



Celebrating Greyhounds

Spring 2015 Online Magazine

Emiliano's Big Trip

ALSO INSIDE:

Out of the Ashes

Osteosarcoma & Greyhounds

Moving Made Easy

Celebrating Greyhounds



Spring 2015
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Emiliano and Kayla visited Big Bend National Park for the second time after Emiliano's diagnosis of osteosarcoma and subsequent amputation.
/ Photo by John Spaulding

From the Editor

This is the Spring Issue of *Celebrating Greyhounds*, yet as of March 1, many parts of the country were still anxiously awaiting spring's arrival. Here in North Texas, a late-season snow storm resulted in several snow days during the last week in February.

One thing I've noticed about snow days is that adults don't seem to enjoy them nearly as much as we used to when we were younger. Kids still have the innocence of youth to keep them from worrying about missed deadlines, frozen pipes, or icy roads. My neighbors' children seem to have invented a new



game of "ice basketball," in which I'm pretty sure someone gets points every time an opposing teammate slips and falls.

Even the neighborhood kids' play didn't come close to matching the boundless enthusiasm of two Greyhounds

who love the snow. Now I know some of you have hounds who don't much like cold weather. Gypsy can sure be a diva when it comes to going out in the rain. But snow...that's a different story. Give her a warm dog coat and a fresh yard of snow and it's game on!

Celebrating Greyhounds Magazine

Editor-In-Chief:	Stacy Pigott
Managing Editors:	Naty Saylor, Michele Maxwell
Adoptions Editor:	Lindsay Hocker
Features Editor:	Dana Provost
Production Editor:	Lynda Welkowitz
Copy Editors:	Joanne Ardizzone, Corinne Castano, Kristin Harrington, Carrie Noar, Alice O'Hearn, Kelly Swartz, Tammy Wallace, Barbara Williams
Regular Contributors:	Jim Bader DVM, Guillermo Couto DVM, Bruce DeKing, Laurel E. Drew, Deb Levasseur
Veterinary Advisor:	Jim Bader DVM
Legal Advisor:	John Parker
Art Director:	Zographix Inc.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

subscriptions@adopt-a-greyhound.org

SUBMISSIONS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND SUBMISSION INQUIRIES

editor@adopt-a-greyhound.org

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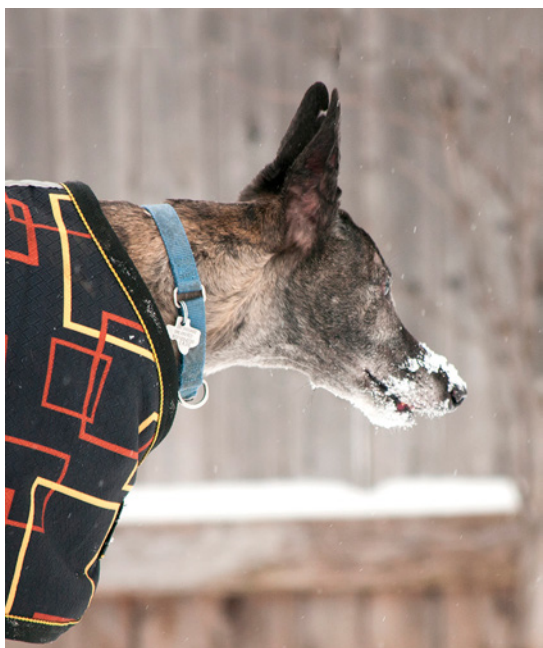
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Today, as I watched Gypsy, Greta, and Jewel play in the snow, it occurred to me that I could learn a thing or two from my dogs. While I was content to huddle indoors, avoiding the treacherous roads and, quite honestly, complaining about the bitter cold, they embraced the rare snow day. Their exuberance was catching. I found myself smiling and laughing at their antics, and even went inside to



grab a camera so I could snap a few pictures. As I watched them through the lens of my camera, I forgot about the cold, wet weather. I quit dwelling on the work I needed to do, but wasn't able to because of the snow. I stopped thinking about all the ways the winter storm was causing me hardships. Instead, I enjoyed the moment. I laughed and played with the Greyhounds until we were all



winded and ready for a break. It's a lesson I'm glad I listened to today. Because life isn't always sunshine and rainbows. Sometimes, it snows along the way. And whether that snow is physical or metaphorical, we can deal with it the same way – by embracing the change and playing in the snow.

Stacy

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Celebrating Greyhounds Magazine is published quarterly by The Greyhound Project, Inc., a nonprofit Massachusetts corporation.

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Greyhound Bytes:

News you can sink your teeth into

Just Like Humans, Animals Help Save Lives by Donating Blood

RICHMOND, VA—You’ve probably heard that you can save three lives every time you give blood, but what about your pet? As veterinary medicine advances, there is a growing need for dog and cat donors, too.

Gabe the Greyhound settles in. Peanut butter and cheese is all he needs.

“I’d hate for somebody else to lose their dog because there wasn’t enough blood supply when my dogs are able to be donors,” says Karen Riggs of Chesterfield.

Since last May, she has been driving Gabe and her other two Greyhounds to Fredericksburg every six weeks where Jeff Frederick holds blood drives at his home. Frederick is with Greyt Expectations Greyhound Rescue.

Read more and watch the video at [Richmond’s ABC 8 News](#).

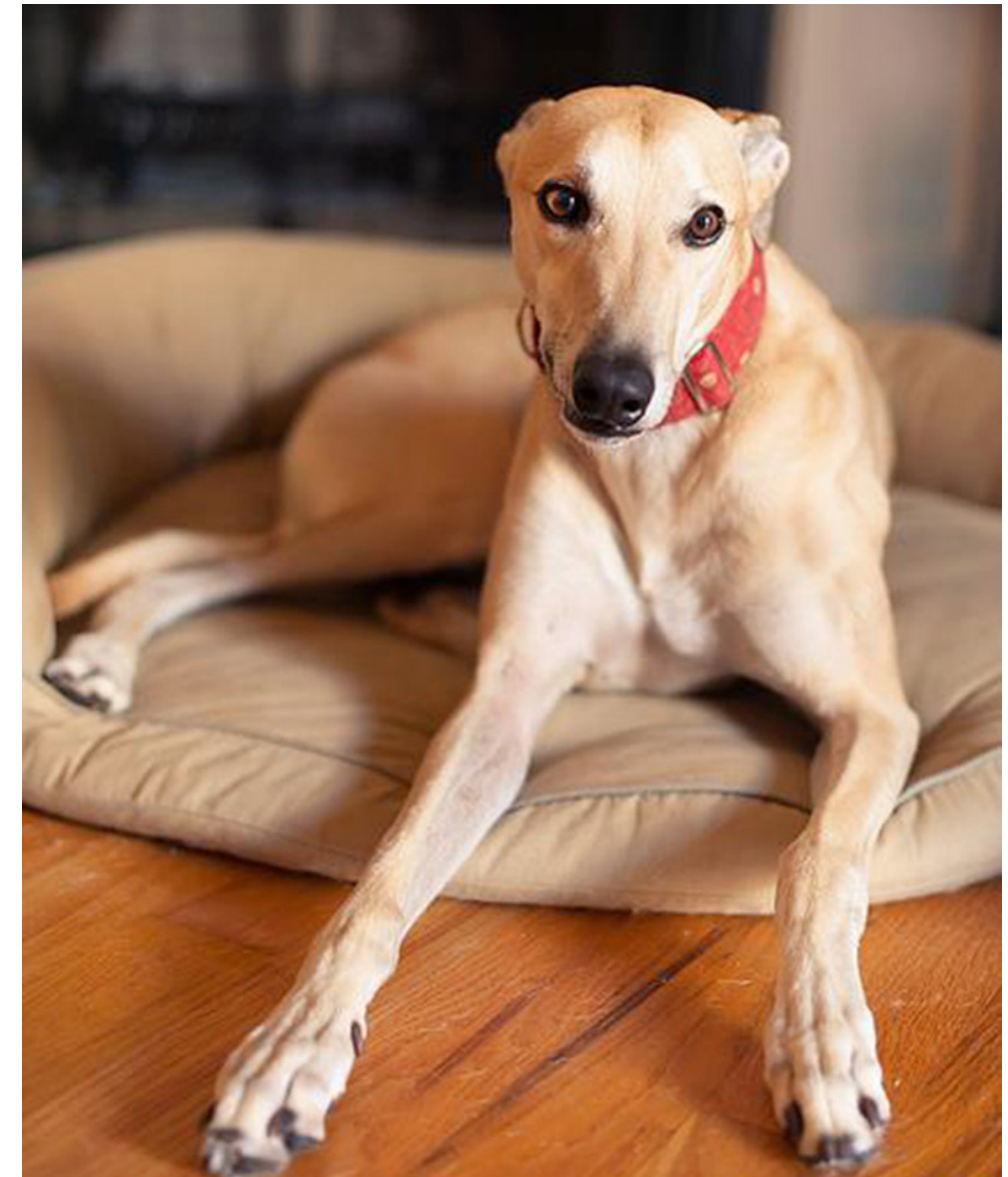
The Growth of a Wolseley Greyhound

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA—I’ve never been a child’s mom. But I remember when I first demonstrated my own independent, public persona.

“Look, Mom! Across the street. It’s Billy from Kindergarten!” It’s a rite of passage. For child and parent.

And so it is with my dog, Styxx, whom you met in this Metro column in January 2014 (“A Greyhound Comes Home”). He had just severed ties with the Michigan/Ohio underground racing circuit and its aftermath, and retired to Wolseley.

Read more about Gail Perry’s hound at [The Winnipeg Free Press](#).



Snaggle Tooth, Snaggles for short, adopted by Nancy Bowden, of Warwick, New York, through Greyhound Friends of New Jersey. / Photo by Amy Roth.



Amy, adopted by Karen Makowski, of Chicago, Illinois, through Greyhounds Only.

Volunteer runs in Bath Half Marathon for Greyhounds

DORSET, UNITED KINGDOM—In late February, dog lover Shaun Andrews was getting ready to run to raise money for a Greyhound rescue charity.

Shaun, who lives in Wincanton, United Kingdom, was lining up in the Bath Half Marathon on March 1.

He was raising money for Greyhound Rescue West of England - GRWE - and among his staunchest supporters was Benji, one of the dogs sponsored by the charity.

Read more at [*Blackmore Vale Magazine*](#).

Westminster Best Of Breed Winner

BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA—Bluffton, South Carolina, resident Melanie Steele was elated as she watched her 2-year-old Greyhound Gia prance around the green carpet at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, ultimately taking home the Best of Breed award.

Steele admits she would much rather have seen Gia perform in person in New York

Greyhound Bytes

City's Madison Square Garden than from her television at home, but there was no chance she was leaving the side of a litter of recently born puppies.

Read more at [Bluffton Today](#).

VIDEO: Annual Greyhound Gathering in Solvang

SOLVANG, CALIFORNIA—Organizers for the 11th Annual Solvang Greyhound Festival held a variety of Greyhound activities throughout the city over the weekend of Feb. 19-21. Watch the video at the [Lompoc Record](#).

Rescued Greyhounds Offer Companionship

PENRITH, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA— Rescued Greyhounds have become the rescuers in a program designed to help provide companionship and care for vulnerable people.



Watch Solvang Annual Greyhound Festival video.

Animal-assisted therapy is used extensively in clinical treatment of anxiety disorders, most notably for returning soldiers with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

UnitingCare Mental Health, which has an office in Mount Druitt, began the program two years ago after adopting their first Greyhound, Roger, who is now 6.

Read more at [St. Marys-Mt. Druitt Star](#).

Greyhound Bytes

Darren Rigg Honored by *Dog Fancy* Magazine

EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA—Since it was founded in 1987, the Greyhound Adoption Center in El Cajon, California, has rescued, rehabilitated, and found permanent homes for close to 6,000 retired racing Greyhounds and Greyhound mixes from around the United States.

The center now houses 50 rescued dogs in its Dehesa Road facility. Two dozen more of the animals, most of whom were involved in track racing, are in foster homes throughout San Diego County.

More than 200 volunteers and a part-time staff help at the center's 3-acre site, feeding, exercising, bathing, and giving affection to the dogs. The center has a 1.3-acre "run free" field

where potential adopters can spend time with the dogs and a Canine Sports Center where the dogs play.

In recognition of the center's efforts, Darren Rigg, who founded the nonprofit along with his wife, veterinarian Dr. Candy Lewis, has been named one of the "45 People Who Have Changed the Dog World" by *Dog Fancy* Magazine.

Read more at [U-T San Diego](#).

Dog Foster Carer Leads The Way on Fundraising Walk

WORCHESTERSHIRE, UNITED

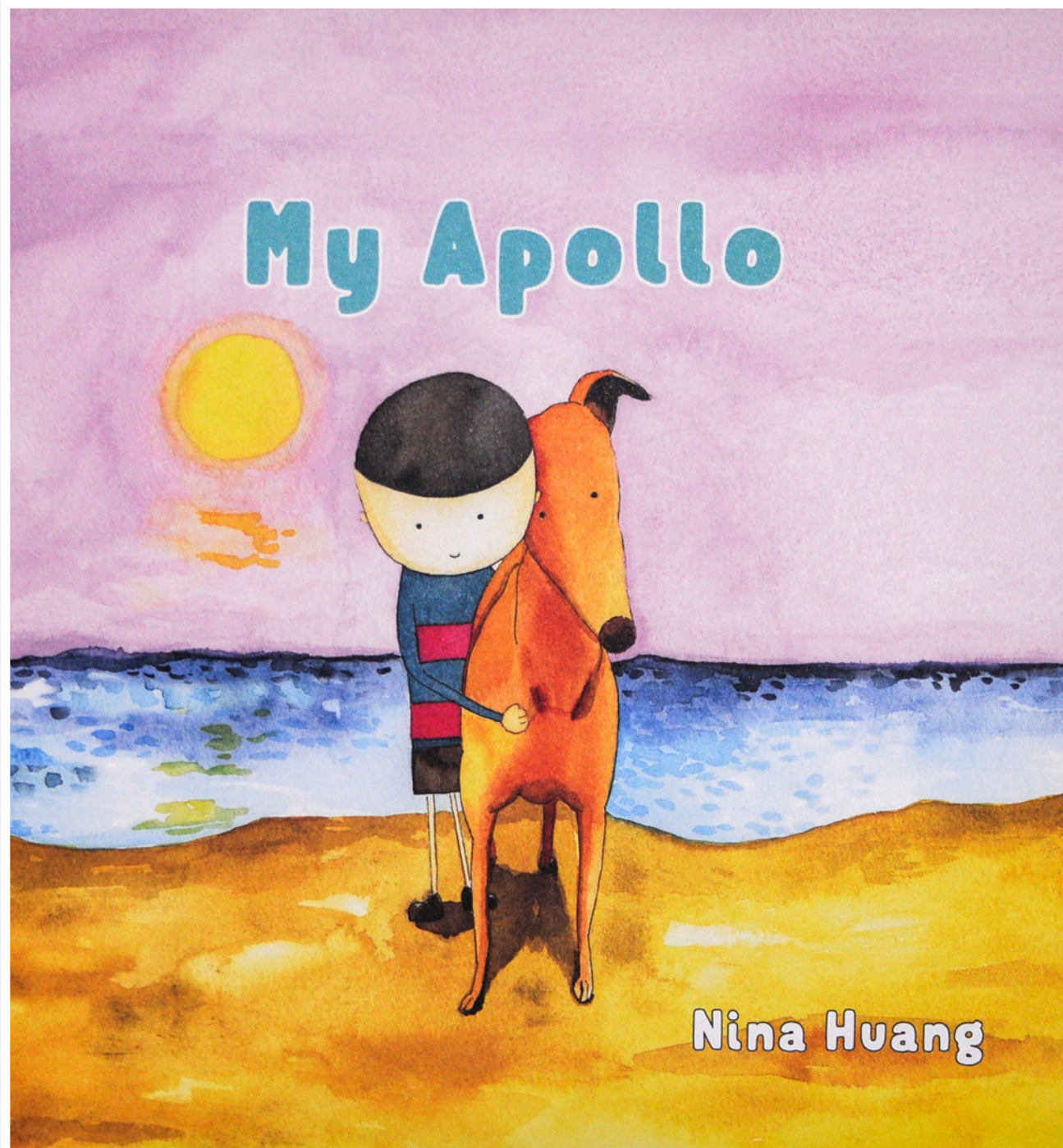
KINGDOM—Former soldier John Williams, who set off to mark his 60th birthday with a 60 kilometer walk accompanied by 60 dogs, has successfully completed his task.

The dedicated dog foster carer from Fernhill Heath decided to mark his milestone birthday last month with a fundraising effort for Evesham Greyhound and Lurcher rescue.

Williams, who served 22 years as an electrical and radar technician with the Army's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, began fostering rescue dogs for the charity 18 months ago. Currently he has three dogs: one, a black Lurcher called Jensen that is fostered and looking for a permanent home, and two of his own: a Saluki called Marnie and a grey merle Collie called Sorchia.

In 18 months he and his wife, Ruth, have fostered 20 dogs, some for a few months and some just for a few days.

Read more at [Worcester News](#). ■



Where Art & Text Collide

A children's book features original watercolor illustrations perfectly printed for all ages to enjoy.

By Carrie Noar

Nina Huang

My Apollo

Self-Published by Nina Huang Art Studio

40pp.

My Apollo, by sociologist Nina Huang, is an illustrated children's book that explores the healing power of love. It tells the story of Briar, whose mother has left him and his father. Briar is having a tough time. There were no special celebrations on holidays and birthdays, and he's falling asleep in class. He's withdrawn from the world and not playing with other kids. The school counselor calls Briar's dad in for a conference to talk about things.

After school, Briar notices that his dad isn't driving home. When he inquires about this, his dad tells him that they're going to make it into a good day. Briar is surprised when they stop at an adoption kennel

because he's been wanting a dog for a long time. His dad explains that after Greyhounds are finished racing, they need homes.

The kennel is full of Greyhounds, but Briar chooses Apollo, a Greyhound who cowers at the back of his crate. The lady at the kennel explains that Apollo will need a lot of patience and love to get him to come around. Briar is determined that this is the dog he wants to bring home.

Once Apollo comes home, he's afraid of everything, even the couch, and he doesn't like to be petted. However, he loves to go for walks, and he and Briar begin exploring the world together. Briar begins taking Apollo to the dog park. One day, they meet a girl named Elli who has a Greyhound named Emma.

With Elli's help, Briar begins to understand Apollo and they begin to forge a connection. Things begin to improve in Briar's life, not just with Apollo, but with his dad and how he sees

the world. All in all, it's a very sweet story that shows that even though you don't always get the ending you want, sometimes a different ending can be just as happy.

The only drawback to the story is that it perpetuates the idea that all Greyhounds are abused at the track. It's mentioned several times throughout the story, and even though nobody knows that Apollo was abused, everyone assumes it because he is shy and timid. Even though there are a lot of Greyhounds who are happy and well-adjusted, this story chooses to focus on the idea that Greyhounds are abused. It also doesn't show the adoption group doing anything to help Apollo on his transition from being a racer to being retired. While I know this helps to make the story what it is, I keep wondering if there couldn't have been other ways to achieve the same outcome without using the assumption of abuse. It's still a sweet story, but this issue

might bother some readers.

The book's illustrations are lovely watercolor paintings. It is truly a visual treat to look at, as it is printed on art-quality paper that enhances the hand-drawn, original illustrations.

My Apollo was funded through [Kickstarter](#) and is available for purchase through [Nina Huang's website](#) for \$18.99. ■

About the author: Carrie Noar is a blogger who writes about her life with two Greyhounds, Bunny and Flattery, along with two German Shepherds, Morgan and Küster, at [TalesAndTails.com](#). She also enjoys photographing them, traveling with them, and finding local places where they can be included. She wants people to see that retirement is just the beginning for Greyhounds and that sometimes, you just have to laugh at the things life throws at you.



Ask the Expert: Avoiding a Stay at the Howl-A-Day Inn

Greyhounds who exhibit stress when left alone could be suffering from one of four conditions, including separation anxiety.

By Deb Levasseur, Certified Dog Trainer and Behavior Therapist

If you are at your wits' end because your Greyhound goes out of control every time you leave him alone, he may be suffering from separation anxiety, separation distress, isolation anxiety, or isolation distress. Let's explore these four conditions, investigate common misdiagnoses, and review a treatment program to keep your hound's stress at bay.

Greyhounds with separation anxiety tend to exhibit behavior issues only when the dog's preferred owner or handler leaves. If another human were present, the dog would still display the same behavior issues.

Isolation anxiety refers to severe behavior issues exhibited when the dog is left alone. This means that if the dog is supervised, even by a stranger, he or she will not exhibit the undesirable behaviour. Distress is less severe than anxiety and is determined based on the symptoms displayed. Vocalizations such as whines, cries, roos, and barks are signs of distress.



Able, adopted by Vivian Diaz.

True separation anxiety presents itself as sheer panic. This includes destructive behaviors such as chewing door frames and windows, as well as house soiling. These behaviors generally occur within 30 minutes of departure and are one way isolation anxiety is differentiated from boredom or house-training issues. The good news is that there are very few cases of true separation anxiety.

Isolation distress, which is fairly simple and quicker to resolve, is more common and often misdiagnosed as separation anxiety. Separation anxiety, separation distress, isolation anxiety, and isolation distress are clinical diagnoses and should only be made by a certified professional.

Stress, lack of enrichment, and house-training issues are often misdiagnosed as separation anxiety. House soiling could be caused by lack of a proper elimination schedule, unreasonable owner expectations,

marking, submissive urination, or urinary incontinence due to a medical condition. Excessive barking could be the result of boredom or stress brought on by street noise. Separation anxiety chewing is usually directed at escape routes such as door frames, windows, and walls. If chewing issues are more generalized throughout the house, the behavior is more likely linked to boredom and stress issues.

Displaying basic vocalizations in a crate during training is a fairly normal part of a Greyhound's transition, and this behavior should be ignored. Any reinforcement you provide will worsen the situation. However, if intense and prolonged vocalizations are combined with chewing at the bars, frantic pawing, or crate soiling, then your Greyhound may be suffering from a form of claustrophobia. If your dog exhibits anxiety inside the crate, you can try not crating him,

and vice versa if your dog is anxious outside the crate.

In the case of claustrophobia, a more specific intervention by a certified dog behaviorist may be required. In this case, it can be dangerous to crate the dog, especially in a wire crate. For these dogs, an exercise pen can work well if house training or destructiveness is an issue, because the pen limits their space but provides more freedom than a crate. It is not recommended to close a claustrophobic Greyhound in a small room, as he or she may have the same issues as in the crate and chew on the door in an escape attempt. Sometimes simply limiting the space will be enough; close all doors in the home, including closet doors, and dog-proof everything well. Leave the dog with a toy box full of amazing chew toys and stuffed Kongs. Leave the television or a radio on as well.

Treatment Program to Reduce Anxiety

General Training Principles

- Establish a consistent and stable routine and environment.
- Keep your Greyhound under his tolerance threshold while working on this issue. It may be necessary to use a doggy daycare or have a dog sitter stay with him until you improve his ability to be alone.
- Mix up your leaving cues to desensitize your Greyhound. Gather your keys, put on your coat and shoes, walk out a specific door, and immediately re-enter. Repeat the ritual until these cues elicit no reaction from your dog.
- Stage short departures and return before any anxiety is manifested. Starting with absences of only a few seconds, gradually extend the length of your departures as you see progress and no signs of anxiety. If you can leave for 30 minutes without

signs of anxiety, you can usually increase your departure time in longer increments. If you can build your time up to 90 minutes without issue, then you can generally leave for any reasonable amount of time.

- Provide ample amounts of mental stimulation for your Greyhound, such as challenging games and enrichment walks. Read my “Enriching Our Dog’s Lives” article in the Spring 2013 issue of *Celebrating Greyhounds* Magazine for more ideas.
- Make all your departures and returns calm and meaningless. Ignore your dog for 20 minutes before departure, upon your arrival, and first thing in the morning. Avoid all eye contact or interaction with your dog during this time, as any attention you give him will cause him more distress when you leave.
- Boost your dog’s confidence and give his mind a workout with obedience classes. Be sure to work with a trainer who only uses positive reinforcement training methods.

- Acclimatize your dog to sleeping alone outside your bedroom.

What to do Before Leaving Your Dog Alone:

- Provide exercise before your departure.
- Give your dog plenty of stimulating toys and long-lasting treats. Provide your dog with a toy box full of fun things such as frozen Kongs, fresh bones, durable chew toys, and food puzzles. If your dog is crated, place three or four of these items with him.
- Keep a radio or the television on loud enough to drown out street noise. Classical music or talk stations may work best.
- Keep curtains closed.
- Leave your dog with an article of your clothing to curl up with and spray some of your perfume or cologne on the door when you leave.
- Use your computer to record your dog while you are away to test the effectiveness

of your anti-anxiety interventions. Use a webcam or a sound-activated audio recorder.

Severe cases of anxiety may require medication from your veterinarian to lower your Greyhound's stress. It is vital that the medication is combined with a behavior-modification program, as medication alone will not fix these problems. Some homeopathic solutions you can try are:

- **Rescue Remedy** is a blend of the essence of five flowers and is available over the counter. This works best when given directly in the dog's mouth. Give six drops two to three times a day on an empty stomach.
- **D.A.P.** (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) is available in a spray you can apply on the collar or in a plug-in diffuser.
- **Anxiety Wraps** swaddle your dog to keep them calm. You can use a tight shirt, an elastic bandage, or purchase a wrap designed for this use.

It is important to remember that you never punish your dog for stress-induced behavior. This is not a behavior he is doing freely: anxiety is the cause. He is not behaving badly to punish, guilt, or undermine you. Also, do not impulsively adopt another pet as it may not resolve the issue. If your dog's anxiety is caused by loneliness it may help, but it will not help if your dog has true separation anxiety.



Quinlan, adopted by Tricia Neves, of San Diego, California, through Greyhound Adoption Center.

When it comes to anxiety and distress, remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Consistently implementing some treatment program tips, such as not allowing your dog to sleep in your bedroom, not speaking to your dog when you first get up in the morning or when arriving home, and making your comings and goings meaningless, is the kindest and most compassionate thing you can do for your dog. We do not want our hounds pining away for us when we leave. Even though we may enjoy an emotional greeting after a hard day at work, this is setting up our best friend for emotional distress. As Greyhound owners, we should consistently strive to have our hounds gain independence. ■

About the author: Deb Levasseur, Canine Behavior Therapist (CTB), is president and founder of the Maritime Greyhound Adoption Program, based in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. © May not be reproduced in whole or part without author consent.

Out of the Ashes

A fire destroyed the main building at Greys'Land, but could not demolish the heart and soul of the Georgia adoption group.

By JoAnn Woodside

The morning of March 5, 2014, was cool but sunny at Greys'Land, the home of [Adopt A Greyhound Atlanta, Inc. \(AAGA\)](#), in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Carl Viener, president and founder, was working in an unheated back room of the organization's main structure (a





Exterior of shelter.

combination of his home and the main Greyhound kennels), accompanied by the two resident Italian Greyhounds. To take the chill out of the air — the Italian Greyhounds were always cold — he turned on a small

heater. Hearing the phone ring, he went up front to the office to answer it and found himself talking to someone who had found a Greyhound.

Using the ear tattoo and tag numbers given by the caller, he searched through the AAGA's computerized database and located the Greyhound's information. Thanking the caller and telling him he or the owner would get back to him shortly to claim the dog, Carl called the Greyhound's owner to report the dog as found. Wandering out on the deck during the phone conversation, he turned to see a plume of smoke trailing up through the roof at the back of the building. Frantically ending his call, he rushed back into the office, dialing 911 as he ran.

He was immediately met by the Italian Greyhounds, who anxiously bounced around and barked at his feet. Scooping them up, he raced to the kennel room and quickly herded all of the Greyhounds out into the yard area.



Grey'sLand van.

Luckily, only six were on the property at the time. A hauler of new ex-racers available for adoption was scheduled to arrive from the Florida race track the next morning. Not knowing how serious the situation might become, he muzzled each Greyhound and piled them into the company's van parked some distance from the building. It was a bit cramped — five was the maximum number of dogs usually transported at one time — but at least they would be out of harm's way.



Carl Viener comforting one of the Greys during the fire.

Fortunately, the temperature was cool and not a problem. Most importantly, Carl would be able to quickly move the dogs if needed. He put the Italian Greyhounds in a small crate and set them next to the van.

By then, thick black smoke and flames were billowing through the roof of the main building. With any hope of going back

inside gone, Carl grabbed a hose and began watering down the breezeway joining that structure with a second building, a one-bedroom apartment originally built for his mother and now used as additional space for adoption operations. He was hopeful the fire wouldn't spread to that structure before the fire department arrived. Already he could hear sirens approaching in the distance.

Within a few minutes, a number of fire vehicles screeched onto the property, and a battery of firefighters jumped out. For more than two hours they worked feverishly to limit the spread of the blazing inferno. Fortunately, they were successful in confining the fire to the main building, thereby saving the attached apartment. Although the exact cause of the fire was never definitively identified, it was generally believed the Italian Greyhounds knocked over the space heater in the back bedroom. The heater was an older model and lacked an automatic shut-off.

On the heels of the emergency personnel

came the news media — three television stations and two newspapers — all with their special trucks equipped to broadcast live from the scene. As a result of Carl's urgent phone calls, a handful of AAGA volunteers were arriving. Once the fire was reduced to smoking embers they went to work. The volunteers temporarily shored up the fencing the fire trucks had knocked down so that the Greyhounds, all quietly watching the whole event from the AAGA van, could once again have a yard in which to run. In the meantime, Carl spent the afternoon being interviewed by a myriad of newscasters while juggling the many calls he was receiving from concerned friends.

That evening Carl, the two Italian Greyhounds, and the six Greyhounds set up housekeeping in the saved building. Fortunately, the fire had not affected its plumbing, and the AAGA had a generator to provide power. The racetrack was contacted and the next-day shipment of Greyhounds was cancelled. Another adoption group generously



Fire survivors awaiting a new home.

came forward and took those ex-racers.

The insurance company immediately set out to find a temporary residence for Carl and a boarding facility for the dogs. Carl advised the adjuster that he would remain in the surviving 750-square-foot apartment until the new facility was built. Ultimately, Carl elected to totally forego a new home

for himself, deciding instead to rebuild the entire structure for the Greyhounds and the adoption business and to keep just the small apartment for his personal living quarters.

It was time to address the next big question: what should the AAGA do with the adoptable Greyhounds? Foster homes seemed to be the logical choice, and a number of experienced foster parents were already offering their services. However, this was not how the AAGA typically operated. The organization always advocated having all of the dogs onsite so they could be more closely monitored, and guaranteed identical care and necessary treatment. It was thought this “halfway house” concept, which included getting the dogs unpenned and free-roaming as quickly as possible, helped to provide a smooth transition from the racing kennel to a forever home. Plus, to facilitate choosing their perfect pet, potential adopters liked the idea of being able to meet and interact with a number of Greyhounds at the same time in

the same place. This was a special situation, however, so a handful of foster parents residing close to the AAGA were chosen and assigned Greyhounds.

With the rapid spread of the details of the fire by the news services and social media, there was an immediate and overwhelming outpouring of aid and support from the entire Greyhound community — all the way from breeding and training farms, racing kennels and racetracks, to many Greyhound adoption groups around the country, as well as from Greyhound owners everywhere. Carl had been in the Greyhound adoption community for more than 30 years, and during that time had placed more than 5,400 ex-racers in homes.

An auction to benefit the AAGA was immediately set up and became immensely popular. A total of \$28,000 was raised through the auction fundraiser and other monetary donations. Because insurance covered the residential part of the building only — nothing related to the dogs — these funds, together



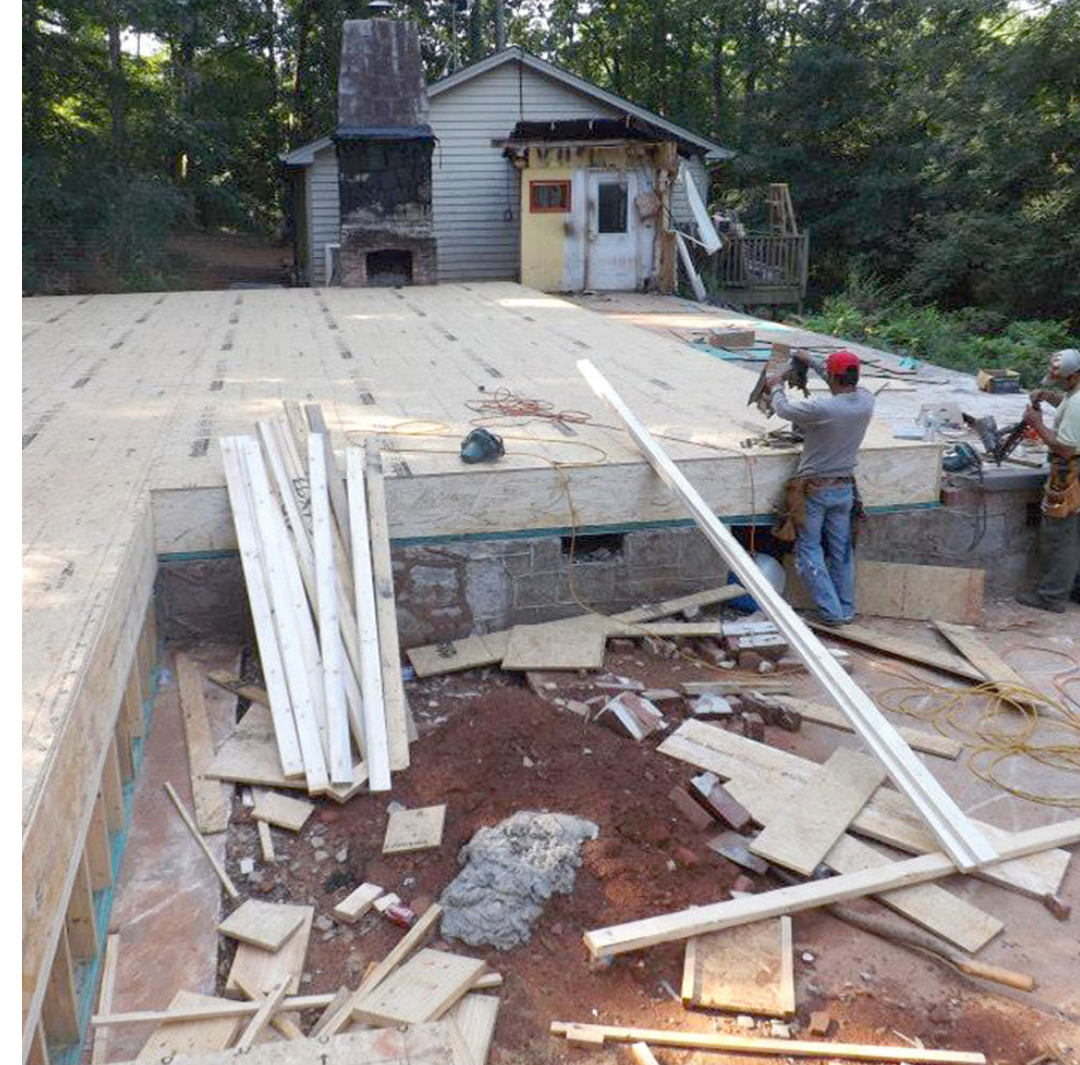
Greyhounds checking out demolition.

with another \$20,000 most generously donated by one AAGA Greyhound owner, were critical for rebuilding.

Early on, it became apparent that the foster home arrangement for the dogs wasn't working. People had their own

priorities — jobs, family responsibilities, and other commitments — and getting potential adopters and foster parents to agree on the most convenient meeting time was a struggle. In spite of the chaos and confusion, the AAGA was able to place all six Greyhounds into forever homes within a few days. But with months of frustratingly slow rebuilding looming, Carl thought he could not effectively continue to find homes for his beloved Greyhounds with this system. So, despite everyone saying it would not work and that he was taking on too much, Carl insisted on trying to resume the AAGA's normal adoption procedures and, regardless of the cramped space, keep all the dogs with him in the apartment.

On March 31, 2014, just three weeks after the fire, the AAGA welcomed adoptable Greyhounds from the Jacksonville racetrack. It was a small group of seven, but it was a start. Surprisingly, the experiment was not a disaster.



Carl elected to totally forego a new home for himself, deciding instead to rebuild the entire structure for the Greyhounds.

In fact, everything went relatively smoothly, considering the circumstances. The Greyhounds seemed to welcome Carl's constant presence, getting extra attention from the workers, and



Early construction.



The AAGA held its annual Christmas party at the new Greys'Land.

watching all the bustling activity. One month later, the AAGA welcomed a second group of Greyhounds, and so it continued throughout the entire construction period, with the adoption rate ultimately reaching 99 percent of that of the previous year's rate.

The reconstruction started with many weeks of meetings, negotiations, and

inspections with the fire marshal, insurance company, bank, mortgage company, county officials, and general contractor. Then came the demolition, which included the seemingly constant noise of hardworking bulldozers crashing and crunching through debris. Finally, in August, the demolition ended and rebuilding began.

Throughout it all, Carl was deeply immersed in every aspect of the rebuilding process. He researched every product and scrutinized every plan. Nothing was designed, purchased, or installed without his approval. He oversaw every work crew and kept all projects on track.

By November, the slow and tedious rate



Greys'Land new construction entrance.



Greys'Land new entrance.

of construction seemed to ramp up and the AAGA's new home began to take shape. The building featured sturdy, attractive, and roomy new kennels; a tiled shower for dog washing; a large comfortable reception room for introducing prospective adopters to available Greyhounds; an efficient office; a modern,

fully equipped kitchen; and, most importantly, a large, open great room furnished with piles of dog beds and dog-friendly furniture, in which the Greyhounds were free to roam. In addition to the regular turnout yard and an adequate parking area, the grounds now boasted additional separate outdoor fenced

areas for prospective adopters to interact with adoptable Greyhounds.

With the holidays approaching, it was decided that the organization's annual Christmas party should be held in the new facility. On December 13, 2014 — after nine months of noise, construction dust, and

cramped quarters — the AAGA threw open its doors to a private, pre-public showing of the new Greys'Land. There was still work to be done; the landscaping wasn't all in, the parking lot needed work, and the fence wasn't finished. Nevertheless, it was a great holiday celebration, with about 20 AAGA volunteers and even more Greyhounds in attendance. All were in enthusiastic agreement that the new Greys'Land was certainly a dream that arose out of the ashes.

Some little unfinished construction issues must be resolved before the AAGA can officially move in and get everything set up, organized, and decorated. Plans are already in the making for a big, public open house. The AAGA is eagerly looking forward to the next year, and all the beautiful ex-racers it will be able to welcome and place into loving families.



Click the arrows to see more photos from Greys'Land fire, rebuild, and new facility.

EPILOGUE

Now that 2014 is behind us and the new Greys'Land is operational, would we have wished for the fire? No way! Was the whole rebuilding project a lot of hard work and frustration? You bet! But, taking into consideration the old adage of "everything happens for a reason," we have so much to be thankful for:

- The fact that no one was lost or injured.
- The good fortune that the small building survived the fire. Without that, AAGA would not have been able to place the dozens of Greyhounds who passed through our doors since the fire.
- The beautiful new facility that provides the AAGA with an even greater opportunity to continue matching these amazing athletes with loving families.

- And, most of all, for the overwhelming support and generosity of the Greyhound community and all the lasting friendships we have made along the way, from one end of the racing industry to the other. Without that, the AAGA would not be here.

Yes, as odd as it may sound, the AAGA has been blessed. ■

About the author: JoAnn Woodside fell in love with Greyhounds when she stopped at a pet store one day to buy cat food and ran into a meet and greet of ex-racers. She vowed then that when she retired from her job that required a lot of travel she would adopt one. When she turned 65, JoAnn welcomed Joshua, a fawn senior male, into her household. In no time, another ex-racer was added to the family. Then, in 2006 she moved, Greyhounds in tow, from south Florida to the Atlanta area. She went to an Adopt A Greyhound Atlanta meet and greet,

adopted M's Mr. Grey, and immediately became an active volunteer for the organization. Now, nearly nine years later, while running her own business as a copywriter/copyeditor, JoAnn, 76, handles the group's administrative tasks: researching all of the incoming dogs and setting up files for each, preparing contracts, processing completed adoption paperwork, managing the AAGA's website and database, handling correspondence, and arranging meet and greets and other events. JoAnn lives nearby in Lawrenceville, Georgia, with the latest in her personal chain of retired racers — Bandit and Diggins (her ninth and 10th Greyhounds).

Canine Osteosarcoma: Part 1

This first installment in our two-part look at osteosarcoma focuses on current treatment facts and information you need to know.

By Nancy Beach

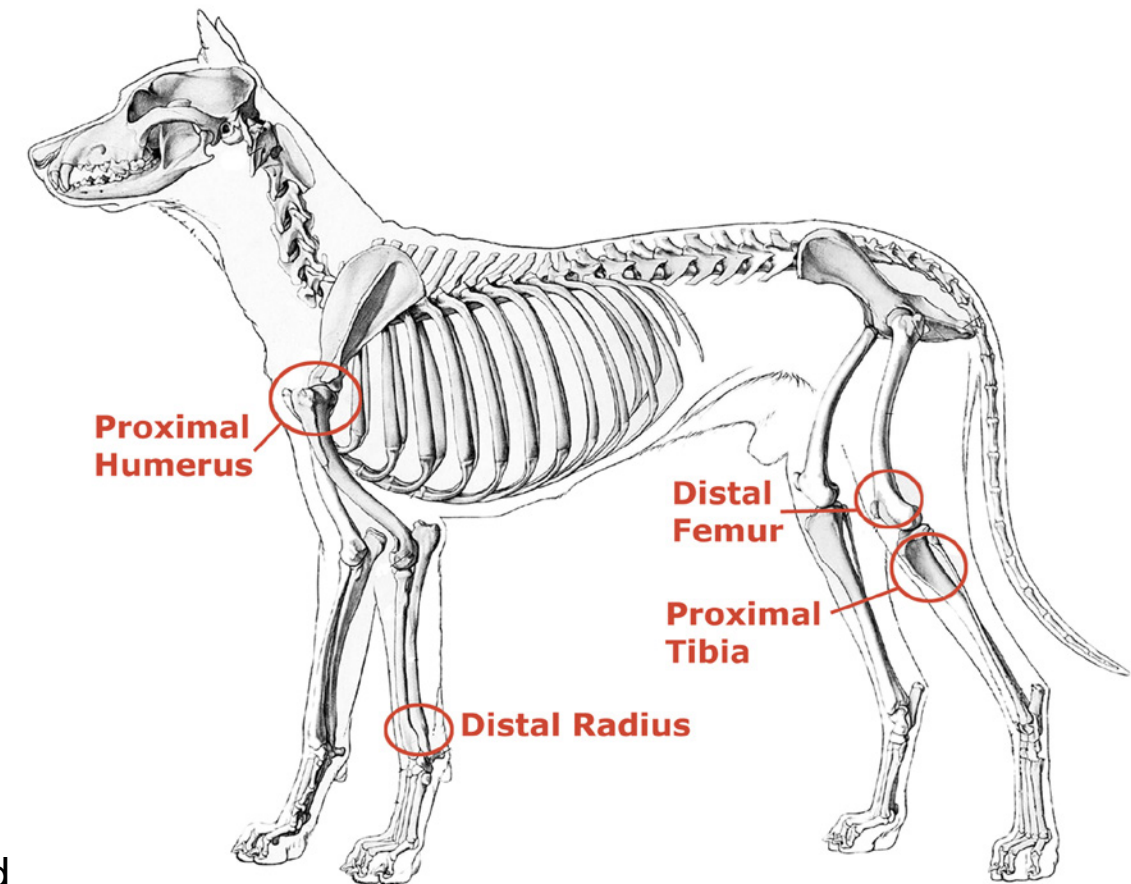
Cancer is something we all fear — for ourselves and our loved ones, including our Greyhounds. If you researched the Greyhound breed before bringing your retired racer into your home, you already know that osteosarcoma, or bone cancer, afflicts up to 20 percent of these dogs, making it the most common cancer diagnosis for racing Greyhounds.

Even if we feel well-prepared going in, hearing those dreaded words from the veterinarian can freeze us, so thoroughly overwhelming us with thoughts and emotions that we can't really listen at the time. Then, later, the questions come.

This article offers a survey of the current state of osteosarcoma treatment, which may help you better formulate those questions for your veterinarian and guide you in a difficult decision-making process. Then, watch for the next issue of *Celebrating Greyhounds* magazine, in which part two will look toward the future, describing the state of research and what new treatments may be available to fight this particularly devastating disease.

What is osteosarcoma?

Osteosarcoma is an aggressive bone cancer most often found in the long bones of the legs, though it can also appear in the skull,



The most common sites for tumors are the distal radius ("wrist"), proximal humerus ("shoulder"), proximal tibia, and distal femur (on either side of the knee joint). Veterinarians describe these sites as being "away from the elbow and toward the knee." Illustration: Wilhelm Ellenberger and Hermann Baum, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections.

jaw, ribs, and spine. It is the most common cancer originating in bone and typically starts deep inside, growing outward. It destroys normal tissue as it grows, weakening the bone.

Humans, usually children, can also develop osteosarcoma, although it is much less common than in Greyhounds.

It is highly metastatic, which means it spreads quickly. Most studies on dogs state that in 90 percent of cases, by the time it is diagnosed it has spread to other parts of the body, though in many cases the lesions are too small to see on X-ray at that point. The lungs and other bones are prime targets.

Osteosarcoma is an intensely painful disease, and this factor must take precedence in decisions made about treatment.

At-risk dogs

Osteosarcoma occurs most commonly in large and giant breeds. Veterinary researchers estimate the risk is as much as 200 times



Genome-wide analyses implicate 33 loci in heritable dog osteosarcoma, including regulatory variants near *CDKN2A/B*

Karlsson et al.



Karlsson et al. *Genome Biology* 2013, 14:R132
<http://genomebiology.com/2013/14/12/R132>

*Karlsson and colleagues' genetic study was published in **Genome Biology** in 2013.*

higher in large breeds than small breeds, and they represent more than 80 percent of all osteosarcoma cases. **Veterinarian Jaime F.**

Modiano, director of the Animal Cancer Care and Research Program at the University of **Minnesota**, notes between 6,000 and 8,000 new cases are diagnosed every year in the U.S. Most dogs are older when diagnosed, generally between 7 and 10 years of age, though a smaller group under 2 years of age are also affected.

What causes osteosarcoma?

Cancer is complicated, and it is unlikely there is a single, simple answer. The question is currently under investigation, and both veterinary and human medical researchers are working on finding answers. Biologically, there is no difference between human and canine osteosarcoma. Dogs can serve as a model to uncover the causes of the disease and examine the effectiveness and safety of new therapies for both species.

One major area of inquiry focuses on genetics. Is there a gene, or more likely, a

combination of genes that make an individual more likely to develop the disease? One advantage of working with dogs is that researchers can focus on specific populations, such as a single breed with demonstrated higher risk. Examining that gene pool can bring discoveries that help guide research.

For example, in 2007, veterinarian Jeffrey C. Phillips and colleagues published a paper in *Genomics* which reported the strong likelihood of a genetic component being responsible for the high incidence of osteosarcoma in Scottish Deerhounds. These types of studies can be used to pinpoint which dogs within a population may be more likely to develop the disease and to influence breeding decisions to reduce future risk.

In another example, researchers have found a much greater incidence of osteosarcoma in retired racing Greyhounds than in Greyhounds bred for the show ring. This also points to



*A distal radius tumor x-ray found in Oats Alimony (Ali), an ex-racing Greyhound.
/ Courtesy of Aimee Finley*



Ex-racing Greyhound Oats Alimony (Ali) before amputation, showing the tumor in her right front leg just above the first joint. / Photo by Aimee Finley

possible genetic factors, as different traits are selected for in these two populations.

The American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation has committed funds to this type of research, the results of which are pending.

Other studies have included several different dog breeds at high risk for osteosarcoma.

Elinor K. Karlsson, PhD, and colleagues published one in 2013 which included Greyhounds, Wolfhounds, and Rottweilers. This study pinpointed 33 areas in the genomes of these breeds which are associated with a greater risk of developing the disease.

There is also evidence that at least one

environmental factor — feeding large-breed puppies food that makes them grow faster — may increase their risk.

Symptoms

Lameness is the most common symptom. Some owners may notice a firm, painful swelling at the tumor site. Since the tumor weakens bone, sometimes the first sign may be when the bone breaks. This is known as a pathologic fracture.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will perform a physical exam and probably take urine and blood samples. An X-ray of the affected area will be taken. If osteosarcoma is suspected, chest X-rays should also be performed to check for any visible spread to the lungs.

While some veterinarians may want to take a biopsy to confirm the type of cancer, some may not due to the risk of fracturing the diseased bone. It is important to discuss

whether or not to take this step.

Often the Greyhound's age, the location and appearance on X-ray of the tumor are enough for a confident diagnosis of osteosarcoma. While there are other cancers that may appear in bone, they are less common and typically originate elsewhere. Chondrosarcoma, a cancer originating in cartilage, can sometimes appear in long bones but would require similar treatment. Benign bone tumors are very rare.

Treatments

Deciding on which course to follow is often the most difficult part of the treatment process. Every Greyhound, person, and situation is different. The best decision is the one that suits all of them as well as possible. A brief summary of the most significant advantages and disadvantages of current treatments is outlined here.

For more in-depth information on diagnostic procedures and treatment choices,

see veterinarian [Kim A. Selting's](#) overview in her talk at the Conventions for Veterinary Care meeting in San Diego, CA in 2009 and [Douglas H. Thamm](#) presented a similar talk.

Treatment Option 1: Palliative Care Choices

The goal of palliative care is to alleviate the pain osteosarcoma causes and restore a good quality of life for as long as possible. Since the symptoms are what's treated, the disease itself can continue to spread, though some forms of palliative care can slow progression.

Amputation of the affected limb is usually the primary method of palliative care. People tend to have a negative view of this surgery, mainly because it is difficult not to think of it in human terms. People worry about how they will look and function without a limb. These fears are often projected on to our hounds. There are also concerns about post-surgical pain and care.

Greyhounds with amputations can run, play, and have good quality of life. Many have

been functioning on three legs already and quickly adjust. It is important to remember that amputation is the only sure way to eliminate the extreme pain caused by the primary tumor. While there are other pain-relieving therapies available, they may not work well, or be too expensive or difficult to access. Veterinarian Nicole Ehrhart of the Flint Animal Cancer Center at Colorado State University presented a talk at the North American Veterinary Community Conference in early 2014 about this subject. [The Cancer Center's website](#) includes information and videos featuring Ehrhart and two canine amputees to help owners understand what to expect with this surgery.

Amputation also eliminates the possibility of pathologic fracture in the affected limb, and effective pain relievers are available for the post-surgical period.

While amputation can improve the quality of life for an osteosarcoma patient, it usually



A pathologic fracture in the femur of an ex-racing Greyhound. Symbra's leg was amputated and she survived another 17 months.

/ Courtesy of Deanna Swartzfager

does not improve survival times. By the time of diagnosis, the disease has usually spread microscopically, usually to the lungs. The median survival time with amputation alone is about four months. This means of all dogs that have amputation surgery, about half will live less than four months and the other



*Symbra enjoying a vacation at Dewey Beach, Delaware.
/ Photo by Deanna Swartzfager*

half longer. In a 1992 survey conducted by veterinarian Gary J. Spodnick and colleagues, the one-year survival rate was 11.5 percent and the two-year rate was only 2 percent.

Also, as with any other surgery, there can be complications such as infection, bleeding, and adverse reactions to anesthesia and other medication.



Ali runs in the snow. / Photo by Aimee Finley

Some Greyhounds are not good candidates for amputation due to age, advanced metastatic disease, additional health problems, or other situations. For them, there are other methods available to increase comfort.

Pain medications can be used alone or in conjunction with amputation. Osteosarcoma causes pain in several ways, so it is common to

prescribe two or three different medications in combination to attack it on different fronts.

Some of the most commonly prescribed drugs are anti-inflammatories. These drugs work mainly by reducing swelling. The drugs with the strongest anti-inflammatory properties are corticosteroids, such as **prednisone**. Another type of anti-inflammatories, known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), are used for a wide range of conditions. **Carprofen**, **meloxicam**, and **etodolac** are some NSAIDs frequently used in dogs. These drugs can be effective pain relievers, but also carry a risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. Corticosteroids and NSAIDs cannot be used together for this reason; one or the other must be chosen.

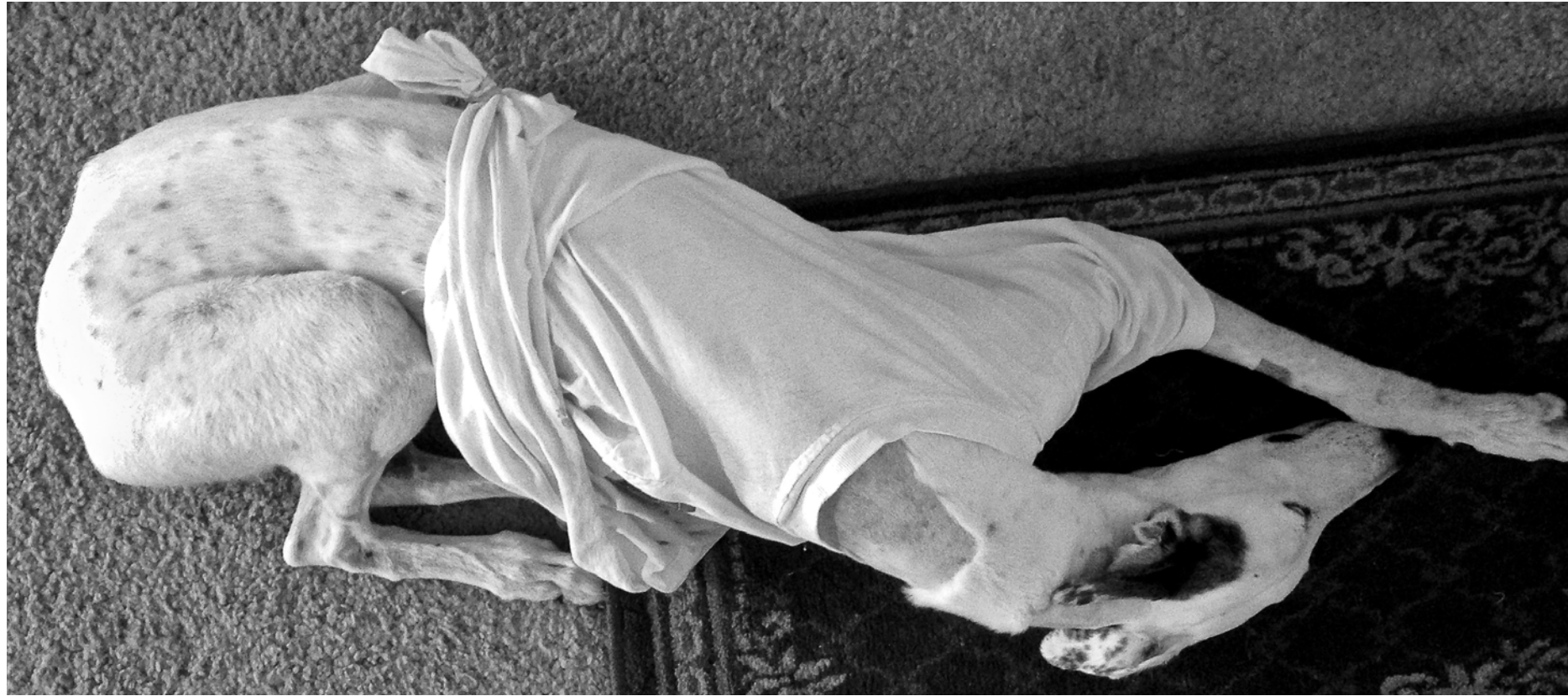
Opioid-based medications are another type of pain reliever that act on the central nervous system. **Tramadol** is a man-made opioid related to codeine. It has gained popularity with humans and dogs because it works well

for pain without the risks of addiction that other drugs of this class have. It can be used in conjunction with anti-inflammatories and can even help NSAIDs work better. The risks of using it include excessive sedation and seizures at higher doses, so it cannot be used in Greyhounds already prone to seizures.

Gabapentin is a drug that was developed for use in epileptics to suppress seizures. It works on nerve pain, which people often describe as burning or tingling sensations. It can be used with the other drugs mentioned above.

Even with frequent and large doses, managing bone pain with drugs alone may not be possible.

Radiation therapy uses doses of high-energy radiation aimed at the affected bone, killing the cells that are destroying it and thereby relieving pain. Studies have shown it to be very effective, with up to 91 percent of dogs showing improvement. Pain relief can start



Katie snoozes at home after the amputation of her right front leg. A T-shirt can protect the incision and soften the impact of its appearance. / Photo by Gayle Uyehara

within a day or two of the first treatment and generally lasts from two to three months.

There are a number of treatment plans. Some require three or four weekly visits, while others require two to five visits over consecutive days. A 2009 study by veterinarian

Heather M. Knapp-Hoch and colleagues examined the effectiveness of a University of Washington protocol which consists of two treatments on consecutive days. They found this plan has similar results to more extended treatments. Since radiation therapy is only

available at veterinary medical schools and specialty clinics, and requires the dog to be anesthetized during treatment, this method offers cost advantages and a less stressful process for both dog and owner.

Side effects can include possible weakening of the bone, making pathologic fracture more likely. Greyhounds who feel better may also use the affected limb more, which also increases the chance of fracture. Less serious side effects include irritation of the skin, hair loss, or change of color of the hair over the radiation site.

Biophosphonate therapy uses drugs that prevent the destruction of bone. They are used to combat osteoporosis in post-menopausal women and in human cancer patients whose primary tumors (usually of the breast or prostate) have spread to bone. One side effect of this action is reduction in bone pain.

Pamidronate is one of this class of drugs that has been studied in canines. It is given

by intravenous (IV) infusion and can be used every 28 days. Study results have shown that while the drug is safe, with very few side effects, only about 30 percent of dogs show signs of pain relief. A newer compound called **zoledronate** is currently undergoing trials at the Veterinary Cancer Care specialty clinic in New Mexico in the hope it will provide pain relief to a higher number of recipients.

Treatment Option 2: Amputation and Chemotherapy

Intravenous chemotherapy in conjunction with amputation is the only treatment currently available that has been shown to increase survival times. Dogs undergoing this treatment have a median survival rate of 10-12 months, with 20 percent living longer than two years. This is more than twice the median survival rate than with amputation alone. These statistics are roughly the same regardless of the chemotherapy drug chosen, so decisions on which to choose can be made according to

the risk of side effects, cost, and availability.

Just as with amputation alone, there can be fears about the negative effects of chemotherapy, often based on what people know about how it impacts other humans. However, the goals of animal chemotherapy are different. The intent is to induce a remission, rather than achieve a permanent cure. For this reason, the doses are not as strong. As a result, most pets don't lose hair and there is a lesser chance of other effects such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Doses can also be adjusted if these undesirable effects do occur. Since the lives of dogs are shorter, this makes sense. For instance, if a remission of one year is achieved for a large-breed dog, this equals approximately 10 percent of that dog's lifespan.

There is, however, one factor that multiple studies have found can be predictive of a poor survival rate among dogs with osteosarcoma even if they receive chemotherapy — the



This x-ray shows a tumor in the center of the right humerus of a male ex-racing Greyhound. Most tumors grow near the ends of the bone. Jamey survived 27 months after amputation. / Courtesy of Tineke Asma



*Katie relaxes in the back yard a week after amputation surgery.
/ Photo by Steve Uyehara*

presence in the blood of high levels of an enzyme called alkaline phosphatase (ALP). This enzyme is present in the liver, bones, and intestines. Abnormally large amounts can indicate the presence of more aggressive disease. Canines with high ALP can have half the median survival rate of those who do not.

ALP levels can be determined by a blood test. Consulting with your veterinarian prior to making the decision to pursue chemotherapy should include a discussion of the results of this test.

The most commonly used chemotherapy drugs are cisplatin, carboplatin, and doxorubicin. Cisplatin and carboplatin can be used alone, or in combination with doxorubicin. Doxorubicin can also be used alone. All of them attack the DNA in cells, interfering with their ability to divide. Cancer cells divide rapidly,

which makes them more susceptible to the effects of these drugs. Unfortunately, normal cells that divide frequently, such as those of the gastrointestinal tract, can also be affected. This is why chemotherapy can sometimes cause vomiting and diarrhea.

These drugs also affect the cells in bone marrow, suppressing its ability to produce certain types of white blood cells which are needed to fight infection. Therefore, dogs undergoing chemotherapy will also have blood tests taken, usually the day before each treatment is scheduled. If the cell count is too low, treatment may be delayed by a week to allow the marrow to rebound.

Studies have shown that carboplatin alone for six cycles results in the lowest rate of adverse effects and survival outcomes equal to or better than other treatment plans. Cisplatin can damage the kidneys, and doxorubicin can cause heart failure, so these are important considerations to discuss with your veterinarian when deciding on a plan.

Plans vary, but typically treatments are scheduled two to three weeks apart, and will occur four to six times. They take place in the veterinarian's office where the IV infusion can be monitored.

Hope for the future

Researchers in human and veterinary medicine have teamed up to advance our understanding of this disease and its treatment. Current research focuses on areas such as gene therapy and immunotherapy, along with better treatments for dogs with metastatic disease. The second part of this article will discuss the latest findings and their promise for the future.

Resources

[The Tripawds blog](#) is a veterinarian-recommended information and resource site for people whose dogs have undergone amputation.

[Colorado State's Flint Animal Cancer Center](#) has an excellent client information section dedicated to assisting owners in making the best decision possible for their pet. ■

About the Author: Nancy Beach is a university technical support analyst and recovering journalist with an interest in human and Greyhound medical issues. She is a long-time retired racing Greyhound owner and lives in Hillsborough, North Carolina, with her husband, Martin Roper, and 11-year-old Greyhound Tough.

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JC, a male ex-racing Greyhound, survived 34 months after amputation and carboplatin chemotherapy. He succumbed to an unrelated liver tumor. / Photo by Nicole J. Hill

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Moving With Greyhounds

By Dave Gillen and Lois Teed-Gillen



Moving across the country, or even across town, can be stressful for humans and Greyhounds alike. Veteran Greyhound owners share some tips from their recent interstate move.

Recently, we moved from Dallas, Texas, to Grand Rapids, Michigan. We made the trip with our retired racing Greyhounds, Duncan and Gigi. It was a relatively painless process, because we were prepared. We would like to share some tips on how to make your move with your Greyhounds a success.



At the Dog Beach on Lake Michigan near Muskegon. The sand is HOT.



Duncan, Gigi, and Lois at the Blandford Nature Center.



Duncan sleeping in the “nest” in the back of our car as we drive from Dallas to Grand Rapids.



Duncan’s bum, resting in the “nest” in the back of the car during our drive from Dallas to Grand Rapids.

Practice, practice, practice

We knew for a few years we wanted to move, but didn’t know where. Our annual vacations became a proving ground. We drove to various places in the Great Lakes region to look at towns, escape the heat, and teach ourselves how to handle long drives. Our Greyhounds always travelled with us. They’re family, right? You don’t kennel your family.

The drives taught us a lot — to take a big enough car, how to configure the car, how the Greyhounds would travel, how long we could drive each day, and where to stay.

Make it soft

For the first two trips, we used whatever luggage was stored in the garage to pack our Scion xB. These were things accumulated over the years — nothing fancy, but typically they had hard surfaces. We discovered the luggage and our Greyhounds had to co-exist in the back of the car.

We made a nice nesting space behind our seats, and in front of the luggage. Cushions and comforters made the nest soft, but it was small. Our hounds were good sports, but it was clear this was not a great solution. They were



Gigi napping behind driver's seat on the road from Dallas to Grand Rapids.

clearly cramped in this space. Every couple of hours on the road we would hear the “he touched me” growl.

The second two trips, we wised up. First, we drove our new, bigger, Subaru Forrester. Second, we bought soft luggage, especially large duffle bags. The soft luggage gave us more flexibility in packing the car and could be molded to form a bowl. We tossed a soft throw or comforter on top to double as a nest.

Duncan would crawl in the nest and sleep.

Gigi would curl up in a separate space behind one of our seats and sleep. There was plenty of space for both of them to stretch and move around during the trip. We heard the “she touched me” growl less often. And our hounds appeared much more comfortable.

A 20-pound weight limit is not a dog-friendly hotel

Finding big-dog-friendly lodging has always been an issue. This may be the biggest stumbling block for any trip or move. Before we give some pointers about lodging, there's one thing you must do: leave nothing to chance — have a reservation for each night



Our room at the Marriott Residence Inn in Grandville, MI.

of your trip.

Here are the pointers we have learned over time. Fortunately, we have not had any bad experiences by following them.

- There are websites listing dog-friendly lodging. Use them with a grain of salt. They can be good filters, or starting points, but we recommend not relying solely on them.

- Dig deeper when you see the simple moniker, “dog friendly.” Many places limit you to one dog or dogs under 40 pounds. Remember, you have a Greyhound (or two). These are big dogs. Be honest with yourself and the lodging establishment.



Waiting at The Residence Inn.

- When you find candidate places to stay through a website, always call the direct number for the hotel. Tell them you're interested in staying at their establishment, and you have one (or more) big Greyhounds. Be sure to ask about the number of dogs allowed, weight limits, and fees charged. If this is different from what's posted on the website, ask about the discrepancy. Sometimes they don't always know what their website states. Sometimes, their pet policy is more liberal than the website shows. Often in such a conversation, they will ask what kind of dog. They are generally delighted when you tell them, "Greyhounds."

- We have repeatedly stayed at Drury Inns, La Quinta, and Marriott Residence Inn during our trips and the move. We consider them good values and they have flexible pet policies. We have also stayed and had good experiences at Baymont Inn and Comfort Inn. We consider

them good back-up hotels.

- Leave nothing to chance (yes, we said this up front). Make sure you have your reservations in order for each night's lodging. Also have your confirmation number at hand when you check in.

The x-pen is your friend

If you don't have an exercise pen (x-pen), get one. We used ours extensively during packing, move out, and move in. The x-pen, floored with cushions and toys, gave Duncan and Gigi a safe place to stay amid the mayhem. It also kept them secure when outside doors were wide open. Seeing our Greyhounds in the x-pen also reassured the movers and contractors that our hounds wouldn't escape or possibly bite them. It was a win-win all around.

The x-pen was the last thing the movers loaded in Dallas. It was one of the first things they unloaded in Grand Rapids. When



The Great Room is packed to move. X-pen in corner by window and lamp.



We're stuck in the corner while our world is turned upside down!



Gigi and Dave, bonding in a hotel.

the movers were finalizing things in Dallas or starting the unload in Grand Rapids, we leashed and held our Greyhounds. Once the x-pen was available, the cushions were added and Duncan and Gigi entered their temporary safe place.

When you're settled

Now that we are settled in Grand Rapids, we want to find a Greyhound-savvy veterinarian

and connect with the local Greyhound community.

Before we left Dallas, we researched Greyhound rescue groups in the Grand Rapids area. We found Allies for Greyhounds. We sent an email asking if they could recommend any Greyhound savvy veterinarians in the area. We also asked when their next meet & greet would be so we could introduce ourselves. Two volunteers responded with answers.

We have yet to check out the veterinarian recommendations. That is next week's project. We have introduced ourselves, met several Greyhound parents, and Duncan and Gigi have sniffed many Greyhound butts.

Finally, you would think your Greyhounds would resume their old sleeping habits in the new house. That is not always the case. Duncan still prefers his loveseat in Lois' office. Gigi, on the other hand, has decided sleeping in the middle of the bed, between Mom and Dad, is her new safe place.

Nighty night. ■

About the authors: Lois required that Dave "must like big dogs" as part of dating. With the approval of her Labrador, Gatsby, a 26-year relationship began. Dave Gillen and Lois Teed-Gillen have adopted seven Greyhounds over the last 21 years. The first was an AKC Greyhound puppy named Frenchy, who served as Gatsby's buddy during his elder years. Dave and Lois, with needlenoses Duncan (#6) and Gigi (#7), call Grand Rapids, Michigan, their home.



A bare living room, before the piano arrives at the new house in Michigan.

Hero Hound Uno



Uno enjoys relaxing at his home in the United Kingdom when he's not saving his family from disasters.

A retired racing Greyhound saves a U.K. family and their home from what could have been a devastating fire.

By Clare Whiteford

On September 4, 2014, I awoke to find Uno barking in my face. He seemed very distressed. He then ran across the landing to my sons' rooms, still barking. Half asleep, I got up. I thought he needed to go to the toilet. He continued to bark at me while I walked down the stairs. I noticed he wasn't coming with me. I tried to encourage him, but he wasn't coming down.

All of a sudden, I heard a sparking sound. Then I noticed a horrible metal smell. I walked into the kitchen and saw flames and more sparks. The freezer was on fire! I turned around and quickly flipped the switches in the fuse box. I ran back upstairs to grab my phone and dial 999, fire services. They told me to get everyone out quickly. Two engines arrived within five minutes. The firefighters piled into my home to put the fire out.

Once safe, the fire inspector guided us back into my home. Our emotions were running high. He asked a number of our questions. How did I know there was a fire? Did you flip the fuse box or did it trip itself? Had the alarms gone off? I said, "My Uno was barking and distressed at 4 a.m.



The Whiteford family — Clare, Kieran, Paddy and Aiden — with hero hound Uno.

No alarms went off. I tripped the fuses in the box. “Why are you asking me these questions?”

He went on to say that because of the type of fire it was, we were very lucky to be alive. If you didn’t have your hound, you would have died in your sleep. Uno saved our lives!

I should have started the story by telling you that Uno (Holly Gate Uno) is a Greyhound. He’s been retired from racing for two years. All any Greyhound knows is the track and race training. They’ve never been trained to live with a family in a house, raised with children, or trained to sit. Nothing. For Uno to wake his family up to get us to safety and to warn me not to go downstairs is completely amazing!

Words cannot describe the love we have for our hero. A big thank you to

the Retired Greyhound Trust’s Hollin Hall Rehoming Center. I had seen a couple of Greyhounds in my area before I checked out a few websites, and in August 2013 I came across Uno. It was love at first sight. I knew I had to bring him home from Hollin Hall. I phoned and arranged a meet and greet on a Thursday. On Friday, the next day, he was home. Thanks to news reports in several newspapers and magazines, Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital has nominated Uno for a hero award. ■

About the author: Clare Whiteford lives in Washington in Tyne and Wear, United Kingdom, with her children, 12-year-old Kieran, 8-year-old Paddy, and 3-year-old Aiden. They are all safe thanks to Uno, and are even more devoted to their very own four-legged hero.



Marilyn Mathis celebrates reaching the park with both Greyhounds: Kayla (left) and Emiliano (right).

Emiliano's Big Trip

It all started with the crash on Easter morning.

By Marilyn Mathis

My husband, John Spaulding, had already left for church and I was preparing to join him when I heard a series of loud, sharp noises from the back of the house as if something were falling or hitting walls. By the time I got to the source, I found our 9-year-old brindle Greyhound Emiliano shaking, panting, and balancing on three legs in a closet. He was holding the weight of his left rear leg on his other paws.

During the past month, he had been limping and favoring his left side. When our veterinarian examined him several weeks before, she said the problem was his hip. The X-rays didn't show any problems, so she recommended prescriptions and supplements. They seemed to help as long as we administered them, but we were not prepared for what lay ahead.

I was now alone with a 78-pound Greyhound in distress. I called the church to contact John and the 24-hour veterinary clinic to let them know



"How do you feel about being back at Big Bend, Kayla?"

we would be coming. Fortunately, both were only a few blocks away. The veterinarian took X-rays immediately, and we were all stunned to hear that Emiliano had broken off his femur at the hip socket. He had seemed fine that morning when he returned from his lively morning walk. The local veterinarian kept him overnight and administered pain medications, but we needed to take him to a veterinary surgery center for additional evaluation.

The next morning, we drove him the 20 miles to the surgery center. I rode in the back



No one thought they would see this again – Emiliano matching his proud profile to Casa Grande, ready to run.

seat to calm and stabilize him. On the new X-rays, we could see the leg bone's interior was darker than its outside. The surgery center's veterinarian told us that this was nearly always osteosarcoma: bone cancer. We knew Greyhounds were prone to the disease; if the veterinarian was correct, Emiliano would not recover. She said there was a small chance it was not bone cancer, but a lab report would have to verify his condition. In the meantime, we had to deal with the emergency.

First, we asked whether the leg could be



Taking it to the wall: a ravine where bear and other wildlife had passed by.

repaired. This was risky and probably not feasible. The bone was definitely compromised in some way — if not by cancer, then by some other bone disease. Nothing less could explain his breaking a hip by simply getting up from his bed. Even if the leg could be repaired, his recovery time would be six to eight weeks, rather than the three for amputation. We tried to imagine keeping Emiliano quiet and still for that long. If the leg did not heal, we would still be in the same dilemma, decide to amputate or say goodbye.

Although this might not be everyone's decision, for us it was too sudden to say farewell. We were not at peace with having our last memories of him in extreme pain, if we could help it. So, knowing that Greyhounds often adapted well to living with three legs instead of four, we agreed to the amputation.

After two nights in the surgery center, we were able to pick him up. The biopsy had been sent to the lab, with the expectation of a report in five days. Although Emiliano didn't look comfortable, he wasn't in the horrible pain he appeared to be in after the break. The technician led him out with a sling under his belly for support. We would need to handle him this way when he went out to relieve himself.

We cleaned the incision several times a day while it healed from the inside, and restrained our hound from licking himself. This is not a simple task for either hound or human. It required several types of protective collars. He was wearing the safest version, a bite-



Anybody see a mountain lion around here?

free collar that was about eight inches wide around the neck. Because of his long nose, he could still possibly turn to lick the healing area, so he was also wearing a large cone. We were provided with a shorter cone and an Elizabethan, or E-collar that he could wear to sleep, and a flexible collar that he could wear for short times if we watched him diligently. There was a Greyhound in there somewhere!

We decided the bite-free collar was just too restrictive, at least for daytime use. This meant that we had to watch him constantly,



Nope, just the sign for "Panther Junction." People only imagined a Greyhound as a big cat.

correcting him each time we saw his head move toward the incision. We used the larger cone if we would be out of the room for any time.



Precautions for a Greyhound on the mend: a rented full-size van and ramp to ease the climb.

Emiliano adapted to his new tripod status in days, not weeks. As dogs will do, he found his way to take care of business outside, as well

as moving within the house. We made sure someone was with him all the time. We handled him that first week. I watched him during the day and John slept near him at night. We also taped non-skid areas in the room with his bed. He slipped and fell only once.

By Sunday, a week after the original emergency, we had another crisis. The incision had opened and the bleeding had increased. Complicating this was a bit of miscommunication. I frantically searched the paperwork for an emergency phone number for the surgery center. The space where it should have been was blank.

We emailed photos to our 24-hour veterinarian and again brought Emiliano in, but the veterinarian said the only thing we could do was to return on Monday to the surgery center for redoing the incision. When we traveled there again, the surgeon told us the incision problem could have been caused

by a combination of several small events. Like every Greyhound adopter with a sick hound, we would always wonder if we could have been more diligent. The solution was an additional surgery with staples, instead of the previous internal stitches, and a drain that had to be emptied several times a day. The incision, still unhealed, would continue to seep, and again we were told that it would have to be cleaned regularly and heal from inside.

This was the darkest time. We worried that the surgeries and repeat procedures were too stressful for Emiliano. We worried that he would not heal, but just get worse. We worried that he might lose too much blood. However, still not knowing what his diagnosis was, we continued the effort to help him heal.

We picked him up the next day, new stitches, drain, and all. As we conferred with

the surgeon, seated at his computer in the examining room, Emiliano tugged on his lead to move to another part of the room. When I gave him some slack, he headed toward the surgeon and nuzzled his hand, then returned. I'm not sure whether I would have been that grateful to the doctor if I had been the patient, but Greyhounds sometimes seem to know when you're trying to help them.

A couple of days after the second surgery, the office called us. Sadly, the biopsy was positive and Emiliano was confirmed to have osteosarcoma. Even though we had known it was likely, we had to take a cold look at the future. The veterinarians told us to expect Emiliano to live another three months, and we wanted to make that time as comfortable and pleasant as possible for all of us. We agreed that should he take a turn for the worse, we would make the tough decision to let him go.

The next few weeks were tedious, punctuated with additional medical

appointments, but thankfully no more surgery. The incision finally began to heal. Where he had been shaved for surgery, Emiliano's mink-soft brindle coat began to grow back. He learned to propel himself with his remaining rear leg that had now shifted toward the center, and use his long tail for balance. And he never lost his appetite.

As Emiliano's body healed, something else happened. Other friends in the Greyhound community said, "Oh, you just didn't notice this before" and "You're just so glad to have him with you that it seems different." Whatever the reason, his personality and behavior changed positively. As his strength returned, our obedient, reserved and gentle Greyhound seemed to come out of his shell.

He was more loving, more affectionate,



Just a plain pair of Greyhounds and their human walking on Mulberry Street.

more responsive, more playful, more active — *just more dog*. It was like getting a new Greyhound. Even minus a leg, he galloped ahead on walks, mouth open and tongue wagging. It was easier for him to go faster than slower, and he used that to his advantage. This increased over a period of

weeks, but it was unmistakable. Even his ever-keen sense of smell seemed heightened, as if every scent was even more essential to explore with his remaining time. Despite the fact that his narrow frame was not built for “roaching,” he would still contract into a “half-roach,” paws folded submissively, with his belly ready for a rub by any available human. This endearing behavior was one of his new ones.

As time went on, we began to imagine celebrating a milestone with Emiliano. In another six weeks, it would be time to leave on a long driving trip to **Big Bend National Park**. We had taken the hounds there a few years before (see the cover of *Celebrating Greyhounds*, Summer 2012, “Watch Out for That Cactus!”) and we were looking forward to a return visit, preferably with both hounds. We had booked a popular, **pet-friendly cabin** 16 months ahead of the trip. Now we looked at Emiliano fondly. Hang in there, buddy.

Emiliano continued his march toward improvement.

Soon, he was able to take short walks and car trips to favorite haunts like the nearby lake and pet-friendly organic market. He was even able to return to the nursing home where he and Kayla served as therapy dogs. Many there wanted to know the story of his missing leg. Considering our audience, we focused our answers on his present ability to walk and run, not mentioning his diagnosis or time left. One nursing home resident pointed to him and said, “You know, I could learn something from you!”

As the time approached for the 1,200-mile trip, we identified veterinary clinics and hospitals along the way, just in case. As we did three years ago, we rented a van so our hounds could ride comfortably. We brought the ramp along that had helped Emiliano get in and out of the car for those first tentative trips.

Hotel and Restaurant Tips

- Several websites offer lists of pet-friendly hotels and restaurants. Always follow up, though. One restaurant told me they only allowed service dogs. Another only allowed dogs on its patio during “slow” times.
- Pet-friendly hotels are a boon to travelers. Fees vary. Ask if there is a convenient place to walk your Greyhound. How large are the rooms that permit pets?
- Bring a mat or towel into the hotel in addition to your hound’s bed. He may need traction on hotel floors (this includes elevators).
- Does your room have a window overlooking the first floor? When you disappear through the hotel hallway door, will your Greyhound panic if she can’t see you outside?

A few days before leaving, we took our big guy for an additional X-ray. We had made a reservation for him at Camp Greyhound in Dallas in case the cancer had progressed. If he was ill, a long car trip would be out of the question. But the veterinarian gave us the best news: for now, Emiliano's heart and lungs were clear. There were no more obstacles.

It's a long drive from anywhere to Big Bend National Park. After several canine and human stops, we arrived at the park boundary 11 hours later. We took photos to mark our achievement and drove the final 10 miles to reach the **Chisos Basin area**, nearly one mile in elevation above the entrance. Here the dry air was 84 degrees — a vast improvement over the 95 and muggy we left behind. All four of us took a deep breath. Emiliano and Kayla bounded out of the car, on lead of course, to explore the remembered secrets of Big Bend.

Our favorite cabin provided us with the best view in the park. The mountains of "The

Window" descend to a "V," so one can view the landscape through them, creating great sunrise and sunset vistas. Kayla and Emiliano's favorite spot was the small road bridging a ravine between the lodge and cabins. Noses out, leashes to the limit, both Greyhounds found the smells irresistible. Here is where the wildlife meets the road, evidently. Bear? Javelina? Skunk? Coyote? They sampled a smorgasbord of delight. Even the crevices, leading to tunnels formed by smaller creatures, offered tantalizing possibilities for long noses. What a gift for the hounds to experience scents like nothing in our city neighborhood, while staying safe from close animal encounters. It was a daytime highlight throughout the stay.

The next day, John took the hounds on an early evening constitutional. Emiliano continued his forward pace, leading all the way, even with his tripod gait. Kayla lagged a bit, so the threesome was strung out in a long

procession along the path.

The walk took them just below the lodge dining room, windowed from floor to ceiling. Although the diners could see the trio, they didn't quite process it. Kayla, our golden female, can sometimes appear to "stalk" — especially when challenged by a squirrel. Also, one of the Park's attractions is the nearness of wildlife, and getting a glimpse of a mountain lion is quite the event. So, according to the serving staff, the visitors all ran to the windows, because they thought they saw a mountain lion stalking a man and his three-legged dog. Shortly, they realized their mistake, seeing the two dogs were both leashed, and worry turned into embarrassed giggles. Our server related the story to us at breakfast the next morning, and we joined her in a good laugh. We imagined that Kayla, catlike and independent, would have been so proud of being mistaken for a predator, even momentarily.



So, when's the next adventure? The hounds relax in the cabin.

We stayed in Big Bend for five nights, writing, painting, photographing, and taking an easy hike or two. No side trips needed —

just enjoying our Greyhounds was adventure enough. We couldn't resist giving Emiliano extra hugs to remind him and ourselves, "You're here, buddy. You're really here. This trip was for you, and you made it." Surrounded by mountains, sky, and silence, we became emotional on a daily basis. Every day with our Greyhounds is truly a gift.

The bigger journey for Emiliano is yet to come. And there are those questions we all ask. Would we have spent our money and time trying to

heal him if we had known the diagnosis? In fact, should we? At the time of the first surgery, we were not willing to end his life. By

the second surgery, still without a diagnosis, we were in for a penny, in for a pound. Even with a chance of his not having cancer, not everyone would make that decision. A veterinarian kindly told us, "There are no bad decisions here." We know there will be a time to say goodbye, but this bonus time has made us so grateful. ■

About the author: Marilyn Mathis' work has been featured in Celebrating Greyhounds Magazine, Summer 2012, "Watch Out for That Cactus!" She has earned international recognition for her corporate writing and editing. Her work has appeared in local newspapers and in Shape Magazine. Currently working on a mystery novel, she enjoys traveling with her husband, John Spaulding, who took photos for this article.



Mountain air, great walks, and awesome scents (View from the cabin.)

National and State Park Pet Tips:

- Check with your favorite park for specific rules, but in general, pets must be leashed or physically restrained at all times. Pet leashes may be no longer than six feet. In addition, pets may not be left unattended when tied or physically confined. Leaving them crated while we walked to the lodge for meals was fine; taking day trips without them would not be.
- As much as possible, know your environment and the type of setup that will work best for your Greyhounds. It will be too late once you get there to regret not bringing an ex-pen, extra pads or cables.
- *Some* parks allow dogs on some trails. *Some* do not, so make sure you know and follow your park's rules.
- Likewise, rules may vary for different sections of the park. Can your Greyhound come with you to the ranger talk? Does your state or national park allow pets on its restaurant patio?
- Reserve your spot early. A year is not too far ahead, particularly to get your favorite view and most Greyhound-friendly cabin.
- When you plan your wilderness park trip, consider the season. Spring break might be convenient, but will your Greyhound enjoy a calmer time?
- For the specifics, go to www.nps.gov, then search "rules for pets." Naturally when you plan your trip, you'll also want to phone the friendly folks at your chosen park. For state parks, select the park first, then check the website or call for pet rules and fees.
- Always ask. The answer might be yes. For example, could we bring our dogs on an advertised park tour? No, because it included a trail walk. However, the staff at Big Bend National Park offered to design an in-car tour just for us and our dogs.

Exercise for Ex-Racers

A chasing toy that encourages vigorous play can be a positive way to interact with your Greyhound.

By Mary Renck Jalongo

Each of our three Greyhounds would much rather run than walk. However, there aren't any opportunities in my rural area to take them to a dog park, much less go lure coursing. Leash-walking them requires more than an hour and they lose interest at different points along the way. I've found a solution that allows me to give my Greyhounds the activity they relish in my own backyard in about 20 minutes.

The tool is a dog's version of a cat toy on a string or a lunge line used to exercise horses. Those who condition athletic dogs refer to it as a flirt pole, but the commercially available version also can be searched online as dog chasing toy, dog fishing pole toy, or "dog exercise toy. It looks like a simple fishing pole (without the reel) and has a dog toy tied at the end. Admittedly, flirt poles have a seamier side; they originated as a way to train



Lily, a 5-year-old female adopted by Sian Greenock, of France, through Greenfields Greyhounds Rescue in the U.K.

German Shepherds as protection dogs, and have even been used to train Pit Bulls for fighting. However, the flirt pole can be used in a very positive and productive way with retired racers.

There are at least four compelling reasons to give this toy a try with your retired racer.

1. It simulates racing. From their earliest days of training, Greyhounds are taught to chase a furry object during short bursts of activity. Although I fantasize about building a fenced area the size of a Greyhound track, the cost is prohibitive. With the chasing toy, however, I can simulate lure coursing. All that it takes is a smooth, relatively flat, unobstructed, and secure space that is more than double the combined length of the pole and line, which is about 7 feet. Plan on utilizing an exercise area of approximately 20 feet by 20 feet to allow for the wide turns made by long dogs. For safety's sake, avoid slippery (e.g., wet grass or leaves,

polished floors), loose (e.g., gravel, bark), or hard (e.g., cement, blacktop) surfaces. Do not use the toy shortly before or after a meal because the play is very active and could lead to bloat or a twisted stomach.

Evidently, the chasing toy is particularly appealing to dogs with prey drive or herding instinct. To illustrate, when my friends from a therapy-dog group visited with Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, their dogs weren't at all interested in chasing the toy, even though they watched while my Greyhounds and my Collie played with it enthusiastically. All of the retrievers were unimpressed and — no big surprise here — preferred to play fetch. For physically sound Greyhounds, the fishing pole-type of toy is just perfect. It not only supplies them with the brief episodes of intense activity they were accustomed to as racers, but also gives them a safe outlet for their prey drive. Even if you have access to

a lure course, the flirt pole can be used to condition your dog and prevent weekend warrior injuries.

2. It provides aerobic exercise in record time. My 4-year-old Greyhound was a pretty good racer and she has energy to burn. If she doesn't get exercise, she will pester me by putting that long nose under my armpit until I give in or she gets into mischief, whichever comes first. Fifteen to 20 minutes with the flirt pole leave her completely spent. All of my dogs get much more exercise this way. I don't need to come up with over an hour to spare, load them into the car, and worry about the weather as much as when planning for a long walk. One word of caution: this is vigorous play, so you should do a warm up before the play gets wild. If your dogs will chase other toys, toss them around first, walk around a bit, or drag the chasing toy along the ground gently. You don't want strained muscles

and torn ligaments caused by neglecting the warm up. After the dogs have been limbered up a bit, you can start making wide circles around you with the toy. You can keep the toy just out of reach for a while and then allow the dog to catch it periodically.

Be certain, though, to adjust the intensity of the play to your particular dog's needs. My 10-year-old Greyhound has a soft-tissue problem with her neck, so I just gently drag the toy along the ground and she grabs it; that's about enough, given her arthritic condition. If the Greyhound is physically fit, then your goal is to get the dog running in smooth, flowing circles. Avoid bouncing the toy, which could cause the dog to jump, spin, and jolt back down to the ground or abruptly change direction, because all of these things can cause (or aggravate) orthopedic problems. Most days, I can fit in

one thorough workout at least an hour after they are fed, so this activity occurs much more dependably than hour-long leash walks. I also use this energetic play before we leave the house because it moderates the protests associated with separation anxiety. As the saying goes, a tired dog is a good and happy dog.

3. The dogs love it. Our Greyhounds can be lounging around the living room and all I have to say is, "Do you want to go outside and play with your twirly toy?" and they jump up and run to

the door. When I introduced this toy to my straight-off-the-track **Fiona (Budz Fiona)**, she went crazy with excitement. Meanwhile Rosie, my senior hound, was up on the deck rooing the whole time. So, this is my first



Hank, adopted by Becky Olstad, of Denver, Colorado, through Colorado Greyhound Adoption.

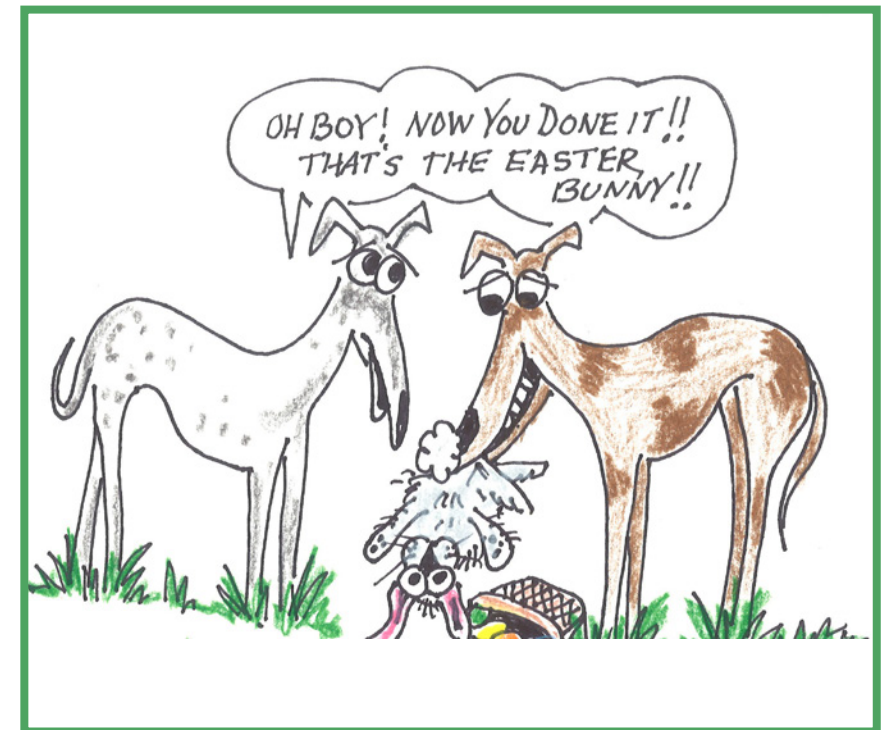
tip: realize that initial play with a dog lure of this type can get wild and then proceed slowly. I must confess that when I first got the toy, I tried to do too much too fast and accidentally flipped the toy toward my legs. As a result, I was knocked flat by a flying Greyhound. To her everlasting credit, Fiona dropped the toy, came over, and touched me with her nose as if to say, "Sorry about that. Are you OK?"

Do not attempt to work with multiple dogs as soon as you bring the toy home. It is better for human and dog to use it with only one dog at a time until you have learned how to control the toy and the play. To introduce it to more than one dog, try playing with one dog while holding the collar of the second and announce whose turn it is with the dog's name. When you switch, say the name of the dog getting his or her turn to play (e.g., "Rosie's turn."). Your dogs will catch on to the turn-taking. It

may take a while before you can play with more than one dog at a time. I have built up to three dogs with three different flirt poles. Usually, I let my high-energy, young Greyhound catch the toy and when she goes off to chew on it, I use one or both of the remaining poles with my two other dogs. They aren't as big, boisterous, and fast as she is, so they can play together or separately using a shorter stick and pole.

4. It is a powerful training aid. Be aware that a flirt pole is the dog equivalent of catnip for a cat — chances are your Greyhound will go crazy for it. Do not allow a child to use the toy until the dog is reliably trained and, even then, play sessions with the chasing toy require close and constant adult supervision. Young children are apt to run around while dragging the toy behind them; this could cause the dog to knock children down in pursuit of the toy or, worse yet, to chase children like prey. Children might bend

over and grab the toy right when the dog is lunging to get it or to play keep away by holding the toy up on their chests, putting them at risk of an accidental bite to the face, neck, or hands. The best course of action is to reserve the flirt pole for play with adults or with mature, responsible children who have been thoroughly coached in the proper use of the toy and are supervised by an adult.



Use the flirt pole to get your dog to respond to your requests. For example: does your Greyhound ignore you when you call him or her to come while he or she is outside? Not a problem. I have a storage bench where I keep the flirt pole toys and, if I open and close the lid, the dogs come running to my side. So, I put a word to it, "Come," and now the recall out in the yard is far more reliable. Professional dog trainers call this "capturing," because you take something that a dog does naturally and reinforce it. I learned this from experts who work with the staff and inmates of our local correctional facility to train service dogs. They "captured" 4-month-old puppies' natural inclination to jump up and paw; now these dogs can turn the light switch off and on for a person with limited physical mobility.

When you first introduce the toy to your Greyhound, have patience. Allow the dog to explore the toy a bit and get it good and

slobbery before you put it in motion. If you start moving the toy right away, the dog will tend to grab it, pull hard, and be unwilling

to relinquish it. These are behaviors that you definitely do not want. After the dog has had a chance to explore the toy, offer



Jeff, adopted by Lindsey Stallard, of Portland, Oregon, through Greyhound Pet Adoption-Northwest.

a savory treat as a trade and as soon as the dog releases the toy to get the food, say, “Drop it!” and give him or her a treat again. At first, hold the toy out of sight and teach your dog to “watch me.” You also might try placing the toy up around your neck, as long as you can do so without risking injury from an overly eager dog who might grab at the toy, and your neck. As soon as the dog makes direct eye contact with you instead of fixating on the toy, say “Watch me!” The reward for watching is to offer the toy to the dog and say, “Take it.” If you put in the time, you’ll have your Greyhound’s undivided attention, as well as control over the play. Gradually, you can add “Sit,” if your hound does this, or “Down” and then “Stay/Wait” to your dog’s command repertoire. It represents a particular challenge to move the toy but keep the dog from chasing it, so you’ll need to work up to a “Leave it” command. It will take many, many repetitions before these commands are

mastered. Also realize a brand-new toy can amp up the excitement, so be prepared for it.

My Greyhounds are never better behaved than when we are playing with the dog-exercise toy because they know the rules and really want to participate. After a toy-chasing session, they are tired both mentally and physically because they had to expend energy to control themselves as well as to run. This makes for a peaceful, relaxing evening with dogs snoozing all around on their beds.

What Equipment Do You Need?

If you’re convinced that you want to try the chasing toy, the next step is getting your equipment. I read the reviews online and have tried just about every brand of fishing pole-type dog toy. Some of them were destroyed in short order; others had a line that was too short for a Greyhound. The one that has withstood hard use is the large [Squishy Face Studio V2 dog exercise pole](#) with one

Videos on Flirt Poles

- A professional dog walker and flirt pole enthusiast provides helpful tips, instructions for making a do-it-yourself flirt pole, and a three-minute instructional video at the end. Her [blog post](#) is found here.
- A sighthound learns to play with the flirt pole in this [video](#).
- Two hounds, one a Greyhound, enjoy playing with the flirt pole in this [video](#).
- Dog trainer Drew Webster demonstrates the basics of flirt pole training with a Canaan Dog in this short [video](#).



Ragz, adopted by Marla Nye, of Apple Valley, California, through FastFriends.

lure. It costs about \$30 on Amazon and the quality is worth the expense. Although it is a bit more bulky than the whip-like skinny poles, it has a stretchy line that gives if the dog happens to get tangled or pull on the toy, a rubberized hand grip, and hanging loop.

You can see it in action [here](#). Although you'll find instructions for homemade flirt poles that use vinyl-coated wire or thick clothesline, the potential for these items to create a rope burn on a Greyhound's skin or produce a whiplash effect when pulled makes them unsatisfactory.

As much as I like the Squishy Face Studio large flirt pole, I dislike the braided felt toy

lure because my dogs prefer fur toys. The toy lure that works the best is Invincibles made by [Kyjen Plush Puppies](#). True to its name, the squeaker is virtually puncture-proof. I've had one tied to the end of the dog-exercise pole

for several months now and so far, my Greys have not succeeded in silencing it with one carefully placed eye-tooth chomp to the heart of the squeaker. The Kyjen Plush Puppies Invincibles Flappy Friends have multiple squeakers and no stuffing but they are very sturdy, rather than loose and floppy. You can get a bear, dog, duck, pig, snake, or monkey with two squeakers for about \$9. The line can be tied very tightly where the toy is stitched into segments, which prevents it from falling or being pulled off. The smaller toy also is more challenging for the dog to catch, so I don't recommend spending the extra money for the bigger ones with four to 16 different squeakers. The addition of the plush toy took my Greyhounds' excitement about the flirt pole to a whole new level.

For an older, smaller, or less vigorous Greyhound, the large Kyjen PP02290 Tail Teaser Dog Toy Squeak Toy Exercise Training Toy (about \$20) also works well. It has a

shorter line/pole and a fuzzy toy that squeaks and rattles. It also has a very secure system of attaching the toy and comes with one replacement squeaker.

Conclusion

Even though my husband and I *talked* about “dog downsizing” as we age, after helping to bathe four dogs transported from the track, we chose a big, confident girl as our foster-to-adopt. As if to affirm that decision, Fiona sat in the back seat enroute to her new home and gave each of us a little slurp on the cheek. To reach her ideal weight, she put on nearly 10 pounds and ended up being our biggest Greyhound yet at 75 pounds. We just aren’t willing to give up on our big, beautiful Greyhounds.

An 8-year-old who owns a 4-pound Yorkie and loves playing with our dogs captured “big dog” appeal when she told me, “Mary, I figured something out. You can do little dog

things with little dogs but you need a big dog to do big dog things.” Doing those “big dog things” with Fiona and company involves more than just couch potato time, as much as we treasure that. We also want to give them the exercise they crave and keep them in good physical condition. A simple toy has been enormously helpful in meeting the needs of that premier canine athlete, the retired racing Greyhound, when we are retirement age ourselves. ■

About the author: Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph.D., has contributed several articles and photographs to Celebrating Greyhounds Magazine. She is a professor of education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the editor-in-chief of Early Childhood Education Journal, and has written numerous published articles and books about humane education. Her most recent collaborative research project found a positive impact on elementary students’ oral reading fluency when therapy dogs were used to motivate children’s practice reading

aloud; it will be published in Society & Animals. She and her husband have adopted three retired racers from Monica’s Heart Greyhound Adoption in Altoona, Pennsylvania.



Romeo, age 1, adopted by Donna Wares, of Seal Beach, California, through GreySave.

Is your Greyhound a “Fur Kid?”

Researchers investigated the brain’s response to children and canines, with some surprising results.

By Henry Townsend

Greyhound owners who feel a little sheepish or even worried about how much they love their dog can be reassured by a new scientific study. It investigated the emotions and feelings that readers of *Celebrating Greyhounds* Magazine experience often and know quite well — how much we love our dogs.

The study used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), a type of brain scan, to detect activity in various parts of the brain. Eighteen women with both young children and dogs were shown a series of photographs of their own child, their own dog, an unfamiliar child, and an unfamiliar dog. The data was then analyzed to identify whether and to what extent various parts of the brain were activated.



Grace, adopted July 20, 2013, by Marty and Carol Singer, of North Port, Florida.

Researchers had two main discoveries. First, and not surprising, the responses of the brain to a familiar image, whether to one's own child or dog, are quite different than the responses to unfamiliar children and dogs. The second discovery, perhaps more surprising, was that our mental reactions to seeing images of our own children are much the same as our reactions to images of our own dogs. When we see an image of a child or a dog, familiarity is more important than if the image is of a child or dog.

Only one part of the brain showed a response to one's child and not to one's dog, while only one showed a greater response to one's dog than to one's child. So, human brains, for the most part, show similar responses to their own children and their own dogs, but the responses in two parts of the brain are different for one's child and one's dog.

Those who would like to read the original study may do so [online](#). Be forewarned, the article is not an easy read for those who are not experts in statistical analysis. ■

About the author: Henry Townsend and his wife, Jessica, have lived with their Greyhound, Salisbury, since November 22, 2003. They are very familiar with him, and as all their friends know, they love him and treat him as their child.



Osteoarthritis: What You Need To Know

As many as one in five dogs could develop osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease, which can be treated with a variety of medications and therapies.

By Dr. Kelly Diehl, compiled from a [Morris Animal Foundation](#) webinar

Osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease are two terms often used interchangeably. Osteoarthritis occurs when the cartilage that covers the end of the bone at the joint deteriorates. The exposed bones rub against each other, resulting in pain, and inhibiting movement. Instability can develop because of the deterioration. New bone will form as the body attempts to stabilize an unstable joint. These bone fragments, sometimes called osteocytes, unfortunately are not very helpful in alleviating pain or stabilizing the joint.

Figure 1 shows a normal joint (left) and the surrounding joint structures, the cartilage and fluid, that are designed to make it stable,

pain-free, and to allow easy movement. The image on the right in Figure 1 illustrates the impact of osteoarthritis — a lot of the structures have deteriorated and the bones are rubbing against each other.

Causes & Symptoms

The main cause of osteoarthritis is just aging, or wear and tear on the joint. Previous trauma can result in low-grade, chronic inflammation and contribute to joint erosion, leading to osteoarthritis. Congenital abnormalities can also lead to osteoarthritis. Any kind of damage, infection, or immune disease might predispose that joint to osteoarthritis.

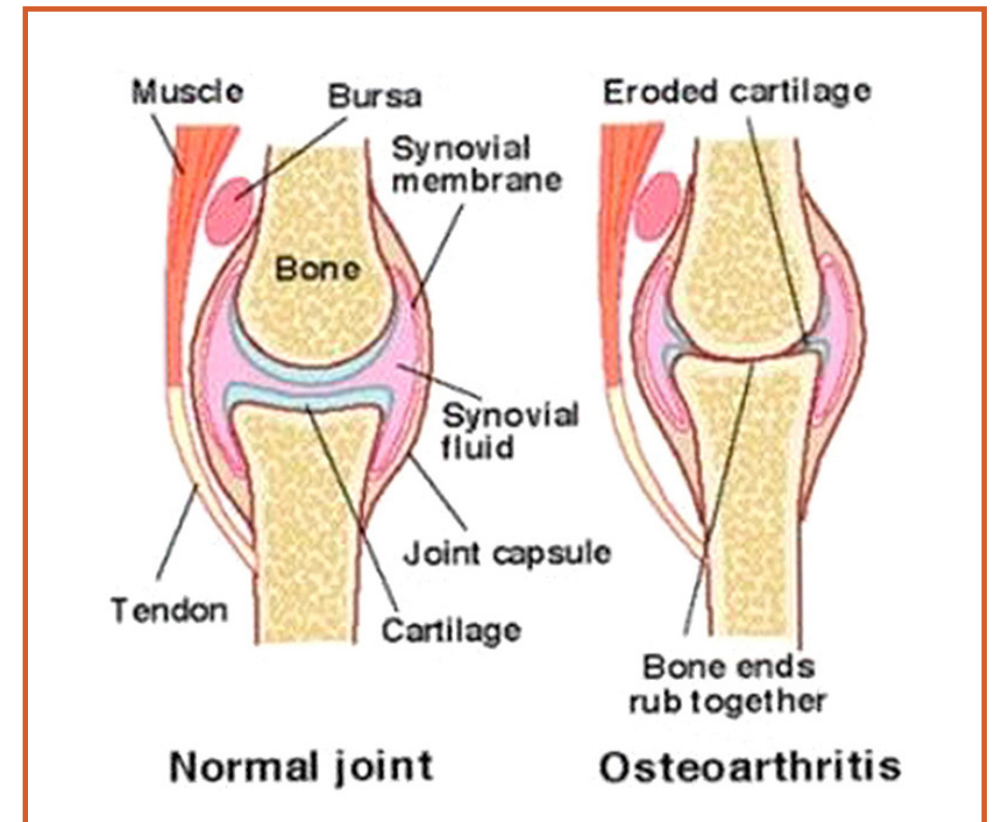
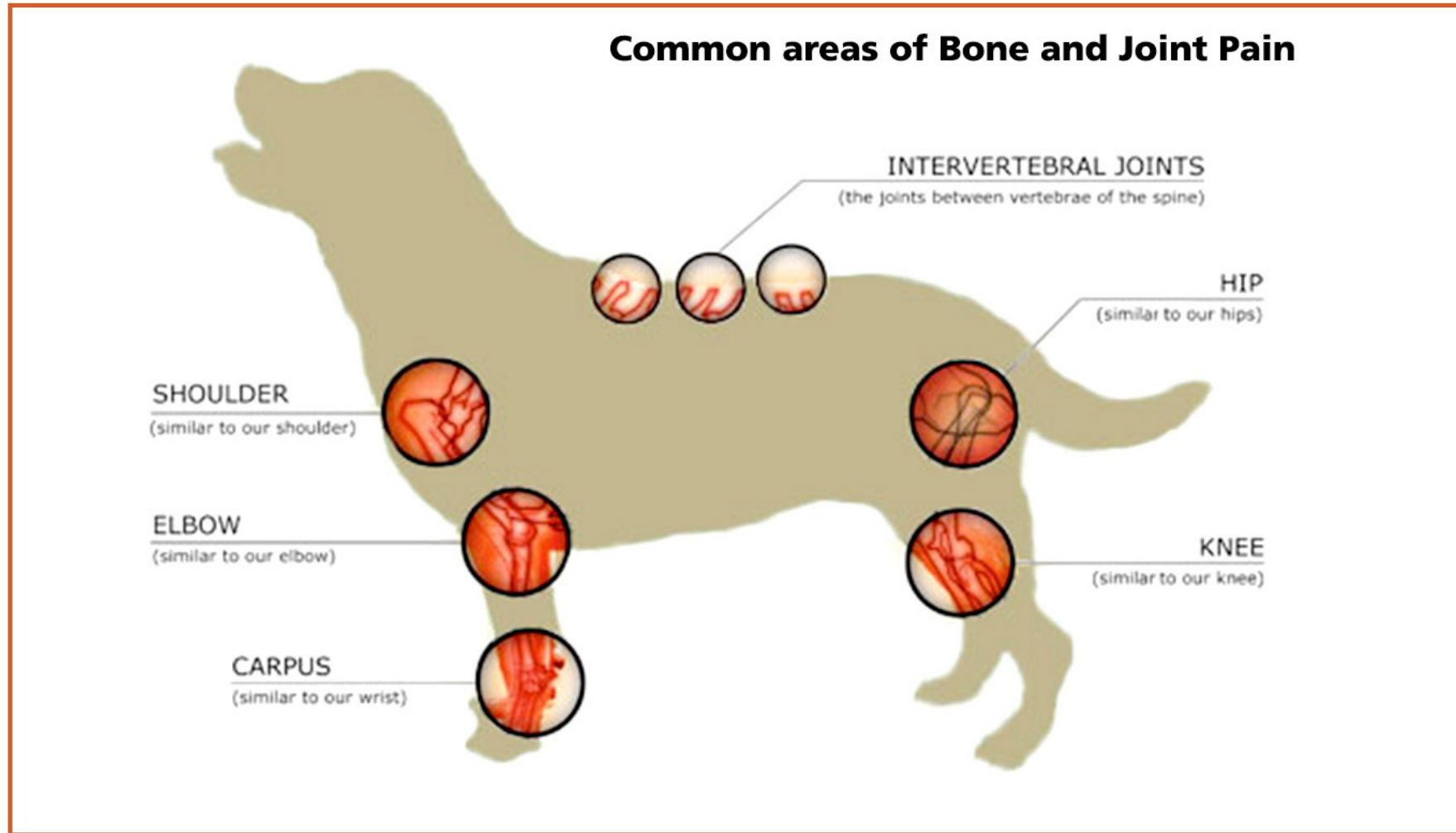


Figure 1 — The image on the left depicts a healthy, normal joint. The image on the right illustrates a joint affected by osteoarthritis.



Greyhounds do not appear to be over-represented in the populations of dogs that seem to be more susceptible to arthritis. Racing does not appear to predispose them to osteoarthritis.

Lameness or limping are obvious signs of osteoarthritis. Some dogs will have a crouched or hunched appearance, and a reluctance to move or exercise is common. They just do not want to get up and go for a walk. Also, they

may tire more quickly during exercise because moving is painful. Two-mile walks become a thing of the past.

Sometimes there isn't any obvious pain or limping. Other signs include difficulty jumping up and down, trouble climbing stairs, and slipping and falling. Those who have had older dogs will often see slipping on hardwood floors or tiles that posed no problem before. Occasionally there are behavior changes, such as irritability. Some dogs will seek out warm areas, such as lying in the sun. In many cases, panting is a sign of an animal in pain.

Osteoarthritis is a common, equal-opportunity disease. Some older studies and a recent one suggest that one in five dogs will develop osteoarthritis.

Diagnosis & Treatment

Physical exams can be very helpful. In the exam room, we might have a patient walk, jog, or use stairs. We track their range of



The image on the far left is an X-ray of a normal knee joint. The X-ray second from left is the same view of a knee with osteoarthritis. Dogs are not the only animals to suffer from osteoarthritis. The two images on the right are X-rays of a horse with osteoarthritis in a lower limb.

motion, and if limitations are observed, we can palpate the joint. Quick X-rays and special studies can also be used. Newer diagnostic methods include arthroscopic examination of suspected joints. Also, owners fill out questionnaires to help veterinarians determine whether pain is due to osteoarthritis-related discomfort or another problem.

The far left image above shows a side view of a normal knee joint in a dog. The image second from left shows an abnormal knee joint. Significant remodeling of the bone — that's the white area — is apparent. The patella is developing osteocytes in an attempt to stabilize the joint. The darker place is fluid in the joint. The joint is crowded with bone

fragments and lacking fluid. This is a severely affected joint.

Medication is the primary treatment for osteoarthritis. Pain relievers, nutritional supplements, and corticosteroids are most effective. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications are the cornerstone of treatment in people, horses, dogs, and cats. Always consult your veterinarian first before medicating your pet because of the possible side effects.

Many therapies are promoted for treating osteoarthritis. Some therapeutic options have been tested in clinical trials, while others have not been subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny. Among the more common therapies for osteoarthritis are weight loss, physical/rehabilitative therapy, acupuncture, massage, surgery, shock-wave therapy, stem cell therapy, autologous

Supportive Care for Osteoarthritis

- Adequate bedding
- Ramps
- Heat support
- Keep nails trimmed
- Flooring
- Avoid potential falls



platelet therapy, chiropractic therapy, Reiki, therapeutic or “cold” laser, and supportive care.

Supportive Care

To make your pet more comfortable, provide extra bedding. Ramps can be used to get a dog into a vehicle. They are widely available and helpful in keeping the dog

from jumping up or down. They also save the owner from having to lift a large dog.

Providing heat support for your pet is helpful, and keeping nails trimmed is another simple way to offer supportive care.

Cover slippery floors with rubber-

backed rugs to prevent falls. Baby gates are recommended to keep pets off stairs where they could fall and suffer a serious injury.

The owners of dogs afflicted with osteoarthritis have many options to address the condition. Your veterinarian can guide you to the right ones for your pet. ■

About the author: Upon receiving her doctorate in veterinary medicine from the University of Tennessee, Dr. Kelly Diehl completed an internship at The Animal Medical Center in New York and a residency in small-animal medicine at Colorado State University. Diehl joined the staff of the Veterinary Referral Center of Colorado as co-owner of the internal medical section. After 14 years, she left private practice to pursue her own career in medical communication and joined the Morris Animal Foundation as a foundation-funded researcher. Diehl lives in Colorado with her husband, two children, and one very lovable Labrador Retriever.

Morris Animal Foundation has been supporting orthopedic research since 1958, investing more than \$4 million in nearly 90 studies. This research includes examining genetic predispositions to congenital abnormalities that lead to the development of osteoarthritis, cutting-edge treatments such as stem cell therapy, and studies into the development of better diagnostic tools. Results of these studies have led to advances in the way young dogs are evaluated for hip dysplasia and changes in how arthritic pain is evaluated in cats.

Ode to a Greyhound

By Martha Leveroni

*Oh how I wish I could turn the clock back
To the time that I lived with a Greyhound called Shack!
He was just the most wonderful dog in the world.
I was in heaven when I saw him curled
On his bed or the backseat of my old Toyota.
Could he have better? No, not one iota!
For all racing Greyhounds their trademark is speed.
Having run on just sand, there are things they don't heed –
Brambles and thorns and rocks that were wet
Resulted in Shack's many trips to the vet.
Getting stitches and shots, even then he was stoic,
In fact at the office they called him heroic!
One funny sight that made neighbors' hearts melt:
A three-foot long bone made of fuzzy red felt –
Shack loved it so much that in fact he would balk
If he couldn't take it whenever we'd walk!*





Ode to a Greyhound continued

*Shack was so calm he was almost serene,
He'd stand still beside me and sometimes would lean.
Sometimes we'd drive to a park and some lakes
So that he could run and not turn on the brakes.
He'd fly through the woods but the minute I called
He'd be back in a flash. Once a friend was appalled
When Shack was in water and wanted to swim –
He was thrashing and churning! (It just wasn't HIM!)*
*Shack was so loving and gentle and sweet
Don't you wish that were true of the people we meet?
Shack was so quiet he'd bark once a year
Unless something weird at the door he would hear.
He wasn't demanding, his day was complete
As long as the mailman would toss him a treat.
No one could meet him and not fall in love.
I'd say to myself "He's a gift from above."
Now since I'm eighty it's just not an option
For me to consider another adoption,
But for those who are healthy and want to be blessed
CHOOSE THIS BREED OF DOG FOR YOUR PERMANENT GUEST.*

In Memoriam



Dodge (Char Dodgem)

Dodge (Char Dodgem) passed away peacefully Jan. 1, 2015, mere days after celebrating his 13th birthday and being featured in *Celebrating Greyhounds* Magazine's Winter 2014 issue, "Many Happy Returns." His racing career took him to three tracks, where he garnered A and AA ratings. A certified therapy dog, he joined the Williams family in Tennessee late in life after being returned to the Mid-South Greyhound Adoption Option program when his owner became seriously ill. He melded immediately with the two resident dogs and lived a comfortable life as a cherished

family member until bone cancer took its toll. Despite his advanced age, he showed indomitable spirit, trying to take on the challenge of stairs or jumping into an SUV. Dodge also had a most loving nature, becoming the family's resident Velcro dog. While his stay with the family was short, he made an impression that will endure.



Honey, adopted by Vivian Diaz.

You're Invited



April 23-26, 2015

Greyhounds in Gettysburg

Nittany Greyhounds

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Greyhounds in Gettysburg is the largest Greyhound reunion in the country, with more than 1,000 attendees in 2014. This year's schedule includes educational seminars, shopping, social events, raffles, and plenty of fun for both people and Greyhounds.

www.greyhoundsingettysburg.org

gig@nittanygreys.org

May 15-17, 2015

Greys & Grapes

Virginia Greyhound Adoption

Leesburg, Virginia

Greys & Grapes is a wine-tasting celebration of Greyhound adoption. The main event at Greys & Grapes is hosted by 868 Estate Vineyards and features two new wineries – Otium Cellars and 8 Chains North Winery. Your registration fee includes six wine tasting tickets that can be used at participating wineries, one specialty wine glass and an event tote bag. Saturday's keynote speaker will be Lee Livingwood, author of *Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies*.

www.greysandgrapes.com

registration@greysandgrapes.com

May 28-May 31, 2015

Mountain Hounds

Greyhound Friends of North Carolina

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Mountain Hounds 2015 is a weekend retreat for humans and Greyhounds including fun, games, vending, catered picnic, seminars, and more. Enjoy the Smoky Mountains and the company of fellow Greyhound owners as we celebrate 11 years of Mountain Hounds. Other breeds welcome.

www.gfncmountainhounds.com

gfncgreyhound@yahoo.com

June 4-6, 2015

Heart of America Greyhound Gathering Halfway Home Greyhound Adoption Abilene, Kansas

Halfway Home Greyhound Adoption is planning the most ambitious and exciting Greyhound Gathering in the heart of Greyhound country, Abilene, Kansas. We will be celebrating our Greyhounds and the people that love them. Activities include farm tours, a tour of the National Greyhound Association, breakfast at the track where you can watch the Greyhounds train, guest speakers, live panel discussions, contests, vendors, food, fun, and more!

www.halfwayhomegreyhounds.com/gathering.
halfwayhomegreys@gmail.com

July 30-August 2, 2015

Grapehounds Wine Tour – New York Rock Stream, New York

The Grapehound Wine Tour - New York is a four-day event, featuring more than twenty wineries and a distillery, wine tasting, music, lakes, waterfalls, and a huge vendor tent filled with vendors from a dozen states. Every registrant receives 10 wine-tasting passes and a commemorative wine glass along with other items in their registration tote bag.

www.grapehounds.com
grapehound@gmail.com

October 8-11, 2015

Greyhounds Reach the Beach Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Greyhounds Reach the Beach's new central location will offer a food vendor, rest rooms, vendors, adoption groups, small group seminars, nationally known speakers, a

Greyhound babysitting area and parking for 275 cars. Additional activities -- from vendor parties to The Greyhounds in Art show to the Nittany Greyhounds ice cream social -- will take place throughout the Dewey Beach and Rehoboth Beach area.

www.grtb.org
grapehound@gmail.com

November 12-15, 2015

Remember the Greyhound Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

Remember the Greyhound offers educational seminars, social activities, fun, and games for Greyhounds and their humans! Dr. Guillermo Couto will be one of the featured speakers at the 2015 event.

www.facebook.com/RememberTheGreyhound

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