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## A Dog Named Hazel

By Jean Follmer



Darcy Cole shares a smile with her new dog, Hazel

In 2005, Darcy Cole decided to surprise her husband, Brett, for his 40th birthday. Since Brett is a major fan of barbequed ribs, Darcy decided to take him and five of his friends to the barbeque hotbed of Kansas City. They enjoyed countless ribs and visited the Harley Davidson Finishing Factory and The Woodlands Dog Track.

At Woodlands, Cole saw a dog by the name of "Mulberry Hazel" in the program. Coincidentally,

her mother's name is Hazel. "We bet on her to win and she won; I remember calling my mom to tell her," says Cole.

In August of 2007, Cole's mother passed away. Cole came across the old program and remembered seeing greyhound adoption tables in front of The Woodlands Dog Track. Woodlands closed in August of 2008. The next month, Darcy contacted Mulberry Hazel's owner to see if he still had her and

if she was available for adoption. Mulberry Hazel had been injured but was kept on for breeding purposes. The owner told Darcy she could have the dog when he was done with her. Mulberry Hazel had two more litters of puppies before she came to live with the Cole family in Lafayette. Cole guesses she probably had six litters of puppies in the last two years.

Compared to many greyhound stories, Hazel's is a happy

one. According to local non-profit organization Greyhound Friends for Life, hundreds of greyhounds "grade off (become unprofitable) every day, leaving kennel owners with expenses but no income from the uncompetitive racers. Some kennels will hold on to failed racers for as long as possible, but for most it's strictly business." With dog tracks closing throughout the country, many dogs are euthanized simply because they have nowhere to go.

"I'm in love with this breed and that's why I want to get the word out," says Cole. Cole notes that a lot of people are under the misimpression that greyhounds are hyper and need a lot of exercise. Actually, they are relaxed, loving companions, according to Cole. "She's my 40-mile-per-hour coach potato," says Cole. The greyhound's speed is something for prospective owners to consider. "My biggest concern is never letting her off the leash," says Cole. In fact, Greyhound Friends for Life is adamant that the dogs should always be kept on a leash if they're not in an enclosed area.

It would be hard to say which one is luckier or who really rescued who. Mulberry Hazel definitely won the race that matters and Cole gets to smile every day when she says her mom's name. For more information about local greyhounds, visit [www.greyhoundsforlife.org](http://www.greyhoundsforlife.org) or nationally [www.adopt-a-greyhound.org](http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org).

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## • Big Birthdays! •

### Helen Vurek Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

Submitted by Jerry Vurek



Photo submitted

Helen Vurek celebrated her 100th birthday with nearly 90 relatives and friends at the Orinda Community Center. Helen has lived in Orinda for more than 70 years, having moved here in 1939.

Pictured above is Helen with a friend from Tokyo, Japan, Miyako Kodaira. Miyako and her husband, Eimei, were married at Helen's home in 1974.

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