

Case of the Month

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9 lives? Maybe not. But this dog has at least 3

Vets twice use CPR to save pup

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EXETER – Susan Ligi didn't get to spend her Valentine's Day dining in a fancy restaurant this year.

She spent it at the Animal Emergency Hospital in Pittston, after her beloved beagle was hit by a car and almost died – twice – until a veterinarian saved her.

Susan was in her home on Thomas Street, in Exeter, when her companion, Joseph, walked in, carrying their 1-year-old beagle, Maxine, Thursday evening.

Just minutes before, the able-bodied dog was dashing through yards and streets after slipping out the couple's front door. Joseph charged after her, but Maxine was determined to keep going – until her dash came to an unforeseeable halt.

A black car was cruising down Schooley Street when the driver noticed Maxine in her path. The driver slammed on the brakes and swerved, still managing to hit Maxine and knock her to the ground.

"I was absolutely devastated," Susan said. "If Joe wasn't there, she would have died."



Maxine, a 1-year-old beagle, is recovering at her home in Exeter after being hit by a car on Valentine's Day. Her owners, Susan Ligi and Joseph Healey, say her heart stopped – twice – before veterinarians saved her.

As the driver kept going, the dog laid motionless, her organs pushed upward into her heart – causing a disruption in her breathing cycle.

The couple rushed the year-old puppy to the Exeter Animal Hospital, but her injuries were so severe that she had to be transported to the Animal Emergency Hospital in Pittston for surgery.

“Joe was holding her in the car. I was concentrating on her so much and looking at her that I almost smashed into the car in front of me,” Susan said.

Maxine's heart stopped beating – twice – before Dr. Louis Del Giudice, of the emergency hospital, brought her back to life. Her diagnosis: a herniated diaphragm with bruising on her lungs.

Del Giudice admits he's tried to save animals before, but the life-saving CPR techniques have only been successful a handful of times in his six years of practice.

“They had to reopen and massage her heart,” Susan explained.

“It's upsetting, but we had to concentrate on her and what we had to do to get her better,” said Del Giudice, who inserted a chest tube to remove excess fluid from Maxine's lungs.

The couple doesn't blame the driver, but they do have words of advice for others, if they end up in the same situation.

“Just stop and take the little animal for help,” Susan said.

Maxine is still in pain, but is expected to recover. And doctors say her prognosis looks promising, after the horrific ordeal.

She was taken off her oxygen tank Saturday and shouldn't have any long-term complications, according to Del Giudice, who says that, now, Maxine is walking, playing, and slowly returning to her normal activities – and she headed home with her family, Susan and Joseph, on Sunday.

“She was wagging her tail a little bit (when she came home),” Susan said, as the young dog took a midday nap with Joseph – her brown face and tri-colored fur nuzzling up against his body.

“It's just wonderful.”