

Joy and grief are inseparable, when sad you are actually weeping over that which once brought you joy.

This is the first of a two part article by Charlene Marvin and Donna Drabek.



Sharing your life with a pet entails the responsibility of having to make decisions, the most difficult being euthanasia. As an animal enthusiast you will eventually have to face the loss of a beloved companion: an aged dog

goes to sleep and does not awaken, an ill dog collapses and stops breathing, the dog you were so sure was trustworthy off leash is killed by a car. In these instances there is no negotiation, your pet is gone. Unfortunately, more often than not you will find yourself with a geriatric, terminally ill or injured dog and the difficulty of facing euthanasia. How do you know when it is time? Ask yourself:

- ◆ Is quality of life present?
- ◆ What has my vet recommended?
- ◆ Can I keep my pet comfortable and pain free?
- ◆ Am I being financially responsible?
- ◆ Is my choice for my pet's benefit or mine?
- ◆ How will I look back and remember this experience?

Forethought about euthanasia, although unpleasant, can help alleviate and clarify the stress and confusion when burdened by this emotional decision making. To have a plan gives decision making structure. Structure gives strength. Strength leads to the inner sense of

knowing you did the right thing for your pet.

Euthanasia is accomplished by an injection of barbiturate sometimes facilitated by an intravenous catheter inserted to assure access to a vein. The drug causes a deep sleep and in 30-60 seconds the lungs and heart will stop functioning. Your presence can be very comforting to your pet who will then close it's eyes for the last time knowing that it's trust in you was well placed. On the other hand, your pet can detect your emotional state, so be present only if you are able to provide calm support. Should you choose not to be present, don't feel guilty, but know that the last thing your pet will experience is the sound of a kindly voice and the caring, competent touch of your vet. Making payment upon arrival at your veterinary clinic will be less stressful than dealing with business after the procedure.

Several choices are available to you when deciding on your pet's final arrangements. A backyard burial will require you to transport your pet back home where local ordinances should be considered. Commercial burial or cremation arrangements can be made through your vet or directly with a pet cemetery. The fees for these services are determined by the weight of your pet and communal or individual options. Whatever brings comfort and closure with respect to your deceased pet is the appropriate choice for you.

Grief is the price you pay for having loved. The relationship with your pet has ended and you are likely to feel the loss for some time. You may experience various stages of grief; shock of your loss, denial, anger that you could have or should have done more, depression and finally acceptance. Do not deprive yourself time to heal, affirm your right to grieve and seek the sympathetic ear of

someone who can appreciate your anguish. Look to the numerous avenues on the subject of pet loss such as books, websites and support groups to help you through this troubling experience. Eventually the emptiness will not occur as often, the sadness will pass more quickly.

As an adult you may have to assist a child through the grieving process. Sometimes the loss of the family pet is the child's first experience with death. If possible, prepare the child in advance and allow an opportunity to say goodbye. Consider the child's ability to understand, answer questions honestly and do not be afraid to show your feelings. Refrain from explaining the pet's death as being 'put to sleep' as the child may interpret this as the pet eventually waking up. Including a ritual of farewell such as a memory box full of the pet's favorite things has been proven to ease a child past distress and accept the finality of death.

Other family pets are not exempt from grieving. Do not be surprised if you notice behavioral changes such as depression expressed by whining and crying, loss of appetite, a break in house training, lethargy, pacing and refusal to let you out of sight. Speak to your surviving pet, try to be patient and understanding. The simple act of touching your grieving pet can go a long way towards mutual healing.

A couple of thoughts:

- ◆ A highly debated issue is the introduction of a new dog into your home prior to death of your ailing pet thereby easing the pain of loss.
- ◆ The greatest tribute to the loss of a valued companion is the eventual introduction of another into your life. From Nancy Mahoney, who found solace in a new dog: "remember you can't replace an

(Continued on page 6)

Dental Dilemma

By Harry S. Newman, DVM

I am often asked, "What is the most frequent medical problem seen in retired greyhounds?" The first thought that comes to mind would be lameness from old injuries, also epilepsy and urinary incontinence seem to be frequent findings. However, the most serious and most common medical problem by far is dental disease. All retired greyhounds come to us with periodontal disease, some mildly affected, but the majority severely troubled with tartar, plaque, gingivitis, receded gums, and loose teeth. The tartar and bad breath are implications of much greater problems in the making for these ex-racers.

During their initial examination, special attention is directed towards oral disease. These dogs are all in need of teeth cleaning, sub-gingival curettage, and in some cases extraction or root canal procedures. The necessary procedures are done prior to their adoption, but the problem does not end here.

Bacteria in the mouth produce toxins which cause breakdown of the periodontal structures of the teeth. The bacteria can gain entrance into the body through the diseased tooth socket and end up travelling through the blood stream to distant organs such as the liver, kidneys, and heart valves. Signs and symptoms of further disease will depend on which organ system is affected. Chronic renal failure, valvular heart disease and hepatitis are but a few of the diseases that can be caused by neglect-

ing dental problems. Although B.G.A. responsibly makes sure these dogs start their new life with a clean bill of health, the problem of periodontal disease begins once again just days after a dental cleaning. Tartar and plaque start accumulating almost immediately. It is up to us as greyhound owners to see that this problem is controlled. What can we do as concerned owners of adopted ex-racers?

- 1) We must brush our dogs teeth as often as possible, daily would be ideal but maybe not realistic.
- 2) Feeding hard treats helps remove about 6% of tartar accumulation.
- 3) Feeding rawhide helps remove about 60% of tartar accumulation.
- 4) Antiseptic mouth washes such as chlorhexidine keeps bacterial counts lower.
- 5) Antiseptic chlorhexidine patches also help to keep bacterial counts lower.
- 6) Yearly dental cleaning by your veterinarian is a must for most greyhounds.
- 7) Pulse Therapy, a rather new concept for controlling periodontal disease in pets, consists of placing your dog on the antibiotic Clindamycin (Antirobe) for five days in a row, once monthly. This technique greatly reduces the disease producing bacteria and their toxins found in the mouth.

Controlling periodontal disease provides a major health benefit for our retired greyhounds and must start soon after the adoption process is complete and your dog feels comfortable in its new surroundings.

From the Mailbox



The Truth About Cats and Dogs

The truth about cats and dogs is that we just don't understand most of the things our people do. For instance:

Very early in the morning, sometimes even before the sun is up, there's a very loud noise coming from a very small box that wakes us all up. My Mrs. hits it, but it just keeps waking us up every few minutes. At some point she decides enough is enough and she gets out of bed. This must be what stops the noise because it doesn't happen again until the next morning. This ritual goes on for five mornings, then for two mornings there is no noise and we just get up whenever. We (my brothers and sister and I) like those mornings the best.

Another thing we don't understand is why my brother and I are made to go out sometimes even if we don't want or need to. The cats never have to go out. This is something else I don't get. Where do they go to, uh, well, you know, relieve themselves? Anyway, always before they go somewhere, and every night before bed, they put us outside for a few minutes. It's great when I have to 'go', but usually I don't, so *what's the point?*

O.K., here's one. My brother and I aren't allowed upstairs except for bed. I've heard the folks say this is because the cats need *a place of their own*. A PLACE OF THEIR OWN!!! Then how come they're allowed **downstairs**? Don't we need a place of **our own**?

Finally, we don't understand why our people can't stay home with us all the time. Every day they go to a place called 'work'. They go out other times, but this 'work' takes them away the most. So we all just lie around together in the sun that comes through the big windows waiting for them. We all like it best when they come home to us.

- By Pharaoh Jankowski, with contributions from Aspen, Alex, and Basia Jankowski.

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A limited number of 1998 Greyhound Project Calendars are now available. Simply return this coupon with your check or money order payable to Buffalo Greyhound Adoption. Price per calendar is \$10.00.

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Return coupon to: Buffalo Greyhound Adoption
 P.O. Box 1096 Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225

FOSTER SEMINAR

If you are interested in becoming a foster family, the next seminar will be:

Friday, January 16, 1998

Location:

799 Sherwood Court

Depew, NY 14043

7:00 PM

RSVP to Donna Drabek, 684-7658

On Behalf of the Extra Special

My name is 'Yellow Ice', and I would like to share my story with you. B.G.A. placed me into foster care after my former owner returned me complaining of behavioral problems. There I was, seven and a half years old, displaced, accused of being a problem. I wondered what my chances of being adopted could be? Would anyone ever love me again?

Greyhounds are as individual as people, some of us have special needs. Does this make us any less important? My two foster homes thought I was worth their time. They were patient, understanding, and made sure they knew what it was I needed. A family came along that wanted to adopt me. B.G.A. made very clear to this family my needs and were very supportive.

My adoption was April of this year. I live with two greyhounds, five

cats and six birds. Sometimes we have a foster dog. Mom and Dad are always telling me how much they love me, and how proud they are that I have never made a mess in the house. They do not consider me any extra work. Their home suited *all* of our needs.

I only hope that more adopting families can keep an open mind and get past labels such as 'Return Dog', 'Special Needs', and 'Problem Dog'. Not everyone is in a situation which allows them to adopt a 'Special Dog', and to those I appreciate your honesty. Others who are considering a 'Special Dog', you may just surprise yourself.

If you do give one of these greyhounds a second chance, I can guarantee that they will give you unconditional love.

Thank You, Ice



Ice has found a loving home.

Thank You!!!

Thanks to the following people for their assistance in making our Chinese Auction at Christmas in the Country a success.

Alethea's Chocolates
Alleyway Theatre
ALCOR
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Marianne Annibali
Blockbuster Video
Bob Evans of Hamburg
Bob-O-Link Golf Course
Bonard's Country Village
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Buffalo Bisons
Buffalo Limousine
Buffalo Philharmonic
Buffalo Sabres/ George Babcock
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The Marvin Family
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The McCann Family
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Old Mother Hubbard

Olive Garden
Pep Boys
Perkins of Snyder
PetSmart
The Pike Family
Putt Putt Golf & Games
Salvatore's Italian Garden
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Studio Arena Theatre
Swing In Time Golf
The Mill
Total Pet
The Uhrinek Family
Pam Walters
Wegman's
Marilyn Westphal
Western Lakes
The Woods Family

Over The Rainbow Bridge

Crisco Getty Puppy Shiloh Stealth Turbo Tyler Zoe

If you haven't read this for a while, or you were wondering about the origin of the phrase 'Rainbow Bridge', we've reprinted the short story below. The author is unknown.

Just this side of Heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they miss someone very special, someone who was left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body begins to quiver. Suddenly, he breaks from the group, flying over the green grass, faster and faster. You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into those trusting eyes, so long gone from your life, but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together...

Submit to us.
Resistance is futile.

Okay, maybe that's taking things a bit too far, but we know there are at least as many greyhound stories as there are greyhounds out there, and we'd love to hear yours.

Deadline for submissions to the Spring newsletter is February 1.

Send your stories, poems, artwork, etc. to:

Off Track Pets
P.O. Box 1096
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225

Or if you prefer, you may send by e-mail to:
mcaughel@aol.com

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pet loss

(Continued from page 1)

- ◆ animal but having four new feet to hold and love will ease the loss of the four old feet that no longer walk."
- ◆ Pine Rest Pet Cemetery has a dedicated staff available to you. It can be easier to seek out your options and make arrangements prior to losing your pet.

It's ironic that several months ago when Charlene and I were tossing around ideas for this article, my husband Brian and I found ourselves in this very situation. Darby, our Irish Setter and 'first born' wiped out while running. The injury eventually led to the diagnosis of a bone tumor. When I asked the vet what we do now, he told me "If it were my dog I would keep him full of pain killers and the first day he doesn't eat I would bring him in to be put down." As straight forward as it sounded, I was thankful for the clear cut advice. Darby never did stop eating, but his last two nights he licked a spot that covered his haunch until it was raw. Obviously he was no longer comfortable. Thirteen days after the diagnosis we had him put to rest. I was obsessed with not wanting to take him into the clinic for the procedure. They say dogs don't think, but I couldn't imagine what might go through Darby's mind when walked into the vet office. In addition, I couldn't picture carrying my lifeless dog back to our vehicle. I'm deeply indebted to our vet for coming out to 'Darby's truck' to administer the injection. It was the hardest thing we've ever done, yet it was smooth and peaceful. We wrapped him in his duck blanket and brought him back home where he belongs. Darby has a tree planted in his honor from friends who appreciated his daffiness the most, a grave marker made by his favorite visitor whom he loved so, and a mum next to his marker from new found friends...and his duck blanket we wrapped him in because he

loved to chase the mallards in the lake at the cottage. (God, I thought he'd drown himself from exhaustion!) All these acts of sympathy helped so very much and we thank everyone who acknowledged his passing. My grieving process was going quite well until I encountered the first Irish Setter since Darby left us. The tears would not stop. Once again, a good friend who was with me helped me through. Brian and I also found our two greyhounds certainly made all the difference in the world with their presence. Now the feeling of loss is fading and the great memories are taking over. And look out- a new Irish puppy is in the future- here we go again!

'Cybercrate' Update

Attention All Cyberhounds!

Do you like to surf the web when mom & dad go to work?

Do you spend all day in romance chat rooms hoping to meet that 'special' hound? (We won't mention the toy poodle you met in 'pet chat')

Do you like to receive and send email? Well, listen up!

Just send your email address to me and you'll be on your way to surfing the web with other greyhounds. If we get enough on-line hounds, we can get together and chat, send each other pictures through email, and share cool grey related web sites. If you are interested....

Send the following information to

Kggrey@aol.com:

Your current email address

Your name and your mom & dad's

names- so folks know who they're contacting- I will email you back, ASAP.

See you in cyberspace!

Alaska & Krissy (Kggrey@aol.com)

1998 Eventful Highlights

February

Niagara Falls Dog Show

April

Maplefest Parade, Franklinville

May

SPCA Petfair, Tonawanda
Kenmore-Tonawanda Showcase

June

Akron Sidewalk Sale
McKinley Mall

July

Niagara County Fair, Lockport
Genesee County Fair, Batavia
Cattaraugus County Fair, Little Valley

August

ERIE COUNTY FAIR (13th-23rd)

October

Hamburg Chamber of Commerce
Olean Craft Show

JOIN US MONTHLY:

Honey Hill Pets, Eastern Hills Mall
(1st Sat.) Marianne Annibali - 683-6333

Nature Company, Galleria Mall
(4th Sat.) Sharon Smith - 839-9075

PETSMART

First Saturday of month:

Niagara Falls

Karen Augello 875-3776

Second Saturday of month:

Amherst

Karen Newell 834-2821

Third Saturday of month:

Cheektowaga

Carolyn Pillard 681-7928

Fourth Saturday of month:

Hamburg

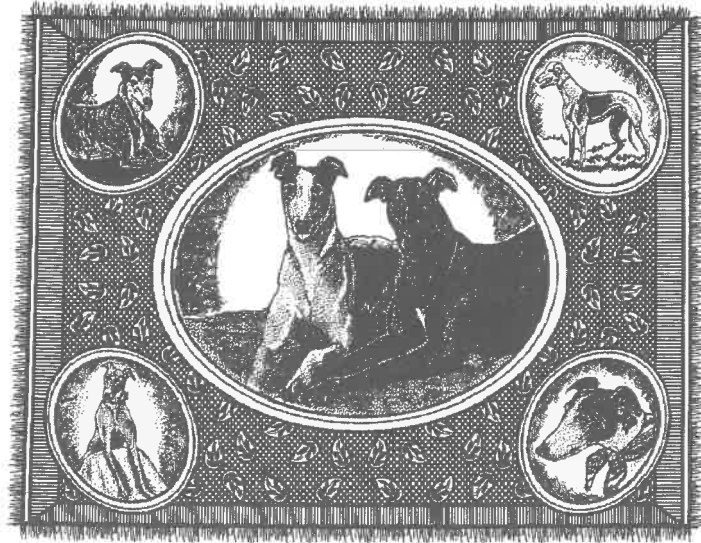
Bev Thomson 652-1858

For any further questions, please contact Sharon Woods, Events coordinator at 941-5265.



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DENIM HAT: Embroidered logo and suede brim. **\$12.00**

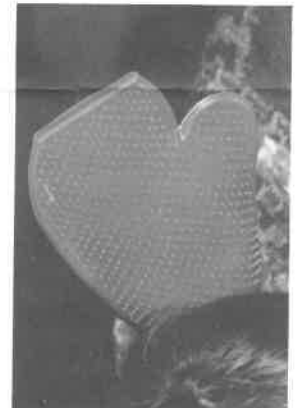
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Grooming Mitt.....\$4.00

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B.G. Accessories P.O. Box 1096 Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225

Maddie

*When you see her brindle fur,
You're sure to fall in love with her.
When you see her cute white feet,
She'll be someone you want to meet.
When you see her friendly smile,
You'll sure want to stay for a while.
But when you see her when she's asleep,
She'll be a dog you want to keep!*

*To: Maddie (my greyhound), age 8
From: Lisa Myszka, age 10*



**P.O. Box 1096
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225**