



Hearts of Gold

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

Volume 9, Issue 1

SPRING 2006



Then and Now: Maximillion/Opie came to GRRMF weighing in at 130 pounds. See what he's up to today - about half of what he used to be!
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Leashed is LOVED: Montana is a good example of why you should NEVER allow your dog off leash unless it is in a fenced area. Page 15



I'm Adopted! Our cover dog from last issue, Randy, goes to his new home!
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**Membership
renewal time!**
**Have you renewed
your GRRMF
membership for 2006?**
**Renew today
and keep this
newsletter coming!**
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2006 Membership Drive Under Way!

Why should you become a GRRMF member or renew your existing membership?

This plea is on behalf of hundreds of needy golden retrievers in our state. Golden retrievers in shelters who are lost, injured or unwanted. Young golden retrievers given up because of a divorce, a new baby or death in the family. Sweet-faced golden retrievers who need expensive medical care such as heartworm treatment or surgery. White-faced golden retrievers given up for the simple reason that they have gotten old. Where would all these golden retrievers turn to in their time of need if GRRMF didn't exist?

Luckily for these precious golden retrievers, Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida is here to help. Through the support of our members (that's you!), we turn their lives around. Through love, quality veterinary care and the safe haven and structure of our foster network, their health and well-being are restored.

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Hello Old Friend

By Carol McKee

"Blessed is the person who has earned the love of an old dog."

Sydney Jeanne Seward



The recent holiday season was a particularly happy one for GRRMF. Why? For one, we reached some milestones: 1,750 total dogs rescued, and 200 in 2005 - a record for us. Second, in the month of December we adopted SEVEN senior dogs to wonderful new families. Seven "golden oldies" in one month alone - well, that's just good for the soul.

In our throwaway society, it seems there is no end to the amount of wonderful older golden retrievers who find themselves homeless. Many are dumped off at shelters, where they will most certainly die. At the very least, these seniors deserve to die with dignity and

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2007 GRRMF Calendar - Wouldn't your dog look great on the cover?



Entry Deadline: June 15, 2006

Last year's calendar contest was a huge success, and we know it will only get better every year. So why not send us that great picture of your gorgeous dog today for his or her chance at stardom? And remember, you can also have your dog's birthday and/or "gotcha day" published in the calendar.

SUBMISSION RULES:

- Contest deadline: June 15, 2006
Give us your best shots, with a \$5 donation per picture. We will be choosing 13 photos, one for each month and one for the cover. However, we will also attempt to place every photo submitted into the calendar in some form. A photo committee will judge the photos by August 15, 2006. We are looking for:
 - ▼ quality of the photo (sharpness, color and clarity)
 - ▼ no glowing eyes
 - ▼ seasonal appropriateness
 - ▼ dogs doing what dogs do best - having fun
- Color prints must be horizontal (4" x 6" or larger).

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grace, not to be put down all alone, in the cold, uncaring and confusing atmosphere of an animal shelter.

GRRMF tries very hard to take those seniors in, and our goal is to ensure that they live out the rest of their lives in peace, surrounded by people who love them. Sometimes, we have just months with them; other times, they surprise us and go on to live very long lives. The truth is, you never know how long you have. We all could go at any time, so the secret is to enjoy every moment of every day.

If that hasn't convinced you to open your heart and home to a golden oldie, try these "top 10" reasons to adopt a senior golden retriever:

1. "WASH AND WEAR" FACTOR. Older dogs generally have had some training, both in obedience and house manners. They have learned how to leave the furniture, carpets, shoes and other "chewables" alone.

2. CLEAN FLOORS. Unless there is an underlying medical cause, 99 percent of senior dogs are potty trained. And an adult dog has a larger bladder and can go for longer periods of time without relief.

3. TOLERANCE. Most older dogs know what it takes to be part of a "pack" and get along with others - including cats.

4. APPRECIATION. Older dogs, especially those who have once known it, appreciate love and attention and quickly learn what's expected of them to gain and keep that love and attention.

5. COMPANIONSHIP. Older dogs know how to let you finish the newspaper, sitting calmly next to you while your work day stress flows away and your blood pressure lowers. They're happy to be a "couch potato" or, if the mood strikes you, are also instantly ready for a car ride, an evening walk or a game of fetch.

6. DIGNITY. Senior goldens are generally calmer than young dogs; they won't scare small children or the elderly by jumping up to greet them or bouncing around like a ping-pong ball.

7. ADAPTABILITY. An adult dog will adapt more easily to changes in your household, such as a new baby, relatives or guests visiting or being left alone during the day when you're at work.

8. WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get). A senior dog is fully grown, and most of her health history is known (hereditary diseases, arthritis, hip dysplasia, etc.). There are no guesses about how big she'll get, whether she'll bark a lot or what her energy level will be.

9. DOING YOUR PART. Just about everyone who enters a shelter is looking for a puppy or a young dog. Others choose to go to breeders or pet stores for puppies. By adopting an older dog, you can make a statement about compassion and the value of life at all ages, as well as register a protest against the indiscriminate and inhumane breeding of dogs, whether it is for profit or to "teach the children about birth." And, of course, just as a puppy has his whole life ahead of him, so does an older dog. You can give that older dog the best years of his life while at the same time bringing a wonderful addition into your family.

10. MEMORIES. Even if you have a senior golden as part of your life for only a few years, the days and the adventures you share are precious. The love you receive will more than compensate for the sadness of eventually losing such a wonderful companion.

And reason No. 11, if we could go that far: There is nothing in the world like smooching the white face of a senior golden retriever!



BRONSON was found by chance at animal control. His lucky stars were shining that day! Our volunteers went to check on another dog there, and this sweet boy had just been turned in. He was heartworm positive. Chris &

Tommy M. took him home and nursed him through his treatment. Bronson's lucky stars were shining again when Cheryl and Bob O. adopted him. They had done their research and found that a golden would be the perfect breed for them. Bronson filled the bill. Cheryl writes: "Bronson is wonderful! I can't believe how much I love him already. We are so happy that we took our time and decided on a golden ... we couldn't have asked for a better dog." Bronson now has his own pool and two cats to play with. He goes to training classes and is doing well, although Cheryl admits she still likes to let him jump up to hug her. And the couch was supposed to be off-limits, but he's been known to snuggle up there, too. Funny how the rules change when you have a golden to love!



BRANDON, 12 years, was due to be put down at a local shelter. His family did not want him back. Although he is a bit hard of hearing, you will never find a sweeter dog than Brandon. Ann F. felt this way too and loved him from the minute she saw his web page. He hopped up in her car with nary a look back at foster mom Sandy and is now sharing his home with another golden senior adopted by Ann named Baron. She truly knows the value of old gold.

JEWEL, 4 years, came to rescue as a wild child. She was an outside dog who had no idea what to do with toys or other dogs. But she knew what she did want - to be as close to her person as she could. Jewel is a true Velcro dog. This is exactly what Eileen B. was looking for and she says that Jewel is by her side all of the time. Another perfect match.

BRADLEY is a senior who does not know he is a senior. We were told he was 10 years old and did not do much. Guess he did not

get that memo, because Bradley loves to move! He loves swimming and playing with any dogs who are willing to play with him. This, along with some good food, helped to clear up his skin allergies and lose some weight. Neal T.



Recent Adoptions - Spring 2006

and his wife saw his web page and thought that some senior gold was just what was needed for their house. They love him to pieces and even had a "welcome to the family" party for him. We hope Bradley and his family will join us at Education Days to show how wonderful an older dog can be.

At the tender age of 3, PARKER had more than his share of maladies - entropion eye issues, heartworms, skin allergies and a raging ear infection. But his sunny personality came through, as Parker endeared himself to all who met him. GRRMF fixed up his medical issues and fosters Chris and Tommy made sure he had all of the TLC he deserved after such a rotten start. Frank K. thought he was special, too, and adopted him as soon as he was ready to go. P.S. That is Parker posing with Dr. Wiseman in the "Veterinarian Spotlight" photo. What a smile!

Just 2 years old, VIOLET found herself at the local shelter with a bad upper respiratory infection. Fostered by Kelly M and her family, Violet soon felt much better. Shannon N. thought she was just what was missing in her home and adopted her right away. No more shelter days for Miss Violet.

JACK-JACK, only 4 months old, was a stray that no one claimed at the shelter. He was adopted in no time by the A. family who wanted a young



one to take to obedience school and raise as a member of their family. This little guy, now named Gunner, was made to order.

Pretty blonde PETUNIA was only 6 months old when her former owner realized that she was not getting the time she needed to become a good canine citizen. He called GRRMF and we picked up this girl right away. Unspayed females are a top priority for us; we need to get them spayed and help decrease the overpopulation of



goldens in Florida. And young females are also very popular on the list for potential adopters. Petunia was no exception. She was

quickly adopted by the S. family. She now has all the time and attention that she could possibly need.



Five-year-old DASH lived in an apartment his entire life. His owner realized this was no life for an energetic golden, and she didn't have the funds for his annual medical care, so she turned him over to GRRMF. She wanted Dash

to have a home with a yard where he could run. When he first came to rescue, Dash was reluctant to go out in the back yard with out a leash. He was recently adopted by the B. family. Now he has that back yard he needs and an active family who promises to walk him daily. We think it was a match made in heaven. Dash even has his own human playmates: 10-year-old Derrick, who will be in charge of training and throwing tennis balls for Dash, and 12-year-old Maria, who promises to shower him with love. We see wonderful times ahead for all of them.

BAYLEY came in with her buddy Barkley. Barkley was adopted quickly, but Bayley needed hip surgery and it took a long time to heal. Long enough for her foster mom Kathy R. to fall in love with her and decide to keep her. Nicknamed "the Diva," Bayley is now spoiled with walks and dips in the pool, just as she thinks she should be.

Lady Luck was truly shining the day her namesake, LUCKY, landed with GRRMF! This handsome 2-year-old was supposedly well cared for by his

former family, but test results came back conclusive for heartworms. Tom & Kellyann G. fostered him through the first chapter of his treatment, and Adam P. agreed to help him through the final treatments. Adam knew Lucky was there to stay and wasted no time adopting him as soon as he was declared heartworm-free. Adam is thrilled that he can finally run and play with his wonderful new canine companion, and we get the impression that the feeling is mutual!



RANDY was our cover dog last issue. He was found wandering the highway and taken to Animal Control. Tom & Kellyann G. sprung him out

at literally the last few minutes of his life, and this 10-year-old's life turned around immediately. He was severely malnourished and had terrible skin infections, on top of being heartworm-positive. GRRMF started him on his way to a healthy and happy life, and Brian L., who previously adopted Bear and Prince from GRRMF, offered to see him through all his treatments. Brian fell in love with this easygoing guy and decided to make it permanent. In Brian's words: "This boy isn't going anywhere - send me the paperwork! I can promise you that when you next see Randy you won't recognize him. He is going to shine!" We couldn't be happier about the ending to this story - from death row to a life filled with love, hard to get better than that!

Four-year-old TOBY came to rescue because the family had no time for him. They said that he did not "bond" with them. We could not figure that out at all. Toby loves people, dogs, basically whomever is around. And he loved Barbara S. when she came to see him. She says he is just great and a wonderful boy.

POLLY, 2 years, came to GRRMF after her owner died and his wife was forced to move to



a nursing facility. She was quite skittish, didn't know what toys were for and, by all appearances, had little or no experience walking on a leash. However, Polly also was as sweet as they come and very laid back. She loved nothing more than to lie by her human's side and be petted. Linda & Jim E. fell in love with her Web page and brought their GRRMF alumni Dryfuss to meet her. They were warned that Polly often did not warm up to strangers and might be quite aloof when meeting them. We ought not to have bothered, as Polly, now Holly, ran up to them, smiling and tail wagging, as if to say, "I thought you'd never get here!" She and Dryf spent some time getting to know

each other, and within 24 hours were playing together. "Holly is a dream. We couldn't be happier," Linda writes. We share your enthusiasm, Linda! Holly is truly "HOME."



SPENCER has come a long way from when he was found heartworm positive and suffering from skin infections and other

medical problems. He's settled in at his new home with Becky and Clyde R., and has even claimed his own chair. He also enjoyed opening his Christmas gifts with his new doggy brothers, Amigo, Bristol and Keebler. Becky notes that Spencer is relaxed enough now to lay on his back, so that's a great sign that he's feeling safe and secure. Becky and Spencer have signed up for obedience classes; we're sure that team will be at the head of the class!

DARBY was adopted by Rick and Valerie B. and their cat, Samantha. Since losing their previous golden, Nick, to cancer, their house just hasn't been the same. Darby has filled that void very well. Samantha and Darby curl up for a snooze together and really enjoy each other's company. Valerie says, "We are really enjoying Darby's amusing antics-she keeps us entertained. She is a very sweet dog and such a joy to have around." Valerie and Rick also attend obedience classes with Darby, who is proving to be a wonderful student. The only problem is that Darby has turned into a real mama's girl. What's the solution? They're considering adopting another GRRMF dog to add to the family. They'd like a daddy's boy this time.

MAGGIE came to us from a shelter. She is a sweet girl who is "all about the play." Fosters Tom & Kellyann worked with her to learn some basic house manners, and soon Maggie was on her way home with



Nedra G. Nedra reports that Maggie is doing wonderful: "She loves toys - all of them and can be quite sneaky if you take them away or try to put them up. She loves to run and persists in making me jog in the mornings... She is a wonderful and lovely addition to my life and I am quite happy about all of it."

Before being turned in to GRRMF with her three young offspring, 4-year-old ROSE was not living the life she deserved. She



was fostered by Rick and Cindy O. who helped Rose feel comfortable living inside a home and learn that not all humans are to be mistrusted. She was adopted by Chris and Julie K. who saw her picture on the website and just knew she was "the one." Her new family reports that Rose is doing very well. Her new sister (a GRRMF rescue) and two brothers welcomed her with open arms. Rose, the dark red beauty on the left, is keeping her new family on their toes with her silly antics and ball fetching skills. Chris and Julie recognize that: "It's funny how you get to know how truly special each one is. They each have their own personality, and we are so very happy to have Rose with us. Thank you so much for taking care of her. We just love Rose, and couldn't be happier to have her join our clan."

DONALD was turned in with two of his siblings and his mother, Rose (above). He was fostered by prior GRRMF adopters Diane & Phil W. Phil was hinting to Diane about Donald staying with them forever, and guess what comes next ... Yes, it seems Donald has found his new forever home with Diane & Phil, and we're not sure who's happier, Donald or Phil!

Before coming in to GRRMF, 2-year-old DAISY was left outside with her mother Rose and 2 siblings. Daisy was unsocialized and afraid of new things. She was fostered by Chris H. and adopted by Richard, Julie and Hunter. Her new family renamed her Cleo and say this about their new golden: "Cleo is a wonderful, welcomed addition to our family and although it's only been 2 months, it's hard for us to remember life without her." Cleo, who loves a tennis ball, spends time every day in the yard with her human kid, Hunter 'tossing the ball' ... well, Hunter tosses (with a typical 4-year-old's aim) and Cleo gladly chases. When play time is done and exhaustion hits, Cleo finds a favorite spot and takes a break!

LILY came in with Rose, Daisy & Donald. She is a very quiet girl and has difficulties with loud noises or changes in routine. Lily fit right into her foster home with the W. family, and when it came time to place her into a new home, they realized they couldn't let her go. Lily has found her forever home, and GRRMF is very happy about that!

Eight-year-old RAINEY was fostered by Bert H. and family and adopted by Gail G. Gail was looking for a special dog who needed to be needed. Well, she certainly found that in Rainey. Gail reports that Rainey is doing fantastic and fits in as if she has been part of the family for years.



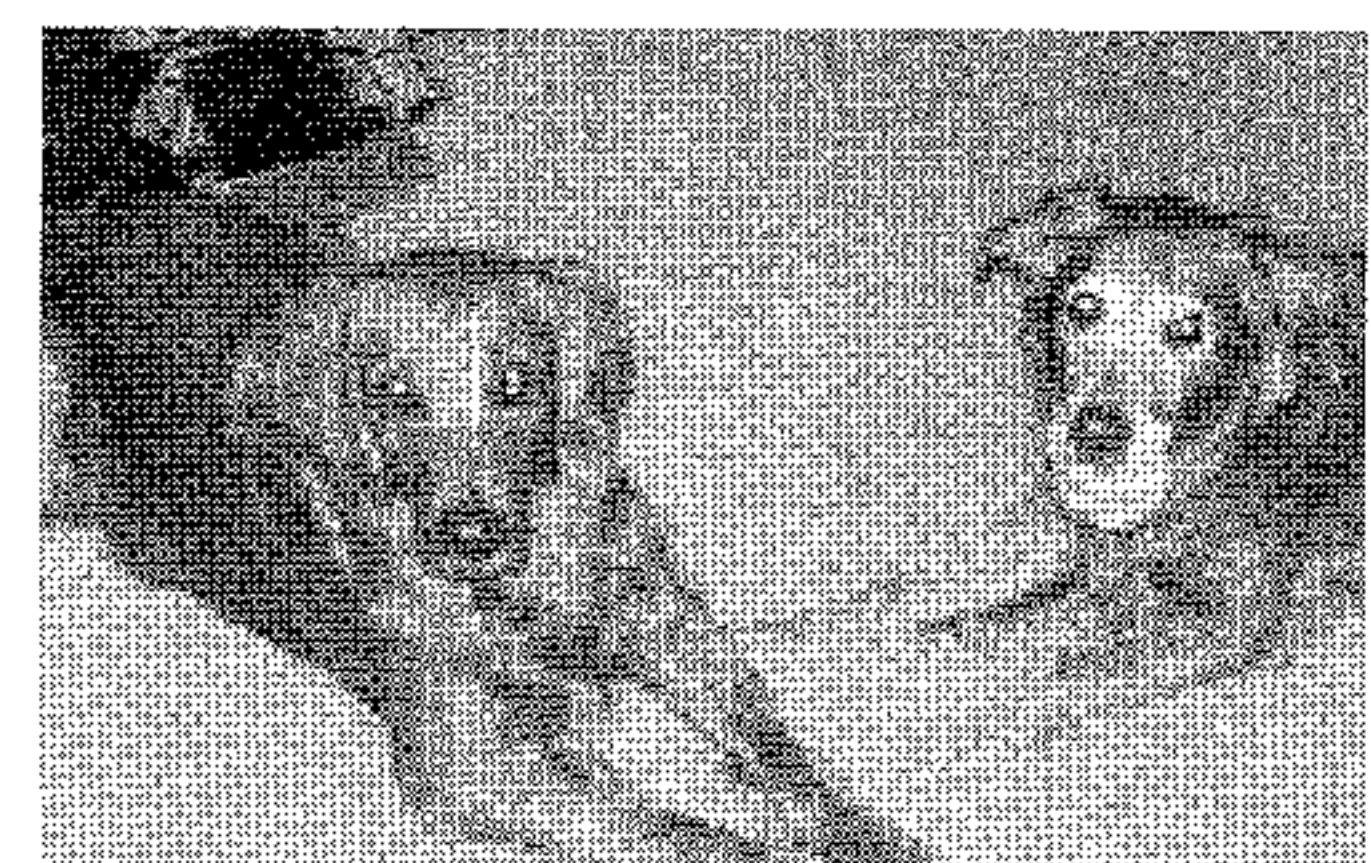
Eight-year-old ANNIE was turned in to rescue when her family realized that spending long hours at home alone in a crate was not the life for any dog. She was fostered and very much loved by Kathy and Jim F. and adopted by Bonnie S., who fell in love with Annie at first sight. Bonnie says that Annie is "better than I could have imagined" and is doing just fine in her new digs.



KIKI was an owner turn-in to Animal Services. Apparently, she was a little wild for the older couple who previously owned her. Kiki was fostered by Emily and Velma and adopted by Darby Jo and Don

P. She and Darby Jo enjoy their long morning walks, and Kiki goes to doggie daycare a few days a week. What a lucky girl!

MONTANA was a very lucky lady to have the love of GRRMF volunteers and donors.



Montana ran across a busy street and was hit by a car. At 2 years old, Montana was facing surgery to repair her severely broken pelvis. GRRMF stepped in and provided the care required to get her back on her feet again. Many donors helped pay for this lovely gal's surgery and rehabilitation. She was lucky to have Emily and Velma as her foster moms. They made sure that Montana received the care she needed and provided swim therapy to help her pelvis heal. After several long months, Montana finally received a clean bill of health. She was adopted by Lori and Steve H., who take her and canine sister Abbey for walks every day. Lori recently wrote: "Montana is such a goof and always makes us laugh and smile. Thank you for giving us such a great girl. We look forward to bringing both the girls to the reunion in March." We're sure there will be lots of caring volunteers and donors lining up to give Montana a hug at the reunion!

Two-year-old HAILEY and her brother Felton were given to GRRMF by a family who had banished them to the outdoors when a new baby arrived on the scene. They were fostered by Hank & Janice B. and Hailey went to her new forever home with Jennifer W. At first, Hailey was afraid of the resident cat, but they have made their peace. She is very well-mannered in her new home and loves to snuggle with mom on the couch. They couldn't be happier with their new golden treasure - and we can see why, as Hailey is a wonderful gal.



ANGEL was originally bought for a young boy who quickly lost interest. She and her younger brother Jack found themselves advertised on a company bulletin board as "FREE TO GOOD HOME." A GRRMF volunteer quickly stepped in and rescued the pair. Nine-year-old Angel was appropriately named. She was fostered by Donna and Chuck and adopted by Jacqueline S. Angel and Jacqueline are

inseparable. They also spend their days warming the hearts of others at a local nursing home. The residents there love her and Jacqueline suspects it's partly because of Angel's snowy white face - they relate to her "maturity"! She loves playing with the other goldens in the neighborhood, including Ricco, another GRRMF dog. She's kept her girlish figure and is, according to Jacqueline, "still the most beautiful dog in the whole world."

NUGGET and his brother Moses were turned in to rescue when their owners could no longer afford them. Seven-year-old Nugget was fostered by Char B. and welcomed into the home of Steve J., who says that Nugget is perfect. Nugget has made himself at home in bed with Steve's son. The two of them are inseparable.

Holding the honor as one of "the world's most perfect fosters" by his foster mom Leah, BISCUIT continues to hold the title of MR. PERFECT with his new dad David C. Eighteen-month-old Biscuit has been re-homed a few times prior to coming to rescue. He now is in his true forever home with a new name which suits him - Arthur. His new dad reports that everyone who meets him goes on and on about how handsome and well-behaved he is. David said: "He really wants to be around us all the time. He's very affectionate and I couldn't be happier!"

SAMPSON was fostered and adopted by Cara and John K. Cara reports that Sampson is doing great - "though we snuggle 24/7 and he still doesn't think that is enough," she says. He loves playing fetch, swimming and hunting squirrels at the dog park. His prior family was having a second child and thought that it was too much to keep him. We can't understand how they could part with him - his whole object in life is just to love you.

JAKE, 7 years old, turned up at GRRMF when he was surrendered by his former owners. They didn't have enough time to spend with him and when housemates moved in the small house, they decided Jake had to move out. He was fostered by Kim E. and adopted by Suzanne & Jordan S. Jake now joins former GRRMF rescue Destiny in daily walks and life with a family who loves him very much and has promised him he is now truly "home."

If WESLEY, 2 years old, were a human, he'd be a hopeless romantic. This little lovebug wants nothing more than to be loved on and will crawl into your lap and lie quietly for hours at a time. His foster folks, Tom & Kellyann, loved him very much, but knew that Wesley deserved



to find his very own home. Along came Kerri & Richard M. Wesley was just what they were looking for. He is now named Quincy and is enjoying spending several visits to Kerri's mom's house, where he has a canine buddy and a swimming pool to play with.

COLE, 4 years, was turned in by his first family. They had too much going on in their lives, and little to no time to spend with him ...and it showed! Cole was completely untrained when he went to stay with fosters Tom & Kellyann. Within 24 hours, Cole had learned sit and shake hands, and they were working on the high-five command. Kellyann immediately recognized that in addition to being handsome, this was one very smart golden! Cole loves to swim and took a dip in the pool whenever the opportunity presented itself - which was sometimes a little too often in his foster home! All it took to turn Cole around was a positive outlet for his energy (he loves to chase tennis balls and will do so until he practically collapses with exhaustion) and some direction and focus in his life. Cole was snapped up by Patrick & Karen S. They love Cole and have committed to taking him to obedience classes so he continues on his positive track.



CORKY is one of Terra's puppies. He was adopted but found himself back with GRRMF when his humans ran into hard times. Corky was fostered by Ron & Jennifer L. and adopted by David B. David loves both Labradors and goldens, so Corky was perfect for him. He likes to get daily exercise, and Corky now will enjoy going walking/jogging with his new dad.

Don't see your adoption here?

GRRMF had a record number of adoptions over the past couple of months, many of which occurred as this newsletter was going into production. Watch for your smiling face in the next issue, coming to your mailbox soon!

As we begin the new year, I'd like to thank all of our supporters for making 2005 our most successful year yet. Through your support of money and volunteer time, we are able to continue our mission. With each golden retriever saved, lives are turned around. I'm always struck with how not only is the dog's life changed forever, but human lives are also enhanced and sometimes healed. Our animals can be the best medicine as we navigate through the stresses of everyday life. Who can put a price on the unconditional love that a golden retriever can offer? For example, we've seen a golden retriever help heal a human who is suffering from the loss of a spouse or family member - or someone after a rough divorce - both lives are transformed and it is very gratifying. When I reflect that in 2005 we saved approximately 200 goldens, it is heartwarming to know that so many families have been impacted in a positive way.

Our goldens are with us for a relatively short time, so take advantage of each day to love them and treat them like they should be treated. I truly believe our animals are gifts from God and are treasures. I'm sure I'm not alone in my feelings. I know our volunteers feel the same way as they work so tirelessly to save these precious dogs.

-Barbara



President's Message

By Barbara Durham, GRRMF President

Calendar contest continued from front cover

3. Digital pictures must be horizontal, at least 300 dpi resolution and be in .jpg, .tif or .gif format.
4. Only GRRMF alumni are eligible.
5. Photos must be previously unpublished, non-professional images; no copyrighted photos accepted.
6. Photos become property of GRRMF and cannot be returned.
7. GRRMF reserves the right to use pictures submitted in our Hearts of Gold newsletter, on our Web site or other promotional purposes.
8. Send a brief story of your dog's past and present life with each picture and when you adopted through GRRMF.
9. Entries, including photos, will become the property of GRRMF and will not be acknowledged or returned.
10. Submission of an entry grants GRRMF the right to publish, use, adapt, edit and/or modify such entry in any way, in any and all media, without limitation, and without consideration to the entrant, whether or not such submission is selected as a winning entry. By submitting an entry, entrants irrevocably assign and transfer to GRRMF any and all rights, title and interest in entry and photo, including, without limitation, all copyrights. Entries: must be the original work of the entrant; must not infringe third-party rights, and must be suitable for publication.
11. Submission of photo does not guarantee inclusion in calendar.
12. Send a check with completed form and picture(s) to:

GRRMF
Attn: Photo contest
P.O. Box 1449
Goldenrod, FL 32733

Or email your photos to grrmfphotocontest@tampabay.rr.com.

Please submit your donation (\$5 per photo via Pay Pal - click the Donate button). You can also submit your dog's "gotcha" day (birthday, adoption day or anniversary day).

Please submit \$5 per "gotcha" day. "Gotcha" days are not limited to GRRMF dogs. If emailing photos and/or "gotcha" days, please include your name, address, dog's name, phone number, how you paid (mailed check or Pay Pal) and your dog's story. Please remember only GRRMF dogs are eligible.

Check the GRRMF web site for more information and photo tips: www.grrmf.org

Light Up Your Life With A Golden!

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Membership dues: \$25 / All Donations are Tax-Deductible. Visit GRRMF on the Web: www.grrmf.org

Calling Volunteers

Recently in each newsletter we've been highlighting different areas of volunteering within GRRMF. One very important area is screening of adoption applications. All applications are pre-screened and, unless they are an immediate reject (the dog will live outside, etc.), a phone screen is performed. We call the applicant and ask them questions about their application, trying to fully understand how they would care for one of our dogs and also answer any questions we have about the application.

This task is performed by the Call Team, headed by Carol McKee (who is also our Newsletter Editor). The Call Team is a group of volunteers who are assigned applications and a list of questions to ask the applicant. It is a task that can be done anywhere as long as the volunteer has access to the phone, and GRRMF pays the long distance charges using low cost phone cards.

What are the qualities of a great Call Team member? We need folks that are artful at asking open-ended questions to get information from the applicant and honestly evaluate the responses. It is important that the volunteer be very focused on the benefit of our dogs,

not the benefit of the applicant. For example, there are a lot of really nice people that apply to our organization for a dog. On the phone they will come off as delightful. But, being "nice" doesn't necessarily mean you are equipped to care for a golden retriever or that you will necessarily follow our safety guidelines after adoption.

So Call Team members need to be a bit skeptical and be able to ferret out needed information so we can make an honest evaluation. They also need to be able to complete these calls on a timely basis. The longer the adoption process takes, the greater the chance that a good applicant might go elsewhere for a dog.

Once the call is made, the Call Team member provides the information to the Team Leader who assembles all the information on the applicant. If everything looks good, then a home visit is requested. Once the home visit is complete all the information on an applicant is forwarded to the Adoption Committee. A decision is made to approve or deny the adoption.

Approved applications are forwarded on to the Adoption Coordinator who works with our regional adoption coordinators to arrange a match for the family.

We presently can use good phone screeners for the Call Team. It is one of the most essential tasks in rescue so it is an opportunity to make a real difference. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Carol McKee at newsletter@grrmf.org.

Time is a Treasure: Spend It Wisely

By Sandy Sumner, GRRMF Adoption Coordinator

December was a good month for GRRMF; we had a lot of adoptions despite the slower pace during the holidays. I was pleased at the number of goldens over the age of 6 that were adopted in December - it was 7 all told.

Two of them were adopted from my house so it had special meaning for me. Bradley was adopted out at 10 years old and Brandon at the age of 12 (see our adoption section). The people who adopted them had the right idea - the window of opportunity is what you make of it and the time is right now.

Too many times I hear people say that they want a young one so that they "have more time" with it. There is no such thing as more time. Dogs leave us at all ages. I personally have lost goldens at age 4 (Mia of a genetic heart problem that I never knew about) and 5 (Brody of bloat). I always thought I would have these dogs until their old age. It was not to be. Recently, I had a 2-year-old golden who had an incurable disease; he was with me for five days. I knew that he was terminal but I did not know how brief my time would be.

Then I have the other side. Many of you may know the story of Abbey. She came to us at 13 years old. Her owner had just lost her mate and he felt she would be lonely since he worked such long hours. I have always had a soft spot for the seniors and

figured she could stay at my house for the six or so months she had left in her life. Well, that was two years ago! Not only is she alive but she is peppy and just had her yearly physical and got a clean bill of health. She participated in the Winter Park parade in December and marched the entire length of the parade (we did bring her stroller so that she could rest after a while but she was not too happy about that).

I would never have traded any of these dogs had I known how long I would have had them. Brody and those eyebrows were only with me for a few years but he was special to me and I treasure the time I had. I marvel at Abbey every day with her big grin and attitude.

I have two pieces of advice as we start 2006. First, treasure and take advantage of the time you have with your golden kids. You never know how long you will have them and treat each day as if it were the last. Second, consider some "old gold" the next time you are looking to add to your family. They bring a special something into your life that is hard to describe. It is soft and warm like a big fuzzy slipper. I know firsthand and I would never change anything about the dogs I have had in my life. They are here for a purpose and their time with me has special meaning - no matter how brief it may be.

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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; JaVic Dog Training, Melbourne; Scott Holloway, Chateau du Chien, Sarasota; Susan Kendrick, Bowser College, Bowsercollege.com or 321.689.2239.

HIP DOG THERAPY: for providing hydrotherapy and massage for our rescues with hip problems, Winter Park.

HEALTHYPETNET/LIFE'S ABUNDANCE: to Dennis Grace, who arranged and coordinates the "Feed Your Dog, Save a Dog's Life" program for which GRRMF gets a percentage of proceeds from the sale of Life's Abundance holistic food and treat products for dogs and cats - www.grrmf.org/grrmf-canine-food.html.

RDV SPORTSPLEX: for donating tennis balls!

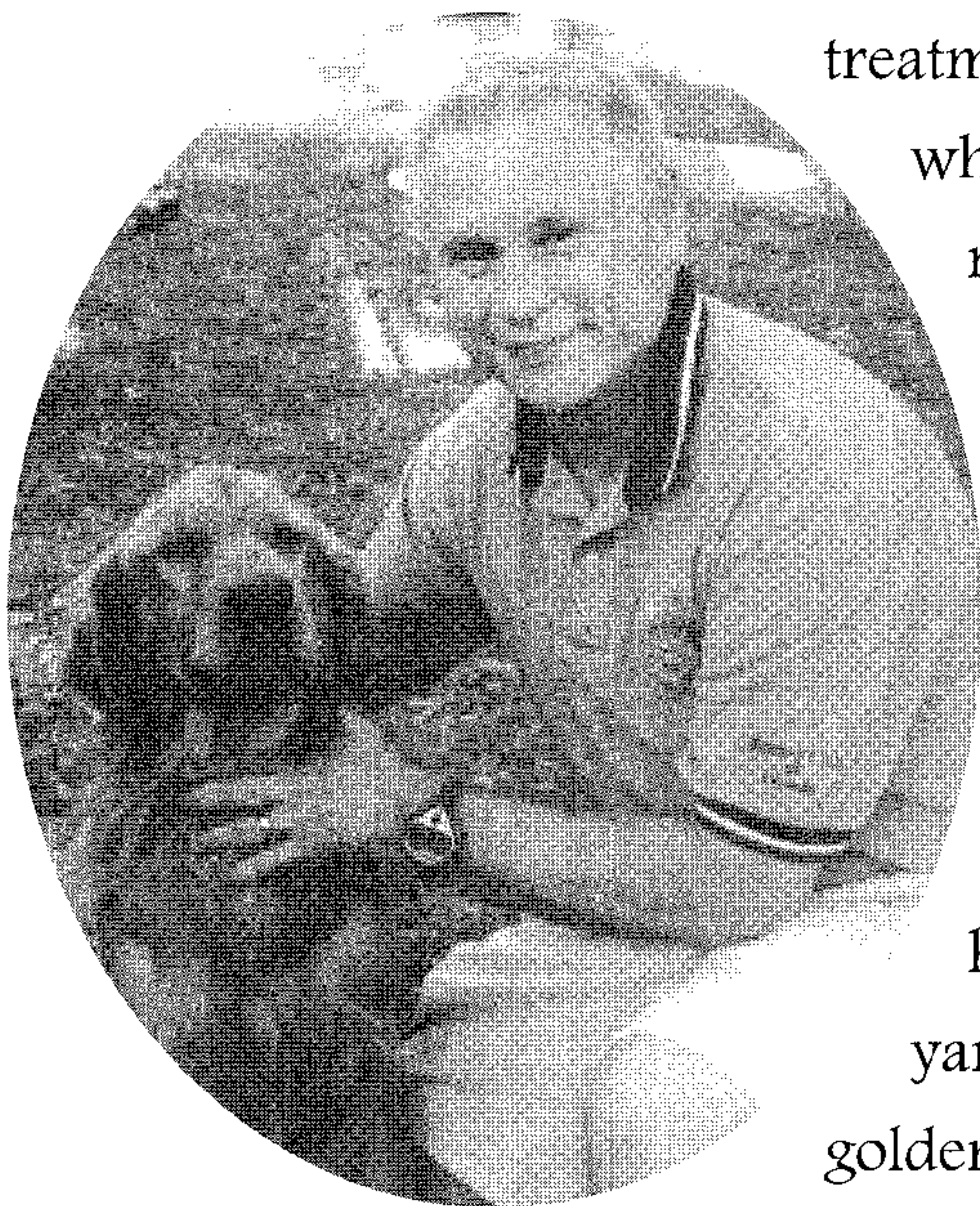
GRRMF WEB SITE: Renee Duke, our Web Goddess, who does such a wonderful job for us - we've received comments from all over the country on the look and value of our Web site.

PET PANTRY: For donating dog food and treats for our fosters.

If we failed to mention you, please let us know - (407) 332-2840 or e-mail our newsletter editor at newsletter@grrmf.org - 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!!

Veterinarian Spotlight: Dr. Steve Wiseman

By Sandy Sumner, Adoption Coordinator



GRRMF is very fortunate to have veterinarians who believe in our mission and offer to help us with the 200 or so dogs that come in each year. They are instrumental to our being able to save as many dogs as we do. Not only do they provide medical services such as surgeries and heartworm treatment, but they allow us to board dogs that need to come in immediately when we may not have a foster home ready for them yet. Some fees are reduced and this helps us manage costs to ensure we have the funds when an expensive surgery comes along such as the back surgery for Montana or the double hip surgeries for Coda. These surgeries require specialists and tend to tap our funds quickly. The local vets who help us are truly angels for our gold.

Some, such as Dr. Steiner and Dr. Ehlers, have been with us for years. Others, such as Dr. Wiseman, arrive just when we need some additional help. Dr. Wiseman runs the Oviedo Animal Hospital, literally in the back yard of Orlando. He was recommended to us by someone who adopted two goldens from GRRMF. A quiet and incredibly calm man, Dr. Wiseman is the type of vet that we in rescue truly appreciate. His hospital is run by a top notch group of techs and staff supervised by Betty, his wife. We often tease them that we could eat off their floor and wish our homes could be that clean!

We started our relationship with Dr. W very slowly, just a couple of dogs here and there. When he said that they could take on more, he had no idea what that would mean! We use his animal hospital as a staging area for transports and often board up to as many as 10 or 12 dogs there when we have a crush of intake.

He has treated our dogs for heartworms, performed hip surgeries, complicated spays, and even did an autopsy on one dog that passed away unexpectedly. He loves the puppies and just enjoys being with the dogs. His explanations are very thorough and we always feel that he wants us to understand the options we have for each dog.

An example of his dedication to the goldens is the case with Bayley. She came into rescue with one poorly done hip surgery and one needing to be done. He did the surgery on the second hip and monitored her progress (or lack of). She was not putting any weight on it and he could not figure out why. He decided to perform an exploratory surgery with her to see if he had missed anything (he hadn't). It was gratis for us and it showed us just how much he cared about our dogs.

And he cares about every animal that comes in. My cat Charlie was very sick one Saturday morning and they said to bring him right in. It was not an easy diagnosis and the prognosis was not good, but through-out, Dr. Wiseman was caring and sensitive about the situation. I will always appreciate that.

Dr. Wiseman has often said that he appreciates what rescue does and the dedication of our volunteers. He is amazed at the broad range of dogs that we take in. He feels that we are what a rescue should be. We feel that he is what a vet should be and we appreciate him: a win-win situation if there ever was one!

Canine Speak

By Jeff Drier, Dog Behavioral Therapist and Trainer and Dad to "Autumn" formerly "Peanut"

We were speaking at an event recently, and I asked the audience if they could tell me how dogs communicate. As I wrote their answers on a board it became apparent to them that there are two basic methods of "canine speak": body Language and vocalizations. Body language includes jumping, nipping, licking, tail wagging, biting, use of the head including, ears, eyes and mouth and various other posturing during which "Rover" uses his entire body. Vocalization includes barking, growling, whining, howling and maybe some other sounds.

Each posture means something. When Rover wants to play, he'll get into a play stance, which I'm sure you've seen. His front end is low, rear end is up and wiggling. His dog friend "Max" recognizes the stance immediately, and if he's feeling playful too, he might mirror the stance and the games begin. Each vocalization means something also. Rover, when startled, might bark or growl to express his discomfort.

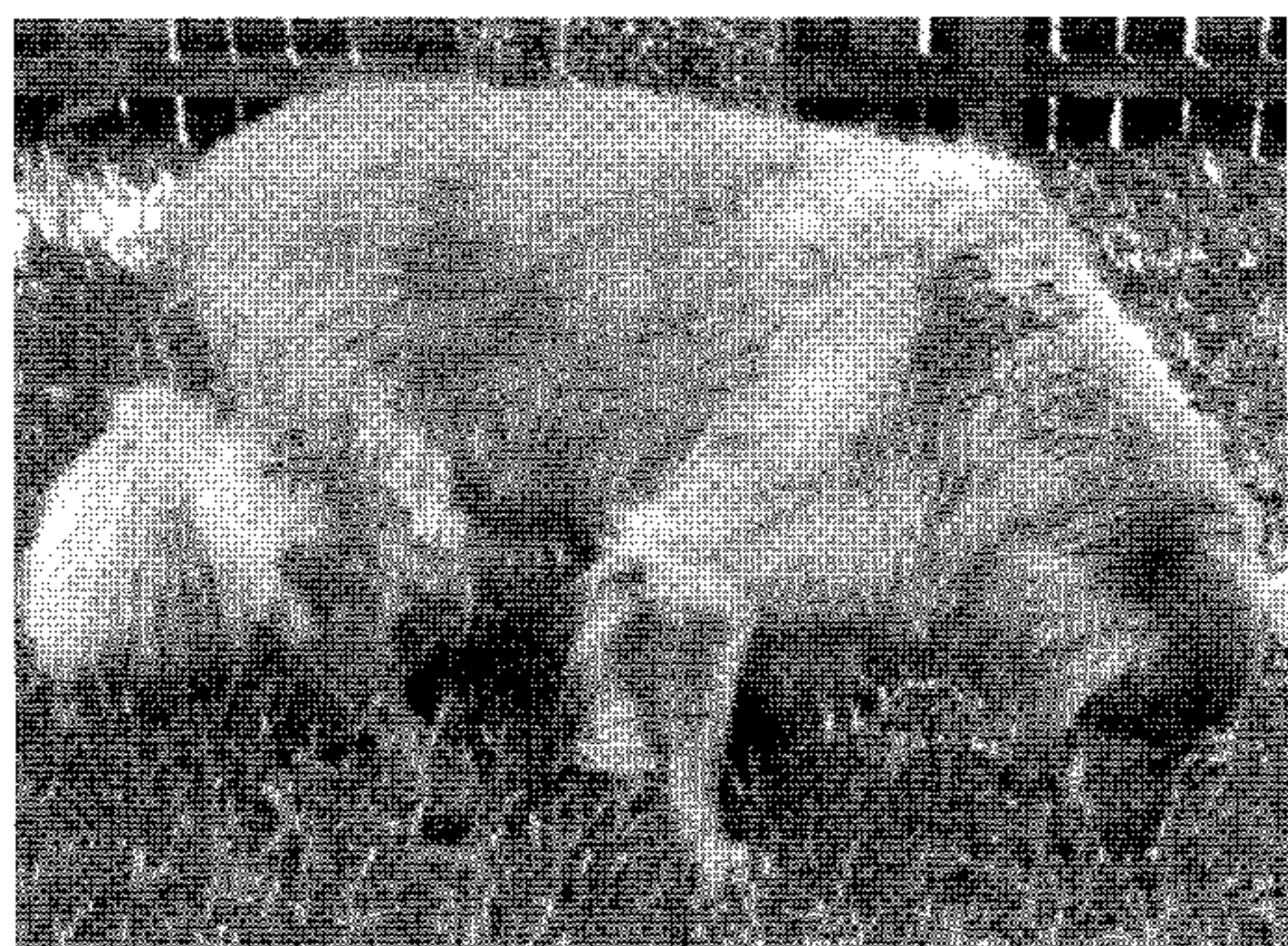
Which is the more important aspect of his communication? Body language is, without a doubt. Body language is Rover's primary method of communicating with both Max and with us. Even if he's vocalizing, he's backing up the message with his body language. If he's telling Max not to come any closer, he's standing as tall and stiff as he can get. His tail is up and it might be slowly waving, like a warning flag. Max recognizes the signals and decides that it might not be a good time to play.

When I work with clients I spend part of the time educating them about canine communication and what some of it means. Why? In order to communicate clearly and easily with anyone you have to know the language.

Dogs don't speak English, French or any other human language. They speak canine. They can learn to associate words with actions, such as come, sit, stay, down etc., but if we use our body language, in a canine way, to match our message the process is speeded up. Let me give you an example. Rover and I were at the park yesterday. I walked into the middle of the park, lowered my height and excitedly tapped my leg. Five dogs immediately started to come toward me. I stood up straight and stiffened my posture, almost at attention, and every one of the dogs stopped. I lowered my height, and again and they came. I didn't utter a word. I only used my body language, and they understood perfectly. Try it with your dog and see what happens.

Most people call their dogs while standing straight and tall, its human nature. If Rover doesn't come, they call louder and sterner. Their body language and vocal tones don't match their message, from a canine perspective. By lowering your height you are more closely matching the inviting play posture. Add a happy, excited "Come Rover" so your vocal message will match your body language, and Rover will have a much better chance at understanding what you want.

When you learn to communicate clearly in a canine way, Rover has a better chance of understanding your message. When he understands he'll be more likely to respond correctly. When he responds correctly he'll get praised. When he gets praised he gets happy. We know the rest of the story.

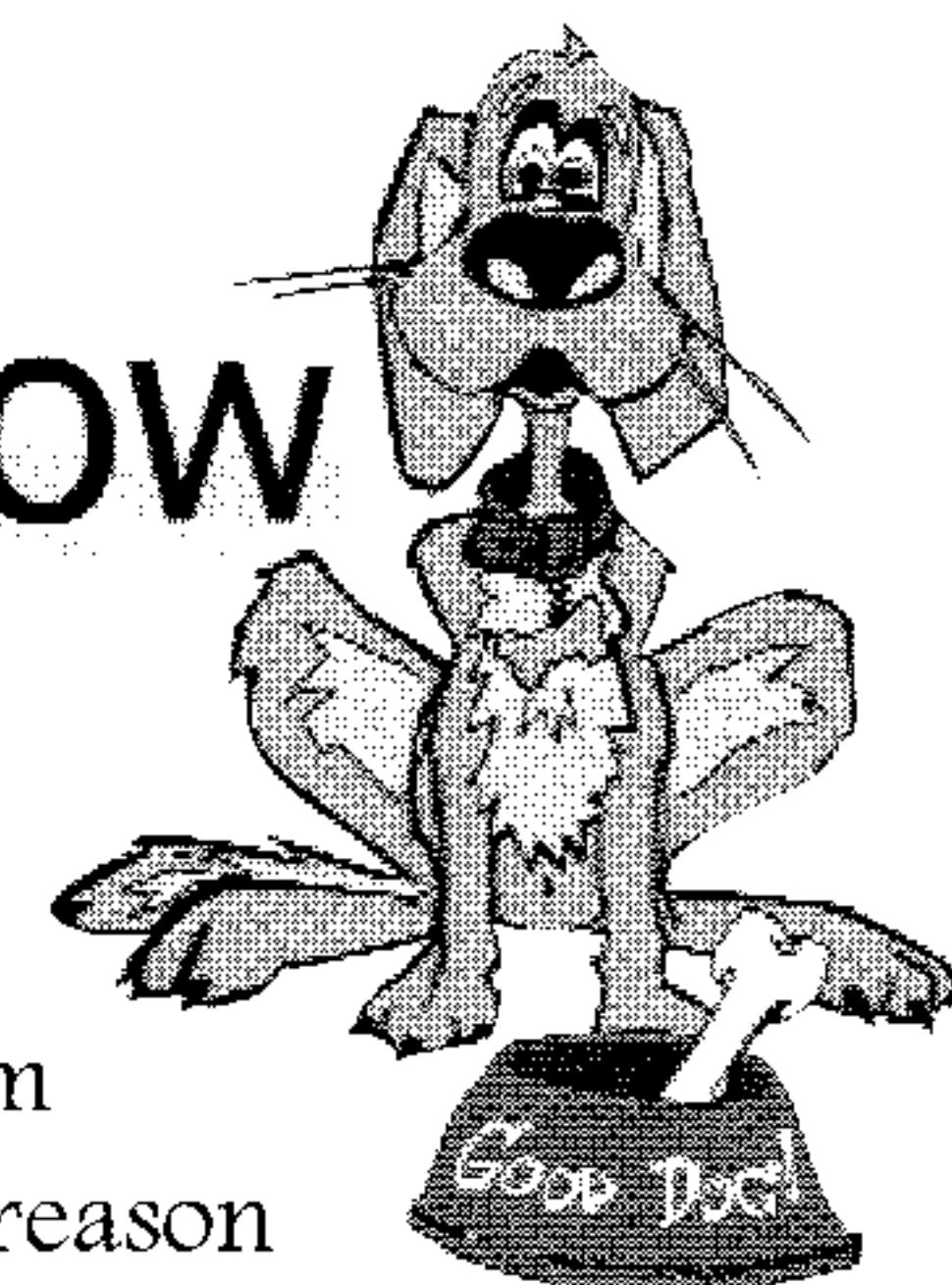


Opie came to rescue at the age of 7. His name was Maximillion at the time, and some of you may remember him from our web site. He was fat, lethargic and heartworm positive. He was an outside dog that the family "had no time for" anymore. Tipping the scales at almost 130 pounds, he was one very uncomfortable boy. GRRMF fixed him up by treating him for the hearworms and giving him a full physical including checking him for hypothyroidism, a common reason that older dogs can gain weight.

Foster mom Pam S. brought him to her house and started the fitness regimen - playing, walking and a good diet to help him lose the excess baggage. As of today, he is about ½ of what he was. He is a new dog these days and a spokesdog at Education Days for the importance of a proper diet and exercise.

As you may have guessed, Opie's foster mom could not bear to part with him after all of his hard work and decided to adopt him. You can't get much more dramatic of a "before" and "after." And we hope that he has many years of health and happiness ahead of him.

Then
and now



Email Corner

Following are e-mail "pupdates" we've received recently. If you'd like to share some news about your GRRMF alumni, please send it to: info@grrmf.org.



For 6 years, I have been taking Hannah, my other GRRMF golden, to a local nursing home as a therapy dog, and recently decided to take Shelbie, who is nearly 12, to give her a shot. She is absolutely wonderful there, and only loves for people to pet her, and pet her, and pet her some more. One of Hannah's favorite



ladies there looked at Shelbie last Sunday, and said, "Gee, Hannah really is different since she had her surgery. ...she is so calm"... I had to explain that it was not the surgery to remove a growth on her backside, but the dog was Shelbie rather than Hannah! I am so proud of both of these girls who are successful therapy dogs, who give a little ray of light to so many people happy every week. Once again, I wish everyone could appreciate the very special attributes of the senior goldens, who are so very special, and still have so much to give.

- Ellen Lindendorf



We adopted "Tiara" about 4 months ago and feel blessed every day by her presence in our lives. About 4 months ago Tiara and my wife were getting out of our car and they were both struck by a truck. Both survived. Tiara is completely recovered - my wife is still recovering. I was told that my wife was laying in the



road with the truck on her leg and Tiara had run off. My wife kept repeating, "Find my dog. Someone find my dog." She had been hit outside of the retirement center where she worked as executive director. The staff and residents all knew and loved Tiara. Being unable to do anything else for my wife, the staff and residents organized a search party and canvassed the neighborhood and eventually found Tiara. When Tiara was brought back, both staff and residents applauded her. She is much loved, and we hope our gift (donation) can help connect a wonderful dog with another loving owner (or vice versa).

- Bill and Joyce Frey



Hi there GRRMF. My name is Annie but I think I used to be Sara. I got to come live with Joan & Steve Kilpatrick last year, and got myself a big sister named Callie in the process!

You guys also put me on the 2006 calendar as Miss November and it has been SUCH fun. My mom mailed calendars all over the country and I got a marriage proposal (I said no) from a big



Labrador in Tarpon named Tango, and lots and lots of other nice phone calls & letters. This is my second Christmas with my new family and I just wanted to let you know I'm doing great. As a matter of fact, this afternoon we are going to a swim party with a Lab pal from down the street and two collies! The collies don't swim and it seems they don't fetch either, but they do love to herd us when we run around the pool deck. Callie leaps right into the deep end to get a tennis ball, but so far I'm only daring enough to run like crazy down the steps into the pool. Anyway, Happy New Year and thanks for all you're doing. Here's a picture of me and my sister and another of me on Christmas showing off a new glow ball that yet another Lab pal gave me. Life is pretty darn good!

Love, Annie

Dog-Gone Vacation: Hilton Head Island, SC

Submitted by Renee Perkie & GRRMF Alumnus Scarlett



Hi Everyone. I just wanted to give you an update on Montana. She is wonderful. It took her about a month to get used to our routines but is doing great. Her ear infection came back but we took her to our vet and she is on medication to get it cleaned out. We take her and Abbey for daily walks (she looks for squirrels the entire time) and she loves the floppy-flopper Frisbee (although she cannot catch, she loves to fetch it). We took away all soft toys so she cannot chew up anything and she sleeps in a normal wool dog bed that she loves. She is such a goof and always makes us laugh and smile. Thank you for giving us such a great girl. We look forward to bringing both the girls to the reunion in March.

- Lori H.



Returns Always Accepted

Remember, if you adopted a dog from GRRMF and cannot keep it for any reason, you should return it to us per the adoption contract. We take a lifelong interest in our dogs and will ALWAYS take care of them. Please email intake@grrmf.org or call 407-332-2840 Mailbox #2 and let us know.



I am writing to share one of our vacations. My motto is "Do not leave home without Miss Scarlett." We have enjoyed many vacations together the last 6 years.

In October 2005, we traveled to Hilton Head Island, S.C. The travel time is six hours from Clearwater. You do not need to golf to have a good time on this island. We found a pet-friendly house to rent at www.hiltonheadhideaways.com.

We traveled with friends and had two large dogs (one of Scarlett's boyfriends is a black lab) in the home. The home is in Sea Pines Resort, a neighborhood with bike trails that provide an excellent path for dog walking. The home had a fenced area that provided a good "potty place" for the dogs.

The house came with several bicycles for exploring the island. The beaches are the cleanest I have ever experienced. Sea Pines Resort/Hilton Head has preserved their island by enforcing building codes. They believe - Nature First. You will find miles of beautiful beaches (no high rise condos) and homes nestled in the Sea Pines Forest (they saved the trees). You may be lucky and observe a deer, if your golden does not bark at it first to scare it off.

Starting October 1, the dogs are allowed on the beach all day long. In the summer, the hours are shorter (they are not allowed on the beach during prime sunbathing time). I found early morning and evening beach walks to be the best part of the vacation. The weather is similar to Florida, so I would recommend the fall or spring (off season).

The Sea Pines Nature Preserve also has many trails for walking. There are several restaurants on the island and many of them have outside dining, so your four-legged kids can join in. The seafood is excellent! Go to the places the locals go, for the best deals. Try Captain Woody's famous grouper sandwich. Make sure you stop by the Doggy bakery, too. Other activities for the humans including, shopping (including outlet malls), horseback riding, island tours, historic tours, lighthouse tour, golf, boating and tennis.

Take Care of Those Canines - Teeth, That Is!

Brushing your teeth at least once a day is part of your daily routine, right? You know that if you don't take care of your teeth and gums, you'll develop dental disease as a result of tartar buildup and bacteria.

Well, the same is true for your dog. While you can't teach your dog to brush his own teeth, there are things you can do to ensure a healthy mouth for your best friend. The real danger of tartar buildup, also known as calculus, is that it can lead to gum disease. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, 85 percent of all dogs over age 4 have some form of gum disease. This is due to the fact that the tartar adheres to the dog's tooth and ends up under the gum. If the tartar isn't removed, it eventually pushes the gums away from the roots of the teeth, forming pockets where bacteria can take hold. This can cause an infection, which can lead

to gum disease. But gum disease isn't the only dental danger for your pooch.

Lack of proper dental care can also cause your dog to develop conditions such as gingivitis, tonsillitis and pharyngitis. These are serious illnesses that can cause bad breath, tooth loss, and, worst of all, bacterial infections, which can spread to vital organs, such as the lungs, heart, kidneys and liver. To know if your dog is suffering



from poor dental care, look for symptoms like mouth odor or bleeding and swollen gums.

He may also experience pain when he eats.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Prevention is the best medicine. When you take your dog to the veterinarian for his annual check-up, make sure it includes a thorough dental exam. If tartar buildup is severe or there are problems, your vet may recommend a cleaning, which usually involves general anesthesia.

You can avoid costly veterinarian bills through good oral hygiene for your dog:

BRUSHING: You can use a piece of gauze wrapped around your index finger or a canine toothbrush from a pet supply store. Be sure to use toothpaste made especially for dogs (also available at pet supply stores), since dogs swallow after brushing instead of rinsing.

FOOD: Include dry kibble in your dog's diet, and make sure it is a high-quality food. Coarse food can help scrape away tartar as your dog eats. For more information on nutrition, including GRRMF recommended brands, check out our Web site: www.grrmf.org.

CHEWS: Provide your dog with the right kind of chew toys will help clean his teeth as he plays. While GRRMF does not recommend rawhide, there are many kinds of chews designed to help remove tartar as your dog gnaws on them. GRRMF's partnership with HealthyPetNet offers a line of dental chews - and the best part is, by ordering through the special link on our site, GRRMF will receive a percentage of the proceeds. HPN offers both Dental Chews and Dental Treats - which contain calcium, parsley and other ingredients to promote good oral health.

As always, supervise your pet whenever he chews.

Address Change?

Are you moving?

Bulk mail

will NOT forward
your newsletter.

Please email us at

info@grrmf.org

or call 407.332.2840

and let us know your
new address, phone
and email so we can

keep in touch.

This is especially critical

if you adopted a dog

from us, in case

they are lost and

we are contacted

by the AKC through

microchip

identification.

Keep in touch!

P.S. GRRMF never

sells, shares

or lends its mailing list

to any organization.

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

It saddens us to notify you that we lost our sweet little Susie on Sept. 23 due to lymphatic cancer. She was a loving part of our household and brought us such joy. Susie came into our lives in 1999 when we needed her most, after losing two of our golden retrievers, leaving our surviving two golden retrievers listless and without direction. When we brought Susie home, she pumped life into us and our two boys. She loved life and loved people, always "auditioning for a new home" when friends or family would visit. Susie's favorite thing to do was lie on her back and squirm with her legs in the air, ears flopping back, eyes bugging out. We always said she looked like a little hyena, and she'd make us laugh until we cried. When we went to Orlando in 1999, Betty brought Susie out first for us to meet. She was not the most beautiful golden we'd seen, having scarring on her head from surviving a fire. She had spunk and was such a happy little girl. Betty asked if we wanted to see the next golden available, and we both said in unison, "NO!" We made our choice, and it was a good one! Susie's symptoms lasted approximately 4 weeks, worsening as the days went by until we had to make the decision to let her go. Thank you all so much for what you do.

- John Moore & Dan Kautz

GRRMF Membership/Donation Form

All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Check one: ☐ General Membership \$25 ☐ Golden Friend \$50 ☐ Sponsorship to help special-needs golden \$100

☐ General Donation \$ _____ ☐ Woody's Fund \$ _____ ☐ Capital Campaign \$ _____ ☐ Boarding Fund \$ _____

☐ In Memory Of: \$ _____ ☐ In Honor Of: \$ _____ Send acknowledgment to: _____

Mail form and check to: GRRMF, PO Box 1449, Goldenrod, FL 32733

GRRMF Inc. 501(c)3 Charitable Organization - Donations are Tax-Deductible. Official registration and financial information can be obtained from Division of Consumer Services: (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state.

membership continued from page 1

Through a rigorous screening process, they find wonderful human families to love them.

Some people find the rescue effort sad. We see it differently. The day these golden retrievers come into our rescue program is the first day of the rest of their lives -- and in many cases, it is the best day of their lives. Not only are they cared for and loved, but they also return this love to their humans. We routinely see these golden retrievers heal human hearts, returning our investment in them tenfold. The healing touch of a golden retriever ... a nuzzle ... a lick ... the faithful companionship they provide ... the unconditional love they offer ... what a wonderful gift they provide to us each and every day.

The success of the GRRMF program is made possible by your membership support. We are asking you to please renew your membership for 2006 today! Perhaps you have adopted a dog from us in years past but never actually joined GRRMF. With each adoption you get a one-year subscription to the newsletter you are reading now, but after that your membership is up for renewal. What better way to honor your golden than by joining GRRMF today. Maybe you are new to our mailing list but haven't yet joined. Now is a great time to do so! And remember, memberships are fully tax-deductible.

We offer three levels of membership. The most popular membership level is the "General Membership" at \$25. Or, you may join at the "Golden Friend" level at \$50, which provides enough funds for an initial exam of one golden coming into our program. We also have a "Sponsorship" level at \$100 a year, for which you will sponsor a specific dog needing heartworm treatment or other medical care. Sponsors will be notified which golden received their special help. The bottom line is that adoption fees do not cover our costs. Without membership dues and donations, we cannot survive. Please send in your membership form above today!

Is this the party to whom I am speaking?

GRRMF's phone team gets the "busy signal".

by Carol McKee

If you've adopted a dog from GRRMF, chances are you've talked to one of our phone screeners - volunteers who place calls to prospective adopters to discuss questions or issues on their applications. This hard-working and dedicated team stays busy, with an average of about 50 screenings per month.

A common comment we hear is that it might be more difficult to adopt a dog from GRRMF than to adopt a child. While we'd never compare a human child to a dog, we don't necessarily consider this a negative comment. Our strict adoption criteria were developed with one thing in mind: to provide the safest and most loving homes possible for our rescue dogs. They deserve that, and we're going to make sure they get it.

In fact, the "bottom line" criteria we give to our phone screeners is to ask this question: Would you let your golden retriever live with this family? Chances are, if the answer is no, they aren't a good fit for one of our rescues.

COMMON ISSUES

By far, the most common issues are related to off-leash. It is just amazing how many people think it's ok to let their dogs off leash in unfenced areas. Some common statements: "Once he is trained, my dog will stay with me." "I live in a quiet neighborhood, so it's very safe." "If he runs, I'll be right there so I can catch him."

Our members will remember the story of Montana - her owners regularly let her outside in their front yard unleashed, and Montana nearly paid for their carelessness with her life. GRRMF was able to rescue her and our generous donors helped pay for Montana's multiple surgeries. Montana made it - but many dogs don't.

GRRMF's policy specifies that our rescue dogs must be kept on leash unless it is in a confined area such as a fenced yard or designated dog park. The leash requirement is part of the legally binding contract everyone signs to adopt one of our dogs - it is not negotiable. Our policy is based on many years of experience - and too many sad stories! Our main concern is for the dog's safety. For further information, read the "Leashed is Loved" section on the GRRMF Web site: WWW.GRRMF.ORG.

Other common issues we see include:

DOG DOOR: Where is the dog door, and how will it be used? Do they understand the safety issues of allowing the dog access to the yard when they are not home? Many dogs are escape artists who need only a few minutes to get out of a yard. Worse, the dog could be stolen, eat something poisonous or be attacked by a wild animal such as a raccoon or snake.

AGE OF DOG VS. AGE OF PERSON, OR TIME SPENT AWAY FROM HOME: If the person is advanced in age, a 2-year-old golden retriever could knock them down or pull relentlessly on a leash. Likewise, if the prospective adopter spends 10 or 12 hours at work every day, a young golden retriever would not be a good fit. In addition to potty issues, they can get lonely or bored, which often leads to destructive behavior or extreme excitement and energy when the owner gets home. All of these are very common reasons young goldens find themselves in GRRMF in the first place! More mature, adult dogs are more suited to these types of lifestyles.

AGE OF DOG REQUESTED VS. AGE OF RESIDENT DOG: They want a young dog and have a dog that is much older, much smaller or has some health problems. Do they understand that the young dog may play roughly with the current dog and exhibit puppy-like behavior, like ear biting, that the other dog may not tolerate? GRRMF receives many dogs every year under the age of 2. Most are completely untrained, and turned in because they are too rambunctious. This may present a problem for a resident older dog.

FOOD: Inferior nutrition is another common issue. GRRMF stresses good nutrition for health and longevity. We try to educate prospective golden owners on higher quality dog food - one that is NOT available in the grocery store. If it is a cost issue, we need to know, since food is the least of a golden's expenses. The screener then refers the applicant to the "Care and Feeding" section on the GRRMF Web site to read up on the subject.

PRIOR DOG ISSUE: Face it, no one is perfect. We've all made mistakes - what matters is what we learn from them. If a person tells us they took a dog to a shelter or gave it away, are they remorseful or indifferent? What did they do to ensure the dog went to a good home? Did their former dog die of accidental causes that could have been prevented? If so, what have they done to change their habits or lifestyle so that it doesn't happen again? All of this gives us a sense of how committed they are to responsible dog ownership and whether they consider a dog to be a member of the family.

DOES THE ENTIRE FAMILY WANT A DOG? If there are flags that indicate it is for a child and that the parents do not want it, this is huge for us since at least one parent needs to be involved in the care. Phrases like "teach my child responsibility" are flags. Do the parents work long hours? Are there multiple children and activities which might translate to the dog spending a lot of time home alone? Does the applicant make statements indicating that his or her spouse may not be too keen on the idea of adopting a dog? None of these situations are good for the dog. This is one of the most common reasons dogs come into rescue.

BREED EDUCATION: If the applicant has not owned a golden retriever before, we ask the phone screener to do a quick "Golden Retriever 101" education. Just because their friends have a golden and "it's pretty" doesn't mean a golden is right for them. I actually talked a woman out of adopting a golden once during a phone screening. She didn't like the idea of a dog being under her feet while she cooked dinner, and she didn't want the "close" companionship (think on your lap) that most goldens provide.

JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE HEARD IT ALL

Here are a few "doozies" in our phone screening "hall of fame":

One family had just had their golden killed by an alligator when they walked it off-leash too near a gator-infested lake. Their answer to this tragic tale? "We'll just take our new dog to a different lake, where there aren't any gators."

A man who was going to install an invisible fence wanted nothing to do with the screener's attempt to educate on the problems with these "shock" fences. "Who the *#!* do you think you are, trying to tell me what kind of fence I can put up in MY yard," he yelled ... just before hanging up on the screener.

Another man didn't take too well to the screener's attempt to talk to him about off-leash issues. "Did you not read my letter, where I told you I used to raise dogs?" According to his letter, he was 12 when his father stopped breeding Springer Spaniels. His age when applying to GRRMF - 78!

In the "we're not a deli" department, we have this comment: "I would like a blonde or white, not red. And not a large dog - medium or small will do, but definitely one that doesn't shed, bark or get on the furniture. It must be friendly, walk well on a leash, be a dainty drinker and have lots of energy, but NOT chase squirrels or lizards." Gee, we'll get right on that, lady ...

Here's how a woman told us she "trained" her previous dog: Seems the dog dug up all the plants inside the house when no one was home. She said, "I taught her never to do that again by putting her in the backyard for 2-3 days. Once we let her back inside, she never did it again."

One screener had a hard time convincing an applicant that a "gated community" is not the same as a fenced yard. Guess he figured he could "train" the dog to check in with the security guard before it ventured out onto the 4-lane highway?

An applicant, we'll call him "Uncle Jed," volunteered to us that his former golden loved to ride in the bed of his pickup truck. Not to worry, though, because he always brought him into the cab if it rained!

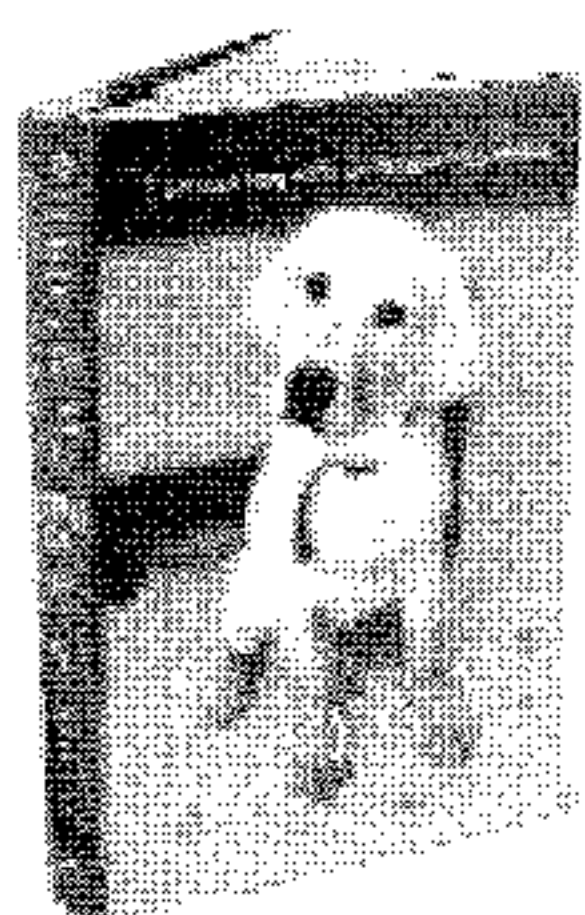
The last thing we try to instill in our Phone Team volunteers is this: The safety and well-being of our dogs is GRRMF's top priority. A family may be very nice, but that doesn't mean they are the best choice for a rescue dog. We are strict with our guidelines, and sometimes we are criticized for that. But would you want to be part of an organization that isn't? And as a result, the dogs are lost, hit by cars or end up in shelters? I know I wouldn't.

Books You Must Read!

By Ellen Lindenfeld, GRRMF Volunteer

Here are some recommended readings from Ellen Lindenfeld, GRRMF volunteer and Broward County Library manager.

MARLEY & ME: LIFE AND LOVE WITH THE WORLD'S WORST DOG, BY JOHN GROGAN (WILLIAM MORROW, 2005)



The Library Journal says: "Grogan, a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, offers a humorous and loving tribute to Marley, his late 100-pound yellow Labrador retriever. The story begins in south Florida when Grogan and his wife, Jenny, decide to adopt a puppy and begin their search. Marley quickly grows and starts to do things that Grogan interprets as typical puppy behavior - chewing shoes, tearing curtains, and jumping up on people. But after several months, Marley's behavior turns more destructive : during thunderstorms, for example, he chews up pieces of walls and damages doors. Grogan recounts various efforts to correct Marley's behavior over a period of years, interweaving them with events in his wife's and children's lives. Throughout, the family is steadfastly devoted to this badly behaved yet totally lovable and loyal pup. Grogan includes the column from the Philadelphia Inquirer, written after Marley's death, that elicited many reader responses and spurred him to write Marley's life story. Readers whose dogs would qualify for the "Bad Dog Club" will delight in this tribute."

I had the opportunity to meet the author of this book at the American Library Association Conference in Chicago, when, ironically, I was halfway through reading his book. To me, his story of Marley is like taking all of the bad behaviors of the 7 goldens I have owned over the past 21 years, and rolling them into one big dog! Loved this book!

Ellen



A DOG'S LIFE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A STRAY
by Ann Martin
(Scholastic, 2005)

Reed Business Information says: "Martin's winsome novel, written from a canine's point of view, is sure to melt the hearts of animal lovers, as she traces the dog days of a stray named Squirrel from birth to old age. During her life, Squirrel gets separated from her brother, finds and loses a canine companion named Moon, and stumbles upon a handful of temporary owners who do not always prove to be loyal. Besides offering a glimpse of how strays learn to fend for themselves, this saga of a lonely dog delivers a subtle but strong message to potential dog owners, conveying the negative effects of neglecting, ditching or abusing a pet."

Although this book is actually for children, I was given a copy of it by a friend, and found it to be an outstanding book, that you can read when you only have a couple of hours to spare. It gave me a whole new insight into how some of our canine friends live on the streets. Have tissues nearby when you read this one.

Ellen

Leashed is Loved!

Just a reminder to all of our adoptive families : When you adopted a dog from us, you signed an adoption contract giving us your word that you would keep your dog on a leash. PLEASE take this requirement seriously. It is so easy to become trusting and think your dog will be okay off leash. Remember, your golden must be on a leash when out of a fenced area. This includes your own front yard. It just takes one squirrel and your dog can take off and be hit by a car.



Montana was hit by a car, which shattered her pelvis and caused internal injuries. IF GRRMF had not stepped into help, Montana would have been euthanized.

Remember that your heart will be broken, your dog will be dead, the poor soul who hits your dog will be haunted by what happened - so many hearts broken.

Also, there is a foster home within GRRMF who nursed and cared for your dog prior to adoption - who fell in love with it but unselfishly gave it up to you with the understanding you would keep it safe and sound. For their sake, please keep your dog on a leash. Remember, Leashed is Loved!

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!

EAST COAST:

Jacksonville - PetsMart, St. John's Town Center - every 2nd Saturday

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 second 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 -- noon to 3:00 p.m. for both

ORLANDO:

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

Borders Bookstore, Oviedo - Every third Saturday, 7-9:30 p.m.

SOUTH FLORIDA:

Pet Supplies Plus, Lake Park/Palm Beach - Every fourth Sunday -- noon to 4:00 p.m.

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.

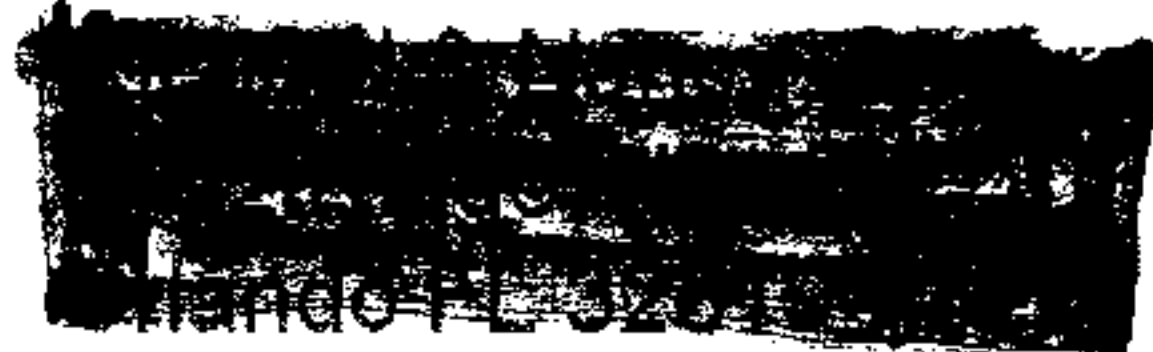
Check our Web site (grrmf.org) under "events"



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