



**NEWSLETTER**

**Volume 13**

**Number 3**

*From our President Stephanie Fischer ([ilovtrav@aol.com](mailto:ilovtrav@aol.com))*

As I looked back through my files, the first newsletter I wrote was May of 2010. I had just become President and was following in the footsteps of my breeder, and club founder, Anne Denehy. The seven years have flown by, and another chapter of my life will be coming to an end with this club.

I can very distinctly remember the first time we saw a Vizsla. We had promised Matthew that when I retired from my job in the city, we would get a dog. It took a year of research and we had a short list. The Vizsla was not on it. I had my heart set on a liver colored shorthair. We went to a dog show and met a handler named Patty Crowley who was watching the litter of shorthair puppies. When I found out the breeder was in Maryland, I reneged. "How about a Vizsla" she said. "A what?" I said. She took us over to a big mobile home and asked Matthew to sit down. He was five at the time. A lovely gentleman named Saul Himmelfarb let three big males trot out to meet Matt. One jumped up on Matthew and started licking his face. His name was Bud,--CH. Pekogait One Man Band to be exact. He had the most wonderful personality. We saw them again the next day and we realized we loved this breed. We were very new at this.

A bunch of people was standing around a show ring and I asked a nice couple standing with a dog if they knew of any breeders. The couple turned out to be Jackie and Eddie McAuliffe. He brought us over to meet Anne Denehy and the rest is history. Anne's dog Betsy was bred to Bud. He happened to be the number one dog in the country at the time and we were fortunate to get a pup from that litter. Bud's owners, Saul and Kim

were a big part of Cliffy's life and were very supportive. We would eventually compete against Patty Crowley and her dogs in the show ring.

I remember telling Anne that we just wanted a family pet. I think she knew better. Cliffy went from being our beloved family pet and Matthews's brother to CH Harann's Big Red Clifford CGC, TDI. What a personality! He just loved the show ring. He became a certified therapy dog. We hunted a bit with him. Matthew went on to become a nationally ranked junior handler under the guidance of Michelle Porfido and Joe Diaz. He took Cliffy to Westminster, and was the second youngest in history to show in the classes. His college essay was written on his experiences.

When Cliffy finished his show career we wanted a second Vizsla. Joe Diaz and Kathie Amore allowed us to have the pick male from their litter. Who was the sire? Jackie and Eddie McAuliffe's Marley. Things happen for a reason! I am a firm believer in karma, positive or negative to this day.

When Cliffy was about a year old, Anne called us up to tell us there was a Vizsla in the town shelter in Wantagh. We had no formal rescue so I volunteered to take a look. She was cautious because I had never been involved in rescue and thought I didn't know what to do. As all of you know, you can't tell me not to do something. Miller was our first rescue and lived a wonderful life up in Syracuse with his owner. When we were taking Matt to visit colleges, we were up in Syracuse and I got to see him years later. We have now placed over 150 dogs in the last 14 ½ years. Our rescue is well known and well respected across the country. I feel it was my calling and it is something I will be continuing. The stories will continue in our newsletters.

Having a Vizsla in our lives has brought us such joy. It has also allowed us the opportunity to make wonderful friends. It has allowed me to meet people from across the country and around the world. It has filled my heart with joy. I am thankful for the past 15 years of involvement with this club, the people I have met and the friendships we have made that will last a lifetime.

I will now turn the club over to the next set of leaders. Please continue to be kind and welcoming to new people. Without the kindness of people 15 years ago, I would not be where I am today.

If you are ever in the Dover, Pennsylvania area, near Gettysburg, please send an email. We have 34 acres for the dogs to run on and it will be nice to see you!

*I love you all!*  
*Stephanie*

## BRAGS, BRAGS, BRAGS

### From Andrew Campbell:

**Widdershins Skypoint Capo JH** finished her Amateur Field Champion title at the Pointer Associates of New England (PANE) field trial at Flaherty Field Trial Area in East Windsor, CT in June with a 3-point major win in the Amateur Gun Dog stake. This was her third major win towards her title -- and after a long, successful spring season, she finished as the #4 Amateur Gun Dog in the Vizsla Club of America's national rankings. She was bred by Julie Smith of Ripley, ME and is her first AFC. Capo is co-owned by Julie Smith, Wendy Russell, and Andrew Campbell. Thank you to all the judges who appreciated her as much as we do.



**Capo**

**Widdershins Momchil MH VC** came out of retirement and, at 12 years of age,

won the Connecticut Valley Vizsla Club's Hunting Dog Excellent stake (a non-AKC-sanctioned stake for fun rather than points). He was bred by Wendy Russell of Widdershins Vizslas in Dover-Foxcroft, ME and is owned by Andrew Campbell and Meg Riordan. He may get to run in November in the Veterans Stake at this year's VCA National Field Trial.



**Momo with Andrew (kneeling) and friend Tristan**

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### From Pam & Bert Rowley:

Proud to announce that our rescue, **Bennington**, aka "Ben", Rowley, successfully competed for his very first ribbon in a Rally/'O' trial with a qualifying score of 87. Ben took fourth place in the Riverhead Kennel Club Rally Trial on June 3rd. Later on in June, Ben achieved two titles: Canine Good Citizen and Trick Dog Novice. And he's entered him in the Aug. 26th Rally Trial at Doggie U.



**Ben**

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**From Marianne Megna:**

**CH Koppertone's California Girl CDX  
RAE NA NAJ NF (Cali)** finished her Rat  
Open Title - RATO in Barn Hunt on July 1.  
She also received 1st Place. Cali, who is  
13 years old, is owned and handled by  
Marianne Megna.



**Cali**

**MACH2 Moramore's Red Hot Reba CDX  
RAE JH MXC MJC XF T2B ONYX (Reba)**  
On July 2nd Reba got her Senior RAT  
Title -RATS in Barn Hunt. She also  
received 1st place. Reba, who is 11  
years old, is owned by Marianne Megna,  
Joseph Diaz and Kathleen Amore;  
handled by Marianne Megna.



**Reba**

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**From Mary K. Chelton:**

**Everedi's Night Stalker (Gibson)** picked  
up 2 points in the Brookhaven Kennel  
Club shows on July 15. (no photo)

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## Rescue Report

There are times we say it takes a village to get something done. We are involved in a rescue currently that is just such a case. Weeks ago we received a call from a woman who is a domestic abuse survivor. She needed a place for her two beloved dogs to go until she could get back on her feet. We reached out on Facebook and a wonderful family took in Montana and Bodhi in western New York who had two Vizslas of their own.



**Montana & Bodhi**

Montana came to them heavily drugged on meds for severe separation anxiety. The SA started after her owner Robin had had to flee her house. She also became somewhat dog aggressive towards other dogs. Karen and her family did what they could, weaned her off all the meds she was on and with their vet's help started her on Prozac. Even with all their love and attention, the aggression was not improving. Family number two was needed. Another family stepped up to foster. Their own Vizsla recently passed and the house was empty. Mary and her family were willing to take on the challenge. With the help of her husband and kids, Montana is doing much better with her anxiety. Robin, the original owner, Karen the first foster mom, and Mary, the current foster mom, are all in touch. Robin even goes to visit her babies. It is our hope that she will eventually get to take them to her new home. I cannot thank Karen, Mary and their families for being so unselfish in this situation. I know that seeing the dogs is helping Robin to heal and move on with her life.

About two years ago we received a call from a senior citizen who needed to rehome her 10-year-old Vizsla since she could no longer walk well enough to keep up with her. The family really loved Apple and was looking for a special home for her. Barbara Hunting was wonderful enough to accept the

challenge. Apple was a very sweet senior Vizsla who loved her new home up in Massachusetts. The original family set up an account with Chewy to send Apple food every month. They all kept in touch. Apple developed bladder cancer. Rescue helped Barb with the bills. I recently received the dreaded email that Apple had gone over the rainbow bridge. Barb shared the info with the former owners and will also be sharing some of Apples ashes. They will help Barb with the medical bills that she incurred. When I was included in the emails that were sent back and forth after Apple's passing I cried.



**Apple**

Below is the entry Barb made on her Facebook page about Apple. Rest in peace sweet girl, you were loved by many.

*My wonderful sweet Apple has reached the end of her journey. She's been battling bladder cancer for a year now and surpassed our expectations for how long she survived. It finally was getting to be too much for her. I loved this dog - she was the first one that was MY dog alone. She was the best. I will miss her terribly. My house is now dog less for the first time*

*ever. Goodbye baby girl, my sunshine, lumpy applesauce! Thank you Dr Ellis at Sunderland Animal Hospital for the kind care right up to the end; and thank you Jacinta Catherine for being there with us.*

I recently received a call from the breeder referral person from the Vizsla Club of America, Florence Duggan. Florence had taken a dog back from a family that came from one of her breedings. This is what reputable breeders are supposed to do. She contacted me to see if we had a family without any other dogs looking for a female. I had received a rescue application from a family that sparked my interest. After spending close to an hour on the phone with Heather, I knew Ava had found her forever home. Florence could not agree more!

About a month ago I received a call from a woman out on Long Island who had seen a wire haired Vizsla posted in the Brookhaven shelter. Not only did I not believe it, she was a senior. Who could do that to their dog? Kathy Feldmann picked her up, and agreed to foster her knowing I would find a family. I immediately posted Ella's picture on our Facebook page. Someone I knew through Facebook reached out. Pam and her husband live in Maryland. Not around the corner. After speaking with Pam, who is also a vet tech, I knew Bella (who was renamed Ella) found her forever home, and I have made two new friends.

I will be continuing my role as New York Rescue Coordinator as well as Northeast Rescue Chair. From time to time I may reach out for home visits and some help. I hope can count on all of you.

Warm regards,  
Stephanie  
[ilovtrav@aol.com](mailto:ilovtrav@aol.com)

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## Rescue Stories

### *Ella's Story*

We found Ella by coincidence. I was tagged by some of the wonderful members of Vizsla International when she was rescued by Kathy Feldmann, and that got the ball rolling. The video of her unsure steps and her sweet, gentle eyes was all we needed. We ended up with Ella for a reason.

She is a sweet, sweet thing and a true velcro dog. Her teeth were not in the best of shape, so we did have to remove quite a few. (All of her incisors top and bottom and one of her molars. Poor thing, I turned her into a Bumble!) We also removed a mammary mass and got her nails to a manageable state. She was so uncomfortable because her teeth were quite bad, and her toes were bent at angles from nails that had been left too long.

A few days after surgery, she decided she could go up and down steps that she found uncomfortable days before. With the addition of medication to help her arthritis, we got a whole new dog! She LOVES to play fetch! She jumps, bounds and chases with abandon, and her tail goes nonstop. It is a good thing she's on the small side, because she is

a counter surfer! She follows us to the bathroom in case we need rescue, and begs like it is her job.



**Ella Meeting Rob and Maggie**

She has won over our other rescue, Maggie, as well as the hearts of our friends and neighbors. We brought Ella home because we have so much good in our lives that it was time to share. We are thankful for her sweet soul and gentle ways, and so very glad she is here. So many thanks to Kathy for pulling her and Stephanie for coordinating the adoption.

Thank you all, again.

*Pam and Robert Bader*



**Ella sunning herself in her new backyard.**

She gave endless kisses and we couldn't get enough of this sweet, adorable, affectionate and loving animal. We knew in that instant AVA was meant to be with our family. The remembrance of the day still brings happy tears to my eyes.

AVA has been with us for a little over a week now and it still seems so surreal. She is a diamond in the ruff, an absolute dream! We cannot get enough of her love and affection, her curiosity, her playfulness and energy and her trusting nature and willingness to be adventurous with our family.

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### **AVA's Story**

AVA is 3 years old and she became a family member and our pampered princess on July 14th. Words cannot describe the absolute joy and happiness we felt the first time we met her. AVA came running out, her body doing the cutest happy dance with the tail wagging from overwhelming excitement to meet new people.



**AVA**



AVA loves going to the kids' soccer practices and running the fields, she loves meeting new friends, taking long walks, playing in the yard, swimming in the water and doing snuggle night with the family. She even quietly snores. We are truly blessed to have AVA. Our family is now complete and we are looking forward to making many memories with AVA.

Infinite hugs, kisses and the biggest thank you ever go to Stephanie, for without her none of this would have been possible. Stephanie and I spoke the first night for over an hour. Her passion, dedication and knowledge of the breed and AVA were and are inspiring and heartwarming. Stephanie has been a beacon and great resource.

She allows me to bounce questions off her any time of the day. She is patient and kind, attentive and responsive, and super protective of her rescues ensuring they are going to a special family and home. I know Stephanie and I will continue to be in touch and the family cannot wait to meet her in September.

*Lots of Love - Heather, Todd,  
Drew, Riley, Kasey and AVA*



### **Member Profile: Anne Denehy**

I had dogs most of my life, so when my husband and I were first married, we “took in temporarily” a beagle mix, Jo, who stole our hearts and stayed for seven years. From there we made a few false starts and ended up with dachshunds. When my oldest was twelve, she and a friend took the dog for a walk and a careless driver hit both the dog and child. The dachshund was killed and so we could not have another like her. Thank God my daughter was only bruised.

And so the hunt began. I decided we needed something bigger, so I went to the library and took out the AKC’s *Book of Dogs*. “Weimaraners” were familiar and a nice size, but on the next page before “W” was “Vizslas,” a Hungarian dog similar looking to Weims, but I had never heard of them. They were only recently brought into the U.S. Curiosity got the best of me and I began the search to no avail. They had not been in

this country long enough to be well known, so with my search being too slow for the kids, on Thanksgiving eve of 1973, the 12-year-old decided (on his own) to call the North Shore Animal League and ask, “Do you have any Vizslas?” “Yes,” was the answer, so I dropped all prep for the next day’s dinner and over we went to get and adopt Jenny (and a very small black and tan pup my daughter talked me into.)

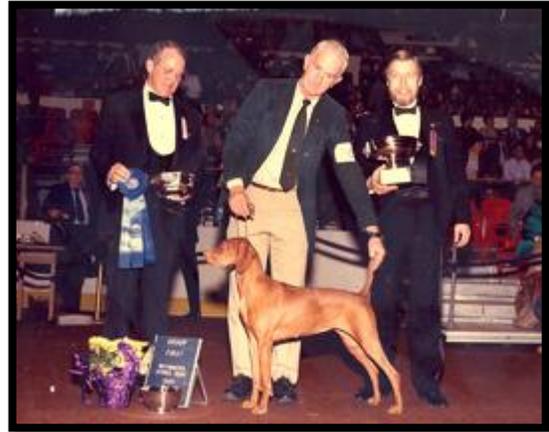
Soon it all began—Jenny made a place in our home and hearts. My 10-year-old son and I took her to obedience classes and met a couple there who were working a Vizsla! —and several others. The story grows from there to obedience competition, to meeting other V owners who were showing in breed competition, etc. That’s how I met the VCGNY people, and thereby hangs the tale.

It was not long before I accidentally found a woman, Joan Smith, who had a purebred Vizsla champion which she had bred and had puppies—at the vet's office! Of course we purchased one, with whom we went the whole way over a period of time—CD in obedience, CH in the breed ring. Then in 1978, our Tuli was born (CH Harann's Tulipann CD). This is a very abbreviated listing of so many exciting and wonderful days and experiences we had. The whole family loved all this fun, especially those kids who so often accompanied me. We ourselves handled her in the show ring, but when it came to competition for Best of Breed, Bill Barker came on board.

Tuli won Best of Breed easily, being a well-balanced, excellent moving and enthusiastic show dog. A man from Honolulu, Charles Spalding, and friend of one of our New Jersey Vizsla friends and owner-breeders, became interested in co-owning Tuli as he had heard of her potential as a show winner. To make a long story short, he became a co-owner and backed her for a year, 1982 through Westminster of 1983. He was a very kind and easygoing person who enjoyed Tuli's accomplishments that year, as we did immensely.

Tuli became a multi-breed winner, a ten time sporting group winner and eventually a four time Best in Show winner—very unusual for a Vizsla in those days, and both the Spalding and Denehy families enjoyed it. To cap it off, Tuli won the Sporting Group at Westminster in 1983, which has never been duplicated by a Vizsla, although

today the breed has had many other winners as Vizslas have become more popular and well known.



**CH Harann's Tulipan (Tuli)**

As for myself, with all that happened, I also became more active in the Vizsla Club of America (VCA) and many other local clubs. As my family (four children) grew up and out, I had more time for trundling around; meeting other V owners, shows, etc., and especially clubs. I became very active in the Vizsla Club of America, especially organizing the annual national events.

As far as VCLI, my energies were spent in the organizing of this club, along with the great and generous assistance of the Fischers, Mary K. Chelton, the McAuliffes, Kathie Amore, the Joneses, and others I may have forgotten, sorry.

It is my fond hope that his organization remains strong, growing continually for the benefit of Vizslas and their owners.

*Anne Denehy and Dora, my 7<sup>th</sup>  
generation Vizsla*



## ***Focus on the Field***

***By Andrew Campbell***



### **Training Aphorisms to Consider**

Thank you to everyone who let me know that they appreciated my last newsletter column about how to make progress with your dog without trying to force it. If that column could be summarized into an aphorism, it might be “train to the dog, not to the schedule.” And so I started to think about other aphorisms or slogans that might be useful to consider because sometimes we overthink things, and

because we overthink them we lose the ability to clearly communicate what we want from our dogs. We wrap things up in complicated language sometimes that is entirely human and makes little sense to the dog: for example, “honoring” and “stop-to-flush” and “steady-to-wing-and-shot” are all simply different contexts that a dog should recognize as the occasion to do exactly the same thing, to stop and stand still until told to

do otherwise.

Aphorisms can help us cut through our own verbal clutter and get to the core of what we are trying to achieve.

**Train Don't Complain. Run your dog, not your mouth.**

This one is on blaze-orange sweatshirts readily seen on Long Island. It might easily have relatives that say "If you don't show up, you can't win." There are several take-aways from this, in my opinion. The first is that if you don't put the time in, don't whine or complain about other people who have. As with every aphorism, there are exceptions that nonetheless prove its limitation. The same is also true of the often-quoted sentence from Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers*: "you need to have practiced, to have apprenticed, for 10,000 hours before you get good." One of the exceptions to this is that the quality of your practice also has a significant effect on the outcome; for example, just because someone claims to have been doing something for twenty years doesn't mean that they were either doing it right or doing it well over that duration. The other obvious exception is genetics, which in dog terms means that you can train all you like, but if the dog has a terrible nose, you can't expect to overcome that by having them smell 10,000 birds. Nevertheless, a companion adage might be: "If you want to beat a professional,

train like a professional". And to train like a professional, you will likely need more than a DVD or a book or two. You will need to spend actual time working dogs with an actual professional. But when I first wrote this slogan for myself, I was also thinking about not settling for "good enough" in training--good enough to win in an amateur field trial stake, good enough to just barely pass a Senior Hunter test. And so I train with the assumption that every dog might become a Master Hunter or a Field Champion, and that to do so, I know I need to train with a long-term vision and with high expectations for the dog and myself.

**Run the dog you've got, not the one you wish you had.**

This was one I made up for myself -- and was an evolution of something I had written on the inside of the hat I wore when handling dogs in field trials, "Plan your run, run your plan." When I wrote the first version, I had this idea that I could envision exactly what my dog would do in a field trial and how I would try to show it on the course. That was naive. And it was naive; especially with the dog I was trying to run at the time. What I was trying to wrap my head around was how to be proactive, how to anticipate what might likely happen, and take advantage of it. And hopefully sell the judge that what was happening was in fact what I intended. I pride myself on developing and training my

dogs so that they don't look like robots - and so it was naive to imagine that, especially with my boldest, strongest dog, that I could absolutely control what was going to happen. Ironically, the evolution of that into what starts this paragraph was because I caught myself wanting every dog after Jake to be Jake which was also silly because, if for no other reason, the dog I caught myself doing it with actually had more presence on birds and was actually even more reliable on point. What I realized was that I needed to take advantage of each individual dog's strengths, showcase those, and try to minimize the holes in their performance.

So, for example, if you know your dog is stone-cold-broke, doesn't need you to say anything, and will stand there through virtually everything, then take your time riding up to them, show your confidence in their abilities by remaining calm, kick around and flush the bird calmly, and let the judge appreciate the sight of your stylish, well-mannered dog.

**Don't try to judge your dog. (And don't try to judge your bracemate.)**

This is also related to the previous aphorism inasmuch as you shouldn't discount your dog in front of your judge. You might be disappointed in what your dog has done, but there's no reason to show a judge that. I am not talking about ignoring a mistake unseen by the

judge that should otherwise have ended your dog's run--for me, doing that just hinders your dog's long-term development and their chances at the next trial or test. But the only people who are responsible for judging your dog, whether it's against a hunt test standard or against all the other dogs in a field trial stake, are the judges. To give an example: when I was working on finishing our first dog's Master Hunter, he had a find in the backcourse. Every time I got in front to flush, he wanted to move just a little. I finally flushed the bird and was annoyed with the dog -- and the judge quietly told me that every time I had kicked around for the bird, I had kicked the arm of a branch into his chest, causing him to move slightly.

The second half of the aphorism means that, just because you don't think your bracemate deserves to pass, don't stop giving them the respect they deserve by handling your own dog poorly and without attention to what your bracemate might still need. Good sportsmanship means that you try to do what you can to give your bracemate the best chance as possible, as well.

**You have to put value in the honor.**

While this one looks skill-specific, it's not. When I heard someone that worked for my friend, Maurice Lindley, down in South Carolina say this, it immediately made sense. Taking a step back in our training progression, if we

can create the conditions for a bird to teach a dog a lesson (or put a different way, if a dog learns something by itself without all our clutter around it), in the vast majority of cases the dog will internalize that lesson to a degree far deeper than one we have framed and structured and 'taught' it -- and will look happier doing so.

(This also works the other way: I have a 10-year-old almost-Field Champion that I can tell you where on the field trial course at Sumerduck in Virginia he realized that he could flush and catch birds without my help -- which is why I eventually decided to retire him from trying to finish that title. As with most things, the challenge is how you balance freedom and structure.) If you take a step forward in your training progression, we come back to the aphorism: instead of thinking about what we want the dog to do, how do we make it worth their while? I am not talking about treat training or 'pure positive' or anything like. We want to engage a dog's prey drive to its fullest, and the only thing that will fulfill that drive is "prey" -- and not a freeze-dried liver treat.

But it is to say that if we start thinking

*Andrew Campbell is an AKC hunt test and field trial judge -- and is lucky to be able to do much of his training at home. The dog in the picture below is Seabank's Archangel Run (Mike) who also earned his first adult field trial placements this spring.*

about what benefits a particular exercise could have for a dog (as opposed to how we get it to do what we want), training can become a whole lot more interesting for everyone. For some dogs, being able to stand and smell a bird ahead of it is plenty of reward, for more, being able to watch a bird fly ahead of it is a pretty great reward, for others, the most fulfilling reward is a bird in their mouth. And, of course, if we give them that bird, then they also understand that they might not need to go freelance and get it themselves.

To use the honor as the example, if you are going to ask a dog to stop for a dog on point ahead of it, be sure you have set up the exercise so the honoring dog will also have a view of the bird being flushed. If you can, shoot the bird ahead of the pointing dog, walk out to get it, and bring it back for the dog who is honoring -- and let them carry it around, eat it, whatever you are comfortable with. But if you start thinking about why a dog would want to do something for you, then you can reframe how you think about training as a whole.



### **Upcoming Events**

***For information on upcoming events, go to:***

[https://www.apps.akc.org/apps/event\\_calendar/index\\_mobi.cfm](https://www.apps.akc.org/apps/event_calendar/index_mobi.cfm)

<http://vcaweb.org>

<http://www.vcli.net>

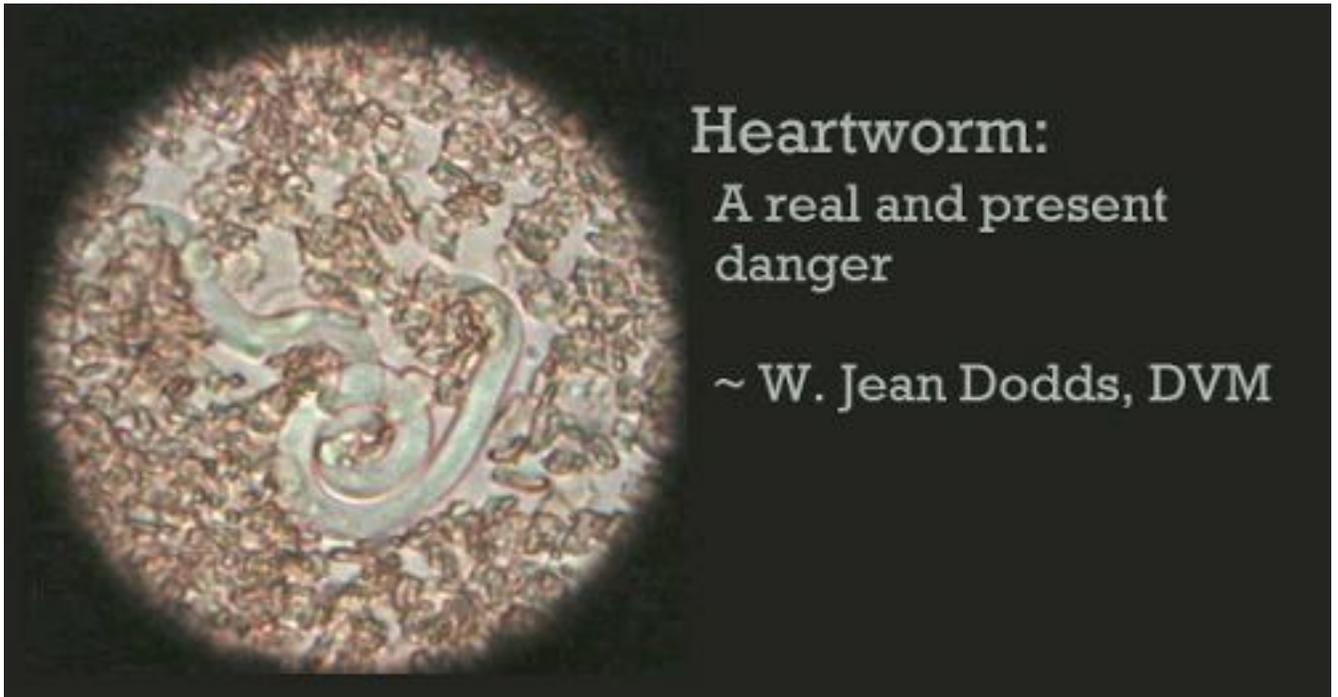
<http://www.vcnj.com/> <http://www.ctvalleyVizslaclub.org/CalendarofEvents.htm>

<http://www.thevcgny.com/Events.html>

<http://www.vccne.net/events.html>

<http://www.lipdc.com/>

<http://www.infodog.com/showinfo/state.htm>



As a practicing veterinarian for over 50 years, I have witnessed the spread of heartworm disease and experienced dogs and cats who have succumbed to its harsh and unforgiving effects. I believe that the excellent public awareness campaign over the past 30 years about heartworm prevention and medication distribution have done great good, but have actually led pet caregivers to a false sense of security that their pets will not get heartworm and subsequently a backlash to prescription preventatives.

The reality is heartworm disease has not been eradicated but has actually mutated. If you have not heard of any cases recently in your area, speak to your local shelter or rescue about how real and present the danger is. These organizations are dealing with it on the frontlines because of lack of funding to give preventives or to test for the disease.

### **History of Heartworm Disease and Prevention**

The 1970's saw heartworm disease spread from the Southeastern portion of the United States to the rest of the Continental United States, Hawaii and Canada. During the 1980's and 1990's, ivermectin (Heartgard) and milbemycin oxide (Interceptor) for dogs were introduced to the market, respectively. **These preventatives – which have been through clinical trials – have kept this disease from reaching epidemic proportions.** I understand the angst surrounding recent controversy regarding some preventatives. Please remember that pharmaceutical companies have years of respected reputation behind them with shareholders expecting them to be responsible. With that being said,

everything we put in or on our bodies and our companion animal bodies can produce positive and negative effects from medications to food to water to topicals. Clinical trials allow us to measure the degree of the positive effects versus the negative. The negative effects are highly scrutinized. Before a drug is released, the negative effects are more than likely proportionately low compared to the positive. This is not a statement that all heartworm preventatives work for all companion animals or that a level of caution should not be exercised particularly for pets with autoimmune diseases.

### **Heartworm Disease Cause, Spread and Effects**

Heartworm Disease is *indirectly* spread between animals via mosquitoes. A mosquito bites a “host” animal. Within 14 days, the microflaria molts in the mosquito who then passes it through another bite to another animal. Once the larvae reach the immature L5 stage in the animal, they will arrive in the heart’s right ventricle and neighboring blood vessels. The artery lining is damaged. The animal’s bodily response is inflammation of the artery, called endarteritis, and other inflammation in the area to try to heal the damage. Blood clots, aneurysms, and complete blockage of small blood vessels can occur. The blood tries to find a way to get to around the wormed areas, which results in complete and partial blockage of blood vessels, causing fluid to accumulate around these blood vessels in the lungs and reducing the effectiveness of the lungs’ ability to oxygenate the blood.

### **Heartworm Positive Diagnosis & Treatment in Dogs**

Heartworm antigen tests and other tests have improved greatly over the past several years to detect the presence of heartworm earlier. However, it usually is 5-7 months before heartworm is detected after a dog is bitten.

Heartworm disease is directly related to how many worms are living inside the dog, the length of infection, the activity level of the dog, and the dog’s bodily response to heartworms. Oddly, highly active dogs will more than likely have a heavier burden of heartworms than less active dogs.

There are four classes (i.e. stages) of heartworm disease. The higher the class, the worse the disease and the more obvious the symptoms.

Class 1: No symptoms or mild symptoms such as an occasional cough.

Class 2: Mild to moderate symptoms such as an occasional cough and tiredness after moderate activity.

Class 3: General loss of body condition, a persistent cough, and tiredness after mild activity. Trouble breathing and signs of heart failure are common. For class 2 and 3 heartworm disease, heart and lung changes are usually seen on chest x-rays.

Class 4: Caval syndrome – a heavy worm burden that blood flows back to the heart is physically blocked by a large mass of worms. Caval syndrome is life-threatening and quick surgical removal of the heartworms from the pet’s heart is the only treatment option. ***The surgery is invasive and risky. Even with surgery, most dogs with caval syndrome die.***

Not all dogs with heartworm disease develop caval syndrome. If left untreated, heartworm disease will progress and damage the dog's heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys, eventually causing death. In essence, it is death by strangulation and complete organ failure.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved two drugs for the treatment of heartworm disease in dogs. Both drugs contain **arsenic** and are effective at killing adult heartworms. Caparsolate Sodium (arsenamides sodium) is not currently manufactured or marketed in the United States. Immiticide (melarsomine hydrochloride) is given by a deep injection into the back muscles to treat dogs with stabilized class 1, 2, and 3 heartworm disease.

One drug, Advantage Multi for Dogs (imidacloprid and moxidectin), is FDA-approved to get rid of microfilariae in the bloodstream of heartworm-positive dogs.

Heartworm disease treatment can be potentially **toxic** to a dog's body and can cause serious complications, such as life-threatening blood clots to the dog's lungs. Treatment requires multiple visits to the veterinarian, blood work, x-rays, hospitalization, and a series of injections with Immiticide.

### **Quick Guide to Heartworm Preventives**

- Prescription preventatives are preferred.
- Alternative, over-the-counter, non-prescriptive products **OR** unconventional approaches to heartworm prevention. The issue remains as follows: a negative heartworm test results does not prove that the alternative products work effectively, whereas only a positive heartworm infection result proves that they don't work adequately.
- At the time of this writing, I do not support preventative, 6-month shots.
- Southeastern U.S. state residents should give preventatives year-round.
- Heartworm preventatives do not actually prevent mosquitoes from infecting your dog with heartworm larvae. These preventatives actually kill different stages of heartworm larvae that already have infected your dog. This is why we recommend giving heartworm during autumn months.
- Dogs, cats and ferrets should be tested annually for heartworm disease. If you live in a state that experiences cold weather months and choose to adopt a 6-month protocol, it is especially important to have your pet tested before the start of the heartworm preventative season.
- Overall, the temperature needs to be above 57 degrees for approximately two weeks and mosquitoes are prevalent.
- You can administer heartworm preventive every 45 days instead of every 30 days, but only if this interval is strictly adhered to. If it's difficult to keep track with a reminder calendar, then your dog may need to stay on the medication every month.
- Half-doses are not recommended. Give the full prescription amount.
- Animals that have been taking monthly preventives for a relatively long time

- may develop subsequent product intolerance. Other preventatives should be sought out or rotated.
- Dogs affected with autoimmune diseases and their immediate relatives should receive only plain daily heartworm preventive (Dimmitrol = diethylcarbamazine). This drug can be found in Canada. For more information about dogs who have autoimmune diseases, chronic thyroid or liver conditions, please visit my blog post, "[General Recommendations for Heartworm Preventives](#)".
  - Trifexis is an oral preventative for fleas and heartworm. Trifexis contains spinosads which are contraindicated in epileptic or seizure prone dogs and should not be given to these dogs. Unfortunately, this is generally unknown and should be shared with your veterinarian, friends and family.
  - Plain milbemycin oxime (Interceptor) is preferable as a heartworm preventive for certain groups of dogs, like sighthounds, smaller white breed dogs and those prone to seizures.
  - **Most Importantly: Discuss the right prescription preventative with your veterinarian.**

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## **When Your Dog's Poop Looks Like This, Visit Your Vet**

*By Dr. Karen Becker*

This topic is a rather unpleasant but important one: assessing your dog's poop for signs of a health problem. Since our canine companions can't tell us when they have cramps, a tummy ache, or some other digestive upset, it's up to us to stay alert for signs of trouble. One of the best ways to do this is to monitor not only what goes into your dog, but also what comes out of him. What's 'Normal' Poop for Your Dog? Generally speaking, a healthy canine stool is moist and firm, and has a mild odor.

### **Healthy Dog Stool**

Dogs fed processed kibble (which I don't recommend) typically produce large quantities of voluminous poop for several reasons. First, most kibble manufacturers add unnaturally high amounts of fiber (beet pulp, soybean, and rice hulls, as well as "cellulose," otherwise known as wood fiber, or sawdust). The normal fiber content of the ancestral diet is between 4 and 6 percent. The fiber content of many dry foods is greater than 15 percent, and most "diet" or "lite" foods contain more than 28 percent fiber. Dogs eating kibble also produce a stinkier poop because their bodies aren't designed to absorb certain nutrients in those diets (for example, grain and other starches, including the unnaturally high potato and pea content found in many "grain free" foods). In some instances, it can feel like your dog is passing out more volume of waste than the food volume she ate!

### **Stool of Kibble-Fed Dog**

Raw fed dogs, on the other hand, tend to produce significantly less poop that is also smaller in size, firmer, and significantly less stinky. Dogs eating a high mineral raw food diet will produce poo that turns a much lighter color within 24 hours and disintegrates very quickly. Dogs eating raw foods that could be too high in calcium or bone pass white, chalky feces, and may suffer from obstipation.

### **Stool of Dog Fed Raw Diet with Too Much Calcium**

Regardless of your dog's diet, it's important to know what her poop looks and smells like normally so that you'll be immediately aware of any changes in frequency, consistency, size, color, or smell. One of the most obvious signs of a potential health problem in dogs is diarrhea, and diarrhea can have different characteristics depending on its cause.

### **Types of Dog Diarrhea**

In the following situations, unless the problem clears up on its own within a day or so, I recommend making an appointment with your veterinarian. A soft stool with no visible blood or mucous might indicate either a dietary change or indiscriminate eating. However, it can also signal the presence of an intestinal parasite such as giardia.

#### **Soft Stool**

A greasy-looking gray stool can be a sign of too much fat in your dog's diet, which can trigger pancreatitis, which is inflammation of the pancreas that can range from very mild to life threatening.

### **Excess Fat in Stool (Steatorrhea)**

A black, tarry stool typically indicates the presence of old blood somewhere in the dog's digestive system. It can be a sign of injury to the GI tract from indiscriminate eating, and it can also be a sign of a very serious disease such as cancer. Watery diarrhea can be a sign of stress or a viral (e. g., parvovirus) or parasitic infection and can lead very quickly to dehydration, especially in puppies.

### **Watery Stool**

A soft stool containing or coated with mucous may indicate the presence of parvovirus or parasites.

### **Stool with Mucus**

A soft or watery stool with visible worms, eggs, or other uninvited guests is a clear indication of a parasite infestation. Firm, soft, or runny poop containing blood or blood clots is almost always a sign of a serious health problem requiring immediate attention. Fresh blood indicates current bleeding, typically from the large intestine or the anus or anal glands. There could be a perforation of the intestinal wall from something the dog ingested, or from the eruption of a tumor or ulcer.

### **Causes of Diarrhea**

Since diarrhea is a symptom of multiple health problems, it also has multiple causes. These include: Change in diet, Toxins, Inflammatory bowel disease, Food intolerance, sensitivity, allergy Idiopathic hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, Small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), Intestinal parasites Lymphangiectasia, Histoplasma enteritis or colitis, Indiscriminate eating, Tumors, Intestinal obstruction, Bacterial infection, Rectal polyps, Irritable bowel syndrome, Viral infection, Exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, and Histiocytic ulcerative colitis

### **The Not-So-Obvious Symptoms of Diarrhea**

When most of us think of a dog with diarrhea, we picture the poor pup standing anxiously at the door, needing to get out quickly. Once he's out, he dashes off to find a suitable spot and passes loose, watery stool. Alternatively, if we're not around when the urgency hits, we come home to an accident on the floor. But what many dog parents don't realize is that sometimes diarrhea causes straining to go, making it look more like constipation than diarrhea. That's because diarrhea upsets the normal rhythm of the muscle contractions in your dog's intestinal tract, giving her the feeling that she constantly needs to poop. So even though she's hunched over and straining, her colon might be empty after repeated bouts of loose stool. And in cases of chronic diarrhea, many dogs don't have accidents in the house and don't have fecal urgency, they simply always have loose, watery stools.

Other symptoms that can go along with diarrhea include fever, lethargy, malaise, loss of appetite, and dehydration. Puppies, small dogs, and seniors are at risk of dehydration from just one round of explosive diarrhea. Small bowel diarrhea can also be confusing to owners, as the first part of the stool is firm, followed by soft or very loose second half of the bowel movement, which can indicate a variety of issues including small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, maldigestion, malabsorption, food intolerances, exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, dybiosis, or IBS.

### **Small Bowel Diarrhea When to Call the Vet**

Most healthy dogs experience an occasional episode of loose stool or diarrhea that resolves within 12 to 24 hours. The underlying issue in most of these cases is indiscriminate eating or stress. However, any dog has the potential to become very ill from chronic bouts of diarrhea. If your dog seems fine after a bout of diarrhea -- meaning she's acting normal, with normal energy -- it's safe to simply keep an eye on her to insure her stool returns to normal within a day or so. But if you notice she's also sluggish, running a fever or feels warm to the touch, or there's a change in her behavior, you should contact your veterinarian. If you see blood in your pet's stool or she's weak or shows other signs of debilitation along with the diarrhea, you should make an appointment with the vet. If your dog seems fine but is experiencing recurrent bouts of diarrhea, it's time for a checkup. It's important to bring a sample of your dog's stool to your appointment, even if it's watery. Use a plastic baggie and shovel a bit in there to take with you. This will help your vet identify potential underlying causes for the diarrhea.

### **Home Care for Diarrhea in Healthy Dogs**

If your pet is an adult, otherwise healthy, and behaving normally except for the diarrhea, I recommend you withhold food -- NOT WATER -- for 12 hours. At the 12-hour mark, offer a bland diet. I recommend cooked ground turkey and plain 100 percent pumpkin. This is a different bland diet from the traditional ground beef and rice combination that is often recommended. Even the leanest ground beef contains a lot of fat, and fat can worsen a case of diarrhea. Rice, even though it's bland, is very fermentable. Fermenting rice in the colon of a pet with diarrhea tends to increase gassiness. Also, rice tends to just zip right through the GI tract, exiting with the next bout of explosive diarrhea totally undigested.

Mix the cooked ground turkey and pumpkin or sweet potato 50-50 in your dog's bowl. Feed 2 to 3 small meals a day until stools are back to 100 percent, which should happen in about 72 hours.

My favorite all-natural anti-diarrhea remedy is an herb called slippery elm bark. I recommend always having some on hand so when you need it, it's right there. Slippery elm is safe for puppies, adults, and geriatric dogs and it is completely safe when blended with other medications. I recommend about a half teaspoon for each 10 pounds of body weight, mixed into the bland diet twice daily. I also recommend you add in a good quality pet probiotic. Feeding a bland diet and supplementing with slippery elm bark is a good plan for about 3 days, at which time your dog's stool should be back to normal. If after 3 days the diarrhea hasn't cleared up, it's time to check in with your veterinarian.

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