

DAWG Tales



Best Dawg Rescue • www.dawg-rescue.org

Summer 2010

Dear Friends,

We thought we'd have some fun with this late summer edition, and so will amuse you with some of the funnier adoption show "moments" and give you a taste of what it's like to be a volunteer at adoption shows.

It seems like fun to volunteer and help dogs get adopted, right? Of course there are a lot of "feel good" moments in our line of work, but that's not all. Get ready to be "adorned" with dirt and drool, and then desperately need a nap afterward! But first, the adoption show.

When dog transport vans arrive, volunteers rush to collect their assigned dog. Some volunteers greet dogs who have become friends, hoping this time will be "it." Other volunteers gulp as new dogs bound out of the van, full of energy and in need of a "potty break." Off they go, learning each other's tempo as they race to the grassy area, then to the water bowl for a nice long drink (for the dog!), and finally inside to settle with toys, treats and reassuring strokes. New dogs are often apprehensive—either quiet or boisterous – while taking in all the new sensations and constant flow of dogs and people swirling around them. DAWG volunteers know how to handle it all, with firm patience and kindness. Some dogs adjust quickly, giving volunteers handling them an opportunity to start working with the

dog to learn his/her name and to focus. "Sit," "down," and "stay!" are soon followed by "wait" and other directions, such as when our creative Jim taught one of our dogs to crawl!

As for the adoption show itself, welcome to "DAWG Improv!" Visitors have varied interpretations of adoption shows. Some visitors think we're there for their entertainment, tell their children to "go play with the dogs," and then have been known to leave the store! Visitors have offered to "donate" their dogs to our "cause," and others have said they want to trade their own dog for one of ours. People arrive with their dogs on fully extended retractable leads and explain they are there to socialize

their dogs (right in the middle of our show?). When visiting dogs leave "presents," we rush to clean up, knowing our dogs would be considered the culprits.

Some visitors ask if they can put in an "order." (What's wrong with the dogs we have?) Some sob through the shows, even if we tell them the dogs are safe and won't be euthanized. Others play doctor and attempt to pry open mouths, pull up ears, palpate the body and even try to see if the dog will bite if provoked! An occasional visitor will scold us for our nominal adoption fee, saying we should be thrilled to give out dogs so we can "go get some more."

Some visitors arrive and ask "which ones



Training works best with TLC!



Time out and training!

are housebroken?” Potty perfection is not the point and is not guaranteed! Then there are people who insist on adopting only a fostered dog (not a kenneled one), because that way they know they’re not aggressive, never mind that all our dogs are temperament-tested and clearly are social. How do people come up with these theories?

While watching for people, their children and their dogs, we find ways to amuse our dogs before they find ways to amuse themselves! One dog delights in untying his handler’s shoes whenever she isn’t paying attention. Most of the dogs become professional treat plunderers, quickly learning how to put his or her head

into a bag of treats while passing the treat bucket. Some become excellent strategists, often with the “look over there!” game and then grab treats when their handlers aren’t looking. Treats are not the only goal. Many toy-shredders are denied the toy bins, so they wait until a dog with a toy in his or her mouth trots by. Gotcha!

Then there are the medical “emergencies,” usually not overly problematic. We’ve had several female dogs go into heat at shows, pending their spays that are already scheduled in the following week. We’ve had broken toe nails and even a cut tongue (don’t ask how that happened), and then there are less appetizing problems, not to be elaborated on in this note!

As a DAWG dog’s “kismet” with a person or family is the hope of each volunteer at an adoption show, it is a special treat to see a volunteer do a “thumbs up” when a good match seems to be in the works, with the dog’s home visit and placement to be scheduled within the week. We celebrate each successful “home run,” but don’t celebrate for long. Homeless and at-risk dogs are in endless supply at shelters. So we start over with each new dog, and our tenacious, talented and amazing DAWG volunteers in their bright green shirts are ready for whatever happens!

Sincerely,
Joan Marshall
 Joan Marshall
 President

Editor’s note: If you think you’d like to join us as a volunteer from time to time, please write our “dawg line” (dawg@dawg-rescue.org) for more information. “A seen dog is an adopted dog” is our mantra, meaning that dogs that attend shows will be noticed and considered for adoption. So don’t hesitate...we need your help whenever you can provide it!

To set the record straight. . .

Most of Best Dawg Rescue’s funds are put aside for medical care, but we also want to provide for new dogs in advance of expected adoptions and offers to foster them. New arrivals need about a month’s time to recover from shelter illnesses before being introduced as a new DAWG dog. So, often a new dog goes from our veterinarian’s hospital to our boarding kennel, where we have a financially attractive arrangement, on an as-needed basis. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, these new “DAWG dogs” live a structured life, are essentially crate-trained, receive regular meals, and are socialized with other dogs. During the summer, our feisty young dogs get “pool time” and swim off their energy! Ironically, our foster homes often cannot provide as much structure and socialization, let alone swimming! Because we are partnered with a great facility, kenneling offers wonderful advantages and is a positive factor in many new DAWG dogs’ lives.



All dressed up and ready to go!

**Dedicated to the DAWG volunteers by the members of the
Board of Directors of Best Dawg Rescue:**

Once I was a lonely dog. . . a dedication to all rescuers

Once I was a lonely dog,
Just looking for a home.
I had no place to go,

No one to call my own.
I wandered up and down the
streets

In rain, in heat and snow.
I ate what ever I could find,
I was always on the go.

My skin would itch, my feet were
sore,
My body ached with pain.
And no one stopped to give a pat
Or to gently say my name.

I never saw a loving glance,
I was always on the run.
For people thought
That hurting me was really lots
of fun.

And then one day I heard a voice
So gentle, kind and sweet,
And arms so soft reached down
to me,
And took me off my feet.

No one again will hurt you,
Was whispered in my ear.
You'll have a home to call your
own,
Where you will know no fear.

You will be dry, you will be
warm,
You'll have enough to eat
And rest assured that when you
sleep,
Your dreams will all be sweet.

I was afraid I must admit,
I've lived so long in fear.
I can't remember when
I let a human come so near.

And as she tended to my wounds
And bathed and brushed my fur
She told me 'bout the rescue
group
And what it meant to her.

She said, We are a circle,
A line that never ends.
And in the center there is you
Protected by new friends.

And all around you are the ones
That check the pounds,
And those that share their home
After you've been found.

And all the other folk,
Are searching near and far,
To find the perfect home for you,
Where you can be a star.

She said, There is a family,
That's waiting patiently,

And pretty soon we'll find them
Just you wait and see.

And then they'll join our circle
They'll help to make it grow,
So there will be room for more
like you,

Who have no place to go.
I waited very patiently,
The days they came and went.
Today's the day I thought,
My family will be sent.

Then just when I began to think
It wasn't meant to be,
There were people standing there
Just gazing down at me.

I knew them in a heart beat,
I could tell they felt it too.
They said, "We have been waiting
For a special dog like you."

Now every night I say a prayer,
To all the Gods that be.
Thank you for the life I live
And all you've given me
But most of all protect the dogs

In the pound and on the street
And send them a rescue person,
To lift them off their feet.

—Author Unknown



Dog Bite Prevention—5 Ways To Protect Yourself and Your Family

by Daphne Sashin

You're out for a walk and an unleashed dog starts chasing you. Do you run? Scream at the dog? Smile and make eye contact?



Actually, none of those things, says Adam Goldfarb, director of the Pets at Risk Program for the Humane Society of the United States.

Dogs bite 4.5 million Americans each year, and about one in five victims suffer severe enough injuries to require medical attention. Young children are at the greatest risk according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Senior citizens and mail carriers are also common victims.

In honor of **National Dog Bite Prevention Week**, we asked Goldfarb for tips on how to avoid being bitten.

Stay Calm, Move Slowly and Appear Nonthreatening:

Dogs love to chase and catch things—and you don't want to spark that urge. If you're out walking and a dog starts running after you, stop moving. Then remain still or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.

Avoid eye contact, because "a stare can be seen as threatening or intimidating," Goldfarb says. He also suggests turning sideways "because it makes you look smaller to a dog and less threatening." Don't scream or give the dog a reason to become excited or aggressive.

Prepare Your Kids: 400,000 children are treated every year for dog bites and most bites involving young children occur during everyday activities and while interacting with familiar dogs, notes the AVMA. Teach your children not to hug or kiss the family dog on the face, a common cause of bites to the face. Instead, scratch the dog on the chest or the side of the neck. The AVMA offers a coloring book in English and Spanish to help educate children about interacting safely with dogs and avoiding dog bites that can be downloaded.

If Attacked, Distract: Get on the other side of a car or "feed" the dog your backpack, purse, t-shirt or a garbage can lid to both distract the animal and to create a barrier between you and it while you try to get away safely.

Protect Yourself: If you fall or are knocked down,

curl up in a fetal position, squeeze your hands into fists and put them over your face and your ears. Those body parts "are so sensitive, and such a huge amount of damage can be done to those areas with even a small bite," Goldfarb says. "Making fists also protects your fingers."

Be Cautious: Use your common sense and never disturb a dog that's caring for puppies, sleeping or eating. Likewise, never reach through a fence to pet a dog. Even a well-mannered dog can bite if they are startled, threatened, or perceive any kind of attack or an intrusion on their territory.

For more information on Dog Bite Prevention Week, download this AVMA pamphlet. http://www.avma.org/animal_health/brochures/dog_bite/dog_bite_brochure.asp

FOOD PUZZLES Unleash Your Pet's Wild Side Solving Behavioral Problems

By Marty Becker, DVM, and Dog Trainer Mikkel Becker Shannon

June 3, 2010—

Pursuing food was an all-consuming life for our dogs' ancestors. While it might seem an improvement to have meals handed to you, that's not really true. The mental and physical lives of pets suffer when their minds and bodies lie idle.

Food puzzles are an easy way to make the modern dog work for a living, and become happier and healthier besides.

Our dogs' wild relatives—wolves and coyotes—spend nearly all their waking hours in pursuit of food. In the wild, whether scavenging or hunting, canids have to work to find what they eat. Nature, after all, doesn't conveniently leave nourishment in bite-size pieces. "Fast food" means quick to find, requiring six steps in graduate-level hunting: prey, pursue, apprehend, kill, compete with the rest of the pack and, finally, consume.

For today's house dogs, though, eating means simply a trip to the food bowl, a kindergarten-level skill that has



but a single step: consumption. Our dogs are still wired to work, but they've become permanent couch potatoes that are lucky to get a couple of short walks a day.

They're "born retired," and this out-of-the-wild lifestyle often means behavioral problems: excess barking, leash pulling or chewing furniture when they need mind and body stimulation they're no longer getting. Too often, these problems put their lives at risk, when fed-up pet owners dump them at animal shelters, where they may not find new homes.

And it's all so unnecessary, when you can give a dog a food puzzle to work off energy, work their brain, enrich their lives.

Food puzzles are toys designed to be filled with kibble, small treats, even frozen foods that encourage dogs to work to get to the goodies. Instead of mindlessly emptying the food bowl, the dog has to hunt to bring down the "prey" and work for a long time to eat what would have once taken a minute to do. Eating out of food puzzles takes memory, skill and manipulation, all of which help our dogs find healthier, less destructive ways to release pent-up energy.



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The Benefits of Food Puzzles for Your Pet

Food puzzles offer as much variety as there are kinds of dogs. They are designed for puppies, for older dogs, for hard chewers, for the tiniest dogs and the most giant. There are puzzles to match a dog's intelligence, challenging the canines to the genius level in pursuit of their supper.

But you don't even have to use a puzzle: You can hide food and make your dog work to find it. When a dog's kibble is scattered in the grass, every day is a holiday, bringing the fun of an Easter egg hunt.

So throw away that food bowl, or at least make your dog work for most of what you used to put in there. With food puzzles, you unleash the wild thing, and your dog will be happier—and so will you.

Recommended food puzzles manufacturers (listed alphabetically)

1. Kong (Kong, Kong Wobbler, Kong Genius, Ziggies) <http://www.kongcompany.com/>
2. Premier (Linkables, Busy Buddy line including Kibble Nibble, Tug-a-Jug, Squirrel Dude) <http://www.premier.com/>
3. Nina Ottosson (Zoo Active products) <http://www.nina-ottosson.com/>

For more of Marty Becker's tips, visit PetConnection.com.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Best Dawg Rescue is 7!

Thanks to our volunteers and adopters for saving 530 dogs. . . and a few cats and birds too. We remember each one and are thrilled when adopters stay in touch!



ON PINS & NEEDLES—Acupuncture For Your Dog

“Wow, I’ve never seen him so relaxed,” is a common statement made by Baltimore dog owners who take their dog for their first acupuncture treatment. Perhaps this reaction is why so many are beginning to believe in this “new” medicine, which dates back over 3,000 years. Most of animal acupuncturists’ patients are older and suffering from problems that plague their human companions, including arthritis, pain, and lack of mobility. As acupuncture becomes more and more accepted in the U.S., people are choosing it for their pets.



Mention acupuncture and many people immediately begin to shiver from the thought of needles and wonder how acupuncturists make the pets sit still. In most cases, a side-by-side comparison between the dreaded injection needle and an acupuncture needle can cure some of the pet owner’s fears. Acupuncture needles are no thicker than a few strands of hair and are designed to come to a fine point in order to gently push skin out of the way without damage and with very little sensation. Injection needles are larger and have a sharp edge designed to cut the skin and deliver a liquid, which also disturbs the tissue. Due to the size and design of the acupuncture needles, patients, on two legs and four, feel very little while receiving treatment.

A study on human brain waves may give us some insight on why animals experience a deep state of relaxation. During an acupuncture treatment, a patient’s brain waves switch from a state of mental chatter where alpha and beta waves are dominant to the theta wave stage, which appears

when a person enters a deep sleep or a meditative state. It’s quite possible that an animal can experience this same effect, and seeing so many dogs fall asleep during treatment could be proof that they are really relaxed.

More Than Just Pain Management

While relaxation is a benefit, it is more of an added bonus than the sole reason to get your dog acupuncture. With trips to the vet getting so expensive that it sometimes limits treatment options, pet owners are looking for an alternative to drugs, surgeries, and in extreme cases, euthanasia. As mentioned earlier, many practitioners treat a large amount of pain and arthritis with great success, but there are other conditions that greatly respond to acupuncture. Skin conditions (such as “hot spots”), allergies (which cause hair loss), and even ringworm (a fungal infection), show dramatic improvement with acupuncture. Neurological conditions also seem to respond very well, including seizures, nerve-related paralysis and conditions like wobblers (hind leg weakness often seen in German Shepherds). There is also a strong effect on animals suffering from some emotional conditions. Acupuncture may help dogs that are terrified of thunderstorms, have separation anxiety or exhibit some odd behavior not associated with their breed.

Before Starting Treatment

There are several important things to consider before deciding whether or not acupuncture is right for your pet. First and foremost, acupuncture has a cumulative effect, meaning that regular treatments may be necessary before your dog receives relief from the symptoms. Generally, acupuncturists will tell owners that treatments are needed about once a week until the dog shows improvement. Pets may show dramatic improvement within 4–5 treatments, but every pet and condition is different. Depending on the severity of the condition along with other factors such as age, weight, breed and overall health, the acupuncturist will tailor a treatment plan to fit your dog. It is also important to note that the sooner a condition is addressed with acupuncture, the easier it is to treat.

Another consideration that may need to be discussed with the acupuncturist is a realistic health goal for your pet. A 12 year-old arthritic Mastiff will never be just like a puppy again, but may be able to move more easily or with considerably less pain. Setting a realistic health goal for your dog will allow you to enjoy your relationship with your pet while addressing the inevitable effects of time.

There are also conditions that are part of a particular breed's "charm" which cannot realistically be helped with acupuncture. Most Jack Russell Terriers will be very active, Border Collies will want to herd, and Beagles will howl till they drop. No amount of acupuncture will change what is coded in their DNA.

Choosing a Practitioner

In Maryland, pet owners have a wide choice in who may perform acupuncture on their dog. Currently, two groups of professionals can treat companion animals. The first are veterinarians certified by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS) and the second are licensed acupuncturists who have an additional certification in animal acupuncture. Both certification courses help bridge the gap between western veterinary sciences and oriental medical theory. Choosing either a vet or a certified animal acupuncturist is a matter of personal preference. The small difference, from a legal aspect, is that an animal acupuncturist will need either a receipt or letter from a vet dated within 14 days prior to your dog's first acupuncture treatment. There are more important factors in choosing whom to care for your dog.

Questions which will help you choose a practitioner include:

Will the acupuncturist make house calls or do they require an office visit? Many pets feel more comfortable in their own homes. Sometimes animals get very anxious in a vet's office. Some practitioners set up their office like a cozy room where your dog can relax. If there are mobility problems, do you want to put the stress of a car ride on yourself and your dog?

Does your dog like the practitioner? Sometimes pets respond better and allow access to guarded areas if they like the acupuncturist. Some pets prefer a specific gender. You may have to audition a few practitioners before you find one that both you and your pet find suitable. Don't worry about getting one treatment from



a different practitioner; they should all have some positive effect.

What are the practitioner's hours and availability? One of the most important factors affecting the outcome of treatment is the ability to get consistent care. If the acupuncturist is only available at a time that is not convenient for you or your pet, ask them if they can refer you to another acupuncturist that may better fit your schedule.

What do they charge? An animal acupuncture treatment can cost between \$60 and \$200. Higher prices may not mean better quality treatment; these prices may reflect how much overhead the practitioner carries. An acupuncturist treating in a high-end vet clinic may charge more because of rent. House call prices may vary by the distance the acupuncturist has to travel. Some practitioners have an hour set aside for your dog while others may only have half an hour for your pet. All of these factors play into how and why an acupuncturist charges a certain amount. While this is a significant cost, compared to surgery with anesthesia and follow-up visits, it is more conservative both in cost and physical and emotional stress on your dog.

The First Treatment: What to Expect

Aside from the normal paperwork and, of course, your dog, very little may be required of you for the treatment. Your dog's acupuncturist will probably have some interesting questions for you which will span from basic health questions to your dog's role or job in your household and even the relationship your dog has with you, your family, and other pets. Since acupuncture theories

suggest that all diseases have an underlying psycho-emotional cause, the Q&A portion of your first visit may sound a bit more like a doggie psychiatry session. Understand that while your dog may be limping, knowing what his favorite place in the house is may give clues to his constitution and allow the acupuncturist to provide a more complete treatment. In general, treatments have two goals: the first is to balance and build a pet's energy and the second is to treat the symptoms. Most acupuncturists would agree that the first part of the treatment is most important because the balancing that is done in this stage not only helps your pet heal itself of the current condition, but also keeps other problems from occurring.

After a short "getting-to-know-you" between the acupuncturist and your dog, the next step is setting the needles. As explained earlier, there is nothing for you or your dog to worry about. The needles are placed quickly and smoothly, and in most cases the dog barely notices them. On occasion, there might be a slight twitch in the skin around the needle. Don't worry; this is not a pain reaction. Dogs (as well as other animals like horses and cats) have developed a thin muscle layer just below the skin which allows sections of the skin to twitch when a fly lands on it—a rather nice evolutionary trait.

What happens next is really up to your dog. Many dogs become quite relaxed and may stare off into space or fall asleep, while others may act a little out of sorts, often looking around the room as if wondering what's going on. Some of your more energetic dogs may need to be bribed with a treat or a bone to lie down, but do settle down even if only for a few minutes. The duration of the treatment will depend on your dog. Some snap out of the "zone" after a few minutes, while others take a 20-minute power nap. The acupuncturist (depending on what school of thought they subscribe to) may either set all the needles at once or periodically remove and add needles.

After the Treatment

As stated earlier, acupuncture is not a one-shot deal, but there are signs that owners should look for after the first treatment. Your dog may be less active for a day or two after the first treatment. This is a positive sign and may indicate that the body is "steering" more of its energy to repair rather than regular daily activities. On occasion, a large improvement of symptoms may be seen after the first treatment. These improvements may appear immediately after the treatment, but may take several days before a change is noticed. A very small number of dogs may experience a flare-up of the symptoms from

24 to 48 hours after treatment. This is often followed by drastic improvement and is sometimes referred to as a "healing crisis." You can contact your acupuncturist if this occurs, but in most cases it passes without incident. During the time between acupuncture treatments your dog may need to drink more water or go to the bathroom more frequently, so please accommodate them. With continued treatment, steady progress should be made, as each treatment should help your dog move toward a reasonable health goal.

Future Care

A maintenance plan is good for everyone, including people, pets and even cars. After your dog has reached his or her realistic health goals, monthly or seasonal "tune-up" treatments will help your dog stay healthy. Remember to contact your vet and your acupuncturist if any new conditions arise or if there is a sudden recurrence of old symptoms. Hopefully, this information will take the "pinch" out of acupuncture for your pet.

BEWARE OF NATURAL DANGERS!

Everyone loves the thought of nature at its best during the summer. Just remember that nature poses hazards as well. Two of note are MUSHROOMS, some of which are poisonous, and BEAVERS. Yes, beavers, who consider dogs as a threat and have been known to drown even huge dogs, or otherwise try to kill them. If you let your dog go swimming, leave the dog on a long leash and be sure to stay clear of deep water. Or just get yourself a doggie swimming pool for safe splashing around.



DAWG Adoption Picture Gallery

Enjoy seeing our former dogs with their proud new adopters!



Angel Eyes



Precious



Candy



Keeva, formerly Bunny



Cuddles



Toto



Reese



Molly

DAWG 2011 Calendar!

Reserve your copies by contacting dawg.photos@gmail.com.

Calendar sales begin October 15: \$10 each at adoption shows, \$13 each by mail. Please inquire for cost of mailing multiple copies.



“Adopt me—I want to be in the 2012 Calendar”

Our grateful thanks to . . . Beltsville PETCO and Rockville PetSmart for sponsoring our weekly adoption shows; and College Park Animal Hospital and Countryside Kennels, for extraordinary care and services at reduced rates that help DAWG dogs get well and live well until adopted. We also thank the Outer Office in Fulton, MD for printing our newsletter.



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Check out our adoptable dogs and DAWG Tales in color at www.dawg-rescue.org

Please support DAWG through CFC, United Way (write-in) and all workplace campaigns this fall