



PAWPRINTS

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Welcome to the third issue of PAWPRINTS. I am grateful to our sponsor, Merial, and also to the American Veterinary Medical Association for the ongoing determined commitment to reach people who have pets. I hope you find PAWPRINTS interesting and informative.

Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: *Love your pets, and they will love you back*

About the Editors

Steve Dale – Editor-in-Chief. The 2002 AVMA Humane Award winner, Steve is the contributing editor for pets at *USA Weekend*, and host of syndicated radio show "Animal Planet Radio" (www.animal.discovery.com) and "Pet Central" at WGN Radio, Chicago. He authors a twice weekly syndicated newspaper column, and has appeared on TV segments on various Animal Planet shows, "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "National Geographic Explorer" and others. Steve lives with his Devon rex cat Roxy; Lucy, an miniature Australian shepherd, a Brittany named Chaser and Cosette, the blue-tongue skink.

Margaret H. Bonham – Editor. An award winning pet book author; her current titles include *The Complete Guide to Mutts*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Labrador Retrievers and Introduction to Dog Agility*. She lives in Colorado, where she's 'owned' by several Alaskan Malamutes, Alaskan Huskies, a German Shepherd dog and a cat. Margaret's website: www.shadowhelm.net

Assistance Dog of the Year



By Steve Dale

Jeff Brosi and Jasper are the winners of the Eukanuba 2004 Assistance Dog of the Year Contest.

When informed that among 130 entrants, he landed on top, Jeff responded with typical New York City bravado, "Why there's no doubt," he says, "Jasper is one of the best service dogs out there."

Jeff's mom, Pat, is positively jubilant, "After Jasper joined the family, a new light came back to my son's eyes. Any mother can understand what I mean after what's happened."

What happened is the kind of story you might think would only be on a TV soap opera. In 1999, Jeff worked as a bartender to put himself through school. It was a late night and as Jeff was driving home, he pulled off to the shoulder to sleep. A car plowed into his vehicle. Police found that vehicle empty, and with a phony license and registration. To this day, no one knows who hit him.

The first paramedic to arrive was a friend of the family who had known Jeff since he was a baby. "I remember being cut out of the car, but of course, it was a long time before I knew exactly how much my life would change," he says.

He was in the hospital for five months and became a quadriplegic.

Jeff's dreams of becoming a firefighter like his dad and both his brothers were crushed in less than a New York City minute. Jeff had been going to college at Mt. Saint Vincent where he was majoring in elementary education. He managed to return to school, graduate and then began a Master's Degree program in School Counseling from St. John's University (where he has also since graduated).

"He never missed a beat," says mom, Pat. "He'd say, 'Well my life has to go on, doesn't it?' But it wasn't so easy, just doing the littlest thing now took so much time and effort."

Six months after leaving the hospital, Jeff attended a disability expo and signed up with Canine Companions for Independence where he met Jasper.

When Jeff drops things, Jasper - a 3-year old golden/Labrador retriever mix - is right there to pick them up. Jasper also retrieves objects, opens doors and pulls the wheelchair when Jeff gets tired.

Jasper entered Jeff's life when he was in grad school. "There's no question that Jasper attracts people, especially the girls. This is good."

In an essay which he submitted for the contest, Jeff wrote, "A bag of dog food, \$35. A visit to the vet, \$75. The value of Jasper to Jeff, Priceless."

"The bond between Jeff and Jasper is so amazing," Pat says.



The value of Jasper to Jeff...Priceless

As the winner of the Assistance Dog of the Year Contest, Jeff won't have to worry about any more dog food bills. He'll receive a lifetime of Eukanuba food for Jasper. They also receive an all expense paid trip to the 2005 AKC/Eukanuba National Championship dog show in Tampa, FL, January 15 and 16. In addition, Eukanuba is making a \$50,000 contribution to assistance/service dog organizations.



MERIAL MUSINGS

It's More than a Bright Smile

Imagine how your teeth would feel if you didn't brush them for a couple days. How about a couple weeks? A couple years? Yuck! We're appalled at that thought, yet many of us wouldn't dream of ever brushing our pets' teeth. But pets need dental care as much as much as we do.

Periodontal disease and gingivitis are more common in pets than in people. Eight of ten dogs and seven of ten cats over five years have dental disease.

This isn't a matter of cosmetics. Bad teeth are painful and allow dangerous bacteria to invade your pet's bloodstream where internal organs like the heart, liver and kidneys can be infected. Bad teeth really might shorten your pet's life.

Human dentists endorse brushing at least twice daily, flossing and using an anti-

bacterial rinse to treat periodontal disease. Most people probably couldn't do this for their pets. But the good news is there are things you can do to keep your pets' teeth healthy, with your veterinarian's help.

Dental Examination and Cleaning

Regular dental exams are important to determine if a dental cleaning is required. Dental cleaning and polishing requires general anesthesia, but thanks to advanced technology, this procedure is very safe. For the best protection, ask your veterinarian about applying a barrier sealant that prevents plaque from adhering to teeth. Your pet will go home with healthy, white teeth, and "kissable" fresh breath!

Home Care

There are many products available—some make a difference; some really don't. For example, foods, treats and chew products specifically designed and labeled for dental use help. Regular brushing helps even more. Choose a toothpaste specifically made for pets. For arguably the best protection, ask your veterinarian about Oravet™. You apply this product weekly right onto your pets' teeth.

Oravet™ helps protect those teeth by preventing plaque from sticking.

Veterinary dentist Dr. Jean Hawkins of Boise, ID explains, "Getting your pets' teeth cleaned under anesthesia is very important. That's kind of like finally getting your dirty car washed; and Oravet™ is like adding the wax. The wax job gives your car further protection. But then you have to continue to maintain the car with more waxing when needed."



Make dental care a priority for kissable breath.

February is National Pet Dental Health month. But don't wait! Good dental care is important year-round, and really might prolong the healthy life of your best friend with paws. — *Scott Vande Griend DVM*

DINING WITH DOGS

Over 500 dogs dined in Chicago on September 13 at 19 participating restaurants to celebrate "Take Your Dog to Dinner." Diners paid \$10 per dog (in addition to their restaurant tab) to benefit the Chenny Troupe, an animal-assisted therapy group.

Naturally, diners with canines ate Al Fresco. Most restaurants did something

special for the dogs, several prepared biscuits; pasta was served to canines at — you guessed it — an Italian trattoria. Dogs were carded (a rabies tag doubled as an ID) at one place before they could be served a martini for dogs, the Bark-tini.

Singer Wynonna Judd happened upon one of the restaurants and made a con-

tribution, commenting about her dozen or so dogs at home. Last year, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley even proclaimed it "Take Your Dog to Dinner" night in the Windy City.

"No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as a dog does." -- Christopher Morley

FROM THE AVMA

Don't Let Halloween Spook Your Pet



A chill is in the air. As little ghosts and goblins race through the streets, don't let Halloween festivities spook your pet. Along with the brisk breezes of fall come new hazards that can haunt your pet's health. The American Veterinary Medical Association offers the following warnings to protect your pet and enjoy the season.

- **Halloween pranks:** Don't leave your pet outside unattended before, during or after Halloween. Black cats, in particular, are at risk for brutal and vicious pranks.

- **Monitor treats:** The same treats that delight children can land your pet in the veterinary clinic. Chocolate is poisonous for some pets, while candy wrappers and lollipop sticks can be hazardous if swallowed.

- **Provide a safe haven:** Consider keeping your pet in a separate room, away from the door, when trick-or-treaters arrive. Strange people in even stranger clothes can frighten pets, even provoking them to bite or scratch if they feel threatened. Be certain your pets are wearing proper identification

in the event they escape while you are opening your door to trick-or-treaters. Keep lit jack-o-lanterns away from curious pets to avoid disaster.

- **Costumes:** Many pets seem humiliated about being dressed up, they don't like it. Other pets don't seem to mind wearing costumes, but be sure that the outfit doesn't interfere with the pet's ability to breathe, see, hear, move, or bark.

For more information about holiday safety for pets, call or visit your family veterinarian. Remember, your veterinarian is your very best source for advice on keeping your pet safe, healthy, and happy all year long. Visit www.avma.org for additional information about pet safety.



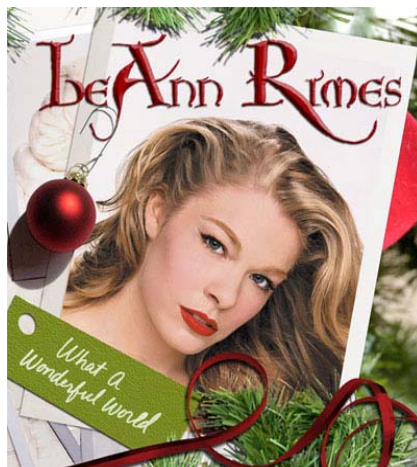
Halloween can be a trick or a treat for pets

LEANN RIMES AND HER BENGALS

How can she live without her pets?

"I couldn't," says and laughs singer LeAnn Rimes, known for hit songs including "How Do I Live?" "Don't Ever Lose That Light In Your Eyes," and "Can't Fight the Moonlight."

She certainly has enough pets. "We [she and husband Dean Sheremet] have seven dogs and two cats. We love our animals. But I was always a dog person until we got the two cats."



Rimes has Bengal cats. This is very active breed whose origins can be

traced to a kind of wild cat from Asia. The Bengals even look like wild cats with spotted or marbled coats and they sometimes sound more like little leopards than they do domestic cats.

"Well, I'll tell you these cats do keep us up at night. They sleep all day—at least ours do. And then in the middle of the night, they stalk us and jump on our bed. I think their goal is to wake us up," she says laughing. "And they usually succeed. And then in the morning we find toys scat-

tered all over."

So who's smarter, the dogs — pets she grew up with — or her recently acquired disorderly felines?

"The cats are definitely smarter," says Rimes. "Dogs need us in a way that I'm not sure that cats do. Well, the cats do need our love, but I think they're more independent and they're better at thinking on their own and taking care of themselves. But then every animal is different."

Rimes says she looks at her pets and notices they know how to live; they always keep that light in their eyes. "We should all live like our pets; I think we can learn from their examples," she says.

— Steve Dale

PAWPRINTS

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FEATURED WEBSITES:

Academy of Veterinary Dentistry — www.avdonline.org/default.html

American Kennel Club — www.akc.org

American Veterinary Medical Association — www.avma.org

Animal Planet Radio — www.animal.discovery.com

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals — www.asPCA.org

Arden Moore’s Website — www.byarden.com

Canine Assistants — www.canineassistants.org

Canine Companions for Independence — www.caninecompanions.org

Good News for Pets — www.goodnewsforpets.com

LeAnn Rimes — www.rimestimes.com/leann.html

Maggie Bonham — www.shadowhelm.net

PetFinder.com — www.petfinder.com

HOWLING GOOD HOWLWEEN PARTIES

Is Halloween a trick or a treat for your pet? All across the country pet owners are skipping people parties and going for a howling good time. Arden Moore, author of the new book *Dog Parties – How to Party with Your Pup* (Bowtie Press \$8.95), explains, “Dog parties are the happening parties these days. About ten million people celebrate their dogs’ birthdays.”

According to Moore, people are enjoying Howlween parties because there’s less stress. “A dog party brings out good doggie manners and socialization skills in a very fun way,” Moore says.

Keep the party short – no more than two hours – and be choosy about whom you invite. While you may want your best friend to come by, skip the invite if

her Snuggles is a nasty-tempered pup.

Plan games in between snacks and don’t forget potty breaks. You’ll need to warn folks to BYOPB (Bring Your Own Potty Bag) and to pick up afterwards.

Here are some canine party games from *Dog Parties – How to Party with Your Pup*, by Arden Moore and *Having Fun With Agility* by Margaret H. Bonham (Howell Book House, 10/04, \$14.95).

Canine willpower—Put the dogs in a stay, put a biscuit in front of them, and tell them to leave it. The dog who stays the longest wins.

Bobbing for biscuits—Get a large shallow pan, such as a sheet cake pan and fill it

with tepid water. Float several large biscuits in the water. Give each contestant a set amount of time to grab all the biscuits he can. The winner is the dog with the most biscuits.

Pumpkin relay—Buy some small, hollow foam pumpkins or pumpkin candy pieces and plastic spoons. Have the owners balance the pumpkins on the spoons while holding their dogs’ leashes. Split the owners up into teams. The owners and dogs must walk backwards to a marked line while balancing the pumpkins and then back to teammates. If they drop the pumpkins, they must start again.

— Margaret H. Bonham, www.shadowhelm.net, www.havingfunwithagility.com

Laugh and Your Dog Laughs with You

Should we be telling jokes to our dog?

What does a dog say when he sits on sandpaper?

Ruff! Ruff!

Or, maybe telling jokes like that is inhumane.

Truth is our dogs love it when we tell them things. If you enjoy the joke, your dog will too.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not at all sure that your pooch exactly understands what it is you’re saying. But then again, for some jokes,

maybe they’re better off. Here’s what I mean.

Did you hear about the dog who got thrown out of the flea circus?

Sure, he was thrown out because he stole the show.

Groucho Marx had it right when he said, “A clown is like an aspirin, only he works twice as fast.”

Of course, Groucho didn’t back up his statement with scientific research, but Dr. Norman Cousins began to by publishing scientific papers and a popular book,

Laughter is the Best Medicine.

Since Cousins did his ground-breaking research, dozens of studies have confirmed his claim that laughter releases endorphins that are healthy for us, and may even alleviate pain and help to heal.

Clearly, if our dogs pick up on our stress – and they do – one can take a leap of faith to assume they also pick up on our joy. You know what they say: “laugh and your dog will laugh with you.”— Steve Dale