

Thalion

July 7, 2000 – May 7, 2012

Thalion came into my life on November 2, 2003, eight months after I completed chemo for ovarian cancer. With that ordeal behind me I was ready to look forward. When I saw the photo of a beautiful red brindle male greyhound named Sly Herman, I fell in love. He was described as energetic and outgoing both of which would prove to be absolutely true. To celebrate the beginning of Sly Herman's new life I chose a new name for him. Thalion, taken from the stories of J. R. R. Tolkien, means steadfast and strong.

As Thalion was my first greyhound and he had never had a loving home, we each taught the other. I taught Thalion the benefits of life away from the track; he taught me patience and the joy of living in the moment. My steadfast and strong Thalion saw me through many dark days when my cancer recurred in 2004. During this difficult time Thalion was my anchor—getting me up each day with his enthusiasm for walks through the neighborhood. And, although some of my saddest thoughts were of his life going on without me, just having him by my side brought me comfort and peace.

As time passed we had many wonderful adventures together. As members of Citizens Against Greyhound Racing we often manned the CAGR booth, educating others about the cruelty of racing and the joys of living with greyhounds. We attended pet fairs, parades, and, my favorite, library programs. From the day he came into my life, Thalion never met a stranger. He loved everyone, young and old, and expected them to love him in return. He was especially fond of "kissing" any children who approached him, often to the delight of the child.

In addition to our volunteer activities, Thalion also loved to travel. From the day I picked him up he always loved riding in the car. Short trips or long, he just wanted to go. We visited

family in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Georgia where we hiked a portion of the Appalachian Trail; we spent time on Oak Island, NC where we walked the quiet beach just happy to be together; and we drove 3,000 miles to visit a friend in Nova Scotia with whom we had many adventures. But, most of all, Thalion loved to travel to greyhound gatherings. Our first gathering was Greyhounds Reach the Beach in Dewey Beach, Delaware in 2006. That was the year the nor'easter brought a deluge accompanied by winds strong enough to push the ocean right up to the boardwalk in the nearby town of Rehoboth Beach. Despite the awful weather we enjoyed seeing all the greyhounds and their people. I was contacted by the owner of one of Thalion's littermates, Sly Hue, aka Bogey, and the two brothers were reunited for the first time in many years. After 2006 Dewey Beach, as Greyhounds Reach the Beach is known, became an annual event and the highlight of our year. As time passed Thalion walked a little slower we spent more time hanging out on the beach instead of exploring, but we still enjoyed every minute we spent together.

We also attended Greyhounds in Gettysburg in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Mountain Hounds in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Each event brought new experiences and opportunities to meet other greyhound enthusiasts. Thalion was my entree into this wonderful world and for that I will always be grateful.

But all journeys must end and I knew I would not have my sweet boy forever. In an ironic twist of fate my cancer did not return, but in November 2011 I was given the devastating news that Thalion had osteosarcoma. We made the most of each precious moment during the five months following his diagnosis. Short trips to the park were splendid—the blue sky, the sun on our backs, and the beauty of being there together. Where we'd once hiked the endless trails in the Wissahickon, a short trip to Valley Green became the source of poignant memories that I will hold forever in my heart.

When I had to say goodbye to Thalion on May 7, 2012, I thought my heart would break in two. How could it be that I would never see him joyfully “digging the grass” with his front paw

after peeing or see his ears stand straight up when something especially interesting caught his attention. He would never again come to the door to greet me—ka-thump, ka-thump, ka-thump. And I would never have the hair raised on the back of my neck at the sound of him joining with other greyhounds in the haunting cry of a group roo. I miss his gentle face, the feel of his cold nose in the morning when he was ready to go out and I wasn't, and the complete joy he exhibited every time he heard the word "go."

My Thalion there will never be another like you. You brought so much joy into my life and gave to me more than I could ever have imagined. Run free, sweet boy. You will always be loved more than words can express.