

The Life and Times of Pixie Homaly Domaly

By Dennis Knight

To give you the framework of people and time, it was in the summer of 1948 when we acquired the cocker spaniel in our grandparents' town of Loveland, Colorado. Jerry was going on eleven, Maureen had turned nine, I was pushing five, Jimmy was two and Kathi wasn't yet a year old. Mickey Don and Timmy would come later in 1949 and 1954 as the sixth and seventh children of Pixie's family.

I distinctly remember the drive back to Laramie, Jimmy and I on the floor of our station wagon, fighting over the red puppy. Our parents interceded with an offer to let Jimmy think of a name for her, and in a burst he pronounced his choice. It was immediately ratified, and she was christened Pixie Homaly Domaly by family proclamation.

Pixie was a family dog in the tradition of the middle of the last century. She would, with urging, sit, shake or roll, but that was about it. Unlike television's Lassie, the nation's dog of choice in those days, Pixie was never asked or expected to rescue Timmy from a well. She wore a collar with license dangling, but I doubt she was ever on a leash. She had the run of the neighborhood but mostly stayed close to home on the Laramie River. All too frequently she came running to Mom with quills in her nose or smelling of skunk.

Pixie attracted a string of paramours to our corner of town, and her amorous activities could have served as a laboratory for the Knight kids to study birds and bees, but our parents didn't seize that opportunity. And if dad spraying a garden hose full blast at Pixie and her suitor of the moment prompted our interest, any questions were summarily dismissed. Such were the times we lived in.

Often on a beautiful summer's evening some of us kids would take bedrolls to the backyard to sleep under the stars. I was particularly proud of the morning I awoke to find Pixie had delivered her latest litter of five at the foot of my blanket. I felt like she had delivered the gifts to me personally and I graciously wanted to keep them all. Pixie bore dozens of mighty cute puppies over her lifetime but Mom succeeded in moving every one of them to different families.

Dad kept a birdbath and feeders to attract songbirds. In her youth, Pixie would thwart his hospitality, leaping vertically in hopes of snaring one in flight. He was at once exasperated and bemused by her futile attempts. She kept on the chase until her final years as she became arthritic and heavy from her life's diet of table scraps.

It's been some sixty years, but we all have fond memories of Pixie Homaly Domaly at the apex of a skyward vault in pursuit of bird, red cocker spaniel ears, as long as she was tall, spread like wings in flight.