



Giving an Old Dog New Love

BY BRENDA CURRIN

Most of Greyhound Welfare's dogs are between 2 to 5 years old and come straight from the track. But occasionally, an older dog is returned by its original adopters. These more "senior" dogs, which might be 8 years old or older, can be a challenge to re-home for a variety of reasons, mostly due to age and perceived age-related problems.

The hair may be a bit greyer, they may move a bit slower, and their eyesight may not be as good as before. But ask anyone who has adopted a senior greyhound, and they'll tell you that these are special dogs with lots of love to give.

"The love they give back, which is more profound than from the younger ones, is the reward," said Susan Clark, whose first greyhound, Zoe, was 9 years old when she adopted her. "They just somehow seem to know that you have given them a second chance, and they love you even more for that."

Susan has adopted several other senior hounds over the years, including Sasha (adopted at age 11), Rocky (age 11) and Rocket (age 10), and says that all of her future dogs will be senior or special needs dogs. "For myself, I get so much satisfaction in knowing that I can guarantee that their final years will be happy, comfortable and relatively pain-free," she explained.

Like Susan, Connie Brown has a soft spot in her heart for the older dogs. Over the last few years she's adopted Nikki (Sasha's littermate), who will celebrate her 15th birthday in June, and Leo, who will be 10 in July. They all share their home with the youngster of the family, 6-year-old Marley.

"Both Nikki and Leo have come alive again, and the joy they have shown me means more than anything," Connie said. "That reward alone makes cleaning up a mess acceptable, building



Littermates Nikki and Sasha, age 15 in June

a ramp practical, visiting the vet a road trip, and giving a pill like giving a treat."

Like all of us, aging can bring on health problems, but as Susan pointed out, the medical costs aren't necessarily higher, they just come sooner than when adopting younger dogs. "Proper nutrition and exercise will help in maintaining a healthy dog of any age," Connie said. Connie's super-senior Nikki is going blind at age 14, but other than a rainy night when she ran into the fence, Connie said as long as she's careful, there are few problems.

"If you stopped to consider that you won't have them as long or that there will be age-related
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Zoe, adopted at age 9

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Letter from the President: 'Tis the Season

BY MEREDITH DOWELL



Meredith with her grey, Turbo, at the beach
(photo by Balance Pet Photography)

I often joke that Greyhound Welfare should produce a t-shirt with a picture of a cloaked, hooded hound with the caption: Here's your greyhound. Welcome to the Cult. Because if there's one thing I have noticed about greyhound owners over the years, it's that you cannot find a group of people more dedicated to a specific breed of dog. Indeed, greyhound adopters are a breed unto themselves. And since it's human nature to seek out like-minded individuals, grey-

hound adopters tend to flock together, beginning at this time of year and running through autumn.

The weekend of March 14, to our south, the greyhounds were gathering on the beach in Jekyll Island, Georgia. Sandy Paws was in full swing. In April, the hounds and their owners will be gathering in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania for shopping and socializing at Greyhounds in Gettysburg (also known as GiG). In June, the greater Boston area will be host to the 6th and final Greyhound Adoption Expo at the Massachusetts racetracks. In July, the Finger Lakes region of New York will host the Grapehounds Wine Tour. Other events on the East Coast include Mountainhounds in Gatlinburg, TN, Greyhounds Festival of the Bluegrass in Louisville, KY, Beachbound Hounds in Myrtle Beach, SC, as well as countless adoption group picnics, gatherings and fundraisers. The season culminates in the mother of all greyhound gatherings over Columbus Day weekend in Dewey Beach, DE, Greyhounds Reach the Beach, a gathering of thousands of greyhound owners and their pets for a long weekend of shopping, socializing and seminars.

But why? What is it that possesses us to drive, in many cases, hundreds of miles to hang out with a bunch of strangers and their dogs?

My first major event was strictly for shopping. Turbo needed a decent collar and a better coat and it was simply easier to fit him in person. But now that my dog has everything he could possibly need (and many things he doesn't), I still go to these events. This year, I will likely attend between 5 and 7 major events, most of them more than 100 miles away (and some more than 500 miles away).

To be around other people who care so much about greyhounds is truly affirming. To meet face to face with folks who would do absolutely anything humanly possible to help a retired hound find its home, who establish programs dedicated to the health and wellness of greyhounds, who travel from all over the country (and even the world), just because we have one — admittedly amazing — thing in common is humbling. It speaks to the hold these dogs have over us, even if we don't want to admit it.

So, now that Spring is in the air, enjoy it. And head on out to a greyhound gathering or two. Or five. I hope to see you there. ■

Greyt Bites

BY TINA CARLSEN

Oatmeal Apple Cookies

These were very popular with India and Kashu, who were quite happy being taste testers on these yummy-smelling healthy treats. Sits, downs and waits were no problem with these rewards.

Ingredients

- 3 cups old-fashioned oatmeal (not instant)
- 1 cup sugar free applesauce
- ½ cup of diced apples
- 1 tablespoon flax seed meal
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Drop by spoonfuls onto greased or lined cookie sheet. Flatten cookie. Bake at 375 degrees until crisp, about 15 minutes. To make crunchier, turn off oven, and leave the treats in until oven cools. Store treats in air-tight container in refrigerator.



The Skinny on Greyhound Welfare is a quarterly publication of Greyhound Welfare.

Greyhound Welfare is a greyhound rescue and placement group serving the metropolitan Washington D.C area (Maryland, Virginia and DC) and parts of New England (Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire). Greyhound Welfare is a 100% foster home group, which means that all our greyhounds live in real homes until they are placed. This helps us teach the dogs about their new world, and learn more about the individual dogs. Knowing our dogs well helps us greatly with our placement success.

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TRAINING

CORNER

BY CYNTHIA WILBUR

Nothing in Life is Free technique benefits greys and their people

From practice on cold days when the neighborhood yards are empty, Dannie and Hope know that if they walk politely through the 'Barky Dog

Alley' stretch of our walk, there will be treats served in front of the stone house. When we get to that point in the walk, the seven harmless but vocal yard dogs on that stretch of the circle can no longer see us and we stop for a treat party. Getting to 'the treat spot' by walking quickly and quietly is what they focus on now, instead of on barking retorts out or leaving pee mail for the excited outdoor dogs.

Is this NILIF? It is! 'Nothing in Life is Free' isn't just about sitting for leashes and walks, or giving paw for a good neck scratch, or laying down nicely for a treat. It also means walking politely past barky dogs and not pulling on the lead. It's a lifestyle where your dog learns to EARN what he wants (food or privileges) and we get what we want: nicely mannered dogs.

NILIF is doggie economics. Work for what you want. Earn your privileges. And in the process, the slightly anxious dog becomes more confident, knowing how to get what he wants, and the too confident dog on the edge of bossiness learns to relax and let the owner be in charge.

NILIF isn't just for dogs with 'problems,' it's a good basic lifestyle for setting any dog up for success by teaching dogs the proper way to get the resources that we control. We humans really do control all of the resources — play, walks, food, pillows, furniture, pets and attention — and our pups can earn them all by working.

When my newest greyhound Hope came home, NILIF started as soon as she bounced into the kitchen. The nail clippers were on the kitchen counter and each paw clipped earned a scratch, a good girl, and a chicken treat. She had no idea what made the treats happen that first day, but after a few weeks the nail clippers were her



Hope earns rewards with her 'lay down'

signal to stand still, let the human mess with her feet and she'd get yummy treats. Then into the crate for a late breakfast in her new home. Hope stood in her crate waiting for me to release the bowl of food, with no idea that the words 'lay down' meant 'stretch your skinny body out on the floor of the crate please'. But in five or six minutes, she decided to get comfy and lay down while she waited for the slow human to give her the food. Bingo! As soon as she did that, breakfast was served along with a chirpy 'good lay down'. Within a week, she had connected the dots: The faster she hit the floor of the crate when I said 'Hope, lay down' the

faster that food bowl joined her there. She had learned to work for food.

In the four months since that very first day in her home, Hope has built on her lessons and learned how to work for (almost) everything she wants. She still can't have the kitty no matter what she does and she still isn't allowed on furniture, but for food or walks or play or lovins', she knows how to ask politely to get the prize, just like her siblings Monty and Dannie do.

And a related but poignant NILIF story about my very special Katie. Katie was a happy roofer and had learned to say 'please' and 'thank you' with coos and roos. I could ask 'what do you say' and she'd roo her answer. This came in handy when physical movement became a challenge for her, but we still needed some level of 'normal'. She could ask me for things even though she couldn't control her body well. When we made that final visit to the vet's office, I was feeding her every special treat she'd ever loved and wanted (except cat poop, and yes I do regret not bringing that). Everything was completely free now; she didn't have to work for any of it. But between bites on the comfy floor pad in the exam room, she lifted her chin and gave me the unbidden 'please and thank you' coo that made me smile and cry and broke my heart. Katie just didn't know how **not** to work. ■

cont'd from cover story

expenses, no one would probably adopt them," Susan said. "You adopt them because they need someone to care for them, not for what they can do for you."

Susan and Connie both also pointed out several reasons folks should consider adopting an older greyhound:

- ▶ They are already housebroken.
- ▶ They are not as wild and nutty as hounds right off the track. They are very mellow and have house manners.

- ▶ What you see is what you get. It can take up to a year for a young dog's true personality to come out. The seniors' are already there.
- ▶ The bond between you and a senior is different. The older ones seem to love you more than the youngsters.

How do you measure love and compassion, in days or weeks?" Susan asked. "Think about what you can give to the senior and how you can make their lives so much better. Yes, they are a little more work, but the love they return is worth everything." ■

Top 8 Things to Do in New England With Your Greyhound

BY RALLY PAGULAYAN

Winter in New England means putting on dog coats, cleaning off icy salt-covered paws, digging out special pee/poop areas in knee-deep snow and wearily looking forward to the arrival of Spring. In anticipation of its long awaited arrival, we've compiled some of our favorite things to do with our greyhounds in New England.

Walk in the woods. The Middlesex Fells Reservation offers rocky hills, meadows, forest, and scenic vistas that belie its location just a few miles north of Boston. The fire roads and single track trails that criss-cross the Fells are all very doable for a greyhound. The Minuteman Trail in Concord is a scenic path through classic New England countryside and happens to be where the American Revolution began. The Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain is an oasis of nature in the middle of the city and Lake Waban in Wellesley offers a beautiful walk around the scenic lake on the Wellesley campus.

Walk on the beach. Revere Beach in Revere is a wonderful beach for walking your greyhound. It offers city dwellers a closer beach experience that's accessible by the T. After your walk, treat yourself to the deep fried whole-belly clams at Kelly's Roast Beef. But visit soon, Revere Beach restricts dog access on May 1.

Hang out with other greyhounds. We're lucky to have two active greyhound groups that hold weekly walks in our area all year round: Greyhound Adventures (GA) and Trail Bound Hounds (TBH). GA holds walks on Sundays all over the Boston metro area and are greyhounds only. TBH allows other breeds and holds walks Saturdays throughout southeastern Mass. Walks have around 30 greyhounds so there's plenty of opportunity for greyhound socializing.

Go to the movies. During summer, Free Friday Flicks are held every Friday evening at sundown at the DCR Hatch Shell in Boston. Set up your blanket and picnic basket on the lawn along the Charles River and enjoy a movie under the stars.

Chill out on an outdoor patio. Have a bite to eat and something cool to drink with your hound on the patio of Tremont 647 or the Columbus



Rally Pagulayan's Lima Bean, and Elizabeth Palaima's Beckett, rest briefly at Cambridge Dog Park, one of the many outing locations in the New England area. (photo by Rally Pagulayan)

Café in Boston's South End. Or share an iced latte and cookies at Starbucks' spacious patio in Kendall Sq., Cambridge. It has a nice exposure to the early afternoon sun and it's quiet on the weekends, nice for those hounds who prefer a more low key setting.

Go to a greyhound event. The Greyhound Adoption Expo is held by the local New England tracks to promote greyhound adoption. High-

lights include a costume contest, the "Fun Run" which allows your hound to race on a short portion of the race track, professional photography, and plenty of greyhound merchandise to purchase. This year's Expo is June 12-14 at Wonderland, Raynham, and Seabrook, NH. One event that isn't local, but certainly worth a visit, is Greyhounds Reach the Beach in Delaware. More than 2,000 greyhounds and their owners descend on Dewey Beach in early October for a long weekend of greyhound fun. It's an event you simply have to see to believe. Make your room reservations early!

Enjoy a Farmer's Market. The Marblehead Farmer's Market is particularly dog-friendly — most vendors put out water bowls for the dogs and dogs abound. Entertainers add excitement to the market giving a great opportunity for your dog to experience an even wider variety of interesting sights and sounds.

Visit GW Open Houses. The Open House is like a family reunion for GW dogs. Share your stories and help us spread the word on the wonderful experience of adopting greyhounds. ■



Rally Pagulayan and Lima Bean enjoy a run on Crane Beach in Ipswich. Dog access at Crane Beach is now closed for the season, but Revere Beach in Revere can be enjoyed by greys and their people through May 1. (photo by George Guinta, Jr.)

Beckett

BY ELIZABETH PALAIMA

Editor's Note: This article was originally posted on the GW Yahoo! Adopter's Group site in January, but we liked it so much we thought our newsletter readers would enjoy it as well.

Yesterday, I was signing Beck's contract and was thinking back to when I first got Beck as a foster in July.

It's hard to believe that Beckett, as he's now known, is the same dog. At one time, walking down the street was an obstacle. He just wouldn't go. At some point he decided he wasn't leaving the house. Well, so much for my imagined jogging partner. Oh, and at the time, he didn't like food or treats that weren't given to him in his crate. And when he was in his crate he whined. Every night. All night. He whined until we figured out he was afraid of the dark and got him a nightlight.

The walking thing — that took longer. I baked so many cookies to thank the crossing guard who didn't even blink when Beck froze up in the middle of the street on which she had just held up traffic for us. She acted like it happened all the time.

The first breakthrough came when he picked up a stuffed animal, the only thing he had ever shown any interest in. So there I was walking down the street in the middle of hot, humid July, attempting to coerce a 70-plus pound dog to simply move by holding out a large incredibly-embarrassing teddy bear. It did wonders for my street cred.

Once we were able to get to the end of the street we came to our first setback, these things called "dogs." The scariest of these creatures was 20 pounds or less and moved quickly. He refused to go down any street that had led to an encounter of the four-legged kind. All my streets lead to parks. All dogs, even the neighbor's whip-pet scared him. The only exception was other greyhounds. The moment he is with another greyhound everything changes.



Elizabeth and Beckett (in the fenced yard) relax in the sun. (photo by Charlene Kim)

Of course I'm trying to explain all of this during an open house, and since there is another greyhound, he looks and acts perfectly adjusted. He even does fine near other "regular dogs." He becomes "Super Dog." It is a complete 360, and I look like I'm crazy. That's okay though, because at this point I am sort of used to looking "eccentric." I've been carrying around the teddy bear for a few weeks.

Fortunately, Beck came to appreciate the wonders of peanut butter, so at least I had two weapons — the teddy bear and the jar of peanut butter — both of which I was carrying around on my walks.

But what really made a difference were time, patience and help. I received lots of help, support and advice from really caring owners and volunteers, most of which I met through Greyhound Welfare.

Soon we could handle larger dogs, then medium ones, and today we do "good" around smaller dogs.

In fact today you might not even know it was the same big guy. Though this is probably exacerbated by the story I tell people about a dog that looked just like mine that used to live in our neighborhood. That dog didn't want to walk anywhere and was owned by this crazy lady carrying a teddy bear. The teddy-carrying lady would just sit down, right on the sidewalk and ignore the didn't-want-to-walk dog until he finally started walking again at which time she would praise him while holding out aforementioned Mr. Ted and a jar of peanut butter.

The thing is I'm not sure who really learned more: me or him. Probably a bit of both.

Anyways, I just wanted to give a shout out to all the volunteers and people who helped get Beck to where he is now — my best friend and running partner. Beckett is Super Dog 85 to 90 percent of the time, pain in my butt 15 to 10 percent of the time, which is just about where he should be. ■

Lost Dog Tips

BY SCOTT MOODY AND MEGAN RICHARDS

Losing a dog can be a greyhound owner's worst nightmare. In an instant a Greyhound can take off into the distance and can easily lose his or her way home. According to statistics compiled by Michael McCann on the national Amber Alert forum on Greytalk.com, about 80% of lost greyhounds from 2007 were found alive, another 10% were found dead, and the last 10% were never found or accounted for.

These same statistics show that the number one way in which greyhounds escape is through an open gate. Coming in second is escape from an open door, and third is by slipping a collar. Other reasons include dropped leashes, and escapes while getting into or out of a car.

To keep your special friend safe, use the following checklist to review your every day activities and make sure you're providing a safe environment for your 4-legged (or 3-legged) friend.

OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME

- ❑ Always go out into the yard with your Greyhound, even if it's fenced. Every dog is different; you have to watch and learn from each one by observing behaviors. Check the fence and gate before releasing your dog.
- ❑ Secure even the narrowest openings in your fence. Greyhounds can squeeze through unbelievably narrow spaces. Check frequently for loose boards or slats.
- ❑ If your dog likes to dig, check frequently for new holes and areas where your dog may be able to escape. Place rocks or stones in his or her path, and consider concreting along the base of the fence.
- ❑ Lock your fence gate with a padlock and keep the key inside. This will prevent the gate from being accidentally left open by meter readers or neighborhood children, and will prevent gates from accidentally blowing open in a storm.

- ❑ Keep lawn furniture and equipment away from fences. They make excellent jump-over-the-fence points.

INSIDE OF YOUR HOME

- ❑ Be aware of where your dog is whenever anyone opens a door and be sure children or adults who are not knowledgeable don't open doors leading to the street. Most will not be able to restrain a Greyhound who wants to take off.
- ❑ At times when you will be frequently opening the door, place a safety gate up to prevent your hound from getting to the door.
- ❑ Keep house and vehicle windows opened no more than 6 inches. Greyhounds are able to escape through partially-opened car and van windows and doors. They can even push house windows open if they get their needle-nose underneath.

EVERYDAY SAFETY

- ❑ Check to see if your dog's collar is properly fitted. Greyhounds can easily back out of poorly-adjusted martingale collars. The material on many martingale collars also stretches over time, so collars do need to be checked and readjusted periodically. Always keep some sort of identification on your dog, and consider micro-chipping the new member of your family. Consider using a two-collar system so that the hound will still have a collar even if they slip their martingale. Many online collar vendors offer embroidering with your dog's name and your phone number on the collar (see photo).
- ❑ When walking your hound, place your hand through the leash loop, wrap the leash around your wrist, and hold the leash firmly. Consider using a carabiner to reinforce the clasp on your dog's martingale (see photo). Always use a six-foot or shorter leash and never use a flexi-lead or other retractable leash system for a greyhound. Your hound can reach their top speed in three strides.



Cali's mom and dad know that home and vehicle windows should never be opened more than 6 inches because greyhounds can escape through openings larger than that.

On a flexi, you could either injure your dog or lose them forever when they get to the end of the line. Furthermore, that heavy retraction system will inevitably spook your hound when it hits the ground.

- ❑ And, finally, remember to never let your dog run off lead unless you are in a completely enclosed area!!! An ounce of prevention and diligence can go a long way in keeping our best friends safe and sound. Please also visit the lost dog files in the GWAdopters Group on yahoo.com.



Boo models two measures his owners have taken to help keep him safe — a carabiner and a special collar. Many online collar vendors offer embroidering with your dog's name and your phone number on the collar. A carabiner is used to reinforce the clasp on your dog's martingale.

Volunteer With Greyhound Welfare

BY MOLLY MARTIN

Greyhound Welfare is a 100 percent volunteer organization. That means after our volunteers finish their day job they often go home and turn on the computer, get on the phone or walk a foster before they take time for themselves.

As Volunteer Coordinator I am happy to report that we have a stellar team of volunteers that tirelessly offer their weeknights, weekends, and everything in between to help get more retired racers into forever homes. And before I forget, THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!

If you are interested in increasing your greyhound knowledge and joining a community of friends that care deeply about animal welfare and rescue, then you might want to consider volunteering with GW. What do volunteers do? Anything and everything that it takes to advance the mission of GW. We give our volunteers a lot of responsibility.

Volunteers who foster probably have the most challenging, yet also most rewarding, volunteer task. Not only do our foster homes feed and walk our foster dogs, they also have to give baths and trim nails, take them to open houses or the vet, and work on simple training commands. We trust our foster homes to introduce the newly



GW volunteers Christy Lyons, Carla Boucher, Matt Lyons and Elizabeth Palaima share information about greyhounds with PetSmart customers at an Open House in Everett, Mass., on March 22. (photo by Rally Pagulayan)

retired racers to experiences and stimulus they might encounter in their forever homes. The list includes many things, some of which are dogs, cats, kids, ceiling fans, stairs, and perhaps most importantly peanut butter and sleeping all the day through!

GW has volunteer tasks that can suit nearly anyone's schedule or preferred method of communication. If you like to talk, then we might ask you to make phone calls to check references or follow-up with our current adopters. If you like to meet people, we might suggest that you work with our events team and attend open houses. If you would rather communicate electronically, we have a multitude of tasks that can be done from the comfort of your favorite keyboard! If you really just want to work with the dogs, and you have enough time and space in your current schedule we might suggest you give fostering a try!

Regardless of how you volunteer with GW, it is a wonderful way to enrich and expand your connection to GW.

Why do people volunteer? Everyone volunteers for a different reason, and there are too many reasons to list! Some folks enjoy working with the greyhounds, others feel good about giving back to the community, and others just cannot get enough of these wonderful animals. At the end of the day, the reason for volunteering does not matter. The important thing is that you actually volunteered!

What are our volunteer needs? That is sometimes a tough question to answer. Right now, most of our teams are staffed, but I am always looking for people who want to make a long-term (six to nine months or more) commitment to the organization. Senior volunteers are the core of GW but we can always learn from new ideas and fresh perspectives. I would love to bring in a new crop of volunteers from our adopters and imbue GW with their energy and aspirations.

How can you volunteer? If you want to know more about volunteering with GW, please visit



Greyhound Welfare has volunteer tasks that can suit nearly anyone's schedule. From making phone calls in the comfort of your own home to taking care of foster dogs, like Peach (pictured here), volunteers tirelessly offer their weeknights, weekends, and everything in between to help get more retired racers into forever homes.

www.greyhoundwelfare.org/volunteer.php. That web page has all the initial information about how to enter the GW volunteer community. I really encourage you to give volunteering a try and step out of your comfort zone. We offer extensive training and mentoring to make sure you have all the tools and resources you need! The most important thing to know about volunteering with GW is that we want it to be something you enjoy.

Stop by and say hello at an open house near you, or email me at volunteer@greyhoundwelfare.org with any questions. ■

April 2009 Photo Contest Winners: Fashion Spread

Thanks to everyone who emailed or posted photos as part of our photo contest. For all of the Greyt Fashion Photo contest entries, visit Yahoo! Groups GW Adopter site. Look in the photos folder, *Newsletter April 2009*. Get out those cameras and watch your email for announcements about upcoming photo contests!



First Place Winner: Cian, Kiaba and Tehya (photo courtesy of Nichole Zurgable)



Second Place Winner: Gracie (photo courtesy of Rachel Anderson and Scott Beliveau)



Third Place Winner:
Rocket with Thumbs the kittie
(photo courtesy of Susan Clark)

April 2009 Photo Contest Outtakes



Onyx
(photo courtesy of Kim Morrow and Cindy Fox)



Cookie (photo courtesy of Eliza Cioccarri)



Lil (photo courtesy of Carrie and Chip Hawthorne)



Gus and Jack
(photo courtesy of Emma and Gary Warner and daughter, Pat)