

March 2002

Volume 5, Issue 2



The Scoop

Roseville Dog Owners' Group

Did You Know . . .

- RDOG meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Christian Life Center in Roseville. See page 8.
- The March meeting will be on Tuesday, March 5, 2002, starting at 7:00 pm.
- RDOG's new web site is at www.rosevilledog.org

Local Dog Overcomes Prejudice, Saves Life

By Jeanne Davis

My dog is a hero. She has dealt with physical abuse, neglect, starvation, and everyday prejudice from people. Despite all that misfortune, she has managed to overcome her aversion to strangers and even save a person's life.

Gabby, my American Pitbull Terrier, was abused and starving when a kind woman scooped her into a car in the middle of a busy intersection. From then until she was four months old, Gabby was shuffled from home to home because people either had too many dogs or they could not make the lifelong commitment of owning a dog.

When I decided to foster Gabby, I did not know how much or to what extent the prejudice was awaiting us. People would quickly cross the street to avoid us. When we go to pet stores, parents herd their children to the other side of the aisle to avoid the vicious looking pitbull. One time



at the store, a man asked me, "What is that dog doing here? There is no reason a bitbull should be here," while pushing his two little girls behind him. With all that Gabby has had to endure, it is no wonder she was very timid and frightened during her first two years of life.

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What Should You Do If Your Dog is Missing?

By Pamela Dallas
RDOG Parliamentarian

Not many things can send panic and fear through you like discovering your dog is missing. Whether your dog escaped from your home or yard, or got away from you while on an outing, there are some things you can do to increase the chances of a speedy and safe return.

The first thing experts advise is to act immediately. It is a mistake to wait a day thinking your pet will return on his own. While some do, waiting

only increases the time and distance that separate your dog from his home.

The best chance of finding your lost dog, is to get the word out to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. The target zone according to John Keane, pet detective and owner of Sherlock Bones, is two miles in any direction from where your pet was lost. In rural, less populated areas this target zone should be extended to five miles because of less human intervention.

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Happy Birthday!

March

- Boomer Ivey, Mar. 1
- Yoda Shell, Mar. 1
- Callie Wagner, Mar. 1
- Kassie Cross, Mar. 6
- Bacardi Bizeau, Mar. 8
- Graycee Cain, Mar. 8
- Bailey McManamy, Mar. 15
- Molly Silvius, Mar. 15
- Talon Diehl, Mar. 22
- Brandy Day, Mar. 26
- Otter Pup Harman, Mar. 30

April

- Chessi Klinger, Apr. 1
 - Tia Klinger, Apr. 1
 - Jerry Money, Apr. 1
 - Wilma Shell, Apr. 1
 - Molly Steinhart, Apr. 5
 - Ziggy Sidhu, Apr. 12
 - Asa Walther, Apr. 28
 - Kona Jacoby, Apr. 30
- Is your dog's birthday missing? Call (916) 774-2854 or email birthdays@rosevilledog.org to add his or her name to the list.*

The Scoop

The Scoop is the official newsletter of the Roseville Dog Owners' Group (RDOG), P.O. Box 1216, Roseville, California 95678. The newsletter is published bi-monthly and is included free of charge in the membership dues.

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Roseville Veterinary Hospital

810 Riverside Ave., Roseville
(916) 782-2123

Willow Rock Pet Hospital

6661-M Stanford Ranch Rd., Rocklin
(916) 630-9234

The Controversy of “Kill” vs. “No Kill” Shelters

By Carl Friedman

Director, San Francisco Department of
Animal Care and Control

“No Kill” animal shelters have been in the news lately, making it seem as if it were a new or controversial issue. Having been involved in this field for more than twenty-five years, I can testify that there is no controversy at all regarding this concept. Without exception, every shelter director, staff member, and volunteer I have ever met finds no joy in killing animals. We all want to find homes for all the abandoned animals in our care. We have always considered the sad task of euthanasia as absolutely the last option, one we must resort to after all lifesaving alternatives have failed.

After decades of tireless educational efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of animals in our world, there is now growing acceptance of the “no kill” concept. I believe it is one of the best recent achievements in the field of animal control and welfare, and one we should be proud of. Once, “open-door” shelters (facilities that accept any and all animals) that gave refuge to any needy animal, regardless of its condition, were forced to seek more efficient and humane methods of destroying many of them. Now, with public acceptance and support and new legal mandates for programs that save more lives, shelters with even the most limited budgets can direct more resources to developing better and more innovative ways to find animal-caring new owners.

We are very proud that the San Francisco Department of Animal Care and Control is known as one of the “model” municipal animal shelters in the nation. We have earned this reputation through the earnest, cooperative efforts of just about every local agency – municipal, private, non-profit, corporate, professional associations, rescue clubs, volunteers, animal advocates, and other caring individuals, who work with us daily to help reduce the killing. We are grateful to all of them – from the smallest groups to the largest – who have joined our cause.

However, I am deeply concerned by some of the current rhetoric on this subject. In reality, most “no kill” shelters are simply those that can pick and choose the animals they take in, and who can turn away abandoned pets when their facility

is full, or not accept those animals who would prove difficult to place. But the term “no kill” implies that those that cannot advertise themselves as such are “killing fields.” This label arbitrarily sets one program against another, Good Guys vs. Bad Guys, Rescuers vs. Killers. As a result, the very facilities that most desperately need public support and resources to increase their adoptions and reduce the number of animals euthanized are instead scorned as “Bad Guys.” And that is not right or fair – to the animals, to those who work in those shelters, or to the public, the unintended victims of this misconception.

I cringe when I hear someone say that “no adoptable animals were euthanized in San Francisco,” without also explaining the fate of those deemed “not adoptable.” I know only too well that 5,907 of our community’s animals had to be administered that final injection in the past year. That many of these poor, needy, neglected creatures could not be categorized as “healthy and adoptable” when they arrived at our doors does not diminish their value, nor does it make their deaths less tragic.

I fear that disregarding those lives in public statements, intentionally or not, suggests that San Francisco is a “no kill” city where no animals are being euthanized. People are being misled into thinking the pet overpopulation problem has been solved and that spaying and neutering is no longer necessary, or that it is okay to abandon a companion animal rather than make the lifelong commitment that responsible pet ownership requires.

We are sincerely thankful that, with the help of our friends, partners, and a deeply committed staff, San Francisco has significantly reduced the number of homeless animals that are euthanized each year. We will continue to make progress by working together on every level to save the lives of as many animals as possible.

Reprinted from the Winter 1999 issue of Tails of the City, the newsletter of the San Francisco Department of Animal Care and Control.



“In reality, most ‘no kill’ shelters are simply those that can pick and choose the animals they take in. . .”

Reliability and the Retrieve: Justifying the Ear Pinch?

By Suzanne Clothier
Special to The Scoop

I am not 100% reliable. I sleep through alarms, forget to buy dog food (forcing me to create unusual concoctions from oatmeal, eggs and a single slice of cheese). I often find myself counting pills in a prescription container, calculating how many should be left in order to figure out whether I had indeed given a dog his medication that morning. I leave perishables in the car overnight, fail to return phone calls, empty the parrot's water bowl and then leave it on the kitchen counter until he brings it to my attention. I mail checks late or pay them twice. I call dogs by other dogs' names, or say "come" when I really mean "stay." I forget birthdays and anniversaries, or buy cards and gifts only to put them in a safe place where they are found months or even years later. In short, I am a completely normal human being. And therefore, I am not 100% reliable.

"Well, I'm glad that she's doing well. But is she 100% reliable?"

Only a dog who is force trained is reliable on the retrieve."

Chatting with a competition trainer, a friend of mine was discussing her dog's progress and mentioned that while the dog had had some problems with the retrieve, we'd been able to work it out in a humane, sensible manner and that the dog was doing just fine. This trainer knew my friend had been adamant about not using an ear pinch to teach her dog. "Well," allowed the trainer, "I'm glad that she's doing well. But is she 100% reliable? Only a dog who is force trained is reliable on the retrieve."

The world of dog training is full of such questions which are absurd in their very opening premise. If, as is rarely done, we actually examine the logic of the question of 100% reliability, we begin to see how much abuse is perpetuated in the name of training. There's several issues at work here - first, the concept that anyone or anything is 100% reliable; second, that being 100% reliable in regards to a retrieve is of critical importance; third, that force trained dogs are in fact 100% reliable; and fourth, that using force to achieve a greater degree of reliability is therefore justified.

The opening premise of 100% reliability is shaky at best. Take a quick look around your home, think about the people you know, consider your own behavior - why, go even further and consider the natural world and tell me what it is you see that is 100% reliable. I don't know about your house, but in my house, electricity works most of the time, but not 100%. Water runs out of faucets most of the time, but not 100%. Most mornings,

my truck starts - but not always. I'm usually kind to my dogs, but not always. Face it - nothing in your entire world is 100% reliable. We operate in our daily lives under assumptions that people will, in all likelihood, do certain things, and machines will operate a certain way, and that the ground below us will remain stable. But people do odd, unexpected things; machines break down, sometimes inexplicably; earthquakes can turn seemingly solid ground into waves and chasms. From time to time, we are reminded that nothing is unchangeable, immutable, immune to alteration or failure.

Yet somehow, our dogs are expected to transcend what we know to be the workings of the real world, and be 100% reliable - at least when it comes to a retrieve.

Which leads us to the second point - what's so darn important about having a dog pick up a piece of oddly shaped wood or plastic that we threw away in the first place? If my truck fails at the wrong moment, it can be deadly - literally. If my dog fails to retrieve a dumbbell, no one is hurt. At best, I've lost a little face, if I'm foolish enough to bring my ego into the ring with me. I've lost my entry fee (less than it would cost to take a friend to lunch), and the time, effort and money required to bring me and my dog to this show site (all of which is "disposable income" anyway, unless you're crazy enough to spend the grocery money or the rent on your dog show hobby.) If the entire day's value hinges upon your dog's performance of the retrieve, then I suppose you have lost a lot.

But what of the time spent working with your dog to get to this point? What about the long drives where you find yourself talking to your dog about your feelings, plans or dreams? What about the sunrise or sunset you saw? Or the ice cream you shared with your dog? What about the joy in your dog's eyes when he realized that he, and only he, was the dog for the day? Or didn't you have time for that because you were too upset over your dog's failure to retrieve?

The reality is that the worst that will happen when a dog fails to retrieve is this: he fails to retrieve. I'm sure that a failed retrieve may translate into the loss of dreams, big dreams of national rankings, high scores, recognition and probably more. But sometimes, in the quest for these glorious

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dreams, we forget the reality of the dogs we "volunteer" to accompany us. We forget that we were the ones who chose to work with a living, breathing partner with a mind of his own, with his own particular gifts, with his own particular failings. Quite artificially, we magnify a simple act - the retrieve - to an act of possibly monumental proportions. A failed retrieve matters because we say it does. And for no other reason.

Assuming for a moment that a retrieve is of great importance, we can at least understand why absolute reliability in this exercise is of equal importance. This takes us to the third point, which is that force trained dogs are 100% reliable retrievers. Proponents of the force retrieve inevitably ask handler of dogs trained by other means, "Is the dog 100% reliable?" By logical extension, that indicates that force trained dogs are 100% reliable. If this were indeed true, and we are still willing to work with the assumption that a retrieve is of great importance, then it would appear that force training is critical, perhaps even imperative. But of course, it is not possible that force trained dogs are 100% reliable.

Let's take an absurd example: The handler of a force trained dog throws the dumbbell, gives the command to retrieve, and as the dog takes off, the handler is attacked by a crazed spectator or another dog. Does the dog retrieve? Maybe, maybe not. Depends on the dog, doesn't it? (Hard core force trainers may be muttering, "You could prove for that. You'd just need some assistants...") At this point, readers begin to sputter, "Well, of course, in that situation, you couldn't expect a dog to..." 100% means 100%. No exceptions. No mitigating circumstances. But even proponents of force retrieve training will admit that under certain circumstances, they would understand why a dog might not complete a retrieve. Unlike the implied or actually stated definition of reliability (100%), we now have a new definition - that dogs retrieve reliably under certain circumstances. Certain circumstances where failed retrieves might be acceptable are only as defined by the handler. The circumstances that a dog might define as conditions under which he could not possibly retrieve are not open for discussion. Why not? Because we are stuck in a logic loop which begins with the assumption that the retrieve is of great importance, therefore reliability is of great importance.

The reality is that after more than 20 years in the dog world, I have seen many failed retrieves from force trained dogs. If you doubt that, go stand

outside any obedience ring and watch and then ask handlers how they trained their dogs. (Once again, hard core force trainers are muttering, "Well, they just didn't do it right.")

The last, and saddest, point is this: using force to achieve a greater degree of reliability is justified. This point deserves a book unto itself, for it contains the notion that it is somehow acceptable to inflict pain in order to achieve results. Much of dog training is built on this premise, which contains deeply rooted, widely accepted societal beliefs about "lesser" beings and our dominion over them. On this same premise, children are beaten in the name of discipline, entire races have been subjugated, enslaved or exterminated, women considered less than men's equals.

It is a strange logical equation that we have built here: *The retrieve is of great importance therefore reliability is of great importance therefore any means that may be used to improve reliability is justifiable because the retrieve is of great importance.*

Imagine that your boss had certain goals which he considered critically important. Let's say that it mattered intensely to him that for five minutes a week, you had to be absolutely, unflinchingly polite to a stranger he brought you to visit. He drilled you for hours during the week, rehearsing what you had to say, how you had to stand or sit, exactly how you would move, and precisely what actions you would take when he told you to. Any mistakes you made were met with a painful blow to the head.

About the only conditions under which many of us would "accept" such treatment would be if we were held prisoner. If the boss became our captor, if our very lives depended upon pleasing him since he held the control of our water, our food, our freedom, we might learn very quickly how to please him, and how to avoid the blows to the head. And he would be very pleased with us indeed - we would be highly reliable.

Why would such treatment be unacceptable? Why would you be outraged if your child's teacher used hair pulling as a way to teach your child to reliably perform multiplication? Would it be okay if your boss disguised the blow to the head by calling it a "love thump," and he justified it by telling you how far you could rise on the corporate ladder. Would it be acceptable if your child's teacher cloaked her techniques as an "hair massage," and pointed out that your child's math scores were perhaps

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"But of course, it is not possible that force trained dogs are 100% reliable."

Dog Missing. . .

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Distribute and mail posters to as many locations as you can. Your flyer should have a photo of your dog and include: a description of your dog, offer a reward, a phone number, the date, time and location last seen, and Liz Blackman of Help4pets recommends use of a sentimental saying such as, "My best friend is missing," or "Children are heartbroken." Flyers should be delivered to local animal hospitals, shelters, groomers, and anyone associated with animals. Flyers should also be posted on signs where motorists can easily see them, and left in high pedestrian traffic areas such as post offices, grocery stores and shopping centers. Distribute flyers door to door in a large radius of the area your pet was last seen. Ask animal friends and neighbors to help with this task. In a small town, the local police station might let you post a flyer or distribute them to law enforcement officers as they are leaving for their patrol shift. Flyers posted outside should be protected from the weather by being printed on heavy weight paper and enclosed in some plastic to keep them flat and legible to motorists.

"Make sure your dog is wearing a current I.D. tag every moment, even while at home."

Place an ad in all the local papers in your area. This should be done immediately since it takes a day or two for the ad to appear. It is also a good idea to change the outgoing message on your answering machine to something similar to: "Thank you for calling. I am out looking for my lost pet right now. Please leave a message and I will call you back as soon as possible." Friends and neighbors calling may offer to help you search for your pet or distribute flyers. If the person who found your pet is calling, they will know how anxious you are to be reunited with your dog.

Besides the above, it is a good idea to visit the local shelters in your area to look for your pet. Shelter personnel are often too busy to do a thorough search and are not familiar with all breeds. You are the best person to recognize your dog. If your dog is of a particular breed, contact the rescue groups for that breed to see if anyone turned your dog in to them. Also, call all the emergency veterinarians in your area on a daily basis.

Of course the best course of action is to be proactive and safeguard your dog to the best of your ability. With proper prevention, hopefully, you will never face the awful experience of losing your beloved dog. Make sure your dog is wearing a

current I.D. tag every moment, even while at home. Get your dog microchipped. If he escapes and loses his collar and tag or they are removed he will still have identification. Enroll your dog in an obedience class. The recall or "come" command can be a life saver. Your dog should respond immediately and return to you when you call him, whether at home or in an unfamiliar area. Also train your dog not to bolt out the door when it is opened to let someone in or out. Spaying or neutering your dog may reduce his or her urge to wander.

Leave your dog in a safe place when you are not at home. The safest place for your dog while you are away is inside your home. You may have to crate your dog or secure him in a room where he cannot hurt himself or damage property. If you must leave your dog in your yard while you are away make sure your fence is secure. Inspect your entire fence. Be certain your dog can't jump or climb over, or dig under the fence. Also make sure the public can't readily access the fence. A dog run or separated fenced yard is best and putting locks on all outside gates is advisable. Never leave your dog tied up unattended in a public place, even for a short time.

Having a manilla envelope or folder readily available with the following information is advisable: a recent photo of your dog, complete description of your dog, photocopies of your dog's license and vaccine record, name, address and phone number of your Veterinarian, contact name of friend or relative who knows your dog, your dog's microchip information, list of medication your dog is on and a list of any special diet requirements. In case of an emergency having this information at your fingertips will be convenient and save time. This is also handy to leave with the pet sitter or kennel while you are out of town.

Two services worth checking on are Sherlock Bones and Help4pets. Sherlock Bones is a tracing service that helps people recover lost pets. Their toll free number is 800-942-6637. An educational and informative web site is available at www.sherlockbones.com. Help4pets is a registry service that supplies you with an ID tag listing a permanent registration number for your pet and an 800 number. If your dog is lost, anyone who finds your dog can call anytime and speak with an individual who will locate you or anyone you des-



Local Dog Overcomes Prejudice. . .

(Continued from page 1)

Even with all of the prejudice and hatred, Gabby is an outstanding canine citizen. She was honored in the Auburn Journal newspaper and on Fox 40 News for saving a man. One day in June of last year, Gabby was playing with two other neighbor dogs on our nine-acre rental in Auburn. I was washing dishes when I heard her barking incessantly. I yelled outside for her to be quiet. About 15 seconds later, Gabby came to the screen door and was still barking. Unknowingly, I told her to go play with her doggie friends. Gabby came back only 10 seconds later and was still barking. I knew that something was amiss when I realized that the other two dogs were not barking. I took off my gloves and donned my shoes. When Gabby saw that I was finally following her she took off running. Every few seconds she would look back at me and make sure I was still following. When I arrived at Gabby's destination, I found Jim, my landlord, lying on the dirty ground. He had apparently been picking peaches when he fell off the 15-foot ladder. He was not conscious. While I ran to get help, I noticed Gabby stopped barking and sat next to Jim. When I came back to Jim, it was as if Gabby said, "Okay, my job is

done." Then she went off to play with the other dogs again.

Jim was flown by helicopter to the nearest hospital. His injuries included two broken vertebrae, a clavicle broken in two spots, a concussion, and broken ribs. When he came home, I learned that when he fell, he said that he could hear a dog barking and licking his face, as if pleading with him to wake up. He said that she would be gone for a few seconds and then come back and do the same thing. Gabby had to have gone to Jim, licking and barking, and then come to get me at least three different times. Next time I won't be so eager to tell her to be quiet.



Reliability and the Retrieve. . .

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better than the children whose hair had not been pulled?

In the end, the degree of pain you are willing to endure or inflict has a great deal to do with the importance you assign a given activity. For some workers, rising high on the corporate ladder would be worth the blows to the head. For some parents, improved math scores would justify having their child's hair pulled. And for some handlers, the retrieve is important enough to justify inflicting pain on their "best friend." Is it more important than the look of fear and pain in the dog's eyes? Is it worth having your "best friend" flinch away from you as you reach for his ear? If it's that important, isn't it worth investigating and mastering other methods which don't involve hurting your dog?

There is a considerable portion of dog training which is actually thinly disguised abuse. It has little to do with education of an animal, but it

does have a lot to do with our egos, our assignment of importance to relatively unimportant actions, and our own deeply seated beliefs about animals. Humane training begins with a critical look at the premises and assumptions which undergird many traditional approaches. We become better trainers by refusing to swallow uncritically what is tossed to us as truth, by developing our powers of empathy and observation, and by searching for better ways to teach and educate the dogs we love.

The few moments of our life where a retrieve is all important are very, very few. Are those moments worth the price you ask your dog to pay for them? Because unlike you, in learning a force retrieve, he is 100% involved and feels 100% of the pain.

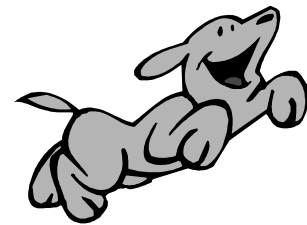
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Roseville Dog Owners' Group

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Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.ROSEVILLEDOG.ORG

RDOG Meeting Information

The Roseville Dog Owners' Group (RDOG) meets monthly on the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 7:00 pm. We are pleased to announce our new permanent meeting place:

The Christian Life Center
119 Fern Avenue
Roseville

If you are coming from Cirby on Riverside (heading towards Douglas) the street after Darling is Fern. Take a right turn and the next street is Clinton. The church is on the corner.

Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, March 5, 2002, 7:00 pm

Tuesday, April 2, 2002, 7:00 pm

Tuesday, May 7, 2002, 7:00 pm

Tuesday, June 4, 2002, 7:00 pm

Tuesday, July 9, 2002, 7:00 pm

Tuesday, August 6, 2002, 7:00 pm

