



The Retriever

Official Newsletter of the Labrador Education and Rescue Network

Volume 2, Number 2, July 2001



L.E.A.R.N.'s mission is to assist in the rescue of unwanted Labrador Retrievers by placing them in homes through fostering, adoption and referral. In addition, we strive to provide public education regarding Labrador Retrievers and to promote responsible ownership and the humane treatment of all dogs.

A Great Start—501(c)3 Status and Fundraising Successes!

Having celebrated its second year and 200 rescued dogs, year three is bringing much to celebrate even in its earliest stages as the efforts of so many volunteers have been bringing great results—more saved labs and fundraising successes to save even more labs!

Almost as exciting as another rescued lab, L.E.A.R.N. has been granted 501(c)3 status! Now officially recognized as a not-for-profit organization by the government, L.E.A.R.N. is exempt from federal income tax. The 501(c)3 status will make life better for all since rescue funds will stretch further.

Thanks to everyone who donated items and to all the volunteers who organized and assisted with Garage sales in Madison and Freedom, WI, more labs will be able to have loving homes and good lives. Thanks to everyone who frequented the sales and purchased items. We expect more great results from the garage sale in Milwaukee, taking place as this newsletter goes to press.

Mounds' sponsored and organized Dog Fest in Madison proved an even bigger success than imagined for L.E.A.R.N. Not only did L.E.A.R.N. help labs Bud and Special Needs Dog Claire to meet potential forever families, but it achieved great sales volume from selling T-shirts, Chuckits, and giant cookies. In addition, Mounds selected L.E.A.R.N. as one of two rescue groups to share the proceeds from Dog Fest admissions! It would seem that the stars are aligned to help these dogs!

With fundraising as L.E.A.R.N.'s #1 priority this year, we have much to celebrate already, yet plenty more to do before the year is over. We have more garage sales planned and will have booths at several more shows such as the Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Show in Oshkosh, WI, and the Rockford Family Pet Show in Rockford, IL. Please check our website at www.labadoption.org for more information. We are also continuing to sell L.E.A.R.N. merchandise through our website.



L.E.A.R.N. Calendar Photo Contest!

We're creating a L.E.A.R.N. calendar featuring rescued labs and their stories. Please see inside for more details!

Inside this issue...

We have an article about Cold Water Tail, an often hard to recognize condition that active swimmers can develop, tips for traveling with your dog, and the many benefits of adopting a senior dog. Our featured lab story is about Bandit, who's had quite a life with a very happy ending. And . . . **Augie** wins the "Caught in the Act" photo contest!

Thanks for your interest in and support of L.E.A.R.N., and we hope that you enjoy this issue!



BANDIT'S STORY

Written by his foster mom (twice), Eileen Mislove

As foster moms and dads, we will always remember each special dog that resided in our homes before they went on to their new lives. It does seem though, that there are some special dogs that will always be first in our hearts.

Bandit is such a dog. I first met him at a shelter I was called to pick up another Lab. While looking at the other Lab, I noticed an older, large male black Lab in a nearby kennel, barking his lungs out at me. It was as if he was saying, "You'd better not leave here without me too!" I checked with the shelter manager and found out that Bandit had been picked up as a stray, but the owner was found. The owner was an elderly man who could no longer care for Bandit, so the owner's daughter had come in to surrender Bandit to the shelter. It was from her information that we found out that Bandit was 9 years old and had formerly been an excellent hunting dog that had "never lost a pheasant". I happened to have room in my house for a foster dog, so home Bandit came with me.

I found out quickly that Bandit was housebroken, great with other dogs and cats, and was a major character. Bandit was a typical happy-go-lucky, sometimes rowdy, but always sweet black lab.

Unfortunately, he was also heartworm positive and needed eye surgery for a genetic condition called entropion, which occurs when there is excess eyelid, causing the eyelid to turn under and the dog's eyelashes to scrape against his eyeball. With the help of LABMED, which provides funds for medical care for rescued Labrador Retrievers, Bandit was first treated for heartworm, and then the eye surgery was performed. He was adopted soon after by a wonderful family and I felt great knowing that Bandit had gone to his forever home.

However, that was not the last I heard of him. About 6 months after he'd been adopted, his family contacted me to let me know he'd started growling at their 5 year old daughter. He didn't growl at anyone else, just the 5 year old. This family loved him dearly and tried everything they could think of to get Bandit to stop, but nothing worked, and he was finally returned to me several months later. This was one of the saddest times in rescue for me, as it was obvious his family really loved Bandit and was devastated at having to return him. Bandit himself was very depressed for a while at having lost his home again. However, his true lab spirit came through and after several days he became his old rowdy self.

After further temperament testing, it was decided to try and find Bandit another home, just without small kids. By this time Bandit was 10 years old and struggling with arthritis. His chances of being adopted again were pretty slim. After a couple of months, we ran an ad featuring Bandit in the Northwest Herald in Crystal Lake, IL. The Herald generously donates weekly space to L.E.A.R.N. featuring our rescued dogs. Almost immediately, we received a call from a man whose 79-year-old father's Lab had just died, and the son was afraid his father would be too lonely without a Lab to hang out with him. The father had a fenced in yard and dog walkers to come over every day to help walk his dog. Bandit was taken to meet him, and perhaps it was that Bandit remembered his first owner, the elderly man who could no longer take care of him, but he took to his new owner right away and last we heard was doing great hanging out in the backyard with his new "Dad".





Counting the Benefits of Adopting Senior Dogs

Adopting a senior dog has proven an amazing experience for many of us. Offering a senior or adult canine a loving home, perhaps the only one he or she ever had, brings rewards that few could have ever anticipated. Each dog is special in its own way and has developed a unique personality, so it's not just adopting an old dog, it's enriching your life with a mature, perceptive, and endearing animal, grateful that you exist. In fact, many will say that a dog who has known difficult times feels grateful to be saved and forms a powerful bond with the adoptive family—a bond even unlike the strong bond that a dog in a normal, happy situation forms with its family. Maybe the dog's beloved owner became infirm and unable to care for it or maybe it's been neglected and shuttled between homes and shelters. Maybe you'd give this dog the best times of its life.

Senior dogs bring countless practical benefits. Seniors typically have excellent house manners and won't try to eat your new rug, add extra ventilation to your shoes, or open and destroy the mail you left on the table. They know not to leave a surprise behind your plant and instead utilize the Great Outdoors. Having outgrown surfing counters, these dogs give kitchens a more peaceful and safe atmosphere. While most enjoy walks, swims, and games, they've retired from collision sports like tackling or bowling down small children who weigh less than they do. They approach guests more gently and wag their tail enthusiastically rather than jump up to kiss their glasses. In sum, adopting a senior will bring you great love, companionship, and appreciation combined with less work and no destruction. Why not give a senior a chance during his or her golden years?

People typically don't think of adopting a senior first for several common reasons. Some have just lost their dog, want a new canine companion, and want the new dog to be around for a long, long time. While it's true that a senior dog does not have as much time left to chase balls and sleep by your side than a puppy, one can never really predict how long an individual dog will live. Some puppies will live to be 8, and some 8 year-olds will live to be 16. Often, taking a more philosophical view towards the life span of a dog helps, and one could even argue the benefits of being able to help more dogs for shorter durations during important times for them.

Another reason people may not first choose to adopt a senior dog is that they want to control and shape the dog's early development. Labs have wonderful dispositions and, their ability to forgive and adapt is unsurpassable. Labs are among breeds that can learn and be trained throughout their lives—unlike other breeds that must be properly imprinted from year one or else the training and learning window closes. Yes, you can easily teach a senior lab new tricks!

Harley (formerly Mercy), a 10 year-old yellow male, and Indy, an 8 year-old female lab-greyhound mix are excellent examples of the benefits senior dogs possess, and these dogs really had the odds stacked against them.

Erica and Joe adopted them after losing both their Rotties to cancer. Harley had wandered the countryside for 3 months and was doing a "self-destruct" on some allergy-induced "hot-spots," and Indy had tumors that required removal. Both came from shelters, and Indy's time was up— "Who would adopt an old mixed breed dog with tumors?" Erica asks. By treating Harley's allergies and by removing Indy's tumors (malignant, cancerous, but successfully removed!!), both dogs now have great lives thanks to Erica and Joe. Erica writes to L.E.A.R.N., "We highly recommend adopting a canine adult or senior citizen. Why not give a dog a chance to finish his life in a loving home, possibly the only one he'll ever have? True, it seems impossible to change the sad statistics of pet over-population through the adoption of one pet, but it matters to that one."





Tips for Traveling with Your Dog

With summer here, many of us will take vacations or long weekends that we'd love our canine companions to enjoy with us. Here are some considerations for before and during your trip.

Make sure your dog is up to the trip. Before your trip to make sure your dog is healthy and up to date on vaccinations. Just because your dog loves to ride in the car does not mean your dog will be a good traveler—will your dog be happier on the trip than left at home?

Keep identification on your dog at all times. Include your name, address, and telephone number as well as a local number where you can be reached in case your companion wanders off. Bring a photo of your dog just in case.

Bring necessary paperwork. You must carry a current license and proof of all vaccinations. Your vet can provide you with a current health certificate if you are traveling on commercial air or to Canada. Health certificates are good for ten days from the time of issue and will require a brief office visit to your vet. In case of non-urgent health concerns, bring your vet's phone number.

Identify a local emergency vet clinic. Easier to do beforehand than in the middle of a critical situation!

Make and Use a checklist. It's easy to forget even the most important items. Include food, water, bowls, leashes, collar, ID& paperwork, emergency vet location and number, treats, bedding or crate, baggies, grooming implements, medications, supplements, heartworm pill, toy, bone, etc.

Keep your dog comfortable and safe in the car. Keep a car window open so your dog has fresh air. Park in the shade with at least two windows open for cross ventilation. NEVER leave your dog in a parked car for more than FIVE minutes in the summer sun—even with windows open, your dog can become dangerously or deathly hot very quickly. Always have water available. Keep your dog safely secured while driving in a crate or with a doggie seatbelt—seatbelts save human lives and securing your dog may save him someday.

Reserve accommodations in advance. During peak times, accommodations fill quickly. Make sure dogs are allowed where you'll be staying before you show up. Use the websites listed below to identify motels, cabins, and campgrounds quickly that allow dogs. (If you're traveling by commercial air, make your flight reservation 3-4 months in advance as airlines limit the number of pets allowed on each plane at a time.)

Keep your dog on a leash. This is the best insurance for preventing even the best-trained dog from running away in a strange, new place. Put the leash on before getting out of the car! New smells can be enticing! Most places require leashes and it keeps your buddy safe.

Only bring a sufficiently trained dog with you. Without basic obedience training (sit, stay, come, down, settle), your stress level will escalate and your dog's safety will be jeopardized. Be confident that you communicate consistently and effectively with your canine. Would you feel refreshed after a week of barking?

Make the vacation environment similar to home. Dogs like routines and will feel more relaxed with minimal changes from the norm. Feed him at the same time, bring his crate or bed and favorite toy, etc.

Clean up after your dog! The more we clean up after our dogs, the more welcome they will be. Be courteous indoors, too—keep your dog off hotel furniture and don't leave him in the room alone. Some recommend bringing a 4:1 mix of water and white vinegar in a spray bottle to remove traces of accidents or any lingering aromas.

Here are some websites that can help your canine vacation planning:

1. www.traveldog.com - covers all the topics
2. www.takeyourpet.com - lists many other pet travel websites including every possible topic
3. www.petswelcome.com - search hotels, motels, cabins, ski resorts, etc., by state that welcome pets
4. www.akc.org/love/dah/cantrav.cfm - American Kennel Club's travel tips, including list of dog travel books



Augie—"Caught in the Act"—Wins 1st L.E.A.R.N. Photo Contest!

Augie has a real talent not only for getting caught in the act, but getting caught in the act on film! Augie's skills have won a L.E.A.R.N. T-shirt for his, and we'll all keep our fingers crossed that he keeps the T-shirt intact with holes only for arms and head! Way to go, Augie!



"Monkey See, Monkey Destroy"



"Would this be considered mail fraud?"



L.E.A.R.N. Calendar Photo Contest — Enter Now!

L.E.A.R.N. wants to create a 2002 calendar that features rescued labs. If L.E.A.R.N. rescued your lab, please consider submitting a photo along with your dog's story for possible inclusion in the calendar. Our goal with the calendar is to include a variety of labs and lab mixes—different ages, shapes, sizes, colors—with compelling stories. The proceeds from the calendar will help to save more labs with stories just as compelling as yours!

Prize: The winners will be featured in the calendar and recognized in the newsletter

Honorable mentions, with the winner, will have their incriminating act recorded in the next newsletter.

Entry Deadline: For consideration, all entries must be received by September 15, 2001.

What to do: Send (1) your "Calendar" photo, and (2) your rescued lab's story summarized in 100 words or less, to: **L.E.A.R.N. Calendar Photo Contest, PO Box 164, Island Lake, IL 60042.** Please write both your name and your dog's name on the back of the photo, and if you'd like the photo returned, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. L.E.A.R.N. is not responsible for any lost photos, and all judges decisions are final. There is no entry fee for this contest, and the calendar will be available for sale through L.E.A.R.N..



Cold Water Tail *by Diane O. Gifford*

First Printed in the Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. Yearbook (1995). Updated January 2001

It was early in the training season and the pond seemed to have warmed enough for a water session. After working on a water blind handling pattern, the two year-old black Labrador Retriever bitch was towed and returned to her kennel in the car without any unusual occurrences. The next morning her owner noted that her tail was not carried in its normal manner--two thirds of her tail hung limply behind her. Upon examination of her hindquarters, the Labrador appeared in obvious distress and even yelped and whimpered when asked to sit. Fearing a "broken tail" or some other injury, a veterinarian was consulted and x-rays were taken; however, no firm diagnosis was determined. Four days later, without treatment, the bitch's tail carriage returned to normal.

"Cold water tail," "limber tail syndrome," "broken tail," "dead tail," "broken wag" are all euphemisms for a relatively common occurrence in sporting dogs. The tail of the dog hangs down from the tail base or is held horizontal for three or four inches and then drops down. A flaccid tail episode appears to be a painful, but relatively benign affliction that can occur after swimming, after a heavy hunting day or even after a bath with cold water or water that is too warm. It is not always associated with swimming or water, but can happen after a heavy day of work that involves a lot of tail action. The majority of limp tail cases have been reported in sporting dogs or hounds -- Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Setters, Pointers, Flatcoats, Foxhounds and Beagles are the breeds frequently named. Almost all dogs that suffer through an occurrence return to normal within a few days. Affected dogs may or may not have a repeat incidence during their lifetime. [It is this author's experience that symptoms will repeat in the same animal and can be triggered by something as simple as a cold water bath.] This affliction has been described by the layman as a "sprain," fibrosis or a "cold in the tail." The affected dog is miserable at the onset and the tail is painful. If neither the dog owner nor the veterinarian is familiar with this condition, it can be disturbing--fostering conjecture on a possible fracture or spinal cord disease.

Males as well as females are affected as the following narrative from Ron Mandsager D.V.M., Nordic Pine Labradors, Stillwater, Oklahoma indicates. "My male Lab has experienced the condition on two occasions--both were a day or two after several days of heavy hunting (pheasant). On the first occasion, I was very concerned--the tail was carried limply and my dog was in obvious discomfort. Not knowing what was going on (this condition was never mentioned in Vet School, folks!) I was concerned about the possibility of either a fracture or nerve injury in the tail. We radiographed the caudal pelvic area, and the only thing we may have detected was swelling of the ventral muscles at the base of the tail. It resolved spontaneously after a day or two. After the second occurrence, and thinking a bit about what had transpired prior to the condition developing, my hunch is that in my dog it is a response to strenuous exercise of the tail muscles--more than they are used to. When my dog hunts pheasants and gets "birdy," the tail is up and beating rapidly. Between bouts of heavy activity, my dog is crated overnight or as we travel--this may aggravate the condition. This is just a hunch--no evidence. As a veterinarian, I had never seen or heard of this condition, nor had several colleagues with whom I discussed the condition with when I first encountered it."

Janet E. Steiss, DVM, Ph.D., and J.C. Wright, DVM, Ph.D., researchers in the [Sports Medicine Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine](#), Auburn University, conducted a study on limber tail syndrome in hunting dogs. They surveyed sporting dog owners and trainers by mail and telephone as part of a project aimed at determining the cause or causes of this condition. Their initial inquiries were sent to 418 owners and trainers of hunting dogs in the Southeastern United States. Twenty-seven per cent replied--90% had owned or trained hunting dogs for more than 10 years and respondents had a total of 3,066 dogs in their kennels. Seventy-six per cent of the dogs were used for hunting. Half were in the field once a week and the other half more than once a week. The five breeds commonly observed to have been affected with the syndrome were the English Pointer, the English Setter, the Foxhound, the Beagle and the Labrador Retriever. Based on this study, it appears that the limp tail syndrome is associated with damage to the tail muscles. Dogs that were examined early in the course of the disease showed elevations in serum creatine phosphokinase, a muscle enzyme. There are similarities between this condition and "delayed onset muscle soreness" in humans. Underconditioning or overtraining has been implicated in many cases of dogs showing symptoms of limp tail syndrome. Without a direct cause for the condition, veterinarians find it difficult to prescribe treatment, however experienced owners and trainers feel that recovery time is shortened if anti-inflammatory drugs are administered as soon as the condition is observed.

References:

Grayson, Peggy, Water and the dead tail syndrome, Dog World, May 5, 1995; Grayson, Peggy, What causes dead tails?, Dog World, April 14, 1995; Roslin-Williams, M., All About the Labrador Retriever, Pelham Books, England, 1980; Sawtelle, Lucille, All About the Golden Retriever, Pelham Books, England, 1980 Steiss, Janet E.DVM, Ph.D., Limber Tail Syndrome in Hunting Dogs, American Canine Sports Medicine Association Newsletter, September 1996, Volume 2, Issue 3.



Chicagoland Yard Sale - We Need Donated "STUFF"



Our biggest fundraiser of the year, our 3rd Annual Yard Sale, is approaching fast! The dates are August 24th and 25th (Friday and Saturday). The garage sale will be held on the property of a generous L.E.A.R.N. volunteer at 30338 N. Fairfield in Grayslake, IL. We rely heavily on the proceeds from this sale to keep us going through the entire year. We need donated items to sell.

So clean out your closets, garages and basements and see if you have anything you'd like to donate! Pass this information along to your co-workers, friends, relatives and neighbors. Remember, all donations are tax-deductible, and we can provide anyone with a donation receipt for tax purposes. We're asking that you price and mark all the items BEFORE you bring them over to us. That will save us a lot of time.

If you have items you'd like to donate, please contact us on our hotline number (857) 289-7387 or via e-mail at learndogs@yahoo.com to arrange a pickup/delivery time and location.



Enormous Thanks!

The following people have generously donated money, supplies, time, or services to our wonderful rescued Labradors. We could not make it without their help!

Claudia Kawalec, Coast to Coast Dachshund Rescue
Don and Judy Hayes, Chana, IL
Great Dane Rescue of Wisconsin, Inc, Stoughton, WI
LABMED
Landmark Kennels
Michael and Donna Ryan, Rockford, IL
Michael Gershbein and Lisa Beckus, Evanston, IL
Melissa Browne, Madison, WI
Michael Browne, Nashotah, WI
Mitzi Heytow, Libertyville, IL
MOUNDS Pet Food Warehouse – Madison, WI
Rose Locander
Shaila Bolger, Richland Center, WI
Sheboygan County Humane Society, Sheboygan, WI
Sheridan Ellis, Winfield, IL
The Northwest Herald, Crystal Lake, IL
Winnebago Labrador Retriever Club

Dr. Steve Cybella, DVM - Alta View Veterinary Clinic, Greenfield, WI
Dr. David Mentjes, DVM - Alta View Veterinary Clinic, Greenfield, WI
Dr. Randy, DVM- Great Lakes Veterinary Clinic, Neenah, WI
Dr. Lloyd Shaw, DVM- Woodstock Veterinary Clinic, Woodstock, IL
Dr. Dave Stehr, DVM- And Dogs, Too, Veterinary Clinic, Middleton WI
Dr. Leslee Ann Larson, New Glarus Veterinary Service, New Glarus, WI
Dr. Tia Simms, DVM - Greentree Animal Hospital, Libertyville, IL
Dr. Mike Petersen, DVM - Stoughton Veterinary Service, Stoughton, WI
Dr. J Peters, Countryside Veterinary Svc – Appleton, WI
Wrightstown Veterinary Center - Wrightstown, WI
Tuckaway Veterinary Clinic



Please Help Us!

As we celebrate over 220 rescued Labradors, we keep finding more and more dogs that are in desperate need of expensive medical attention. This is placing a huge drain on our finances. Please consider sending us a modest donation of \$10, \$25, or \$50. All donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your help!

Yes! I want to support the efforts of the Labrador Education and Rescue Network (L.E.A.R.N.) as they rescue stray, abandoned and unwanted Labrador Retrievers and place them in permanent adoptive homes.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed please find my check for:

- \$10.00
- \$25.00
- \$50.00
- Other Amount: _____

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