

WHAT'S IN A NAME

by Lee Netzler

Just before Thanksgiving I acquired a beautiful young red brindle male Scottish Terrier. Since I didn't especially like his registered name, I decided to give him a "call name" that would fit him better. To do so, I spent most of two days, including one full afternoon, at the library, researching names to find one that would perfectly suit him. I finally selected the name "Rusty," a modern Scottish nickname for "a red-headed lad," which was derived from "Russel," a word that has roots in both the Old French language and the Celtic language, and which originally described reddish color. It pleased me considerably to think that after spending all that time and work so wisely researching the possibilities I had finally discovered the one and only correct choice.

A few days later, I took the young dog with me around town as I made some shopping trips and ran a few errands. One of the locations where we stopped was at a recycling station where I regularly drop off aluminum cans. The fellow who runs the place and I have become friends over time, and we always enjoy a good conversation whenever I stop there.

On this occasion, as soon as we finished our business with the aluminum cans, I proudly paraded my handsome new pup out for him to see. I praised my dog's qualities, pointing out in particular his striking reddish coat. The fellow nodded, and after listening to me for a couple of minutes he asked, "What's his name?"

Eager to impress him with the account of my long and difficult search for exactly the right name, I began my story by saying, "Well, he used to be called 'Pharoah,' but I didn't like that name, so I decided to change it."

Before I could continue, he put my pride of success after two days of research work into proper perspective with his two minutes of common sense observations as he interrupted me and asked, "What do you call him then, 'Rusty?'"

"Yeah," I mumbled weakly.

"Seems right," he said. "It suits him."