

2010
Issue No.
THREE

Blogging

Come and visit us at our Foundation's Blog (located online at landofpuregold.wordpress.com). Our Daily Golden Thoughts are great to begin each day.

Twittering

Share in Twitter's 140 character fun (located online at twitter.com/landofpuregold). That is where you catch our irreverent musings.

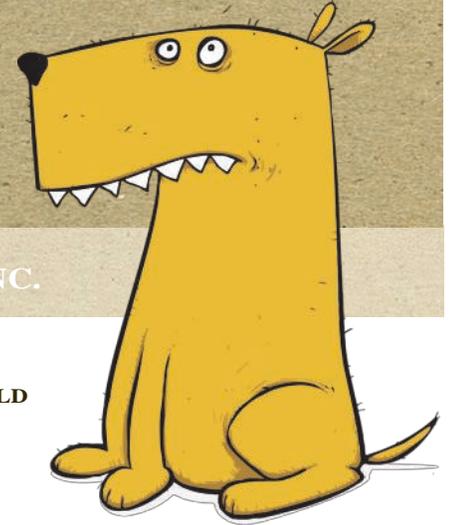
Supporting

Support our canine cancer treatment grants. Shop at our Store for what truly matters—health, home, happiness and healing (at store.landofpuregold.com).

PET 

LIVE LOVE LAUGH
and LEARN

PET TALK



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE LAND OF PUREGOLD FOUNDATION, INC.

A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO GIVING COMPANION ANIMALS A VOICE IN THE WORLD

CANINE COMEDIANS

HELP US LAUGH
AND ENJOY LIFE

Musings from land of the Golden Obsessed



Just love "THE WELCOME" from Jana Mauney. It begins like this....

I hear it! I hear the car! HER car! And she's coming this way! Oh, oh, I must run in and grab a gift! I must greet her with a gift!

Oh, 'BONK' missed the step. No matter, I must hurry. Move over, doggy door! She's coming, she's coming!

Gift, gift, where, what, oh, oh, ah! A plastic bottle she drinks from, right here on top of the container they call trash! Oh, perfect.

She's coming, she's coming! Oh, oh, oh... The door! I hear the door sound that sounds right before she comes in! Oh, it's OPENING! SHE'S HOME!

Oh, oh, 'wobble, wobble, wobble' I cannot be still! You're home! And look, look, I have this nice bottle! Oh, oh, you're home! YOU'RE HOME!

I have missed you so much, you've been gone hours, weeks, days, years! And so much has happened!

Share your fun observations.
landofpuregold.com/go.htm

We have some *Golden* Finds in this current newsletter along with wonderful articles on [Animal Reiki](#) and [Kidney Disease](#). And, the adventures of all things Alfie continue.

Our sweet boy celebrated his 11th birthday on May 31st. Never made it this far with a Golden, so we celebrated (see how at our [Blog](#)). Alfie loved the [organic birthday cake](#) and I adore Alfie's new personalized name [velvet collar](#).

Well, here it is summer in Maryland, and the heat and humidity is horrid. Being allergic to the sun, mold (from mulch), grass, and pollen, any time spent outside is dangerous at best. So, I am very much thankful for *hubby* Gary loving the outdoors, Alfie keeping him company as he takes care of our pond, bird feeder, flowers, fruit trees, and the vegetable garden.

Alfie never got to go into the vegetable garden before as it was a literal jungle, Gary unable to



keep up with all of the weed growth given its being organic and free from the use of pesticides.

But, this year a super guy named Joe, of [J.W.'s Lawn and Landscape](#), designed the raised beds you see above. Alfie now loves getting to inspect Dad's incredible green thumb. With a stone floor to keep out weed growth and an attached deer fence, we—rather than the rest of the animal kingdom—are getting to eat the goodies.

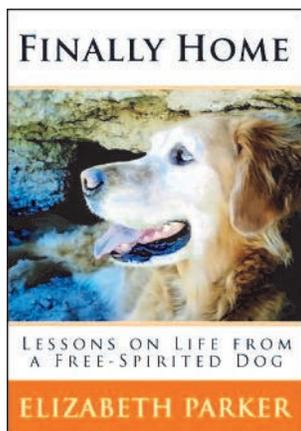
[Click here](#) to see the greens feasted on thru June. Above, our Alfie is luxuriating at the sugar snap pea area (he adores 'em). No question that the boy does LOVE to eat, even gulping down supplements from his bowl. But, he isn't a peasant, as Dad boasts, as Alfie refuses to eat salad greens without Mom's famous dressing added to the mix.

Stay tuned for the backyard camping adventure, cool tent and sleeping bag ready to go. I cannot wait to see *the boys* getting up close and personal with the deer, foxes, and who knows what else.

Finally Home

Lessons on Life from a Free-Spirited Dog

Elizabeth contacted me to ask about advertising her book at the foundation site, donating a portion of the proceeds to our mission. Then she hit me with this: "The dog in the book is my own and has just been diagnosed with osteosarcoma, so this site hits close to home."



Finally Home: Lessons on Life from a Free-Spirited Dog, a 2010 book by Elizabeth Parker, is a sweet little find that may be just perfect for new adopters. And, especially so for the many rescue adoptions of those dogs with issues.

Elizabeth Parker writes a variety of genres, including that of memoirs, short stories and horror. A huge dog lover who does dog rescue volunteer work, her family includes two Golden Retrievers and one Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever.

The book features the true story of Golden Retriever, Buddy, an excessively mischievous dog who had been shuffled from owner to owner as no one could control his crazy behavior. He was on his way to meet his fate at the local shelter when a mere coincidence connected him with Elizabeth and her husband, Michael.

While he no longer had to switch homes, the hilarious acts he committed, from ingesting bottle caps to barging into a stranger's house, caused Elizabeth and Michael to almost reconsider their decision. Buddy was a dog that no one wanted, yet he became one of the quirkiest, friendliest, smartest and most cherished of dogs.

It is hoped that the reader may learn from the unfortunate mistakes of others, thus thinking outside of the proverbial box in order to successfully overcome any related obstacle. You can read an excerpt [by clicking here](#).

I love this from the book about body language and what I call the *Golden Goofiness Syndrome*:

One day we were walking on a trail down the block from our new house. This trail goes for miles and miles and we were just coming back from a lengthy walk. Normally, Buddy and Brandi get to roam free on this path, but this time I had them on the leash as two joggers were almost passing us and sometimes people get annoyed if the dogs are not properly restrained. I took notice of the men jogging as they had their heads held high and looked kind of snooty.

Well, Buddy looked at the joggers and as they passed, Buddy looked at me and then at his leash. I laughed as I knew exactly what he wanted, so I rolled up the leash and handed it to him. He happily took his leash, and then in the funniest gait I have ever seen Buddy carry out, he jogged with his head held up high following the same body posture of the joggers. It sounds crazy and untrue, but if you knew him you would understand. Sound familiar? Buddy was imitating the exact posture of the joggers. He then turned back to me and gave me his leash. He just wanted to be a clown for a few minutes, the only way Buddy knew how.

Elizabeth spends some time on her soapbox extolling the need to understand whether having a canine family member is right for you. Folks reading these words, though, have surely already learned that life is only enriched and made that much more meaningful when our home and heart is opened up to a companion animal.

But, for the masses, she talks about trying to dissuade people from getting a dog unless they are prepared to handle the following:

1. Puppies get big.
2. Dogs bark. I have actually heard of people returning or abandoning dogs because they bark. Really? Is this not common knowledge?
3. Dogs drool.
4. Dogs sometimes do not have manners.
5. They may have an accident on your rug.
6. They may jump on furniture
7. They shed
8. They do have waste that needs to be disposed of . . . by you.
9. They may have behavioral issues that you have to deal with.
10. Vet bills may get very high.
11. Some dogs need very expensive food as their stomach can't handle regular food.
12. They may live to be eighteen!!
13. Dogs chew things. Sometimes it is things that they should not chew.
14. Dogs steal.
15. Dogs need to be groomed.
16. They may get sick at inopportune moments.
17. They may counter surf. This means they may steal things of importance off of your counter.
18. It IS a lot of work.
19. Some DO need to be exercised constantly, depending on the breed.
20. There are many other surprises that are too numerous to list.



2 PAWS UP

Reviews from Golden Mom Rochelle

I have to admit it. I am always on the lookout for the latest and the greatest books . . . even though there is so little room left to store all these finds.

Authors who have been kind enough to share their latest publications may see reviews here, at our foundation's website, or our foundation's blog.

Not one to be negative, though, only those books receiving my "2 PAWS UP" Stamp will appear. My mom was right, of course. If you have nothing good to say, don't say anything at all.

Working with Golden Retrievers since 1987, my bookshelves are simply overflowing with animal themed books and media. At our Foundation's website you can find my favorites. The categorized listing includes items in my possession, or from recognized authors I've come to trust.

Categories include: bereavement, cancer, children & dogs, various canine sports, performance dogs, general & holistic health, massage, diet & nutrition, clicker training, assistance dogs, human-canine bond, hospice care, detection dogs, tracking & trailing, travel, puppy life & training, physically disabled dogs, blind & deaf dogs, problem solving, anxiety & fears, search & rescue, senior dog care, and understanding our dogs.

Just visit:

store.landofpuregold.com/books.htm

WOOF WOOF ARF ARF

You simply never want to miss the latest from Dr. V, absolutely the most fun veterinarian online. She Facebooks. She Blogs. She Tweets. She plays with Barbies. Oops, too much information.



CALL... OF THE DAY

Receptionist: Hello, thank you for calling. How may I help you?

Caller: Hi, I was wondering if you had prednisone?

Receptionist: Yes...it's a prescription medication though. Do you need a refill?

Caller: Well, I just called PetStore to ask if they carried it over the counter & they said no.

Receptionist: Are you a client here?

Caller: Huh? Oh, no. I got some from my regular vet for my dog because he had a platelet problem and I ran out. Can I get some more?

Receptionist: You would need to be seen by our veterinarian first.

Caller: Is it bad when they bleed out of their nose?

Receptionist: Yes. Yes, it is. Please go see a vet right now.

PSA of the day: When a pet with a platelet disorder bleeds from any orifice, do not pass Go, proceed directly to your vet. Thank you.

PET PEEVES

By Dr. V of pawcurious.com fame

Love and redemption

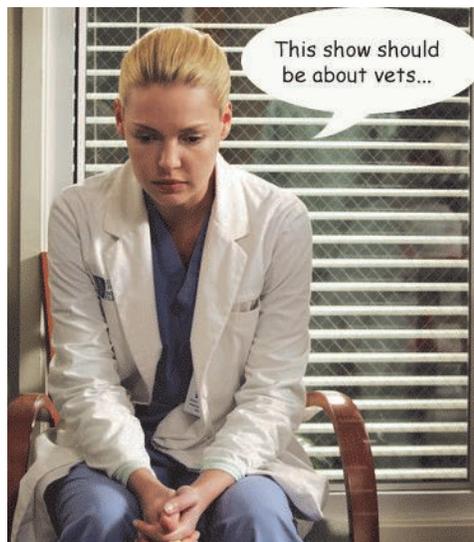
I think I have mentioned here that I lived in Los Angeles for 5 years. 5 nutty, weird years in La-la land—4 of them getting a bachelor's degree, and one more trying to figure out what to do with it.

That was the year, if you might recall, that I worked for the Beverly Hills erectile dysfunction specialist on the Viagra clinical trials, fielding phone calls from beleaguered geriatric Golden Age actors who simply HAD to be on the little blue pill trial.

I learned many things in LA.

1. Yes, that many people really do get plastic surgery.
2. Looks are everything.
3. Substance is nothing.

Needless to say, I didn't live there any longer than I needed to. Sure, there were some normal, real people somewhere in the town. I just didn't meet very many of them. I left very jaded about the Hollywood scene and the quiet desperation and over inflated egos of the lost souls who populate it.



Like many people, I've spent many a Thursday night watching Grey's Anatomy, shipping Mer-Der, icking out at Lexie/Sloan, shaking my fist at LVAD-gate. I've

always considered Katherine Heigl to be an OK actress whose ego outstripped her talent, who never really recovered from insulting the show's writers come Emmy time a few years ago.

Then she quit the show. I didn't miss her. See ya later. Have fun in the deep black abyss of David Caruso-land. It's not that I dislike her, it's just that she didn't do anything to impress me as either an actress or a human being.

Today, though, she won my heart. I've heard mention here and there about the Heigl Foundation and the work it is doing to help animals. That alone wins her a pass for The Ugly Truth. Then I read about **England**.

Some piece of human garbage hog-tied a pit bull and left him for dead in a muddy field in Bakersfield, where he was fortunately rescued and rehabilitated. When announcing England the Dog's new home today, Heigl also announced that her foundation will be working in conjunction with Last Chance for Animals to provide additional rewards for people who come forward with information in animal abuse cases.

This isn't as cute and Hollywood as the other well-publicized efforts of the Heigl Foundation. Rescuing a terribly abused pit bull isn't nearly as sexy and photoppy as flying a plane of Chihuahuas cross country. But it is necessary, and so, so helpful. What incentive is there these days for people to report animal abuse, aside from conscience? Not much, and oh, how the world needs more people to step up and get involved.

Heigl also recently adopted a daughter with her husband, which she cited as a major reason for leaving her hit show. Having a new child is a ton of work—I can vouch for this—and it would be very easy for her to disappear into the world of nannies and playgroups and let the foundation run itself for a year or two.

But she's staying involved and using her celebrity to help some really underserved causes, and for that, well, she has a permanent fan. Staying the course and staying true to what matters in that weird morass of celebrity is pretty hard to do. Thank you Katherine, for continuing to do things that matter (and I'm not talking about *Knocked Up*.)

Don't Kid Around with Kidneys

By Audi Donamor

Polydipsia and Polyuria are fancy words, but the meaning behind them is simple . . . If your dog is drinking more water than usual, or is urinating more frequently, then he may be exhibiting signs of kidney disease.

Other symptoms may include dilute urine, which means that your dog's kidneys may not be concentrating urine, as they should. Urine that lacks colour or an odour is a telltale sign of a kidney problem.

Less frequent but just as important symptoms to be on the look out for are loss of appetite, weight loss, and even discoloured teeth.

Your dog's breath may have a chemical odour, he may have sores in his mouth or light coloured gums, which are an indicator of anemia, and even episodes of vomiting and diarrhea.

If your dog is repeatedly licking his nose, chances are, he is nauseous, which is another possible indicator of kidney disease, along with muscle weakness and exercise intolerance.

Those are lots of signs and symptoms to think about, but when it comes to our companion animals, we need to take the time to really look, touch, and listen, so that possible problems can be dealt with proactively, by you and your veterinarian.

Complete blood work, a urinalysis, and a urine culture are important, because only the results from these tests will let you know if you are dealing with an acute or short-term kidney problem, or a chronic or ongoing problem. Along the way, your veterinarian will want to rule out other problems, like Cushing's and Addison's disease, and Leptospirosis.

From calcium phosphate crystals, which appear most often in alkaline urine, to struvite crystals, the most common type of crystal, seen in approximately fifty per cent of cases, to calcium oxalate crystals and stones, once a diagnosis of a kidney problem has been made by your veterinarian and a treatment plan put in place, it is important to incorporate the following tips into your dog's daily living plan.

Make sure that fresh filtered or spring water is always available, and encourage your dog to drink at regular intervals. Water consumption is very important, because keeping the kidneys and bladder flushed, helps to prevent the formation of crystals and stones. Add extra broth to your dog's daily meals, and add some extra excursion outdoors.

Some supplements have been found to have a positive impact on both acute and chronic kidney problems. Salmon oil, an omega 3 essential fatty acid, is helpful for fighting inflammation and supporting your pet's immune system, and may even slow down the progression of renal failure.

Vitamin E is the perfect partner to the fish oil supplement, but beware . . . don't use cod liver oil.

Cranberry helps to stop bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall, and aids in the prevention of further infections, while vitamins B and C also work together to support kidney function.

In a perfect world, we would be able to offer our pets with kidney problems high quality proteins that closely match the proper mix of amino acids that they need. Animal proteins, such as meat, milk, and eggs, are of a higher quality than plant source proteins.

Consider high fat, moderate amounts of high quality proteins when feeding your dog, and use low phosphorus carbohydrates to fill in the gap.

Beef, lamb, pork, turkey, dark chicken with skin, beef heart, green tripe, white rice, sweet potatoes, and winter squash, can be combined in a variety of ways, to provide your dog with a nutritious and delicious meal, that meets his special needs.

Dogs with kidney problems often do better when fed smaller meals through the day, rather than one or two large meals.

Make your dog a special treat, with this easy to follow Kidney Kookie recipe.

Preheat your oven to 350F degrees. Then, take 2-1/2 cups of organic flour (spelt, kamut, brown rice, barley, etc), 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder or 1 freshly minced garlic clove, 1/2 cup homemade chicken broth or low sodium canned broth, 1/2 cup filtered water, and 1 cup of pureed green beans and carrots, and whirl together in a food processor or blender, until all ingredients are well incorporated.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board, and then knead it a few times, and then roll out the dough, cutting it into desired shapes, or simply place the dough on a lighted greased or parchment paper covered cookie sheet, and roll out the dough into the corners of the sheet, and then lightly score the dough with a knife, before popping it into your oven for 25 minutes.

Then, turn the oven off, and let these easy to make treats, cool completely in the oven, before storing in a zip-lock bag or cookie jar.

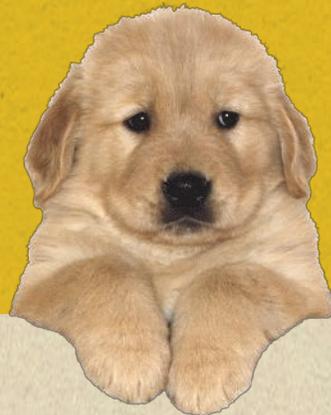
Other vegetables you can use, include, zucchini, parsley, celery, dandelion greens, collard greens, squash, and turnip.

Try to use organic ingredients, whenever possible.

While kidney disease can be very complex, dietary management, while only one facet of a treatment protocol, is the one way you can give your companion animal the best possible quality of life.

Audi Donamor, Canadian *Animal Wellness Magazine* dog health writer, has been successfully creating special needs diets for dogs and cats for fourteen years.

HEALTHY SENIORS 101



Golden Oldies

Tufts University defines the senior dog this way:

"The point at which a dog qualifies as 'aged' varies. Veterinarians generally consider small dogs to be senior citizens at about 12 years of age, while large dogs reach the senior stage at 6 to 8 years of age. This roughly corresponds to the 55-plus category in people."

With nearly 40% of our canine buddies considered geriatric, is it any wonder that veterinarians and researchers are now focusing on geriatric nutrition, dental care, and cancer?

Did you know that our dogs do their fastest maturing in their first two years, already equal to a 15-year-old teenager after only one year?

And, believe it or not, he or she is equal to an adult's age after only being with us two years. After that, however, only 4 years in maturity is gained with each passing year.

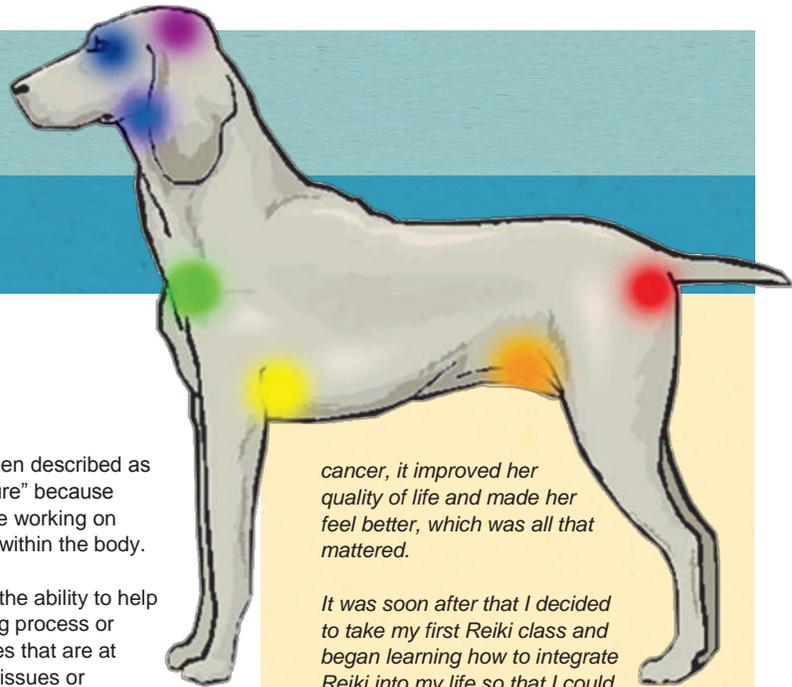
Senior Dog Resources

Check out the "Treasured Golden Oldies" related webpages at our Foundation site, located at:

Landofpuregold.com/oldies.htm.

Reiki for Animals

By Kerry Malak



With the explosion of the holistic animal care industry, you may have heard of something called Reiki.

Most often used with humans, Reiki for animals is becoming more common and can be an excellent complimentary therapy for any animal suffering from physical, mental, or emotional problems.

I first discovered Reiki at work one day when battling a migraine headache. A co-worker who was a Reiki practitioner saw my obvious pain and offered to give me a quick treatment to help.

I had never heard of Reiki before, and was very skeptical, but also a bit desperate, so I decided I had nothing to lose. After about ten minutes of sitting in a chair receiving Reiki, I had become a Reiki convert.

My migraine didn't miraculously disappear, but the pain had been reduced greatly, and I felt much calmer and able to deal with my day. I realized then that there was something to this "new" healing technique.

What is Reiki?

Often translated as "Universal Life Energy," Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that promotes healing by allowing the body to take control of its natural capacity to heal itself – on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels.

Along with acupuncture, homeopathy, flower essences and acupressure, Reiki falls into the energetic healing modality in holistic animal care.

Unlike many other therapies, however, Reiki is painless, non-invasive, and has no unwanted side effects, so it can be used along with any other conventional or complementary treatments.

Reiki works to heal the underlying causes of illness or emotional distress and can do no harm as it balances the energy within the body and helps to create an overall sense of wellbeing.

Although people commonly assume that Reiki is a form of massage or that practitioners are animal communicators, neither is true.

Many people find it easiest to understand Reiki as a form of "laying of hands" or focused

meditation. It's even been described as "needle-less acupuncture" because treatments often involve working on different energy points within the body.

For animals, Reiki has the ability to help begin a physical healing process or resolve emotional issues that are at the heart of behavioral issues or illness.

Reiki's powerful, yet gentle nature helps strengthen the human-animal bond and also makes it useful for alleviating pain, or during end-of-life care to ease an animal's transition.

During a Reiki treatment, an animal will typically experience a state of deep relaxation and peace.

Reiki resurfaced in my life about a year after first learning of it, when my beloved dog Georgia was diagnosed with cancer at only four years old. As part of our integrative approach to treating her illness, I decided to look into Reiki to help strengthen her immune system and minimize any stress or anxiety she was feeling as a result of her cancer treatments.

*In my search for information, I found two wonderful books, **Animal Reiki: Using Energy to Heal the Animals in Your Life** by Elizabeth Fulton and Kathleen Prasad, and **Hands on Healing for Pets: The Animal Lover's Essential Guide to Using Healing Energy** by Margrit Coates, which helped me to better understand the benefits of energy healing for animals.*

I also had the good fortune of finding an Animal Reiki practitioner who offered to treat Georgia when she was in the end stages of her illness. Sure enough, after the treatments, there was a noticeable improvement in Georgia's energy level and spirit.

There was no doubt that this mysterious, yet powerful form of healing had helped, and even if it was not able to cure her

cancer, it improved her quality of life and made her feel better, which was all that mattered.

It was soon after that I decided to take my first Reiki class and began learning how to integrate Reiki into my life so that I could ultimately help other animals in need of healing.

Adapting Reiki to the Animal's Needs

With humans, Reiki is usually done hands-on, using a series of specific hand positions at various energy points on the body.

A typical treatment will last about one hour.

The same method can be used with animals. However, because of the nature of energy and the Reiki process, treatments can also be given from a distance, and this is often the best technique to use on an animal who is feeling ill, frightened or stressed.

Because animals are extremely sensitive to energy, a Reiki treatment provided from a short distance can be just as effective as one done hands-on.

Advanced practitioners can even provide long-distance treatments, to animals or people, with equivalent results.

One of the things that makes Reiki very unique from other healing methods is that during a treatment, the animal is in control of the session.

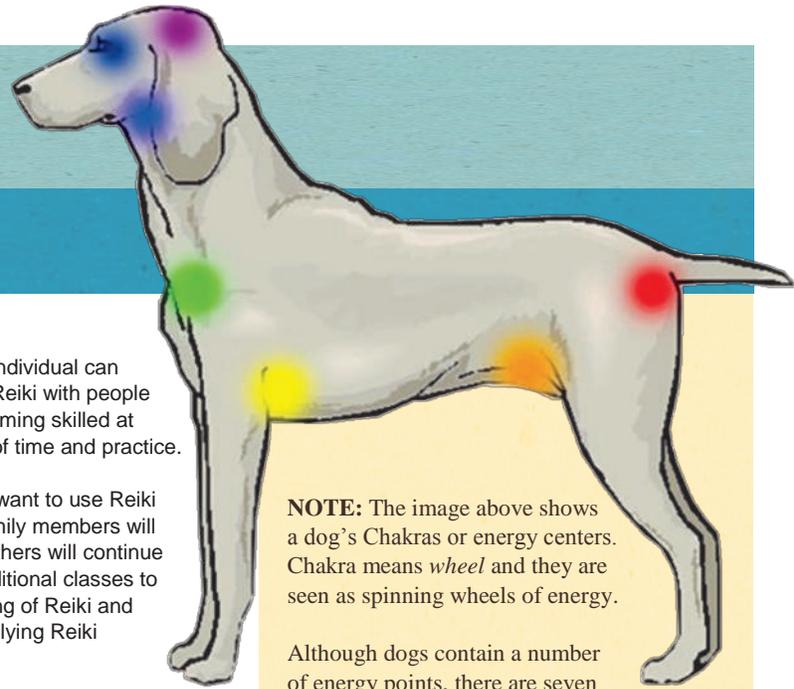
They alone determine whether or not they want to receive Reiki energy, and for how long.

In this way, they become an active and equal partner in the healing process, and it allows them to more easily relax and trust the person offering the Reiki treatment because they are not being coerced or forced into submitting to something that they don't want.

(article continued on next page)

Reiki for Animals II

By Kerry Malak



Considering how frequently our companion animals are asked to put up with humans as they poke, prod and otherwise manipulate their behaviors, this simple act of respecting their needs and their space can do wonders for strengthening the human-animal bond, or mending it in cases where animals have been abused or mistreated in the past.

I first realized the importance of allowing the animal to decide when and how to receive a Reiki treatment after working with my dog Sampson. When I first started offering him Reiki, he would usually tolerate it for a minute or two and then get up and move to a different place in the house. At first, I thought this meant that I was doing it wrong or he didn't enjoy Reiki.

I was stuck in the conventional mindset that I knew best about what he needed and could just impose my will upon him to force a healing process.

He was clearly trying to tell me something different. When I finally let go of my desire to control the Reiki session and allowed him to be in charge of his own healing, I soon discovered that he actually loved Reiki treatments – when he needed them.

Now, he will often “ask” for Reiki by jumping onto my lap and lying down with his chin on the arm of the couch for me to start a treatment. It's the only time that he does this, and when it happens, I know that he is in need of some Reiki and I am happy to offer it until he indicates that the treatment is over, usually after about 30 minutes.

Regular Reiki treatments have since helped him become more balanced emotionally and are used to help him maintain a state of good health.

Getting Started with Reiki

To become a Reiki practitioner, one does not need to have special skills or hold any specific religious or spiritual beliefs.

Reiki techniques are passed down from Master to Student, so one does need to take a Reiki class and receive an “attunement” to help understand how to use Reiki techniques and how to “tune in” to Reiki energy.

After the attunement, an individual can immediately begin using Reiki with people or animals, although becoming skilled at offering Reiki is a matter of time and practice.

Many people who simply want to use Reiki on themselves or their family members will stop after Reiki Level I. Others will continue their journey and take additional classes to deepen their understanding of Reiki and learn new methods of applying Reiki techniques.

Reiki's Role in Maintaining Wellness

As beneficial as Reiki can be to an animal's health and overall wellbeing, it's important to understand that Reiki isn't necessarily a quick-fix and can't magically cure cancer, or other serious illnesses or injuries. And, it usually won't correct behavioral or emotional issues overnight.

Reiki is not a replacement for sound nutrition, exercise, training and regular veterinary care. What Reiki can do is clear the way for the body to call upon its own natural healing abilities, and can help reduce anxiety and tension – without drugs or side effects.

Since stress and anxiety have a major impact on the immune system and emotional balance, removing these barriers to good health can often have very positive results and help your pet achieve a new level of wellness – physical, mental and emotional.

For more information about using Reiki with animals, or to find a practitioner in your area, visit the Animal Reiki Source website at animalreikisource.com.

Kerry Malak is the proud mom of an English Bulldog named Sampson and the founder of Georgia's Legacy, a canine cancer information and support resource for pet owners, whose website can be found online at: www.FightCanineCancer.com.

Kerry is a Reiki Master/Practitioner and has studied Animal Reiki with Kathleen Prasad. She is also a Certified Pet Loss Counselor through the Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement, and a graduate of the Clayton College of Natural Health's Holistic Care for Companion Animals program. In her spare time, Kerry very much enjoys volunteering at a local animal shelter, where she often provides Reiki treatments to dogs waiting for their forever homes.

NOTE: The image above shows a dog's Chakras or energy centers. Chakra means *wheel* and they are seen as spinning wheels of energy.

Although dogs contain a number of energy points, there are seven main centers in the aura, known as the Chakras.

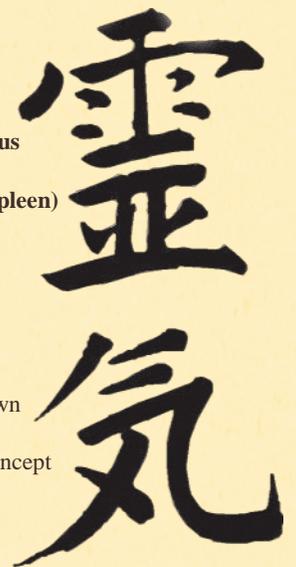
Through the seven chakras, dogs receive and give off essential energy. A dog's thoughts filter down through the Chakras to the physical dog body, where they become outer manifestations.

Like a human being's Chakra System, most dogs have seven active Primary Chakras.

The Major Chakras, in animals, are fully developed Energy Centers.

These seven Chakras are the:

1. Crown
2. Third Eye
3. Throat
4. Heart
5. Solar Plexus
6. Belly (or spleen)
7. Root



The symbol shown here on the right represents the concept of Reiki.

For the love of Wonder Mutt, sew me the bunny

By Kelley Baldwin



Maryville, Mo. — She sighed and laid her head on my shoulder.

Her dark brown eyes looked searchingly into mine as I cradled the soft bundle in my arms. I ran my hand gently over the gaping wound along its side.

I saw remnants of its life essence littering the floor where I kneeled. Random patterns of white scattered among the darker color of the carpet.

Can you save him? her eyes begged me, desperately hoping for a miracle.

I patted her softly on her fuzzy, golden head and whispered, "I'll try, baby girl. I'll try."

It's no secret that Chaser, Wonder Mutt of West Edwards Street, is the size of a Volkswagen rather than your average golden retriever.

She's not fat.

She's not big-boned.

She's not retaining water (that's MY excuse).

And contrary to popular belief, she did NOT eat a small child.

She's just...well...big.

A recent visitor to the Baldwin home laughingly remarked upon opening the front door to be greeted by the four-legged family member, "Wow! Are you gonna put a saddle on that thing?!"

But the truth is she's nothing but a gentle giant. Sure, she might love a throw pillow to death on occasion, but for the most part she's just one big pile of love eager to share a tennis ball, a ham sandwich and a just-drunk-from-the-toilet-bowl smooch with anyone within a five-mile radius.

Yep, she's all about the love. Except when it comes to stuffed squeaky toys.

Throw one in her direction and she'll snag it out of the air and ravage it quicker than a beef tenderloin tossed into the lion pit during feeding time at the zoo.

But she's sneaky with the squeaky. It's like living with Doggy Bowser...or rather Doogie Howser. She's a surgeon, using her ESP-like doggy senses to locate the tiny, plastic squeaky ball in about 60 seconds flat then carefully opening the nearest seam and pulling it out along with a mouthful of stuffing to reveal her prize.

To her credit, she's never eaten a squeaky ball (that I'm aware of). She just pulls it out and lays it next to the toy. As if to say, "Look what I found inside! Can I trade it for a treat?"

But then, little by little, canine instinct takes over and she continues to pull out the remaining stuffing, leaving puffs of white cotton in a trail around the house until the toy is nothing but an empty shell covered in dried doggy drool.

Oh, the humanity!

There's a box stuffed in the corner of the hall closet that I call the Container of Lost Souls.

There's a pheasant with one wing, a squirrel with half a bushy tail, a bunny without ears and what I think is a one-eyed raccoon but DNA tests are still out on that one. They each bear the scars of their battles with Wonder Mutt.

I know I should throw them away or at the very least provide them with a proper burial (known as the trash can). But the eternal optimist in me hopes to bring each one back to life some day.

Because I've seen that look in her eyes each time she takes one over to the Dark Side. She walks up, drops the ruined toy at my feet and whines, Can you save him, Mom?

And I never have the heart to tell her "no."

With needle and thread in hand, I slowly begin to sew up the rips, the holes, reattach wings, legs and the occasional tail. Trying in some fashion to reverse the damage wrought by Wonder Mutt. Which isn't all that easy considering I flunked home economics class in junior high school. But that doesn't keep me from trying.

So after each stitch, I look over at the golden head resting on my knee. She patiently waits until the surgery is complete and her toy is once again whole.

I toss it up in the air. She snags it and runs off with her tail wagging. All is right with the world again.

Until next time.



You can follow many additional adventures here:
kelleybaldwinlifelikemine.blogspot.com.

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A Bittersweet Discovery

I believed it was a Golden day after discovering the talents of Kelley Baldwin—her humor and writing so wonderful. The 'Sew me the Bunny' piece is simply classic, our Darcy's Woobies similarly having been sewn up a bazillion times.



Here is Chaser snoozing on the way home from seeing the oncologist at K-State. Hope was high as the cancer hadn't spread to the lungs. Kelley got busy taping down rugs to cover her hardwood floors, great advice from current owners of tripawds.

On June 17th Chaser made it through her surgery with no complications.

We look forward to bringing our golden girl home soon. Once she recovers from the surgery, we know she'll be pain-free and feeling better than she has in several weeks.

But, my breath was taken away with the quite unexpected, tragic news on June 19th.

Chaser passed away unexpectedly this morning. She sailed through the surgery very well. She had been up, hopping and walking around, seeming to adjust rather well to life with three legs. We were prepared to bring her home later today but G-d had other plans.

In tribute, Kelley has been sharing tales of Chaser at her [Life Like Mine](#) blog. Some are from previous columns, others are newly told. So masterful with her Golden reflections, despite a hurting, heavy

As for us....we're hanging in there. The abrupt change in routine has been heart-wrenching. My husband gets up in the morning...then wanders around aimlessly. No puppy to let outside to start the day. He mowed the yard yesterday, struggling with the fact his 'supervisor' wasn't out there with him. After finishing dinner last night I just sighed and looked at my husband. He sighed in return and said, 'I know exactly what you're thinking. There's no Chaser here to lick the plates.'

Yep. EXACTLY what I was thinking.

No Chaser to climb the stairs with us before bed at night. No Chaser to bark when the doorbell rings. No Chaser begging to be sprayed with the garden hose when I water the plants.

No Chaser to snuggle up with on the floor. Or give belly rubs to. Or put my arms around and bury my head in her golden fur after a really hard day.

Everything is so friggin' quiet.

Someday. Life will feel a bit more normal.

Someday I'll stop listening for the jingle of her collar. Someday I won't cry each time I see a tennis ball.

Someday.

Just not today.

Contacting Kelley in early May, permission was granted to reproduce any of her Golden deliciously (*filled with snark*) columns about Chaser. There was absolutely no way they would not be a huge hit in our foundation's publication. But, my heart sank when I read Kelley's May 24th blog posting:

Last week we learned the bump on my golden girl's leg isn't a simple matter of arthritis, as we had thought. Turns out it might be something much more deadly. Hoping for the best that it's something we can battle.

This was not the way that Kelley believed her Chaser, Wonder Mutt of West Edwards Street, would be taken from her. She always believed it would be a result of the small heart murmur that she had been born with seven-and-a-half years ago, something she has watched, listened and waited for with respect to any signs.

I have waited for any small sign. A cough. A hitch in her breath that might show the murmur has gotten worse. I spend each check-up holding my breath while the veterinarian holds a stethoscope to Chaser's fuzzy chest and listens. Then with the vet's cheerful nod that all is OK, I sigh in relief and think, "Today's not the day."

I joked with friends that our Chaser would live to be – oh – about 20 years old. Flying through a field, chasing a rabbit, when her ticker would decide, "Today's the day." And she'd be gone.

In early June, Kelley blogged about Chaser's being diagnosed with osteosarcoma, the need for a right foreleg amputation. So, I contacted her with the perfect site to provide assistance: [Tripawds.com](#). Now, she would be in able hands, learning all about the special preparations before and the expectations after.



GROWING UP

This is Kelley and Chaser at the beginning in 2003. *Chaser* was a compromise between "Chase" and a tribute to the Columbia space shuttle crew — lost the same day their baby was picked up. To pay tribute, her registered name was Baldwins' Chaser of the Stars.

Below is Kelley's son Gabe with his Chaser.

Gabe did remarkably well this morning (even asking to take a picture with Chaser and her polar bear before heading to the vet's office). Then he had a moment of weakness in the car. As I was trying to wrestle Chaser from the floorboards after she'd dove there when she got wind of our destination, Gabe cried out, "If they take off her leg, won't that kill her??!" Then he proceeded with the crocodile tears. ...

After explaining Chaser's leg amputation surgery to our 5-year-old he asks, "It'll grow back, right?" Oh, to be 5 again. When I said, no, it won't grow back, she'll be more special than she already is 'cuz she'll have just three legs, he responded, "That'll be cool!"



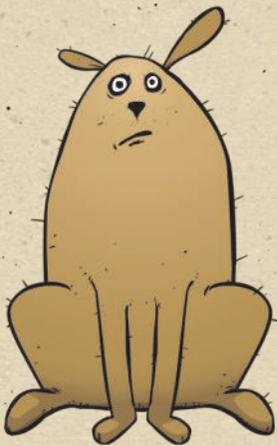
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PET

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PETTALK

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Earth Friendly Pet Products

Environmentally friendly (also eco-friendly, nature friendly, and green) are synonyms used to refer to goods that are considered to inflict minimal or no harm on the environment. To make consumers aware, the products may be marked with eco-labels. But because there is no single standard for this concept, these labels are too vague to be meaningful. So, look for those businesses dedicated to sustainable fair trade principles, and that use organic, dye-free, and/or reclaimed materials.

One such company is Barkwheats, who uses the *berry*, buckwheat, for their biscuits. Handmade in Stockton Springs, Maine, these gluten-free and grain-free wonders are made with



organic and local ingredients from neighboring organic farms in Maine, and family farms with Sustainable Harvest International in Belize. Barkwheats packaging is 100% compostable, biscuits enclosed in packaging made from sustainably harvested cottonwood trees and 100% recycled paperboard. They also compost, recycle, purchase wind energy, use CFL bulbs and select the most energy efficient equipment to run their facility. Find these great treats and more at:

store.landofpuregold.com/sogood.htm

Recommended resource links

- cancer.landofpuregold.com — Becoming Cancer-AWARE
- ccr.cancer.gov/resources/cop — NCI Comparative Oncology Program
- bit.ly/AVSABarticles — American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior
- www.askdryin.com — Leadership without Force from Dr. Sophia Yin

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