

# GGRR NEWSLETTER

Volume Number 5

Issue Number 12

Date: December 2008

## \* \* \* Meeting Notice \* \* \*

Date: **Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

Time: 7:15 p.m.

Place: The Museum of the Dog

*We love having well-behaved, healthy Goldens (up-to-date on shots, please) attend our meetings. However, please keep them leashed and at your side while we conduct the business portion of our meeting. Dogs are welcome to romp and socialize both before and after the meeting.*

**We will be having refreshments and a canine gift exchange following our December meeting. If you plan to participate, have your dog(s) bring a wrapped, new (no dog slobber, please!) \$5.00 dog toy. A small dessert or appetizer for humans to share would also be appreciated.**

## MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> :

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Pat Moran. The meeting started early due to having a speaker scheduled for afterwards. Tracie B. moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Amy G. seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed. The following correction was noted: The dog shown with Pamela Wollenberg on page 4 of the November newsletter is **Canon**. He was incorrectly identified as Nikon.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

None this month



It's the first Christmas for Iris Adkins! Lee and Carmie report that Iris is a happy baby and a true bundle of joy.

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

Beth J. reported that our account balance at the beginning of the month was **\$2490.43**. Income was **\$1619.00**. Expenses were **\$1,958.32** plus a **\$25 returned check**, leaving an ending balance of **\$2,125.91**.

## MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Janice E. reported there was 1 membership inquiry during the past month and one inquiry as to how to make a donation to GGRR. No new members joined the group. Member **Judy Drozda** was attending her first meeting this month. There were two visitors: **Hillary H.** and **Sharon West**, our speaker for the evening.

## INTAKE COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Barb B. reported that three new dogs were surrendered to GRR during the past month:

- 08-044: Snickers**, an 11 month old spayed blond female who is being fostered by the Rudkowskis
- 08-045: Junior**, a 1-1/2 year old unaltered male being fostered by the Gerbers
- 08-046: Sniffy**, a 3 year old spayed blond female (Junior's mom) being fostered by Betsy Finnegan

Tim and Deanna Gorman are fostering their first dog, **Chance**, who has been at Woof since the end of September. We are still looking for someone with space to take **Shep** (Junior's dad), a 6 year old unaltered 100+ lb. male. We appreciate the help **Love a Golden** provided by taking in two dogs that GRR did not have room to accept. **Duke** is the only dog left at Under One Woof now.

## ADOPTION COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Carrie T. reported that 3 dogs were placed in their forever homes during the past month:

- 04-016R: Ginger**
- 08-039: Ben**
- 08-041: Tess**

Carrie has a new, updated waiting list for anyone who would like a copy. See her after the meeting.



Max Blacksher recently paid a visit to Scout Troop 2620. The Blacksher's dogsitter extraordinaire, Melissa C., borrowed Max for the evening to help the girls complete requirements for their Pet Care badge. It's hard to tell who had more fun—the girls or Max. Max is shown with his new best friend, Chantel K. Who says dogs don't smile?!

## EVENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Chris R. thanked members and their dogs who participated in the annual Webster Groves Christmas Walk. Our canines didn't mind the cold weather, although a few of our human participants would have appreciated a furrrier coat!

Heather H. thanked everyone who helped with the Lucky Dog Halloween Happening. She has dog treats left from the event that need to be consumed within the next couple of weeks. The dogs in attendance were delighted at the thought of leftovers!

Chris R. would like someone to take charge of informing the media in advance of our public events to increase attendance. Chris has a list of all our media contacts, which makes it easy to send a group email to radio stations and the press. See Chris if

## EVENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT: (cont.)

you would be interested in handling this task.

Chris should have information about the St. Pat's parade in December or January. It is generally held the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day, which is March 14<sup>th</sup>. The parade route is about 3 miles in length. Members can walk the distance with their dogs or ride in Chris's van if they become tired. Chris will be placing an order soon for GRR clothing, including green GRR sweatshirts for the parade. Plan ahead and talk with Chris if you would like to order any items. It is fine to wear blue GRR apparel in the parade if you don't want to purchase something green just for this event.

Volunteers are needed for upcoming Lucky Dog Adoption Day events. We have volunteers for November and December but will need to fill slots for the first few months of 2009. Chris will circulate a sign-up sheet at the December meeting. The dates and volunteers for the rest of 2008 are:

**Sat., Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>: Amy Hernlund-Gerber**

**Sat., Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>: Tom and Donna Schmiederer**

Times are somewhat flexible, but generally from around 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.



I've been a very good boy this year, Santa!



Scottie Adkins takes a break after a romp in the leaves. Life is good, judging by the smile on his face! Enjoy the peace and quiet while you can, Scottie! Once baby sister Iris is crawling and walking, your life will never be the same!

## WEBSITE COORDINATOR:

Paul S. reported our website statistics for the month of October. They include:

**Hits: 83,599**

**Page Views: 24,904**

**Visitors: 8836**

**Unique Visitors: 2572**

## OLD BUSINESS:

Barb B. circulated a card from the staff at Westinn's Under One Woof to thank GRR for the luncheon we provided for them in October.

Chris R., Heather H., and Tracie B. have been asked to serve on the nominating committee for our upcoming election. Because the committee members have been unable to meet yet, they will present their nominations for President and Secretary at the December meeting. Elections will then be held at our January 8, 2009 meeting. Officers must be members

**OLD BUSINESS:** (cont.)

for one year before they are eligible to serve. Pat and Barb have each served 2-year terms and would like to see new people in these positions.

Amy G. is working on finding reasonably priced insurance coverage for our 2009 Reunion Picnic. Due to the number of dog bites in the county parks, the St. Louis County Parks Department has new restrictions concerning the amount of liability insurance needed in order to hold dog events in any of their parks. Since the Dog Museum is owned by the AKC instead of St. Louis County, members voted to hold the picnic at the Dog Museum. This location also has a large indoor room in case of inclement weather. Amy will call to schedule a date for the picnic.

Pat M. asked that volunteers call or email Carrie T. when they need to discuss a potential adoptive family or obtain information about the availability of a dog. Carrie is the only person who has information about both families and dogs and makes the final decision about where dogs get placed. Please do not use the members' message board for these conversations.

Further discussion took place concerning issues that have surfaced recently in the placing of dogs. Volunteers doing phone interviews and home visits should **not** discuss particular dogs with families interested in adopting from GRR. It is fine to make a note on the family's paperwork if they are interested in a dog on the website. However, the family might not be the best match for that dog, or the dog may have already been matched with a family. We take pride in matching the needs of our

dogs with the lifestyles of our adoptive families. Unfortunately, there never seems to be a shortage of Golden Retrievers needing new homes in the St. Louis area. Please advise potential adoptive families to trust our expertise and experience in finding the "right" dog for their needs.

Mike S. stated that being thoroughly familiar with our Constitution and By-Laws is essential for all of our members. He will take charge of making copies or a CD with these documents on them for members who need them. Mike also pointed out that the purpose of phone interviews and home visits is to become acquainted with the family members, the family's lifestyle, and their living space. We assign different people to do phone interviews and home visits because we want multiple perspectives on the families. We definitely **do not** operate on a first come, first served basis. Our decisions are based on which family is the best fit for a particular dog. Mike also recommended that we **not** accept application fees or perform home visits for families who only want a puppy since we seldom receive puppies. It's fine to create a list of names and phone numbers of people interested in adopting a puppy. We can call these families and start the adoption process if a puppy is surrendered to GRR. Generally people interested in puppies do not want to wait and will contact other organizations or breeders until they find an available pup.

Pat M. responded to Mike's comments by emphasizing that we need to provide training for our members on a regular basis. Holding clinics on conducting phone interviews, home visits and dog visits must be a priority in 2009. Training for our foster homes is also essential.



Sunny G., formerly known as Aiden and one of Shadow's pups, gives his new mom a kiss. This photo was taken in May 2008, shortly after Sunny went to his forever home. A more recent photo of Sunny is on page 6.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The Golden Retriever Club of Greater St. Louis is holding its 2009 field trials on Saturday, May 30 and Sunday, May 31. Dogs can receive their Water Certification by successful completion of this event. Volunteers are needed to help, and GGRR will be compensated for the services of our members. Bird hunters are needed to shoot farm-raised Mallard ducks for dogs to retrieve. The GRC also needs volunteers who will sit behind blinds and either throw or launch deceased Mallards for dogs to retrieve. The Golden Retriever Club performs many valuable services for our group, so it would be nice if our members would return the favor. It's a great opportunity to experience something new and to see the breed we love perform the tasks for which they were bred. You can volunteer for one day or both days of the trials. Tim Miget will be our contact person who will receive information from the Golden Retriever Club about this event. Please talk with Tim if you are interested in volunteering at the field trials.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Janice E. It was seconded by Mike S. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. After a short break, Sharon West, owner and trainer at Westinn Kennels, began her presentation.

### **NOTES FROM SHARON WEST'S PRESENTATION:**

When a foster dog enters your home, consider it to be the first day of the rest of its life. Some reasons our members foster dogs are to make a difference in their lives, to provide them with love, and to socialize these dogs. It is easy to lose our perspective and feel sorry for foster dogs because of neglect or abuse they may have encountered in their previous families. Foster parents need to approach their task by becoming good leaders. Dogs being displaced do better in homes with structure, not "gushy love." Loving a dog is not enough. Dogs thrive when their lives have structure and when they understand what their boundaries are. We need to instill trust and confidence in the dogs we foster.

**Introducing the foster to your dogs away from your home:** If dogs are not introduced properly, there can be problems such as fighting or inappropriate urination. Do not just put the dogs together and expect things to work out smoothly. It is often best to introduce your dogs to a foster dog on neutral territory. A nearby park or playground works well. Out of control dogs upset dogs that are under control. All dogs should be on leashes and under control when introduced to each other. Few dogs (or people) react positively when a stranger rushes up and gets in its face. Let the dogs approach each other on their own schedule.

## NOTES FROM SHARON WEST'S PRESENTATION: (cont.)

### **Bringing the foster dog into your house:**

When a foster dog comes into your house, it needs to be given a space of its own. Give the foster dog time to observe family members and dogs from a crate or gated in a small area. Let the foster dog observe how the household functions from a distance. The dog needs time to warm up to its new environment. These early interactions will set the basis for everything that happens from that point on. It's normal to want the foster dog to fit in quickly, but if you move too fast, it will take the dog **longer** to become comfortable. Establish the household rules and build a relationship with your foster dog before you introduce it to your dogs. When you don't have a relationship with a dog, the use of a clicker is one of the fastest ways to build a relationship. When your foster dog is crated or gated in an area, it allows all of the dogs in the household to introduce themselves through the barriers on their own terms. When the dogs are interacting well through the gates, then introduce them on a leash. If there is a problem, back them away from each other. Remain calm since shouting at dogs will only make matters worse. Remember the following 3 things:

1. Introduce the dogs slowly.
2. Give the dogs time to become comfortable with each other. Short, closely supervised interactions while leashed are best for the first few days.
3. Monitor the dogs—if you aren't able to watch the dogs, use gates to keep them separated.

Whenever there is a problem between dogs, discipline **all** the dogs involved.



This photo shows Sunny G. in September 2008. He sure is a handsome boy! If you adopted one of Shadow's pups, send us some recent photos. Sunny (aka Aiden) wants to see how the rest of his littermates have turned out!

## NOTES FROM SHARON WEST'S PRESENTATION: (cont.)

**Discipline:** Require your dogs to work for everything they get. Dogs shouldn't be allowed to tell you when to do something. You let them know when it's time. Rude, obnoxious behavior should not get your dog the attention it seeks. Bumping your arm to be petted is not an appropriate way to seek attention. Needy dogs must learn that just because they want something doesn't mean they can get it. You should initiate affection when it is convenient for you. Insist that the dog earn your attention by having it obey a command first. Dogs belong on furniture if and when you invite them. Foster dogs do not belong in bed with you because you haven't established a relationship with the dog. Food bowl work is tremendous for teaching obedience. The dog does not eat unless/until it follows your commands. Food, trips outside, and affection are all opportunities for teaching obedience. You cannot work on everything at once, so set priorities. Do not allow your dog the

## **NOTES FROM SHARON WEST'S PRESENTATION:** (cont.)

opportunity to practice bad behavior. If your dog looks for opportunities to steal food from the kitchen table or counters, you must manage the situation so the dog is unable to be successful. If there is food within reach and you must leave the room, take your dog or the food with you. Do not leave food unattended anywhere that a dog can get to it. If you are unable to watch the dog while cooking, gate it outside the kitchen. Another technique is to set the dog up and then bang pot lids together loudly when the dog puts its paws on the counter. The dog will learn to associate that behavior with loud, unpleasant sounds. You must teach a dog what is right behavior and what is wrong.

**Aggression:** Dogs that are dog aggressive react more out of fear than for any other reason. If your dog has storm phobias, try getting the dog to do something it loves. For dogs that love to play fetch, toss balls for them to chase during a thunderstorm. Covering a dog or covering its crate can be calming. Use a Halti (not a Gentle Leader) to calm down an excited dog. The Halti controls the dog's head and its mouth. Do not use the Halti when your dog is in its crate or when left alone. Sharon says that if your dog has been properly trained, you should be able to control it both with and without its collar. Foster parents may take their foster dogs through Sharon's GROWL class for aggressive/reactive dogs free of charge.

**Housetraining:** Crating is the easiest way to housetrain 99% of dogs. For dogs other than young pups, take the dog outside to potty at 2 hour intervals throughout the day. Walk it on a leash to its designated potty area and say your chosen elimination word.

If the dog relieves itself, give it play time. If not, take the dog back to its crate.

**Pulling on the leash:** Walk the dog on a Halti. Whenever the dog starts to pull on the leash, move in the opposite direction.

**Exercise:** Tired dogs are happy dogs. Dogs should get a minimum of 10 minutes of continuous, brisk walking—no sniffing or stopping to potty. If you are unable to walk your dogs, get a treadmill and teach them to walk on it.

**Closing Thoughts:** Finding ways to make your foster dogs move into the real world should be a top priority. Keeping dogs away from the things they fear does them a great disservice. Our goal for all of our GRRR foster dogs is to get them out of foster care and into an adoptive family. Give your foster dog structure, boundaries, training, and discipline to make it more adoptable. Help instill the confidence and trust each dog needs to be successful in a new environment.

**Sharon's Recommended Books and Authors:** (available online at Dogwise, Amazon, Target)

**Canine Body Language** by Brenda Aloff

**Get Connected With Your Dog** by Brenda Aloff

Karen Pryor—clicker training

Sue Sternberg—shelter dogs



## DONATIONS:

Donations to GRRR were made by the following individuals and groups:

**Miss Isabel Nauman**, who asked her friends to make donations to GRRR instead of bringing gifts to her birthday party

**In honor of Isabel Nauman's birthday:**

- The **Bickel** family
- The **Marpegan-Penchaszadeh** family
- The **Baker** family
- **friends** (names unavailable), who made cash donations

**Aaron and Christine Mayer**

- in memory of **Rusty**

**Christine Miller**

**Tim and Deanna Gorman and family**

**Mrs. Lynne Glatthaar and her Golden furkids, Casey, Murphy, and Penny**

**Bill and Barb Blacksher**

- in memory of **Goldie, Nala, and Simba**

## WAGS AND BRAGS:

**Chloe (Queen Bee) Rogers** will be 11 years old on November 17<sup>th</sup>. We hope all of Chloe's dog wishes come true on her special day!

**Blitz Blacksher** has made it into the double digits! He tipped the scales at 97 pounds on his most recent weigh-in. That's 33 pounds lost so far, with about 15 more pounds to go. Blitz celebrated the event by downing one Heartgard Plus tablet instead of the two he had needed in previous months. Blitz certainly didn't see anything fair about that!

## ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER:

Please send items of interest, *photos of your pups, brags*, etc. to:

[blacksher@charter.net](mailto:blacksher@charter.net)

*Please submit items by the last day of the month to include them in the newsletter for the following month.*

## I RESCUED A HUMAN TODAY

I rescued a human today.

Her eyes met mine as she walked down the corridor peering apprehensively into the kennels.

I felt her need instantly and I knew I had to help her.

I wagged my tail, not too exuberantly, so she wouldn't be afraid.

As she stopped at my kennel, I blocked her view from a little accident I had in the back of my cage.

I didn't want her to know that I hadn't been walked today.

Sometimes the shelter keepers get too busy and I didn't want her to think poorly of them.

As she read my kennel card, I hoped that she wouldn't feel sad about my past.

I only have the future to look forward to and want to make a difference in someone's life.

She got down on her knees and made little kissy sounds at me.

I shoved my shoulder and side of my head up against the bars to comfort her.

Gentle fingertips caressed my neck; she was desperate for companionship.

## I RESCUED A HUMAN TODAY (cont.)

A tear fell down her cheek, and I raised my paw to assure her that all would be well.

Soon my kennel door opened and her smile was so bright that I instantly jumped into her arms.

I would promise to keep her safe.

I would promise to always be by her side.

I would promise to do everything I could to see that radiant smile and sparkle in her eyes.

I was so fortunate that she came down my corridor.

So many more are out there who haven't walked the corridors.

So many more to be saved.

At least I could save one.

I rescued a human today.

*Thanks to Joan Ellege and to Sue Freund for submitting the above poem for use in the newsletter.*



Yadi, an escape artist who rivals Houdini, works on escaping from the double gate arrangement which was designed to isolate him from the Blacksher dogs while he was recuperating from pneumonia. Yadi broke out of a crate with locks, escaped under and over gates, and eventually squeezed his way through these gates as well. If it weren't for the c-clamp on the bottom gate, Yadi would have opened the door himself and walked right out. It was eventually decided to let Yadi recuperate with his adoptive family since they don't have other pets.

**TO ADOPT OR SURRENDER A DOG, CALL THE  
GGRR PHONE LINES:**

**314-995-5477**

### Officers

**President:** Pat Moran  
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**Vice-President:** Tim Miget  
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**Secretary:** Barb Blacksher  
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**Treasurer:** Beth Johnson  
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**Member Rep:** Chris Rogers  
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### Coordinators:

**Intake Coordinator:** Barb Blacksher  
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**Adoption Coordinator:** Carrie Tennesen  
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**Membership Coordinator:** Janice Elsenraat  
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**Events Coordinator:** Chris Rogers  
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### Mentors:

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**Adoption Phone Lines:** Barb Blacksher  
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**Home Visits:** Shane Stark  
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**Dog Visits:** Shane Stark  
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**Foster Homes:** Kathy Dierkes  
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