



familydog™

the
rescue
issue

*25 homeless hounds,
25 happy landings*

*Decompressing:
Why it's essential*



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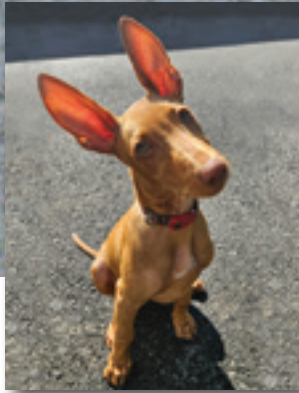
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Celebrating **55** years
1968  2023

the rescue issue



On the Cover: Pharaoh Hound Soleil (Nerak Coast 2 Coast Chasin' the Sun)
Owner/Photographer: Lizbeth K. Molloy

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Hearts, Hope, and Homes

The festive season is upon us, and, like everyone else, Emily and I are planning gatherings and gifts, especially for one sweet Leonberger who is firmly on the nice list this year.

With all the merrymaking going on, it's important to remember some of the intangible qualities, such as charity, gratitude, and hope. That's why we chose rescue as our theme to close out 2023.

The issue is a celebration of heroes—both human and canine—who give so generously to keep hope alive against all odds. Every page is brimming with inspirational stories and advice on opening your heart and home to a dog who needs help.

In our lead feature ([page 26](#)), you'll get an inside view of a breed rescue group's desperate attempt to save 25 hounds who were running out of time. The Vet's View column ([page 24](#)) shows how a dedicated owner and veterinarian triumphed over a rescue dog's mysterious illness. Training & Behavior ([page 18](#)) looks at ways to stop habits that can get a dog dumped. Two articles explore decompression ([pages 22](#) and [34](#))—why it's important to give a rescue dog time to realize that this strange place is home.

And for fun, remember to check out our [annual Holiday Gift Guide](#). You're sure to find something wonderful to delight the pups and people on your "nice" list.

From the staff of *AKC Family Dog*, we wish you all the comfort, peace, and joy of the season and health and happiness in the year to come.

Warmest regards,

Mara

Mara Bovsun
Managing Editor

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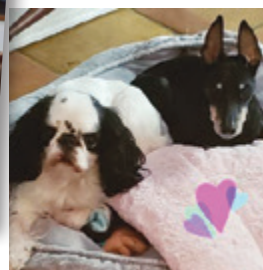
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Spirits Bright

Enjoy the warm, fuzzy seasonal feelings brought to you by our readers' dogs.

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Where Your Dog is the Star



Send Us Your Snaps!

We'd love to see *your* family dog. Email your digital photos (high-resolution, please) to familydog@akc.org. Please include "Your Family Dog Photo" in the subject line, as well as your dog's name and city and state of residence.

- Only previously unpublished photos will be selected for publication.
- All photos become the property of the American Kennel Club and will not be returned.

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10 Years of Helping Dogs and Their Owners

Two AKC initiatives—AKC Rescue Network and the AKC GoodDog Helpline—have helped dogs land and stay in the homes they deserve. These programs celebrated their 10-year anniversaries in 2023.

HASTEN THE HOMECOMING

We've all heard these stories. Some sad-eyed, bedraggled creature has been dumped in a shelter multiple times and is reaching the end of the line.

Fast forward five years. That same creature—hair glistening, eyes bright and joyful—is whipping through weave poles, springing off a dock, or executing a perfect heeling pattern, and heading toward a major rosette.

What happened?

The short answer is “a miracle.” Sometimes, that's true. But mostly it takes good foster homes, veterinary care, appropriate food, and remedial training. For that, you need people willing to do whatever it takes, even if it means driving hundreds, if not thousands, of miles, to pick up or deliver a dog to a new home.

Breeders have always been heavily involved in these mercy missions. In 2013, the AKC recognized their efforts with its AKC Rescue Network. Currently, there are 450 AKC Rescue Network groups in the United States, mostly affiliated with the AKC breed clubs.

Most breeder/rescue volunteers have decades of experience and a passion for the dogs they are helping. For some, rescuing dogs is a family tradition, passed down from generation to generation. They

possess a huge treasure chest of firsthand knowledge about canine health, training, and breed-specific traits. The network's groups are unique in that the fostering or rehabilitation period lasts for as long as is needed before the dog is re-homed. They also can guide newcomers into the world of dog sports, starting with the Purebred Alternative Listing program.

To learn more, visit (akc.org/akc-rescue-network). The AKC Rescue Network site is the best place to start your search if you are interested in a purebred rescue dog. The network offers an alphabetical list of breed-specific rescues from Affenpinschers to Yorkshire Terriers.



CANINE MANNERS S.O.S

The AKC GoodDog Helpline (GDH) also marked its 10th anniversary in 2023. GDH director Penny Leigh says the service has offered support to nearly a million puppy and dog owners. Most callers are new puppy owners, but about 10 percent are seeking help with rescues.

“Our trainers were able to help a long-time client train her rescue dog through reactivity issues and other issues with being around other dogs. She recently called to let us know that this dog just earned her CGC!” says Hilarie Erb, AKC GDH supervisor. She tells of another dog who was barking excessively and was resource guarding. A GDH trainer offered tips to correct and manage the dog’s issues. “This dog’s owner wrote to let us know that her dog’s behavior has improved so much that he is now a registered therapy dog,” Erb says.

The live telephone service offers individualized training advice for all owners and their dogs. With an AKC GoodDog Helpline subscription, owners get instant access to a team of trainers available seven days a week. The service recently released video training consultations as well.

For more information, visit the AKC GoodDog Helpline at akc.org/products-services/akc-gooddog-helpline.



facts & stats

86 dogs

and 1 cat

That’s the number of therapy animals it took for Denver International Airport’s Canine Airport Therapy Squad (aka CATS) to win the Guinness World Record title of “Largest Airport Therapy Animal Program.” At least 33 dog breeds—and yes, one cat—participate in the program, which offers stress relief to travelers. —Jen Reeder

books we love

Horror Dogs: Man’s Best Friend as Movie Monster

By Brian Patrick Duggan
Published by McFarland & Co. Inc.

Horror Dogs covers more than a century of canine characters that are the stuff of nightmares—from the bloodthirsty Hound of the Baskervilles of the silent era to a scrappy little shelter pup who turns into a “weredog” in a 2020 Hulu series.

In the book, author Brian Duggan aims to answer one question. “Dogs have always been Rin Tin Tin, Asta, Benji, Lassie,” he said in an interview on the “Dog Talk” podcast. “When did we start making dogs into bad guys?”

The first canine movie monster was the 1914 silent version of Hound of the Baskervilles, but the golden age for the genre was roughly a 20-year period starting in the 1970s. Those years saw the production of films like *Cujo*, *The Omen*, and the lesser known but truly terrifying *Devil Dog: The Hound of Hell*. Duggan delves into these movies, and there are more than 120 of them, from all angles—history, philosophy, and behind-the-scenes looks at how filmmakers created the hellhounds. You’ll learn, for example, what they used for the blood on *Cujo*’s face and other production secrets.

AKC Family Dog readers will recognize the author. His meticulously researched, beautifully written, and often quirky history features have graced our pages for more than a decade. A film buff, historian, Saluki breeder, and AKC judge, Duggan brought the perfect blend of skills to this project. No book has ever explored the topic of dogs in horror movies. It’s almost as if the book was waiting for Duggan to write it.

Horror Dogs is a scholarly work. But it’s also fun and fast-paced, a great read. If you are a dog lover or movie buff, we highly recommend it, although you may want to purchase a nightlight along with your copy.



WEST-HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER: ELA BRACHO / ALAMY; STOCK PHOTO: RIGHT TOP: COURTESY DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT; BOTTOM: COURTESY AUTHOR

we asked, you answered

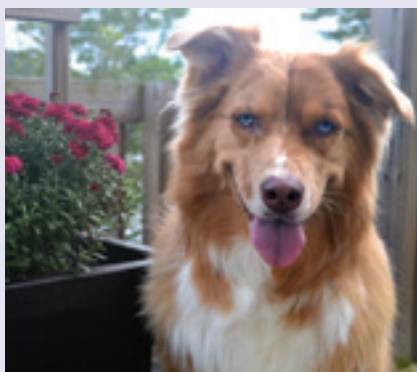
No Place Like Home



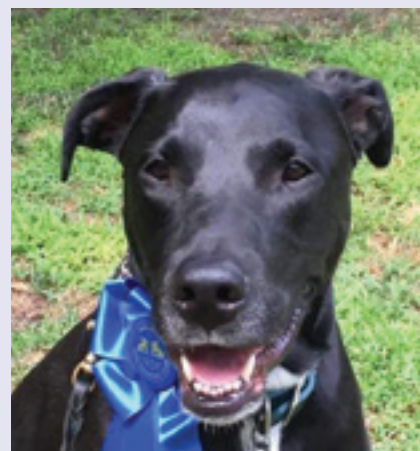
We asked our readers to tell us about their rescue dogs. Here are just a few of the responses we received.



My old man, **Orion**, came from rescue and opened up the world of dog sports and everything else. Now I'm a huge advocate for rescue, purebred dogs, and dog sports. He has forever changed my life. —Emily Wright



Hannah was a multiple return to a local rescue. I had a previous Australian Shepherd rescue and was thrilled to welcome her into our home. Once she decompressed, we realized she was reactive to dogs and some people. After lots of training, she earned AKC titles in agility, rally, and trick dog, including the prestigious TKE and recognition for an outstanding performance in the inaugural AKC Trick Dog National Competition. Hannah certainly pushed me outside the box to be a better trainer. —Kelly Jo



Found as a stray puppy in one of the highest poverty areas of Kentucky, **Ralphie** was shipped to a New Jersey shelter, where I spotted him. He has the best life! Free run of the house, a brother, and a cat buddy. He introduced me to the world of dog sports, earning titles in rally and obedience, and three levels of CGC titles. He's also a therapy dog. My boy sure hit the lottery, as have I. —Larissa O'Donnell



Xander was an 8-week-old puppy when we found him in 2019 in the Alachua County (Florida) animal shelter. At 6 months he started swimming lessons at Ocala Dog Ranch and at a little over a year old, he went to his first dock diving competition. In the two years he's been dock diving, he earned seven titles. Last year he went to the North America Diving Dogs Championship, where he placed ninth out of 40 dogs in his division. He also has titles in Fast CAT and Barn Hunt. To say getting him was life changing is an understatement. —Susan Hovanec

Join the conversation:

Follow us at facebook.com/akcfamilydog.

Have a question to ask?

Email it to familydog@akc.org.

Responses have been edited for length, grammar, and clarity.

COURTESY OWNERS; BOTTOM: BLUE DOG PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OWNER

Mailbag & Brags

Jean Schaardt, of New Jersey, told us the story of her remarkable rescue, Sparky.

“Sparky’s rescue story starts in 2013 with Coco, his mother. She lived for seven and a half years in backyard kennel in Tennessee before her owners dumped her in a shelter, where she had eight pups. Four survived. Later, Coco and the pups were sent up to a New Jersey rescue, where I found her. Coco was terrified, but open to learning. By 2017 she had a CDX in obedience and an RAE in rally, and participated in the 2017 RNC in Perry, Georgia. Coco passed away in 2020.

In December 2020 I was looking online and saw a picture of a dog in a shelter who looked just like Coco. The rescue told me he was her puppy.

He was 8 years old and considered unadoptable.

I couldn’t abandon Coco’s last puppy, so Sparky came home with me. He has been quite a handful! He’s reactive to touch and responded to any threat with his teeth.

But today, he’s quite happy. He loves rally, and is doing very well, with an RAE and Masters title. We’re working toward our RACH. I hadn’t planned on showing him, but he loves it!”

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What Will Happen to My Dog After I'm Gone?

BY ARLISS PADDOCK

Sponsored by *The Loyal Legacy Plan Underwritten by New York Life*



Records of the deep affection humans have for their canine companions stretches back to when the first wild canids joined us beside the fire. Archeologists have unearthed pet cemeteries in early Greece and Rome full of artifacts bearing poignant tributes to deeply loved dogs.

Things haven't changed. Thousands of years later, dogs are profoundly a part of our lives and families, and our concern for their lifelong well-being is foremost.

LAGOTTI ROMAGNOLI © MARCUS LINDSTROM/GETTY IMAGES

Thinking About the Unthinkable

One of the saddest things to contemplate is the possibility of being unable to care for our beloved pets. If we die, what will happen to those furry family members who so completely depend on us?

“I cannot imagine overlooking this planning,” says English Cocker Spaniel owner Martha Guidotti, of Connecticut. She and her husband had discussed the subject years ago, making sure there would be money left to cover the expenses for the care of each of their dogs. After her husband passed away, she adjusted the details of the will, specifying that one of their sons take responsibility for her current dog, Stella, and allocating those funds to her continuing care.

Where There’s a Will

If you’ve had the chance to discuss with a friend or family member the possibility of taking on responsibility for your pets and they’ve agreed, you can name this person in your will and describe the arrangement.

It’s important that designated caretakers understand all that would be involved. They should be sufficiently knowledgeable in pet care, and their living space suitable. Ideally the person is someone whom you trust without hesitation.

Another important consideration is the length of time before a will is executed. Daily care, feeding, and a place to live must start right away, so you might need to note that the agreed-on care for the pet is to begin immediately.

But can a pet actually be a beneficiary of a will? In many states pets are legally considered personal property, and property can’t “inherit” funds.

Dollars and Sense

How much money should you leave? Try to estimate the cost for care of your pet as accurately as possible, including:

- Annual cost of food and treats
- Basic supplies, such as dog beds, crates, bowls, and leash and collar
- Grooming, if applicable
- Routine and emergency veterinary care
- Premiums for pet health insurance

New Option: Trusts

A type of arrangement developed more recently is a pet trust. A trust both provides for financial support for your pet’s life and also legally designates a person who is authorized to supervise the funds and make sure the pet is well cared for.

The Loyal Legacy Plan, underwritten by New York Life, is a life insurance plan that can help you accomplish financial goals for the care of your pet, and can help cover costs when you are gone.

Another good option is a “living trust,” which can be executed while someone is alive but incapacitated. A will goes into effect only after a person’s death.

In the Details

When you’re thinking about the possibility of someone else taking over your dog’s care, there are many details you might include to ensure your dog will be happy.

Marsha Wallace, a longtime dog rescuer and owner in Virginia, made sure her will includes detailed descriptions of many aspects of the care of her senior dog, Millie. “I had explicit instructions written out describing everything about her—favorite food, words she knows, things she doesn’t like, and so on. It said everything I could think of that a new owner would need.”

Wallace also emphasizes the importance of ensuring immediate care for the pet in the event the owner suddenly dies or is disabled. “What people often don’t think of is how to handle the dog in the immediate aftermath of a death or hospitalization. Who will take care of the dog until the dog goes to a permanent home? Fortunately, I have neighbors and friends with keys to my house who would make sure that Millie was fed and medicated while she was still in my home or taken to a friend’s home. My sister and best local friend had all this information also.”

As hard as it is to think about, planning ahead for a future without you may be one of the greatest ways to show how much you love your dog. **FD**

Arliss Paddock is the senior editor of our sister publication, the AKC Gazette. She participates in dog sports with English Cocker Spaniels, Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes, and Welsh Springer Spaniels.

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Yuki, the Singing Rescue

An infamous moment in the long relationship between dogs and presidents occurred on an April morning in 1964. While walking the White House grounds with his Beagles Him and Her in tow, President Lyndon Baines Johnson encouraged Him to bark for visitors. To do this, LBJ used Him's ears to hoist the dog up on his hind legs.

A photo of the incident appeared in *Life* magazine. The public's negative reaction was vehement. Since then, Johnson has been presidential enemy number-one to animal lovers with long memories. But hard as it may be for his doggy detractors to admit, the man seemed to be truly infatuated with dogs.

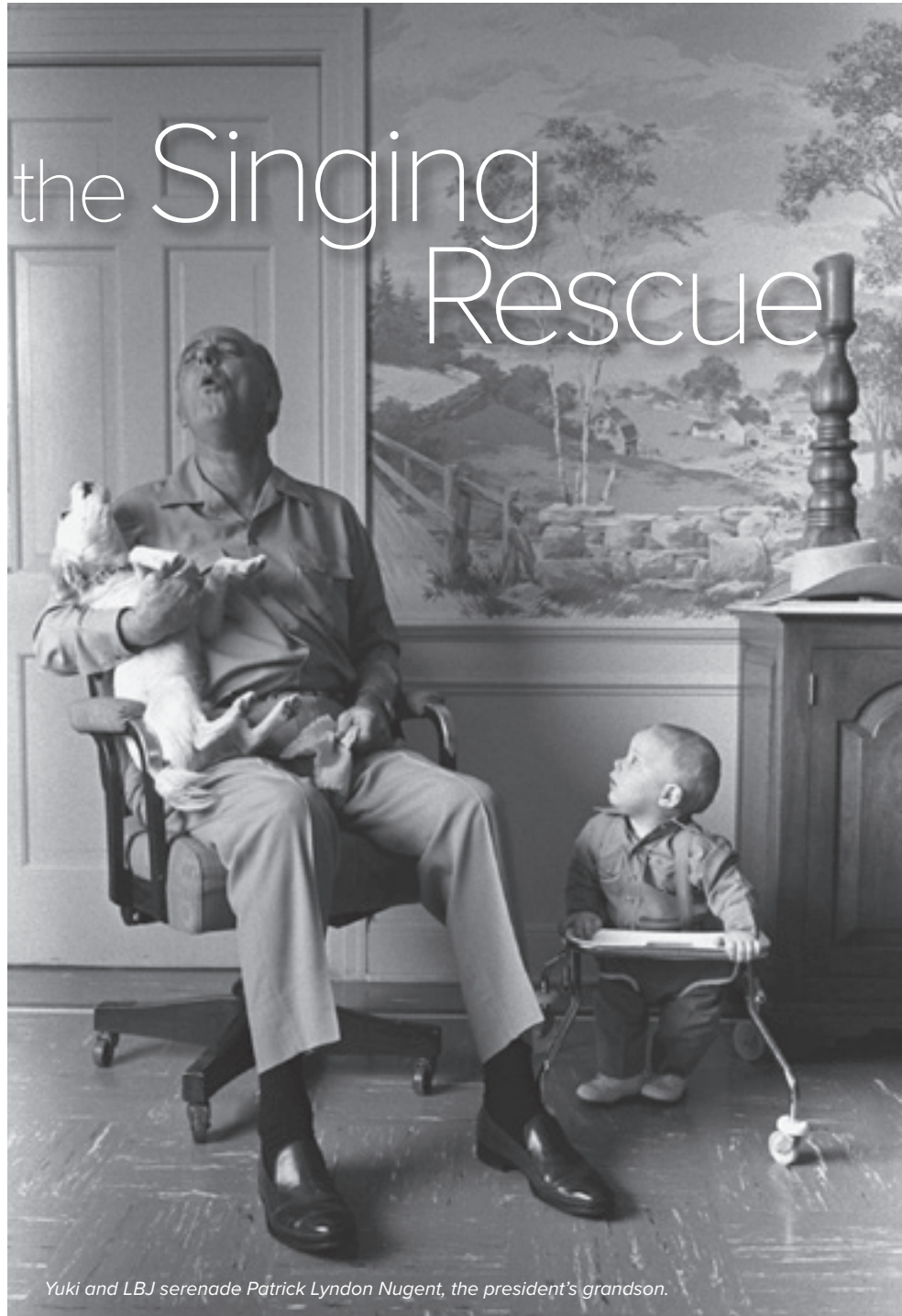
The 36th president, a Texas rancher, owned many dogs in his time. His favorite was a mixed breed named Yuki.

In the White House pressure cooker, Yuki's antics provided comic relief for the beleaguered president. LBJ was especially fond of Yuki's singing voice: The leader of the free world and his little dog would howl together at the top of their lungs.

After Johnson left the White House in 1968, Yuki—"the friendliest and the smartest and the most constant in his attention than all the dogs I've known"—retired to the LBJ Ranch with his doting master.

In his retirement the former president recorded *Dogs Have Always Been My Friends: Lyndon Johnson Reminisces*. On this truly odd but endearing album, he tells the story of how Yuki, a stray that LBJ's daughter rescued from the side of the road, came into his life:

"Luci picked him up—she has a love



Yuki and LBJ serenade Patrick Lyndon Nugent, the president's grandson.

for dogs too—and brought him to me when she came for Thanksgiving dinner. And Yuki's been here ever since. We left word that if the owner ever asked about him, to direct him here. But I'm glad the owner never missed him because I

surely would if he left me." The album's highlight is one of Yuki and LBJ's unforgettable "duets."

LBJ died in 1973. Yuki went to live with Luci Johnson Nugent and her family and lived to a ripe old age. **FD**



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Gift Guide
2023



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Fresh Start



Making sure your dog's "forever home" really is forever

Almost everyone knows someone who has a rescue dog. And it's likely that when the dog was introduced to you ("Meet my rescue dog, Lola!"), you were curious about her backstory—why was she given up?

Believe it or not, it's *not* always due to behavior problems.

Sometimes there's a big lifestyle change (like a move) and owners are no longer allowed to have a dog at their new location. A former student of mine was in the military, and a few years after he bought a puppy, he was reassigned to China and was unable to take the dog with him. He reached out to a local rescue group who happened to have an application from a family looking for just this type of dog. It was a match made in heaven, and to this day they still correspond and share pictures and stories about the dog. It's been almost three years, and they still keep in touch!

Another common reason is allergies. People can do a lot of things to overcome

an allergy to a dog, but sometimes it's an insurmountable problem, even with medical intervention for the humans.

I've also had students who adopted a dog because the previous owner sustained an injury or very serious illness. One case that stands out in my mind is an owner who was in a terrible car accident and now uses a wheelchair. Her dog was nervous to begin with, and the sound, movement, and sight of her wheelchair just sent him over the edge. Re-homing was a better option, because not only was the owner unable to support her dog through his fears, but she was still adjusting physically and emotionally to her situation. Fortunately she was able to find a perfect match with one of my students, who was an amazing dog owner *and* had the perfect living situation for the dog. The love the former owner had for her dog was immeasurable, and even though it was a great loss for *her*, she wanted *him* to have a better life than she could provide.

But as varied as adopted dogs' origin

stories might be, there are some universal tips that will ease the transition to their new homes.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

You might be surprised that the first step in the rehab process for my students is changing the words they use when talking about their dogs. Instead of negative labels like "my fearful rescue dog," I encourage introductions like, "This is my new dog, Sylvia. We're working on her confidence."

This puts a positive spin on the challenge that the dog has, while alerting the person that this dog needs some space. Of course, at that point, the owner should give instructions on how to greet (or not greet!) the dog.

Furthermore, the rescue part isn't front and center. As someone who's adopted, I appreciated that my parents introduced me as their daughter instead of their "adopted daughter." Most people are supportive, even admiring, of owners who choose to rescue, and understand

that the best dogs may come from the worst circumstances. But others hear “rescue” and assume behavioral issues or a history of abuse, which affects how they interact with the dog.

My Border Collie, Dash, came into my life when he was a year old from a friend’s rescue. My daughter brought him to me for a behavioral evaluation, and after 15 minutes, I knew he was my dog.

But I *never* introduce him to my students that way. I say, “This is my dog, Dash,” and immediately go into a demo of some trick or command, then let him *go visit*.

I prefer to introduce my dog by his name and not his history. However, if you’re proud of the rescue part, I get it. But leave out the challenge—scared, reactive, wild—and put a positive spin on it so you don’t keep reinforcing the issue in your mind. Give only the information needed to advocate for your dog: “We just adopted Sparky. He doesn’t want to be pet, but if you ignore him, he’ll smell your shoes when he’s ready!”

BACK TO BASICS

Puppy, senior, rescue, or re-home, there are a few universal challenges that come with transitioning a dog to a new home. Luckily, these are fairly straightforward to overcome.

■ Housebreaking

1. First, rule out any medical issues, such as incontinence.
2. Get food and water intake under control—monitor the quantity, quality, and timing of meals.
3. Timing is everything. Because if a dog has to go, but no one notices or is around to let him out ...

■ Stealing and Destructive Behavior

1. Management—keep your eyes on the dog or safely confine him when you can’t, and stop allowing the rehearsal of the behavior you don’t want. The more your dog is able to practice stealing and



destroying things, the better he’ll get at it. Practice makes perfect, right?

2. Pick toys that are enriching to *your* dog. I’ve had students say, “I bought my dog this toy, and he won’t even chew on it!” Some dogs tug. Some dogs fetch. Some dogs just want to disembowel their stuffed toys. Find (or make!) toys that appeal to your dog’s breed so he doesn’t start “repurposing” household objects to fulfill those instincts.

3. Mental stimulation is key—so go do things with your dog! Beyond walking the same old boring route, teach him a trick, enroll in a training class, get involved in a therapy program, and just *do* things with your dog!

■ Training-Related

Pulling on leash. Running away. Jumping up on guests. I bet you know what I’m going to suggest—*train your dog!*

Whether you buy an online course, hire a private trainer, or take a group class, give your rescue dog a chance at success by being clear about what is expected of him—and what he can expect from you.

At the same time, be realistic about your timeline. Your adopted dog’s

behavioral issues will not simply resolve now that he’s in a new home. Behavior modification takes months, sometimes years. Sometimes it’s not achievable, and instead of trying to change a behavior, you opt for a management protocol instead. Work with a trainer you trust and follow your dog’s lead.

Think about the last time you learned something new and how long it took you to become proficient in it. Give your dog that kind of grace with his learning process. You can help speed things up by being consistent, and making sure the people in your life who interact with your dog are also following your new rules.

By creating structure and a training plan that works for you (and staying optimistic about your dog’s ability to change), you’ll get the success and relationship you were looking for when your first decided to bring a new dog into your family. **FD**

Kathy Santo has trained dogs and their families for over 35 years and competed in AKC obedience and agility. She has a training school in Waldwick, New Jersey, and online courses. For more information, visit kathysantodogtraining.com.

Remarkable Rescues

What do these accomplished rescue dogs have in common? They started with the CGC.

At the American Kennel Club, we say that we're more than champion dogs—we're the dog's champion. This includes rescue dogs, who may have had a rough start in life or come to a new owner from a bad situation. For these dogs, training and socialization enable them to become wonderful family pets. Some—like Daisy, Buddy, Baker May, and Jacob—go on to dramatically change the lives of those who adopted them.

AT HIS SERVICE

The AKC's Canine Good Citizen program is often the starting point for dogs who will become service or emotional support animals. The basic skills taught for the CGC test—such as *sit*, *down*, and *come*—lay the foundation for more advanced skills to support an owner with a disability.

Before starting the Wounded Paw Project, Airman Ernesto Hernandez was serving our country in Iraq and Afghanistan for months at a time. While in Iraq, he came under concentrated indirect rocket and mortar fire. He and another soldier who used their bodies to protect soldiers in a bunker both



Lifelong Learning: Baker May models just one of the rosettes from her many AKC titles, which started with the CGC.

earned the Purple Heart, the military decoration awarded to those who were wounded or killed while serving our country.

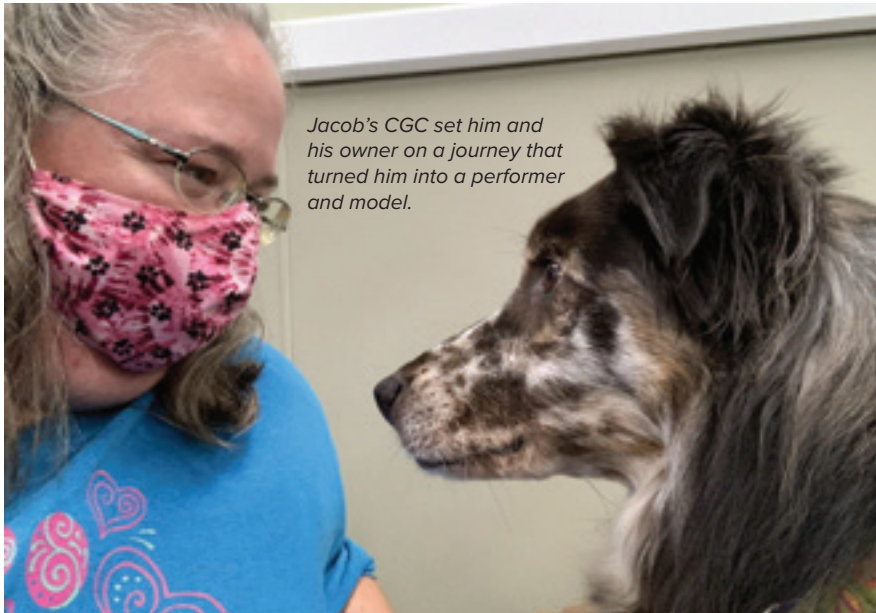
When he returned home, Hernandez was in constant pain and could not get out of bed. At the time, opioids were the treatment of choice. It was then that Daisy, the family's rescue dog, stepped in.

Daisy originally joined the family to comfort Hernandez's children when their dad was deployed—but ultimately, Daisy became Hernandez's emotional support dog. Because her owner could

not get out of bed due to shrapnel in his back, Daisy learned to pull him up with her tug toy. She stood steady to help Hernandez balance, and she sat on his lap and calmed him during episodes related to PTSD. Best of all, Daisy took away the need for opioids and alcohol. For Hernandez, the medicine provided by a loving, well-trained dog worked better than drugs. Hernandez and Daisy, CGC, are living a good life.

BEYOND THE CGC

There are countless rescue dogs who passed the CGC test and went on to



Jacob's CGC set him and his owner on a journey that turned him into a performer and model.

become world-class companions. Many owners of these “CGC overachievers” began their training journeys with CGC and eventually got hooked on training and AKC events.

Buddy, whose veterinarian thought he was a Border Collie mix, was found wandering the streets of Germantown, Ohio. The family he followed home searched for his owners for months, and when no one came forward, they advertised Buddy online. Enter Rachel Hatton, who, as they say in the rescue world, provided Buddy with a forever

home. Hatton took Buddy to an AKC event and saw Fast CAT. Before long, Buddy had a Fast CAT title. Next came Canine Good Citizen and Farm Dog Certified. Buddy passed both with flying colors and went on to pass the AKC Community Canine and Urban CGC tests. For Hatton and Buddy, training has become a lifestyle and they are currently training for scent work.

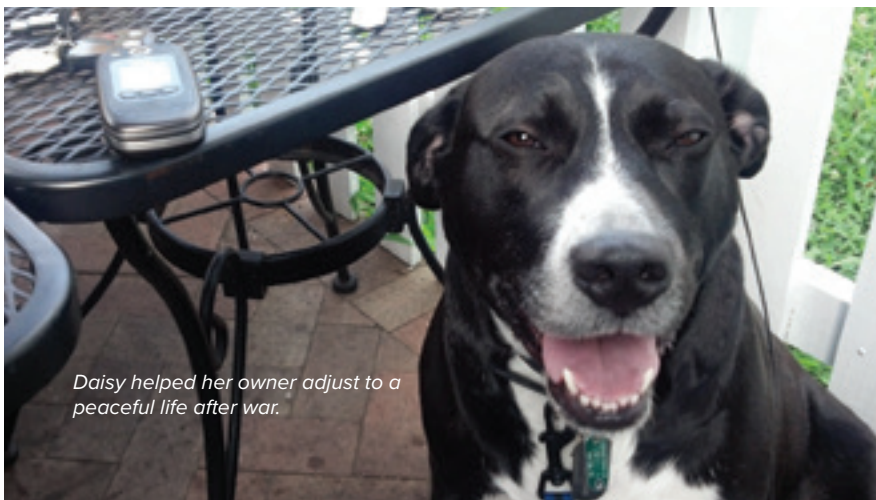
Aimee Phillips found her dog, Baker May, as a 6-week-old puppy in a shelter. The team began training together when Baker May was 4 months old, and they

never looked back. Baker May is now officially Baker May, BN, RI, FDC, CA, DCAT, CGCA, CGCU, TKE, ATT, VHMA, VSWI, FITS. Phillips and Baker May are currently working on FITG and FCAT titles. Baker May's long list of initials represents the CGC titles as well as titles in tricks, rally, coursing, Virtual Home Manners, scent work, AKC Temperament Test, Farm Dog Certified, and AKC FIT DOG.

Jacob was a shy, unsocialized, extremely fearful puppy who was being given away for free in a North Carolina flea market. A rescue volunteer took him and placed him in a loving home with Ariane Bailey. Bailey saw that Jacob was in desperate need of socialization and exposure to the world. She took him to training classes where he passed the CGC, CGCA, and CGCU, and then he went on to earn titles in agility, Barn Hunt, disc dog, rally, scent work, and tricks. For Bailey and Jacob, training also became a lifestyle. Jacob is 13 years old now, and he just earned his Rally Excellent title. Jacob's training has led him to an unexpected career as a performer. He has performed at festivals, fairs, in photoshoots, and—perhaps most memorable—an appearance with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

The AKC's Canine Good Citizen program is often a starting point in the rehabilitation of dogs who need a behavioral makeover, and with patience and persistence on the part of the dog's owner, these dogs can go far. **FD**

Mary R. Burch, Ph.D., is a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist through the Animal Behavior Society. She is the director of the AKC Family Dog program.



Daisy helped her owner adjust to a peaceful life after war.

For more information on the AKC Canine Good Citizen program, visit [akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen](https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen).



Your rescue dog is adjusting to his new life—when should you introduce a grooming routine?

Address or Decompress?

Some dogs don't get groomed before rescue to avoid introducing additional stress. These dogs often already go through a lot, such as multistate transport and spay or neuter surgery. It's tempting to clean up dogs immediately, thinking it'll make them feel better, but should you?

"With any sort of behavior, any task, I always look at how necessary is this right now," Sam Griffin, CBCC-KA, KPA-CTP, from Wise Whiskers Training, says. "I would recommend that this dog is going to live in your home for a long time, and you want to build trust by not doing anything too invasive or challenging [right away]."

IF THE ANSWER IS YES

Emily Wolf, KPA-CTP, CPDT-KA, FDM, founder of Summit Dog Rescue and co-host of "Pod to the Rescue," agrees and lists situations that require urgent grooming: severe parasites, mats with possible fetid skin underneath, and matted feces or urine scald. "I'm trying to form a bond of trust and respecting their

boundaries. I feel like most dogs do not enjoy bathing or most grooming," Wolf explains, "so in my experience, it's an overstepping of personal space of the dog."

Wolf also suggests asking your veterinarian about medications or even sedation to make any immediate grooming less stressful.

SLOW NOW, FASTER LATER

Griffin encourages new owners to ditch grooming goals, instead recommending a process of discovery about your new dog's body language, likes, dislikes, and sensitivities about touch. Learn what food rewards or toys the dog likes so that grooming tasks always get paired with something positive. The theory? Better to start slowly and build happy grooming for a lifetime versus the risk of making grooming a big drama forever by doing too much too soon.

Griffin recommends teaching your dog "The Bucket Game," created by Chirag Patel of Domesticated Manners in London, before any issues arise. Essentially, dogs learn that staring at a bucket full of treats

gives permission for grooming. When dogs look away from the bucket, that's how they ask for a break.

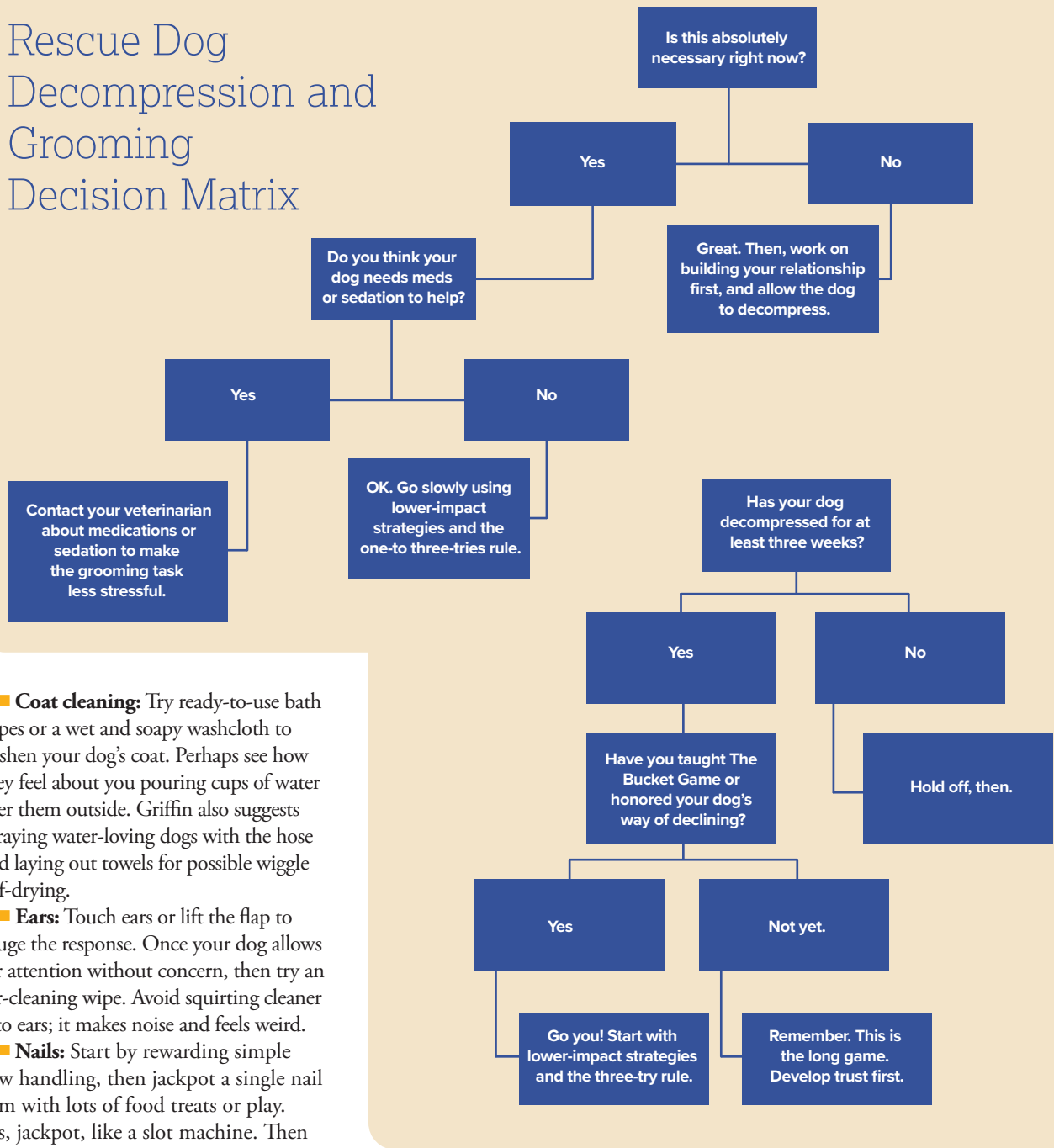
In addition, the Fear Free strategies created by Marty Becker, DVM, and team, establish a "three try" rule for dogs. After three tries, you stop and revisit later. Griffin suggests lowering that threshold to a single try for newly adopted dogs. This allows dogs to decline and to learn that you'll listen without them having to shout or act out more dramatically. Look for Fear Free Certified groomers as well.

LOWER-IMPACT STRATEGIES

Even after at least three weeks of decompression, start by rewarding your dog for seeing and approaching grooming tools. Then, hold the item in your hand while close. Next, see how your dog responds if the grooming tool touches them. Once you work through the see-and-touch process, then test lower-impact grooming strategies.

■ **Brushing:** Begin with slow, gentle sweeps with the brush down your dog's back.

Rescue Dog Decompression and Grooming Decision Matrix



■ **Coat cleaning:** Try ready-to-use bath wipes or a wet and soapy washcloth to freshen your dog’s coat. Perhaps see how they feel about you pouring cups of water over them outside. Griffin also suggests spraying water-loving dogs with the hose and laying out towels for possible wiggle self-drying.

■ **Ears:** Touch ears or lift the flap to gauge the response. Once your dog allows ear attention without concern, then try an ear-cleaning wipe. Avoid squirting cleaner into ears; it makes noise and feels weird.

■ **Nails:** Start by rewarding simple paw handling, then jackpot a single nail trim with lots of food treats or play. Yes, jackpot, like a slot machine. Then rely on latent learning over a few days, where the dog’s brain processes the payoff. Also experiment with the dog’s body position. Some dogs don’t mind you facing them. Others prefer to keep their back to you. Some love laying on their back between your legs, paws in the air for manicures.

■ **Teeth:** Talk to your veterinarian about noninvasive dental cleaning

options, such as chews or water additives, if your new dog doesn’t tolerate regular tooth brushing.

BIG PICTURE

Griffin adds, “I think, overall, what is important is that ‘just grooming’ isn’t ‘just grooming’ because every interaction you have with your dog is affecting everything

else. The more we can give them control and choice and positive experiences will impact everything else, including their relationship with you.” **FD**

Roxanne Hawn is a journalist and an award-winning dog blogger. She is the author of Heart Dog: Surviving the Loss of Your Canine Soul Mate.

Investigating the Itch

A Lab is rescued from a life of uncertainty—but a nagging health issue perplexes his new owner.



Rusty came in with Marlene the day after she adopted him. A boisterous yellow Labrador Retriever, he was a nice dog, but we later found he was plagued with problems.

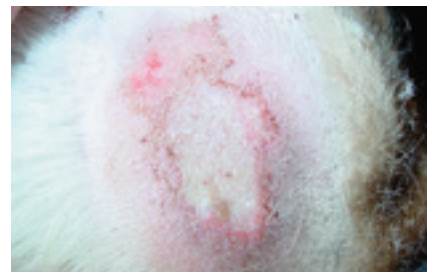
From questionable circumstances and shuffled between rescues, we really didn't know Rusty's background. I did an exam and looked forward—what to feed, necessary vaccines, and how to set the stage for good health.

But we had a problem: a hot spot on his hip.

This skin inflammation can be a one-off condition that resolves and we are done—or it can be the first indication of a long-term problem. How do we find out? We “fix” it and see if it disappears.

I trimmed the hair (see photos). This is the best way to handle a hot spot—clip it, clean it, and apply medication. I sent Rusty back to his new home and instructed Marlene to clean the area and apply ointment twice a day.

Both Rusty and his owner were back a week later. The hot spot was clearing up, but a new problem surfaced. Rusty was licking a hind foot—the skin was infected, the hair was gone, and it looked irritated.



Hair can hide the severity of a hot spot. Clipping the area makes the irritation easier to see and treat.

This was a lick granuloma, caused by tongue trauma. Two causes came to mind. One is stress. With a new home, another dog to live with, two cats, and all the changes, Rusty was definitely stressed.

The other possible cause is an underlying skin irritation. Connecting the hot spot and the lick granuloma, I started suspecting allergies.

I asked Marlene if Rusty was scratching or licking anywhere else. He was. In fact, he was now keeping them awake at night—allergies were looking to be a more likely culprit.

The key is finding out what type of allergy it is. There are three to consider: fleas, food, or environment. (See the sidebar on how I determine among the three.)

The shelter had applied flea medication on Rusty just before he was adopted. Marlene's other dog was not treated for fleas, but she had never seen one on him. Fleas were ruled out in this case.

I could have used a medication like Apoquel—if Rusty were in bad shape, I would have—but Marlene wanted to try to resolve the issue without drugs.

We went the food route.

In this case, we had no history on Rusty. We did not know what he ate before, but I suspected an inexpensive food with common ingredients. So, I wanted to avoid chicken and the common grains (wheat, corn, and rice).

I decided on a homemade food to limit ingredients—cooked pork and squash, in a 50-50 balance. At first, Marlene

BY JEFF GROGNET, DVM, BSC (AGR)

Pinning Down the Allergy

The hot spots, the scratching—telltale signs of an allergy. But what was causing it? Here are the steps to differentiate the three options.

To rule out a flea allergy, I apply a flea product that kills fleas before they bite. The response is revealed in a few days, so it is a quick and easy test.

The other two types of allergies are perplexing to pin down. Tests are poor predictors. Skin testing works in only about two-thirds of dogs with inhaled (environmental) allergies. Saliva tests, touted for food allergies, are under a lot of suspicion. Some researchers suggest results are no better than chance.

Many veterinarians will look at conventional prescription hypoallergenic diets. My experience as a holistic practitioner comes from seeing dogs where these diets have not worked—that is why I try other ways instead.

The goal is to introduce food ingredients that the dogs have never had before. I will put two ingredients together and feed that for at least a month.

If that fails, then we must consider an environmental allergy. Medication and supplements then come into play.



An inflamed lick granuloma eased after two weeks of a new diet.

wondered if this meal was balanced, but to get started, it doesn't matter. The initial diet is used in the short term to see if there is an allergic reaction, then we fine-tune it.

So Rusty went home with the prescribed elimination diet as well as ointment for the lick granuloma. I emphasized that Rusty should get no treats at all—a tiny bit of extra food could be the source of an ongoing allergy. And he wasn't allowed near the other dog's food or the cats' food.

I didn't see him, but I did have a few followup phone calls with Marlene. She said that he loved the food. He chowed down and ate every bit. His itchiness reduced over the first few days on the

new diet and the foot healed up over a month or so. Based on these improvements, we could conclude that a food allergy was the cause.

My plan over the next few months was to introduce new ingredients, one at a time, to see if his system could tolerate them. Then, we'd look at adding a vitamin and mineral supplement as well as an oil to balance the diet long-term. **FD**

Dr. Jeff Grognet is a practicing veterinarian and an award-winning author. He teaches courses for dog owners from a holistic standpoint, as well as college courses for veterinary assistants. His course and regular blog are found at newearthvet.com.

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Exodus

Twenty-five Pharaoh Hounds were in a desperate situation.

What would it take to save them? By Mara Bovsun

Her name is Soleil, French for *sun*. The 10-week-old Pharaoh Hound showed up at an AKC rally trial in New Jersey, during the summer. She looked like an ordinary pup—full of energy, sass, and curiosity—as she nestled in the arms of her owner, Lizbeth Molloy.

From her appearance, you would never guess that she had taken a journey of thousands of miles—coast to coast twice—to get here. Along the way, she was aided by dozens of people who dropped everything and spared no expense to save her life.

Some trial participants knew of

the extraordinary circumstances that brought Soleil and Molloy together.

“Is this one of *the* rescues?” a friend asked. Molloy smiled and nodded as the sleek chestnut-colored creature in her arms squirmed, chomped on her wrist, and tried to escape over her shoulder.

Craigslist Mystery

It all started in late June when Hannah Pemberton, a member of the Pharaoh Hound Club of America (PHCA) rescue committee, noticed an odd social media post. It concerned a Craigslist ad for a pair of 7-month-old Pharaoh Hound pups. These dogs are very rare, and their

breeders are a tightknit community. It was unlikely a new litter could have fallen so far under their radar.

Pemberton emailed and was told that it wasn't two pups needing homes, but six.

Without delay, Dominic Carota, who has been showing and breeding Pharaoh Hounds for 30 years, coordinated with Pemberton and then contacted the seller to learn more.

He discovered that the owner had once been involved in dog shows but a mental health crisis forced him to give it up. When it became clear the man couldn't care for his dogs, his family jumped in.

The owner's sister then revealed to



Confined to cages for the first weeks of their lives, the pups had limited contact with people. A lack of early socialization—especially for sighthounds, who tend to be aloof—could have hindered their chances of landing well.

It was the July 4th weekend. Carota, a member of the AKC Board of Directors, was in New York, about a thousand miles from the South Carolina location. But he wasted no time and jumped into his Sprinter, a van large enough for a passel of puppies, and headed south. Five other club members met him there.

The caretakers signed over the dogs, and the rescue group quickly moved to a nearby park for intake and assessment.

Now What?

The youngest pups—4 to 5 weeks old—were in horrible condition—malnourished nearly to starvation, bellies swollen with worms, and covered in their own feces.

“Had we been another week or two later, they would not have survived,” Carota says.

Club members rushed in to do whatever they could. Darci Kunard, for example, a member of the PHCA board and rescue committee, flew in from Denver. She then rented a car and drove back to Colorado, four pups in tow. Harper later traveled from California to Kunard’s home and picked up two.

Carota reached out to an old friend, Stacy Threlfall, a top professional handler who has guided Carota’s show Pharaohs to victory for a quarter of a century.

Carota that it wasn’t one litter, but three—22 pups—and the parents, one male and two females.

“We were in shock. We’ve never had more than three rescues a year,” says Theresa Harper, PHCA vice president and member of the rescue committee.

The rescue had limited funds. A strain like this could break it.

“We were all kind of terrified,” she says.

Taking Charge

“I was like, *oh my God*,” Carota told FD of his reaction during his phone conversation with the dogs’ caretaker. But he kept his cool when he spoke to the woman.

“We’re here to help you,” Carota told her. “What can we do?”

She said her family could no longer manage the dogs.



Onion was the skinniest of the pups, but all were alarmingly malnourished. It was touch and go, but with a lot of TLC, everyone survived. Even Onion, now Walter, filled out nicely and is comfortable and well-loved by his new family in Boston.

TOP: COURTESY DOMINIC CAROTA; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY STACY THRELFALL; INSET: COURTESY OWNERS



Pepper, soon to be Soleil, on the first day as volunteers sorted, cleaned, and assessed their new charges



Magnolia (Maggie) and Rosie, two of the older pups, show their appreciation to PHCA rescue volunteer Kendra Williams for fostering and giving them lessons in good manners. It paid off. Both have homes, and Maggie, now Ellie, lives with AKC Executive Director Gina M. DiNardo.

With her husband, Evan, also a leading handler, she runs a boarding kennel for show dogs in North Carolina.

Carota called her from New York before he started the trip, explained the situation, and asked if she would foster. She agreed.

Three days later, he showed up with a bunch of sick puppies. Threlfall took 12 of the young ones and two adults. Carota took the third adult—a female with severe eye problems requiring intensive daily treatment—back to New York with him.

“They were the size of Chihuahuas,” she recalls. The pups were about three pounds, less than half of what they should have weighed at that age.

Food passed through them because of worms and Giardia infections. What they didn’t throw up came out the other end in diarrhea. Their bones were clearly visible.

“Dominic would call me every morning and go, ‘OK, so how many did we lose?’” Threlfall says. Day after day she gave him the happy news that they were all holding on.

Threlfall, a second-generation dog fancier, had never dealt with so many sick pups before. But she drew on decades of experience, specifically saving runts. “You try to do everything you can,” she says.

Veterinary care had to start immediately, even though the dogs were too frail to visit a clinic. The vets told her to bring in stool samples so they could begin treating the digestive parasites. Miraculously, after weeks of medication and incremental increases in meal size, the pups started gaining weight, strength, and vitality.

Within three weeks, it looked like they would all survive.

Operation Pharaohs

Now, the PHCA had another challenge, finding suitable homes for 25 hounds. Luckily, Harper’s career skills were a perfect match for this job.

As senior director of operations for a firm that produces analytical and robotic equipment for pharmaceutical companies, she possesses tremendous

organizational abilities, detail orientation, and a knack for spreadsheets.

“That’s what I do for a living, is coordinate stuff,” she says. Harper, with the aid of the PHCA rescue committee, had to plan fundraising strategies, identify short-term fosters, find permanent homes, and arrange transport.

The PHCA turned to social media to raise funds to cover the enormous veterinary bills. For the first time, the club set up a rescue page on Facebook. With so few rescues in the past, such outreach had never been needed.

“I was stunned at how many people donated for these puppies,” says Harper. Many long-term PHCA members donated up to \$1,000 each. Other breed clubs, such as the Ibizan Hound Club of America, also sent in donations. All told, the club raised \$22,000 from individuals. Then, they received a \$23,000 AKC rescue grant.

The older pups were farmed out immediately to experienced fosters within the club. Growing up, they had little

Life With Pharaohs

It was Wednesday night, and the weekly Zoom support group for Pharaoh Hound rescue puppy owners was starting. “Ways to wear out the crazy” was the topic for the day. The pups had been in their new homes for about a month.

“The honeymoon period is over,” lamented one of the six participants. “She’s mouthy and chewing.”

The once sedate creatures were destroying their leashes *during* walks, lunging after squirrels and other dogs, barking, shredding, upending, and climbing on their owners’ heads during Zoom meetings. In other words, they were being typical young Pharaoh Hounds.

Moderators Theresa Harper, Bonnie Folz of the PHCA rescue committee, PHCA Corresponding Secretary Lynne Tatarowicz, and trainer Lizbeth Molloy, herself a rescue pup owner, commiserated, offered advice, and helped puppy people connect with Pharaoh Hound owners in their neighborhoods. “I expect for the rest of these rescues’ lives to be available to these people should they ever need help,” Harper told FD.

This is just one of the supports from the PHCA. Some others include:

- Waiving fees for PHCA membership for the first year
- Helping owners get their PAL registrations (all the pups will be spayed or neutered) so they can participate in AKC sports
- Offering guidance for behavior issues
- Helping owners find events and programs to keep their hounds engaged and active, in body and mind
- Maintaining open lines of communication through social media and online meetings, such as the private Facebook pages for owners of Pharaoh Hound rescues ([Pharaoh Hound Club of America Rescue](#)).



Pharaoh Hounds have strong streaks of goofy and crazy, amplified by off-the-charts hunting dog energy. These traits added an extra challenge in placing them.

human contact. It was imperative that they start a crash course in being a pet.

Then, the club again turned to social media, posting a plea for fosters and potential owners. PHCA recording secretary Annie Hammer created an electronic form of the application that circulated around the web. Other breed clubs pitched in to spread the word.

PHCA soon had 65 applications to foster or adopt.

“I created an Excel template where I summarized the information from those applications into one spreadsheet,” Harper says. Candidates with previous Pharaoh Hound or sighthound experience went to the top of the list. The rescue committee met weekly to review.

“We wanted to make sure they knew what they were getting into,” Harper says. Cute as they are, Pharaoh Hound puppies

are a handful. “By the time they have teeth, we just call them velociraptors.”

For a month, the rescue committee vetted homes, interviewed candidates, checked references, and worked through transportation logistics.

Boys Will Be Trainers

While the home search was underway, foster families concentrated on the important tasks of socialization and training.

The pups were no longer sick, but they had issues that could undermine placement. They were accustomed to using their crates to potty and sleeping in the mess.

These pups had not learned a basic lesson—to use separate areas to eat, sleep, play, and relieve themselves, says Threlfall. Usually, the mother teaches them. But in this case, she was malnourished and fighting for her own life, so that step was

skipped. Potty boot camp quickly fixed that problem.

The other major issue: Some of them avoided contact with people.

For this, Threlfall brought in her socialization special forces team—her sons, William, 8, and Kenneth, 9.

“That’s when the fun started,” she says.

Every day after school, the boys put down their Nintendos and played for hours with the pups. If one started to wander away from the kids, Threlfall would bring the puppy back and offer a treat for settling down.

It wasn’t long before the pups had absorbed two lessons that would make them welcome in new homes—that it’s important to be clean and that people are the greatest things on earth.

They were ready for their next chapter. Threlfall started preparing folders for



Left: Socialization Special Forces: William (seen here), along with his brother, Kenneth, are the official puppy play pals at the boarding facility run by his parents, both professional dog handlers. Their mission was to show these wild things that people are gentle and fun.

Above: At its national specialty, the PHCA recognized members of the rescue committee: Sheila Hoffman, Hannah Pemberton, Robert Newman, Darci Kunard, Bonnie Folz, Meredith Wille, Marie Henke, Alex Wood, and Theresa Harper. The PHCA also recognized the Threlfall family for their heroic fostering efforts. Many other volunteers gave generously of time, effort, money, and heart to save these dogs.

each pup with health records, a picture, and a number for identification.

That didn't sit well with William.

"They can't just be numbers, Mom," he said.

So he gave them funny names, like Onion, Garlic, Asparagus, Corn, Dragonfruit, and Kale, to send them off with a smile to their new lives.

Exercise Finished

In California, Harper was becoming attached to one pup—a girl named Pepper. She was worried about finding the "right" home until two East Coast friends saw videos of Pepper playing during training classes. Separately, they told Harper the puppy would be a good fit with one of

their friends, Lizbeth Molloy.

Coincidentally, Molloy, a professional trainer specializing in dogs with quirks and who previously owned Pharaoh Hounds, had sent in an application to foster.

A dedicated dog sport competitor, Molloy had seen a video of Pepper at a Barn Hunt class, the pup's first time going after a rat in a quarry box.

Ten days later, Molloy and Pepper, now named Soleil, were on a flight from California to New York City. Impressed by her energy and enthusiasm, Molloy decided she had to have this dog.

"She looked just like a happy little ray of sunshine," Molloy says, adding, "I can't wait to do all the things with her."

By the end of July, all the puppies—

including Onion, the skinniest and sickest one—were thriving in new homes.

Two of the adults had spots waiting for them. In many cases, PHCA arranged transport—through relays, hired drivers, or just by getting in the car and taking the dogs where they needed to go.

"This was a success," Carota says, "because dog people came together from all over the country to make this happen." **FD**

For more information or to find a Pharaoh Hound breeder, visit ph-club.org.



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A veteran Grand Champion Beagle returns to the ring to help a Junior find her way.

By Lindsey Dobruck

Sofia's Journey

Journey was a handsome show dog, owner Debra Metcalf says, but he'd much rather be in your lap.

This was on full display at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship, where Journey was invited to compete against the nation's top-ranked Beagles.

As the judge slowly strode past the lineup, examining the dogs before making his selection, handlers knelt beside their Beagles, positioning the head and tail in a perfect stack.

Journey had other plans.

"He'd just get in my lap and I had to keep pushing him back out!" Metcalf recalls, laughing.

Journey had the good looks and impressive structure to be competitive in conformation, but he didn't have that "look at me!" attitude that makes a show dog shine. "He took a little bit of skill to show him," Metcalf explains. "You had to kind of massage it out of him." He earned a Grand Championship and an early retirement.

Until, at 8 years old and far removed from his show career, Journey met a pint-sized Pee Wee handler named Sofia Eaton.

A Second Act

Unlike many young handlers in the Juniors ring, the Eaton sisters did not come from a dog show background.

Sofia's mom, Jocelyn, had been involved with Great Dane rescue for years, and



older sister Izzy took an interest in showing Danes when a friend introduced her to the sport. After watching her big sister compete, Sofia was inspired to try it, too—she just needed a dog to show.

Metcalf, who's taught handling classes for more than 40 years, knows potential when she sees it. She also knows how young handlers can get discouraged from the sport early on if they don't have a well-trained partner to compete with.

"[Journey] was a good dog, and he was somebody that she could learn with," Metcalf says. He was a kind dog, one who loved children and could tolerate the sometimes clumsy maneuvering of a Pee Wee handler.

She brought the veteran Beagle to

handling class to meet Sofia.

"From the second I saw him, he was so happy. He ran up to me and was sniffing my face," she remembers. "He was wagging his tail. He was just the most happy thing with me."

Sofia, barely the same age as her seasoned canine partner, took him through the class and felt an instant connection.

"I just knew that this was the dog I wanted to show."

Pushing Buttons

The team debuted in Pee Wee, a noncompetitive class to prepare young handlers for Junior Showmanship. "She couldn't even hardly put him on the table," Metcalf recalls. "She couldn't



Twinning: Little Sofia was the same age as her veteran show dog when they debuted in the Pee Wee ring.



Now 14, Sofia has matured into an elegant handler whose Beagles compete at group level. Here she is with Ace, who is co-owned with Metcalf.

even look over his back. I mean, she had to look at his legs!”

As Sofia advanced to Junior Showmanship and got more comfortable in the ring, so did Journey—and he started to make his opinions about this show business known.

“Everybody thought because he was so old that he was going to be this push-button dog that I would just go in there and win with all the time,” Sofia says. “But he had so much attitude that he definitely was not push-button at all. He would always keep me on my toes, and he was definitely fresh.”

But Sofia was patient with Journey, Metcalf says. She faithfully brought him to every handling class and entered every show to gain more experience—and to understand her canine teammate.

“She blew me away. She has such presence and such instinct,” Metcalf says. “She’s very kind and gentle. And she’s learned from Journey, because he wasn’t the easiest dog.”

This reluctance can be typical of the breed—some label Beagles as stubborn, but Metcalf calls them “opportunists.”

“They have to understand you, you have to understand them,” she explains. Beagles are jolly, uncomplicated companions who love their families, especially

children. “They want to be your friend; they want to be with you. They’re curious about what you do. They love to go to places with you.”

Journey, despite his sometimes curmudgeonly behavior in the ring, still exemplified that happy-go-lucky Beagle temperament.

“He always had that fun personality, even though he was so old,” Sofia says. “... If he saw a rabbit in the yard or a bird, he would definitely go and chase it. He did all the things that a Beagle should do.”

The Journey Ahead

In Junior Showmanship, young handlers are judged on their handling ability, rather than how the dog conforms to his breed standard. Large, flashy breeds may attract a judge’s attention, but for Sofia, Beagles offer a better presentation of skill.

Metcalf compares showing a Beagle to driving a manual car. “The big dogs are like an automatic. If you train them well enough, they’re going to stop and stand correctly all the time,” she explains.

“... A Beagle is like a standard. You have to get down on your knees, you have to bring the head up over their shoulders, and you have to bring that tail up.”

Learning to coax Journey into performing on days he didn’t feel like

showing helped Sofia mature into a thoughtful, problem-solving handler.


“[Journey] helped me learn how to deal with different situations in the ring,” she says.

Now, at 14, Sofia has added two Beagles to her pack—Ace, whom she co-owns with Metcalf, and Neil. The local Beagle community has embraced the young handler, and she is a regular fixture in the breed ring. Another Beagle puppy will be joining Sofia’s family soon, whom she hopes will be competitive at group level. She has even contributed to breed rescue efforts by fostering a Beagle as he transitioned to his forever home.

Journey, the veteran show dog who opened the doors of the fancy to an eager young girl, died in July of this year at the age of 14.

In a touching tribute posted to Facebook, Sofia bid a heartfelt goodbye to her first canine partner. “Journey, you have no idea how much you changed my life,” Sofia wrote. “Thank you for all the amazing memories. You will always be the dog that built me!” **FD**

Lindsey Dobruck is the senior consulting editor of AKC Family Dog. Her family lives in Los Angeles with their Lancashire Heeler, Scoop, and Pomeranian, Bubbles.



It's tempting to think that all a re-homed dog needs is love. What he really needs is patience, space, and structure.

By Sassafra Lowrey,
CPDT-KA

Learning to Exhale

A decade ago, I fell in love with an All-American Dog named Charlotte at a Brooklyn sidewalk rescue event. As a dog trainer, I knew better than to assume the quiet dog peering out from a rescue van would be calm in my home. Only after she was with me for a while did the true Charlotte emerge. She had several

behavior issues—severe anxiety and reactivity—that made her a difficult dog.

It happens over and over. A dog-owner hopeful brings home a silent, sedate creature with big, sad eyes. Days pass without a change. Then, seemingly out of the blue, the stillness is broken by the sounds of barking, shredding, shattering, and all kinds of mayhem.

This means the decompression phase—some call it the “honeymoon period”—is over. The new four-legged resident’s true colors are about to emerge.

Jennifer Smith, of Erie, Pennsylvania, learned about this when she brought home a terrier mix. At the shelter, Hazel was calm, jumped into Smith’s arms, and nestled onto her daughter’s lap.



Be Prepared: Sometimes dogs behave badly once they feel at home.

Smith was unaware that Hazel had just been spayed and was recovering from kennel cough. Physical issues made her seem like a mellow couch potato.

Weeks later, the real Hazel was tearing around the house, getting into everything, and barking at other dogs. This is the point when some people are overwhelmed and return the dog. Instead, Smith worked through some problems and learned to manage others.

Just a Phase

Decompression refers to the time it takes a dog to adapt to new surroundings.

Many dog trainers ascribe to the “rule of three” for canine decompression—three days of high stress, three weeks of starting to adapt, and three months for the dog to bond and trust you.

It isn’t an exact science, though. Some dogs leap into new surroundings and settle in with glee, but it’s rare. Others can take months to adapt. The time it takes to feel at home differs from dog to dog and is determined by temperament and life experience.

In general, though, the process takes

longer than most people think. Many believe a dog can walk through the door and fit right in. It’s important to remember that everything in your dog’s world is new and different.

“It could be weeks or months, depending on the dog,” says Ferdie Yau, MA, CPDT-KA, of Behavior Vets NYC. Yau specializes in working with rescue dogs and advises prospective dog owners to know that behavior in a shelter or kennel environment is “frequently not a good predictor of how they are going to behave in the home.”

Depending on the individual dog, Yau says it can take “up to five or six months before you really feel like they are coming out of their shell.”

Habit Forming

You may be tempted on the first day to have a party to introduce the new family member. Resist this impulse, no matter how eager friends and family are to meet and greet. It’s best to go slow to make new associations as low-key and pleasant as possible.

When bringing a rescue dog home,

whether it’s a puppy or a senior, most trainers and behavior experts recommend that dog owners establish a routine and stick to it. These routines should include consistent walking, feeding and bedtime schedules, adequate time alone, and plenty of play. To help your dog adjust to their new home, take your dog on sniff walks to explore at their own pace, and provide plenty of dog-safe chews.

Another good idea is to slowly introduce essential activities that might be stressful, such as nail clipping, brushing, and other grooming tasks. (See Good Grooming, page 22).

Get Help

If you feel overwhelmed by unexpected behavior issues or aren’t sure how to work with your dog, ask for help! No one wants to see a re-homed dog come back. Rescue groups and shelters often have training support. Use it.

Many rescue groups affiliated with national breed clubs have an extensive network of experts with decades of experience who are happy to help a needy dog. In many cases, these groups will support rescue dog owners for the dog’s life. (See page 26.)

Others are using AKC’s Canine Good Citizen-Ready (CGC-Ready) program to prepare dogs for life as a pet. In CGC-Ready, rescue-group trainers, staff, or volunteers prepare dogs to take the test. This helps to get the dog off on the right foot.

At the very least, most groups should have referrals to local trainers who utilize positive-reinforcement techniques.

As for Charlotte, we worked through her issues as they popped up, and she eventually became a Trick Dog Champion and a wonderful companion. I owe a lot to her. She made me a better trainer. **FD**

Sassafras Lowrey, CPDT-KA, is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, Trick Dog instructor, and award-winning author.



They are born saviors, but sometimes even a Newfoundland needs a buoy to get through rough waters.

By Nancy E. McCarthy

Rescuing the Rescuers

Sweet Dreams: TNP gave Peaches and Sampson a chance at a good life.

Cathy Derench, of Coventry, Connecticut, founded That Newfoundland Place (TNP), a breed-specific rescue organization in 2010. Her history with the breed began 40 years ago with the adoption of Charlie, a neglected Newf returned to his breeder. Derench was totally smitten.

“The best way to describe my love for this breed is to say Newfoundlands are my heart,” she says.

Charlie was a beloved family pet for Derench, husband Ed, and daughter

Melissa, but Derench wanted more. In 1985, she purchased a foundation female sired by Dryad’s Flagship from the esteemed Dryad Kennels line.

They established Mountainview Farm Newfoundlands to breed and show their dogs. In their show career, they created 15 champions and earned recognition on the Newfoundland Club of America’s (NCA) Breeders of Distinction list.

“I loved everything about it,” says Derench. But by 2007, when work and family commitments interfered, she ended her breeding program.

Learning Curve

Before starting That Newfoundland Place, Derench volunteered with a no-kill shelter and rescue and co-chaired the Newfoundland Club of New England’s regional rescue and referral service. A longstanding NCA member, Derench supports its charitable trust, which provides funding for national Newfoundland rescue.

“Cathy is very generous with her time, her extensive background in Newfoundlands, and financial support for NCA rescue,” says Mary L. Price,



*Left: Ed and Cathy Derench with their first Newfoundland, Charlie, 1986
Inset: Derench bred many champions during her long show career, such as Ch. Mountainview's Ashley Bearington, seen here winning a five-point major at Cape Cod Kennel Club Regional Specialty, September 1989.*

who chairs NCA's national Newfoundland Rescue Network.

"Believe it or not, breeders and rescue go together," Derench says.

Shyann Torstenson, vice president of the TNP board of directors, agrees that they are companion entities. "You can actively be a part of rescue and advocate for the dogs who have no voices themselves, while working to better the breed overall as a responsible preservation breeder."

More parallels: Responsible breeders are discerning about their puppy placements just as reputable rescue groups make careful matches for their dogs. It's about what is best for the dog for its lifetime, including being available to adopters who may just need a little extra support or advice.

"Cathy is always quick to respond to our questions and has a wealth of information that she shares. She can help with just about any situation for any animal," says Laura Ogden. She and husband Craig adopted Peaches and Sampson from TNP.

Cats and Comfort

The Derenches operate their 501(c)(3) nonprofit rescue as co-presidents on the seven-acre farm where they live.

For years, the couple worked opposite shifts so one was always home for their daughter and their dogs. Both are retired now.

Unlike many rescues, which rely on networks of fosters to house homeless pets, TNP has room for up to 20 dogs at a time. Some rescues are fostered in homes, but most live temporarily in large kennels with access to outdoor fenced areas. In cold weather, they over-night in heated indoor kennels.

After dogs decompress and become familiar with the rest of the property during leashed walks, they can explore more outdoor space unleashed. Some even use the Derench house's doggie door to say hello to the resident dogs or snooze inside.

The Derenches also take in feral cats from the Animal Welfare Society (spayed or neutered before they come to live on the farm). The kitties have a designated cat house where rescue dogs can be "cat tested." There's also an outside pond to gauge the dogs' interest in swimming.

The priority is finding the right fit.

"I want my hands on every dog we place before we place," says Derench. She

considers only adopters with completed home checks and approved applications, and often has specific applicants in mind when a new surrender comes in. They typically place 20 to 30 dogs a year.

Derench, her husband, and a volunteer team divvy up the tasks: facility and kennel maintenance, training, socialization, vet visits, grooming, home checks, transport, website, newsletter and social media management, and fundraising. Derench has contacts and regional volunteers across the United States. TNP can address reach-outs from anywhere about Newfs in need—dogs like Peaches.

On Her Feet

Before the Ogdens acquired Peaches, she spent three years confined to a crate, lost almost all muscle mass in her back legs, and was re-homed with a Michigan couple.

When they discovered Peaches would need two expensive TPLO surgeries to repair her knees, they contacted Derench for help with vet bills. TNP and the NCA Charitable Trust's Barrister Fund partnered to underwrite the costs. The Barrister Fund provides grants to prevent premature euthanasia or surrender to rescue due to financial hardship. A specialty hospital offered a generous surgical discount.



Left: Laura and Craig Ogden with Peaches (right) on Sampson's Gotcha Day, May 6, 2022. Sampson, 8, is a senior dog who was neglected. He and Peaches are living their best lives now. Right: Vivi, one of the five Newfs the author's family has lived with and loved over the years, was a TNP alumni.

Peaches' surgeries and rehab were successful, but a few months later, the couple had their own health issues.

Derench felt it would be best to find Peaches a new home. With a series of volunteers taking turns transporting each leg of the trip, Peaches arrived at TNP. The Ogdens, approved adopters, had lost their two Newfs and were looking for a new friend.

Peaches' story captured their hearts and they opened their home to her in October 2020. "Peaches Ogden was, and still is, the sweetest little girl," says Ogden.

Home Help Aid

Dogs are surrendered due to financial hardship, divorce, illness, owner death, and relocation. Like Peaches, some have unexpected medical issues owners can't afford. Or a family must choose between food on their table or for their dog.

"This is where we step in with some questions and rescue prevention ideas if the owner is truly interested in keeping their dog," says Derench. "We don't send money to people—we pay vets or groomers directly, order food for

shipment. Our methods have proven to help people keep their dogs."

Derench recently came full circle when Torstenson expressed an interest in conformation showing. Derench didn't hesitate to jump in and mentor her. They now co-own two show dogs. With Torstenson as primary handler, both have earned several AKC titles including Grand Champion, a title that didn't exist when Derench was showing her dogs.

A Grand Champion title is a tremendous accomplishment. But to Derench, the Newfoundlands she has helped are all winners in their own way. And Derench will continue her mission to champion for her special heart breed. **FD**

Nancy E. McCarthy and husband, Brian, have been owned by five Newfs to date, including their second Newfoundland, Vivi, acquired through That Newfoundland Place in 2014.

Adopting from a Rescue

The AKC Rescue Network maintains a large list of dog rescue groups with 160 breeds currently represented.

The hallmarks of a reputable rescue include:

- Providing proof that dogs are vetted, spayed, or neutered
- Being transparent about any medical or behavioral issues
- Sharing the dog's backstory, if known
- Being open to your questions and displaying genuine compassion for dogs in their care
- Providing an application and asking about you, your environment, and lifestyle
- Requiring a home check and references
- Providing an adoption contract that includes a clause to return the dog if things don't work out

To learn more about
That Newfoundland Place, visit
thatnewfoundlandplace.org.



WESTWARD HOUND!

With “forty horses, forty servants, forty guns, forty dogs, and forty of everything else,” Lord Gore left some unusual legacies in America—including four-footed ones named Speed, Lady, Possum, Fly, and Burster.

By Brian Patrick Duggan

At Rabbit Ears Pass on the Great Divide, Jim Bridger shows Gore their next hunting ground. Named for the distinctive rock formation, the pass is on U.S. Hwy 40 in Colorado.

The Hunting Party on the Continental Divide, by Jack Roberts, 1968

19TH century America was no stranger to British “pilgrims,” including Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, and Oscar Wilde. But perhaps the most extraordinary was Sir St. George Gore, who came to hunt the wilderness with his hounds—but in the highest style.

An Oxford-educated baronet with 7,000 acres in Ireland, Gore was beyond wealthy. He devoted his life to sport—shooting, fishing, and running his Scottish Deerhounds and Greyhounds.

Gore’s Greyhounds, Shade and Magician, won the Waterloo Cup respectively in 1848 and 1849. With Deerhounds, he stalked the red stag in the Scottish Highlands. Lord Saltoun observed “... he had

a great number [of Deerhounds], selected or bred with great care ...” Others had different opinions. Gore exhibited at early dog shows and in 1865 was criticized for “... a deerhound that was almost smooth, a big coarse, ugly greyhound in appearance, that of course did not take a prize.” Another peer asserted his were “very fine Deerhounds.”

Good or not, he brought them to America.

HIS DRY-LAND ARK

In 1854, 43-year-old Gore disembarked with servants, animals, and a mountain of baggage. By rail and steamboat, he journeyed to St. Louis—the jumping-off point for emigrant wagon trains.



With the Rocky Mountains in the distance, Gore's lengthy wagon train fords one of several rivers in a high Colorado valley. His custom-made parlor wagon is at the right.

Lord Gore Entering North Park, Jack Roberts, 1968

Staying at the ritzy Planters House to organize his trek, Gore kenneled hounds and horses on a convenient island in the Missouri River. A reporter disdainfully characterized his like as “... my ‘Lord Fitz Snooks’ and so many dogs and servants on route for the Plains ...”

No expense was spared for comfort. Unique was Gore's special wagon, with spring suspension that converted into a rainproof room with a crank. Living quarters were a 180-square-foot, green and white striped tent furnished with rugs and take-apart furniture. There were barrels of whiskey, brandy, and gunpowder, a small library, crates of cigars, and three milk cows. His large staff included valet, cook, gunsmith, fishing lure maker, and horse grooms. Wisely, Gore hired the famous Jim Bridger as his guide, along with a small battalion of mountain men for bodyguards.

The gear was loaded in 21 carts and six wagons. All were hauled by horses, mules, and oxen, with hounds trotting alongside: “Between forty and fifty dogs, mostly greyhounds, and staghounds, of the most beautiful breeds ...”

Bridger led Gore's party beyond the

isolated Army forts, trappers' stockades, homesteads, and river towns to lands abundant with big game. He hunted alone each day, returning at dusk with his trophies. There were constant hound-chases after hoofed game, coyote, and wolf.

The baronet spent some \$500,000 (many millions today) and traveled over 6,000 miles. On his way home in 1857, he was back in St. Louis with horses and his “40 hounds.” But during that nearly three-year journey, dogs died and dogs were born. Many of those pups were left at Army posts.

THE DOGS HE LEFT BEHIND

At least one turned up in northeast New Mexico in 1858. In charge of Fort Union's arsenal, Capt. William Rawlee Shoemaker lived with his family on post. Shoemaker had 10 Greyhounds kenneled in the commissary's corral and cared for by Cpl. Thomson, a keen hound-man from Virginia. Possum, a cross from one of Gore's, was their leader. Tall and long, he was acclaimed for speed and strength. Possum and the pack (slightly assisted by Toots, a black setter) hunted regularly for

jack rabbit, antelope, wolf, buffalo, and occasionally unwanted skunk.

Capt. Eugene F. Ware, 7th Iowa Cavalry (pen name “Ironquill”), discovered the “large number of splendid greyhounds” at Fort Kearney, Nebraska in 1864. Built to protect emigrants on the Oregon and Mormon Trails, Gore's party had camped there in 1854. Several Greyhound pups became the fort's common property with ownership assigned by the commanding officer. Ware and Capt. O'Brien were given Lady and Kearney—“beautiful animals.” Lady was jet black and the finest hunter. Bugler, a powerfully voiced scent hound, was purchased from a wagon train to join the hunts. His nose prevailed when antelope, jack rabbit, and wolf disappeared into cover (Bugler's replacement was a “Virginia stag-hound” named Bugler No. 2). Ware's pack increased with Fannie, Fly, and Nellie, a large white girl ranked as second fastest. Sadly, Nellie died after gobbling strychnine-laced wolf bait. Ware countermanded that practice and dryly wrote, “After that, the poisoning of wolves was discontinued.”

In Dakota Territory at Fort Sully, the 22nd Infantry had their own Sporting Club. Capt. Javan Irvine was posted there in 1867, bringing along his Greyhounds to combine with the post's Greyhounds, staghounds, and foxhounds. The commanding officer, Gen. David S. Stanley, was elected club president and Irvine secretary/treasurer. Their pack had offspring of cup-winners in England and Ireland, including the celebrated Waterloo Cup winner Master McGrath.

Irvine's foundation pair, Speed and Drew, were both from Gore stock. Speed's sire was an “imported, rough-haired Scotch greyhound” and his dam an English Greyhound. Speed himself could catch buffalo and wolf. Had it not been for his badly healed, broken foreleg, Speed might have been as swift as their best hounds—Harry, Sweep, and Malsie. Drew, a Greyhound, wasn't the

fastest but had powerful endurance. Notable pups from Speed and Drew's, born August 1871, were Burster, Diamond, and Louisa (Speed sired two more litters that summer). Diamond was energetic, tough, and foolish; not as fast as nervous Diamond, Louisa had better sense. Burster stood 30 inches high, "... *the largest dog* in a pack of sixty" (Irvine's emphasis). In turn, Burster sired Leo out of Gipsev. Both Burster and Leo (another big boy at 75 pounds) could handily run down either antelope or jack rabbit.

From June through September 1873, Stanley commanded elements of several regiments as escort for a railroad survey expedition into the Yellowstone country. The Sporting Club voted to send Given, Sweep, Donovan, and George along with their contingent. Newly arrived from Reconstruction duty in the South, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry would accompany the column. George and Libbie Custer had their own pack of Deerhounds and Greyhounds. Friendly rivalry between Stanley and Custer was

ARMY GREYHOUNDS AT WESTMINSTER

In 1878 at the 2nd Westminster Kennel Club Bench Show, in a class of 23 Greyhounds, Gen. Stanley had two entries—Fleet from Fort Sully and imported Pencawon of Master McGrath's line. If Custer had not been killed in 1876 at Little Bighorn, he might well have competed in that ring with his own Greyhounds against his former commanding officer.

To learn more about Gore's extraordinary expedition, see *Baronets and Buffalo: The British Sportsman in the American West 1833–1881* by John I. Merritt. For the Fort Sully Sporting Club and the Custers' hunting hounds, see my own *General Custer, Libbie Custer and Their Dogs: A Passion for Hounds from the Civil War to Little Bighorn*.

immediate. A refereed match took place but despite Custer's braggadocio, his hounds didn't win (to be fair, they'd just trekked 400 miles in 16 days and the Sully hounds *were* on home ground).

After 12 years at Fort Sully, in 1879, the companies of the 22nd would be reassigned to posts across Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Now at Fort Griffin, 50 miles from Abilene, Irvine proudly recorded that his old girl Drew, at 12 years, was still catching jack rabbits.

GORE'S LEGACY

A loner all his life, Gore died childless in Scotland in 1878. Namesake places are a permanent reminder of him—the Gore Range, Mountain, Pass, Hill, Canyon, Creek, and Lake (and I do wonder about South Dakota's Greyhound Gulch and Montana's White Hound Canyon).

However, Gore's more obscure bequest is the distributed DNA from Possum, Lady, Kearney, Fannie, Fly, Nellie, Speed, Drew, Burster, Louisa, Diamond, Leo, and so on. **FD**



Crow's Breast and Gore at Like-A-Fishhook Village in what is now North Dakota. Before the baronet finished his extended hunt, he and a few of his men (with hounds and horses) wintered in a spare earthen lodge, courtesy of Hidatsa chief Crow's Breast.

Lord Gore with Crow's Breast in Hidats, by Jack Roberts, 1968

Brian Patrick Duggan is a canine historian and the award-winning author of the newly released Horror Dogs: Man's Best Friend as Movie Monster. Well published on dog topics, Duggan's the editor for McFarland Publishers' Dogs in Our World series and the author of Saluki: The Desert Hound and the English Travelers Who Brought It to the West.

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It's the Journey: Marge and Sam as they set out to conquer the world

Marge, Red, and Me

A young woman and two shelter dogs achieve fame, fortune, and a lot of fun through the AKC Canine Partners program.

When I was 17, I decided I would like to have a pet dog.

I envisioned someone cute, fun-loving, and easygoing, and who would get along with my cat.

So on June 29, 2008, I brought a dog home from a shelter where I volunteered. She was a sweet black Labrador Retriever mix, Marge. It was one day after her first birthday. Her gift that year was a new home.

But soon, a disturbing thought started rolling through my mind.

"Perhaps I've bitten off more than I can chew."

Marge was fine with my cat, but she was terrified of my dad, growled at

my mom, hid from loud sounds, and needed a lot more help adjusting to our human world than I expected.

Born in rural Georgia, sent to animal control at merely days old, and raised in a shelter, Marge never experienced life.

I wanted to help, but I had no idea what I was doing. Reading, researching, and talking to others who had experience with undersocialized pups gave me some direction, but I needed more.

The big change came after a few months when I worked up the courage to enroll my shy rescue in basic obedience classes at the Staten Island Companion Dog Training Club in New York City.

There, Marge was surrounded by experienced dog people who knew and

respected that she didn't want to *say hi* to them. It made her feel safe.

We worked hard, but it didn't seem like work. Sits, stays. Fronts, finishes. She loved it. Marge, who used to hit the end of the leash bolting from plastic bags on walks, wanted to learn.

MIXING IT UP

We earned our Canine Good Citizen certificate on April 19, 2009. I cried tears of happiness and triumph, knowing that our hard work would be officially recorded by the AKC.

My instructors and peers urged me to move on to more advanced classes.

We were good at this!

Beginner rally and agility classes came

COURTESY AUTHOR



Marge excelled at agility, eventually earning two Master Agility Championships and competing at Westminster.

next, and I began hoping to someday enter competitions. At that time, however, there were few options for showing a mixed-breed dog.

That was about to change.

In late 2009, the American Kennel Club announced its Canine Partners program, for the first time welcoming mixed-breed dogs into AKC companion events!

With this change, the wide world of dog shows opened up to us. I initially took my scrawny shelter dog to train so she could be a well-adjusted pet. Now I could reach for so much more. I was excited.

My first time in the AKC ring was at an agility trial in April 2010 in Freehold, New Jersey. It was the inaugural weekend for the Canine Partners program. A handful of us mixed-breed competitors were there, eager to usher in this new era.

On our first run—Jumpers With Weaves—one off-course jump kept us from earning a ribbon. Still, I beamed, remembering a time when my dog would have never been able to even be in a room with so many people, sounds, and distractions.

If we never accomplished another

thing, we were already winners.

In our second run, we finished every obstacle without any errors. Our friends cheered as Marge went over the last jump for our first ribbon and a second place!

THE CHICKEN CHASER

Marge excelled in everything she did. Agility? No problem—we earned two championships. Obedience? We earned our Companion Dog Excellent (CDX) title. And rally? We competed in rally for about a decade, qualified every time we ever set foot in a ring, and ended our long career on a high note with Marge's Rally Championship (RACH). It was a few days after her 14th birthday.

Marge's love for training changed my life, calendar, and bank account forever. Soon I wanted more! I wanted another dog.

By hanging around the dog show world, I learned to look for key indicators that a dog might thrive in performance sports. That was also thanks in part to generous friends who let me compete with their own dogs, most notably Arrow, a Border Collie who played every sport with an intense enthusiasm I'd never before experienced.

I knew that Marge would not be happy with an 8-week-old puppy. My friends and I joked about how she sauntered away from youngsters and acted as if they weren't there. It would have been selfish for me to ignore her preferences.

Marge and I shared a special bond that we had nurtured for a long time. I refused to let anything jeopardize her happiness. I decided to look for another dog in rescue that fit my criteria: adolescent, medium-sized, herding-breed mix, male, likes food, likes toys.

My search led to a candidate in Avon, Connecticut, three hours away. The pup was adorable, posed in his picture hugging a teddy bear between his little front paws. His description seemed perfect.

OFF THE FARM

I threw caution to the wind and submitted a very detailed application and received a quick positive response. Rex's foster parents answered every one of my many questions. They told me how playful he was and how he craved human contact.

When we met, the rescue group allowed me to introduce Marge to him in a way I thought would stack the odds



When the RACH (Rally Champion) title was introduced in 2017, the team leaped in with their usual enthusiasm. Marge was about 14 when she earned this title.

in our favor. First, we walked. Then they played in the foster's yard. Rex was respectful of Marge's cues. He came home with us that night.

I later found out that Rex—now Red—had been owned by an older woman in Mississippi who could not provide the outlet he needed for his energy.

So this young Australian Cattle Dog mix amused himself by chasing chickens.

The neighbors were not so amused. When they threatened to take action, Red landed in a local shelter and eventually was relocated far away from the farms he frolicked on.

He was the perfect candidate for a dog sports job—eager to please, curious, and always up for adventure. It wasn't long before he began competing in rally, agility, and obedience, just like Marge.

We aimed high and achieved a lot. Successful in many endeavors, his most impressive achievements were placing two years in a row at the AKC Rally National Championship and starring in two television commercials. He truly has taken me to places beyond my fondest dreams.

Most importantly, Red's success was never at Marge's expense. Those two were best buds; one was the shy introvert and the other the life of the party.

We took many road trips together, traveling to 25-plus U.S. states for dog shows and hiking adventures. I always find a way to proudly point out that my dogs have been to more destinations than many people.

Marge passed at the age of 15 years, 2 months, in August 2022, after a life of training, traveling, and hiking. She lived

most of her life without her past affecting her, which is the biggest ribbon she ever earned. She saw me through so many formative moments in my life. I miss her dearly, and I am so grateful that the other half of my incomparable duo, her "little brother," Red, is here to help me heal.

As I turn toward finding what I've dubbed "dog three," in an unending ode to Marge, I am faced with a lot of the same questions about who will fit best here. Well-meaning people send pictures my way of dogs in need or make thinly veiled suggestions that whatever foster dog is crashing at my house for a few days should stay. However, this is a process.

I'm waiting for that special dog who would like to do the same things Red and I do—hiking, traveling, dog sports, the occasional modeling job, and bumming around as a couch potato—so

COURTESY: AUTHOR



I can provide the life that dog deserves. Red, too, needs to give his paw stamp of approval, just as Marge did for him.

I was so lucky to find two wonderful dogs, but I'm sure that all our lives would have been less exciting without the Canine Partners program. In 2008, all I wanted was to train my shy dog to be a happy family pet. In 2023, I'm now training dozens of other teams who seek to compete

in the sport of rally in my weekly classes and monthly seminars.

As an instructor, my greatest joy is seeing beginners "catch the bug," much like I did with Marge thanks to my own supportive instructors. Some of the people in my current classes were in my first rally classes a decade ago with a previous generation of dogs!

So, if you, too, are thinking perhaps



When not competing, Sam loves to travel and hike with her dogs.



Who Needs Chickens? Red's rally style—precise, bouncy, and happy—has propelled this team to the highest levels of the sport, with a second place in the Master class in the AKC Rally National Championship.

you bit off more than you could chew with a new dog, hang in there. You'll find your way. Maybe you will go beyond basic training with your diamond in the rough. Maybe you will support your local dog club or eventually teach classes. Maybe you'll travel the country, meeting like-minded people, befriending lots of dogs, and becoming engrossed in a world that seeks to promote the very best dog-owning practices.

Thank you, AKC, for giving me and my shelter pups the chance to shine. It's been quite a ride. I can't wait for what's next. **FD**

Samantha Scicchigno has been teaching rally classes at the Staten Island Companion Dog Training Club since 2013. She has competed successfully at every level of AKC Rally and has shown at the AKC Rally National Championship several times with Marge and Red.

For more information on the AKC Canine Partners program, visit akc.org/register/information/canine-partners.

Learn more about AKC Rally at akc.org/sports/rally.

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We got Artie at 2 (we think) from the Franklin County dog shelter in Ohio. Starved and neglected, he weighed just about 25 pounds, hunched up, literally skin and bones, with a crazy mustache [see inset]. It was love at first sight. He took about a year and a half to recover. When he felt better, we realized he was crazy fast! We decided to try a fun run at a local training facility, The Gated Dock, and started doing Fast CAT. With the guidance of Gated Dock trainers, he's earned his Canine Good Citizen and Fast CAT titles. In 2022, he was the AKC's second-fastest Fast CAT Poodle! He's now working on obedience and scent work titles and is training to be a therapy dog. In his free time, he likes belly rubs and snuggling with his dad.

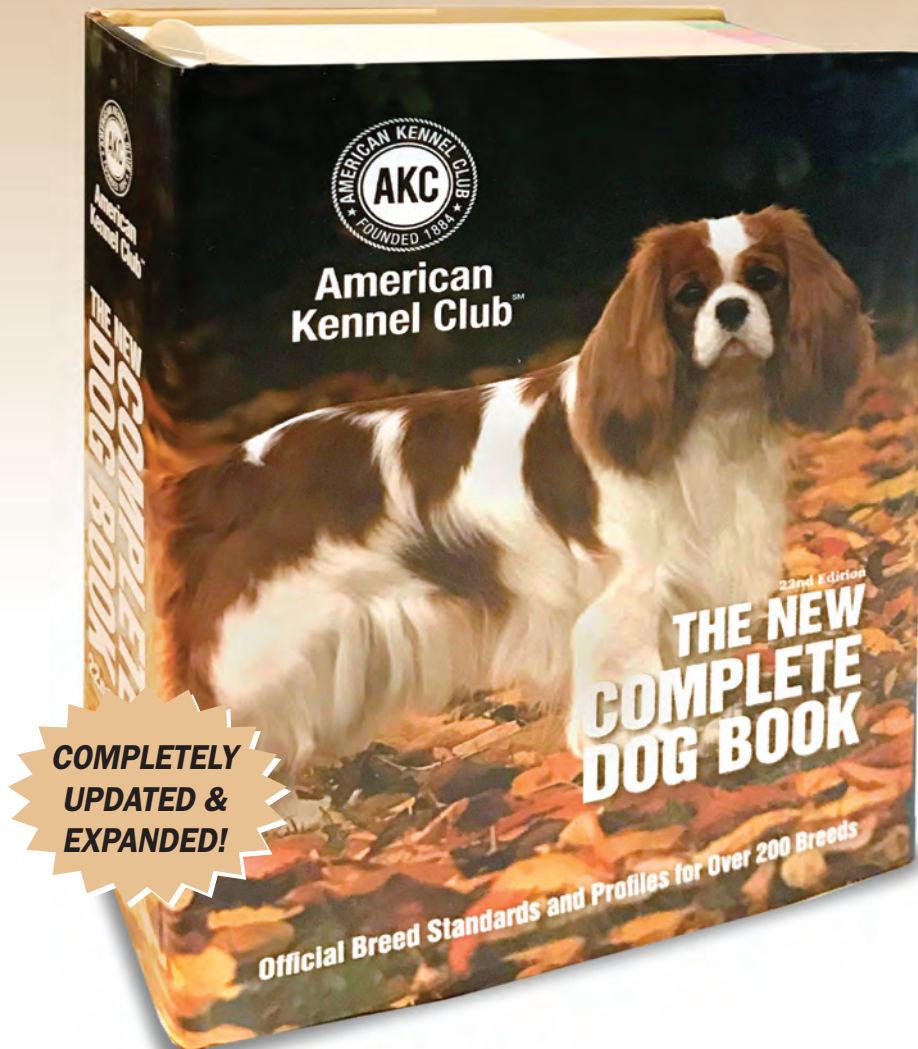


—Photographer Margo Smith talking about her rescue Poodle, Artie (Little Work of Art, FCAT3, CGC). Smith, 21, started taking pictures in honor of her first dog, Eddie, a black Poodle. Eddie entered her life when, at age 16 and after many years in the foster system, Smith was adopted by a veterinarian who had rescue Poodles. “I went through depression, high school, and entered adulthood with him. I truly think we were meant to be,” Smith says. When Eddie died, Smith realized she had few images of him. So she started taking pictures. Her company—Another Shot Photography—specializes in candid images of performance dogs. Smith herself shot this photo of her and Artie at a Fast CAT start line. She used the Camera Connect app, which allows her to remotely release the shutter from her cell phone.



MARGO SMITH/ANOTHERSHOTPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

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