

Greyhounds Pets of America-Northern California (GPA-NC)/ Greyhound Adoption California (GACA) Newsletter, Summer 2008

Happy Endings!

It's been a busy few months for us at GACA! We are happy to announce the remaining dogs from the May 10, 2008 haul from Oklahoma have been adopted. These are:

Josh, who was adopted by Devin Weiss.

Piper and *Combat Cutie* found a home together with the Harris family.

Moving right along to the next item of business, a very dedicated group of volunteers woke early on Saturday, June 21, to meet a greyhound transport bringing six GACA greyhounds (and over a dozen more to be rehomed through other California adoption groups). Our sincere thanks to these dedicated early risers: Terry Barnhill, the Cores, the Rodgers, the Schmidt family, Kathy Vasquez, and the Shofstahls. Our driver (Craig Randall from the NGA) is the second person from the right in the photo.



The greyhounds from this transport that have already found forever homes are:

Riley, adopted by the Rodgers family and joins his four-legged siblings, Brandon and Jenny.

Dakota found a home with Eric Johns and Casey Jones.

Bing was adopted by Kelly Holt.

Rodeo Joni was adopted by Kelly and Jac Stone.

After several months, *Mondo* succeeded in convincing his foster family that they were the right match for him and reports that he loves his life with greyhound sister *Zena* and Yvonne and Kevin Oberman.

Pet Assisted Therapy Service

Placement Reps and frequent meet-and-greet participants Sherrlyn and Tom Lancaster have found a new and rewarding way to spend time with their greyhounds - by volunteering with Furry Friends Pet Assisted Therapy Service. Furry Friends (<http://www.furryfriends.org>) is an all-volunteer organization devoted to bringing the healing power of animals to those less fortunate in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

After completing the mandatory orientation class, Sherrlyn and Tom had the opportunity to select a team who meets at a convenient time for a once-a-month visit to a specific care facility (nursing homes, facilities for disabled or seriously ill children, hospital rehabilitation wards, the Children's Shelter, psychiatric facilities, etc). Their hounds, Holly and Gromit, like all others involved in the program, were first evaluated by a veterinarian to ensure that their health and temperament was suitable for this type of work.

"It's bringing a ray of sunshine into these people's lives!" says Sherrlyn enthusiastically. "You just walk up and ask them 'Would you like to pet my dog?'" Greyhounds, she reports, make for very easy conversation starters, as every one has a story to share; whether it is about their former careers or their funny antics. "It makes me feel good to see the smiles and know they are happy to see you. There's always at least one patient at every visit who just grabs your heart."

In addition to the benefit she is bringing to others, Sherrlyn reports it is a wonderful way to socialize her pets with other well behaved dogs. Because one of the requirements for therapy pets is they must get along well with all other types of animals, there is no acting out such as one often sees at the dog park!

Hookworm (ewww) – perhaps more of a concern than you thought...

Meet "Streak"...Streak is a retired greyhound. Lucky boy lives in California and goes for a run every weekend on the beach. When his owners can't take him to the coast, he enjoys a nice romp with his canine friends at the dog park. But one day Streak just doesn't feel like running around much; he gets tired quickly and would rather just lie in the shade – or on his pillow at home. His owners notice he has developed diarrhea and when both conditions don't clear up in a few days, Streak finds himself at the vet. The vet notices his gums are paler than usual, and knowing Streak's active habits, she tests a fecal sample; sure enough...Streak has hookworms! She prescribes an oral dewormer and before long, Streak is feeling like himself again.

Now Streak may be a fictitious hound, but it is important to understand that hookworm infestations are not uncommon. They are easily treated, but if allowed to continue unchecked can result in canine death. Additionally, hookworms can be transmitted to people, albeit with less serious consequences.

Here are some important things to know regarding hookworm and your adult dog:

What are hookworms? Hookworms are parasites that reside in the small intestine of dogs and feed on the animal's blood.

How do dogs contract hookworm? Unlike puppies, who can be born with a hookworm infection, an adult dog contracts hookworms by ingesting larvae through contaminated water, soil, or by eating another infected animal. Additionally, larvae can also penetrate the skin from contact with infected sand or soil. *This is especially common in areas such as beaches, sandboxes and dog parks* where dogs walk or lay on soil where infected dogs have previously defecated.

What are the signs of hookworm infestation? Any or all of the following: diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, vomiting, poor or no appetite, pale mucous membranes in the mouth, weakness, loss of weight.

How can one control hookworm infection? Prompt removal and proper disposal of feces is key; especially in yards, public parks, and beaches. Good hygiene, for example, washing hands and other skin exposed to feces immediately with soap and water, will go a long way towards stopping potential spread to people. Many products made to control heartworm also control hookworm. Read the package closely! If your heartworm treatment is not one of these talk to your vet to see if switching to another type makes sense for your hound.

For more information on hookworm and how it is spread please see this informative website:

<http://bakerinstitute.vet.cornell.edu/cahrc/Hookworm.htm>

Thoughts on Fostering

by Rachel Mittler, current foster parent to Sol Major

When they hear I have another foster dog, people often ask why I do it. Why take in a big dog who is not house trained to mess on your carpet and snack on your furniture? I find myself starting with answers like: someone did it for me with my first dog, I feel this is how I can repay that debt. Or: I really like the experience of taking a scared, confused hound and watching it discover life is fun and it's good to be loved. The questioners seem convinced fostering is a Herculean task, but when you get right down to it, I've not had a foster dog that can come up more bizarre things to present to me than my own pets. Need an example? Here's a good one:

This year on my birthday I arrive home with exactly 20 minutes before my sister is due to meet me for a small celebration. Thinking I have just enough time to walk Hero, I catch the happy dancing dog, get a leash on her and off we go to the park. About half way through the walk, Hero lays down in the shade and presents her belly to be rubbed. Here I notice Hero's pink tummy is sprinkled with brown spots – each about the size of a dime. VERY unusual. Taking a closer look, I realize my blue dog has brown spots all over her sides as well. I poke at one of the chunkier looking patches. My finger comes away with a brown smudge. With great trepidation, I sniff.

Chocolate. Oh Hero!

There are many things going through my head at this point. Concern for Hero's health is not one of them. A previous counter-surfing escapade involving chocolate chip cookies taught me a 65 lb greyhound has to eat an enormous quantity of chocolate to suffer harm from the doggie toxin it contains. I knew there wasn't that much of the stuff in the house. But what on earth must the inside of my home look like? And how fast can I clean it up and bathe a dog too?

Now do you see what I mean about the foster thing? With a baby gate to keep them away from the good furniture and a bottle of Nature's Miracle to deal with accidents, you have 90% of every potential foster crisis under control. A foster dog would never swipe a small container of shaved chocolate from the back of the counter, dump it on the carpet then lay on it until their body heat created chocolate polka-dots; they are far too busy letting themselves in and out of the dog door 50 times a day...because it's fun and they can. The foster dog didn't jump out of the Jeep in an all-fired hurry and scalp himself; that was my dog that required a Christmas day trip to the emergency vet. The foster was the one sleeping in the woodbin because it reminded her of a crate. It was a foster dog (several, really) whom I stood behind and moved their paws from one step to the next, teaching them how to navigate a flight of stairs. My boy ripped a nail out doing spins on the landing. (Yes, it bled profusely.) Ok, so one foster got himself stuck under the bed, but at least he had the good sense to lie there looking foolish and wait for help. Heaven knows what a dog that wasn't adjusting to everything new would have done!

My point? Simply this: Fostering is no more of a tremendous undertaking than owning your own critter. It has a slightly different set of challenges and rewards, but armed with patience, good humor and a few key supplies, it's utterly do-able and altogether heartwarming. E-mail Carolyn

jshofstahl@mindspring.com if you're interested in trying it in the fall. E-mail me if you need to know how to get stains out of carpet!

Good Reads

Here's a good one for your library! You've always been told that greyhounds have some unique medical needs and now there's a new book that addresses the issues. Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound, by Linda L. Blythe, James R. Gannon, A. Morrie Craig, and Desmond P. Fegan (American Greyhound Council, 2007), presents an overview of medical problems seen in Greyhounds so that vets and adopters can provide their animals with the best possible care. While this book is written from a medical point of view and is very technical in nature, it contains a lot of good information that can be shared with your vet. For information about how to purchase this book, you can contact the National Greyhound Association via their website at www.ngagreyhounds.com, call them at 785-263-4660, or write to NGA, POB 543, Abilene, KS 67410. Cost of a softbound copy is \$40 and \$7 for shipping.

Greyhounds Make Great Pets Forum

Last year, GPA National created a web-based [forum](http://greyhoundsmakegreatpets.com) where adopters can share information regarding greyhounds. If you want to know about how others deal with such things as medical issues, training and behavior, hound welfare, food and diet issues, events, and transports, please visit <http://greyhoundsmakegreatpets.com>. GPA chapters, including ours, have their own sections in the forum where they can share chapter-specific information, such as people needing dog sitters. While the forum is open to all, in order to use the forum, you will need register. A password is required to use the GPA – Northern California section of the forum; please e-mail 2greys@mindspring.com if you would like to have access to this section.

Annual Picnic

Saturday, October 18, 2008 is the date for the next Greyhound Adoption California Picnic. It will again be held at Amador Valley Community Park, Pleasanton, California, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. We will serve the typical picnic food – hot dogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers with the fixings. Come and visit with friends, participate in the silent auction, and compete with your pet in the “best trick” contest. Cost will be \$10 per person or \$25 per family. Hope to see you there. Please contact us at 2greys@mindspring.com if you are interested in volunteering to help with the picnic or if you'd like to donate an item for the silent auction. More information about the picnic will be coming in the next few weeks.

Events

- Check our events page (<http://www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com/events.html>) for information about recurring GPA-NC/GACA events such as the weekly Saturday meet and greets at the Modesto PetSmart, the 2nd Saturday of the month show & tell at a San Jose Petco, and the 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.

Fundraisers

- Greyhound Adoption California is now set up to collect donations through our website (www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com) via PayPal. At the click of a computer mouse, your contribution can help pay for medical needs and re-homing costs of retired racers. If you are considering donating to us, we would like to thank you in advance.

- Once again the Greyhound Project has published the Celebrating Greyhounds calendar as a way of providing a fundraising product to adoption groups. The calendars feature adopted greyhounds from around the world. If you would like to reserve a copy to make sure you get one, please contact us at 2greys@mindsping.com by August 31, 2008. At the moment we don't have any information about the cost but we should have that in the very near future. To see a picture of last year's calendar, visit <http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org/treats/books-per-cgcal.html>.