

The official newsletter for friends, volunteers and supporters.

The Prez Sez

Life changes. What about the dogs?

Many owners whose lives are changing due to births, deaths, marriages and health issues think about surrendering their dogs.

Mobility

I'm facing a temporary mobility issue myself, and I'm planning to modify my household on a shoestring, of course — so I can take care of myself and my dogs while I'm recovering from foot surgeries.

The first thing I did was to have a concrete ramp built so I could have access to the world from my porch. A friend helped with the work, so the cost was minimal. The next issue is getting out of my house to the porch. There's a 5-inch drop, which the wheelchair can't navigate. In October, I built a structure to enable me to get out the door and onto the porch. Here's how it works: A normal 2x4 is a little less than 2 inches by 4 inches. A three-fourths inch piece of plywood isn't quite three-fourths of an inch. So, when you take the "4 inches of the 2x4 and lay it down and put the three-fourths inch plywood on it, the result is almost 5 inches. That allows me to open the

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Every little bit helps

BY LAURA HASENSTAB

Times are tough, and while we try to present CRT in a positive light and not beg for money constantly, our general donations have dropped to less than half the level they were in January and February. Like all rescues, we've had to make major cutbacks in the past two years at a time when our adoptions have dropped drastically. In 2010 we were operating at a sustainable level with adoptions/donations, but we've fallen below that level. It is our policy not to take dogs into rescue that we are unable to support with full veterinary care, so we don't send out fundraising pleas for individual dogs. We are in a position where we have to limit the number and type of dogs we take in so we can continue to provide full care for those who stay with us permanently and long-term, as well as the new ones we take in as places open.

Many of our dogs need surgery, shots, heartworm treatment, expensive dental care or surgery, as well as ongoing heartworm preventative and updating vaccinations. The average medical bill for

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VOLUNTEERS IN TRAINING



Emigen Lois Watts, daughter of Beth and Kent Watts of Colfax, N.C., was born Oct. 2, and already has the Watts' chihuahuas, especially Riley, wrapped around her finger.

Bailee Elizabeth Edwards was born March 4 to Kyle and Misty Edwards of Sanford, N.C. She's already a fan of family companions Sadie and Bobo.



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HELP

each dog is \$425. That cost increases for permanent and long-term fosters.

So many of you have donated over the years, and we appreciate every single donation. You've helped many Chihuahuas, and every cent of your donation has gone to our dogs. We have no paid employees, no overhead

expenses, no gas reimbursement for volunteers who transport, and absolutely no frills. Your donations are wisely used.

If you can make a commitment of \$10 or \$20 a month it would help us considerably. You can do that through automatic deductions in your checking account or use

PayPal or checks. You can also make a one-time donation. Whatever you can do will help us continue to care for and adopt these little ones who so desperately need our help.

Again, thanks to all of you for your ongoing support and continuing donations. Without you, we wouldn't be here.

PREZ

screen door and roll out the wheelchair onto the platform I'm building. Once I clear the door, I'll have a ramp, about 3 feet by 4 feet, from that platform to the porch and can roll down to the concrete ramp. One 4x8 piece of outside type plywood and three or four 8-foot 2x4s should do the trick. I estimate the cost at \$50 or less. Recycled lumber can also work.

The big problem will be getting to the door from inside and keeping the dogs from going out with me. I've got that licked. I have an exercise pen that will provide a barrier. I use one now but at the moment I step over it. I'm going to use a lighter one that I can open while the door is closed, roll to the door, then rearrange it to block the dogs away from the door.

I can feed, water, let the dogs out and pick them up from the wheelchair. So, for the time I'm unable to walk or drive, I don't anticipate any major problems with dealing with the dogs. They get to play nursemaid while I have to keep my foot up. They love that. Naptime with momma is their favorite thing to do.

This is a scheduled surgery so I've had time to plan and prepare, which is always important when you have pets.

Children

Another common reason given for wanting to surrender a dog, especially a Chihuahua, is because of a new child. Sometimes it's a baby, but in the current economy it's often because of combined households. Getting rid of the dog should be a last resort. Figuring out a way to coexist is the best option.

If an elderly relative joins the household, the above ideas are helpful to avoid falls. A Chihuahua can get underfoot easily so keeping it out of the way at strategic times is a good idea.

None of these suggestions are of much help if a family runs up against local pet limit laws, but for just blending a family for a while, even when visiting temporarily, it's worth trying.

*Lynn Buntin is president
of Chihuahua Rescue & Transport.*

KEEPING THE PEACE

Here's a variety of things to try in order to keep the peace, avoid bites to the children and injuries for the dog.

Baby gates are not just for babies.

They can be used to keep the dog in a safe area both for potty issues and for child issues. The dog will generally be fairly compliant about staying in the designated area. The problem often is with children not understanding that they are to stay away from the dog. That's where instruction from the adult humans comes in.

Exercise pens come in handy for a fairly safe place to set up outside for potty activities for the dog. Or you can set it up inside in an appropriate place.

Newspaper and potty pads can be used in a pinch. An exercise pen can also help keep the dog and the child safe from each other. Note: never let a child lean over the pen to interact with the dog. A toddler can cause the pen to fall over on the dog and everyone will be disturbed and upset.

Crates are a dog's friend. It is like a dog's den or house or bed as long as it's not used for long periods or as punishment. If there are already resident dogs, the crate can be used to keep them separate and allow them to be out in shifts. It's also a great way to feed dogs so no one gets fussy about someone else eating their dinner. Of course, a crate is a great tool for potty training when you cannot watch the dog during the training period.

Old Friends: Adopting a senior dog

By JACKIE BUSCH, DVM

Considering an addition to your family? Why not consider adoption, specifically an older animal? If you are looking to add a member of a particular breed, then adoption from a breed specific rescue is a great option. Older-pet adoption offers several unique advantages compared to adopting younger dogs or even puppies. The biggest advantages of adopting older animals include having a better idea of the pet's temperament, having a pet who often is already trained, and of course, knowing you were able to give a deserving pet a loving home for its "golden years."

With the current economic state, rescue groups are overwhelmed by the number of animals being relinquished by owners unable to care for them. Often, these animals are in the care of animal shelters that may contact these groups in the hopes of being able to move animals into their care to improve their chances of being placed into private homes. A rescue group (breed specific or not) is often a wonderful place to find your next pet.

As the public gains more knowledge and insight into the pet shop business, many of whom are supplied by "breeders" or puppy mills, rescue has become a growing trend. Consumers who adopt are subtly sending a message to individuals and businesses who are breeding animals for profit. If people stop buying from pet stores and puppy mills, they will stop breeding and selling dogs in less than ideal conditions.

One myth about adopting an older pet is the "baggage" that may accompany it. By adopting from a rescue group, these pets have been living with foster families who are able to attest to their personalities and temperaments thereby increasing the likelihood of a good match between the adopter and the adoptee.

While some people are afraid an older pet may incur greater costs due to age-related disease, they



also save the adopter on some costs associated with young pets, such as additional vaccine boosters, training, and spay/neuter costs, depending on the rescue organization from which you adopt. Although older pets may be more likely to have conditions such as arthritis, younger pets are

more prone to foreign bodies or causing damage to furniture, clothing, etc. before they are trained. Because older patients are more difficult to place, many shelters and organizations offer a discount on adoption fees. Another bonus is that medical needs of these fosters have been met or discovered prior to placement with a forever family. Because of this knowledge and care, the expenses are not a surprise to the new family. Some people also fear that an older pet must have something wrong with it behaviorally or medically to be placed for adoption. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that most of these pets are up for adoption because of problems with their owners (change in lifestyle or finances that no longer allow the owner to appropriately care for the pet), rather than problems with the pet.

Perhaps one of the most important and rewarding reasons to adopt an older pet is that many of these older animals that are adopted do seem to "appreciate" their families. The match between families and adoptees are successful. Most people who have adopted older pets have taken great joy in knowing they were able to provide love and care for a pet in its golden years when it is most deserving of an easy full life of love. If you are still uncertain whether adopting an older pet is appropriate for you, talk to others who have done so...chances are you will be surprised and touched by the stories you will hear!

Jackie Busch has been in small animal practice for more than eight years, joining Westwood Hospital for Animals in Brownsburg, Ind., in 2001.

DONATIONS

IN HONOR OF...

Citra-Solv, L.L.C

Jimmy and Precious Wills

Mary J. Pitcairn

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Kimberly & George Caraker

Miles and Ella Caraker

Debbie Line

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Helen Chandler, Lily and Nicky

Tammy Stankunas

Chico and Spike

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Mary Denson and Vonda

Helen Chandler

Briana Dunning

Lewa and Junebug Strazzeri

SAVE-A-CHI...

Jane Grawes and Jennifer Plodzien

Tootsie, Pika, Little Diva, Papi, and Tika

Rick and Janice Robinson

Pico



Thank You!

Fireplug Inn supports CRT by collecting donations and providing free boarding for our foster dogs. If you live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and are looking for doggy daycare or bed and breakfast for your small dog, check them out!

<http://www.firepluginn.com>

IN MEMORY OF...

Nancy Davis

Chi Chi

Nancy Larrow

Sweet Girlie Dog Klauber, and her family, Chuck and Joanie Klauber

Kent and Blanca Tinucci

Thea and Zoe

Ruth and Mike Romero

Princess Leia and Yoda

NC Department of Cultural Resources Western Office staff

Newman Isaac Lanier

Colleen Dold

Cricket

Jenny Gadsden

Trixie

Kevin, Jenny, Anna and Jack Jurica

Barbara Bradshaw

Tracy Loger

Emma

Debbie Oklota

Angelina

Jeantz Martin

Baby Minnie

Jennifer Plodzien

Jane Grawe

Maria Elena Cruz

Blondie

Pam Janson

Jody Blomberg

Jan and Mike McFarland

Sadie

The girl who came so far

BY BARB GIELOW

The day I met Mona, she was a little grumpy, but that was understandable. Not only was I a stranger who was taking her away from the only people she'd known, but her bulging blind eye looked like it was very painful for her, and I could also see both of her back knees popping out of joint as she walked. I took her immediately to the vet who said this 2½-pound dog was in horrible and constant pain. She received vaccinations, and over the next couple of weeks Mona was placed on a diet, given antibiotics, and prepared for surgery. Her eye had to be removed. The vet thought it was caused by an injury that had become infected and never been treated, although it could also have been caused by untreated glaucoma, a genetic disease.

The day after surgery, Mona was starting to feel better. Once the pain in her head vanished, her personality began to shine. She had to wear an Elizabethan collar for awhile so she wouldn't irritate her stitches. She was so happy the day the collar came off. She played with toys, explored in the yard and house, started getting acquainted with the other Chihuahuas, and began asking for more attention from her foster mom and dad.

CRT was helping to get her ready for a great future, and as her foster family, we were going to



Mona made a remarkable recovery after several surgeries.

help her every step of the way.

After recovering from her eye removal, Mona was spayed, and a few weeks later her teeth were tended to. She had retained baby teeth that had to be removed; her remaining teeth were cleaned. We were working toward her big surgery — getting both knees repaired. She had luxating patellas. Surgery would remove the pain in her legs and give her more ability to run, sit normally and maneuver.

During her recovery between surgeries, we started working with Mona on her socialization. We took her to visit the elderly women at a retirement residence. Mona soon realized she was a “star.” Everyone looked forward to seeing her and petting her, and Mona enjoyed the attention. Mona begged to be picked up and put on a lap. Other departments soon invited Mona to visit. She even brightened the nurse's days!

Mona marked her second birthday in July. It was time for her to have the surgery on both legs. It was hard to leave her when we transported her to the CRT coordinator who was taking her to the

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TRAINER TIME

Adapting to Adoption

BY KRISTIN GIESEKER, *animal behavior and training specialist*

Adopting a new pet is a wonderful and exciting experience for adopters, but for the adoptees it can be a bit overwhelming. Let's talk about what to expect when you bring home your new buddy and how to make your pooch's transition as smooth as possible.

For many of us, as soon as those adoption papers are signed we love our new dogs and consider them a part of our family. That can make it hard to remember that the dog has no idea that we are its permanent family yet. Some dogs seem to feel at home wherever they are, but others take more time.

Most foster dogs have been through at least two homes before they make it to yours, so they can't be sure your house isn't just another pit stop. The change may be frightening, and they may shut down to a degree or go through some depression. This is natural! When adopting from a rescue group that keeps fosters in homes, the dogs have already had a taste or a loving family environment with other dogs as additional pack members, and it's normal for them to miss the relationships they formed for a time. Expect



A comfortable confinement area is important for a new dog.

it to take time before you see all the cute personality traits that the foster told you about. That's all part of the wonderful process of getting to know each other. They may initially refuse a few meals, and this is also natural. Do not supplement the meals with treats and table scraps or modify their food. Put food down twice daily at scheduled mealtimes, leave it down for 15 minutes or so, then take it away if they haven't eaten it. If you stick with this

process and don't make any rapid diet changes, the dog should resume normal eating habits within a few days.

Be aware that your new dog is just that — new! They don't know your routine, they haven't yet formed a bond of trust with anyone in your family, and they're unsure of their place in your pack. The best remedy for this is to put them on a strict routine for the first few weeks. Don't let them on the furniture uninvited, don't give them the

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Mona visits with a friend at a retirement home.

GIRL

surgeon. But four days later we drove the 15 hours again to pick her up and bring her back to our foster home. For weeks we did her physical therapy and exercised her legs. She could run like the wind, bounce around, dance and play with the other dogs!

Mona was now ready for adoption. She was placed on the CRT website. A couple of days later a wonderful couple applied to adopt her. The adoption process was completed, and the adoption was approved. We miss our tiny foster girl, but we are so happy her life is now full of happiness. Mona has two Chihuahua sisters to play with, and a new forever mama and daddy who adore her. In my heart I know CRT has helped her to find that ideal forever family.

And the family that adopted her? They know that with tiny Chihuahuas, genetic problems may arise as she grows. That doesn't matter to them. They don't see her as a little girl with a missing eye and repaired legs. "She's beautiful, and she's absolutely perfect," they said.

TRAINING

grand tour of every room in your house or allow them to make their own schedule. The No. 1 mistake I find that adopters make is to treat a new dog like a dog who has already lived with them for a long time. They give too much too quickly, and the dog gets privileges it hasn't earned. This is why so many people have issues with housebreaking or behavior, when the dog never had a problem in their foster home. Treat your new family member as you would a nervous puppy. Limit the access they have to your home until they have proven themselves to be trustworthy in confined areas. Crate or pen them when you cannot supervise them closely. Feed them, walk them, and take them out to potty at scheduled times. The more consistent the schedule, the easier it will be for the dog to adjust to the new routine and learn to count on you.

Also, be trustworthy yourself. Try not to hold your new dog tightly or get into its face unless it initiates it. Rough play, overexcitement, being held closely, and having 'face time' with a new person can be threatening. Dominant dogs have to respect a person before they can truly love them, but insecure dogs have to trust before they can love. If you put your new dog in one room initially and go in and spend time being calm and quiet and letting your new buddy get to know you on its terms, it will learn to trust more quickly. Walks and exercise can also help your new dog learn to follow you as its leader and drain excess energy and stress. I recommend taking your new dog for a walk as soon as you bring it home, and before you ever enter the house if it is already leash-trained. Walking together with you as the leader, and then having it wait for you to invite it through the door creates a lasting impact. After the initial confinement period, you can even leave a leash on your new kiddo's harness and attach it to your pants so you can 'wear' it around the house until you're confident it isn't likely to have an accident or get into anything. A dog will get used to the idea it should be where you are and follow you when you move. Be prepared for a new dog to test boundaries. Be firm, fair and consistent. If you give your new family member a little time and a lot of direction, it will blend happily into your family.

Dear Diary, I feel the love, yes, I do!

Day One: Well, my mom is finally discovering what a wonderful little dog I am. It's taken years, but I knew she'd come around. She's started giving me a very special treat every night when I eat my dinner. She gives me a bunch of peanut butter on her finger! I stand right up on my hind legs to eat it, and thank her afterward. I knew she'd see how cute I really am and start the special things! It's been a long haul, but the day has finally come. I'm pretty sure it doesn't have anything to do with the fact that I was throwing up every night on my little furry snuggler bed, but I stopped doing that just in case she'd get mad and stop the special treats.

Day Two: My sister Pepper, who is an old lady, has been having some problems. She's still the awful little snitch she always was, but now she's decided that both beds under the table are hers, and she gets to choose who sleeps in the other one after she gets settled. That isn't going to fly around here, so I've started sleeping in her favorite one and refusing to move. She *aarfs* and *aarfs* at me for hours, but I ignore her. I won't even come out if mom calls me. I'm trying to see how long it takes for Pepper to have a nervous breakdown.

Day Three: You know, I kind of miss that old Pokey that used to live here. Tonight I wrapped all up in her SpongeBob fleece blankie and took a nap. It was nice of her to leave it to me when she went to the Rainbow Bridge, but the other dogs here don't understand it's MY blankie now. And I don't share.



Day Four: Woo Hoo! I got me a squirrel today! I think it's a real one, too! My mom was sitting at her computer with this hairy thing in her lap, squeezing it, and every time she squeezed it, it squeaked! Well, I figured she was saving it for herself, for dinner or something, so I waited till she wasn't paying attention and then I leaped up into her lap, snatched the squirrel right out of her hand, and dived back into my bed. It's here with me right now, all covered up with my blankie so she can't find it. I think I killed it for sure when I snatched it up, because it hasn't moved or squeaked since, but just to be sure, I'm going to guard it all evening.

Day Five: OK, so, it wasn't a "real" squirrel, but I'll bet you all couldn't tell the difference either. Anyway, it's mine. I'm going to keep it forever.

Love, Margo



Jeremiah finds a home

BY KAREN HALES

As a foster mom, one of my greatest joys is nurturing my fosters' into happy dogs. Sometimes the nurturing is on an emotional level as they adjust to the idea their former owner just didn't want them anymore. Sometimes it is a physical transformation as they go from a lonely, starving stray to a healthy, happy dog. And sometimes there is one like Jeremiah, who was picked up as a stray after he had been severely burned at only a few weeks old. The veterinarian thought he had been burned by boiling water.

When the call went out to the volunteers, I knew I wanted to foster him. I had never taken care of a burn victim, but I work at a vet clinic and had access to medical care. As a foster parent, you get a feel for your challenges. My feeling was that this one would end in success.



Jeremiah, now christened Benny, is making himself at home with Stacy and Travis Rae and Miss Kitty.

Jeremiah was tiny, but was big in spirit! He put up with the daily hydrotherapy and all the pain that entailed. Yet, when I placed him in the bathtub, he would still kiss me.

Applying the salve to his raw skin was a delicate, tender task. He also struggled with an upper respiratory infection, which is common in burn victims. As his skin healed the itching began. If you've ever had an itch you can't scratch, you know

how he felt. Perhaps the hardest part for a puppy was that he couldn't play with other dogs.

Shortly after we put him up for adoption, he found his forever home with Stacy and Travis Rae. Stacy is a nurse, and Travis is his biggest fan.

"He is doing so good! Such a happy little guy, full of energy," Stacy wrote in an email. "Everyone who meets him loves him! He is just the best dog. I am so happy he is part of our family!"

Read more about our success stories and find dogs up for adoption at our website:
<http://www.chihuahua-rescue.org/>



'We're all a little broken'

BY ELIZABETH WEXLER

Pops came to me like all of my dogs. No one else would take him. He was left behind when local rescues convinced a hoarder in Beaufort, N.C., to surrender 35 dogs that she had kept in kennels in her garage. Pops was old and sick and undesirable by the standards of most pet owners.

Pops was estimated to be about 15 years old. He had no teeth; his bottom jaw was nothing more than a dangling piece of cartilage, and he wasn't potty trained. He seemed to have had little handling. A blue tattoo in his right ear identified him as "62E." Weighing in at 1.7 lbs, with bulging eyes and a tongue that permanently hung out, he was a sight.

I knew after I received an email from CRT with his photo that he deserved a second chance.

I picked him up on an August evening in 2009. His chest was soaked with drool and leftover canned food. He seemed indifferent to being petted or to being in a car. His tail drooped. His eyes were glazed and told more about his life than I could ever



understand. I wasn't sure he would last a week.

I had two other Chihuahuas I had adopted from CRT years ago. I was relieved when Pops was immediately accepted into the community dog bed. Within a day, he took a shine to "Gizmo," my then 14-year-old Chi.

He liked to sniff her ears, lay on her, and stand close when I would take them outside. Day by day, she seemed to coax life back into to him and provide the type of comfort that no human ever could. With Cinnamon, my then-11-year old

Chi/Pug mix, I had quite a group of elders.

Within weeks, Pop's fur grew fluffy, and he stopped drooling on his chest. He began flagging his tail. His ears relaxed. He relaxed. He learned that he was finally in a safe place where he could spend the remainder of his days.

It has now been two years and although he is almost blind, he weighs 2.3 lbs is in surprisingly good health. He has accumulated more sweaters than I own and especially likes the ones with the turtle necks that keep his jaw closed. He thinks he looks handsome and it keeps his tongue from drying out. His favorite activity is to be rocked to sleep in his green fleece blanket.

When I carry all three of them to the park, the children like to ask about them. "What are their ages?" "What are their names?" "What's wrong with that one with the funny mouth?" I explain gently, "We're all a little broken. Some of us on the inside, and, like Pops, some of us on the outside. But we all deserve to be loved no matter what."