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April 2009 Newsletter



Dear friends,

Welcome to our April Newsletter from www.bestdoggietips.com.

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Only Irish Coffee provides in a single glass all four essential food groups – alcohol, caffeine, sugar and fat. – *Alex Levine*

Recipe - Chicken Stew

This is a great recipe to make when you are making chicken stock for cooking.

Ingredients

500g chicken wings

Water to cover

2 potatoes

¼ pumpkin

½ turnip

1 zucchini

Handful green beans

1 cup pasta (spirals or shells)

To Make

Place chicken wings into a pot, cover with water and bring to the boil. Boil for 30 minutes and then remove wings. Strip flesh from bones, discard bones, and roughly chop cooked flesh. You get to keep the chicken stock!

Chop the potato, pumpkin and turnip into 1" size pieces, cover with water and bring to the boil. Cook for 10 – 12 minutes until soft enough to mash. Drain and then mash together.

Slice zucchini and place in a pot with the green beans. Cover with water, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain.

Cook the pasta in boiling water for 10-12 minutes and then drain.

Now combine all cooked ingredients. Mix through, and let cool to room temperature before serving. Refrigerates and freezes well.

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Service Dogs

Recruited to Serve and Sniff – Again - Ace Bomb and Weapons Detectives, More Military Dogs are Being Sent Overseas

Rambo sounds the warning as soon as the kennel door at Bolling Air Force Base creaks open, a ferocious, thunderous bark as loud and persistent as a jackhammer. In the next stalls, Rocky goes berserk, spinning in tight circles like a top, and Jess, ears perked, bounces excitedly up and down.

Then there's Timi. He stays silent, his head bowed, ears bent. He stands motionless, averting his gaze.

Timi has always been the oddball of the kennel in Southwest Washington, "the quirky one," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Timothy Evans, his trainer. The dog is also an Iraq war veteran, and according to his medical file, he has nightmares "characterized by violent kicking." His veterinarian says he has had "readjustment issues" since coming home -- although not severe enough to prevent him from returning to the field.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan aren't just forcing thousands of soldiers and Marines to deploy for two and three tours. The sacrifice is being shared by a key, and growing, part of the U.S. military: highly trained German shepherds and Belgian Malinois. In a war with no front lines, they have become valuable at sniffing out makeshift bombs, which cause most U.S. casualties. Some service members say the dogs' ability to sniff out bombs and insurgents makes them as indispensable as a rifle or flak jacket. And they believe that the dogs' heroism should be rewarded.

During his six-month tour in Iraq last year, Timi, a 5-year-old German shepherd, found about 100 pounds of explosive material, Evans said, including a 130mm shell full of homemade explosives.

Timi "is all business," he said. "A real foot soldier." Tough and no-nonsense, he has always been more reserved than the other dogs. He took his time eating. He seemed to look at people out of the corners of his eyes, Evans said, following them. "He's calculating."

But a few months into the deployment, Timi started thrashing about in his sleep, Evans said.

"It was almost like he was having a seizure in his sleep," Evans said. "This was not like he was chasing a little bunny rabbit. He was kicking the . . . kennel down. . . . When I got him out of it, he'd have that bewildered look, and it would take him a minute to know where he was. Then he'd fall back asleep, and it would happen again and again."

For two years, Walter Burghardt, chief of behavioural medicine at the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Veterinary Service, has been studying the effects of combat on dogs. Although he doesn't like to use the term post-traumatic stress disorder with dogs, war can affect them emotionally, he said. In some cases, antidepressants have worked, he said, as have more playtime and more time performing the tasks they were trained to do.

Timi's episodes did not affect his ability to work, which is when he seemed happiest, Evans said. Since coming home, Timi has shown great progress, although in the kennel he is more subdued than the others.

Now he's on his way back to Iraq, the second of what could be several tours. Army Capt. Amos Peterson, his veterinarian, signed off on Timi's ability to deploy. Air Force Staff Sgt. Brandon L. Gaines, his new handler, said there is no one he would rather deploy with. "It's written all over him," he said of Timi. "He's ready to go back."

Like new recruits, the dogs enter the military through boot camp, where they learn the canine version of soldiering: basic obedience and how to detect explosives, navigate obstacle courses and sneak up on a house without barking. They are exposed to the *rat-tat-tat* of rifles, loud noises and explosions so they can learn to stay cool under fire. Although they are taught to bite and hold the enemy, they are not trained to kill, officials said. By the time they are ready to hit the battlefield, the Pentagon has invested \$15,000 in each dog.

At Andrews Air Force Base, which has the largest K-9 unit in the region, two dog teams recently deployed. In addition to military dogs, 38 contractor dog teams are in Afghanistan and about 140 dogs across Iraq. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, 11 military dogs have been killed in combat, Tremmel said.

Former Air Force Tech Sgt. Harvey Holt and his dog, Jackson, were pinned down by sniper fire in 2006 while on patrol outside Baquba, north of Baghdad. During a break in the fire, he took his dog, a Belgian Malinois, through the field to find the sniper. Jackson picked up a scent, sprinted toward a bale of hay, jumped in head first and pulled the sniper out by his calf, Holt said.

Like other handlers, Holt was often attached to many different units, depending on who needed a canine's special capabilities. As a result, Holt didn't form the "band of brothers" bonds with other soldiers, but rather with his dog. On cold nights, they shared a sleeping bag.

"We were two heads poking out of the bag," he said. "If it weren't for the dog, I probably wouldn't have made it emotionally there. The bond and trust I had in that dog was more than with any human being." After Holt handed Jackson off to the next handler, he came to miss him so much that he got a tattoo of Jackson on his left leg.

The U.S. War Dogs Association is trying to persuade the Pentagon to create a medal for dogs. Another group is pushing for a military working dog memorial in the Washington area. And the Humane Society, which criticized the Pentagon during the Vietnam War, when many dogs were left behind or euthanized, has credited the military with working to find retirement homes for them.

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Dogs & Chocolate Don't Mix

This Easter, resist the urge to share your Easter Eggs with your four legged friends. It could be fatal!

Although chocolate is one of our favourite treats, it contains a substance that is toxic to animals. Poisoning is common in dogs because of their habit of rapid consumption, but may also affect cats and other pets.

Chocolate poisoning is caused by excessive intake of the methylxanthine alkaloids in chocolate, coffee, tea, and some over-the-counter stimulants. The poisoning affects many organ systems, and animals of all ages are susceptible. These drugs cause constricted blood vessels, rapid and weak heartbeat, and stimulate the nervous system.

In most cases, dogs are poisoned by eating the processed chocolate used in sweets, chocolate bars and baking, since these contain high concentrations of theobromine and caffeine and dogs find them tasty. Chocolate preparations contain different concentrations of active compound. The biggest threat is from cooking chocolate, followed by semi-sweet chocolate, milk chocolate, and hot chocolate.

Vomiting and diarrhoea occur 2 to 4 hours after intake, and chocolate in the vomit may be obvious. Nervous system stimulation leads to hyperactivity, tremors, and seizures. The heart rate becomes increasingly rapid and irregular. Excessive urination may result from the diuretic (water clearing) action of the chocolate. Advanced signs include stiffness, excitement, seizures, and extreme response to noise, light, and touch. Heart failure, weakness, coma, and death can occur 12 to 36 hours after intake.

If a combination of chocolate ingestion, vomiting, nervousness, or weakness is seen, take your dog immediately to your veterinarian. If possible, bring any vomit to the clinic as well, since this may aid in rapid identification of the toxic substance. If your dog is having a seizure, do not attempt to cause vomiting; take him or her to your veterinarian without delay. If the chocolate has just been consumed ring your vet for advice immediately.

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How Could You by Jim Willis, 2001

A man in Grand Rapids , Michigan incredibly took out a \$7000 full page ad in the paper to present the following essay to the people of his community.....

When I was a puppy, I entertained you with my antics and made you laugh. You called me your child, and despite a number of chewed shoes and a couple of murdered throw pillows, I became your best friend. Whenever I was "bad," you'd shake your finger at me and ask "How could you?" -- but then you'd relent and roll me over for a belly rub. My housebreaking took a little longer than expected, because you were terribly busy, but we worked on that together. I remember those nights of nuzzling you in bed and listening to your confidences and secret dreams, and I believed that life could not be any more perfect. We went for long walks and runs in the park, car rides, stops for ice cream (I only got the cone because "ice cream is bad for dogs" you said), and I took long naps in the sun waiting for you to come home at the end of the day.

Gradually, you began spending more time at work and on your career, and more time searching for a human mate. I waited for you patiently, comforted you through heartbreaks and disappointments, never chided you about bad decisions, and romped with glee at your homecomings, and when you fell in love. She, now your wife, is not a "dog person" - - still I welcomed her into our home, tried to show her affection, and obeyed her. I was happy because you were happy.

Then the human babies came along and I shared your excitement. I was fascinated by their pinkness, how they smelled, and I wanted to mother them, too. Only she and you worried that I might hurt them, and I spent most of my time banished to another room, or to a dog crate. Oh, how I wanted to love them, but I became a "prisoner of love." As they began to grow, I became their friend. They clung to my fur and pulled themselves up on wobbly legs, poked fingers in my eyes, investigated my ears, and gave me kisses on my nose. I loved everything about them and their touch -- because your touch was now so infrequent -- and I would've defended them with my life if need be. I would sneak into their beds and listen to their worries and secret dreams, and together we waited for the sound of your car in the driveway.

There had been a time, when others asked you if you had a dog, that you produced a photo of me from your wallet and told them stories about me. These past few years, you just answered "yes" and changed the subject. I had gone from being "your dog" to "just a dog ," and you resented every expenditure on my behalf.

Now, you have a new career opportunity in another city, and you and they will be moving to an apartment that does not allow pets. You've made the right decision for your "family," but there was a time when I was your only family

I was excited about the car ride until we arrived at the animal shelter. It smelled of dogs and cats, of fear, of hopelessness. You filled out the paperwork and said "I know you will find a good home for her." They shrugged and gave you a pained look. They understand the realities facing a middle-aged

dog, even one with "papers." You had to pry your son's fingers loose from my collar as he screamed "No, Daddy! Please don't let them take my dog!" And I worried for him, and what lessons you had just taught him about friendship and loyalty, about love and responsibility, and about respect for all life. You gave me a good-bye pat on the head, avoided my eyes, and politely refused to take my collar and leash with you.

You had a deadline to meet and now I have one, too. After you left, the two nice ladies said you probably knew about your upcoming move months ago and made no attempt to find me another good home. They shook their heads and asked, "How could you?"

They are as attentive to us here in the shelter as their busy schedules allow. They feed us, of course, but I lost my appetite days ago. At first, whenever anyone passed my pen, I rushed to the front, hoping it was you that you had changed your mind -- that this was all a bad dream... or I hoped it would at least be someone who cared, anyone who might save me.

When I realized I could not compete with the frolicking for attention of happy puppies, oblivious to their own fate, I retreated to a far corner and waited. I heard her footsteps as she came for me at the end of the day, and I padded along the aisle after her to a separate room. A blissfully quiet room. She placed me on the table and rubbed my ears, and told me not to worry. My heart pounded in anticipation of what was to come, but there was also a sense of relief. The prisoner of love had run out of days.

As is my nature, I was more concerned about her. The burden which she bears weighs heavily on her, and I know that, the same way I knew your every mood. She gently placed a tourniquet around my foreleg as a tear ran down her cheek. I licked her hand in the same way I used to comfort you so many years ago. She expertly slid the hypodermic needle into my vein. As I felt the sting and the cool liquid coursing through my body, I lay down sleepily, looked into her kind eyes and murmured, "How could you?"

Perhaps because she understood my dog speak, she said, "I'm so sorry." She hugged me, and hurriedly explained it was her job to make sure I went to a better place, where I wouldn't be ignored or abused or abandoned, or have to fend for myself -- a place of love and light so very different from this earthly place. And with my last bit of energy, I tried to convey to her with a thump of my tail that my "How could you?" was not directed at her. It was directed at you, My Beloved Master, I was thinking of you. I will think of you and wait for you forever. May everyone in your life continue to show you so much loyalty.

A Note from the Author: If "How Could You?" brought tears to your eyes as you read it, as it did to mine as I wrote it, it is because it is the composite story of the millions of formerly "owned" pets who die each year in American & Canadian animal shelters. Please use this to help educate, on your websites, in newsletters, on animal shelter and vet office bulletin boards. Tell the public that the decision to add a pet to the family is an important one for life, that animals deserve our love and sensible care, that finding another appropriate home for your animal is your responsibility and any local humane society or animal welfare league can offer you good advice, and that all life is precious. Please do your part to stop the killing, and encourage all spay & neuter campaigns in order to prevent unwanted animals. Please pass this on to everyone, not to hurt them or make them sad, but it could save maybe, even one, unwanted pet. Remember...They love UNCONDITIONALLY.

This IS the reality of dogs given up to shelters!

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Bad Dogs Have More Fun

*The following is an extract from Bad Dogs Have More Fun, the latest book by John Grogan, author of the best-seller **Marley and Me**.*

I spent Sunday immersed in a world that has gone totally, unapologetically to the dogs.

Believe me when I tell you fur was flying everywhere. It was being combed, parted clipped, teased, blow-dried, poofed and puffed. The last time I witnessed this much vanity preening I was walking past a beauty salon.

The occasion was the Kennel Club of Philadelphia Dog Shows, which stretched across 2 days and 15 rings, drawing 2700 purebred dogs of every imaginable shape and size, accompanied by their perfection driven owners, who also came in every imaginable shape and size.

Some 15,000 dog lovers streamed through the doors to ooh and aah over the super pooches, and it occurred to me that of the Miss America contest could capture a fraction of this mojo, it wouldn't be going down the drain.

In the staging area, the owners fretted over their pooches, which waited patiently for their turn before the judges. Many of the se dogs live a good part of their lives on the road, going from one show to the next. I watched as a spectator patted a husky on the head, and his handler swooped with a comb to fluff the violated spot.

I knew I was in a special world all of its own when I headed for the bathroom and found not only His and Hers doors, but Human and Cab=ine facilities, too. The dogs actually got the better deal, enjoying spotless stalls filled with sweet smelling cedar shavings.

In the rings, the handlers lined up their unflinchingly behaved specimens and began prancing around in circles at a half-run under the keen eyes of the judges. Round and round they trotted, hurrying to go nowhere.

A surprising number of the handlers were young people in their early teens. They obviously had invested hundreds if not thousands of hours into working with their dogs. What was up with these kids? Shouldn't they have been home playing video games?

The dogs were something to behold. They stood in flawless formation, their noses just inches from the tails of the dogs in front of them. Not one of them made a move. No lunges, no butt-sniffing, no hopping in the air as if the y had invisible springs on their paws. No attempts at intimate relations. No two-legged floor dances. It was like I was watching fur-clad robots that had been programmed by Miss Manners.

Who was the official sponsor of this show anyway? Puppy Prozac?

As the unofficial Chairman and spiritual leader of the Dysfunctional Dog Owners of America, I'll admit to a little professional jealousy. I couldn't help imagining how my own late and not-so-great

Labrador Retriever, Marley, would have taken the competition by storm, starting by stealing the tablecloth off the judges' table. If the kennel club had a shredded-couch division, I'd have had a shoo-in National Champion.

The current Lab-in-residence at the Grogan house thinks "Come!" is a suggestion she is happy to take under advisement and get back to us on. She's never met a rustling leaf that hasn't been worth barking herself hoarse over.

Every dog has its strengths, and Gracie's unique gift is her eye-tongue coordination. This allows her to leap into the air and smash her snout into our faces at the exact moment we are opening our mouths to speak, allowing her to jam her tongue where no canine tongue was meant to go. We call her the Phantom Frencher.

And she's the good one.

I guess I came to the show hoping for some small ray of hope that even award-winning show dogs shared some common ground with my obedience school rejects.

I scrutinised the contestants for any cracks in their glossy armour. C'mon, I pleaded silently, just one flying drool-stringer. Nothing. They trotted; they pranced; they posed; not missing a beat. I came across one Poodle, so still and perfectly coiffed, I had to look twice to confirm it wasn't stuffed.

"That's just not right." I said.

As much as I envied the magnificent über-beasts, I knew that life for them, as for all of us, was full of trade-offs.

Good dogs win all the ribbons, it's true. But bad dogs have more fun.

Bad Dogs Have More Fun is available through [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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Fun Stuff - A Dog & Cat Diary

Excerpts from a Dog's Diary...

- 8:00 am - Dog food! My favourite thing!
- 9:30 am - A car ride! My favourite thing!
- 9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favourite thing!
- 10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favourite thing!
- 12:00 PM - Lunch! My favourite thing!
- 1:00 PM - Played in the yard! My favourite thing!
- 3:00 PM - Wagged my tail! My favourite thing!
- 5:00 PM - Milk bones! My favourite thing!
- 7:00 PM - Got to play ball! My favourite thing!
- 8:00 PM - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favourite thing!
- 11:00 PM - Sleeping on the bed! My favourite thing!

Excerpts from a Cat's Diary.

Day 983 of my captivity. My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects.

They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets. Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I nevertheless must eat something in order to keep up my strength.

The only thing that keeps me going is my dream of escape. In an attempt to disgust them, I once again vomit on the carpet.

Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a 'good little hunter' I am.

There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight. I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I could hear the noises and smell the food. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies.' I must learn what this means and how to use it to my advantage.

Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet as he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow -- but at the top of the stairs.

I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges. He is regularly released - and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded.

The bird has got to be an informant. I observe him communicating with the guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my every move. My captors have arranged protective custody for him in an elevated cell, so he is safe.

For now.....

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The Weird & the Wonderful

The Bionic Dog?

A German-shepherd mix named Cassidy has become one of the few animals in the world to receive a permanent prosthetic limb, and is a trailblazer whose surgical experience could help humans.

The dog, who lost his right rear leg below the knee joint, had an "osseointegration" procedure in which a titanium implant was attached to the tibia, a leg bone. A removable, C-shaped foot made of titanium, carbon fiber and rubber screws onto the prosthesis.



"The implant is permanent and goes into the bone like a dental implant in humans, and then the bone and the implant fuse," said Steve Posovsky, 61, a retired dentist from Long Island who with his wife, Susan, adopted Cassidy in August 2005, when the dog faced euthanasia.

Posovsky was watching a morning news program that showed "this dog that had been found in The Bronx with his leg cut off wandering the streets who was about 2½ years old.

"He was 30 pounds underweight. He limped along. He had almost no hair," recalled Posovsky, who said that before his surgery, Cassidy "would walk for 10 minutes and have to plop down and need a rest. Now, he can walk for hours."

After taking in Cassidy, he and his wife contacted Dr. Denis Marcellin-Little, a surgeon with the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh and had a removable prosthesis made.

Cassidy "kicked off" the leg, so they decided to go with a permanent one.

Last August, the permanent prosthesis was implanted, and last month, the final version of the foot was perfected.

"What is being assessed and being designed for Cassidy may improve our knowledge and may ultimately help in what is being done for people," he said.

Meanwhile, Cassidy "is very happy," Posovsky said. "He walks on the beach with me every day with his new leg. When he's running I take his leg off. I'm a nervous father."

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