



# The Retriever

Official Newsletter of the Labrador Education and Rescue Network

Volume 3, Number 3, August 2002



## Lab Rain Turns to Lab Monsoon!

All volunteers have heard that it's raining labs and never stops. For the first time ever, Mary VanderBloomen, LEARN's President, has declared a Lab monsoon!

Our last issue emphasized the key role that foster homes play in saving labs. *This issue is dedicated to all the deserving companion animals who never get a real chance at life and never experience a loving and caring home.*

According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), over 20,000 companion animals are euthanized *every day*. In a year, that's over 7 million lives wasted! It's horrifying to think that even today, yet another 20,000 pets are being euthanized because as a society just don't respect them as important living beings and still need to work harder at curbing pet overpopulation through education, spaying, and neutering.

The good news is that rescue groups, especially with the help of the Internet in recent years, have been helping to reduce the burden of unwanted animals that would have otherwise ended up in a shelter, euthanized, or abused. More good news is that we all can make a difference, and if we each do something small, it adds up to something big. Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "By an inch it's a pinch, by a yard it's hard." Whether it's fostering a dog, making a financial or other contribution, or telling someone about LEARN who then adopts and loves a lab, we all can strive for an inch a day.

***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.***

In a busy month, LEARN receives an average of 8 calls each day from people who want to surrender their labs. In addition, shelters call for help with their dogs, email inquiries fill the leardog mailbox, and many volunteers receive individual calls and emails. How hard it is to see all the sweet faces and know that you have to say "no."

As of the writing of this article, we have 16 labs identified and desperately needing foster homes. A yellow male has lived in a chicken coop under disgusting conditions. A young yellow male got dumped when his family moved to Texas. Another young yellow male got dumped for being heartworm positive and yet another, for ear infection problems. A litter of 5-week old puppies needs LEARN's help. Some delightful strays needed to get out of shelters as their time was nearly out. The list goes on and each is special and deserving in his or her own way.

If you can help LEARN an inch to deal with the summer monsoon, as an organization we will make it many more yards!



*Inside this issue...* ♦ How could you . . . not have heard of Jim Willis? ♦ Risks of needle biopsies for diagnosing tumors ♦ Spike's Story ♦ LABMED's Internet Auction—items sought now! ♦ Protect your herbivore from poisonous plants ♦ Send *The Retriever* an E-mail! ♦ Upcoming Events! And more!



## Spike's Story

Two years ago Spike timed his rescue well. He came straight from an Illinois shelter to a LEARN picnic! In a huge fenced in yard, Spike immediately entered into the spirit of the even with the volunteers' dogs as well as many LEARN foster dogs. He mingled with the other dogs, waded in the labby pool, and enjoyed the tennis balls. Another big, friendly, typical lab!

**Photo of Spike**

Spike then went to a Wisconsin foster home, near to the Cave of the Mounds tourist attraction. He'd stroll over from time to time to say hello to everyone.

When a couple in Illinois who lived by a premium lab swimming area adopted Spike, LEARN assumed that he had it made. Unfortunately, Spike's couple separated. The woman, who was going to keep Spike,

encountered some major health problems and could no longer take care of him. So Spike came back to LEARN—to a very nice foster home, but not via a picnic!

Spike's foster mom thought his breathing sounded strange, so she took him to the vet, who diagnosed him with laryngeal paralysis. The vet told LEARN he would be fine with it and that we didn't need to worry about it. Right diagnosis, but wrong recommendation. It should have been treated.

A wonderful couple in Chicago adopted Spike. They were looking for an older dog who would be fine with apartment living in the city.

In the meantime, LEARN took in another older lab with the same problem as Spike's (laryngeal paralysis), but this lab was taken to the University of Wisconsin Veterinary Teaching Hospital. They recommended immediate surgery and told us that if laryngeal paralysis is left untreated, the dog's breathing could become so blocked that the dog could collapse and die under normal exercise.

Upon hearing this, we decided to contact Spike's owners, inform them of what we learned, and recommend that he undergo the surgery, at LEARN's expense. Unfortunately, we found out that Spike had already collapsed while playing at the beach and was rushed into emergency surgery. Fortunately, his life was saved! This wonderful couple, who said Spike was their "100 pound child," did not hesitate to get the surgery Spike needed to save his life. This time, Spike really has it made but he'd still love an invitation to the next LEARN picnic!



## Let The Retriever Know!

The Retriever now has her very own email address: [learnnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:learnnewsletter@yahoo.com)!

This is especially exciting for her because, after all, no one knows you're really a Labrador Retriever on the Internet! Please let us know what lab stuff is on your mind. Send your feedback, questions, and suggestions! Or, if life's busy for you now and you'd like to be taken off our mailing list, please tell us.



## "HOW COULD YOU?" . . .Not Have Heard of Jim Willis

Jim Willis devotes his life and his writing and other talents to help the millions of animals who are victims of humankind's cruelty and neglect. How could you or anyone not be deeply moved by his work? Some of you may have already seen his acclaimed essay, "How Could You?" in more than one place. It's been translated into French, German, and Spanish, and will soon be available in Russian, Italian, Rumanian, and Tagolog. You can learn more about his global efforts and other writings at <http://jimwillis0.tripod.com/tiergarten/>. Recently, a man in Grand Rapids, Michigan, purchased a \$7000 full page ad in the paper to present the "How Could You?" essay to the people of his community.

*"Anyone is welcome to distribute the essay for a noncommercial purpose, as long as it is properly attributed with the copyright notice. Please use it to help educate, on your websites, in newsletters, on animal shelter and vet office bulletin boards. Tell the public that the decision to add a pet to the family is an important one for life, that animals deserve our love and sensible care, that finding another appropriate home for your animal is your responsibility and any local humane society or animal welfare league can offer you good advice, and that all life is precious. Please do your part to stop the killing, and encourage all spay & neuter campaigns in order to prevent unwanted animals."*

### **HOW COULD YOU? By Jim Willis, Copyright 2001**

When I was a puppy I entertained you with my antics and made you laugh. You called me your child and despite a number of chewed shoes and a couple of murdered throw pillows, I became your best friend. Whenever I was "bad," you'd shake your finger at me and ask "How could you?" - but then you'd relent and roll me over for a bellyrub.

My housetraining took a little longer than expected, because you were terribly busy, but we worked on that together. I remember those nights of nuzzling you in bed, listening to your confidences and secret dreams, and I believed that life could not be any more perfect. We went for long walks and runs in the park, car rides, stops for ice cream (I only got the cone because "ice cream is bad for dogs," you said), and I took long naps in the sun waiting for you to come home at the end of the day.

Gradually, you began spending more time at work and on your career, and more time searching for a human mate. I waited for you patiently, comforted you through heartbreaks and disappointments, never chided you about bad decisions, and romped with glee at your homecomings, and when you fell in love.

She, now your wife, is not a "dog person" - still I welcomed her into our home, tried to show her affection, and obeyed her. I was happy because you were happy. Then the human babies came along and I shared your excitement. I was fascinated by their pinkness, how they smelled, and I wanted to mother them, too. Only she and you worried that I might hurt them, and I spent most of my time banished to another room, or to a dog crate. Oh, how I wanted to love them, but I became a "prisoner of love."

As they began to grow, I became their friend. They clung to my fur and pulled themselves up on wobbly legs, poked fingers in my eyes, investigated my ears and gave me kisses on my nose. I loved everything about them and their touch - because your touch was now so infrequent - and I would have defended them with my life if need be.

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Now you have a new career opportunity in another city, and you and they will be moving to an apartment that does not allow pets. You've made the right decision for your "family," but there was a time when I was your only family.

I was excited about the car ride until we arrived at the animal shelter. It smelled of dogs and cats, of fear, of hopelessness. You filled out the paperwork and said "I know you will find a good home for her." They shrugged and gave you a pained look. They understand the realities facing a middle-aged dog or cat, even one with "papers." You had to pry your son's fingers loose from my collar as he screamed "No, Daddy! Please don't let them take my dog!" And I worried for him, and what lessons you had just taught him about friendship and loyalty, about love and responsibility, and about respect for all life. You gave me a goodbye pat on the head, avoided my eyes, and politely refused to take my collar and leash with you. You had a deadline to meet and now I have one, too.

After you left, the two nice ladies said you probably knew about your upcoming move months ago and made no attempt to find me another good home. They shook their heads and asked "How could you?"

They are as attentive to us here in the shelter as their busy schedules allow. They feed us, of course, but I lost my appetite days ago. At first, whenever anyone passed my pen, I rushed to the front, hoping it was you - that you had changed your mind - that this was all a bad dream...or I hoped it would at least be someone who cared, anyone who might save me. When I realized I could not compete with the frolicking for attention of happy puppies, oblivious to their own fate, I retreated to a far corner and waited.

I heard her footsteps as she came for me at the end of the day and I padded along the aisle after her to a separate room. A blissfully quiet room. She placed me on the table, rubbed my ears and told me not to worry. My heart pounded in anticipation of what was to come, but there was also a sense of relief. The prisoner of love had run out of days. As is my nature, I was more concerned about her. The burden which she bears weighs heavily on her and I know that, the same way I knew your every mood.

She gently placed a tourniquet around my foreleg as a tear ran down her cheek. I licked her hand in the same way I used to comfort you so many years ago. She expertly slid the hypodermic needle into my vein. As I felt the sting and the cool liquid coursing through my body, I lay down sleepily, looked into her kind eyes and murmured "How could you?"

Perhaps because she understood my dogspeak, she said "I'm so sorry." She hugged me and hurriedly explained it was her job to make sure I went to a better place, where I wouldn't be ignored or abused or abandoned, or have to fend for myself - a place of love and light so very different from this earthly place. With my last bit of energy, I tried to convey to her with a thump of my tail that my "How could you?" was not meant for her. It was you, My Beloved Master, I was thinking of. I will think of you and wait for you forever.



May everyone in your life continue to show you so much loyalty.

The End





## How Reliable are Needle Biopsies in Diagnosing Tumors?

By Dr. Jens Leubow

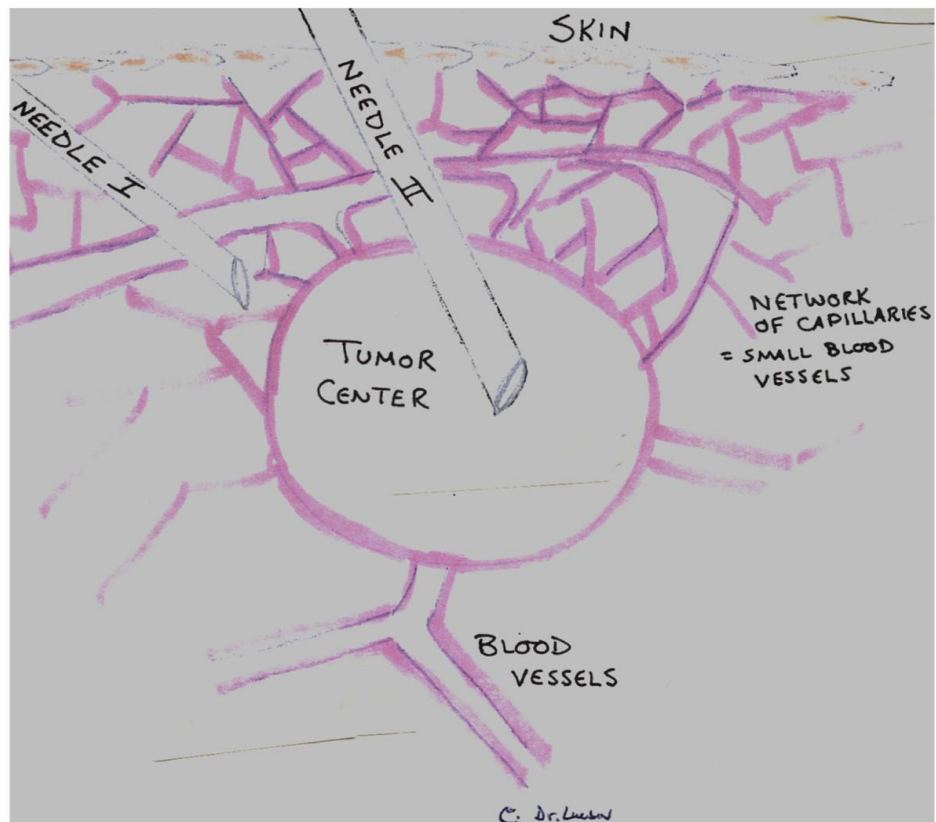
Tumors in small animals are a very frequent diagnostic challenge for the veterinarian. Correct identification of tumor tissues and growth patterns is of utmost importance. Today, cancer is one of the leading death causes in small animals. While not every tumor is classified as “malignant” (=cancer), many different types of cancerous tumors exist. Generally, the best chances for survival and/or cure depend on early and correct diagnosis and the appropriate treatment, e.g., radical and complete removal of a tumor mass.

One of the most commonly performed clinical procedures to diagnose soft tissue tumors, e.g., tumors of the skin, subcutaneous space, muscle, etc., is the Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA). This procedure involves location of a tumor by manual palpation and inserting a biopsy needle into the suspected tissue mass to obtain cell material for analysis. However, this technique frequently provides unreliable results. Approximately 75-85% of needle biopsies fail to provide an accurate result. The illustration will provide some insight why a good clinician should not solely rely on the results of a needle biopsy:

1. Malignant tumors may consist of an irregular surface. Often, the needle fails to reach the actual tumor mass and, instead, recovers cell material from the surrounding tissues. These may consist of either normal tissue or, in some instances, peripheral inflammation. (NEEDLE I)
2. Needles cut through healthy tissue (e.g., skin) and may become obstructed with such material. Because suction is applied manually by pulling back the plunger of a syringe, it is impossible to accurately obtain a tissue specimen at an exact location. Obstruction of the needle through peripheral, healthy tissues may go unnoticed by the clinician. Even though the needle (NEEDLE II) reached the tumor center, no material can be obtained at the center of the tumor.

A needle biopsy may put your pet at risk. Tumor cells can be spread through lymph- and blood vessels. Tissues contain generally an enormous amount of small blood vessels (“capillaries”). As the sketch shows, during a needle biopsy the needle will penetrate and open millions of capillaries and lymph vessels, leading to more or less visible bleeding and/or tissue injury. A needle that successfully penetrated a highly malignant tumor will, with certainty, pull back a large amount of cells through the freshly injured peripheral tissue. This may lead to spread of cancerous cells (“metastasis”) to distant organs/tissues in the body. Unfortunately, a large number of veterinarians fail to consider such effects of a needle biopsy on a microscopic level.

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### How to Avoid Putting a Patient at Risk through Needle Biopsies:

1. Don't perform a needle biopsy when a tumor mass has the appearance of malignancy, e.g., invasive growth pattern, irregular surface, tissue destruction, etc. Plan a complete surgical excision instead. If possible, submit the entire tumor with normal-appearing tissue margin for histopathology.
2. Never rely on the results of a needle biopsy alone. Seek a second opinion if your veterinarian does.
3. The application of needle biopsies is, in the opinion of this author, very narrow, at best. If your doctor suspects an abscess or a fluid-filled cystic structure, a needle biopsy or incision (opening) of the mass is quick, easy, and in all rule, diagnostic.
4. Many practitioners who perform a needle biopsy and microscopic evaluation in their own practice are not trained as pathologists. This fact adds another element of uncertainty to the diagnosis of microscopic tissue samples. Reliable histopathologic examination of tumor cells calls for evaluation by a specialist.

Dr. Leubow's practice is Madison Veterinary Clinic, Ltd., 2125 N. Stoughton Rd., Madison, WI. He prepared this article especially for *The Retriever*. A special thanks to him for his contribution that may someday save your special companion. If you have further questions, he can be reached at (608) 249-8525.



### 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!

[insert names of those to thank]



### Fun Upcoming Events!

| <u>When?</u>                   | <u>What?</u>                      | <u>Where?</u>      |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| • August 10-11                 | • Dogwash at Pine Tree Pet Center | • Libertyville, IL |
| • August 17, 11:00am – 1:00 pm | • Booth at Mounds Store           | • Fitchburg, WI    |
| • August 23-24                 | • Annual Chicagoland Garage Sale  | • Chicaco, IL      |
| • September 15, 8:00am-5:00pm  | • Wind Lake Street Fair Days      | • Wind Lake, WI    |
| • November 3-4                 | • Chicago Pet Expo at Navy Pier   | • Chicago, IL      |



## LABMED Needs Your Help With Items for Auction!

LABMED ([www.labmed.org](http://www.labmed.org)), a 501c3 non-profit which assists the medical needs of Labs/Lab mixes who are in a rescue situation, has helped fund surgeries for LEARN dogs as well as many others across the nation and thus enabled them to experience joyful lives. LABMED currently seeks items for their Seventh Annual Bullet's Benefit Bash Internet auction, which will be held Friday, November 1, 2002 through Saturday, November 9, 2002. All donated items are appreciated -- these should be lab or dog related. For ideas, please take a look at last year's items (<http://www.labmed.org/auction.html>). Those items allowed LABMED to raise over \$18,000 last year; but due to a huge increase in applications, they are hoping for an even more successful auction this year because they're running way behind on auction donations so far. All donations are tax-deductible as charitable contributions to LABMED. *Donations should be sent to Auction Coordinator, Heather Bowden, 3313 Swanson Drive, Plano, TX 75025, no later than October 1, 2002.*

If you have any questions about the online auction or LABMED, please contact Deb Hamele ([djhl@chorus.net](mailto:djh1@chorus.net) or 608 273-0172) or Auction Coordinator Heather Bowden at [auktion@labmed.org](mailto:auktion@labmed.org), or visit our website at <http://www.labmed.org>. You can also write LABMED at the address given above.



## Plants that can Poison your Dog

Here is a list of plants that you don't want your dog to eat. For specific concerns about your plant eater, please contact your vet. To view the list on the web, please visit:

[http://www.ivillage.com/pets/dogs/articles/0,12329,166994\\_18300,00.html](http://www.ivillage.com/pets/dogs/articles/0,12329,166994_18300,00.html)

|                           |                           |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aloe Vera                 | Cycads                    | Janet Craig Dracaena      | Poison Ivy                    |
| Amaryllis                 | Cyclamen                  | Japanese Show Lily        | Poison Oak                    |
| Apple (seeds)             | Daffodil                  | (especially cats!)        | Pothos                        |
| Apple Leaf Croton         | Devil's Ivy               | Jerusalem Cherry          | Precatory Bean                |
| Apricot (pit)             | Dieffenbachia             | Kalanchoe                 | Primrose                      |
| Asparagus Fern            | Dracaena Palm             | Lacy Tree Philodendron    | Red Emerald                   |
| Autumn Crocus             | Dragon Tree               | Lily of the Valley        | Red Princess                  |
| Azalea                    | Dumb Cane                 | Madagascar Dragon Tree    | Red-Margined Dracaena         |
| Baby's Breath             | Easter Lily (especially   | Marble Queen              | Rhododendron                  |
| Bird of Paradise          | cats!)                    | Marijuana                 | Ribbon Plant                  |
| Branching Ivy             | Elaine                    | Mexican Breadfruit        | Saddle Leaf Philodendron      |
| Buckeye                   | Elephant Ears             | Miniature Croton          | Sago Palm                     |
| Buddhist Pine             | Emerald Feather           | Mistletoe                 | Satin Pothos                  |
| Caladium                  | English Ivy               | Morning Glory             | Schefflera                    |
| Calla Lily                | Eucalyptus                | Mother-in-Law's Tongue    | Silver Pothos                 |
| Castor Bean               | Fiddle-leaf Fig           | Narcissus                 | Spotted Dumb Cane             |
| Ceriman                   | Florida Beauty            | Needlepoint Ivy           | String of Pearls              |
| Charming Dieffenbachia    | Foxglove                  | Nephytis                  | Striped Dracaena              |
| Cherry (seeds and wilting | Fruit Salad Plant         | Nightshade                | Sweetheart Ivy                |
| leaves)                   | Geranium                  | Oleander                  | Swiss Cheese Plant            |
| Chinese Evergreen         | German Ivy                | Onion                     | Taro Vine                     |
| Cineraria                 | Giant Dumb Cane           | Oriental Lily (especially | Tiger Lily (especially cats!) |
| Clematis                  | Glacier Ivy               | cats!)                    | Tomato Plant (green fruit,    |
| Cordatum                  | Gold Dust Dracaena        | Peace Lily                | stem and leaves)              |
| Corn Plant                | Golden Pothos             | Peach (wilting leaves and | Tree Philodendron             |
| Cornstalk Plant           | Hahn's Self-Branching Ivy | pits)                     | Tropic Snow Dieffenbachia     |
| Croton                    | Heartland Philodendron    | Pencil Cactus             | Weeping Fig                   |
| Cuban Laurel              | Hurricane Plant           | Plumosa Fern              | Yew                           |
| Cutleaf Philodendron      | Indian Rubber Plant       | Poinsettia (low toxicity) |                               |



## Please Help Labs in Need!

Summers are busy stressful times for L.E.A.R.N. Many pets are abandoned or given away as vacations approach, as summer ends, as schools begins. We continue to find more and more dogs in need of rescue, many in desperate need of expensive medical attention. This places 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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