

**Greyhounds Pets of America-Northern California (GPA-NC)/  
Greyhound Adoption California (GACA)  
Newsletter, Spring 2009**

**Happy Spring to our Human and Canine Friends!**

Spring is the time for new beginnings. The following greyhounds have found wonderful homes and begun their life of leisure.

\*Oliver\*, who quickly learned about comfy couches, was adopted by Elysa Lozano and Simon Shaw.

\*Gracie\* joined the Schmidt family and sister \*Cleo\*. As mom and dad run shadesofgreyca.com, Gracie can expect to be “styling” in the newest greyhound fashions.

Karen Robey has a new walking and running partner with \*Satie\*.

\*Maggie\* has discovered that the best thing about retired life is cuddling with her new mom, Julia Ulrich.

\*Granite\* was adopted by the Holtorfs and is enjoying his new home and playing with toys.

James Dewar and Lucinda English adopted \*Tia Maria\*, who hopes to someday meet her littermate, \*Jack Daniels\*, who was adopted this past October.

\*Honey Pie” is settling into retired life with Julie Western and Robert Mahoney.

Best wishes to all of our new adoptees. May your new lives bring you lots of love, exercise, toys, and treats!

**Special Thanks**

A greyt big thanks to all of our volunteers who helped make the February 21, 2009, greyhound haul a success. As you can see from the picture, it takes a group of dedicated volunteers to pull-off a transport. We thank everyone -- foster parents, dog handlers, drivers, and medical support – for working so well as a team to give the greyhounds a great start to their new life. Special thanks to Dr. Nicola Mohr, who donated medications and performed, at the transport, health checks and collected blood for testing to ensure the good conditions of our dogs.



February 21<sup>th</sup> transport (greyhounds from left to right are Gracie, Granite, Satie, Tia Maria, DLT Let's Roll, Maggie, and Gil).

### **GACA Current Events!**

The promise of spring also brings the return of our outdoor show-and-tell season. Mark your calendars as we will be looking for volunteers for the following events. What better way to enjoy the weather than by spending an hour or two telling folks how wonderful greyhounds are!

- Memorial Day at the Post Naval Graduate School, May 25, 2009, Monterey, CA.
- Dog Days of Hollister, May 30, 2009, Hollister, CA.
- Woof-to-Woof, June 6, Scotts Valley, CA
- San Juan Bautista Rib Cook-Off, June 13 and 14, San Juan Bautista, CA

Also check our website [www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com/events](http://www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com/events) for information about recurring GPA-NC/GACA events such as:

- Weekly Saturday meet and greets at the Modesto PetSmart
- 2nd Saturday of the month show & tell at a San Jose Petco
- 3rd Sunday of the month greyhound walk in Pleasanton Sports Park

Do you know of any events that would be good show & tell opportunities? Are you interested in doing a show & tell at your local pet store? If so, please let us know and we would be happy to help you get started.

## Greyhounds on Facebook

GPA National now has a page and a group on Facebook. Their page has a calendar of greyhound events and information of interest to greyhound lovers, which will be updated frequently with articles, pictures and videos, about greyhounds in the news. You can visit and become a fan at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Greyhoundpets-of-America/42303951658>

## Good Reads

*Why do Dogs Drink out of the Toilet?*, written by veterinarian Marty Becker and Gina Spadafori, answers 101 of the most perplexing questions about dog behaviors. This interesting (and humorous) paperback is written in an easy-to-understand, fun-to-read question and answer style. In answer to the question posed by the book's title, from a dog's perspective, the toilet is a wonderful porcelain fountain with fresh, cool water. From a human perspective, toilet water can be filled with residues from harmful cleaning products and other unmentionables. So, keep your the lids down and help your dog avoid temptation.

## Dental and Periodontal Disease in Greyhounds

By Nicola Mohr, DVM, Santa Cruz Veterinary Hospital

It is estimated that dental calculus and gingival disease affects 80% of the general dog population, and 100% of greyhounds, unless an owner takes active and daily measures against it. The reason for the breed's predilection towards oral disease is not completely known, but coming from a racing background appears to be a predisposing risk. There is no correlation with diet or general health, and most greyhounds have significant disease by the time they're first released for adoption at the age of 18 months. Most will have had their first dental cleaning when spayed/neutered, but if no regular dental home care is instituted, a progression toward advanced disease appears to be inevitable.



*Healthy greyhound mouth and teeth*

In the wild, carnivores use their teeth to cut and rip prey into chunks of a size that can be gulped. This involves cutting tendons, hide, muscle and bone – for which domesticated dogs are perfectly adapted to by having a set of shearing and pinching teeth. Modern dogs, however, receive small, concentrated kibble to eat, and as a result rarely use their teeth in any mechanical way. Never brushing or flossing either, it is no surprise that their beautiful teeth become encrusted with calculus and plaque in a relatively short time. Again, why greyhounds have an extraordinary tendency to develop oral disease is not known, although it is thought that diet and oral flora (resident bacteria) that develops while in a racing environment may play a role.



*Typical greyhound with marked dental plaque and gingival disease and infection*

A contributing factor to dental and periodontal disease is likely the ingredient composition of modern kibble, which is high in carbohydrate, and, if left in the mouth after eating, can lead to caries and change the acidity and make-up of the oral flora. Kibble is a relatively recent development (from the 1950's), and nutritionally a wonderful way to feed a dog. It allows dogs to eat with almost any dental disease since real chewing is no longer required. But it also means that a dog with dental problems and pain will not necessarily show this while eating, and will often eat around his painful and infected teeth. Thus, unless we look very carefully at our hound's teeth and gums, we can fail to recognize even severe disease that may result in both chronic infection and pain. Unfortunately, the outward signs of dental problems may be subtle, including, for example, slowed eating, reduced excitement at feeding time, a preference for soft foods, or bad breath. In severe cases, decreased social interaction, no longer playing with/tossing toys, snapping at people or other dogs, and generalized withdrawal from normal activities may be observed. Most of the time, though, the onset of dental disease is so gradual that he/she can compensate and outwardly appears completely normal to us. While we may think that an obvious sign would be that our friend stops eating, this is usually the last thing to happen. It would be helpful if our hounds were able to complain to us!





*Severe and chronic dental plaque and abscessed gingiva*

By the time plaque and gingival disease is usually noted, a thorough professional cleaning is the only thing that will reverse the disease. Unfortunately, this can only be done under general anesthesia. In order to fully evaluate and treat the teeth of any dog, we need to be able to inspect and chart them, and probe under the gum line on the inside and outside of the teeth. Frequently, sub-gingival pockets and disease are found that require taking intra-oral x-rays, and fractured crowns and abscessed roots are often discovered. Simply scraping off the calculus on the outside of teeth will likely miss the full extent of the disease, and may lead us to erroneously believe that we have taken care of the problem. While we all worry about anesthesia, especially when dogs reach older ages, the procedure can be done very safely today. This does mean taking precautions in the preparation and treatment. All patients undergoing anesthesia need to have a prior physical exam and lab work to assess their overall health. On the day of the dental therapy, IV fluid support and careful anesthetic monitoring is required. Only the safest anesthetic protocol should be used (the same as is used for people), and the patient should be handled very carefully – kept warm and comfortable, antibiotics and pain relievers administered as needed, and blood pressure and systemic health monitored. While this requires a lot of veterinary effort, as well as cost to the owner, it does mean that the procedure can be carried out safely. With careful and thorough therapy, a painful and infected mouth can become clean and healthy once again, and the overall health of our friend is enhanced.



*Greyhound during dental and periodontal therapy with anesthetic monitoring and support*

Following treatment, the long term dental health of our hounds can be maintained by regular home care. The cornerstone of this is daily brushing of the teeth using a veterinary toothpaste, perhaps complemented by dental diets, chews, and rinses. Daily brushing will disrupt the film of tartar that develops in 24 hours, which – if left intact - hardens into a cement-like plaque in 36 hours. While we may think that feeding dry dog food prevents dental calculus, most dogs gulp their kibble, and only specially developed veterinary dental diets can help in scraping teeth and massaging gums. But the emphasis of maintenance is daily brushing, focused on the outside (next to the cheeks) of the teeth, 30 seconds on each side and in front. Veterinary tooth pastes taste good and contain ingredients that have prolonged anti-bacterial effects that do not need to be rinsed off – making brushing easier and more fun for everyone! Give your dog a treat immediately after brushing, and before you know it, even an old dog can be taught this simple, healthy new trick.



*Please brush my teeth....*

## **Abilene, Kansas, and Life on the Greyhound Farms**

By Jim and Carolyn Shofstahl

As we've fostered greyhounds, we continue to be amazed by how easily they adapt to life "off the track", learn to adore their new humans, and embrace their new greyhound pack. We have often wondered about the lives that these greyhounds led prior to their retirements. Thanks to the help of Teddy Palmer (from whom we get most of our greyhounds), we had the opportunity to visit two greyhound farms near Abilene, Kansas. Here is what we saw and learned.

For those of you who might not know, Abilene's claim to fame is that it is the home of the Greyhound Hall of Fame, the National Greyhound Association, and the Eisenhower Presidential Library. The Greyhound Hall of Fame houses exhibits about the history of greyhound racing in America, as well as showing pictures and statistics of its noteworthy inductees of both the two-legged and four-legged varieties (you, too, can visit at [www.greyhoundhalloffame.com](http://www.greyhoundhalloffame.com)). We were surprised to learn what a family business greyhound racing is. For example, Craig Randle, who many of you know as the dedicated guy who drives the hauler 24 hours in a stretch to bring new retirees from Oklahoma to California, has an uncle (Eugene Randle, a second-generation greyhound breeder) who was inducted into the Hall of Fame after a 40-year career in the industry. Eugene owned Real Huntsman, who was one of the first three racers inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1963. We also learned that one of our GACA adopters was the granddaughter of the inventor of the artificial lure used in greyhound racing. The mechanical lure was invented by Owen Patrick Smith and first used in 1912 at a circular track in Emeryville, California. The best part of the visit to the Hall of Fame was meeting TalentedMrRipley and his friend Jada, who serve as the site's greyhound ambassadors in residence. Ripley lived up to his name by winning, in one year, all of the major greyhound races and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2008. So, it's certainly appropriate that Ripley rules the place from his raised pad (with built-in toy box, of course) in the entry hall and, like all other greyhounds, enjoys the attention that he receives during visits from his adoring public. Jada had just joined the Hall of Fame a few days before we visited and Ripley wasn't too sure about her at that point. She had been retired from the Woodland Park track in Kansas and replaced Ripley's prior companions who had passed away due to old age. The Spring 2009 issue of Celebrating Greyhounds magazine has a story about Ripley and Jada.

Abilene also has many greyhound farms, one of which is operated by David Strong, a second-generation greyhound farm owner. We meet David's father at Abilene Greyhound Park while he was training his dogs. The Strong farm has over 120 greyhounds, 60 of which are currently in the schooling phase of their career. These dogs are taken twice a week to the Abilene Greyhound Park for schooling races, where they run 5/16 mile in 31–33 seconds. At Abilene Greyhound Park the schooling races are run early in the morning, sometimes as early as 2AM in the summer months to avoid the heat later in the day; this, in part, may explain why your greyhounds are early risers. While in school, the dogs live in an environment that duplicates the conditions of the kennels that they will move to when they begin their racing careers (i.e., standard, double stacked kennels). These dogs are "turned-out" for exercise and bathroom breaks several times a day. The younger (3–15 months of age) dogs at the Strong farm are separated from the dogs in school and kept in smaller buildings, separate from the main kennel area, with inside shelter and free access to fenced, 350-foot-long runs (this

explains why some of our fosters learn the dog door so quickly). David told us that the young dogs often love to run and play outside during the rain — so if your greyhound gets excited after a bath, it may just be something they picked up as a puppy. As they grow, the younger dogs will be moved to the main kennel area as space becomes available as older dogs are sent to the track or “petted-out” (i.e., adopted). We also had the opportunity to meet five, 7-week-old puppies from an “oops litter”. Another owner had placed one of his females at David’s kennel and, after about 1 month, it was noticed that she was pregnant. While the owner of the female didn’t want the puppies (they can’t be registered if the father is unknown), David is keeping them (and mom) until they are old enough to be placed with an adoption group in Kansas City.

We also visited the small farm of Bob and Marena Riggins, which was a short drive from Abilene. The Riggins have been in the industry for over 35 years and have 20 dogs, mostly brood bitches, in Kansas. They also have a more active farm in West Virginia close to Wheeling Downs where most of their dogs run. The environment of the brood bitches was a bit different than that of the Strong farm. Each girl has her own kennel space, which connects to a private, outside dog run. These runs are designed so that puppies can stay with their mothers after birth. Teddy’s kennel in Tulsa follows a similar design to the Riggins’ Kennel.

While the set-ups of the two farms that we visited were different, they shared some common elements. First, the dog areas were kept very clean – no unpleasant smells of urine or feces. At both farms, the owners were very concerned with the welfare of their dogs, which all appeared to be in good condition. Both owners were happy to meet with people who helped retired racers find new homes. And, at both farms, the greyhounds were happy to see humans. As we walked through the brood building of the Riggins farm, each girl would jump up so that we could pet them. At the Strong farm, we had more dogs jumping up on us or wanting to lick our faces than we have ever encountered before. Only one dog showed any signs of hesitance towards us – and even she came to visit when her kennel mates showed interest in us. While many people say that greyhounds are abused at the farms, we can strongly state that we saw no mistreated greyhounds – living a working life, yes; being abused, no. While we visited only two farms, we also noticed a dozen other farms in the Abilene area and it could easily be seen from the road that the dogs on these farms were in good condition, too.

### **Stay Tuned...**

Several of you have recently e-mailed us with your favorite places to go with your greyhound. We will be sharing some of this information that we have received in the next newsletter. If you have a special park, dog-friendly restaurant, or store that you like to visit with your greyhound, please e-mail us at [2greys@mindspring.com](mailto:2greys@mindspring.com) so that we can include it in our next newsletter.