

DAWG Tales



Best Dawg Rescue • www.dawg-rescue.org

Fall 2015

Dear Friends,

Happy Autumn!

It has been an unusual year, but then each year has a “personality” based on the dogs we save. Below are some highlights from this year and a few from the past.

In 2015, we took in our usual mix of breeds, with a proportionally higher number of bigger and scared dogs who needed more help (and time), not that smaller dogs don’t need TLC. It’s immensely rewarding to see how terrified dogs bloom, and big goofy dogs— like Duke—become focused; even better when they find great homes.

Our adoption activity has been lighter than in past years, but we made major progress with dogs we’ve had for a while—like our double adoption of Gavin and Tori, and a lasting adop-



Duke



Gavin (L) and Tori, together forever



Leslie (R) with her new friend



Pluto (foreground), with former DAWG dog, Cubby

tion of our “complex” Bella. The funny thing is that adopters often send us post-adoption pictures of their new dogs. . . .sleeping! Or at least relaxing. But then isn’t that what it’s all about?

Unfortunately, an ASPCA grant-funded “clean out the shelter” adopt-a-thon placed over 1,000 dogs and cats in our area on one Saturday in mid-August. Why is that unfortunate, given the general goal is to get homeless pets adopted? Because many of these pets went to unprepared and unchecked

homes. Now that the deed is done, some of these pets are destined to live in backyards, basements or garages, if not lost, sold on Craigslist, or given away. Needless to say, these pet adoptions impacted our own efforts, which would be fine with us if some at-risk shelter dogs found good homes. We hope so.

What’s up with Angie, our starvation dog who had diabetes and then went blind? The big news is that Angie sees again, thanks to many big-hearted friends who donated for her double



Leila (L), found in the trash and now a princess, with her new friend



Angie at her post-op exam



Rosie



Brutus (laying down), with his former DAWG dog buddies

cataract operation. After-care was lengthy and nerve-wracking, but Angie has become a crazy teenager like any other dog. The only problem is that she has had some diabetic episodes that caused her to become temporarily blind, a result of insulin “dips.” So Angie continues to be high maintenance—or maybe high vigilance is a better term—but she is worth it!

Last year’s bounty of “Fergie puppies” turned one year old this year. Here are Rosie (first “batch”), and Brutus (second “batch”).

This year is the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina’s wrath. Our response to the disaster was to frantically seek out a full shelter in a hurricane-ravaged town and take in as many dogs as we could put into a regular van driven by two volunteers. (Note that the dogs we saved had been in the shelter before the hurricane, so our efforts helped to make room as local rescue efforts mobilized.) Perhaps the best epilogue is the story about the unexpected adventures of a Katrina puppy named Nola. She was adopted in 2005 by a couple who then had a baby and—unknown to us—gave the dog to a

relative, who ended up returning Nola to us at age 8! Luckily, Nola was quickly adopted, became Lola, and restarted her life, including road trips all over the United States and frequent excursions to the beach! See “Lola’s Life” pictures on page 7.

We hear from many adopter friends about more local excursions, such as Sheba and her adventuresome new

DAWG turned 12 in August. In dog years, we are 84 and counting!



mom (Sheba’s adopter-dad died). Other DAWG dogs who dropped in to say “Hi!” this year included seniors Charlie Brown, and Gizmo, taken in from someone right at a 2003 adoption show. Lastly, Bingo and Penny sent a postcard from camp!

Don’t be a stranger! Visits, stories, and pictures are always welcome.

Finally, DAWG is on Facebook! Friends can catch up on weekly updates as well as adoptions. As a result, we have discontinued our newsletter’s “Adoption Gallery,”



Sheba and “Mom” enjoying an outing



Charlie Brown (L), senior when adopted, with friend now in Canada



Gizmo (R), one of our first adoptions and world traveler



Bingo and Penny, both DAWG beagles, had a blast at doggie summer camp!

which many photo-shy adopters and dogs may appreciate!

What else? We hope you will be generous when you receive our annual holiday appeal (and please introduce us to family and friends who want to support local rescue

work). Our yearly budget is modest, given every penny has to be raised each year, and then we struggle to save as many dogs as possible with it. **The amount of donation dollars directly relate to how many shelter dogs are saved. Who knows**

if your donation will be responsible for a new face on our website?

Joan Marshall

*Sincerely,
Joan Marshall*

About 7 years ago, my daughter and I were lost, an hour from home, trying to find a birthday party. We decided to stop into a Petco that we saw and ask for directions. Best Dawg Rescue happened to be there that day with a selection of rescue dogs. Although we had a houseful of dogs and no need for another, we took a look. There, lying on a soft bed, was a bone-thin hound/shepherd looking dog. She had no intention of getting up, even when I spoke to her, so I sat down by her. The Dawg volunteer explained to me that Daisy May had been the victim of extreme cruelty and neglect and had never had a bed, and now she took every opportunity to lie on one. My daughter and I lay down next to this sweet dog and talked to her and petted her. Daisy ate it up! We immediately decided that we could provide a home for her. Seven years later, she is still with us and is the gentle queen and protector of our dog crew. She breaks up squabbles, comforts sad dogs, cuddles with sick dogs. She is my most loyal fan, following me everywhere, sitting by my side and staring at me while I work at my computer, and checking on me at night. And she still loves a soft bed.

Thank you, Best Dawg Rescue!
Sue



Daisy Mae... queen, referee, advisor, and nurse!

From Your Dog's Friend:

Pay Attention to This to Teach Your Dog Faster & Easier

by Laurie Luck, KPA-CTP
Smart Dog University
Aug 5, 2015

There's a little secret that dog trainers know and use that only a few dog owners take advantage of.

It's free, it's easy, and it's dead simple. This one thing can mean the difference between years of frustration and years of enjoyment with your dog. It requires no special knowledge, no advanced training, no equipment. It's more powerful than any correction, "no," or discipline.

It's the power of noticing what your dog does right and reinforcing it in the moment.

People ask me how I teach my dogs to understand "No." I disappoint every one of them when I answer that my dogs don't know that word. "But how do you teach them what you want them to do without that word!?" they wonder. Easy: I pay attention to my dogs when they do stuff I like. Take two seconds to praise them, play with them, or otherwise provide something they love when they're doing the stuff I like.

The power of "yes" will beat 100 "no's."

Why Notice the Good Stuff?

Dogs (and people) do what works. If chewing on the couch feels good to the dog, he's not likely to quit chewing on the couch. Most people jump right into the "No" zone, skipping over the "yes." Behavior is governed by rules, thankfully. There are five rules, but two of those rules apply specifically to this situation.

Behavior that is reinforced will happen more often.

Behavior that isn't reinforced will likely go away.

Let's take the couch chewing dog example a little further. If the dog is chewing on the couch, a clicker trainer is likely to find an appropriate chewable object (stuffed toy, rope toy, etc.) for the dog to chew on, redirect the sofa-chewing dog to the preferred object and then praise the heck out of the dog for putting his mouth on the dog toy. And we'll make sure we notice and reward



the dog every time he has a toy in his mouth. Because after all, the toy is what we want the dog to put in his mouth, not the sofa. And we'll also be pretty darn sure to supervise the dog so he doesn't get the opportunity to chew on the sofa when we're not around.

We're practically guaranteeing that the dog will choose the toy to chew on because we've paid so much attention to him every time he's had the toy in his mouth. We can't necessarily ignore the dog for couch chewing because that probably feels just as good to the dog as chewing on the toy. Because we can't ignore it, we'll do something a little dif-

ferent – we'll distract and redirect the dog to the appropriate object, the toy. And we'll also be sure that if we're spending too much time distracting and redirecting, we'll set some barriers up so the dog can't get to the couch to chew on it until after we've gotten lots and lots of repetitions of praise and attention for chewing on the toys.

We Aren't Stingy.

Dog trainers are generous with praise, play, and fun. It's free! Give it away frequently!

When raising puppies for service work, I start giving the puppy feedback right away about what things get him attention and what things aren't worth doing.

We look for the things that the puppy is doing that we really like. It's much more fun to praise your dog than

scold him, don't you think? By paying attention to everything your dog does that you like, you're setting the stage for a really fun life together, while making your job as teacher super easy and quick.

Here are some of the things dog trainers notice—and reinforce—that sometimes pet owners don't even think about.

When the dog has all four feet on the floor, he gets lots of fun attention—I'll pet him, play with him, and praise him.

When the dog picks up an appropriate toy, I'll run over to play with him.

When the dog goes to the door



to go outside, I'll praise him and quickly take him outside so he can go to the bathroom.

When the dog looks at me, I will praise him, pet him.

If your dog is older, don't worry—this works with any dog, no matter the age! It may take some retraining on your part to notice the good, but once you practice it for a week or

two, you'll want to do it because it feels so good!

The Challenge.

For the next week, start to notice the things your dog does that are good (really, anything that isn't bad is worth noticing). Praise your dog, pet your dog, play with your dog—do whatever your dog really likes so you can

convey to your dog that he's getting those good things because of what he did. The cause-effect part is important here: the dog needs to know that his actions produced the good stuff.

After the first week, if you haven't already, start to drop out the corrections. See if you can reduce the "no," "eh-eh," "knock it off," etc. Instead, if your dog is getting ready to misbehave, redirect him ("Fido, come over here" in a happy voice), get him involved in something appropriate, and praise him (or play, or give a treat, etc.) for following your lead.

Laurie Luck is the owner/trainer at Smart Dog University in Mt. Airy, MD and a faculty member at Karen Pryor Academy for Animal Training and Behavior, teaching positive training to both aspiring and experienced trainers. You can see Laurie's class schedule, arrange for private lessons, or subscribe to her blog at www.smartdoguniversity.com.

How To Help Your Dog This Fall

*by Debra Ekman from
Your Dog's Friend*

Fall is my favorite time of year, but, for many dogs, fall brings more anxiety than the lazy days of summer. In the fall, parents walk their dogs to school to pick up their children; community, school, and sports events jam the calendar; and new friends come over to visit or play. You may have just imagined a Norman Rockwell painting with happy children, happy parents and, of course, happy dogs, except for one thing: Many of our dogs aren't happy in these situations, and we don't even know it.

What We Do Wrong and Can Learn to do Right

We tend to see our dog's behavior as aggressive or non-aggressive. As long as our dogs aren't growling or biting, we assume that everything is okay. We take pride in our dogs if they tolerate the child who hangs all over them or the stranger who overwhelms them. Instead of seeing our dogs' behavior in such black and white terms, we should recognize that tolerance is not enough; we should protect our dogs from undue stress and watch their signals. Remember that even a good dog may growl or bite when he has had enough.

We either don't understand or ignore our dogs' stress signals.

Dogs look away, try to move away, slightly cower or back up, close their mouths, lick their lips, change their breathing, shake off (as if wet) or continuously yawn. Our dogs are "talking", but we aren't listening. Instead of ignoring our dogs' pleas for help, we need to help our dogs escape before their frustration escalates.

We don't pay attention to what our dogs are saying until they growl. So, dogs learn that the only way to get us to intervene is by growling. Then, we punish them,

even though they have been trying to communicate with us from the beginning. Growling is your dog's last line of communication. If you take it away, your dog will go right to biting without a last warning signal. Instead of punishing your dog for growling, figure out what is making him anxious enough to growl. Remember that most aggression is rooted in fear.

well-meaning but scary people.

This is a recipe for increased anxiety. Let your dog learn to trust you and then introduce him to one or two people at a time. Don't overwhelm your dog with more than he can comfortably handle.

Kids run up to our dogs all the time and, unless they are teasing the dog, we assume that the interaction is good. We turn away and talk

Our dog may be great with our kids, but not so much with their friends or with all the extra noise and running around the house. When children or other strangers visit, keep your dog with you on leash or in a crate, if he likes it, or a room with a favorite toy for most of the visit. You can supervise their meeting at the end after all the excitement has died down.

Children may be showing affection, but very few of our dogs enjoy this way of interacting.



We assume that because we want our dogs to like all children, strangers and new situations, we can force the issue. But some dogs are uncomfortable around, or even dislike, one or all three. Exposing them to what they fear won't fix the problem. We can help our dogs by slowly associating what they fear with positive rewards at a comfortable distance, but we will always have to be alert to our dogs' stress level around his "triggers" and manage his environment. It's not fair to force our dogs into situations that make them anxious just because we want our dogs to be more accepting than they are.

We take our newly adopted or fearful dogs to the community fair or soccer game, where they will be surrounded by crowds, noise, and

to our friends while children crowd, pick up, hug, kiss, pat on the head, and dress up our dogs. Children may be showing affection, but very few of our dogs enjoy this way of interacting. Always be aware of what is happening to your dog. Where there are children, allow them, one at a time, to ask your dog permission to come closer by putting out their hand. If your dog isn't interested, that's the final word.

We take our dogs to events on retractable leads. Everyone who has ever tripped on one or watched a dog on one get in other dogs' faces while their human stood right there, raise your hand. Enough said.

Most of us don't remember that dogs and kids are both unpredictable. We leave our dogs loose when our children's friends comes over.

If we can help our dogs through the increased chaos of fall, maybe it will be their favorite time too.

Beware!
Toxic-to-dogs
xylitol now in
some peanut
butter brands!

Lola's Life

Just wanted to send you some pictures of Lola on her travels. She went with us across the USA to Seattle via Yellowstone, and then to the Oregon coast. She has now been from ocean to ocean. We then drove down to Salt Lake City (she saw the Great Salt Lake) to Albuquerque and then east to home. She traveled beautifully.



Thank you for choosing such a perfect dog for us!
Ilene and Kip

Our “arfs” of gratitude go to trainer Al Marx.

Al spends many Saturdays at our adoption shows helping our good dogs become great dogs! We recommend Al to new adopters—even experienced ones—to help with “transitional tweaks.” It’s also never too late to teach an old dog new tricks! Al can be reached at 301-922-3391 or greatdogs@obedienceworks.com



Keep in touch!

We love to hear from friends and adopters via notes and pictures.



Moving?

If you have moved or are planning on it, please let us know by emailing us at dawg@dawg-rescue.org.

If you moved over a year ago, the post office is unable to forward mail and returns it to DAWG. Thanks!



Our grateful thanks to . . . Beltsville PETCO, Potomac PetValu, and Laurel 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

Dogs need help 365 days of the year! Please give and volunteer throughout the year.