



Gold Ribbon Rescue

Dedicated to Helping Golden Retrievers and Their Owners in Central Texas March 2004 14th Edition

In This Issue:

- What to do for those dreaded allergies.
- Thunderstorm phobia: more common than you think.
- Noel, our Christmas miracle.
- Golden Afternoon at Zilker.

Letter from GRR's President — Maura Phelan

We've Come a Long Way in Five Years

This year's picnic is set for March 27—so mark your calendars. We always have a great time, and it's wonderful to meet all our former foster dogs and their forever families. If you've never attended before, please come this year!

Along with warmer days, spring also brings ticks, fleas, and allergies. Be sure the Frontline is up to date, and watch for signs of allergies and hot spots. If problems do crop up, check Margo Biba's article for advice in dealing with them. Spring is also prime thunderstorm season, so we've included a discussion of ways to help storm-phobic dogs (see page 6).

Pretty weather means more outside time—with more chances of Rover escaping just when you're not looking. This is the time to check collar and tags, tighten or replace tag holders, and update that city dog license. If your dog isn't microchipped, think about having that done; if he is, scan to be sure the chip is operating correctly.

In spring, we often think of making changes and fresh starts. On that subject, you may notice our elegant new GRR logo! We have a few staff changes as well. I am now doing double duty as Intake Director, while Kathy Burton is taking a well-deserved break from that job. And Teresa Szostak has come on board as Assistant Intake Director. Welcome, Teresa!

In over 5 years of saving Golden Retrievers, we have come a long way. Before we were Gold Ribbon, we were just ME—doing rescue on my own, at my house, through the Austin Golden Retriever Club. When I shut down a puppy

mill on Superbowl weekend 1998 and ended up with 93 dogs in the process, it drove the club to push rescue out. So I founded Gold Ribbon Rescue, received some of the money that had been raised, and incorporated as a non-profit. At our first meeting, I told the 10 to 15 attendees that we couldn't operate without their help, and they jumped right in. From that small core, we have evolved to an exemplary organization that rescues over 100 dogs a year, covers a large part of Texas, and has the best group of volunteers I have ever had the pleasure to work with.

Our latest goals are to do more follow-up on adopted dogs and to increase community outreach and education. Two new volunteers, Scott and Paula Cook, will be coordinating our follow-up efforts. If you're interested in assisting them or helping GRR in any other way, please contact volunteer@grr-tx.com. You will meet great people, help some wonderful dogs, and have a truly golden time! 🐾

Gold Ribbon Rescue

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Non-Profit 501(c)(3)

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www.GRR-TX.com

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Brenda Forsythe

**Please join us on
March 27, 2004**

(rain date: April 3rd)

**for a
Golden Afternoon
in Zilker Park.**

See back page and website for details.



Golden Health

Along with Warmer Weather, Sunshine

by Margo Biba

At our house, with 7 old Golden Retrievers, along with warmer weather come dreaded allergies...itching, sneezing, licking feet, ear infections. Golden Retrievers, with their sometimes delicate immune systems, are susceptible to allergy issues.

Like humans, dogs suffer from inhaled "atopic" allergies to tree pollens (cedar, oak, etc.), grass & weed pollens, molds, mildew and house dust mites. Atopic allergies generally first occur at 1 - 3 years of age, increasing throughout the dog's lifetime. After several years of acquiring new allergies, seasonal problems transition into year-round misery.

Allergy symptoms can be caused by many things besides inhaled allergies, including fleas, low thyroid, sensitivity to household products, and food allergies. Drug reactions, diseases, and infections can also cause scratching and hair loss. For this reason, if a normally non-itchy dog suddenly begins losing hair in patches and scratching himself, your first course of action ought to be making an appointment with your vet. Other symptoms may include chewing at feet, constant licking, and ear flaps may become red and hot. Chronic ear infections may follow. Skin becomes thickened, greasy and has a strong odor.

While considering the preferred treatment for your Golden's allergies, choose from a mix of traditional methods and alternative therapies. Your goal is making the dog's immune system stronger, while reducing the symptom—uncomfortable itchiness...

■ **Fatty acid supplementation.** Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are useful in improving skin health. Omega-3 decreases inflammation and itchiness. Fish oil capsules test better than flax seed oil in reducing symptoms. One fish oil capsule, twice daily.

■ **Antihistamines.** The response to antihistamines varies in pets. Only through trial and error will you know which works best for your particular Golden. Benedryl containing 25 mg Diphenhydramine HCl (and nothing else!) is a popular choice. Hydroxyzine in 50 mg capsules, taken 2 or 3 times daily, is a more expensive but sometimes a much more effective alternative. Talk to your veterinarian about antihistamine options. For long-term use, antihistamines are preferable to corticosteroids (steroids) because they have fewer side effects.

■ **Shampoo Therapy.** Frequent bathing, even 2-3 times per week, can be soothing & helpful if a mild dog shampoo is used (oatmeal and hypoallergenic shampoo). Dog shampoos are specially formulated not to strip oil from the coat. Do not use tearless shampoo, as manufacturers use harsh chemicals to make it tearless. Rinse thoroughly. Bathing rinses out allergens in the coat that could be absorbed through the skin. Your vet can provide other shampoos if your Golden has secondary seborrhea or a secondary bacterial or fungal infection.

■ **Hyposensitization (allergy shots).** Once the specific sources of allergy are identified via testing, very small amounts of the antigen are injected weekly. This repeated dosing desensitizes the immune system over a period of 2 - 12 months or longer—but every dog is different. This is the most expensive form of treatment.

■ **Diet.** Feed your dog the best quality food available to reduce health & allergy problems. You do get what you pay for.

Poor quality dogfoods have been implicated as contributing factors in allergies, cancer and a host of other serious health issues.

■ **Reducing exposure to toxins.** Anything you can do to lessen the detoxifying burden placed on the dog's liver will help the dog in the long run.

■ **Acupuncture.** The goal is to restore the healthy flow of internal energy, known as chi—increasing circulation, reducing pain and inflammation by increasing the production and release of the body's own pain-killing, mood-elevating chemicals. Several Austin-area vets successfully practice doggy acupuncture.

■ **Local Honey.** Honey, taken daily, has anecdotally been mentioned for allergy relief. The key is procuring locally grown honey, so that the bees gather pollen from the same environment that produces symptoms for you & your Golden. Dosage is 1 teaspoon for your Golden.

■ **Acidophilus.** Given daily, probiotics like acidophilus battle yeast infections, which are typical for itchy skinned allergy sufferers. Acidophilus also helps maintain good gastro-intestinal health by promoting the "good bacteria" needed for proper digestion. Acidophilus can be found at health food stores & pharmacies. Yogurt contains acidophilus and can be effective if given in larger amounts, say, up to 1 cup per day per Golden.

■ **Antibiotics.** When secondary infections like staph or fungus (yeast) attack the skin, veterinarians often use antibiotics. Oral probiotics like acidophilus are helpful, both during & after antibiotics, to help beneficial bacteria killed by the antibiotics re-colonize in the dog's digestive tract.



Come Seasonal Allergies

■ **Nettle.** There are a number of theories that could explain nettle's success at treating allergies. Its histamine compounds may mimic or slow the release of histamines that are naturally produced by the body, or they may trigger an immune response that strengthens the system. Starting just before allergy season and continuing until just after allergy season, add one-half teaspoon of the dried herb to each cup of food at mealtime. Dried nettle is available at health food stores.

■ **Antioxidant supplements, including vitamin C and tons of garlic.** These supplements act as powerful antioxidants and help detoxify the body, necessary for any animal living in our stressful & polluted environment. Although dogs' bodies produce some vitamin C, a boost of 300 - 500 mg. per day with meals may help. Even better, add grated or steamed green veggies at every meal. (Do not include

green pepper if your dog suffers from arthritis or allergies, as it causes inflammation.) In addition to its antioxidant qualities, garlic helps to eliminate worms, strengthen digestion and beneficially stimulate the intestinal tract.

■ **Flea control (just in case).** Topical monthly treatments like Frontline or Advantage can be used up to every 3 weeks if flea infestation is a problem, according to veterinarians.

■ **Anti-inflammatories including, steroids.** Steroids work extremely well and quickly to relieve itchiness and pain, but have serious side effects. The negative side effects include decreasing the ability of wounds to heal & increasing the chance of infection. For arthritic pets, they contribute to further destruction of arthritic joints. At high doses, steroids suppress the body's immune system. Long term use affects nearly every organ, leading to serious damage to your pet's body. Steroids can

also have serious interactions with other prescription drugs. The bottom line: use steroids in the lowest possible dose, for the shortest possible time.

■ **Reiki.** A form of hands-on healing that heals the body first, then the mind, emotions & spirit. My own "Special Agent Cooper," age 14, suffered from severe allergies manifesting with extreme itchiness. Since adopting him in 2000, we've tried antihistamines, medicated shampoos, quality diet, 2 years of allergy shots, reducing exposure to toxins, antibiotics, flea control & steroids—all with only partial success. After one 30-minute Reiki session, with a 10-minute follow-up several weeks later, Cooper's itchiness stopped completely and we discontinued all antihistamines & allergy meds. There are many Reiki practitioners in the Austin - San Antonio area.

■ **Consult your veterinarian.** You and your vet are teammates, working toward the common goal of your Golden's comfort & health.

■ **Read up on the issue.** *The Allergy Solution for Dogs*, by Shawn Messonnier, DVM, uses the holistic approach to treating allergies. *Pet Allergies: Remedies for an Epidemic*, by Plechner, DVM & Zucker, explains why allergies are on the rise and what to do about them. *Protect Your Pet*, by Ann N. Martin, discusses the dangers of commercial pet foods and other health risks. *Whole Dog Journal* is the best—bar none—monthly newsletter guide to natural dog care and training. Check out their website at www.whole-dog-journal.com.

So as this spring time approaches, don't let your itchy dogs suffer any longer. If they are scratching excessively, take them to your vet right away. Try to find out what allergies they have and start treatment. Your Golden's will love you for it. 



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Success Story**GRR's Christmas Miracle—Noel's Story**

A few days before Christmas a call came in to our Hotline from a Good Sam who had found a "pitiful" looking young female Golden. She appeared to be starving—you could see every rib and the poor little thing was eating every scrap she was offered.

GRR volunteer Laura Reed at once went to see the dog and realized that this little gal needed immediate rescue. She was indeed very sick and clearly starving to death. Laura picked her up like a feather and placed her gently in her car where she rode quietly until they reached Laura's home. She perked up a bit with a little tail wag when Laura's daughters approached her. She lowered her head for some pets, and then simply slumped to the floor from weakness.

Laura took "Noel" to the vet the following morning and we received some very sad news about our little Christmas girl. Her blood work indicated that she was in severe renal failure. There isn't much that can be done in a situation such as this and the vet offered to euthanize Noel that very morning.

But Laura just couldn't leave Noel so soon. "She is so sweet and docile and loves to

lay her head on your lap and snooze. I realize she is weak, so I won't let her hang on for long, but I would like to give her a couple more days of TLC." As long as Noel displayed an appetite and wasn't vomiting, the Rainbow Bridge would have to wait.

Amazingly, within a few days Noel began to rally. Laura reported, "Each day I have seen her gain strength and come alive. She is even retrieving a ball!!" She had been too weak to even pull herself up from the floor and now she was becoming Laura's shadow—following her from room to room. "I think Noel has decided she wants to have a Reed Christmas this year."

Her lab results were beginning to look more normal, but she was far from being out of the woods. An ultrasound was performed. Hooray—her kidneys looked normal! But the vets did see that her heart muscle was unusually thin and they suspected a possible heart condition. Thankfully, further tests on her heart have come back normal.



Pictured at left is Noel the day she came in to GRR care. Below, Noel snuggles with Sarah Reed after a romp in the unseasonable snow.



Today, Noel's lab work continues to improve. She is being treated for a kidney infection—the lingering effects of malnutrition. She may have long-term kidney problems; it's still too early to know for sure. What we do know is that she is truly a miracle dog who literally owes her life to the Good Sam who called GRR and to Laura for wanting to give her those few extra days of tender loving care.

Noel is now a happy, bouncy, playful girl—at a normal healthy weight. She will need her heart and blood levels rechecked regularly, but in the meantime, she is busy filling the Reed family with the love and energy of a thankful young Golden. This is what rescue is all about! 

 **What do you want for your birthday?**

We are always looking for creative fund raising ideas for GRR, as the need for income never diminishes. GRR adoptive mom, Debra, had a wonderful idea! She asked if we could somehow set it up so that guests to her 40th birthday party could give to GRR as a birthday gift. No problem!! Tim Tierney and I worked together to design a special card to place within her mailed invitations, provided her with self addressed envelopes and Tim set up a personalized website for her guests to visit—complete with a disco look and feel to coordinate with her party theme. So what do you want for your birthday? Consider a virtual party page on the GRR website. Check out Debra's page at: www.GRR-TX.com/Debra.htm (turn up the volume!).



Fiesta Fun at GRR Holiday Party

Our Holiday Party was a huge success. Special thanks to Susie and Gary Schaffer for organizing the event, and to Tammi Hanson for cooking up a meal to delight us all. Kurt Schultz took some amazing pictures. Pictured clockwise starting at top: Max Ploeger wins a lovely piece of pottery created and donated by Dana McGill; Pam Phillips, who helped with the decorations relaxes in the fiesta atmosphere; Clark Hoesman finds a cuddly pooch in the boutique (he and Beth welcomed the arrival of Dillon in January); and Susie Schaffer and Maura Phelan share a laugh during the raffle drawing. To view more pictures of this event visit our website. From the Holiday Party event photo page you can link to the full gallery of images on Kurt's website.



We would also like to thank everyone who donated items to help our fund raising efforts. Without your support, the event would not have been such a huge success.



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- Albertson's at Riverside
- Randalls
- HEB
- Whole Foods



- Sam's Club
 - Costco
- Donations of items for our silent auction:

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- Dana McGill
- Regal Cinemas



- Chandra Beal
- Dog Works
- Jeri Jones
- Chris Miller
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Lillian Sikorski is a certified in-home trainer and has been teaching owners how to understand the language of their dog since 1981. She has two golden boys, Cisco and Cabo.

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When Stormy Weather Spells Trouble

by Becky LaBrum

Springtime in Central Texas means longer, warmer days, grass turning green again, trees coming into bloom—and rainier, more unsettled weather. And for storm-phobic Golden Retrievers and their owners, those thunderstorms can make for a stressful season. Experts still aren't sure just what it is about storms that some dogs find so terrifying. Noise is definitely a factor, but since not all dogs who are frightened of thunder are equally perturbed by other loud noises, it's possible that they are also reacting to sudden changes in air pressure or to electrical charges in the atmosphere.

Many dogs couldn't care less about storms, and others get just moderately anxious. Tucker, our black Lab, is one of these; we call him our Dog Barometer, as he can detect incoming storms long before there's even a cloud in the sky. At the first hint of trouble, he becomes moochy and clingy, following me from room to room. As the storm draws in, he begins to pant, pace, drool, tremble, and hunt for the smallest possible hiding place; he'll squeeze behind the sofa, try to crush himself into the gap between toilet and bathtub, or disappear into the back of a walk-in closet.

And then there's the severely phobic dog. Often placid in most circumstances, these animals become genuinely frantic during storms; they may crash through plate glass windows or sliding doors, chew off doorknobs, break down their crates, try to dig through the floor, or simply careen blindly through the house (or, if they're outdoors, flee down the street), trying desperately to outrun their fear. They may break teeth and nails in their escape attempts; some lose bladder or bowel control.

If your dog is only mildly or moderately phobic, letting him see that *you* are not worried may well be enough to get him through a storm. Don't coddle him or comfort him—an “oh you poor thing, Mommy's scared too!” reaction will just reinforce his anxiety. And don't scold him, either—if he could help being frightened, he would. We more or less ignore Tucker as he follows us around, tell

him “it's fine” now and then in a matter-of-fact tone of voice, and make sure the door to at least one closet is open, should he want to go in and hide. He is more fearful if a storm strikes at night, which is not uncommon in phobic dogs; I encourage him to lie down between nightstand and bed, then dangle my arm down so my hand touches his side. This is usually enough to calm him down. Other owners have reported that it helps to turn all the lights on, then switch on the TV and turn on the washing machine and/or dryer to help mask the storm sounds (you can do this in the daytime, too, of course).

Some owners have had good success with Rescue Remedy or flower essences, herbal preparations with calming properties. Mimulus, Rock Rose, and Aspen are the essences most commonly used for thunderstorm fear. When a storm is rolling in, you can put about 5 drops in your dog's drinking water (a 1- to 2-cup bowl); if the storm has already arrived, you can administer several drops under his tongue. (You'll find these products at health food stores.)



Melatonin, typically used by humans to treat insomnia, has also worked very well for some dogs. A typical dose for an average-sized Golden is one 3-milligram tablet; you can give it if a storm is predicted or when one has arrived. You'll find many brands available; some are mixed with herbs or other substances that may not be safe for dogs, so read labels carefully—and always consult your veterinarian before use.

Another option is hug therapy or body wrapping, in which the dog wears a special,

snug body stocking (rather like a tight T-shirt) during stormy periods. The theory here is that any kind of trauma, including intense fear, can damage nerve endings, leading to out-of-proportion responses to certain stimuli. The snug-fitting wrap helps counteract this by providing a steady, unchanging stimulus which, it is thought, will eventually cause nerve endings to modify their reaction thresholds. Along these same lines, you might also consider Tellington touch (T-touch) therapy, a method of petting and stroking your dog in a systematic manner. For more information on this, contact Francine Morris, a T-touch expert here in Austin (512-338-4509; sekmet8@webtv.net).

Many sources recommend desensitization or counter-conditioning, techniques that can help teach your dog to respond in relaxed or cheerful ways to the sounds and other stimuli that scare her now. For example, you might start by exposing her to a very soft tape recording of thunder or a flashing light, and rewarding her with lots of treats and other positive reinforcement only if she stays calm. Over time, you slowly increase the volume and intensity, still offering treats for calm behavior; the idea is for the dog to associate good things with the “bad” sound or stimulus. *This process must be very, very gradual, and before you begin it, you should get professional guidance, either from a veterinarian or a behaviorist.*

For dogs with more severe thunderstorm phobia, pharmaceutical solutions can be very helpful. Many owners have good success with the sedative acepromazine (“ace”). Start with a small dose, just 1/4 to 1/2 tablet, so you can find out how your dog will respond; if you can administer it several hours before a storm comes in, he'll probably be able to relax more easily, and the medication will be more effective. *Important: Acepromazine lowers the seizure threshold, so if your Golden has ever had a seizure, never use this product without consulting your veterinarian.* Valium is another medication that works well for some dogs; ask your vet. And the latest preferred medication is clomipramine (Clomicalm), an anti-anxiety drug which is also helpful in treating separation anxiety.





When a thunderstorm approaches, Dee Dee's otherwise mellow disposition turns to severe anxiety.



Case history: Dee Dee. To find out what methods one GRR mom uses to deal with storm phobia, I recently chatted with Sandy Balch. Her Golden girl Dee Dee is a beautiful, sturdy, mellow-natured 7-year-old with a gorgeous champagne-blond coat and a head so unbelievably velvety that it's almost impossible to stop stroking her. And if you do stop, a gentle nudge or paw tap lets you know your work is not done yet! But Dee Dee is terrified of storms—so much so, in fact, that her original family feared for her own safety and surrendered her to GRR. Now, with the help of the vets at Century Animal Hospital, Sandy is working on calming Dee Dee's fears. I asked Sandy what Dee Dee does when a storm comes in. "She mostly runs around the house," says Sandy. "She will try to burrow into the couch or into the bed, tossing cushions and bedding around, and if she's crated, she really flips out and will batter her way out. Sometimes she loses control of her bladder." Dee Dee has learned how to rock the crate from side to side until it collapses; if she's not at a fever-pitch of anxiety, she also knows just how to lift the latch from the inside and simply let herself out. (Clever dog!) Her teeth are quite worn down, and the suspicion is that at least some of this is due to biting at crate bars in moments of stress.

It doesn't always take thunder to frighten Dee Dee; sometimes, unsettled conditions such as big clouds boiling swiftly across the sky can bring on a nervous attack.

Dee Dee takes one 50-milligram Clomicalm twice a day, every day; if the weather

threatens to be stormy, she gets an extra one. Sandy gives Dee Dee acepromazine only if she is having an especially hard time calming her. "With the Clomicalm, she doesn't get groggy, so I feel that I can try other techniques on her and she's actually able to respond to them," says Sandy. One suggestion offered by Dee Dee's vets was to crate her, switch on a recording of classical music, leave the room, and not release her from the crate until she is calm. The goal here is to help Dee Dee calm down when she is alone, since Sandy will not always be available when Dee Dee is frightened. Sandy says this approach can work if Dee Dee is not too anxious yet, but when she is really stressing, crating is the worst thing for her—it simply escalates her panic. If Sandy has to leave home when a storm is predicted, she simply gives Dee Dee her extra Clomicalm and leaves her loose. She may return to a somewhat disordered house, but figures that this is far preferable to confining Dee Dee.

Sandy also puts Rescue Remedy in Dee Dee's meals, mixing it with a little water in the bottom of the dish before pouring in the kibble. And she's planning to try hug therapy as well. So far she knows that Dee Dee is agreeable to wearing her tight T-shirt, but she hasn't had a chance to see if that will help when a storm comes in.

As Sandy's experience is proving, even bad thunderstorm phobia is generally manageable—if you have a lot of patience,

consult with your vet and/or a behaviorist, and are willing to keep on trying until you find the techniques that help. What's effective for one Golden may not work for another, but eventually you'll be able to come up with a personalized program to fit your dog.

Links for more information. Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue has an excellent article on storm phobia, covering the therapies mentioned here as well as others; see www.ygrr.org/doginfo/behavior-phobia.html. The HSUS site, www.petsforlife.org, has a number of useful articles; click on "Dog Behavior Tip Sheets" at the bottom of the home page. 

Thanks to our Vets!

Gold Ribbon Rescue wishes to thank the following Animal Clinics for their continued support of our dogs and rescue efforts.

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**Special thanks to
Dr. Beardsley
of Central Texas Vet. Specialty
Hospital for her healing hands
and generosity to GRR.**



Extraordinary Golden Fund

Siblings Share Genetic OCD Condition

Editor's Note: Rex, Ginger and Cecelia have all been through a lot in their young lives. It's for dogs like these that GRR's EGF was created. Together their medical expenses will cost us almost \$5,000. We are in need of donations to help with the expenses, as our \$250 adoption fees do not come close to covering the costs of treatment for these dogs and others in our care—even with the generous discounts from our area veterinarians. Please consider making a donation to EGF online or by mail. Thank you.

Rex and Ginger

Rex and Ginger are 9-month-old siblings whose owner didn't have the time to care for them properly. She had told us that Rex had problems with his left front leg and "a little limp," but when the two pups arrived in GRR's care, we learned at once that things are more serious than that.



Rex—after surgery and doing very well.

Foster mom Joy can tell that Rex is in a lot of pain. He prefers not to put any weight on his bad leg at all, frequently standing on only three legs. And Ginger's foster mom, Nora, soon called to let us know that Ginger, too, has problems with her left front leg. Brother and sister share something more than a health problem, though: both foster families simply rave about these pups' sweet nature. "Rex is THRILLED to be sleeping indoors in his crate with our Golden Charlie and us so close," says Joy. "He is a true retriever and brings anything you throw right back." And Nora reports, "Ginger is extremely good

natured, extremely loving and calm, and would be happy just to be petted and scratched all day. She is already a Daddy's girl."

Vet visits and x-rays were in order for the adorable auburn duo. The news: both pups have a condition known as OCD, *osteocondritis dissecans*, in which a flap of cartilage in a joint (the shoulder, in the case of Rex and Ginger) comes loose and acts as an irritant. Every time these pups move their shoulder or put weight on the joint, the flap irritates the tissue, causing pain and discomfort—hence limping and "favoring" the bad leg. Poor Rex has been trying to spare his shoulder so long that the muscles have atrophied: there's a size difference between his left and right shoulders that's very easy to see and feel. Luckily, with arthroscopic surgery, OCD is curable. The surgery isn't cheap, though: it will cost about **\$1,700 per puppy**—that's \$3,400 total! But the prognosis is excellent: two pups who can caper, run, jump, and play, pain-free.

Cecelia

White-faced and gaunt, her front teeth worn to nubs, a tennis-ball-size tumor on her belly and another big lump on one hind leg, Cecelia looked like an old dog in bad trouble. A kind family found her wandering out in farm country just before Thanksgiving and contacted GRR. They knew she'd been in the area for a while—their neighbors had mentioned seeing her for a few days—but nobody seemed to be looking for this sweet girl. The Good Samaritans couldn't keep her, but they couldn't say enough about her calm, affectionate nature.

Upon arriving in Austin, Cecelia headed straight to the clinic. Surprise number one: her age was estimated at only 3 to 5 years, not 9 or 10, as we had thought! Cecelia's "old dog" look resulted from a hard life: she's most likely a puppy-mill

dog, bred non-stop until she simply "wore out"—and then dumped by the roadside and left to her fate. The muscles in her hips and hind legs were



Through it all, Cecelia smiles.

weak and atrophied, doubtless from years of spending most of her time confined in a small space. The vet heard rough breath sounds from Cecelia's chest and feared that the mammary tumor on her belly was malignant and had metastasized to her lungs. But—pleasant surprise number two: on X-ray, her lungs were crystal clear. The mystery was explained when we remembered that Cece had been sleeping on straw. Allergies!

With check-up complete and vaccinations updated, Cece headed to her foster home to put on 10 pounds and get strong enough for surgery.

Cecelia had her 4½-hour operation on January 20th and came through with flying colors. The vets spayed her, performed a complete mastectomy on the right side, and removed the leg cyst. Pathology revealed that the mammary tumor was cancerous—but the cancer was low-grade, and Cece's prognosis is excellent. (She'll be getting monthly breast exams from now on, just in case anything shows up on the other side.) And, she's filling out and getting stronger every day.

Cost for spay, tumor removal, pathology, and the start of a new life: **\$1,400.**



Adoptable Golden Retrievers



Ginger, age 7
I'm mellow, gentle, affectionate, and ready to be your best friend... and your kitty's very best pal, too, as you can see.

Clay, age 1-1/2
Outgoing, sweet, active, always happy, loves fetch, loves grooming, loves being loved on—what more could you ask?



Lady, age 2
I'm a little on the shy side, but give me some time and I'll soon be ready to play with you. Soccer is my favorite game, and I am a champ!



Jed, age 9
Looking for the Perfect Gentleman? Look no farther. I'm well mannered and loving, and I get along great with kids, cats, and other dogs.



Lola, age 10
I'm a gentle old girl who would love to be your forever companion. I like taking LOTS of walks, so we'll both stay fit as we stroll along together.

Ricky, age 2
Handsome dog seeks employment with loving family! For belly rubs and lots of love, I'll sit, stay, down, wait, come, walk nice on a leash, and keep those pesky squirrels away.



For more details and pictures of each of these adoptables, check our website under "Adoption". New adoptables are posted on the website regularly, so be sure to check back often. www.GRR-tx.com

Gold Ribbon Rescue now has crates for sale!

Available in two sizes at bargain prices!
36" crate (40-75 lb dog): \$80 (plus tax)
42" crate (50-100 lb dog): \$100 (plus tax)

Know someone who's getting a young pup? Maybe it's you! Order yours today at: www.GRR-tx.com/crate.htm or call 512-659-GOLD (4653). Crates may be picked up in Manor or downtown Austin. Your shoes, furniture and pup will thank you!



Don't forget to visit our Boutique on line. We have some awesome gift items. Have you started your Golden's scrapbook yet? Check out the "All About Me" scrapbook. Too cute!





Golden Circle Membership Level \$500-\$1000

Susan Adkins
Sandra Nordstrom
Adelaide Biggs

(Love from Shirley- formerly Hannah)
Brian & Melissa Tyler



Gold Medalist Membership Level \$250-\$499

Kelly Topfer



Golden Nugget Membership Level \$100-\$249

Andrea Weeks
Donald & Patricia Ferry
Kathi Beer
Cam Snyder
Sandra Balch
Mr. & Mrs. Paul V. Stoner
Dave Tietjen

The generosity of Golden owners continues to make a huge difference as an ever increasing number of Golden Retrievers find their way to rescue. GRR rescued 137 Golden Retrievers during 2003. Without your support many of these Golden Retrievers would have lost their lives. Your donation is fully deductible as a non-profit donation. You can make your donation online at:

www.GRR-TX.com

via a check or credit card or you may mail your donation to:

Gold Ribbon Rescue, Attn: Golden Honors
PO Box 956, Austin, TX 78767



Golden Friend Membership Level \$40-\$99

Melanie Strybos
Diane and Browne Goodwin
Robb & Micki Miller
Jay Doyle

Elaine & Michael Flores
Tracy Ten Eyck
Peggy Hannon
Lindley Murray
Michael Stauffacher
Gina & Bill Totah
Teresa Shinski

David & Mani Humann
Augie Vicari
Bill Keith

Bonnie Reid
Jo & Ron Kautz
Randy & Terrie Carlson
Jacqueline Merrow

Eda Ballinger
Becky LaBrum

Sara Chadwick
Steve Heagerty

Myrna Rochelle
Debbie Ellis

Cindy Benson
Beth Freeman

Kathryn Burton
Gretchen & Jon Dee Graham

Dana McGill

Joyce Grapes

Jamie Steinburg

Jean Dempsey

Paula Britton

Margaret Fitzgerald

Mark Salmanson

Sally & Bill Astleford

Chloe Moore

Golden Honors

In Honor of
Dee Dee
Sandra Balch

In Honor of
Cecelia
Peg Miller

In Honor of
Maura Phelan
Tommy & Carly Nordstrom

Golden Gifts

Margo Biba

Patty McCall

Leslie Rubenstein

John Robinson

Bernard Lechner

Cheryl Aycock

Brad & Diana Duncan

Nancy & Patrick Hartigan

Morton & Angela Topfer Foundation

Dennis R. Meals Charitable
Foundation

Joanne O'Neill

Cam Snyder

Richard & Kelly Topfer

Century Animal Clinic (for Brio)

Dortha McCracken

Corinne McCray

Elizabeth Bluta

Andrew Napora

Gregory Brill

Pamela Gregg

Steven Moss

Extraordinary Golden Fund Donors:

Brian & Melissa Tyler

Susan Adkins

Elizabeth & Rodney Lee

Elizabeth Lee

On behalf of all
the Golden Retrievers....
Thank You!



From a Grateful Dog

You're giving me a special gift,
 So sorrowfully endowed,
 And through these last few cherished hours,
 Your courage makes me proud.
 But the sweetest kindness is knowing
 When your friend is in pain,
 And understanding earthly acts
 Will only be in vain.
 So looking deep into your eyes,
 Beyond, into your soul,
 I see in you the magic that will
 Once more make me whole.
 The strength that you possess,
 Is why I look to you today,
 To do this thing that must be done,
 For it's the only way.
 That strength is why I found you,
 And chose you as my friend,
 And why I've loved you all these days...
 My guardian till the end.
 Please, understand just what this gift
 You're giving, means to me,
 It gives me back the strength I've lost,
 And all my dignity.
 You take a stand on my behalf,
 For that is what friends do.
 And know that what you do is right,
 For I believe it, too.
 So one last time, I breathe your scent,
 And through your hand I feel,
 The courage that's within you,
 To grant me this appeal.
 Cut the leash that holds me here,
 Dear friend, and let me run,
 Once more a strong and steady dog,
 My pain and struggle done.
 And don't despair my passing,
 For I won't be far away,
 Forever here, within your heart,
 And in memory I'll stay.
 I'll be there watching over you,
 with all the others I now join
 And in your dreams we'll run,
 ... as young dogs once again.

In memory of Rigley, who was what every Golden should be and finally had the love that every Golden deserves.

Dedicated to the Gold Ribbon dogs that came to us too late and left too soon in 2003...

03-026 Spencer
 03-028 Taylor
 03-036 Jesco
 03-039 Bonnie
 03-050 Ruben
 03-071 Parker
 03-069 Dory
 03-078 Annabelle
 (Perm.foster with the Biba family)
 03-138 Rigley (Perm. foster with the Biba family)
 02-041 Audrey (Perm. foster with the Biba family)



and to the Gold Ribbon dogs that went on to their forever homes, and now reside forever in the hearts of their families as they do ours.

00-009 Woody 01-006 Brio 01-036 Kellie
 01-074 Daisy (Flyer) 01-110 Toss 01-116 April

Many of our Golden Retrievers have gone to the bridge in the loving arms of GRR volunteer, Kathy Burton. When that time arrives, Kathy has been there to not only comfort the Golden in his last hours, but to provide comfort and support to the foster and adoptive families. Kathy has been instrumental in putting together a virtual Memorial on our website. Thank you, Kathy.

Golden Memorials

In memory of
Andy Llewellyn
foster dad extraordinaire.
 Margo & Gary Biba

In memory of
Andy Llewellyn
and in honor of
Lisa & Morgan Llewellyn
for their love and dedication to Allie.
 —Katie & Mark Harris

In loving memory of
Woody Robinson (GRR 00-009)
His spirit, enthusiasm, and devotion gave us great joy.
 Rob & Priscilla Robinson

In memory of our favorite redhead
Maxine
loved by Elizabeth, Donald, Beau, Colby & "Sandy" Kalbacher

In memory of
Woody Robinson
 Katie & Mark Harris

In memory of
Judy Curan
 Margaret & John Speller

In loving memory of
"Megan",
 Ch. MWM's Luck of the Irish
"Boone",
 Highmark's Secret Ballot, UD
"Lily",
 Highmark's Somerset Texas Lil, CD, JH
 Linda Willard

In memory of
Scandal
loved by JoAnne & Charlie Dieterich
 Nancy Martin

(Our apologies for missing this memorial: Scandal in our last issue.)



Golden Afternoon in Zilker Park

Sat., March 27 — 11am to 3pm (Rain date: April 3rd)

Our annual Golden Afternoon Picnic will be held beneath the beautiful oaks at Zilker Park in Austin. This event provides the best opportunity for all of us to reunite with our rescued Golden Retrievers and the families that opened their hearts and their homes to these deserving dogs.



Bring the entire family because you won't want to miss having your Spring pictures taken with our very own Bunny (bet he's hoping for cool weather!). And, there will be entertainment, food and drinks, gift items, raffle, grooming demonstrations, yummy treats for the pups and "Golden on Parade". All you need to bring is yourself, your family and of course, your dog on a leash.

Please join us on Saturday, March 27. It just wouldn't be the same without you. For directions and more information visit the website at: **www.GRR-TX.com/picnic.htm**

Let's make a Golden showing at the 2004 Mighty Texas Dog Walk Austin, Sat, April 24, 2004

Start/Finish Tony Burger Center, 4701 Hwy 290 West. See www.GRR-tx.com for details.

**Gold Ribbon Rescue
PO Box 956
Austin, TX 78767-0956**

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