

Greyhounds Pets of America-Northern California (GPA-NC)/ Greyhound Adoption California (GACA) Newsletter, Summer 2010

Starting the Summer — Greyhound Style

Memorial Day has always been considered to be the start of the summer vacation season. Our greyhounds (and their humans) honored our veterans and celebrated the start of summer by participating in a show and tell at the Naval Postgraduate School's Concert on the Lawn in Monterey. We thank the following volunteers for helping with this event.

Dr. Elisa Dowd with Doug, Margie, and *Zula*

Rose and Mike Epting with *Finnian*

Kathleen Farrell and *Sugar*

Kevin and Yvonne Oberman with *Mondo* and *Zena*

Carol and Greg O'Neal with *Rogue* and *Kiowa*

Peggy Richardson with *Phoenix* and *Juno*

Jill and Stephanie Schmidt with *Cleo*

Special thanks to the O'Neals and the Schmidts for the organization and set-up of this event.



*Go Navy! Kiowa and Cleo greet fans at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.
Pictures courtesy of Carol O'Neal.*

Summer Adoptions

The hot weather and lazy days of summer are the perfect time to start retired life. Here are the members of the newest group of greyhounds to begin lives of leisure.

Sister *Sophie* is happy to have *Grace* become a member of the Baca family and has shown great talent for opening just about anything with her needle-nose.



*Grace (left) and Sophie (right) share a treat.
Picture courtesy of Kay Baca.*

John and Deborah Muth welcomed *Rory* into their home.

Leo joined the Davis family and will be a companion to sister *Piper*.

Cool-paw *Luke* was adopted by Rob Hardeman and Karen O'Rourke. Can you guess the name of their favorite movie?

Channel was adopted by Richard Lorenzo and has become a member of a very large circle of family and friends.

Cobh was adopted by Kelley MacNally and her son Jonah. Named after an Irish seaport, Cobh, no doubt, can look forward to lots of new adventures with her new family.

Jim and Tanya Killin welcomed *Gracie* into their home.

Best wishes to all of our new adoptees and their families. May you cherish and nurture that special bond between humans and hounds.

GACA Events

- **Bark in the Park 2010**, Saturday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the William Street Park, San Jose, CA (William and South 16th Streets). For more information, see <http://173.201.173.90/>.

Please check our website (www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com/events) for upcoming and recurring events, including:

- 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.

Sunscreen for Hounds? You Bet!

Some greyhounds just adore basking in the sun and will spend hours sunbathing if you let them. Although very cute, this can be too much of a good thing as they are susceptible to burning, just as humans are. In the summer, if you know your hound is going to be in the sun, remember to use sunscreen on your hound's belly, bare bottom, ears tips, and nose. As with humans, avoid getting sunscreen in your grey's eyes. Sunscreen made for infants and children works great!

Bridget Jones' Diary

Bridget Jones was adopted in May 2010. We are excited to report on her summer adventures.



Dear Diary,

Bridget Jones here! Weight 60 lbs., cigarettes 0. As you can see, my body is fit and fabulous so I decided to take a trip to the beach to show it off in the surf! Hurrah. (Hope Mark Darcy gets a look at this photo.)



Here I am at Stinson Beach with my little pal Toby. He makes things with sand, pets me nicely, and smells really interesting.....I just adore him!



Here is a tip for all you other single gals out there: spend time next to fluffy girlfriends, like Ilsa here...by comparison, you will look quite thin. That's all for now - ta ta!

Why Does My Dog Eat Grass?

I look forward to the warm days of summer – enjoying long walks and chatting with neighbors who are often outside. My greyhounds always look forward to the extra attention provided by meeting friends and patiently wait on the cool, green lawns while we finish conversations. Inevitably, when people stop paying attention to them, my greyhounds start grazing. Yes, I do mean eating grass with the voracity of a Holstein cow (who, by the way, can eat 40 pounds of food per day). The conversation quickly turns to speculation about whether my greyhounds have upset stomachs and if, perhaps, grass has some therapeutic or nutritional value.

“Why do dogs eat grass?” was a question that intrigued veterinarians Kelly Cliff, Benjamin Hart, and Karen Sueda of the University of California at Davis. They conducted a Web-based survey in which they collected almost 1600 responses from owners of plant-eating dogs.¹ Their findings showed that almost 70% of dogs ate plants on a weekly basis, only 8% of these dogs frequently showed signs of illness before plant eating, and 20% of dogs regularly vomited after eating plants. The vets found no correlation between type of diet and the tendency of a dog to eat grass. It was concluded that grass eating is a common behavior in normal dogs, grass eating is unrelated to illness, and that dogs do not regularly vomit after eating grass (although, vomiting may be incidental to plant eating).



So, it would seem that your greyhound’s “salad bar” stop is completely normal behavior — perhaps a trait inherited from the dog’s wild ancestor the wolf, who used grass eating to help purge parasites. Unless there is a big change in your greyhound’s grass eating behavior (in which case you should consult your vet), don’t worry about your dog’s grass grazing. Just make sure to keep him away from pesticide-treated lawns.

¹ Information obtained from *HealthyPet® Magazine*, Spring 2010, published by Zoasis Corp., Huntington Beach, CA.

Aging Gracefully

As our organization is nearing a decade of greyhound adoptions, many of our earliest adopters are finding themselves dealing with the care of aging greyhounds. As with humans, aging brings physical changes in a greyhound’s body. Because of improvements in nutrition, medical care, and protection from accidental death, greyhounds (and other dogs) are living longer. This means that they are prone to age-related degenerative changes in their hearts, skeletal muscles and bones, eyes and vision, ears and hearing, kidneys, and brains. When detected early, some of these changes can be resolved or, at least, managed. Thus, the goal of this article is to provide an overview of age-related issues so that you can recognize the early signs of problems and seek the advice of your veterinarian and keep your greyhound in good health.

How old is my greyhound?

While there are several different methods to calculate a dog's "human-equivalent" age, veterinarians agree that such calculations need to consider the fact that the life expectancy of smaller dogs is greater than that of larger dogs. Care of the Racing & Retired Greyhound² and an online age calculator³ suggest the use of the following scale for greyhounds:

Greyhound Age in Years	Age in "Human Years"
1	14
2	22
3	29
4	34
5	40
6	45
7	50
8	55
9	61
10	66
11	72
12	77
13	82
14	88
15	93
16	99



Casper at 5 years of age (human equivalent age of 40).



*Casper at 13 (human equivalent age of 82).
Yes, dogs get grey, too.*

What are some signs of age-related health problems?

Indicators of age-related changes are listed below. If you notice any of the following changes, please consult your vet.²

- Increased thirst
- Increase urination
- Altered appetite
- Noticeable weight loss or gain
- Changes in hair coat, skin or new lumps or bumps
- Itching
- Bad breath and red or swollen gums
- Difficulty in climbing stairs
- Difficulty in rising from a down position
- Tremors or shaking
- Exercise intolerance (i.e. your greyhound tires easily)
- Increased stiffness or limping
- Behavior changes with less responsiveness and interaction with family members
- Loss of housetraining
- Changes in sleeping patterns

Do senior greyhounds have special nutritional needs?

As your dog ages, his metabolic rate slows. For this reason, senior dogs require lower calorie diets than do younger dogs. Failure to modify a senior's diet can result in obesity, which, in turn, can cause other health issues. Fortunately, many manufacturers offer senior dog food formulations, which are lower in calories than other food formulations and are appropriate for older pets. Many pets enjoy low-calorie and vitamin-rich treats such as carrots and apples. And, the extra fiber provided by these treats can be beneficial for those seniors suffering from constipation (some greyhounds, like humans, benefit from higher-fiber diets). Older greyhounds with specific health conditions (e.g. diabetes, kidney failure, or liver disease) may require special veterinary diets.

Dog foods for seniors are often fortified with vitamins and supplements. For example, glucosamine and chondroitin are often used because they are touted to be beneficial in the relief of arthritis-related pain. However, there are conflicting study results as to whether these supplements are actually beneficial. A recent study in humans called the Glucosamine/Chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial⁴ concluded that, for arthritic participants in the test group with mild pain, glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate when used alone or together did not provide statistically significant pain relief. In contrast, participants in the test group with moderate-to-severe pain showed some statistically significant pain relief. However, the results showing that Glucosamine and Chondroitin were beneficial are questionable because of the small number of participants with moderate-to-severe pain. Of less controversy is the idea that Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil have value in the treatment of canine inflammatory diseases and are important in maintaining a healthy heart, skin and hair coat, and joints.

Often, older dogs suffer from lack of appetite. When your dog won't eat, ask your vet to check for underlying health problems such as dental disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or cancer. If your greyhound is found to be in generally good health but loses interest in dry food, try adding chicken broth or a small amount of canned food to supplement his meal and give it a more appealing taste. If you are inclined to cook for your dog, home-cooked meals (e.g. rice and lamb) can be very tasty. You might also want to try to divide his food into two to four smaller portions to be fed over the course of the day.

And, make sure to give your senior greyhound plenty of fresh water, as his body's ability to maintain water balance is decreased as he ages.

What about exercise for geriatric greyhounds?

As with humans, the old saying "use it, or lose it" rings true. Exercise is key for maintaining a greyhound's physical and mental health. Exercise benefits the heart, lungs, and joints and helps fight obesity. Compared with younger dogs, you may need to adjust the type and duration of your geriatric greyhound's exercise. For example, the pace of her daily walk may need to be reduced. And, if long walks are too much for her, two or three shorter walks during the day might be a better exercise option. Also, make sure the time of day chosen for her exercise is appropriate. For example, walks in the early morning or late evening are recommended during the heat of the summer. In the winter, afternoon walks may be most comfortable for your greyhound. If arthritis is making exercise less comfortable for your greyhound, non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs such as Rimadyl® and Deramaxx® can help provide pain relief. Please avoid giving your greyhounds human drugs such as ibuprofen, which can be harmful to them (ibuprofen can cause ulcers in some dogs).

At what frequency should I expect to visit my vet with my senior dog?

Dr. Nicola Mohr of Santa Cruz Veterinary Hospital recommends that every senior dog (greater than 7 years of age) should have an annual exam and screening lab work. At over 11 years of age, she recommends that level of screening every 6 months — just to catch any health changes early, when intervention may be as simple as changing the diet.

Words of wisdom from Dr. Nicola Mohr

"From my perspective, the most important things to consider are daily activity level (if it decreases, that's not good), food and water intake changes, and overall attitude. 'He's just slowing down' often isn't so benign, and not necessarily a sign of simply old age, but perhaps arthritis-related pain or nausea due to kidney weakness. I always encourage people to bring their loved ones in when that happens, and sometimes completely surprising findings are made..."

Best advice

Every greyhound is an individual. Each greyhound ages differently and will tolerate a different level of exercise. Be observant in assessing your particular dog's abilities, natural inclinations, and current state of health. Monitor your dog's actions, activity level and behavior. Any drastic changes in behavior could indicate a serious condition and should be discussed with your veterinarian.

² Information obtained from *Care of the Racing & Retired Greyhound*, L. Blythe, J. R. Gannon, A. M. Craig, and D. P. Fegan, American Greyhound Council, Inc., 2007, available from the National Greyhound Association.

³ <http://www.france-property-and-information.com/dog-years-to-human-years-age.htm>

⁴ <http://nccam.nih.gov/research/results/gait/qa.htm>

Summer Reading

Look for the August 2010 issue of *Dog Fancy* magazine — Greyhounds will be the featured breed!

Want to know about our national organization, *Greyhound Pets of America*? Read about the latest news at <http://www.greyhoundpets.org/>. And, don't forget to check out their summer newsletter.

Greyhound Trivia — Greyhounds on Parade

Charles Frederick Holder came from a wealthy Massachusetts Quaker family and, after working as curator at New York's American Museum of Natural History, moved to Pasadena in 1885. A passionate naturalist throughout his life, he was known for his books on marine zoology and the first books on big-game fishing. In 1886, Holder assembled a pack of greyhounds and trained them to chase fox, jack rabbits, and coyotes. The hunters rode in the style of English fox hunting and Holder was instrumental in the formation of the Valley Hunt Club in Pasadena. In 1889, the Valley Hunt Club held a "beautiful fate" to show off their hounds and celebrate the ripening of the orange. The resulting event, the Orange Parade, ultimately became the Pasadena Festival of Roses and is now known as the Rose Parade. Our greys were an integral part in the formation of the famed Rose Parade in Pasadena, which is now an annual event drawing thousands from across the country.

2011 Celebrating Greyhound Calendars

We will soon be placing an order for 2011 greyhound calendars published by the Greyhound Project, Inc. Please e-mail us at 2greys@mindspring.com if you would like to order a calendar — both wall calendars and desk calendars will be available at \$12 each, plus shipping.

Get Involved!

We are always looking for volunteers. Please contact us at 2greys@mindspring.com if you would like to help us in our mission to find loving homes for greyhounds. We are always looking for greyhound foster parents, newsletter writers, people who are willing to transport dogs, etc. Whatever your talent or passion, please let us know how you'd like to contribute.

And, if you have friends or neighbors that are interested in greyhound adoption, please feel free to print and give them a copy of the Greyhound Adoption California brochure that you can find on our website at <http://www.greyhoundadoptioncalifornia.com/whygaca.html> (the link to our brochure is located under the picture of the lounging greyhound).

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