



HEARTS OF GOLD

Newsletter of Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida, Inc.

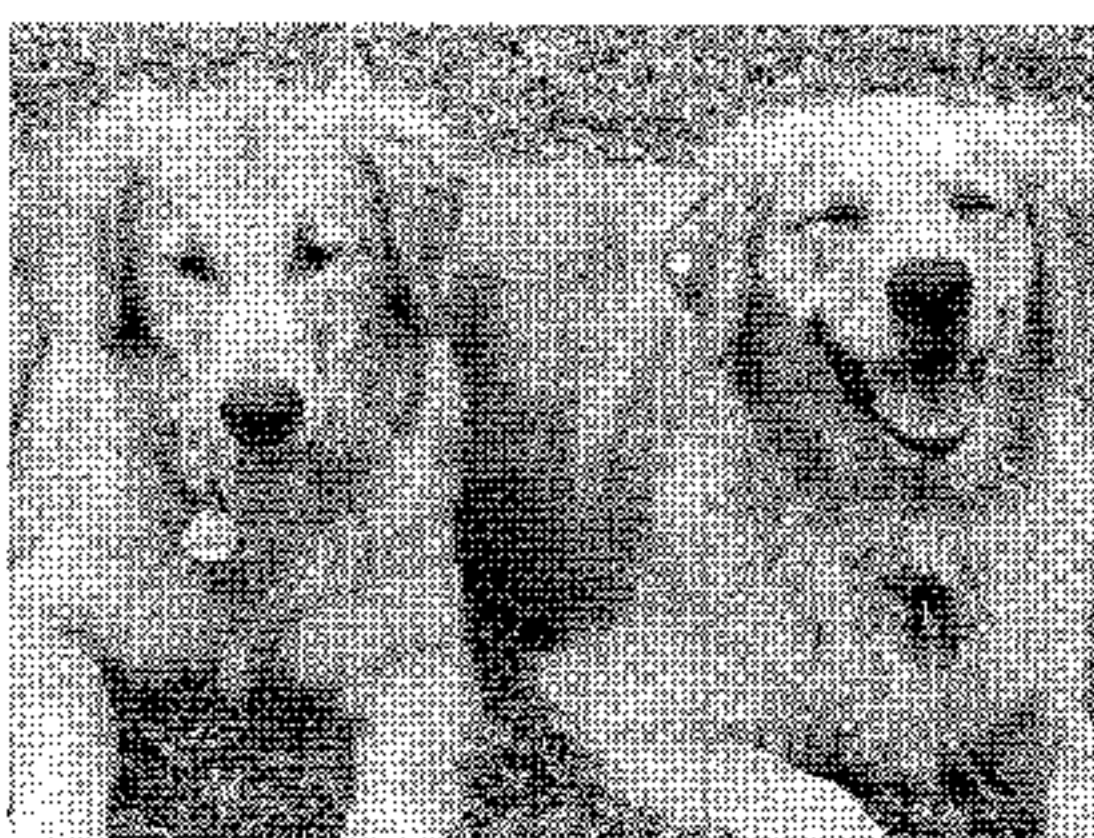
Volume 7, Issue 2

Summer 2004



Reunion Recap

Hundreds of goldens and their humans attended our Annual Rescue Reunion March 20 - photos on Page 14-15.



Look at Me Now!

Ava, our cover dog from a previous issue, has found her forever home. Read about how she is doing on Page 5.



From Sadness to Joy

Read about Primo's journey from death row to a wonderful new home on Page 11.



I'm Adopted!

Review our most recent adoptions starting on Page 3.

Buckethead No More!

by Carol McKee

It seemed appropriate. Outside, it was raining buckets. Traffic was crawling on the interstates between Southwest Florida and Orlando. And inside the vehicle was another bucket. But this one was on the head of a golden retriever.

Meet Dakota - AKA "Buckethead" - a 9-year-old with severe skin problems - so severe his former owner could no longer afford to keep him. Dakota's human did care enough to want to keep him from scratching himself. But instead of using an Elizabethan "cone" collar, he cut the bottom out of a plastic bucket and used a rope to tie the bucket to Dakota's choke collar.

At first, transportation volunteers Mike & Kathy Stastka, who made the first leg of the journey, and George Toms, who completed the second leg, were "surprised and alarmed." Kathy said her first instinct was to "immediately take him home and cut that bucket off his head!" However, they did have to admit that Dakota seemed used to it ... and it kept him from scratching.

But one thing the bucket hid from view were Dakota's severely infected ears. So painful, in fact, that our veterinarian, Dr. Bill Ehlers of 434 Animal Hospital, had to sedate Dakota just to examine them. Along with the severe skin and ear issues, Dakota also had bad eye infections, was about 20 pounds



**DAKOTA
AKA BUCKETHEAD**

overweight and had deep and infected sores on his tail, haunches and legs. It was obvious these maladies didn't spring up overnight.

And it was obvious that Dakota needed our help.

From the very first moment we met him, our volunteers saw that Dakota had that wonderful golden personality - as long as you didn't try to touch his ears! He was very sweet and smiled as big as anything right through that silly-looking bucket on his head and the terrible discomfort he must have been in.

Dr. Ehlers tried removing the bucket, but decided to leave it in place after seeing how obsessed Dakota would become with biting and itching whenever it was removed. Along with medications for his multiple infections, we immediately put him on Wellness Fish & Potato diet - a specially formulated dog food that is proven to be effective in helping with food allergies.

And guess what ... Dakota Loses his Bucket

It has been more than 2 months since that fateful day. Under the expert care of Dr. Ehlers and then foster mom Nancy Carroll, Dakota has made remarkable strides.

He first graduated to a soft e-collar, which is similar to a "cone" Elizabethan collar except it is soft, like a pillow. Soon, he was able to go "solo" - that's right, no more head gadgets for Dakota! He is now a FREE SPIRIT!

continued on page 2

Kassidy's Journey

by Andrea Davis, GRRMF Intake Coordinator

From the beginning, we knew Kassidy wanted to WOW us, and that's exactly what she did.

Kassidy's rescue started out like any typical intake. A humanitarian group called about a heartworm-positive female that was due to be euthanized in a shelter, and they couldn't stand to see her put down because she was so sweet - a story we hear all too often in rescue.

But that's where the "typical" part of this story ends. Transportation "Angels" Ray & Sue Angle began working to get Kassidy moved from a remote area on Florida's West Coast to our talented veterinarians in Orlando to be checked and begin heartworm treatment. In their search, the "Angels" called Greg & Jana Garrison, who agreed to transport Kassidy. But they didn't want to drive her ... they wanted to FLY her to Orlando!

That's right, Greg & Jana have a small airplane, and they wanted Kassidy to get first-class service. Talk about flying the friendly skies! The Garrisons flew Kassidy to Orlando, and then, after her heartworm treatment was completed, they returned to Orlando and flew her to Clearwater to meet her new foster family.

continued on page 7

Kassidy settles in for her flight to Orlando.



President's Message

By Barbara Durham, GRRMF President

Greetings from GRRMF!

I hope you were able to attend our Annual Rescue Reunion on March 20. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to meet too many of you - I had responsibility for the Golden Goods booth, as well as some other activities, and we were so busy with "customers," I was unable to get out from behind my adding machine to socialize!

But the good side of my "problem" was that we were very busy - raising money for rescue! Although fund-raising is not the purpose of the



reunion, we did raise more money for GRRMF at this reunion than any prior year. And that's good news for the increasing numbers of goldens who need our help. If the first few months are any indication, it appears 2004 is going to be another banner year in terms of goldens rescued. Many

thanks to all who purchased golden goods or donated through the raffle, silent auction, coin collection and other activities - your dollars (and cents!) will be used to restore the health and well-being of our precious rescues throughout 2004, and beyond.

Special thanks to John Pfohler and Sally Anne Rowland for organizing the best reunion yet! Everything was perfect -- the weather, the location, the company and, of course, all those lovely goldens. I also want to thank all the other volunteers that helped and their team leaders: Carol & Mike McKee, games; Dave Rowland, our chef; Julie Kielts and Leah Wright, raffle; Linda Arnold, silent auction; Janet Dattilo, photo booth; Ann & John Fitzpatrick, welcome desk; Members of Mid-Florida Golden Retriever Club including Joanne and Tom Hell, George and Patti Toms, and Anney Doucette for the grooming booth; Susan King, CGC Testing; Ray and Sue Angle, Transportation Booth; Charlie and Barbara White, setup/takedown; Theresa Bradley for takedown; and everyone else who assisted throughout the day, including all the many folks who helped me at the Golden Goods booth. I know there were many volunteers helping each of these team captains and each and every one of you are appreciated!

And, don't forget, we're looking for a Reunion Chair for the 2005 reunion next spring, plus team captains, so please let us know if you would like to be a part of next year's event! E-mail me at: red2dogs@aol.com.

Until next time,
-- Barbara

Buckethead continued from front cover

Nancy says his ears are all cleared up, although he is still extremely sensitive to having them touched and will probably need regular ear treatments for the rest of his life due to the length and severity of the infection. He has lost more than 10 pounds and is well on his way to



regaining his "manly figure." His skin infections are all cleared up, as are his eyes. He still bears the scars of his longstanding sores, but Nancy says they are no longer sensitive, and she can see fur beginning to grow back.

Dakota has recently been diagnosed with hypothyroidism, which is easily treatable with an inexpensive, daily medication. It is very common in seniors, and he is responding nicely to the medication. He also had a large cyst removed, which was non-cancerous.

Now for the best part ... In Nancy's words: "Dakota has a terrific personality. He has zero bad habits, he smiles all the time, and he thrives on attention. He follows me from room to room, and seems to be enjoying every second of his new life."

Dakota has fit in with Nancy's canine and feline crew since the very first day. "He loves everyone and everything," Nancy says.

So, let's add it all up: A senior golden with horrible skin, ear and eye infections; allergies; hypothyroidism; surgery ... this was an expensive rescue. Was it worth it? Take a look at that smile, and tell us this handsome golden wasn't worth saving!

We bring you Dakota's story as an example of how your donations and hard work are put to use. We'd like to tell you that Dakota is "unique," but in reality, he is not. GRRMF's mission is to restore goldens back to health, and then find them loving forever homes, where they can live out the rest of their lives in peace and comfort. Some have been well cared for in their previous lives. But many have not. We get lots of "Dakotas" in during the course of a year, goldens who are sick in body and spirit - but our focus is on their future, not their past. And we can assure you that Dakota has a bright future ahead!

Many thanks to all involved for helping us save this wonderful golden! To our transportation volunteers, for enduring torrential rain storms and horrendous traffic getting him to the veterinarian ... to our intake coordinator and all involved in "doing what needed to be done" to get him signed over to us ... to Dr. Ehlers and staff for their expert medical care ... and to his foster mom, for being there for him every day, working him through his issues, restoring his body, mind and spirit, relishing every smile she receives from this very special boy.

Dakota will be looking for a very special family soon, who will be committed to making sure he stays healthy and happy for the rest of his life. *We have promised Dakota: "No more buckets!"*

Would you like to be a part of Dakota's future?

☐ Yes, I'd like to help sponsor Dakota by donating funds for his medical care. Enclosed is my donation for: \$ _____

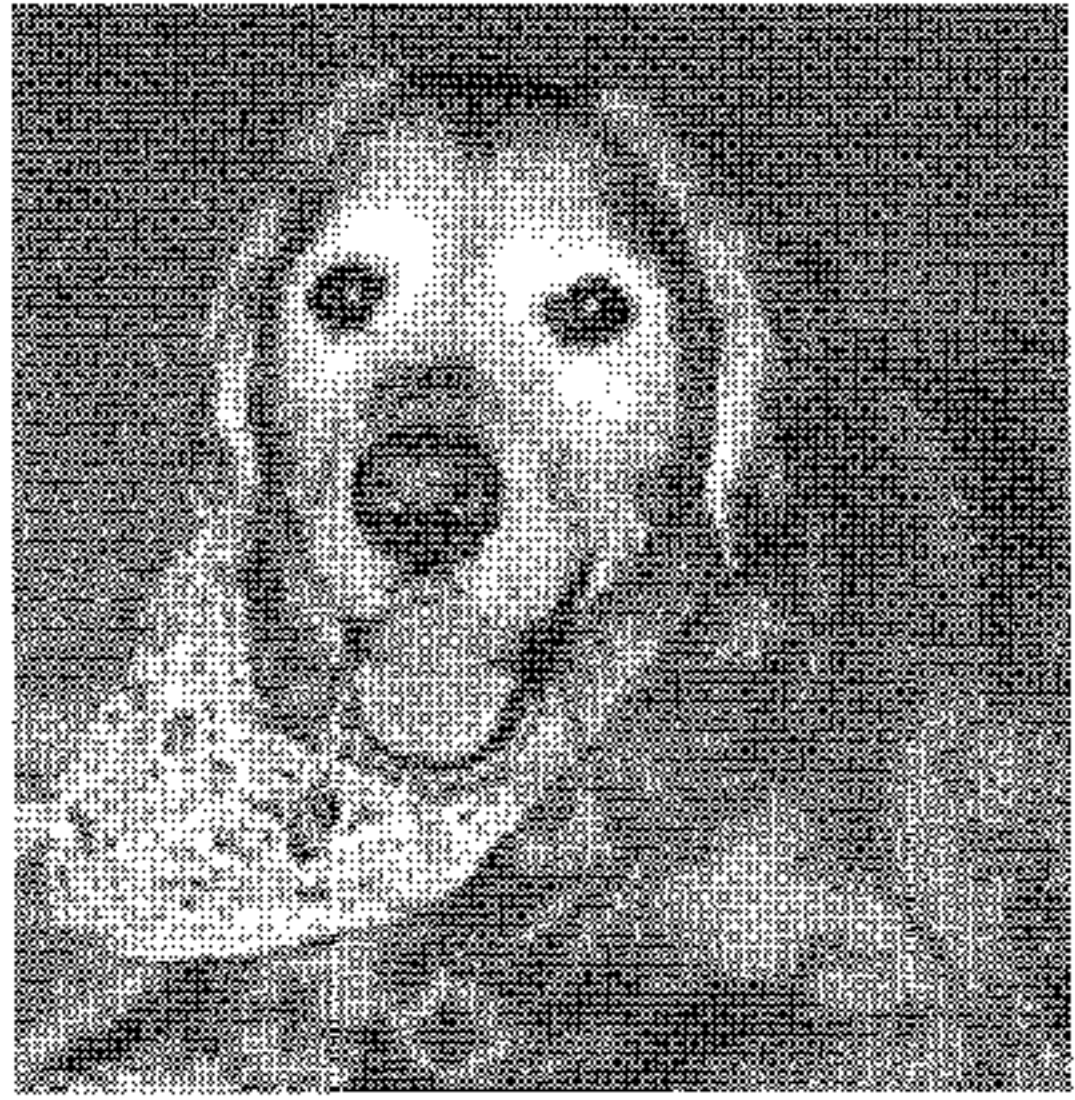
Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ Yes, I'd like to consider adopting Dakota - attached is my completed adoption application (downloaded from our Web site: www.grrmf.org).

All donations are tax-deductible, and contributions will be listed in the next newsletter. Mail completed form to: GRRMF, P.O. Box 1449, Goldenrod, FL 32733

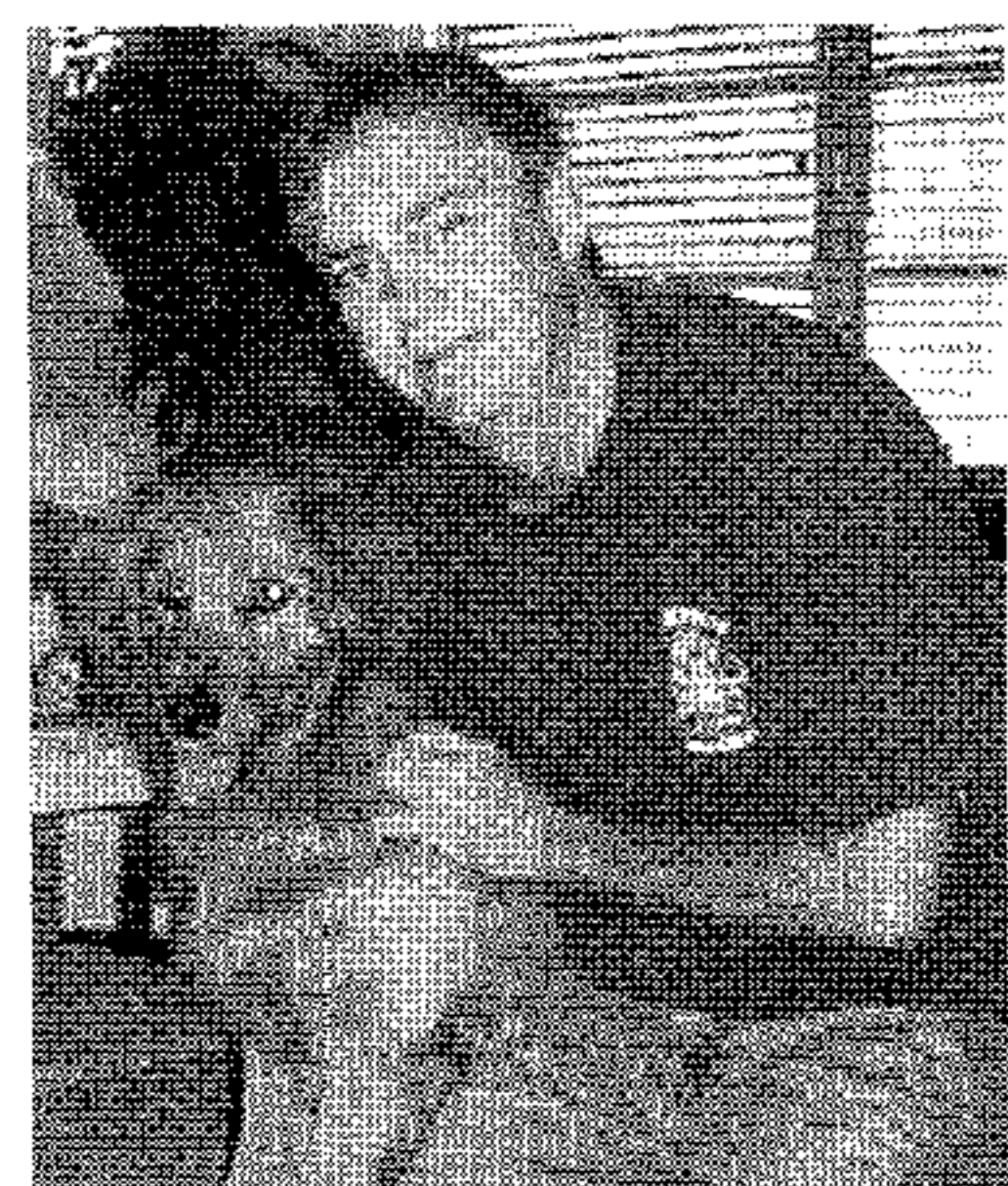
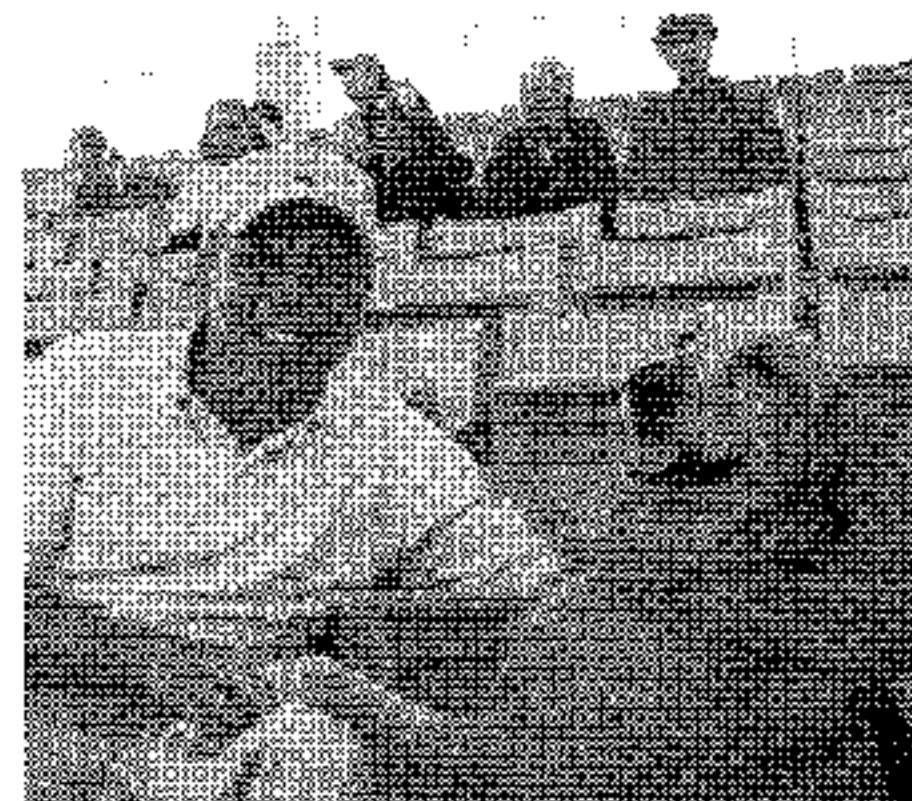
Recent Adoptions - Summer 2004



Maggie's owner dropped her off at a veterinarian's office with orders to euthanize her. The woman's story was suspicious from the start, and the veterinarian asked the owner to sign a release form instead of

putting a perfectly good golden retriever to death. He then called us. That was perhaps the luckiest day of Maggie's life. At approximately 9 years old, Maggie has no health problems and is quite a playful and happy girl. She was a bit nervous at first, but who could blame her? After living her entire life with one family, she suddenly found herself discarded. She was confused and very unsure what was happening. But once she settled into her new foster home with Kirk & Michelle M., her personality began to shine. As the months passed, Maggie and her new family bonded, and they asked if they could adopt her. Maggie finally gets the life she deserves - filled with affection and toys, her two favorite things!

Duffy came from animal control with serious skin problems likely due to the flea infestation he also had. Duffy had a hematoma on his right ear and was overweight. With a green bean diet, vitamin therapy and a high quality food, "the Duff" now quite "the buff!" All his hair has come back and he's a very happy boy. His new family is doing a great job in keeping the weight off of him with plenty of exercise, playing ball and swimming. They can't stop talking about how sweet and gentle he is. The picture here is of Duffy and his dad, Frank G., who recently attended "Bark at the Moon," a Manatees baseball game during which people could bring their "best friends."



The **Duke** of Earl found himself in rescue due to a divorce. He is a very happy, energetic and handsome young golden of approximately 1.5 years. He is house trained and in excellent health. Duke tends to be protective of his toys and food with some

other dogs, but his foster mom Hettie B. worked with him to help him learn that "it's nice to share." Duke found his forever home with Frank H., who promised to keep up with Duke's training and is looking forward to sharing his active lifestyle with his new "best friend."

Primo came from a shelter. We managed to pull him out the day he was going to be euthanized. It was a lucky day for us all, because this little guy won our hearts! Primo is estimated to be 6 years old and is very small, under 45 pounds. He is well-behaved, very sweet and, other than affection from his humans, enjoys nothing better than a good game of fetch with a tennis ball. Primo found his forever home with Steve S., who now calls him **Sandy**. Sandy goes to work with Dad every day and enjoys nice walks in the park with his canine neighbors every day. It was a match made in heaven, according to Steve: "I am flabbergasted by how well we have bonded. I can't believe it ... all that unconditional love and no baggage. There really are miracles." Read more about Primo's story on Page 11.



Sweet 4-year-old **Gracie** was turned in by her family, who explained they had "no time" for her. Gracie was adopted by Susan M., who had just recently lost her

former GRRMF dog due to old age. Susan says Gracie is an "absolute delight and the love of my life." Hey, we're not making this up! But we are not surprised, either! Gracie is as sweet as they come, and we are delighted that she has finally found her forever home.

Buffy was turned in because her former owner didn't spend time with her, and Buffy was just lying around getting fat. No problem. Susan V. agreed to go pick her up and foster her. Yup, you guessed it, another failed foster. Susan says Buffy is the perfect dog and she's going nowhere, she's home now.

From rags to riches ... from burned-out trailer to ... well ... paradise! That's **Toby's** story. When his former owner's trailer burned down, heartworm-positive Toby was suddenly thrust upon rescue. What a great dog he turned out to be! Thanks to your donations, Toby was treated for his heartworms and patiently waited for his forever home. Man, was it worth the wait! How about the world's greatest house, biggest pool and almost an acre of fenced-in paradise to run around in! Many thanks to Kay and Dick for making Toby's dreams come true.



Kodiak's previous humans were moving to an apartment and couldn't take him with them. His only issue, as is so common these days with rescue dogs, was that he was horribly overweight. Aside from

those extra pounds, Kody was a sweet, gentle 3-year-old, great with dogs, cats and kids. He lives to swim, and enjoyed it not only with his foster mom, Hettie Buck, but now has a pool of his very own! Kody was adopted by Cynthia & Jeff T. and their son. He is living life to its fullest, and his new family promises to keep the weight off him. Obesity in dogs carries the same outcome as people - it adds to health problems and shortens their already too short lifespan.



Belle/Ginger, left, with her new family.

Belle was a pretty little girl found at Animal Services. She was very sick and unhappy, but under the wonderful fostering of Pat and Jim H., Belle regained her beauty, strength and health. Phyllis

and Dave T. felt she was just what they needed to make their family complete. Belle is now Ginger and is having fun with her canine sibling, Jessie.

Samson and **Milly** were turned in by their owners, who said they were moving. Samson is a true Velcro golden who just can't get enough of people. He found his forever home with Steven and Laurie A.



Milly with her new family.

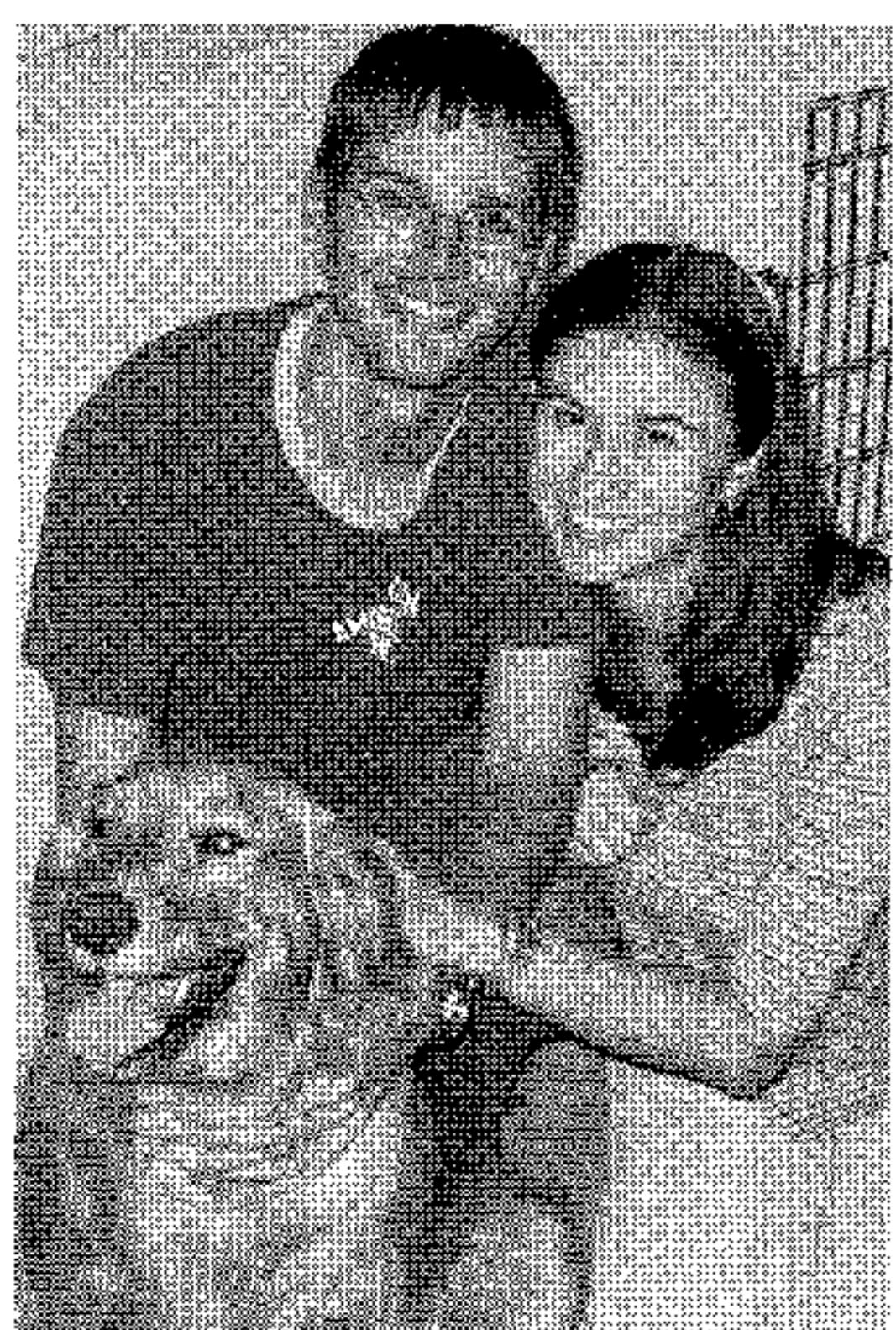
and their three children. Now he has an endless supply of love, games and people to snuggle with. Milly is a sweet gal who is also very well behaved. She was adopted by Debbie & Gary O., who just happen to also have a nice backyard full of lizards to hunt - and Milly LOVES hunting lizards! Milly relishes all the attention she gets with her new family, and they love her very much!



Bo is as energetic as he is tall. He was very sweet but lacked self-confidence and needed to learn some basic obedience skills. All that is taken care of now - Pat and

Rett S. and their dog Maddy were looking for a companion to fit their active lifestyle. Bo has signed up for obedience classes to channel his energy and has a permanent four-legged playmate in Maddy.



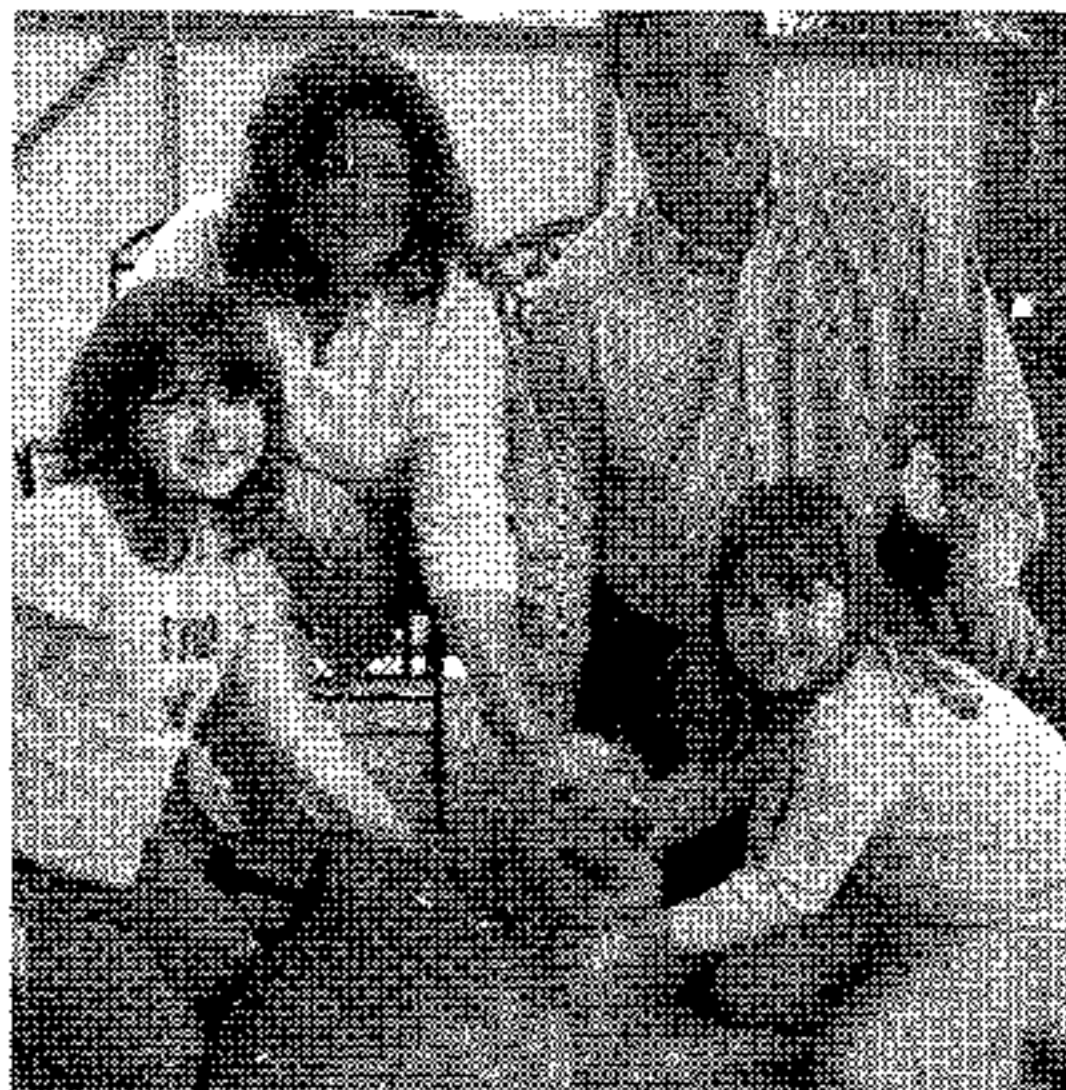


Rascal was another unfortunate gal whose family had no time for her. She's a pretty little golden who hardly lived up to her name. Guy and Becky D. thought so, too. They fell in love with her at first sight and renamed her Zoe. This lucky golden goes on long walks every day, cuddles with her new mom and dad and even

attended her first Rescue Reunion in March. We were overjoyed to see her and her family so happy together!

Sophie, 6 years, needed a special home to love her and also help her get her girlish figure back. Dick and Nancy S. stepped up to foster her and, of course, soon fell in love. Sophie has hit the jackpot in her new life, which includes a canine buddy named Auggie and all the love - and green beans! - she can handle.

Sweet **Georgia**, 4 years, was an owner turn-in. She is very sweet and a bit on the timid side, but also very cuddly and gentle. Susan & Ed K. and their two daughters lost their golden to illness a few months ago and were very lonely. They fell in love with Georgia, and she with them. Georgia snuggled right into their routine ... and into their laps! She is going to have a wonderful life, and we couldn't be happier!



Brenna came from a family who had no time for her. She was a typical young golden who had tons of energy and was never given any direction. Brenna was fostered by Ed and Lisa B. who showed her the basics on how to be a good citizen in the house. Their dog

Ross also showed her how to behave around dogs. Lori and Tim M. fell in love with Brenna and added her to their family. She now has lots of love and attention.

Nia is a cute, little, red girl turned in because her former owner was forced to move to a home that didn't allow dogs. She was fostered by the Daly clan where she soon blossomed into the world's sweetest golden. Nia was adopted by the very lucky Dunne family, and they say she is fitting in nicely.

At 1 year old, **Justice** was already a GRRMFTV star. He was featured on a Tampa Bay news program as an example of the problems pet store dogs can have. Through a GRRMF team



Benson, middle, and Justice, right, with their new sibling, Sadie.

effort, volunteers raised enough money for surgery to correct Justice's hip dysplasia. He improved greatly following surgery, thanks to the TLC provided by fosters Sally Anne R. and Sue S. Justice was adopted by Mike S., who just happened to catch his TV debut and fell in love. It was a perfect match, because Mike is an orthopedic surgeon! Here's a recent note from Mike: "Justice is a great addition to the family. He will be very happy and prosper, plus he will get all the medical attention he will ever need. I am very pleased with everyone's passion for the dogs and the way the process has turned out. Thanks for all your help."

The call came to the intake team about **Benson**, an 8-year-old who was going to be euthanized by Animal Services. They were full, but having a hard time letting him go because he was so sweet. GRRMF jumped on the chance to save this guy - and what a great save! Benson had probably never lived inside before and was quite hesitant at first. He is as sweet as they come, loving every second a human spends petting him and making over him. His foster dad, Guillermo P., enjoyed having Ben around, but knew he'd soon find a wonderful new family - and he did! **Benson** was adopted by Mike S., who also adopted **Justice**. Benson accompanies his dad every evening to visit Mike's mom in a nursing facility. Not a bad turnaround - from shelter dog to therapy dog!

The bigger they come the harder you fall. Just ask Rodney W., as he fell in love with **Bailey** immediately when he saw his picture. Bailey is a very large golden who was neglected by his former owners. His luck changed when they decided to turn him over to rescue. He was given a bath (he looked like he hadn't had one in years), treated for flea infestation and heartworms. While Bailey was undergoing treatment, Rodney decided to foster him with hopes of adopting. Need we say more? Bailey has found his forever home with Rodney.

At just 2 years old, **Skylar** was facing her fate at Animal Services when a concerned citizen alerted GRRMF. She was fostered by Judy S., until Linda F. agreed to "foster sit" Skylar one weekend. It took all of one day for Linda to realize Skylar was "home"! Linda saw how smart and sweet Skylar was, and how much she could add to her life. Skylar is now Lexi, and she is very much at home with Linda and her family.



Archie, just 2 years old, was heartworm-positive, so he was going to be euthanized at the pound. GRRMF acted quickly and bailed this guy out.

Archie was transported to Orlando to begin heartworm treatment and fostered by Regina & Boomer R., who were extremely careful with his recovery. He is all better now, and guess what: Archie has found his way into the hearts and souls of his fosters. Regina & Boomer decided to make it official the day of the Rescue Reunion. What a day ... another dog adopted and loved forever.



Ashley was found at a gas station. Just a few weeks old, she had to be bottle-fed, and her foster mom Sandy wasn't sure she'd make it. But we soon discovered that Ashley - nicknamed "Flashley" - had quite a twinkle in her eye

and a zest for life that was sometimes exhausting! She won the hearts of all who met her, and it was a joy to see Ashley grow and blossom under the excellent care she received with Sandy and her crew. Little Ashley was adopted last month by Barbara C., who fell in love with her beautiful cream coat and small size, not to mention her larger-than-life personality!

Six-month-old **Jackson**

was another owner turn-in. The reason was the all-too-familiar "no time." Not a problem for GRRMF, we took him in and quickly found a forever home for this cute puppy. He was adopted by the Galloways, who wanted a young, active dog to fit into their active lifestyle of walking and running. Not to mention those Sunday beach trips, which Jackson is enjoying to his fullest!



At 5 years old, **OJ, now Murphy**, was surrendered to GRRMF due to his prior family moving. Well, Murphy did his own moving in on Sue D. and her family. Murphy is a well-mannered, beautiful guy who settled

in their home and family the minute he walked through the door. Kudos to his fosters Maggie and Tim for taking him in on short notice. Here's what Murphy's mom had to say recently: "Murphy is fitting in nicely with our family. Adopting Murphy through GRRMF is one of the best decisions I've made. He was the perfect choice for us. And an added benefit: Since we're giving Murphy green beans to get his weight down, my kids are eating more green beans! They get a kick out of eating the same vegetables as Murphy!"

Sweet, wonderful **Nala**. There is no better gal out there. She found herself in rescue due to an illness in her previous family. Nala's foster, John F., said she is as perfect as they come, and that anyone would fall in love with her. His words rang true for Bill and Paula B., who have fallen head over heels.

Nala spends her days at home with constant human companionship and gets to go on lots of car rides. Nala's parents write: "She is perfect in every way. We very much appreciate the care GRRMF took in choosing us as Nala's family. We love her more each day. It feels like she has been with us forever." Another happy ending!

Madison was dropped off at a veterinarian's office to be euthanized. Her crime? She growled at a child. Well, seems that was the best thing that could have ever happened to this 2-year-old cutie-pie, because the vet quickly called GRRMF. It was obvious from the start that Madison hadn't been treated very well in her previous life. She was extremely fearful of everyone and everything. Madison's foster parents, Cindy and Rick O., took her into their home and gave her a new beginning. Beth and Wayne L. will take over from there to provide a loving home filled with trust and fun. Beth reports that "Madison is wonderful and is already becoming a part of our family. She was very shy when we visited her at her foster's home. It makes me sad to think what she must have gone through to be so timid with people. But I saw potential, and I know she will come around. I have seen remarkable improvement in her already."



Underneath the extra weight she was carrying around, 3-year-old **Selena** was a class clown who kept her foster parents, Cary and Deb C., laughing. The more pounds she lost, the livelier she became! Selena is an avid beachgoer and has learned a lot living with her foster canine sister. We are confident that she will continue her silly antics with her new family, Linda and Bill G.

Sawyer, a puppy of less than 1 year old, was found as a stray by Animal Services. When his five days were up, they contacted us to see if we would take this sweet boy. Of course we did! With a temperament to die for and lots of smarts too, we figured he wouldn't stay in rescue long. He didn't! He now resides with Frank and Carrie R., their golden Conner, and two cats. With new playmates, a big fenced-in backyard and all the attention from his new "parents," Sawyer must think he's in heaven. We do!



Kal, 4 years old, was an owner turn-in. It was the same story we've been hearing much too often on owner turn-ins: "no time." Kal is a wonderful boy; it wasn't too long before Jean T. snapped him up. She was looking for a companion, and Kal was too ... a perfect fit!

Bridget was just 4.5 years old when she found herself in rescue. She was fostered by Penny D., who decided that she fit in so well, she needed to stay. Bridget has now found her forever home, and we couldn't be happier!

Seven-year-old **Charlie** came to us heartworm positive, so our first order of business was to send him for treatment. His foster mom nursed him through treatment and quickly learned that he was a very sweet boy who loved everyone and everything. He was adopted by Cathy E., who had this to say in a recent note to GRRMF: "The day Charlie walked into my life was the best thing that has happened to me in a long time. One year ago, I lost my 14-year-old yellow lab, Katie. I knew what was missing, but just had not found the right companion. Thanks to your wonderful organization, I now have Charlie, who makes each day better than the last. He greets me every day as if he had not seen me in a week. He has to say hello to all people and pets as we go on our morning walk. Charlie has found his way into many hearts in a short time. He is a happy boy and I will try my best to make all his days filled with joy as he has done for me."



Ava/Lola shares a smile with mom Emily R.

Look at Me Now!

Little Ava is Growing Up!

Readers may remember Ava - she came into rescue as a small puppy with an ectopic ureter. Ava needed costly surgery to keep her bladder from leaking, and her breeder didn't want her. Thanks to donations from many of you, GRRMF was able to pay for her surgery and start her on the medication she needed.

Sandy Sumner fostered Ava through the surgery and then began looking for a special home for her. Because of her condition, Ava would need a home willing to continue her medical care.

Ava was adopted by Emily R., who renamed her Lola. Here's what Emily has to say: "I saw Ava's story and pictures on the Web site and thought she would make a great addition to our family. Lexi, my adult golden, was lonely since the last foster left and needed a playmate full-time. Lola came home when she was 6 months old. She and Lexi hit it off right away, which was a great sign, because Lexi can be timid.

"Lola loves people and always greets you with something in her mouth. She did very well in her obedience class and got her Canine Good Citizen certificate at the GRRMF Rescue Reunion in March. She loves to go for car rides, especially to the dog park or beach or to do Education Days for rescue."

Although Lola's bladder surgery was successful, she was left with what the veterinarians call an "incompetent sphincter" - her ureter was corrected with the first surgery but, as is common in these cases, the sphincter muscle that controls the flow of urine is not strong. Lola is currently on medication to help tighten the muscle and is doing very well.

"She still leaks sometimes when she is asleep or when she is excited," Emily says. "Thank goodness for tile floors, and we cover the places she sleeps with a towel."

Emily and Lola, who is now a year old, are seeing a specialist in Gainesville to determine if she is a candidate for a new surgery to correct the sphincter issue. If she's a candidate, Lola would be one of the first to have the surgery.

Whether the surgery works out or not, it is evident that Lola is home to stay. "Lola is always happy, always wagging her tail. She is very sweet and easy to care for. My mother lives with us, and Lola is great with her.

"Lola loves to bring you things - the remote, shoes, toys, tissues, whatever she can find. We plan on making use of this skill in the future, teaching her to bring the phone, newspaper, things like that. She always shows her best manners out in public. She makes us very proud when people comment on what a good girl she is - they can't believe she is just a puppy!"

GRRMF and its many supporters are very pleased to hear that Ava/Lola is finally "home." She has a wonderful new mom, who is willing to provide the medical care she needs, a play buddy and an active life, where she gets to go out and see the world! Who could even dream of a better life for a golden!

RAINBOW BRIDGE

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay awhile and leave footprints on our hearts. And we are never, ever the same. Anonymous



Sabrina came into my life in August 2000. She was 8 years old. I always said that the best decision I ever made was contacting GRRMF and getting matched up with her. Sabrina was so wonderful, so loving, so special. She was really and truly just the perfect dog. She got along perfectly with my cat when she first came to live with me and, later, adjusted beautifully when I got married and had a child. Very little seemed to faze her; she really just rolled with the punches. Although Sabrina had a thyroid problem and had to be put on a diet, she really didn't have much in the way of serious health problems. However, on April 7, Sabrina stopped eating and could not stand up. My husband and I took her to the emergency vet and they ran various tests, which indicated cancer in her spleen and liver. The tumors had burst, causing internal bleeding. The vet said she could operate but, assuming Sabrina made it through the surgery, she would only have 2-4 months left. My husband and I made the very sad and heartbreaking decision to put our sweet Sabrina to sleep on Thursday, April 8.

To say that we miss Sabrina would be a huge understatement. She was an important part of our family, and words cannot describe the heartache we feel now that she is gone. I am so glad that she was part of our lives and, if I had to do it again, I would definitely adopt an older dog like Sabrina. Even though she was with us for a shorter period of time than presumably a younger dog would have been, it was so worth it. She was such a wonderful member of our family and she is very much missed.

-- Sandi McNally Russell

Max (formerly Chief)

Love. If anyone could make that word mean everything, then Max did. His short stay with us for two years gave us the understanding of devoted love and friendship that a golden could give. After a year-long battle with cancer, Max went to Rainbow Bridge on March 16. We bless the time we had with him and will remember him always for his love for this family.

-- Laurie, Tracy, Bill Henry



Chase came to me three years ago as a foster, just before my own golden, Molson, passed on. Chase saved me in those first awful weeks. I would find him next to me, nudging my hand up for a pat on the head. He just insisted on the attention, and it distracted me from my loss. I adopted him a few months later. One of my favorite things was when he would lean against me, put his head against my leg and his nose in my hand. He walked right up to people and plopped his big red head in their laps for a scratch on the head. He was always on the lookout for a vacant hand. We went to PetsMart for education days, and he was always ready and willing to demonstrate how wonderful a golden can be. He was funny, endearing, goofy and my greatest friend. I'll miss him forever, but always be grateful for the time we had.

-- Leah Wright



Thelma, my long-time foster golden, was "pure love." She came to us from a Polk County shelter, and she was the sweetest old girl ever. We think she was 10, and when she first came in she weighed 125 pounds. She was a big girl even after all the weight came off but had the best disposition and the most loving face. We decided to keep Thelma as a permanent foster when she became ill, and she was a happy girl right up to the day she died. I miss her planting her big old paw on me or rolling over for a belly rub when she wanted me to stop what I was doing and pay attention to her. She was an amazing spirit, and we are thankful for the time we had with her.

-- Leah Wright

Honey, approximately 7 years old, was used for breeding purposes before she came to GRRMF. During the spay surgery, the veterinarian discovered multiple tumors, which turned out to be cancerous. Charlette B. took her in as a permanent foster, and here is what she writes about her life with Honey, who died too soon, but will leave her imprint on all of our souls: "She came to me looking a mess with big shaved spots on her back and long incisions. She was weak, timid and pitiful. One look into those eyes and she was mine - or should I say, I was hers. It took her only that first day and she was at home. When asked how I could take a dog who was dying, I answered, 'How could I not?' Although I thought of that dreaded time to come, I knew, more importantly, that this little Honey needed and deserved all the love and caring and happiness she could get. She was going to spend the remainder of her life feeling loved and special. And special she was." Honey lived life to its fullest during her last months with Char and her foster siblings. She picked out her favorite toys, loved to romp around outside, had gentle playtimes with the others, ate well and loved her walks and car rides. Heartfelt gratitude to Char for ensuring that Honey's last days were, by far, her happiest.

Scooby's Story

by Sandy Sumner, GRRMF Adoption Coordinator

Trevor became my foster on July 3, 2003. GRRMF volunteer Marcia McGovern had gone to a local shelter to pick up two adult goldens, Fred & Ginger, who had been found wandering the streets of Orlando.



While Marcia was there, the worker kept nudging her to go into the back - that's the area people don't like to talk about. You know, where the unadoptable dogs go ... "doggie death row." And that's where Marcia spotted Trevor. "We'll take him, too," she told the worker. He was surprised, but gladly agreed to let GRRMF take the puppy. There is no doubt that Marcia saved this guy's life on that fateful day.

Trevor's story is kind of odd. He was an 8-week-old stray who came in with another golden. A person claimed the adult but said she didn't know anything about the puppy. One look at him and you could see why someone might not want to "own up" to him. Not only was he tiny and sick, the puppy was covered head-to-toe in mange. As you can see from the picture, he was one scabby little dude.

Out of desperation, Marcia called to see if he could come stay at my house. He needed out of the shelter, or he would be put down. Since it was the July 4th holiday, we had no boarding space available anywhere.

The shelter's policy required that all dogs - regardless of age or health - be spayed/neutered and get a rabies shot before they are released. The fact that he was already ill, only 8 weeks old and going to a rescue organization that preaches spay/neuter to everyone who will listen didn't count.

So, at barely 8 weeks old and covered in mange, Trevor was neutered and got his shots. When I met him, I can honestly say this was the most pitiful dog I've ever seen. I wondered how he survived the surgery, and I wasn't sure he would even make it through the night. He was so sick he would hardly move. There was no light in his eyes. We made him as comfortable as we could and crossed our fingers.

And the bond began ...

Help Me Make it Through the Night

Well, needless to say, Trevor did make it through the night. Soon, he began to eat and slowly gained some strength. Daily doses of Ivermectin for the mange were tough on his little body. I supplemented it with Milk Thistle, Vitamin E and some liquid Vitamin supplements, and he continued to hold his own. Twice-weekly medicated baths also were required, and the shampoo had to be kept on for 15 minutes. For each session, I wrapped him in a big towel to keep him from licking the shampoo, and we would rock in my big rocking chair. He never complained about my awful singing of lullabies, either.

And the bond grew ...

A Baby is Born



And the bond strengthened ...

Same Dog, New Hairstyle

As a young pup, Scooby could get into places no other dogs could or would. He had hinges for back legs that just folded when you asked him to sit. He could slither under the coffee table and maneuver himself up onto the couch in a space no wider than five inches. He has another nickname, "Gumby," for those times.

As you can see from the recent picture, our little Scooby has made a full recovery and is just like any other dog today. From those early rocking-chair days, Scooby and I have developed a strong bond. He is very sweet and loving, and I have plans to make him a permanent member of the family. After all he's been through, it is the least I could do for the love and laughter he has brought into my life.

And for those of you who think this is a special case: The details may be unusual, but most rescue dogs come with baggage - physical, mental, emotional. For some, the scars never heal. Others heal partially but will always have special needs, whether they be physical, medical or behavioral. And for the lucky few, it's a very short time before they seem to forget their past altogether. Regardless of their baggage, GRRMF helps these dogs get past their fear and pain and finds them loving homes. It may take time and effort, but it is ALWAYS worth it. Just look at Scooby. People who meet him today don't believe his story - it is hard to convince someone that the little hairless scabby boy is now so healthy and happy. We all know what his fate would have been had rescue not stepped in.

We appreciate the donations of money, time and effort that our members and volunteers make. And I thank all of you for being there for me to help save little Scooby Doo.

Kassidy continued from front cover

Sue S. and family picked Kassidy up from the airport and are taking very good care of her during heartworm treatment follow up, when the dog must be kept quiet and relaxed while the medication kills off the heartworms.

"She is definitely a sweetheart," Sue says. "She is very lovable, eager to please, follows you everywhere and doesn't seem sick at all. She loves getting brushed - in fact, she loves any attention you give her! It's hard not taking her for our daily walks with our other golden, Bailey, but we know it is only for a little while."

We don't know what happened in the first chapter of Kassidy's life, but we do know the final chapter will be a happy one. You can complete her story by sending in your adoption application today. Cute, sweet and loyal as can be, Kassidy is waiting for her forever home.



Kassidy with Jana Garrison

Don't forget to give your dog his or her monthly heartworm preventive!

Heartworms are very serious and can be deadly to your dog.

HEARTS OF GOLD is published for members of Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida, Inc.

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GRRMF History: 1432 Goldens rescued to date! 2004 rescues through April 30: 771

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Note: The GRRMF Board sends very special thanks to all volunteers and supporters - including those we may have inadvertently left off this list. Although we try to list everyone, our organization is growing, and we sometimes might miss a name or two.

Jean Witt
Zaggia Electric

Thanks!

Doggie Kisses to the Following Golden Friends:

☀️ Home Visits: Linda Arnold, Dawn Avolio, Ed Berger, Nancy Carroll, Janet Dattilo, Andrea Davis, Jean Dixon, Donna Dossing, Maggie & Ted Duncan, Gregg Eddie, Jodi Faist, Ann Fitzpatrick, Jordan German, Bonita Goldman, Kathy Hendrickson, Steve Jaffe, Jan Jennings, Julie Kielts, Alison King, Judy Ladney, Fran McGinnis, Marcia McGovern, Debbie McGhehey, Marilyn Metcalfe, John Pfohler, Renee Perkie, Suzanne Rider, Emily Rowe, Anitra Ruth, Kathy Salisbury, Cindy Snedeker, Diane Snow-Posner.

A note from Peggy Litt, Home Visit

Coordinator: We've been bringing in double the volume of dogs this year, and some volunteers are doing more than one visit at a time! Thank you all for your diligence and love for these wonderful goldens! You all DO help make the difference!

☀️ Fosters: Ani Akarjalian, Jennifer & Philip Allbright, Linda Arnold, Charlotte Bauer, Bob & Theresa Bradley, Hettie Buck, Carol Buczynski, Ed Burger, Marcie Caldwell, Nancy Carroll, Deb & Cary Cash, Bob & Mary Cooper, Lori Cubbedge, Don & Penny Dalton, Amanda & David Daly, Bruce & Janet Dattilo, Andrea Davis, Chuck Graves & Donna Dossing, Gregg Eddie, Linda Fike, Courtney Fitzpatrick, John Foss, Sally & Vann Frazier, Lisa Halpern, Jim Gallagher, Rebecca Gushwa, Linc Hay, Jim & Pat Herrington, Guy & Penny Iannone, Loyd Kiernan, Steve Loebeck, Ron Diane Makinney, Chris & Tommy Manley, Frank & Barb Markowski, Kirk & Michelle Martin, Kelly Mehigan, Sally Anne & Dave

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☀️ Call Team: Linda Cohen, Vicki Ferros, Kathy Hendrickson, Penny Iannone, Sue Keiser, Jeane Knowles, Melissa Knowles, Carol McKee, Kathy Salisbury, Kathy Rozzo.
☀️ Transportation Volunteers: Sue & Ray Angle, Linda Arnold, Chuck & Lisa Beck, Ed Burger, Maggie & Ted Duncan, Gregg & Tom Eddie, Keith & Wendy Erskine, Jana & Greg Garrison, Richard & Diane Gleason, Dennis Grace, Rebecca Gushwa, Lynne Halleran, Penny Iannone, Kim James, Judy Ladney, Kirk & Michelle Martin, Pat & Bill Shepard, Jordan Siegel, Nancy Spears, Kathy & Mike Stastka, Olinda Sykes, Betty Taylor, George Toms, Darcy Wright.

☀️ Admissions Hotline: Linda Arnold, George Acorn, Natalie Benton, Lisa DeJordy, Donna Dossing, Wendy Erskine, Penny Iannone, Pam Marshall, Kelly Mehigan, Emily Rowe.
☀️ Applications Team: Sandy Sumner, Kathy Hendrickson, Pam Harrell, Peggy Litt, Marie Pacheco.

☀️ Mail volunteers: Carol & Hal Avey.

☀️ Master recordkeeper: Jennifer Longman.

☀️ Info@grrmf.org e-mails: Ellen Mathieson.

☀️ GRRMF Hotline voicemail messages: Betty Wyatt

☀️ Lori McDerby for assembling adoption packets.

☀️ Priscilla Brunjes of All Creatures Pet Grooming in East Orlando for grooming fosters at no charge.

NOTE: Priscilla also offers discounts to GRRMF members and former rescues!

☀️ Veterinarians who donated or discounted goods and services: Affiliated Veterinary Specialists, Maitland; All Creatures Animal Hospital, Lutz; Animal Hospital of Treasure Island; Dr. Athey, Orange City Animal Clinic; Dr. Rachael Beckett, Jackson Veterinary Practice, St. Augustine; Belleview Veterinary Hospital, Belleview; Dr. Michael Berkenblit, Village Animal Clinic, North Palm Beach; Dr. Kevin Conrad, Sunset Point Animal Hospital, Clearwater; Dr. Robert Difonzo, Movement Improvement, Oviedo; Dr. Stanley Diment, Clermont Animal Hospital; Dr. Constance DiNatale, Veterinary Acupuncture, Winter Park; Dr. Bill Ehlers, 434 Animal Hospital, Winter Springs; Fox & Friends Animal Hospital, Sun City Center; Dr. Charles Gerhart, Southwest Ocala Veterinary Hospital; Drs. John Kirsch & Matt Oakes, Tampa Bay Veterinary Surgery, Largo; Dr. Myburgh, Bright Cross Animal Clinic, Venice; Dr. Martin Neher, Palmer Ranch Animal Clinic, Sarasota; Paddock Park Animal Care Center, Ocala; Dr. E. J. Rackowski, Treasure Coast Animal Clinic, Vero Beach; Dr. Charles Steiner, Wickham Road Animal Hospital, Melbourne; Dr. Michael Schroeder, Animal Medical Clinic, Spring Hill; Dr. Leland Simmons, Sand Lake Animal Clinic, Orlando; Skyway Animal Hospital, St. Petersburg; Dr. Spencer, Gateway Animal Hospital, St. Petersburg; Drs. Topor, Green & Buchanan, Livingston Animal & Avian Hospital,

Lutz; Dr. Pam Wood, Wellington VCA Animal Hospital, Wellington.

☀️ Education Days/Events: Many thanks to all who participate in educational events around the state - our dedicated volunteers and their goldens are out there almost every weekend spreading the word about rescue, which is invaluable in finding homes for our goldens! For schedule and locations, see back cover or log onto our Web site: www.grrmf.org.

☀️ Staffs of PetsMart, Pet Supermarket, Petco, Border's Bookstore and other businesses across the state, for letting GRRMF set up educational booths. We are grateful for all their support of our organization.

☀️ Training: Courteous Canine, Lutz; Best Paw Forward, Sanford; Oviedo Dog Training Club; 3J Dog Training, West Orlando; Babette Haggerty's School for Dogs, Jupiter; John Pfohler, Sarasota.

☀️ Christa Roman of Merial and Nicole Prosser of Novartis for donation of medical supplies such as Frontline, Advantage, heartworm preventive and heartworm treatment drugs. Also to Ellen Pavlik for coordinating these donations. We really appreciate your help!

☀️ RDV Sportsplex for donating tennis balls for our fosters and adopted rescues.

☀️ Sharon O'Keefe for serving as liaison with Seminole County Animal Control.

☀️ For helping with "Paws for a Cause" in Southwest Florida: Charlie & Barb White, Gail Pfohler, Lisa McGrew, Donna & Chuck Dossing, Debbie McGhehey, Linda Fike & Bill, Sue & Ray Angle.

☀️ For helping with the "Kids Fair" in Sarasota area: Charlie & Barb White, Gail Pfohler, Kent Denslow & family, Emily Rowe, Linda Fike & Bill, Janet Dattilo & family, Bert & Charlie Haker.

☀️ Innova Dog Food Co. for donating samples of California Natural food.

☀️ Everyone who donated goods and services for our 2004 reunion - raffle items, silent auction, food, and everything in between!

If we failed to mention you, please let us know - (407) 332-2840 or e-mail our newsletter editor at 2boatrats@comcast.net - and we'll try our best to list it next time. We couldn't operate without your help - you make a difference in the lives of hundreds of goldens!!

Hot Topics
by Betty Wyatt, GRRMF Education Coordinator

We've recently experienced some position changes in rescue, and I now have a new title. GRRMF President Barbara Durham invited me to coordinate education programs throughout the state. Joining my team are Colleen Sosteri and Nancy Carroll, who are going to help formalize a structured follow-up program. We're very excited about this opportunity, as we have recognized the need for a long time. We need help in making this happen, and I am inviting all who have an interest to contact me.

This column will cover topics of interest from our adoption follow-up forms and questions asked through our info e-mail address (info@grrmf.org) and education days. Please let me know if you have a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue. I cannot say enough about mentoring. If you are a new volunteer and need a mentor, please drop us a line. I would encourage new volunteers to get involved in education days - they are a great way to learn about our rescue organization and meet other volunteers.

Education day volunteers also should remember that visitors can be referred to the GRRMF Web site - www.grrmf.org - for a variety of information on topics such as nutrition, toys, allergies and others. If you can't answer a dog-related question, please feel free to contact me. I'm in the process of setting up a file on some common challenges we are asked about. I am here for you and very accessible. My e-mail address is goldensunbird@earthlink.net. To reach me by phone, call the Hotline at (407) 332-2840, mailbox 4, and I'll return your call. Correspondence is invited - let's have fun.

Much of what I write about will not just be from my knowledge but from periodicals and books. I also plan to review a book in each newsletter.

Let's begin by addressing some of the topics we should cover at education days. Of course, we want to be well-versed in physical and psychological health issues, as well as safety issues for the dog and owner. You can look at one of our contracts and see the items we consider most important. We spay/neuter all dogs before adoption, advise adopters on nutrition and to give the dogs heartworm preventive year-round. At least 250,000 dogs and cats tested positive for heartworms in a survey of vet clinics nationwide.

Pets should be spayed or neutered for two main reasons: for their health, both psychological and

physical, and to assist with the terrible problem of pet overpopulation. There is an epidemic of euthanasia in animal shelters, which amounts to an annual killing of millions of dogs and cats. To me, pet overpopulation in the United States is a disgrace. We can greatly reduce these numbers if we can just motivate people to spay/neuter their pets. How do we do this? Education! Ask those you meet if their pets are fixed. Talk to them about the greater risk of medical problems such as cancer and of behavior issues such as roaming and aggression. Some veterinarians will spay/neuter a pet anytime after 8 weeks of age. We prefer to wait until the dog is at least 6 months old. Geriatric dogs also can be spayed or neutered, but we recommend blood screenings beforehand to ensure there are no underlying medical

conditions that put the dog at risk for surgery. Some dogs have undescended testicles, a condition known as cryptorchidism. In this case, the surgery is more invasive, as the veterinarian must go inside the abdomen to remove the testicle(s). It is especially important for these dogs to be neutered as soon as possible, as they are very prone to developing cancer. For an unsprayed female, the incidence of mammary (breast) cancer increases dramatically. If spayed before the dog's first heat cycle,

the incidence of mammary cancer is almost zero. Do you have a female dog? Be sure to check her for breast lumps, especially as she ages. She'll love the "belly rubs" she gets as you're checking her out. If you find a mass - even a small one - or notice bleeding from the nipples, make an appointment with your veterinarian. Goldens are 10 percent more likely to develop cancer than other dogs.

Other great education topics are nutrition and obesity. Please check our Web site for some excellent articles on this topic. The best advice we can give is to feed your dog a rationed high-quality diet. Some recommended foods are Nutro Natural Choice, Wellness, Innova or the one I'm currently feeding my dogs - Blue Buffalo. This is one time when you shouldn't follow the directions - do not feed the portions recommended on dog food bags, or the dog will gain weight. I read an article that you can subtract 2 years from your dog's life if he or she is obese. Our time with our precious goldens is already too short!

Metal choke collars are another thing we see often at education days. These collars should only be used for training and can easily become entangled, causing strangulation. I suggest that you purchase a pair of wire cutters for your emergency kit, just in case you witness a collar strangulation incident.

Finally, many thanks to those responsible for giving me the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rescue Reunion, and thanks to John Pfohler for the personalized presentation. Like they say, it takes a village. Thanks to John & Gail Pfohler and Sally Anne & Dave Rowland for coordinating the reunion, and to the many volunteers who made it such a great success. Also, a heartfelt thank you to John for all the work he did as coordinator for the Southwest region. We truly appreciate your hard work and dedication to the rescue cause.

-Betty

Sources for this article: Dog Watch, a newsletter from Cornell University; Your Dog, a newsletter from Tufts University; and Love of Animals, by Dr. Bob & Susan Goldstein

Book Review
What About Golden Retrievers:
The Joys and Realities of Living with a Golden, by Dan Rice, DVM

This is a very simple, common-sense book that you may want to tell people about at education days. Dr. Rice discusses the cons as well as pros of owning a golden retriever, which is somewhat rare in breed books. Many prospective owners don't ask the questions they should when buying a cute little golden retriever puppy. Dr. Rice gives honest, reliable advice on what it's really like to own and live with a golden. I'd recommend it for both novice and experienced golden lovers.



From Sadness to Joy: Story of a Rescue

by Carol McKee, editor, Hearts of Gold

"Precious." That was the first word I heard from my husband who, with tears in his eyes, led me to a cage in the back of the Lake County shelter. And there he was - little Primo. The report was that he might be a mix, due to the fact that he was "very small for a golden." Well, other than the fact that he weighed maybe 40 pounds soaking wet, this dog looked exactly like a golden retriever. He had a golden face, ears, tail, even the lovely gold coloring. Yep, this was a golden, all right.

He was frightened, you could see it all over him - guarded eyes, hanging head, quivering body ... but there it was, the tail wagging ever so slightly. Precious, indeed, I thought. I wanted to take him right then and there, but the shelter said his owner, who had already been contacted about him, had five days to claim him. If the owner didn't show up in the allotted time, Primo would be granted another 24 hours, tops, to live.

That's the harsh reality of shelters - too many pets, not enough space. If his rightful owners didn't want him, Primo would get 24 hours to find a new family. Not very good odds by any measure.

The call about Primo had come in from a good Samaritan who visited the shelter. She saw the tiny golden and called our Hotline. Donna Dossing took the call and forwarded the information to Intake Coordinator Andrea Davis. Andrea remembered I lived in Lake County, and sent me an "urgent" e-mail: Could I please go check and see if he was really a golden retriever?

And so, the long journey of "breaking Primo out of jail" began.

A few days later, we got the word. The owner failed to pay the fine, so Primo was going down at the end of the day unless someone came and paid the adoption fee. Linda of HoundHaven, a mixed-breed rescue group GRRMF often works with in Lake County, agreed to stop in and pay the fee. I agreed to pick up Primo after neutering and foster him overnight until he could be taken to one of our veterinarians, where he'd be checked over and boarded until a foster home opened up.

That Friday night found me driving at breakneck speeds from my job in Lake Mary (north of Orlando) to the far side of Leesburg - over an hour away - trying to get to the veterinarian's office before it closed.

I made it, and the next thing I knew, there he was - Mr. Precious himself. As soon as the technician brought him out from the back, even though the vet's office was filled with people and their pets, little Primo set his sights on me - and began wagging his tail.

"Wow, he sure remembers you!" the tech said. Yeah, right - 7 days earlier, he and I had glimpsed each other through thick chain link at a shelter crowded with people and hundreds of barking dogs ... and he remembers me? Probably, he just noticed me staring at him and, smart little guy that he is, honed in on me as his "get out of jail free" card.

No matter, I just smiled through my tears - tears of joy, of course - and knelt to finally pet this precious little golden for the first time.

We hugged, he wagged, I cried, the vet tech laughed ... and we were off. Primo could not wait to get out of that office, and hopped right into the car, hungrily munching the fresh trail of biscuits I'd laid out for him. I rolled down the windows a bit, and the sheer JOY on his face, as he took in the fresh springtime breeze, was truly something to behold. He'd stick his little nose out the window opening, take in a big snort of fresh air and then turn and grin back in at me. His message was a very clear, and very sincere, "THANKYOU!" And I will never forget it.

I was scheduled to take Primo to the vet in Orlando first thing Saturday morning, but I begged out of it. I hated to see him go right back into boarding after spending a week in a shelter and another day and a half at a vet's office. "I'll take him in on Monday morning," I promised my husband (who, for the record, is worse than me about falling in love with every golden he meets!).

Then I called Adoption Coordinator Sandy Sumner. By chance, we had a new foster home (yippee, we love new fosters!!) in the Orlando area, and Sandy was looking for an "easy" first foster for her. Primo fit the bill, and by Saturday evening, he was on yet another happy car ride, this time to Orlando with his new foster mom, Kathy Rozzo.

While it was sad to see him go, the experience was enough to jazz me up about rescue for an entire month. In fact, I'm still jazzed about it, because it wasn't too long before Sandy found the perfect home for Primo. You can read all about Primo's new life on Page 3.

But this isn't a story about Primo's adoption. This is a story about how much goes on behind the scenes for each and every golden retriever we save. I can tick off a dozen names of volunteers involved in Primo's rescue - from that first phone call all the long way to adoption - who played an integral part in one very important fact: **Primo is alive today because no one gave up when the going got tough.**

Now, take the story of Primo's rescue ... multiply it by a couple hundred a year ... and you begin to learn what it must be like to spend "a day in the life of GRRMF." This story doesn't take into account all the other players - the transporters, veterinarians, generous donors, supply-orderers and more ... all to save a single soul.

Is it worth it? All this for just one dog?

Just ask Primo, or his dad, Steve, who is discovering a whole new leash on life with his new best friend. Just ask the writer, who sheds a tear while she writes this story. Is it worth all the work? You bet it is. Would I do it again tomorrow? In a heartbeat. (See "The Starfish Story" at right - you've probably read it before, but it's worth another look.)

Those of you who haven't volunteered your time to help a dog, I urge you to try it sometime. Yes, it was tough going to the shelter, and I lost a bit of sleep as I waited to hear his fate. But yet, it's still the best medicine in the world. Well, except perhaps for the hugs and kisses we get every day from our own goldens!

Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean. He called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are

doing?"

The young man paused,

looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."

Loren Eiseley, 1907 - 1977



Volunteer Spotlight

**Andrea Davis: Intake Coordinator
and 2003 "Hearts of Gold Award" Winner!**

On behalf of the board, GRRMF President Barbara Durham proudly awarded the 2003 "Hearts of Gold" plaque to Andrea Davis at this year's Annual Rescue Reunion March 20 in Lakeland.

Andrea works very hard as GRRMF's Intake Coordinator - a tough job by anyone's standards. After receiving information from the Intake Hotline volunteers about dogs needing to come into rescue, Andrea has the often difficult task of prioritizing the list and determining, with the help of other GRRMF volunteers, which dogs we can help and where they can go - either to a foster home, if one is available and the dog is a good fit, or into boarding until a foster can be found. Sometimes, dogs are placed on a waiting list, and Andrea works with current owners or shelters to try to buy GRRMF some time.

"It is a tough job, but I came from a shelter background and can make the tough decisions," Andrea says. She adds that e-mail is a lifesaver for her. "I love e-mail! I don't know how the world survived without it. It saves me a ton of time."

Andrea adopted her first GRRMF rescue, a senior gal named Peaches, three years ago. "Peaches was 9 when I adopted her, so every time we get a call about an older dog I think of her. If she wouldn't have come into rescue, she would have been euthanized in the shelter for sure, due to her age. She is the greatest ... THE SWEETEST DOG!"

After adopting Peaches, Andrea got involved with GRRMF doing home visits and education days. As her passion for rescue grew, so did her responsibilities, finally leading to her appointment to the critical role of Intake Coordinator.

"If I had to describe Andrea in one word, it would be 'passionate,'" says Adoption Coordinator Sandy Sumner. "She'll do just about anything to save a dog, and her passion for rescue is inspirational. When she took on the role as Intake Coordinator, Andrea suggested that we create a plan for every dog, so no dog comes in without a solution for its ongoing care in mind. We've been working hard at this, and it is helping GRRMF get more organized," Sandy adds.

On volunteering, Andrea has an interesting perspective: "It's like dog training -- you keep doing things that you are consistently rewarded for. Many of our rescues were literally hours away from being euthanized, or lived in horrible conditions that would make your skin crawl. Now, they are 'living large' with a family that gives them all the love they could ever dream of."

One example Andrea offers is a former foster named Chester. "We received a call about a little, red, heartworm-positive boy in Polk County Animal Services that was so scared he would urinate if anyone tried to touch him. We had no foster homes available, but I knew he needed our help desperately, so I agreed to take him. He was everything they said. He wouldn't go outside - I had to pick him up and carry him. But every time I'd go to pick him up, he'd get so scared he'd urinate. It broke my heart. It wasn't long before that little redhead became a spunky, confident guy. His transformation was amazing. I saw him at the reunion, and it was all the reward I'll ever need, he was so happy."

Andrea's dream for GRRMF? "We already are making a difference, one dog at a time. Someday, I hope we have an unlimited number of foster homes or our own facility so we can save every dog we get called about."



Take the Heat out of Summer Fun

There is one word to describe Florida in summer: HOT.

If you are feeling hot and bothered by the sun and heat, chances are your dog is, too.

Please keep the following safety concerns in mind as the temperature rises.

- ▼ Avoid strenuous exercise during the heat of the day. Take walks in the early morning or evening when the sun's heat is less intense.
- ▼ Avoid prolonged exposure to hot asphalt, concrete or sand, which can burn your dog's paws. Consider slowing the pace a bit in summer months, so neither of you gets overheated.
- ▼ Be especially cautious if your golden is a senior citizen or puppy. Old and young dogs have a harder time regulating body temperature and are at greater risk for overexposure.
- ▼ If you jog with your dog, use extra caution during summer months. While you may be able to run for miles in the heat, dogs can only sweat through their tongue and paws, so they can easily overheat.
- ▼ Frequent rainstorms may leave puddles in the roads, which can quickly become contaminated with motor oil, antifreeze, parasites and other unsafe substances. Don't let your dog walk in or drink from puddles.
- ▼ Hopefully, you've not fallen into the trap of letting your dog become overweight, but if he's carrying around a few extra pounds, please use extra caution. Extra layers of fat act as insulation, which traps heat inside the body and restricts breathing capabilities. The same principle applies to humans!
- ▼ Summer is often a time when people fertilize their lawns and work in their gardens. Plant food, fertilizer and insecticides can be fatal if your pet ingests them. In some cases, dogs can ingest these through their paws, so keep him off just-treated lawns.
- ▼ DO NOT shave your golden! A dog's fur acts as an insulator against the heat and sun. If you remove that layer of insulation, the dog will be less capable of regulating its body temperature. You're doing more harm than good by shaving your dog!
- ▼ Check your golden's ears more often, especially if he or she swims. Golden retrievers are prone to ear infections, and heat and humidity can cause them to flare up. Check with your veterinarian for a good ear wash solution.
- ▼ If you go to the beach or park, make sure your dog has a shady spot to rest and plenty of cool, fresh water.
- ▼ Limit her exposure to the sun - dogs get sunburn, too!
- ▼ If swimming in the ocean, watch the currents and remember that dogs are easy targets for sea lice and jellyfish. Also, do not allow the dog to drink seawater - it will make them sick!
- ▼ Don't assume that your golden will love the water - or even know how to swim! Introduce him gradually in calm, shallow water and coax him in by calling his name. Encourage him with toys or treats. Or let him follow another experienced dog he is friendly with. Never throw your dog into the water or force him to swim! If your dog begins to paddle with his front legs, lift his hind legs and help him float. He should quickly catch on and keep his back end up.
- ▼ Don't let your dog overdo it. Swimming is very hard work and he may tire quickly. Dogs can suffer heatstroke from overexertion, even while in the water.



Who Let the 12th Annual Rescue Reunion is Howlin' Good Time!

"It was the best reunion ever."

"Perfect weather, and I met many new friends."

"We had a blast, and our dogs are exhausted!"

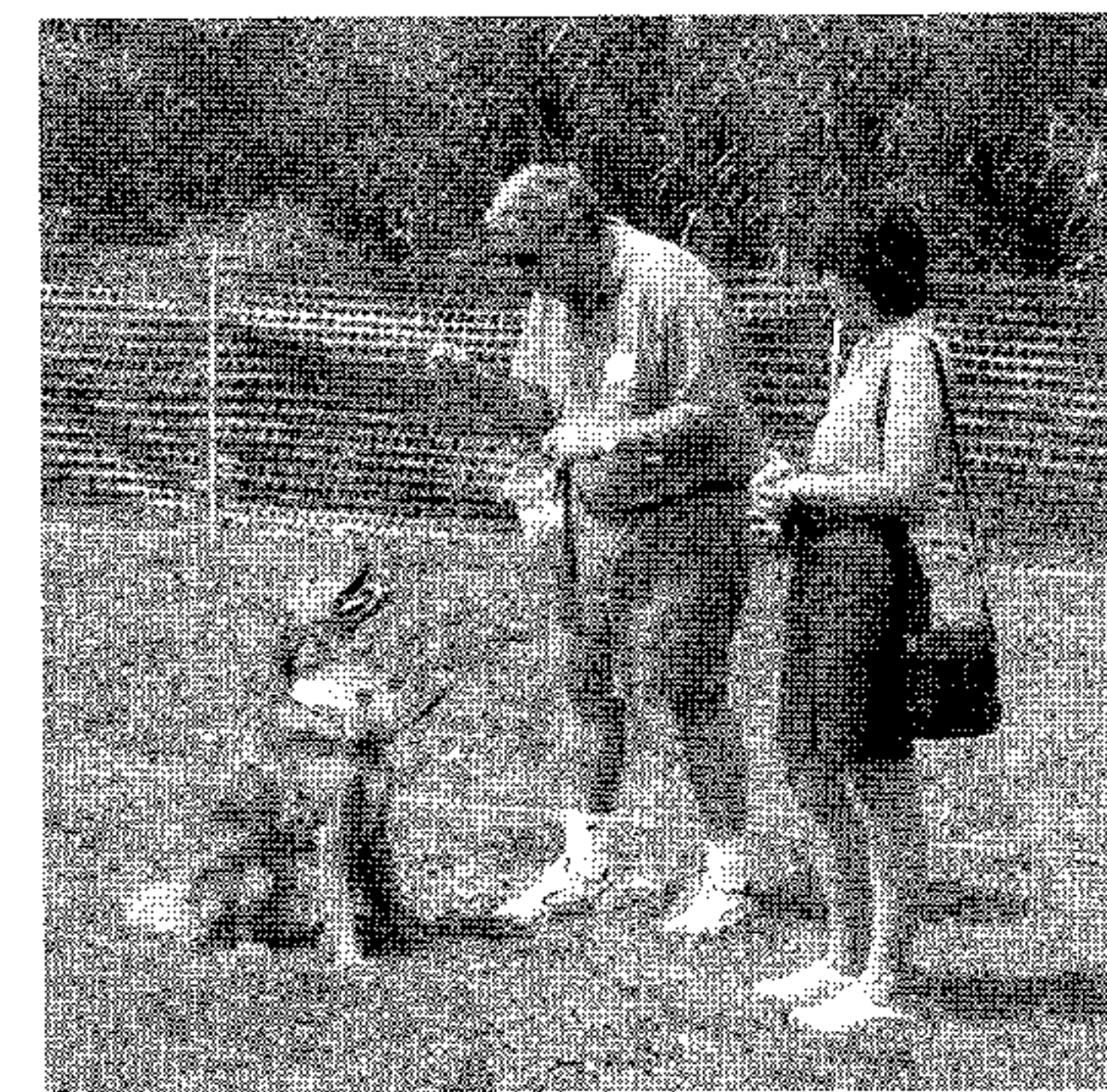


Just a few comments from this year's Rescue Reunion, held March 20 at Lake Parker Park in Lakeland, Fla. Hundreds attended on the picture-perfect spring day that featured many activities for dogs and humans alike.

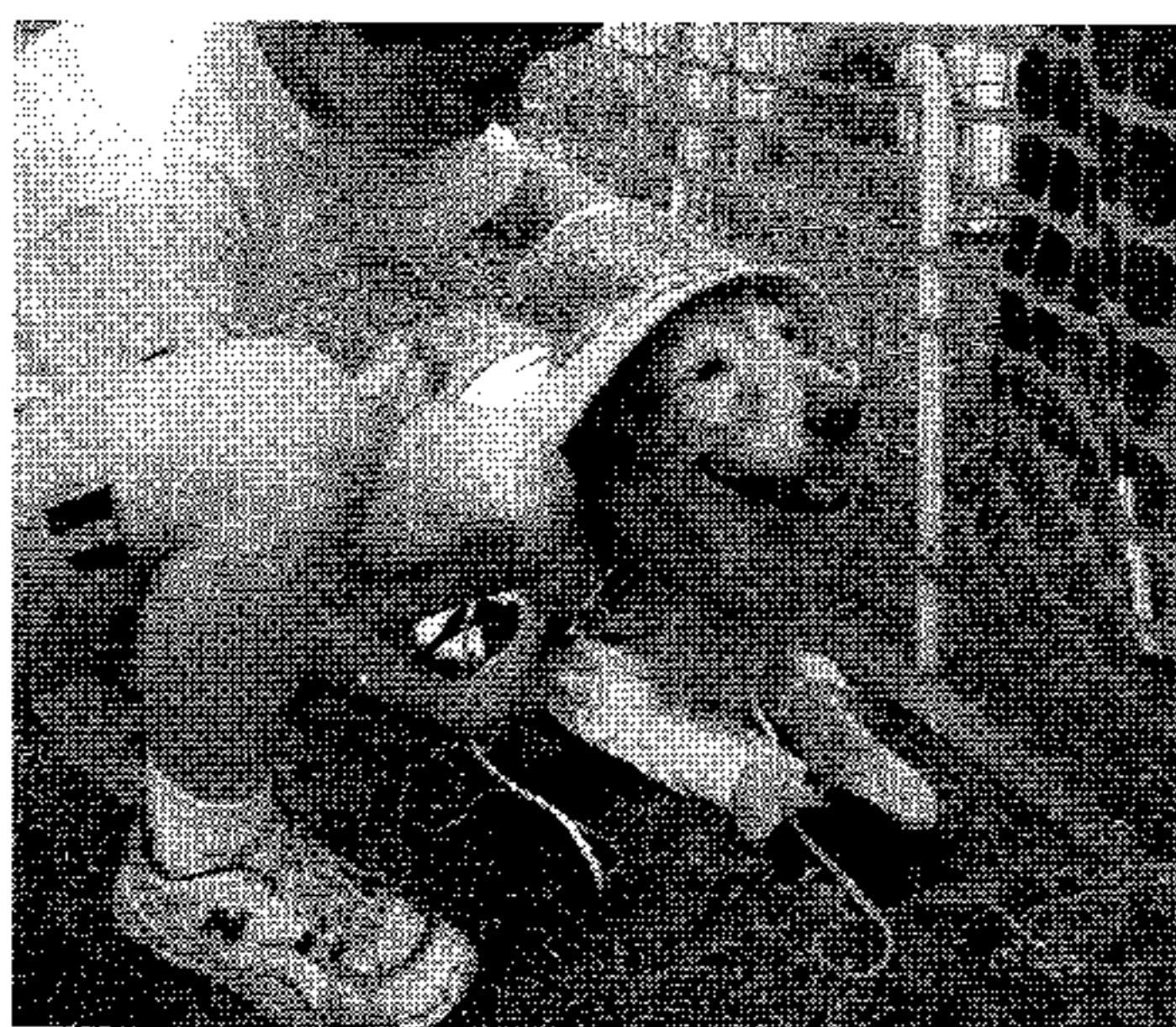
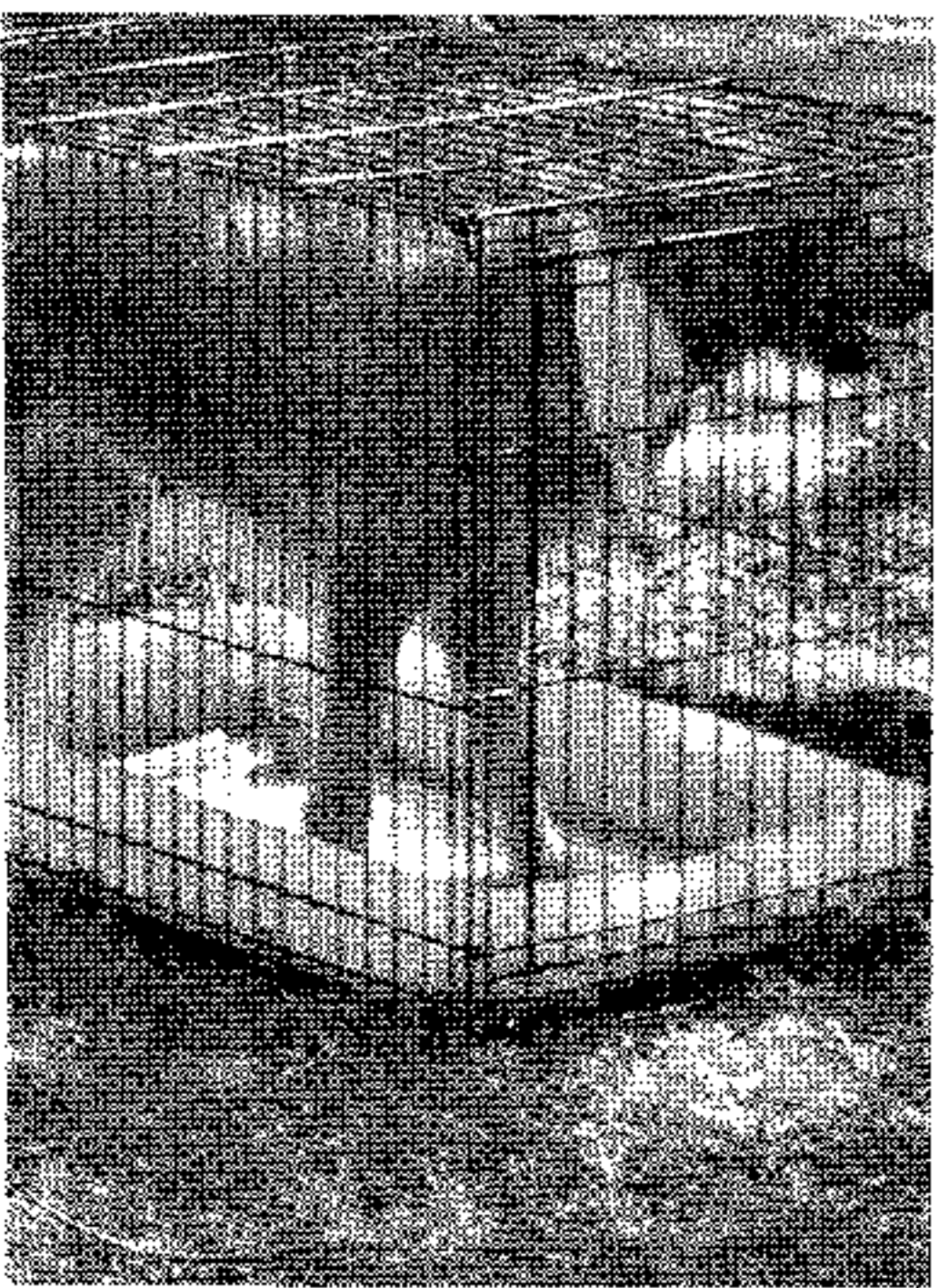
From grooming sessions offered by the "pros" from Mid-Florida Golden Retriever Club to grilled goodies by "Chef Dave" to doggie games such as "Bobbing for Bones" and "Hand-Me-Down Hound" - it was a howlin' good time!

Through the raffle, silent auction, Golden Goods and other fund-raising activities, GRRMF raised more than \$7,000 - all of which will go toward helping golden retrievers in need this year.

Giant doggie hugs to event organizers John Pfohler and Sally Anne Rowland, as well as the dozens of other volunteers who pitched in and helped out: You made this event a resounding success!



Four paws up for all of you!



Dogs Out?

REUNION DVD: "Who Let the Dogs Out?"

This year, for the first time, a volunteer has compiled a wonderful DVD of more than 160 reunion photos set to music. You'll see hundreds of dogs and their humans having fun playing games, splashing in the kiddie pools and just hanging out. The DVD plays just like a movie on your TV or computer and runs for more than 20 minutes. Many thanks to Tom & Kellyanne Goring and "assistants" Robert & Andrew for taking the majority of the pictures and creating this wonderful "dog show"!

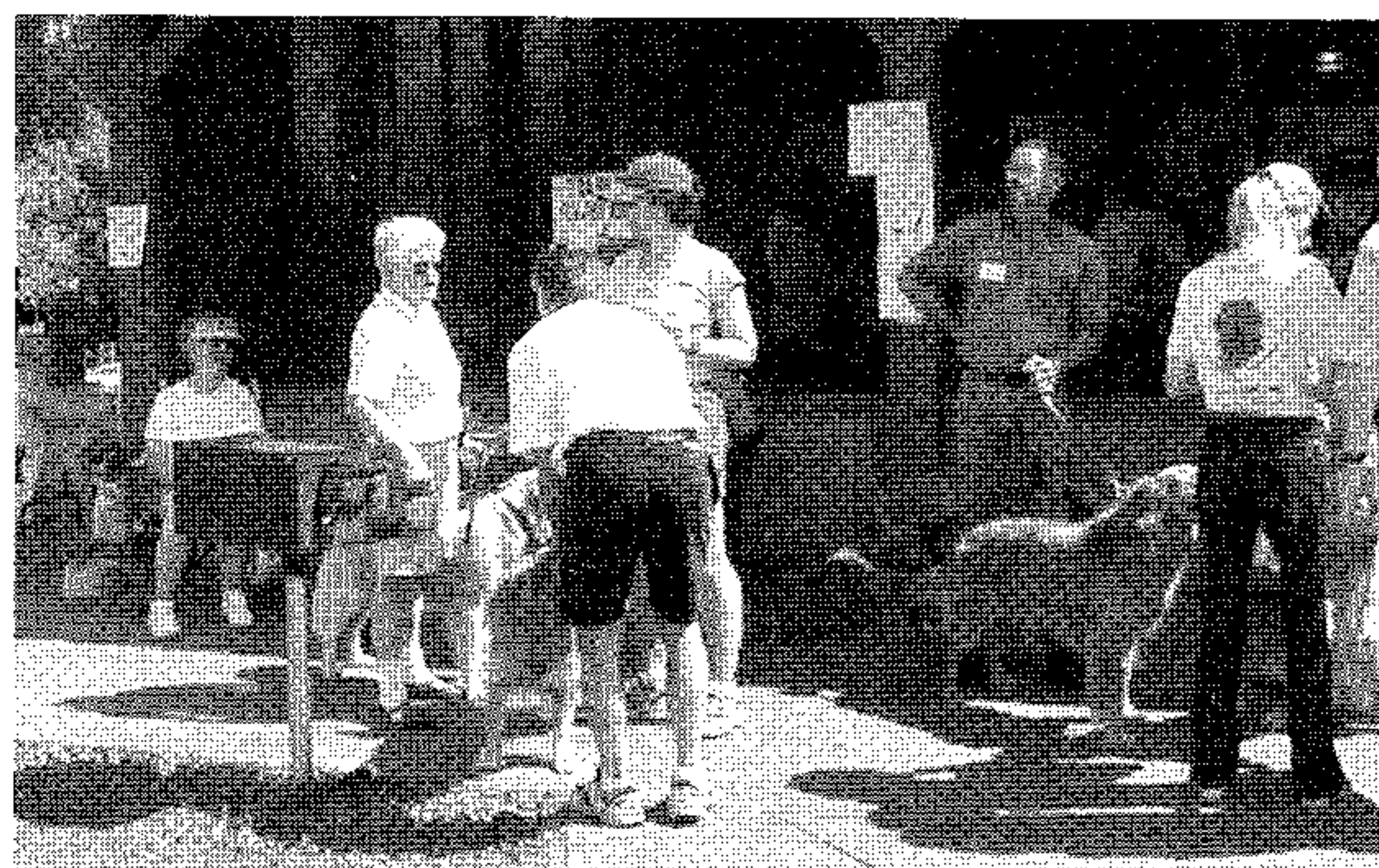
We have a limited supply still available.

DVDs are just \$5 each, and the price includes shipping. 100% of the proceeds go to GRRMF.

If you'd like a copy, send your check payable to "GRRMF" and home address to: Carol McKee, 5922 Hanson View Drive, Tavares, FL 32778.

E-mail Carol with questions:

2boatrats@comcast.net.



Help Us Spread The Word About Rescue!

GRRMF is in need of volunteers to spend a few hours a month "preaching the golden gospel" at our educational days across the state. It's a great opportunity to make new friends, spread the word about rescue, and you can even bring your dog, if he or she is people and dog friendly!

MELBOURNE/EAST COAST: PetsMart, Melbourne / Petco, Viera/Suntree

TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER: PetsMart, Citrus Park/Tampa -- Every first and third Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon

PetsMart, Countryside/Clearwater - Every first Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

PetsMart, Tyrone/St. Petersburg - Every first Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. / PetsMart, Trinity - Every third Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon

SARASOTA: PetsMart, The Landings/Sarasota -- Every first Saturday / PetsMart, Bradenton - Every third Saturday

ORLANDO: PetsMart, Waterford Lakes/East Orlando - Every second Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon.

Borders Bookstore, Oviedo - Every third Saturday, 7-9:30 p.m. / PetsMart, Lake Mary - Every first Saturday

PALM BEACH: Pet Supplies Plus, Lake Park - Every fourth Saturday

If you are interested in helping, stop by at one of the above times/locations! Or call 407-332-2840, or e-mail info@grrmf.org and we'll hook you up with the Team Leader for that location. Check our Web site under "events" for the latest schedule in case of last-minute schedule changes.

Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida Membership Application/Donation Form

ALL memberships/donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____ Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

E-mail: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the quarterly "HEARTS OF GOLD" newsletter and is on a calendar year basis.

Memberships received after September 1 of any year automatically carry forward to the next calendar year.

Please check one:

☐ General Membership \$25 ☐ Sponsorship \$100 (for helping a dog in need – you will be recognized in our newsletter and receive notification of the special GRRMF dog you are sponsoring.)

☐ Gift Membership \$25 for: Name _____ Address _____

Donation

☐ \$_____ to be used for general veterinary care for rescue dogs.

☐ \$_____ to the Woody Fund for care of goldens with difficult medical problems.

☐ \$_____ to the Capital Campaign for a home for Goldens.

☐ \$_____ to the Boarding Fund to help house goldens on a temporary basis until a foster home can be located.

☐ \$_____ for this purpose: _____

☐ \$_____ in memory of _____ Send acknowledgment to: _____

☐ \$_____ in honor of _____

Mail form to: GRRMF, Post Office Box 1449, Goldenrod, Florida 32733A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.



Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida, Inc.
P.O. Box 1449
Goldenrod, FL 32733

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