

Renaissance Poodles

The Newsletter of Poodle Rescue of New England

Welcome Note...by Mahala Beams

Once again the holidays have come and gone in a frantic flurry just as winter arrived in full force, bringing everything from glorious cold and snowy days to gales, ice storms and slush. To protect our pets in winter weather, we list some safety tips in this issue of *Renaissance Poodles*. To remind you of the recent holidays, we offer a gallery of seasonal photos. To help prevent marking behavior, Andrew (*Ask Andrew*) proffers his valuable advice. To celebrate Valentine's Day and to remind you of PRNE's need for your support, we present the poodle *Valentine of the Year*.

However, our main focus in this issue is on fostering and on the stories of those who foster. We hope that these confessions, poems, and "happy tails" will inspire some of you to join the ranks of those who do this tremendously important work.

Poodle Rescue of New England often has more dogs to place than available foster homes. Moreover, the economic hardships of the past year have resulted in more people being unable to care for their pets. Neglected or homeless dogs abound, and requests to surrender pets are up dramatically. Thus the need for foster homes is critical, greater than ever. It has been difficult to handle the current demand, and without more foster homes, we will be forced to turn away some dogs that need our help.

As we look forward optimistically to the New Year and its promise for new beginnings, we ask that you consider taking in a dog in need if it is possible for you to do so. The rewards far outweigh the difficulties as you help a dog along a path to a new and better life or in the case of elderly or ill dogs, to loving homes in which to live out their remaining days.

Consider the deplorable condition of some of the neglected dogs like Dolly who come to Poodle Rescue of New England. Virtually thrown away in her later years, blind and infirm, Dolly was nursed back to health by her dedicated foster mother. Transformed by her care and affection, Dolly was then adopted by this devoted woman.

Or consider the thirty-two dogs rescued last fall by PRNE from a puppy mill, most of whom have never lived in loving homes before. These dogs, forced to have litter after litter, are now learning to enjoy people and other dogs in their foster homes. As they become ready, they are moving into permanent homes thanks to their caring foster parents.

By no means are all dogs who require fostering difficult or from neglectful owners. The circumstances of foster dogs vary tremendously. Also PRNE members experienced in fostering dogs are happy to offer advice, support and encouragement to any new fosterers.

In closing, as an appeal for new fosterers, we reprint Diane Morgan's 1999 testament to the rewards of fostering:

A Poem to My Foster Dog

I am the bridge between what was and what can be.
 I am the pathway to a new life.
 I am made of mush,
 Because my heart melted when I saw you,
 Matted and sore, limping, depressed,
 Lonely, unwanted, afraid to love.
 For one little time you are mine.
 I will feed you with my own hand
 I will love you with my whole heart
 I will make you whole.
 I am made of steel.
 Because when the time comes,
 When you are well, and sleek,
 When your eyes shine,
 And your tail wags with joy
 Then comes the hard part.
 I will let you go -- not without a tear,
 But without a regret.
 For you are safe forever --
 A new dog needs me now

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Dolly before PRNE rescue



Dolly after PRNE rescue

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Foster Homes Needed!

Do you love poodles? Do you have the desire to help those in need? Poodle Rescue of New England desperately needs safe, loving, responsible foster homes. Foster homes are fundamental to our mission; without them we are unable to continue to care for surrendered and abandoned dogs. During these difficult economic times, more and more people are turning to us for help in finding adoptive homes for the dogs they can no longer keep.

Because some of our foster dogs come from less than desirable situations and can be unpredictable, we prefer that our foster providers have a securely fenced yard and a home without small children. These requirements are for the safety of both the dogs and our foster providers.

Let us know if you can help a poodle in need!

HOURS: Part-time

COMMITMENT: Whole-hearted

PAY: Not a dime, but recognition for a job well done and the knowledge that you have changed a dog's life.

Apply at prnevolunteer@yahoo.com

Being a Foster Mom

by Cathy Palmer

What is it like to be a foster mom, to make a difference in a dog's life?

I discovered the pleasure it is to share my home with a little poodle in need. So loving, Mickey jumps in my lap, lays his head back against my arm and peeks up at me as if to say, "I'm happy. Thanks for caring." My heart melts as he looks up with those scared little eyes – I just have to scoop him up and hug him to assure him that everything will be all right.

This foster is different, however. He has been with me for a long time, over a year and a half. As I grow very attached to this loving boy, I have to remember that he will eventually be going into his forever home. A couple of attempts along the way were very disappointing, as finding that special home for Mickey just didn't work out. In each case it was nothing he did or didn't do. The circumstances were simply wrong. We keep up hope and continue to look for his special home.

Being a foster dog is scary. Mickey came into our home very confused as to why he was here. Why is my family sending me away? Did I do something wrong? At first he was quiet, didn't really associate with the other dogs in our home, was a loner. Over time he began to play more, to interact more, and to become a happy dog. It didn't take long for his personality to show through.

We have new hope. Recently we found a possible home for Mickey. Now the process to see if there is a fit between this precious little dog and the family who wants to adopt him begins yet again. It's an exciting time, a chance to bring together a family willing to share their love and home with a dog longing to be in a loving home.



Mickey

Cross your fingers and wish us luck!

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The Gift of Fostering

by Holly De Nike

My husband and I have been fortunate to foster two dogs for PRNE, Poochie and Minnie. Each came with a history of neglect, of poor living conditions, and of lack of medical care. Each had challenges to overcome. Poochie had an untreated eye condition and his poor vision causes him to be very fearful. It took us days to be able to get physically close to him and weeks before we could pet him. Minnie had no idea what a collar or leash was so she would cry out whenever we tried to put one on her. Some of these challenges were easier to work through than others and PRNE offered great support to us as we were working with Poochie and Minnie.

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The Gift of Fostering...

Continued from page 2

Here are a few things that I have learned from being a fosterer. Fostering does not always mean fixing. Some dogs that come in to PRNE have issues that will stay with them for the rest of their lives, like Poochie's fearful behavior. Poochie will never be the happy-go-lucky dog I would love for him to be. But it has been my privilege to be able to create an environment for him where he can feel safe, maybe for the first time. And this safety has made a dramatic improvement in his level of fearfulness. What an immense gift to me that is.

Fostering is a commitment of time, love, energy and patience. The return on that investment though is priceless. How often in life can you have such a profoundly positive impact on the life of another being? What wouldn't I give to be able to do that?

Fostering will stretch your heart beyond what you thought possible. When Minnie came to live with us she was malnourished causing her fur to be dry and her skin to flake. To pet her silky fur now makes me joyful beyond words.

I could say many other things about fostering, but each statement would end with some words describing how much the experience has given me. Poochie and Minnie are not the same dogs that first came to live with us.

Thank you, PRNE, for giving us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of these dogs.

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Confessions of a Foster Mom

by Marcella Stasa

I'm a terrible foster mother.

I fall in love. I have yet to take in a dog and send it on its merry way into a new home, but I'm working on it!

My history with foster care is mostly because of having friends involved in animal rescue who have requested occasionally that I take an animal in on a temporary basis. However, the truth is, every dog that has ever come here on a temporary basis has really come here to retire. Having a friend who works at the MSPCA was a sure way to end up with sweet animals who could not be placed due to old age, illness or behavioral issues.

We had hoped we could take a break from challenged pets when we contacted PRNE about adopting a poodle. Subsequently we adopted Jake - the love of my life. But, silly me, I thought Jake needed a buddy his own size, and this brought us Paco. Paco came as a foster with the possibility that he might be a permanent addition to our family as a companion to Jake, assuming they got along. But Paco hated Jake. What did I do? I sent in the adoption fee and paperwork, of course. I had fallen for Paco. Love conquers all, right? Well, not really in the world of dogs, but in my head, absolutely.

Next came Simon, one of the nicest dogs I've ever met. Loving, energetic, cuddly and an all around good guy, he's the one we decided, with great reservation, to send into the adoption pool. I was in love again, but this dog had no apparent issues. He liked everyone, ate well, was housebroken and crate friendly; in other words, he was very adoptable. In fairness to him, I felt that he'd be happiest in a home where he could commandeer all the love rather than having to share it with our other dogs.

A couple of options for him fell through, and just as well, as he turns out to have an "issue" after all. He has intervertebral disc disease, which at best causes pain and at worst, paralysis. He needs medication and monitoring, and we have to restrict his movement, all in an effort to avoid expensive surgery. He's very frisky and it's heartbreaking to crate him when he wants to play. So far medication is doing the trick. We hope that this will work for the long-term, but it's a special person who would adopt a dog with such a pre-existing condition. I can just see my husband rolling his eyes: "Yeah, Marcella, 'special' - that would be you..."

I think Simon may be here for a while. Not a problem, it's that love thing again.



Then there's Buffy, also known as "The Love-Buff" (I think you know where I'm going with this). He was given up when his caretaker could no longer afford to feed him. His physical exam showed that he had growths on and near his liver. His blood work didn't look all that good either, and that, along with his advanced age, made him a surgical risk. Removal of the growths with work on his teeth at the same time was not recommended. I ask you, how adoptable is a dog with the breath of a dragon who might have cancer? Well, to me, 100% adoptable. This is now his forever home where he can live out the time he has with as much love as I can give him.

Finally (maybe), there's Tasha. She's another older dog, so naturally there are issues - icky teeth, anemia, urinary infection, a heart murmur, deafness, cataracts, yeasty ears, and then some...but I totally adore her. I think she expects to retire here too, and that's fine with me.

So as you can see, I'm the world's worst foster mother!

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Licorice, first day of rescue



Licorice transformed!

Before and After...



Cooper before surgery



Cooper after surgery



Cooper now!



Coco, first day of rescue



Coco transformed!



Ginger, first day of rescue.



Ginger, resplendent in her new coat.



Emma, first day of rescue



Emma transformed!

Fostering is... by Liz Palmer

Fostering is:

Meeting a dog who is broken in body or spirit and lonely because he or she has no home.

Opening one's heart and home knowing fully the probable chaos that will ensue.

Steeling oneself before seeing the neglect, cruelty and lovelessness one's fellow humans have inflicted.

Having your heart break for those who surrender dogs because circumstances have forced them to do so.

Cleaning poop, pee and throw up.

Giving a dog the time and space to learn to trust.

Learning to be patient.

Driving to vet hospitals and groomers.

Medicating, brushing, bathing, feeding.

Worrying, worrying, worrying... is the foster dog getting enough? Are my dogs getting too little?

Beginning to see the healing of mind and body.

Loving and protecting them fiercely.

Becoming very frustrated at not being perfect.

Trying to believe there is someone out there who will love this dog as much as you.

Keeping too many.

Searching for a home.

Crying when they are gone.

Hoping all will go well. Accepting when it does not.

Opening one's heart and home to the next needy dog.

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Winter Tips... by Kim Rosen



Sporting his winter fleece, Figaro frolics with friends.

Living in New England, we all have seasonal routines to prepare for colder weather. We pull out our shovels and ice melt, change our wardrobes, and ready our cars. Here are some tips for insuring our faithful companions are just as prepared for winter weather!

- Dogs without heavy coats might require a jacket or sweater to protect them from the cold and precipitation. Look for coats and sweaters that are warm and weatherproof, but not too cumbersome to put on and take off.
- Remember their feet! Some dogs will tolerate booties, but there are other options. Many people find that small balloons fit well on their dog's feet while not being too difficult for the dog to accept. Think of them as latex gloves. Also bag balm is great for preventing snow and ice from sticking to and building up between the pads of your dog's paws.
- Regular grooming should include keeping the hair around the pads of the feet trimmed to prevent ice and snow from accumulating.
- Rock salt and Ice Melt can cause serious burns. Several pet safe products are available that work just as well such as Safe Paw and Petco Ice Melt.

- Thoroughly wipe your dog's paws and belly when you come in from outdoors, especially if there's any chance your pal has gotten near any ice melting chemicals or antifreeze. Because antifreeze is tasty to animals, we want to insure they don't lick it off themselves.
- Antifreeze is highly toxic to dogs! It tastes good to them, but a very small amount could be fatal. If you believe your dog has ingested any amount of antifreeze, get him or her to your veterinarian ASAP!
- If you're lucky enough to live near a lake or pond, make sure your dog does not run out on dangerously thin ice!
- Just as we love to sit near a fireplace, our dogs will be equally drawn to the warmth. Be certain you have a heavy screen your dog cannot push down and never leave your dog unattended near the hearth.
- Older dogs and dogs with arthritic conditions will need special attention when walking on snow and ice. Also arthritis and other joint pain always feel worse in cold and damp weather. So make sure you have plenty of warm bedding for your friend!
- Never leave your dog alone in the car. A car can function like a refrigerator and potentially lead to freezing.
- Always make sure your dog is leashed and wearing his or her collar. According to the ASPCA, more dogs get lost during the winter than any other season. In inclement weather, dogs are apt to lose their scent and find themselves unable to find their way home.

Following these guidelines will insure that our beloved companions will enjoy a safe, healthy and fun-filled winter.



Harley digs for buried treasure.

Ask Andrew

(with help from Laura Klein Plunkett)

Dear Andrew,

I don't know if you can help me or not. I have a problem that my mother isn't very happy about. I tend to lift my leg on the corner of the kitchen island and mark it. I don't know what comes over me and I don't know if I can stop it. I know it's wrong and I know how to go to the door and ask to go out to do all of my business, but sometimes I get this urge to pee inside the house. I've been checked out at the vet and I'm fine. Can you help?

Tiny Tim

Dear Tiny Tim's Mother,

Urine marking is a deeply embedded canine behavior and experts don't agree on the causes. However, research into the dynamics of wolf packs indicates a territorial component to this behavior. Wolves tend to avoid areas marked by other wolves, so scent marking, especially by dominant wolves, establishes pack boundaries, helps to space out dominant wolves and reduces competition for limited resources.

Domestic dogs differ from wolves inasmuch as dogs do not avoid areas where other dogs have marked. Actually, dogs will seek out surfaces that other dogs have marked and dribble their urine over the area too. (This behavior is not restricted to male dogs. Females will also mark, but generally to a lesser degree and usually not on vertical surfaces.) After marking, many dogs make scratching motions with their feet. Scientists speculate that scratching spreads the urine odor to a wider area, establishes a visual indication of the mark, and transfers the dog's scent from the glands on the feet to the ground. It is also thought that marking provides a dog with an increased sense of comfort in their environment.

We do know that the tendency to mark starts early in a dog's life. Puppies are most likely to eliminate in familiar areas and at locations previously marked by their parents. This same marking behavior helps with housetraining since dogs like to eliminate in areas that they and other dogs have used in the past.

Excitable and reactive dogs are more likely to mark, as are socially dominant or aggressive dogs. Also males that are neutered later in life tend to exhibit more marking behavior.

Things that trigger marking:

- New objects in the environment such as packages, a visitor's bag, new furniture.
- Objects with another animal's scent.
- Changing pack hierarchy; a new dog or other animal in the home, a dog leaving the home, another dog's illness or death.
- Visitors, increased activity in the home, proximity to a female in heat.
- A baby with a dirty diaper may trigger marking.

What You Can Do:

- Clean soiled areas thoroughly with an enzyme-based cleaner such as Nature's Miracle.
- Prevent establishing the scent by taping Chux or other absorbent pads on areas that are commonly marked.
- Make previously marked areas unattractive. Feed or play with the dog in the areas he likes to mark.
- Restrict access to areas where he likes to mark. Crate him when you cannot watch him. Tether him to your waist so you can watch his behavior. When you see signs that he's looking for a place to mark, take him outside pronto and praise him. If you catch him in the act, interrupt him with a "no" and whisk him outside.
- Use a bellyband lined with a sanitary pad. (Poodle Rescue can provide you with inexpensive custom sized bellybands. Contact us for information at info@poodlerescuene.org).
- Small dogs are more of a challenge than larger dogs. Small drops of urine often go undetected and act as triggers for future marking. Clean carefully everywhere and be vigilant.
- Use NILF (Nothing in Life is Free). Make your dog work for everything he gets from you. Before he can eat, have him sit. Before he can go outside, have him sit or give you a paw. If his marking has a dominance component, establishing yourself as the one in charge will help diminish his need to mark his territory.

What You Should Not Do:

- Don't punish. Punishing marking will teach the dog that you'll be unhappy when you see him pee, so he'll seek out areas to mark where you won't see him. You don't want him to find hidden areas to mark; you want him to stop marking. Punishment after the fact is ineffective because the dog won't know why he's being scolded.
- Don't withhold water.

Remember, dogs aren't people. They don't misbehave out of jealousy, or spite, or anger, or any other human emotion. Canine behavior is complex and not completely understood, but we do know that consistent and patiently applied positive behavior modification techniques will help resolve this issue and preserve the loving bond between human and dog.

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If you need advice on training and behavioral issues,

Ask Andrew!

Andrew has over 16 years experience as a Ph.D. (Phenomenal Dog). In each issue of Renaissance Poodles he will share his knowledge. Send your questions to info@poodlerescuene.org.

Holiday Gallery



Ginger and Santa



Susie and Santa



Silly and Santa



Pixie and Santa



Simon and Max



Sonny and Mac



Figaro and Triton

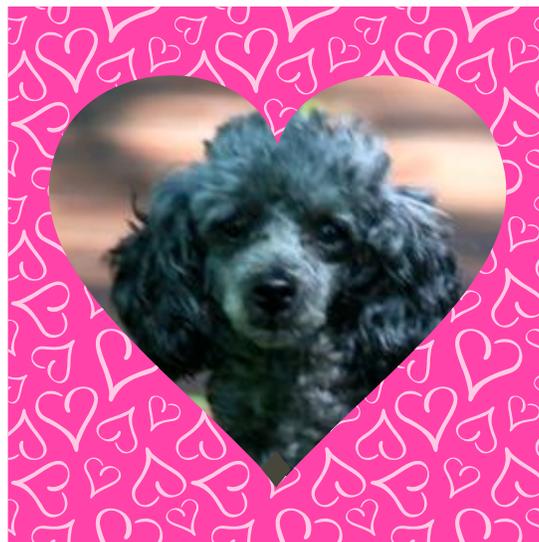
February is our Valentine's Issue!

Won't you please consider making a donation so that we can continue to help all the poodles, like Ashley, who need our help?

Please send donations to:

Poodle Rescue of New England
P.O. Box 441447
Somerville, MA 02144-0012

Please include your email address so that we can send our acknowledgement and thanks electronically and thus save more money for the poodles in need.



Valentine of the Year

Ashley

Ashley is as sweet as they come. However, her story is one all too familiar to us, beginning with having just been sold "as is" from a puppy mill in Maine after enduring seven years of non-stop breeding; Ashley was a very sick and worn out little girl. Shortly after, Ashley was given to PRNE and has remained ever since because her foster mother just adopted her!

She's come a long way over the past nine months, but the affects of living in such deplorable conditions have done a number on her. (Watch for Ashley's story in the next issue of *Renaissance Poodles*.) Fortunately, she's a survivor and is our *Valentine of the Year* poodle!





Figaro

Alert!

Large dogs who have deep chests like standard poodles are prone to bloat, a dangerous condition in which the stomach twists and blocks the flow of blood to the heart, spleen and stomach. Bloat or GDV (Gastric dilatation- volvulus) is extremely painful and can lead to death.

Many of us with standard poodles use raised food and water bowls for our pets in the belief that they help to prevent bloat.

However, the findings of recent research suggest that raised bowls actually may contribute to the development of bloat, as reported in the November 2008 issue of *Your Dog*, published by the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

It seems the ingestion of more air, which results from eating and drinking from raised bowls, may be the culprit.

Thus it may be best to put food and water bowls on the floor for your standard poodles.

Reminder!

Next spring at the Sheraton Hotel in Needham, MA, Jan Fennell, the acclaimed original dog listener, will present her techniques for shaping positive behavior in dogs:

- Foundation Course in Canine Communication: April 18 and 19, 2009, 9 am – 4:30 pm
- Advanced Course: April 24, 25 and 26, 2009, 9 am – 4:30 pm
- An Evening with Jan Fennell: April 21, 2009, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm. (Proceeds from this evening will be donated to Poodle Rescue of New England!)

For more information on Jan Fennell and her techniques, visit: <http://www.janfennellthedoglistener.com> or email pwright01@snet.net.

Experience the pure pleasure of a relationship with your dog that both of you truly deserve!

WHO WE ARE

Newsletter Committee: Mahala Beams, Amanda Lion, Alice O'Connor, Laura Klein Plunkett and Kim Rosen

Board of Directors: Merrilea Agostino, Amanda Lion, Sue Matre, Alice O'Connor and Laura Klein Plunkett

Please let us know if you have a topic, a question, a suggestion or a story to share for the next issue of the newsletter. Also, since we plan to email you when the latest issue of *Renaissance Poodles* is available on line, please send your email address to: poodlerescue@poodlerescue.org

For more information on Poodle Rescue of New England, please visit our website: www.poodlerescue.org.