

**From  
the Editor**



## Farewell to the Sheriff

**One morning, not long after Best Friends opened Dogtown,** a young Malamute dog was found waiting at the front gate – clearly left there by someone too embarrassed to bring him in during the daylight hours.

Dogtown, like its newest arrival, was in its youth. There were other similarities, too: both were already a bit larger than was good for them – and both were still growing!

**Amra, as we named him,** made himself right at home at Dogtown. Instead of needing to be welcomed in, he became the welcomer: visitors to the sanctuary were greeted by this huge, big-hearted dog who made everyone feel at home. He made it clear that he didn't belong inside any of the enclosures, and soon became known as the "Sheriff" of Dogtown, patrolling the grounds and making sure everything was as it should be.

(Like any "good ole boy" sheriff, his job seemed to include picking up unclaimed bowls of food and biscuits and stashing them for after hours!)

**While lots of people loved Amra,** none was closer to him than Rhonda. This plain little mutt was brought in to Dogtown nine or ten years ago. She was never adopted – at least not by a person; instead, she became Amra's sweetheart. What a pair: the big, handsome Malamute with his petite, undistinguished partner who always managed to stay out of the lime-light. For the next nine years they were inseparable – Rhonda never leaving his side as he did his daily rounds as Sheriff of Dogtown, and giving him a quick kiss and whispering in his ear if he ever started getting grumpy on a hot summer afternoon.



**They say that nothing is forever,** and Amra had been slowing down for several months. He'd lived longer than the average Malamute, but for a few weeks he'd been in pain. One afternoon, an x-ray revealed bone cancer, and it was clear his time had come. Rhonda, of course, was by his side during the x-ray, and she sat next to him as the vet administered the final medicine that sent him on a painless journey over the Rainbow Bridge.

Amra would not be laid to rest till the following morning, and Rhonda stayed at his side all night. What do you tell a dog whose lifelong sweetheart is no longer? Not all animals grieve over the loss of their pals, but seeing Rhonda this morning, we knew how tough this was going to be. Amra's passing is a loss to Best Friends, but for Rhonda it is much more.

Dogs, like people, are quite resilient, and Rhonda will, no doubt, put her life back together. But watching her try to cope with the inexplicable, you know that nothing will ever be quite the same. Things like love and friendship do not die easily. Maybe some things in life really *are* forever. 🐾