



Conformation · Field · Obedience

Golden Tales

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July 2011

AKC Offers New Therapy Dog Title

For years, many GRCCNY members and their dogs have performed volunteer work as pet therapy teams. Now there is a new way to be recognized for those efforts – on June 27, 2011 the American Kennel Club started processing applications for the new AKC Therapy Dog (THD) title.

The AKC Therapy Dog Program awards an official AKC title to dogs who have worked to improve the lives of the people they have visited.

The THD title can be earned by dogs who have been certified by AKC recognized therapy dog organizations and have performed 50 or more community visits.

AKC does not certify therapy dogs; the certification and training is done by qualified therapy dog organizations. The certification organizations are the experts in this area and their efforts should be acknowledged and appreciated.

Why did AKC start a Therapy Dog title? AKC has received frequent, ongoing requests from dog owners who participate in therapy work to “acknowledge the great work our dogs are doing.” Many of our constituents are understandably proud of their dogs.

Earning an AKC Therapy Dog title builds on the skills taught in the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen programs which create a sound and friendly temperament needed by a successful therapy dog.

To earn the AKC Therapy Dog title, you and your dog must meet the following criteria:

- Certified/registered by an AKC recognized therapy dog organization.
- Perform a minimum of 50 visits.
- The dog must be registered or listed with AKC.

All dogs are eligible to earn the AKC Therapy Dog title, including purebreds and mixed breeds.

Documentation for visits must be submitted with an application for the title award. Documentation can be in one of three forms: a therapy dog record of visits form, a certificate or wallet card from a certifying organization indicating the dog has made 50 or more visits, or an official letter from the facility where the dog served as a therapy dog.

For more information and to obtain the application form, visit www.akc.org/akctherapydog

Inside

President's Message	2
Goldens Remembered	3
Welcome New Members	3
Meeting Minutes	4
2012 Specialty Trophies	5
Member Brags	6
Eye Clinic	7
All About Titer Tests	9
Rescue Reporter	10
Skunked!	10
Perspectives - D.Kenney	11
Perspectives - J.Pepper	12
GRNewsColumn	13
Behavior and Training	14
Views from the Doghouse ...	19
Events Calendar	Back Cover

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President's Message

We are about to enter the busiest season for our club. In addition to our general membership meetings on **August 4th**, **September 15th** and the **annual meeting on October 20th**, we also have three training days at Three Rivers on **July 31st**, **August 13th** and **August 20th**. The July 31st day will be devoted to learning about and training for the WC and WCX. Our WC and WCX tests are on **August 6th** at Echoewood in Mexico, NY. If you want a premium, you can email me or obtain it from our website. Even if you don't enter, I encourage you to come out and learn by watching and even better, by helping us to run the event. If you'd like to help, please contact the chair people Maxine Clark or Martha Sturtz.

Next, we have our second AKC hunt test on **September 10th** in conjunction with Finger Lakes Retriever Club the day before. The premium for this event can be obtained from the website <http://www.entryexpress.net/>. We will need lots of help to make this event run smoothly. Again, if you'd be willing to help you can contact Maxine. We will also be recruiting volunteers for our events at our August 2nd meeting. The hunt tests will be followed by our Super Singles to be held at Echoewood late September

or early October. This is a fun social event and intended for all levels of dogs and handlers. We'll talk more about this event at our August meeting.



Lastly, we have our annual eye clinic at Village Veterinary Hospital on **October 16th**. More information is included in this newsletter and on the website. These events are part of the reason for which most of us belong to this club. I encourage you to volunteer for at least one, or more, of the events. Our dogs would all say, "Sure, I'll do it. Pick me!"

On a whole different note, I'm currently listening to an audio book called *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. It's a book about a family told from the dog's perspective. It's very interesting and has a few philosophical thoughts interspersed. One thought that the dog has is about embracing the joy of the moment. He feels that dogs do it well while humans are so busy they overlook the joy of the moment. I suppose it's just another reminder to stop and smell the roses. May our dogs constantly remind us to do so.

Kathy

Where to Send It ... For
Golden Tales - Web Site - Golden Retriever News

Photos - Brags - Memorials - Letters - Stories

All members are encouraged to contribute. To save time and avoid confusion, all submissions are to be directed to Beth Shelmidine. Material will be published, as appropriate, to *Golden Tales*, the Web Site, and/or *Golden Retriever News*. Send via U.S. Mail or Email. Photos returned on request.

Beth Shelmidine, PO Box 4, Lorraine, NY 13659
golden28@twcny.rr.com

Membership Information

GRCCNY invites as new members, anyone with an interest in Golden Retrievers! Applications are available from the Club secretary, or at www.grccny.org/memb_app.pdf.

Membership Options:
 Individual- \$25, Household - \$30, Associate (non-voting) - \$25.

We encourage membership in the Golden Retriever Club of America. Applications and further information may be obtained from Deborah Ascher, P.O. Box 69, Berthoud, CO 80513-0069, (970) 532-3124 or from the GRCA website at www.grca.org/grca-app.htm.

Golden Tales is the official quarterly member newsletter of **The Golden Retriever Club of Central New York, Inc.** a Member club of **The Golden Retriever Club of America** and Licensed by **The American Kennel Club**.



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Inquiries, submissions and correspondence should be directed to: Judi Questel, Editor, 426 Lee Road, Ogdensburg, NY 13669 or e-mail bonefeathers@yahoo.com

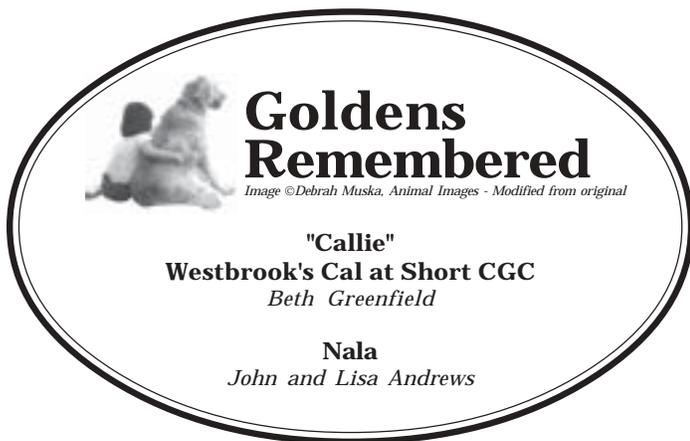
From Your Best Friend

Please don't mourn for me today
My love was strong, but I couldn't stay
The Rainbow Bridge, they call this place
And God has blessed it with his grace

In His hands I am safe and sound
And you won't believe who all I've found

If some days seem too much to bear
Just close your eyes - You'll find me there

*By Permission from Sandy Rolling
Iowa City Golden Retriever Club*



Goldens Remembered
Image ©Debrah Muska, Animal Images - Modified from original

"Callie"
Westbrook's Cal at Short CGC
Beth Greenfield

Nala
John and Lisa Andrews

Activity & Event Leaders

Puppy Referral

Sallie Lennox & Carol Allen
315-469-7926 — carosal@twcny.rr.com

Licensed Specialty Show-Trial

Beth Greenfield
315 363-0012 — BGreenfield@oneidahealthcare.org
Carol Allen, Trophy Chair
315-469-7926 — carosal@twcny.rr.com

Eye Clinic

Patti Gambier
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Golden Retriever News Correspondent

Carol Lantiegne
315-963-8403 — puppies@adirondac-goldens.com

WELCOME

New Members

Matt McConville, Scottsville
Rescue Honorary
Shawn and Jennifer Goodman, Ithaca
Rescue Honorary
Fred and Cynthia Snyder, Liverpool
Rescue Honorary

* Election Required for Individual or Household Applicants

Don't Forget... Golden Tales is available **ELECTRONICALLY** via e-mail. Have you tried it yet? Contact Judi Questel at **bonefeathers@yahoo.com** today to sign up!

Back Issues of Golden Tales are on the Web at
<http://www.grccny.org/Newsletter.htm>

More Club News & Events

Meeting Highlights

- The Following Are Unofficial Summaries -

GRCCNY meeting 6/2/11

Submitted by Beth Shelmidine

Attendance: 12 members, 3 guests

Minutes were read from previous meeting and approved.

Report of the President:

1) Ray B saw that the IRS paperwork was completed and filed as required, we must have and have applied for an ERN

This meeting will have a vote to amend the Constitution and Bylaws

2) Carol L has requested to be replaced as the member club columnist in the GR News. Discussion of having various members write columns in keeping with the different issue themes, with Beth agreeing to make the submissions. Issues would be: Jan/Feb, National, no member column; Mar/April, Stud/Bitch, Beth G; May/June, Performance, Kathy M; July/Aug, Puppies, Beth S; Sept/Oct, Veterans, Maxine C; Nov/Dec, Field, Pam C.

3) Discussion of a club sponsored ad in Field themed issue of GR News as we have done previously at a cost of \$275. MM by Beth S to forego the ad this issue, which generated further discussion and even an offer by a club member to assist in payment. Motion was defeated. New motion made by Ray B and 2nded by Maxine C to have a club ad for no more than \$350. Motion carried with one nay vote from Beth S.

Report of the Secretary:

1) Brags were reported.

2) Various upcoming event and seminar flyers, and items of general interest were shared.

Report of the Treasurer: Balances given for three accounts.

Committee Reports:

Specialty: Beth G reporting that our rebate for the 2011 show has not yet been received. Our 2012 show will be on March 31 which will be our 10th Anniversary show. We will offer sweeps for hunting retrievers. Carol A will relinquish the position as Trophy Chair for next year's Specialty to Connie Craig.

CCA: The CCA is cancelled this year, will be scheduled after 2012 Specialty.

Field: Training dates for this year are on the website. WC/WCX volunteers are in place, Todd C will shoot with other FLRC members. Hunt test is in the planning stages.

GRCCNY meeting 8/4/11

Submitted by Beth Shelmidine

Attendance: 16 members, 3 guests

Minutes were read from previous meeting and approved.

Report of the President:

1) Ray B saw that the IRS paperwork was completed, we are now legal to file with the IRS from this point on.

2) At the request of the AKC, as much as possible of our business with them will be done electronically. We have been using electronic services for field events and some other business already.

Report of the Secretary:

1) Brags were reported.

2) GRCA is looking to fill two positions on the Field Education Committee. Info was shared.

3) Various upcoming event and seminar flyers, and items of general interest were shared.

Report of the Treasurer: Balances given for three accounts. Recently paid bills included payment for Porta-johns at Three Rivers and deposit to Borios Restaurant for the awards dinner.

Committee Reports:

Specialty: Beth G reported the 2012 Specialty will be on March 31, which will be our 10th Anniversary show. She has secured judges, Beth Gerevics Macumber for Sweeps and Pluis Davern for Breed.

CCA: Tentatively scheduled for April 7, 2012, with evaluators firm by Oct 2011.

Golden Tales: Judi proposes newsletter will be forthcoming this weekend.

Field: Training dates for this year are on website. Details for WC/WCX are in place with 29 entered so far. Reminder that club volunteer staff will be essential for the 9/11 Hunt test as we have not hired ROTC kids this time. Super Singles will be Sunday, Sept 18 at Echoewood.

Legislation: No report.

Eye Clinic: Flyer to be in newsletter.

Rescue/Referral: Sallie has received into rescue a 7 week old puppy and she hopes to place it in an adoptive home rather than a foster home.

Awards Dinner: Deposit sent to Borios for Dec 11

Nomination Committee: The same nomination committee will serve again this year – Lennox, Wood, Mickinkle. MM by Ray B, 2nded by Maxine C, all in favor.

Continued on Pg. 16 ⇨

Continued on Pg. 16 ⇨

2012 GRCCNY SPECIALTY

Will You “Sponsor” a Class?

by Carol Allen

It is nine months until our April 2012 Specialty but our Trophy List has to be submitted this fall. Instead of providing trophies to the class winners, our Club sends a donation to the Golden Retriever Foundation. This donation is an accumulation of the contributions of our members. Our Club is proud of our members who make these donations instead of presenting "hardware" trophies at the Specialty.

If you are able to support a class, contact Carol Allen at (315) 469-7926 or carosal@twcny.rr.com. Select a class and ask if it is still available. Mention if you wish to have your donation “in memory of” or “in honor of”. All we need to know is pledges; we’ll send you a reminder in the spring when the pledged amount is due.

Many thanks to our members who have already pledged: Allen, Blaskiewicz, Clark, Greenfield, Lynn, McKloskey, K. Mickinkle, L. Mickinkle, Mueller, Puzon, Shelmidine and Wood.

The number in (\$) is the minimum pledge for that class. A greater amount may be pledged if that is your wish.

CONFORMATION:

- Best of Breed (\$50)
- Best of Opposite Sex (\$40)
- Best of Winners (\$30)
- Winners Dog (\$30)
- Winners Bitch (\$30)
- Reserve Winners Bitch (\$25)
- Open Dog (\$25)
- Open Bitch (\$25)
- Novice Dog (\$15)
- Novice Bitch (\$15)
- Best Puppy (\$25)
- 12-18 Month Dog (\$10)
- 12-18 Month Bitch (\$10)
- 9-12 Month Dog (\$10)
- 9-12 Month Bitch (\$10)
- 6-9 Month Dog (\$10)
- 6-9 Month Bitch (\$10)

- Veteran Dog, 8-10 Years (\$10)
- Veteran Bitch, 8-10 Years (\$10)

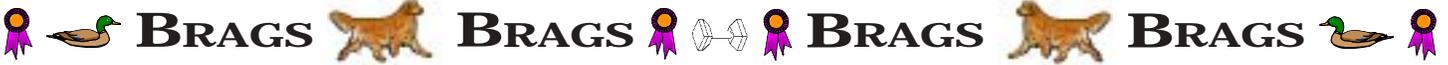
OBEDIENCE:

- High Scoring Golden in Trial (\$50)
- in Novice B (\$10)
- in Open B (\$10)
- in Utility B (\$10)

RALLY:

- High Scoring Golden in Rally Novice B (\$10)
- in Rally Advanced B (\$10)
- in Rally Excellent A (\$10)
- in Rally Excellent B (\$10)





Kelly Mueller reported JT (WayneWood's You've Got A Friend) completed his Beginner Novice (BN) obedience title.

Carol Lantiegne reports that Pokey (Adirondac Hocus Pocus) has been busy with field competition in Canada. On April 30 she took fourth place in her first-ever Derby at the Niagara Peninsula field trial derby, trained and handled by Dave Thompson. On May 14 Pokey took a Judges Award of Merit (JAM) in the derby stake at the South Western Ontario field trial. Then, following these accomplishments, Pokey WON the derby on May 22 at the Eastern Ontario Retriever Club field trial. She has now earned her Am/Can ** designation as a result of these qualifying runs.

Gail Puzon and Devon (One Ash Daredevil Devon) took first place with a 196.5 while earning his second Graduate Novice obedience leg. He has also earned one leg in Open B.

The Mickinkle/Blaskiewicz camp reports success with their girls in the obedience and agility rings. Tugger (Adirondac Tugs At Your Heart) has earned agility legs from Exc B JWW and Exc B Standard (taking 4th place). Tugger also earned her first Open (CDX) obedience leg. Comet (Topflite Shooting Star) has earned her CDX title as well as picking up two first place ribbons in agility from Open Standard and Exc A JWW. Blaze (Topflite Skye's Still On Fire) has earned her Novice (CD) obedience title.

Carol Lantiegne reports that Karma (Adirondac Kiss Me Karma) earned her Junior Hunter (JH) title in nine days over two consecutive weekends, at the tender age of only seven and a half months old.

Carol also notes that Laker (Adirondac Great Laker CD SH CCA WCX) and Jane (Calamity Jane of Adirondac SH WCX CCA) each recently had their third MH pass.

Continuing the field title theme, Martha Sturtz and Flyer (Adirondac Princess Firefly JH CCA WC) have earned a Senior Hunter (SH) title.

Beth Greenfield and Ada (Birch Run Heart of Westbrook) have been busy with Rally, taking first place while earning their first Rally Excellent (RE) leg.

Anne Wood's Molly (Tessahoc Bear Mountain Touch Of Gold CD RN) recently took a High Scoring Golden while earning two Open obedience legs.

Becky Byrns' boy Keeper (Lyn-D's He's A Keeper) has earned two legs in Novice obedience.

Kathy McCloskey and Cameo (Topflight Cameo Rose) have now earned two Utility (UD) obedience legs, in addition to a leg each for Excellent Standard (AX) and Excellent JWW (AXJ) agility.

Todd Clickner and Ada (MHR Scout's Ada Mae MH WCX) are still burning up the field competition, Ada is now a Grand Master Hunting Retriever.

Congratulations to all the above club members and their dogs!



Photos courtesy of Bruce Coleman

Audrey Coleman with Fanny.

Bruce and Audrey Coleman are proud of their girl Fanny (Blue Ribbon's Funny Girl CD MH WCX CGC), who earned her Master Hunter (MH) title on April 23 at the Labrador Retriever Club of Greater Boston hunt test. This was Fanny's fifth straight Master pass at hunt tests during March and April of this year. They are also pleased to note Fanny was trained and handled entirely by Audrey.

Sunday, October 6, 2011 10 am - 3 pm
Village Veterinary Hospital
Route 5, Canastota, NY

Our annual clinic will be conducted by Dr. Thomas Kern, DVM (Diplomate, ACVO) of Cornell University. "Cleared" dogs will be eligible for CERF registration (but you MUST have your dog's AKC registration number available to be recorded at the exam). We will do our best to schedule you according to your requested time, but please allow some flexibility, especially if you are bringing multiple dogs. Plan to arrive at least 20 minutes early to allow for administration of eye drops. You will be notified ONLY in the event that we can't accommodate your requested appointment time.

Examination Fees

First Dog - \$34.00 (\$32.00 for GRCCNY Members)
Each Additional Dog - \$32.00 (\$30.00 for Members)
Additional Charge for Walk-Ins - \$3.00

Please complete attached registration and mail to:

Patti Gambier
GRCCNY Eye Clinic Chairperson
PO Box 352
Rome, NY 13442-0352

If you have any questions, please call (315) 794-0355 or email me at zeropctdown@yahoo.com

Due to the high volume of attendees, we cannot verify appointment times. You will be notified ONLY in the event that we can't accommodate your requested time.

Advance Registration &
Appointment Time Request

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

GRCCNY Member? Yes ___ No ___

Please check your preferred appointment time:

___ 10am-11am ___ 11am-Noon ___ Noon-1pm
___ 1pm-2pm ___ 2pm-3pm

Please list all dogs to be examined and the registration number (and please bring the registration number with you)

Name: _____ Reg. No. _____

Use additional sheet if necessary

Fees Enclosed: _____
Make checks payable to GRCCNY (No Cash Please)

Patti Gambler
GRCNY Eye Clinic Chairperson
PO Box 352
Rome, NY 13442-0352

Canine All-Breed Eye Clinic

Conducted by Thomas Kern, DVM
of Cornell University
Diplomate, ACVO

"Cleared" dogs are eligible for CERF Registration

**Sunday, October 16, 2011
10 am - 3 pm**

**Village Veterinary Hospital
Rt. 5
Canastota, New York**

Sponsored as a service to ALL
Dog Fanciers by
The Golden Retriever
Club of Central New York



Canine All-Breed Eye Clinic

All About Titer Tests

by D. Caroline Coile, PhD

Blood testing for antibodies might help owners avoid over-vaccinating their dogs.

Vaccinations save lives, but over-vaccination can cost lives or, at least, imperil them.

In the early years of vaccinations, their work as lifesavers was heralded. The race was on to find more vaccines to prevent more diseases. Currently, we have vaccines against 18 different diseases in dogs. Although difficult to prove, it's now highly suspected that over-vaccination (vaccinating too frequently or giving too many vaccines) contributes to immunologic problems, including immune-mediated hemolytic anemia, chronic allergies, asthma and polyarthritis. But refusing all vaccinations, as advocated by some breeders, is not the answer. Instead, we should be more selective about which vaccinations are given and how often they are repeated. That choice begins in puppyhood.

The American Animal Hospital Association has made the selection of vaccinations easier by dividing them into core, non-core, and not-recommended. Core vaccinations are those recommended for all dogs: rabies, parvovirus, distemper and hepatitis. All puppies should receive these core vaccinations between 6 and 16 weeks of age, at three- to four-week intervals. The first vaccination against parvovirus, distemper and hepatitis (using the CAV-2 vaccine) should be given between 6 to 8 weeks of age, a second dose between 9 and 11 weeks, and a third dose from 12 to 14 weeks. Rabies vaccination is given between 12 and 16 weeks of age.

When Is It Enough?

Vaccinating more frequently than three- to four-week intervals does not boost immunity; in fact, vaccinating too soon after an earlier vaccination can render the second one ineffective. Puppies receive multiple vaccinations not because they have an additive effect, but because vaccines are ineffective on puppies that still have maternally derived immunity from antibodies they receive from their dam's first milk. Vaccinations are repeated so that they can catch the puppy at a time when its maternally derived antibodies have dwindled to a level at which vaccinations can be effective, yet leave the puppy vulnerable to disease for as little time as possible.

But how can you be certain the puppy is effectively immunized? Most puppies vaccinated with properly handled vaccines per the AAHA schedule are immune to those vaccinated diseases. But puppies of some breeds, most notably the Doberman Pinscher and Rottweiler (and, according to some sources, the American Pit Bull Terrier, German Shepherd Dog, Labrador Retriever, and even black-and-tan dogs in general) – and their crossbreeds – are more likely to require additional vaccinations to mount an adequate immune response to parvovirus. Nobody knows why, but some vaccinated puppies of these breeds succumb to parvo because their owners assumed they were effectively vaccinated when they weren't. One

Continued on Pg. 16 ⇨

AAHA-recommended vaccinations for dogs

Highly recommended (core):

Rabies
Distemper
Parvovirus
Adenovirus-2

Optional (non-core):

Bordetella
Leptospirosis
Lyme
Parainfluenza (when given in combination with the core vaccines)

Not recommended for routine use:

Distemper-measles (given to puppies only)

Not recommended:

Adenovirus-1
Coronavirus
Giardia



Rescue Reporter - By Carol Allen

Your Club endorses and promotes the work of Golden Retriever Rescue of Central NY and encourages your individual support through membership, donations and volunteered assistance. For more information contact Carol Allen at 315-469-7926.

The Challenges We Face Now (2011)

At the mid-point of 2011, 2 of the 95 Golden Retriever Rescue programs have closed – clearly not for a lack of dogs to rehome, and only marginally for a lack of money although each dollar requires more effort to bring in while operating costs, particularly veterinary costs, are rising. The reason is for a lack of human resources and a scarcity of new volunteers willing to accept leadership roles. Many of the programs resemble one another: formed 10-20 years ago by 2-3 people (90% of whom were women) who then had the time, passion and energy to develop and nurture an organization with a purpose near and dear to their hearts. Most of these programs remained small, aiming to meet the local need and did so with wonderful results. Hundreds of thousands of Golden Retrievers have been rehomed over those years.

Fast forward to 2011. It is no surprise that those same volunteers who formed the programs and brought them into maturity are themselves aging. And as most not-for-profit organizations will indicate, volunteerism across the country is considerably down as people have less and less time to give to anything but family, work (or the search for it) and financial matters. The same volunteers who developed the organizations and took such good care of the dogs for so long rarely have the energy and perhaps not the personal inclination to recruit, train and develop replacements. The number of things that a person must do and be good at is part of the problem. This affects the smaller programs the most as their human resource base is lower to begin with; the more people a program has, the greater the likelihood that there will be one or more who are really good at recruitment, are enthusiastic and are skilled at development. But

the long-term key people are tired and burned out and for some being President of a program for many, many years feels like a life sentence. Their programs never had the luxury of term limits. These people would welcome being replaced by enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers and this is compounded by a reluctance to turn over to someone with less commitment than themselves the very program into which they have poured years of time, energy, their own money and, yes, tears. They are very “hands on” with the dogs and also prefer face-to-face human contact, preferring to go to a meeting rather than Go to Meeting. They are not “arm’s length” administrators.

While none of the larger programs have closed, they are facing hurdles of their own, different than the smaller programs but no less challenging. In many cases, the founders are still active but as the newer volunteers gain experience it is no surprise that they bring with them new methods and ideas. There is a “culture clash” of sorts occurring in some programs and we’re hearing from the long-term leaders that “I don’t like the direction the program is going.” There have been “hostile takeovers,” damaged relationships and an occasional stressful but rarely easy transition. Many long-term volunteers, brought with reluctance 15 years ago into the world of computers and email, are finding the age of Facebook, tweets and apps a difficult transition.

The second decade of the 21st century promises to be a challenging one. We must be up to the challenge for the same reasons we formed in the first place: the Golden need us.

Skunked!

Never a pleasant occurrence, and it always happens right before bedtime since skunks are nocturnal. Keep these ingredients on hand and mix just before using: 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup baking soda and 1 to 2 tablespoons liquid castile soap. Apply mixture to a DRY dog and let sit for about 10 minutes, then rinse and bathe dog as usual. Follow up with a spritz of Listerine to the mouth and ears, which will help neutralize skunk spray in areas that cannot be bathed with the peroxide mixture.



Should You Buy Pet Insurance?

by Doug Kenney, DVM

If you are the typical person in America today, you probably have several different types of insurance. If you own a home, you likely have homeowners insurance. If you own a car, you likely have auto insurance. You may also have life insurance, disability insurance, or health insurance. But what about pet insurance?

I frequently read discussions about pet insurance on pet forums. One question that is often asked is, "Should I buy pet insurance?"

You would buy pet insurance for the same reason you buy any type of insurance. You buy it to help pay for large, unexpected or unplanned veterinary bills for which you would have trouble paying for out-of-pocket.

The definition of "large" may be \$500 to \$600 for some pet owners, while for others it may be \$5,000 to \$6,000. This is why pet insurance policies aren't one size fits all.

Pet healthcare expenses fall into two categories:

1. Wellness care (some call it routine expenses) – e.g., annual or semi-annual examinations, vaccinations as needed, heartworm and intestinal parasite testing, heartworm preventative medication, monthly flea and tick control products, dental prophylaxis, early disease detection lab tests, spaying or neutering, etc. Because you can approximate the cost for this

care and when they will occur every year, you can plan and save for these procedures. They aren't unexpected.

2. Accidents or illnesses – e.g., accidental poisoning, foreign body ingestion, fractures, lacerations, acute or chronic diseases, etc. These are, by nature, unplanned or unexpected and sometimes expensive, especially if care is administered at an emergency hospital or if you are referred to a specialist. These expenses are why pet owners usually consider purchasing pet insurance.

A pet insurance company recently surveyed claims they had received that were \$500 or more. Almost half the claims were for pets seen

at an emergency hospital or specialty hospital. Most major metropolitan areas now have at least one emergency and/or specialty facility.

Specialists are more highly trained, solve and treat more difficult cases, have access to and use more advanced technology (e.g., CT scans or MRIs). Emergency hospitals often deal with life-threatening problems that need intensive care or even emergency surgery – usually at hours when your regular veterinarian's hospital isn't open.

For these reasons, the fees at specialty and emergency hospitals

Continued on Pg. 17 ➔

Why Insurance Coverage for Hereditary Conditions Is a Big Deal

by Doug Kenney, DVM

Some pet owners who have investigated pet insurance have complained about what they felt were numerous exclusions or loopholes that would allow a pet insurance company to easily deny claims. This has led them to conclude that pet insurance isn't worth it. One of the exclusions they frequently mention is coverage for hereditary conditions.

These are conditions that have a proven or suspected genetic basis or cause. Many times these conditions are commonly seen in certain breeds; for example, hip dysplasia in some large breed dogs, luxating patellas (dislocating kneecaps) in some small breed dogs, idiopathic epilepsy (seizures) in Beagles, polycystic kidneys in Persian cats, or cardiomyopathy in Ragdoll cats.

If you are considering the purchase of a policy from a company that doesn't cover hereditary conditions, ask for a list of conditions that aren't covered – preferably in a sample policy. Some companies will furnish you with a list of conditions they consider hereditary, and if it isn't on the list, it's covered. They may even offer limited coverage for the conditions on the list. Others may not have a list available for viewing and say they rely on lists of hereditary conditions in current veterinary textbooks, etc. You

Continued on Pg. 17 ➔

Rescued Golden Becomes a Rescuer

by Jeffrey Pepper

On March 11, a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck northern Japan. Almost immediately, USAID placed the search-and-rescue teams of men, women, and dogs that make up California Task Force 2, based in the Los Angeles area, on alert for deployment to the disaster area. The six dog-handler teams attached to CA-TF2 were all trained by the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (SDF). The dogs, all rescued from shelters throughout the U.S. but primarily from California, are an integral part of the teams. All the dog-handler teams have received certification from FEMA as Canine Search and Rescue teams.

Baxter, a young Golden Retriever with extremely high play-drive and an ultra-high energy level, had been rescued from the streets from northern California in late 2005 by Mike and Jody Jones, of Homeward Bound Rescue and Sanctuary. Earlier that year, Homeward Bound had received a letter from me through SDF that introduced the group to shelters and briefly explained the kind of dogs SDF seeks from cooperating shelters.

In February 2006, a SDF volunteer brought Baxter to the attention of SDF, and after testing he was accepted into the training program. SDF's lead trainer, Pluis Davern (who is also a Golden breeder and a conformation and field-trial judge), quickly realized Baxter's potential. She asked me if I would sponsor the dog's training, and I agreed right away.

After about eight months of training, Baxter was ready to move on to the next step: placement with a firefighter. Handlers are brought to the training facility for orientation and then are each assigned a dog, based on the trainer's evaluation of the temperaments of both dog and firefighter. When the group of new handlers was introduced to the dogs, Baxter made his own choice, running straight over to Gary Durian of the L.A. County Fire Department – and a new search-and-rescue team was born.

Gary and Baxter began training together and quickly became a team. Gary's training-group leader, Marc Valentine, remarked, "Baxter is phenomenal. He's

steady and dependable on rubble, and dynamic when searching."

A year later, Gary and Baxter had received FEMA certification and were ready to be deployed. Their first deployment was in 2008, to search for survivors in the wake of hurricanes Gustav and Ike. They were also deployed to local disasters such as mudslides, building collapses, and vehicle accidents in the Los Angeles area.

In January 2010, the team was part of CA-TF2's deployment following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Gary and Baxter were deployed to Port-au-Prince, where they searched for 16 days, combing the wreckage for survivors under the acres of concrete and debris. Together with the six other teams, Gary and Baxter helped find 12 survivors who were brought to safety.

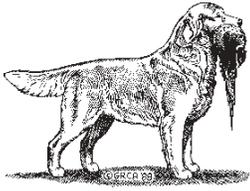
Baxter and Gary traveled to New York in November of last year, where the pair again proved their skills and passed their FEMA recertification testing.

On March 12, Gary and Baxter were part of the 72-man group from California Task Force 2 airlifted to Japan, along with Virginia Task Force 2, to comb the rubble for survivors in what had once been cities, towns, and villages. The six Canine Disaster Search Dog Teams trained by SDF again went to work shortly after arriving. They worked until March 20 searching devastated areas to make certain that no survivors went undiscovered. The teams returned home safely on March 21.

The National Search Dog Foundation currently has more than 100 trained teams provided at no cost to fire departments throughout the country. For more information about the work of this nonprofit foundation that receives no taxpayer funding, visit searchdogfoundation.org.

This article first appeared as the Golden Retriever breed column in the July 2011 issue of AKC Gazette and is reprinted with permission.





Our Club's Column in *Golden Retriever News*

By Carol Lantiegne, Club Correspondent

Carol's submissions to Golden Retriever Club of America for publication in Golden Retriever News appear here for the benefit of members who have not yet joined GRCA.

And Then There Were Eight!

I'll never claim to have all the answers, but after whelping dozens of litters, I might be guilty of a touch of complacency. There are those who religiously take pre-whelp x-rays or confirm pregnancy with sonograms, but I've usually taken my chances and trusted Mother Nature and my old-fashioned bitches to simply git-r-done. In the fall of 2010, though, I had a rude awakening that fortunately ended OK.

The whelping was the first for "Missy," a pup I had sold. She developed into such a fine working dog, with multiple titles including being licensed by New York State to legally search for wounded deer, that her owner decided to have a litter. I agreed to oversee the breeding, whelping and raising of the litter. I figured, no big deal – there's no reason to expect anything out of the ordinary. True to form, the first pup appeared on the scene at 10:50 p.m. So going to be a typical all nighter. Number 2 came along an hour and 15 minutes later. The next came in 20 minutes – next an hour – next 3 ½ hours, then 45 minutes later we had #6 at 5:45 a.m. Missy ate and drank and went outdoors, and gave all indications that she was done. She did return to the landscape bed and do a little digging in her "nest," which is perfectly normal behavior. She wasn't uncomfortable or anxious... returned to the puppies and settled in. Then, lo and behold – at 8:55 p.m., the head count showed another healthy pup... 15 hours after the last. An oxytocin

injection resulted in some half-hearted contractions as expected, and Missy's owner and I were convinced our beautiful litter of seven was complete. Fast forward to 1 p.m., a full 40 hours later when #8 emerged. He was a tad smaller than his siblings and perhaps not as vigorous, but was certainly not in significant distress. Some added attention to making sure he nursed had him doing fine in a few days.

One of my personal "theories" has been that daughters and their fertility and whelping patterns tend to resemble their mother's. Missy's dam was one of the easiest whelpers ever, as was her grand-dam. I never would have anticipated the whelping of eight puppies would stretch out over 58 hours, *and* have everyone happy and healthy at the end. You can bet we'll be x-raying Missy next time! Uterine inertia can happen even in the best of families.

At our annual holiday awards dinner, 26 Golden Retrievers and their owners were recognized for attaining titles in 2010. Martha Sturtz won the "Heart of Gold" award for her essay about her dog, ADIRONDAC PRINCESS FIREFLY, and everything Flyer means to her. The 2010 Versatility Award went to Mark and Beth Shelmidine and CAN CH SHOR'LINE CUTTIN THRU RUFF SEAS CD RA WC NJP CCA, for earning a total of seven titles within the award year.



From the Mailbag...



In the last issue a question was posed – how did you decide on a name for your dog? The following were received:

From Beth Shelmidine: Cutter and Cash are named in keeping with Cynthia (Binder)'s nautical theme. Cutter is Shor'Line Cuttin' Thru Ruff Seas. My uncle suggested Cutter because it is a single masted sailing vessel with two sails (think a kid's drawing of a boat), and he's a retired Navy commander so he would know! Cash is from the "pirate" litter so Shor'Line Search for Sunken Treasure yields cash! And Kylee was before, and now without Tess, is again Laramie's N' Kylee Makes Three. Mr. "We don't need 4 dogs" will tell you we won't be naming anyone again any time soon! But then, you

never know...

From Beth Greenfield: Westbrook has traditionally gone with names that reflect about things that are going on at the time the litter is born – Brees is named after MVP Superbowl QB Drew Brees, her long name is Westbrook Heart of Bramisole which is the name of the home in "Under the Tuscan Sun" which I read that summer. Ada was from Sue Birch's "heart" litter – from her husband having a heart transplant. Her short name of Ada is a Civil War name from the book "Cold Mountain." I went to a meeting and the speakers talked about an important general whose daughter was "Ada," that cemented it.

Teaching the Recall

Tips for teaching this useful, often lifesaving command.

by Kathy Santo

The number-one command that I'm asked (and begged!) to teach a dog is the *come* command. This makes sense, considering that without a reliable response to the command, many owners are at their wit's end attempting to coax an unwilling dog back to safety. Loose-dog situations range from comical (dog refusing to come inside from its fenced yard, causing the owner to chase after it in her bathrobe), to serious (dog running loose in its fenced yard, refusing to come and making the owner late for her job interview), to deadly (dog running loose near a busy intersection). In a pinch, but without any reliability, some dogs can be lured into the house or back to their owners' arms by classic tricks such as the sound of a box of dog treats being shaken, or with bribes of "Who wants to go for a ride?" Those of you who've been in that situation know the fear and frustration that occur when your dog refuses to come when called; those of you with new dogs or puppies don't ever want to experience it. The good news is that both the old dog and the new dog will be able to learn an airtight *recall* command.

STEP ONE: TEACH YOUR DOG HIS NAME

Yes, I know, he's 3 years old and you think that he knows it, but if he doesn't look at you expectantly when you say his name, then it needs some work. Start by having his most favorite thing in the world in your possession every minute you're with him. For some dogs this may be deli turkey slices, for some it may be a tennis ball, and for some it may be a ratty old stuffed toy (sorry!). During the first few days, alert him to the fact that you have "the thing" by showing it to him, and say his name. Odds are that he's going to be next to you and looking at you, so lavishly praise him and *immediately* give him his reward – in the case of food, a *small* tidbit (you don't want a 500-pound dog!); in the case of a toy, a short play session. Build up to being farther away and saying his name. After a very short while, your dog will come running over to you when he hears *you* call his name – after all, you're now a human Pez dispenser.

After a week of this, start giving the rewards more randomly, with the exception of verbal and physical

praise, which should be given every time.

STEP TWO: CHANGE THE COMMAND

If your dog were suddenly gifted with the power of speech and you asked him what the word *come* meant, more than likely he would say either "I don't know" or give a totally wrong definition (as in, "It means if I don't have anything better to do, then I should go see if she has a treat for me"). It's easier to teach a dog a new word than it is to teach a new meaning of an old word, so start the process by changing the command. My students who were previously using *come* usually switch to the word *here*.

STEP THREE: TEACH IT

Now that you're ready to start teaching the new command, let's make sure you have the right equipment: a four- to six-foot leash (attached to your dog's collar), your dog's favorite treat or toy, and an uninterrupted block of time (10-20 minutes). To maximize your training, be sure that your dog is ready to learn and not tired from recent exercise or full from a meal. Ideally your dog should be hungry, lonely, and bored, and therefore excited at the prospect of spending time with you and earning rewards. Which reminds me – rewards, whether a toy or food, should be something your dog would literally jump through hoops for. And if it is a toy, please keep it out of your dog's daily toy rotation so it doesn't lose its appeal.

Holding the short leash, say your dog's name (and I bet he'll look at you, too!) and the command *here*. Run backward a few feet and keep your lure (food or toy) in your outstretched hand. Stop backing up and bring into and against the center of your body (level with your dog's eye line) – it should be closely followed by your dog. Once your dog has been lured in (your hand is still against your body), let him nibble the treat and hook a finger in his collar. *That's* the moment you release the lure into the dog's mouth and say "OK!" Praise exuberantly and repeat. If you say the

Continued on Pg. 18 ⇨

⇒ Titers (Cont from Pg. 9)

solution is to continue to vaccinate puppies from these at-risk groups for longer, until 22 weeks of age or more. But with the caveat against over-vaccination, many owners balk at this option because puppies that have sufficient immunity continue to receive unnecessary vaccinations. If only there were some way to gauge if a puppy was effectively vaccinated. There is: vaccination titers.

Titer Tutorial

A titer is a measurement of how much antibody to a certain disease agent, such as a virus, is present in the blood. The measurement is expressed as a ratio, such as 1:2, or 1:64. The higher the second number, the larger the number of antibodies present. So what's the magic number? Unfortunately, the cut-off is not so black and white. That, added to the expense and time involved in sending blood to testing laboratories, has traditionally made titer testing less popular than simple revaccinating.

But recent in-house titer tests have made testing affordable, timely and capable of yielding clearer results. These tests are available for parvovirus, distemper and hepatitis. Titer tests allow the veterinarian to assess maternal antibody levels to ensure puppies are adequately protected shortly after birth; to follow the decline of antibody levels to better estimate when a vaccine will be effective; and to check antibody levels after vaccination in hard-to-immunize breeds. The latter should be checked between 14 and 21 days after the last vaccination because the immune system might take that long to complete its response to the vaccination. Note that the test doesn't discriminate between maternally derived antibodies and those from vaccination, so don't assume a young puppy with a high titer needs no more vaccinations unless the titer was previously low.

Duration of Immunity

Associated with the quest for fewer vaccines is the question of how often dogs must be revaccinated with boosters. In the early days of canine vaccine science, nobody knew how long a vaccine would protect against disease. The first vaccines for canine distemper were tested in the 1950s. When dogs were tested one year after vaccination, about one-third of the dogs had antibody titers that were considered too

low to be protective. This led to the first recommendation for annual revaccination.

As early as 1961, Dr. S. Piercy wrote in the *Veterinary Record* that although titers would be the scientific way to check if dogs needed revaccination, owners would likely balk at what it entails: paying for titer testing, waiting for the results, then revisiting the veterinarian and paying for a booster should one be required. As a matter of expediency, yearly boosters were advised. This has been the prevailing practice until the last few years.

Vaccine Advancements and Limitations

Vaccines have improved since those early days, and titer tests and disease-challenge tests (in which a vaccinated dog is exposed to a disease) have indicated that most vaccines impart immunity for several years, and possibly for the life of the dog. The AAHA revised its guidelines in 2003 to recommend that boosters be given every three years instead of annually. But some owners believe this is still too often. Can titer tests be used to tell them when their dog is "low" on antibodies? Probably not, but they can be useful nonetheless. A positive titer test can tell you that the dog has sufficient immunity, but a negative test in an adult doesn't necessarily mean the dog has insufficient immunity.

This is because antibodies rise shortly after being exposed to a disease (or vaccination for that disease). But the immune system is complex; it doesn't just flood the body with antibodies forever. When the disease agent is no longer threatening, the number of antibodies gradually declines, and the titer test results would reflect this. But that doesn't mean the dog has lost immunity. The immune system has "memory cells" that retain the ability to recognize invaders the body has previously been exposed to (or vaccinated against), and quickly produce the proper type of antibodies against it. Titers don't measure memory cells, so the fact that a dog has a low titer months or even years after vaccination doesn't necessarily mean it has lost its immunity.

That doesn't mean your dog never needs boosters. Rabies boosters are mandated by law in most states every three years, or in a few states, every year – despite the fact that the rabies vaccination almost

Continued on Pg. 16 ⇒

⇒ June Minutes (Cont from Pg. 4)

Golden Tales: Judi Q requests submissions ASAP, July 1 publish date tentative.

Rescue/Public Education: Carol A reported national stats of 95 groups reporting, there were over 11,000 GR rescues last year.

Eye Clinic: Oct 16, flyer will be prepared.

New Members: Bobbie Vassallo, second reading, voted on favorably.

Unfinished Business: Constitution and Bylaw revision Proposed change #1 to the Constitution and Bylaws Article 1 – Name and Purposes, Section 2(d), (new text in bold)

(d) to conduct Dog Shows and Performance Tests and trials under the rules and regulations of the American Kennel Club and the Golden Retriever Club of America. **This could include conformation, obedience, rally, agility, tracking, and field events, and any future events of the American Kennel Club or the Golden Retriever Club of America.**

MM by Maxine C and 2nded by Ray B to use text as proposed. Motion passed.

Proposed change #2 to the Constitution and Bylaws Article 1 – Name and Purposes, Section 2(e), (new text in red)

(e) To provide Public Education services to the general public relative to the breed and breeding, and its care and training needs **and to encourage and support rescue operations that involve the Golden Retriever.**

MM made by Maxine C and 2nded by Sallie L to use text as proposed. Motion passed.

President Kathy McCloskey will alter the Constitution to reflect these changes, and adjust revision date accordingly.

New Business:

- 1) Kathy, Carol and Ray will proceed as necessary to complete IRS documents
- 2) SOTC Pet Expo Oct 22, shared booth space will be set up with rescue to promote Golden Retrievers, at a cost of \$12.50 for each club.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM. Next meeting 6/2/11.

⇒ August Minutes (Cont from Pg. 4)

New Members: Frank and Jean Shepherd of West Monroe, second reading, voted on favorably.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

1) MM by Ray B and 2nded by Suzi Mac to donate \$100 locally themed basket of goodies to the raffle at the National Specialty next month. Carol and Sallie will see that it gets done and transport. All in favor.

2) Discussion of getting a club credit or debit card for expenditures so that the purchasing members do not have their personal monies tied up before the club can make reimbursements. Tabled for further investigation with our banking institution.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 PM. Next meeting Sept 15.



⇒ Titters (Cont from Pg. 15)

certainly lasts for longer. The risks to human health are considered to outweigh the risks of repeated vaccination. In some hardship cases (in which the dog's health makes vaccination especially risky), titers might be acceptable. But again, a low titer might not indicate lack of immunity. Some other vaccines, notably those against bacterial infections, such as leptospirosis and Bordetella, might induce immunity for only a year or less, and must be repeated to maintain immunity.

Custom Immunity

Vaccination is a medical procedure, and as such, is not a one-size-fits-all undertaking. Titer-testing makes tailoring vaccinations to individuals possible, and although it might not provide the perfect answer for adult dogs, it can prevent some puppies from being vaccinated too much, and others from being unprotected.

This article first appeared in the August 2011 issue of Dog World magazine and is reprinted with permission.

⇒ Insurance (Cont from Pg. 11)

are usually higher than what you would pay at your regular veterinarian's hospital. Specialty and emergency hospitals (when needed) play an important role, along with your regular veterinarian, in providing quality healthcare to your pet, and can often be the difference between successful or unsuccessful treatment of your pet. Therefore, pet owners are starting to look more closely at pet insurance as a way to help bridge the gap between the quality of healthcare they need or want for their pet and what they can afford.

According to another recent pet insurance survey, a majority of respondents would be willing to spend "anything" to save their pet. It has been my experience, however, that when I present the cost of a diagnostic or treatment plan to pet owners, the reality of the situation sets in – and some aren't so sure of the answer anymore.

Dr. Barry Kipperman, an internist at a California 24-hour emergency and specialty hospital, stated that he frequently hears pet owners say, "I never imagined that it would cost this much to save my pet's life."

If your pet was sick or injured and required surgery and an extended hospital stay and the bill was \$10,000, \$5,000, or \$3,000, could you afford to pay for it? If not, then you should at least look into purchasing pet health insurance.

The primary consideration for some pet owners contemplating the purchase of pet insurance may not be "could" I afford such a bill, but "would" I be willing to spend that amount of money on my pet. For some pet owners, the answer is "no." Therefore, pet insurance would be of little benefit.

I believe that more and more clients will purchase pet insurance in the future because technology and the costs of delivering quality healthcare to pets have outpaced the ability of many pet owners to pay for it. Consequently, veterinarians and pet owners will have to become familiar with pet health insurance. While pet owners and veterinarians alike can benefit by third party payment to help pay for the healthcare of pets, I'm convinced the real winners will be the pets.

For more questions to ask yourself when contemplating the purchase of pet insurance, visit petMD's Pet

Insurance Center (www.petmd.com/centers/insurance).

The above article appeared on PetMD's The Daily Vet website at http://www.petmd.com/blogs/thedailyvet/dkenney/2011/may/should_you_buy_pet_insurance and is reprinted with permission of PetMD.

⇒ Hereditary (Cont from Pg. 11)

might be surprised how long some of these lists can be.

You should also inquire about whether congenital conditions are covered. These are problems that the pet was born with, such as a congenital heart defect or liver shunt. Some companies won't cover congenital conditions (even if they cover hereditary conditions) because they consider them pre-existing, since they had the problem from birth – i.e., prior to your purchasing a policy. However, there are companies that will cover congenital problems as long as they weren't known about or diagnosed by a veterinarian prior to the effective date of your policy.

For example, if you take your new puppy in for a wellness examination and vaccinations and on physical exam your veterinarian hears a heart murmur that the puppy likely had since birth, it won't be covered if you later purchase a policy. However, if you purchase a policy and several months later the puppy starts showing signs of illness and a liver shunt is diagnosed (which is congenital – the puppy was born with it), that would be covered because symptoms developed after you purchased the policy.

While coverage for hereditary conditions is a significant factor when selecting a policy for your pet, coverage for congenital problems is just a bonus because a pet is much more likely to develop a condition considered hereditary than it is to be born with a congenital problem.

From a veterinarian's perspective, I believe coverage for hereditary conditions is essential. I have seen instances where the insurance company considered a condition hereditary and the veterinarian did not, but unfortunately the insurance company's opinion is the one that counts and the claim was rejected. In

Continued on Pg. 18 ⇒

⇒ Recall (Cont from Pg. 14)

command and your dog *doesn't* turn and come to you, fear not: The fact that you're running backward while holding the end of a leash that he's attached to will ensure he arrives promptly.

STEP FOUR: TEST IT!

So now you have a dog that comes when you call him in a distraction-free area, but what would happen if you were in a crowded park or at your child's soccer game? My guess is he'd revert to his old patterns. So, to ensure that your dog's training holds up in the real world, it's time to introduce some distractions. Make a list of potential distractions and put them in categories of easy, challenging, and really difficult. Master the easy ones first, and when you have a confident, happy, recalling dog, move on to the next level, and then the next. Take your time and don't rush the process. I'm not as interested in how long it takes a dog to master a command as I am in the fact that the dog *does* master it in the end.

When you notice that your dog won't leave your side (no doubt anticipating the next *here* command), start adding distractions such as new locations, or people interacting with your dog. Always say the command once and be sure to praise and reward profusely when your dog arrives. Does your dog say "No, thank you" to your *here* command? If so, proceed with caution. While a tug on the leash is suitable correction for a dog who's refusing to do what you've asked because he was distracted or just didn't feel like it, a confused or fearful dog would most likely be traumatized by that reaction. In those cases, reteaching or going through the steps slower will help build your dog's confidence, and soon he'll be coming to you like a pro.

As your dog's proficiency increases, you can progress to using longer leashes and more difficult distractions. The golden rule of teaching the *here* command is that during the training period, *never* call your dog to come unless you're holding a leash he's attached to. If you do and he refuses to come, you've just taught him that the command *here* is optional, and now you're back to square one.

LONG LINE IN THE YARD

So you think just because he comes when you call him on a six-foot leash that when you turn him loose in

your backyard he's going to run to you the minute you call him? Maybe the first time or two, but trust me, your dog knows the score in your yard – and at this point, it's dog: 78, you: 0. Dogs learn by experience, and his experience with being loose in your yard is that you can't catch him. Clear up his confusion by attaching a 10- or 20-foot-long leash to his collar and supervising his romps in the yard. That way, if you call him (using his new command) and he decides to go into "catch me" mode, this time you actually can. Walk toward the end of the leash and step on it; then, doing your best impression of a high-wire act, walk on it until you arrive at a dog. Calmly place your hand in his collar and guide him back to where you originally called him from, praise, and release.

Teaching a better *come* command takes time and commitment. The most common problem is that somewhere in the process people wonder, "What would happen if I took his leash off?" I'll tell you what will happen – he'll probably run away. Maybe not the first time or two that you call him, but eventually he will revert to his old habits, and you'll have set yourself back a few weeks in training. Commit a few months – yes, *months!* – to retraining and you'll have a rock-solid recall.

Kathy Santo trains dogs for home and competition. She is the author of *Kathy Santo's Dog Sense* and a regular guest on *The Martha Stewart Show*.

This article first appeared in the July/August 2010 issue of AKC Family Dog magazine and is reprinted with permission.

⇒ Hereditary (Cont from Pg. 17)

order to avoid this situation, buy a policy from a company that covers hereditary conditions, preferably up to the full per-incident or annual maximum.

By reading a sample policy, you should be able to determine if hereditary conditions are covered and if there are any limits or restrictions on coverage.

The above article appeared on PetMD's The Daily Vet website at http://www.petmd.com/blogs/thedailyvet/dkennedy/2011/may/Why_Insurance_Coverage_for_Hereditary_Conditions_Is_a_Big_Deal and is reprinted with permission of PetMD.



Views from the Doghouse

By Judi Questel, Editor

*Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of "management."
This column is the price y'all have to pay for stickin' me with this job.*

AKC Breeder of Merit

I consider myself a serious hobby breeder – as do several other GRCCNY members. We strive to produce healthy puppies who conform to the Golden Retriever breed standard. We “do things” with our dogs – therapy work, compete in various venues, include them in our daily lives. I know for myself that I spend considerably more time on public education regarding what to look for in a good breeder and how to pick the right dog for a family, and then proper training of said puppy, than I do actually raising and placing pups. And I certainly don't do it for the money – my dogs and I would be homeless and starving if I attempted to live on what is actually realized from the sale of a litter.

In this day and age we are battling more than just newspaper ads for backyard bred dogs when John Q Public is looking for a new puppy. Those ads can be, and often are, for sources selling more than the occasional accidental (or poorly thought out intentional) breeding of the family dog. There is also the internet presence – both reputable breeders and puppy mills alike can be found at the click of a mouse.

The American Kennel Club has made an attempt to assist potential puppy buyers in their decision by offering a Breeder of Merit distinction. According to the AKC website, “The Breeder of Merit Program honors breeder/exhibitors' dedication and hard work as they continue to produce dogs that are healthy, capable and beautiful. The foundation of today's AKC, Breeders of Merit have the power to influence, guide, and teach future breeders, exhibitors, and all purebred dog owners.”

The requirements to become a Breeder of Merit include having a history of at least five years involvement with AKC events, earned at least four AKC titles on dogs they have bred or co-bred, being a member of an AKC club, certification that applicable health screening is done on breeding stock as recommended by the Parent Club, and demonstrating a commitment to ensuring 100% of puppies produced are AKC registered.

As of this writing, GRCCNY has at least four members who have been recognized with Breeder of Merit status. I am sure there are probably a few more that may be eligible as well. Yes, I am among those four.

It isn't lost on me that AKC has a financial motive for

promoting this program, especially with the last requirement of puppy registration. It is well known that revenues from dog registrations have been declining for several years, and I'm sure that was a driving force behind their ILP/PAL and Canine Partners programs. However, I have always had a practice of making sure all my pups were registered as the lion's share have been sold to pet homes on AKC Limited Registration status and therefore this requirement really didn't force a change to my normal routine.

I do appreciate some of the benefits extended to Breeders of Merit, especially those pertaining to online records and pedigree research. Other “benefits” are more fluff but the ability to access records can be extremely helpful when planning a breeding.

I think the application process could have been more stringent in requiring documentation to back up a breeder's claims, however, especially when it comes to what health clearances are routinely done. Other information on the application could be verified by looking through AKC records, but actually researching application information could be time consuming. On-line tools such as the OFA and CHIC databases are helpful but only if you have the dog's registered name and/or number to start with. I highly doubt AKC is going beyond the honor system when reviewing applications, and I believe their disclaimer of “The Breeder of Merit Program does not imply a recommendation of a breeder by AKC” is a nod to this practice.

I also think AKC could have streamlined their listing of Breeder of Merit recipients, to include a cross reference to what breed(s) they work with. At present an inquiry will pull up all breeders in a particular state, listed in alphabetical order, but that's all. You get more information from a CGC evaluator search than you do from the Breeder of Merit listing. To me it just seems like somewhat of a disservice to potential new puppy owners for this information to be so obscure.

In the long run having Breeder of Merit status is nice – a “feather in the cap” so to speak – but it certainly shouldn't allow us to become complacent nor should potential puppy families use it as a sole deciding factor when seeking a breeder. Buyers and breeders alike still need to do their homework.



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Label



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Meetings

All meetings at Gander Mountain's Community Room, 5864 Carmenica Drive, Cicero unless otherwise indicated. Exit #30 from I-81 (next to Cracker Barrel Restaurant).

September 15 (Thurs)
7:00^{PM} General Meeting

October 20 (Thurs)
7:00^{PM} General Meeting

Activities

Field Training Day - Aug 13
Three Rivers WMA - Baldwinsville

Field Training Day - Aug 20
Three Rivers WMA - Baldwinsville

AKC Hunt Test - Sept 10/11
Three Rivers WMA - Baldwinsville

Super Singles - Sept 18
Echoewood - Mexico

Eye Clinic - Oct 16
Village Veterinary Clinic - Wampsville

Awards Dinner - Dec 12
Borios Restaurant, Cicero

In case of inclement weather, information regarding meeting or event cancellations may be obtained by calling Kathy McCloskey - 315-233-9571