



## Adopting An Older Companion

By Brenda F. Barnette, CEO

Recently we met Clay, who came to the Seattle Humane Society looking for a new friend after his beloved dog passed away. Clay fell in love with Maddy, a sweet 10-year old Doberman mix who is the perfect example of what an outstanding pet an older dog can be. By adopting Maddy, Clay found a win-win situation: he now has a constant companion, who is already housetrained and easily understands commands, and Maddy is spending the rest of her life in a loving home.

There are so many fabulous success stories from people who adopt mature dogs and cats from the Seattle Humane Society. We regularly hear from people who report that the transition of their new companion into the family was seamless.

Thinking about people who adopt mature animals brings Sammy Cahn's haunting lyrics set to Jimmy Van Heusen's score, *The Second Time Around*, immediately to mind. Bing Crosby crooned them in a film, and Frank Sinatra put them on the charts, "*Love is lovelier the second time around...Just as wonderful with both feet on the ground.*"

There are many advantages to adopting mature animals. You already know what they are going to look like and what size they will be, and you will know their personalities sooner, rather than waiting through those sometimes very trying development stages to find out who they will become. I believe that mature animals are more poised, and in many ways that makes them easier to train.

If you are considering adopting an older animal, look for a clean bill of health or be sure that you are willing to deal with the expense and extra care if the animal has a medical condition. For cats, ask about litter box habits. For dogs, ask if she is housetrained and what she does when left alone for a few hours. Ask if there have been any behavior challenges such as scratching, biting or guarding their food or possessions. When looking for mature dogs and cats, look for an animal you are comfortable with and who is gentle.

Like the song says, "*Love's more comfortable the second time you fall. Like a friendly home the second time you call. Who can say what led us to this miracle we've found? There are those who'll bet love comes but once and yet. I'm oh so glad we met the second time around...*"

Mature animals need us when circumstance leaves them without a family. Often, they have been given up by people who loved them, and they are well-adjusted and trained. If you aren't quite ready for the housetraining, chewing, or the climbing antics of a puppy or kitten, but you are ready for unconditional love and companionship, visit the Seattle Humane Society and meet some fabulous adult shelter guests who are waiting to meet that special someone *The Second Time Around!*