

LEISURE TRAVEL VANS WONDER RTB RV WEIGHTS HEARTLAND NORTH TRAIL TOWABLE

familyRVing

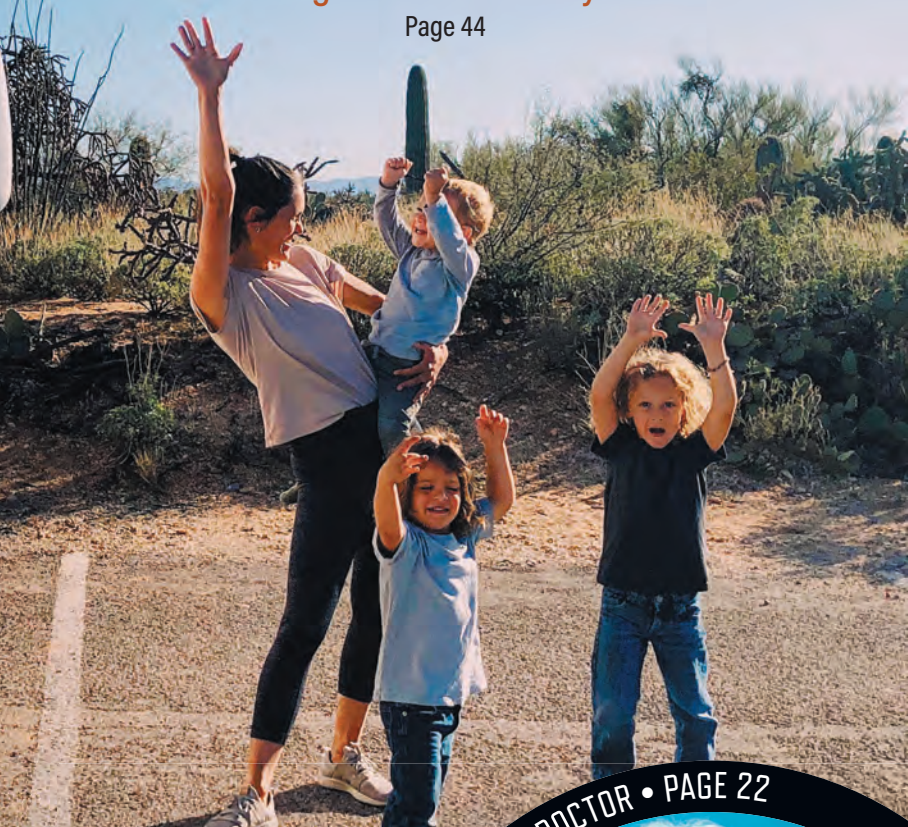
ENHANCING THE RV LIFESTYLE

JULY 2020

Family Road Trip

Making Memories Mile By Mile

Page 44



REMEMBERING THE RV DOCTOR • PAGE 22



VOL. 57 NO. 7 • \$3.99 US
FamilyRVingmag.com

THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED FROM THE JULY 2020 ISSUE

➔ COBB'S PURPOSE

A rescued schnauzer brings joy to the family that adopted him, and to many others.

By Joni Gommo, F497818

My husband, Paul, and I never intended to adopt a third dog. After Misty, our oldest miniature schnauzer, passed away, we decided that our two remaining schnauzers were enough for now. Not long after making this decision, however, we learned that life had other plans for us.

As I was scrolling through social media one day, I saw a post in the rescue group I follow about a new dog that they took in from the local shelter. This little guy, named Cobb — after the road and county where he was found — had such a severe spinal cord injury that he would not be a surgical candidate and would have been euthanized if the rescue group hadn't stepped in when they did. While I wasn't paralyzed, I, too, previously had spinal cord compression

and understood some of what Cobb must have been feeling.

Somewhere deep inside, I just knew Cobb was meant to be a part of our lives. I applied to foster him, initially part-time, but it wasn't long before he was with us full-time. We naturally began to discuss his future and where he would end up. I wondered whether anybody would even be willing to learn to take care of him. Would they be diligent enough to manage his eight pills a day? What if someone adopted him out of the area and we never heard about him again? Or worse, what if someone adopted him, not fully realizing all of the special care he needs, and then dumped him a second time? It dawned on me during one of these discussions that Cobb was exactly where he belonged. WE were his family, and, silently and

skillfully, he had made his way into our hearts and lives forever.

We did a twist on a gender reveal photo shoot, calling it a “Cobb reveal,” with him popping out of a box with blue balloons, and sent these out as adoption announcements. We had an adoption ceremony, complete with champagne, a pet blessing, a cake, and even a unity candle symbolizing our promise to give Cobb the best life possible. That very night was the first time that he initiated play with our other two schnauzers. It was as though he knew that he was finally home, and it brought tears of joy to my eyes.

Since Cobb's adoption, we have taken him and his schnauzer sisters, Daisy and Lily, on countless RV trips across the country. Cobb has had his picture taken at Mount Rushmore, Old Faithful, and the Grand Tetons. He has visited the beaches of South Florida, Billy the Kid's grave, and Big Sky Country in Montana. Our favorite trip of all, and now an annual tradition, is visiting coastal Maine and Acadia National Park. We often jokingly call our motorhome “Cobb's Tour Bus,” because through social media, he literally has fans all over the country, several of whom have driven up to 100 miles just to meet him!

Last year, Cobb was chosen, through a collaboration between Sam's Club, Swiffer, and the “Today Show,” to do a Swiffer/Sam's Club combination commercial. It can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/hYMMYRAB5RM>. The production crew told us in advance to prepare for a 12-hour day of filming, but being Cobb, he wrapped it up in only eight hours and did everything asked of him the first time.

I get messages daily from people telling me how inspired they are by following Cobb's story, his RV travels,



Hilary Massey

➔ Paul and Joni Gommo have enjoyed many RV trips with their three miniature schnauzers.



Joni Gommio

← A severe spinal cord injury hasn't stopped Cobb from living a full life and serving as an inspiration to many people.

think that Cobb would snuggle in bed with my husband?" I told her that I was sure he would. On the way over, we told Cobb what a very special meeting he was about to have, and how he had to be on his very best, most gentle behavior. The look in his eyes told me he understood.

Nothing could have prepared us for the way the room literally lit up when we walked in with Cobb. The very moment we put Cobb on the bed, it was as though he knew exactly what he needed to do. He immediately snuggled in and allowed himself to be loved on by a dying man.

After that experience, I realized that this special little schnauzer of ours had a higher purpose in life. We know what joy he brings people when he meets them on RV trips and through his Facebook page, "Cobb's Purpose," but what if he could spread that joy and inspiration even more by becoming a pet therapy dog?

This past fall, I enrolled Cobb in his first-ever obedience class, and he passed with flying colors. The teacher made accommodations for Cobb's handicap, and he did beautifully! Once this pandemic subsides, he will continue with his training. Cobb and I will combine my previous hospice experience with his ability to connect with people. We will visit hospices, nursing homes, and hospitals.

We have truly been blessed to meet so many new people, make friendships that we will cherish for a lifetime, and have our lives forever changed for the better, all because of a rescued, paralyzed little schnauzer named Cobb. ●

and his daily life. He brings so much joy to people. A woman once emailed to tell me she'd recently had a hip replacement. She didn't feel like going to rehab, but then she saw a video of Cobb playing with his sisters, and she knew she couldn't just stay at home, feeling sorry for herself.

I often hear from people telling me they've recently lost their beloved pet and that following Cobb has helped ease some of their grief. I once even received an email from a nursing home patient who so much looked forward to Cobb's daily antics, as the person no longer had any family members.

Another person saw my post about Cobb doing so well that we planned to put him through another cycle of

rehab. Before we knew it, that entire six weeks of rehab had been paid! This was someone who followed Cobb on his Facebook page and didn't even know us.

On one of our RV trips, we knew we would be passing near the town where Cobb's "rehab angel" lived. We made arrangements to meet and say thanks in person. On the way over, I called and asked for the address. That's when I was told that the husband, one of Cobb's biggest fans, who had been following his story from the beginning, was in hospice care. Being a former hospice nurse, I realized this meeting was about to be even more special.

After discussing directions to their home, the wife asked me, "Do you