



March 2009



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Events to Note

- Mar. 21 Club Meeting, RSVP Brianna
- Mar. 24 Newsletter deadline for April issue
- Apr. 18-19 Pet Expo

Dates on the March Calendar

- 8th Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 17th St Patrick's Day
- 20th First Day of Spring

If a dog's prayers were answered, bones would rain from the sky. - Turkish proverb

Breed Profile: Meet the Weimaraner

Originally published January 22, 2009
So sleek-bodied is the Weimaraner that its gray coat often looks like it's been painted on. And although these graceful and friendly canines are very intelligent, their stubbornness can sometimes mask their smarts.

They love attention and long for VIP status -- either within a family or as an owner's companion. Keep in mind that proper training requires an

owner to walk a fine line between asserting a leadership role early on -- to prevent willfulness and aggressive behavior toward other dogs -- and not disciplining too severely, which can make Weimaraners uneasy and wary. Their boundless energy makes them a good match for people who are active, but a not-so-good fit for those who have smaller dogs or young children.

<http://www.akc.org/breeds/weimaraner/index.cfm>

Hunt Dog Challenge

Mark Swanson

This Hunt Dog Challenge is on March 7th. This is a great way to see if Hunt Tests are something you may be interested in also another opportunity to get your dogs on birds.

No AKC registration required.

Entries will close at 5:00 PM CT, Tuesday, March 3, 2009.

Advanced entries are \$15 received by closing. Entries made at the event are \$20. Entries are limited to number of dogs that can be run during the allotted times.

Mail entries with checks (payable to HOAGSP Club) to:

**Mike Martin, Event Secretary
628 Dixie, Liberty, MO 64068
Tel: (816) 365-3065 Email:**

rhicks68@kc.rr.com

Volunteer Recruitment

Mark Swanson

What: Event to find more volunteers.

Who: Human volunteers only (No dogs)

When: Sunday, March 8th 1-3 p.m.

Where: Tails R Waggin Doggy Daycare, 6976 W 152nd Ter, OP, KS

For more information visit KCPETSFORLIFE.com or call 816-363-3665.

What is a Dog?

(from Paws & Praise newsletter)

- 1) Dogs lie around all day, sprawled on the most comfortable piece of furniture in the house.
- 2) They can hear a package of food opening half a block away, but don't hear you when you're in the same room.
- 3) They can look dumb and lovable all at the same time.
- 4) They growl when they are not happy.
- 5) When you want to play, they want to play.
- 6) When you want to be alone, they want to play.
- 7) They are great at begging.
- 8) They will love you forever if you rub their tummies.
- 9) They leave their toys everywhere.
- 10) They do disgusting things with their mouths and then try to give you a kiss.

Midwest PAWS

Brianna May

This is a plea for foster homes for Midwest PAWS. We have been hit with an "influx" of weims in need. We are also in need of materials such as crates, treats, tough weim toys, food, or gas cards as we are making many trips. Anything is appreciated.

Greetings from the Hostess with the Mostess...

Weimaraners in her house at one time that is!

Thank you ALL so much for coming this past Saturday to enjoy plenty of puppy play time! Our guest visitor, Laura, thoroughly enjoyed seeing weimies of all different sizes, shapes, and colors. The experience convinced her beyond any reasonable doubt: She has decided to adopt Willow! She picks her up March 9th. YAY Willow!! Nixie and Cleatus done trained her up goooood! ☺

We had lots of posturing from our 'boys'... Cleatus was determined to maintain his position as top dog in the house...it was briefly challenged by Dylan and Baloo...Cleatus graciously accepted their presence. After all...he decided that he was bigger than them. And then came Luther! He was such a great dog!! So nice and wanting to play...Cleatus wasn't having any of that though! He played hall monitor from that moment on, strutting his stuff and reminding all of the other 'dogs' that Nixie and Willow were HIS. ☺ it was fun to see them all interact as dogs do...and the day was spent with two and four-legged folk alike rubbing knees and elbows. I can't wait for the next time we all get together.

Here are some pics from the day...we were having so much fun that we forgot to take pictures till the end!! It just goes to show...ya just gotta be there!!!

Till we see you next month...have a great day, and happy dog walking!
Wendy

Erin and Pru



Scott and Luther



Nixie keeping an eye on HER backyard



Nixie, Cleatus, and Willow claim their seats



The Group



How many dogs do YOU see in the picture??

SAFE AIR TRAVEL FOR DOGS & CATS

Paws & Praise Newsletter, Dec. 2008

Have you ever tried to travel with your pet on a commercial flight and found it difficult to see your beloved pet headed to the cargo area of the airline? Well, a new company, Pet Airways, is introducing a worry free method of travel!



According to the American Animal Hospital Association, approximately 76 million cats and dogs travel with their owners each year. Dogs and cats are found in at least one out of every three households and America's love affair with pets is growing. Despite the high number of pets traveling, relatively few currently travel by air. This is not surprising, considering the questionable conditions under which most pets must travel.

Small pets have it best and may travel, stowed under the seat on some airlines, although most airlines will only accept one or two pets per flight. Pets too big to fit under the seat are relegated to cargo and unfortunately in many cases, are treated as such. Recently, several airlines have announced they will no longer accept pets on board their aircraft. Others will not accept them when outside temperatures are below 45 degrees or above 85 degrees, or in other words, during the most popular winter holiday or summer vacation months. Now pet owners have a choice. Pet Airways is the first pets-only airline. Animals fly in the main cabin with trained pet attendants on board to supervise and care for your pet along the way. Plus an easy to view tracking system, allows you to track your pet in flight. Pet Airways flies their pet passengers in the main cabin of their planes for only slightly more than you would pay to send your pet in the cargo hold. Their goal is to keep the service affordable so all pets can be safe and treated well. Fares start as low as \$150 depending on the size of the pet and the distance traveled.

Pet Airway's mission also includes helping the animal community. Dan Wiesel, Pet Airways' President, is committed to reducing euthanasia in shelter animals. As such, Pet Airways plans to donate excess capacity to non-profit organizations needing to transport unwanted pets to alternative shelters or adoptive homes. KONG shares Pet Airways' commitment to pet safety and animal welfare, and we're happy to help our community members learn about this new resource. For more information go to www.petairways.com.



Message to a Friend

by John Quealy

I miss you so much; my four-legged friend
I ask myself each day; if the pain will ever end
Your loss is so hard; for one person to bear
because we were a team; an inseparable pair

You were by my side; when I got up each day

waiting so patiently; to go out and play
You were there each night; when I got home
waiting to go to the park; where you could roam

You always knew if I was having a bad day
so you'd snuggle up close; and try to get me to play
If that didn't work; you'd put your head in my lap
then make yourself comfortable; and take a nap
One way or another you; would brighten my day
like only you could; you had a special way
You gave me a lifetime; of memories to hold
through all the years ahead; till I'm gray and old

I promise I'll see you; again one day
when we'll be together again; to go run and play
Your loss is a cross; I will just have to bear
because you and I know; we're an inseparable pair.

Just A Dog

Author Unknown

(submitted by Wendy)

From time to time, people tell me, "lighten up, it's just a dog," or, "that's a lot of money for just a dog."

They don't understand the distance traveled, the time spent, or the costs involved for "just a dog."

Some of my proudest moments have come about with "just a dog."

Many hours have passed and my only company was "just a dog," but I did not once feel slighted.

Some of my saddest moments have been brought about by "just a dog," and in those days of darkness, the gentle touch of "just a dog" gave me comfort and reason to overcome the day.

If you, too, think it's "just a dog," then you will probably understand phrases like "just a friend," "just a sunrise," or "just a promise."

"Just a dog" brings into my life the very essence of friendship, trust, and pure unbridled joy.

"Just a dog" brings out the compassion and patience that make me a better person.

Because of "just a dog", I will rise early, take long walks and look longingly to the future.

So for me and folks like me, it's not "just a dog" but an embodiment of all the hopes and dreams of the future, the fond memories of the past, and the pure joy of the moment.

"Just a dog" brings out what's good in me and diverts my thoughts away from myself and the worries of the day.

I hope that someday they can understand that it's not "just a dog", but the thing that gives me humanity and keeps me from being "just a man or woman."

So the next time you hear the phrase "just a dog" just smile... because they "just don't understand."

JW PET Hol-EE Roller

By Cindy Bonner



I bought one of these balls for Gwen at the Canfield show - I wanted something she could play with outside. When the weather turned cold, she brought it in the house. She loves this toy and so do I. It is flexible, very easy for us to throw and for her to pick up. It is light enough that if it hits something, it doesn't hurt it. Gwen loves to play tug with it - it's so strong that we usually end up being the one to let go first (luckily there isn't a dominate gene in her). An ad on one of the dog catalog sites says, and it is true: "Made of tough, yet flexible rubber, they bounce, roll, "squish," tug and immediately spring back to their original shape." The balls come in 3-1/2", 5" and 8" sizes and because of their design, even a small dog can pick one up.

5 STARS! ★★★★★

"If dogs could talk, perhaps we would find it as hard to get along with them as we do with people." - Karel Capek

Speaking for Spot

By Nancy Kay, DVM

I'm pleased to announce the release of my book, *Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life* (Trafalgar Square Books). My goal in writing it was to teach dog lovers how to navigate the sometimes overwhelming, confusing, and expensive world of veterinary medicine.

Thus far, the book has been wonderfully well received. Claudia Kawczynska, editor-in-chief of

The BARK Magazine describes it as "a must-read groundbreaking new book." *The Whole Dog Journal* put *Speaking for Spot* on their list of "Five Ya Gotta Try" in 2009, and behaviorist, Linda Tellington Jones stated, "This book should be in the library of every person who loves her dog. With clarity, charm, and wit, Dr. Kay provides step-by-step guidelines that teach you how to be a responsible and informed advocate throughout your dog's life. It could save you thousands of dollars and give you the tools to prevent the heartache that comes with making uninformed or rushed decisions about your dog's health care."

Please visit <http://www.speakingforspot.com> to learn more about me and read excerpts from the book, my blog, and a variety of published magazine articles. Please contact me with any questions.

Minutes of 2/21/09 Club Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Laura at 12:50 p.m.

The prior meeting's minutes as printed in the previous newsletter were "ok'd" by Toni and seconded by Wendy. And of course everyone agreed with us!

Secretary's Report: a motion was made by Toni and seconded by Wendy and voted in by all to donate \$50 for trophies to the National Weimaraner Club of America.

Treasurer's Report: the Paypal report was reviewed by all present...we all nodded our heads at the numbers. ☺ The club will be reimbursing Wendy for the cost of the Club Banner.

Hunt Test: Mark is currently working on the judges. We need horses for our judges, and are working on getting the judges to work both the hunt test and ratings test. We will most likely host the weekend with the Vizsla club again. Mark told us about a Hunt Dog Challenge (not AKC) on March 7-8th. He will be sending an email to the Club with the pertinent details.

Membership: we have visitors today!! Scott and Sally Johnson are here with their Silver 6-yr old boy Luther. Scott adopted Luther 'the giant' from Animal Haven 4 years ago. Welcome Scott and Sally! We hope to see you again soon! ☺

Specialty: details and arrangements are coming along nicely. Don't forget about the money jar we draw for at the specialty. (a motion was unanimously carried that Laura is not allowed to buy raffle tickets for the money jar - unless of course she shares her winnings with me!)

Website: we'll soon see a tab for the starter pistol raffle on the site. Toni will also be putting a picture of the new Club/Expo shirt out there for

your perusal. If you have any pictures of your pups submit them to her and we'll start showing our babies off on the website. Let's show our 1 million+ visitors just how beautiful our babies are!!!

Ways & Means: after a motion was made by Wendy and seconded by Erin and voted YAY by all we'll be ordering a number of t-shirts to be sold possibly at the expo and at our other events this year. And of course all of our members will be purchasing one...right?!?!?! We gotta represent!! We'll be ordering 10 shirts of each base color for a total of 60 shirts. Additionally, some of us are also ordering some hoodie jackets with the design on them. Contact Toni if you'd like to order one.

Pet Expo: is April 18-19th. Set the dates aside and be thinking about what day you'd like to work it. We'd love to get enough people and dogs there for us all to work the 2 hour shifts. Sign up sheets will be available at next month's meeting. Mark suggested that the Club fund the basket raffle items to the tune of \$75. Toni seconded this motion and it was voted on by all to have it be so. I can't wait to see what kind of neat stuff we'll have in our basket this year!!! Oh, I hope I win!!! Nixie needs a new toy!

New Business: Toni suggested that since our organizers of the Hunt Test must be WCA members that possibly our Club could reimburse those members a portion of their WCA membership fees. This is something that will be revisited in the future as more research is done on the cost, number, etc... Mark made a motion that we order new business cards minus phone numbers (500#); the motion was seconded by Erin and carried by all. At that time everyone's attention was directed to our new Club banner... it looks great and you can look forward to seeing it at future Club events such as the Expo, Specialty, and Hunt Test. Wendy put forth an idea that we possibly donate an amount of our Club funds to the Midwest PAWS rescue group for weimaraner care, and Toni suggested that it be by way of leashes/collars for the dogs to look pretty at events. This is something that too will be revisited at a future meeting after some cost analysis is done.

Old Business: we will be placing a newspaper ad March 28th for preparation for the Pet Expo. Deb will be the contact person for the ad.

Future Meetings:

March 21st at James A Reed - we will possibly have use of the main bldg. RSVP to Erin @ 816-298-7786 or erinmcbayer@yahoo.com. Depending on the weather the mtg may be at either 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. Keep an eye on the site for updates.

The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 2 p.m. Onward and outside to play with the dogs!! ☺

President's Notes

Fellow WCGKC members!

Another month closer to spring!! I know I can't wait to get the dogs out and play with them more. I bet they will enjoy it as much as me. Pet Expo is just around the corner and we need everyone to help make it a grand success just like last years! So mark those calendars and let Toni know when we can put you on the schedule to be there to help!

It is also time to begin collecting items for the Silent Auction and raffle items!! The more items we have out the more tickets we will sell. So let's put those thinking caps at folks and get some good stuff!! I know I can count on you all so let's do it!!!

Summer meetings are beginning at James A. Reed Wildlife Area which means dogs and kids are all welcome!! We will be getting the dogs in the water and seeing them swim. How fun is that!?? Keep your eyes on the calendar of events and the newsletter to know when!

Chat with you all soon!

Laura Roehrich

COFFEE FILTERS

Coffee filters--who knew! And you can buy 1,000 at the Dollar Store for almost nothing.

1. Cover bowls or dishes when cooking in the microwave. Coffee filters make excellent covers.
2. Clean windows, TVs and mirrors. Coffee filters are lint-free so they'll leave windows sparkling.
3. Protect China. Separate your good dishes by putting a coffee filter between each dish.
4. Filter broken cork from wine. If you break the cork when opening a wine bottle, filter the wine through a coffee filter.
5. Protect a cast-iron skillet. Place a coffee filter in the skillet to absorb moisture and prevent rust.
6. Apply shoe polish. Ball up a lint-free coffee filter.
7. Recycle frying oil. After frying, strain oil through a sieve lined with a coffee filter.
8. Weigh chopped foods. Place chopped ingredients in a coffee filter on a kitchen scale.
9. Hold tacos. Coffee filters make convenient wrappers for messy foods.
10. Stop the soil from leaking out of a plant pot. Line a plant pot with a coffee filter to prevent the soil from going through the drainage holes.

11. Prevent a Popsicle from dripping. Poke one or two holes as needed in a coffee filter.
12. Do you think we used expensive strips to wax eyebrows? Use strips of coffee filters.
13. Put a few in a plate and put your fried bacon, French fries, chicken fingers, etc on them. Soaks out all the grease.
14. Keep in the bathroom. They make great "razor nick fixers."

OH YEAH THEY ARE GREAT TO USE IN YOUR COFFEE MAKERS!

Quote from a 1949 Breeder

Yvonne GoldSmith

"If I were asked to put my recipe for successful breeding into a few words I probably would say don't spare quality food and do as much of the work around the kennels as possible yourself. When it comes to Weimaraners no one can do the job quite as well as you can."

How Story Time for Dogs help your Kids

By Sharon Azar
Reading Out Loud

Some years ago, I lived in a quiet residential neighborhood in downtown NYC. After work, I would walk my companion animals, sometimes resting with them on a bench in front of my ground floor apartment. There were the two doggies, Chili, a Mexican hairless and Genji, a Tibetan terrier. And last, but not least, my orange tabby, Harald, named for the Norwegian 10th century red-headed Viking king. The whole neighborhood would stop to look at a red cat with two dogs.

Harald, a major ham, would parade in front of the bench letting everyone stroke him. Surrounded by children, enchanted by his sweet nature and dogs, looking perplexed, as if they were wondering, "Why isn't this cat scared of me?" Harald was indeed the king. That's how I met the two boys whose parents lived around the corner. Scott and James would sometimes come by to visit after school. "Chili! Genji! Harald!" they'd call out as they knocked upon the door. They came in carrying bags stuffed with their favorite books, along with boxes of crayons and games.

We started reading out loud, sometimes taking turns. Scott, being the leader, did most of the reading. Among the lovely books they brought were *Julie of the Wolves* by [Jean Craighead George](#), *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein and *Bunnacula* by James Howe.

Chili and Genji sat beside us on the floor watching and listening intently. Harald, who always studiously sat in the middle of everybody, would perk up his ears. Perhaps he wondered why his silly dog brothers were so rapt? We always got carried away, forgetting the time. Linda, their mom, had to call up and say, "Dinner is getting cold!"

I first began reading to my furbabies in the evening after their final walk. We read my favorite things like Japanese or Persian fairy tales, W.B. Yeats' *Fairy Tales of Ireland*, or the short stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer. The only requirement for my audience was that the person reading was thoroughly enjoying it. I believe they picked up on the good energy. What a nice way to end the day and drift off to sleep.

It seems that reading out loud to an interested audience inspires confidence. I've always been shy and soft spoken. People used to interrupt with, "Excuse me, what did you say?" After those nightly reading sessions, my speaking voice improved! *What a blessing*, I thought. Less and less were my friends asking me to repeat myself.

There are great programs all over the country helping children by having them read to dogs—improving their reading abilities as they gain confidence with the dogs who listen, tails wagging, without judgment. It's a win-win situation.

Posted Low on a Refrigerator Door

Dear Dogs and Cats: The dishes with the paw prints are yours and contain your food. The other dishes are mine and contain my food. Placing a paw print in the middle of my plate and food does not stake a claim for it becoming your food and dish, nor do I find that aesthetically pleasing in the slightest.

The stairway was not designed by NASCAR and is not a racetrack. Racing me to the bottom is not the object. Tripping me doesn't help because I fall faster than you can run.

I cannot buy anything bigger than a king sized bed. I am very sorry about this. Do not think I will continue sleeping on the couch to ensure your comfort, however. Dogs and cats can actually curl up in a ball when they sleep. It is not necessary to sleep perpendicular to each other, stretched out to the fullest extent possible. I also know that sticking tails straight out and having tongues hanging out on the other end to maximize space is nothing but sarcasm.

For the last time, there is no secret exit from the bathroom! If, by some miracle, I beat you there and manage to get the door shut, it is not necessary to claw, whine, meow, try to turn the knob or get your paw under the edge in an attempt to open the door. I must exit through the same door I entered. Also, I have been using the bathroom for years - canine/feline attendance is not required.

The proper order for kissing is: Kiss me first, then go smell the other dog or cat's butt. I cannot stress this enough.

Finally, in fairness, dear pets, I have posted the following message on the front door:

TO ALL NON-PET OWNERS WHO VISIT AND LIKE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR PETS:

(1) They live here. You don't. (2) If you don't want their hair on your clothes, stay off the furniture. That's why they call it 'fur'-niture. (3) I like my pets a lot better than I like most people. (4) To you, they are animals. To me, they are adopted sons/daughters who are short, hairy, walk on all fours and don't speak clearly.

Remember, dogs and cats are better than kids because they (1) eat less, (2) don't ask for money all the time, (3) are easier to train, (4) normally come when called, (5) never ask to drive the car, (6) don't hang out with drug-using people; (7) don't smoke or drink, (8) don't want to wear your clothes, (9) don't have to buy the latest fashions, (10) don't need a gazillion dollars for college and (11) if they get pregnant, you can sell their children.

A PET'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

Submitted by Wendy Flegel

1. My life is likely to last 10-15 years. Any separation from you is likely to be painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want of me.
3. Place your trust in me. It is crucial for my well-being.
4. Don't be angry with me for long and don't lock me up as punishment. You have your work, your friends, your entertainment, but I have only you.
5. Talk to me. Even if I don't understand your words, I do understand your voice when speaking to me.
6. Be aware that however you treat me, I will never forget it.

7. Before you hit me, before you strike me, remember that I could hurt you, and yet, I choose not to bite you.

8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, I have been in the sun too long, or my heart might be getting old or weak.

9. Please take care of me when I grow old. You too, will grow old.

10. On the ultimate difficult journey, go with me please. Never say you can't bear to watch. Don't make me face this alone. Everything is easier for me if you are there, because I love you so.

Take a moment today to be thankful for your pets. Enjoy and take good care of them. Life would be a much duller, less joyful experience without God's critters.

Stem Cell Transplants in Dogs

(from TVWC News)

Medicine is advancing by leaps and bounds and veterinary medicine is no different. In fact, because the FDA has less restrictions on animal research studies compared to humans some of today's advances are further along for animals!

Take for example stem cell research. Vet-Stem, Inc. is a San Diego, CA based company that processes stem cells for canine and equine therapy. Currently, it is being used to improve orthopedic injuries and conditions like hip dysplasia (common in many dog breeds.) The process is relatively simple. A veterinarian who has been certified in providing stem cell therapy for dogs removes about 30 grams (two tablespoons) of subcutaneous adipose (fat) tissue from the dog. It is sent overnight to Vet- Stem where it is processed to remove stem cells from the fat tissue. It is then overnighted back to your veterinarian for injection back into your dog's effected joint(s). Studies have shown an 80% success rate with clinical improvement often seen within days!

Compared to joint replacement surgery the cost of stem cell transplants is a bargain. The \$2,500 price tag isn't 'bargain store pricing' but compared to \$11,000 or more for joint replacement surgery it not only makes more sense financially but lets face it (and more importantly) it's a lot less invasive with minimal recovery time for Fido. To date about 3,000 horses and over 200 dogs have undergone the stem cell transplant procedure.

Vet-Stem is currently studying the efficacy of stem cell therapy in cats for kidney disease and in dogs for liver disease. They expect to be able to offer these services within two years. Vet-Stem offers a free 3 credit hour continuing education course for veterinarians interested in becoming credentialed in stem cell transplants.

Three New AKC Breeds

Irish Red & White Setter is the newest member of the Sporting Group from Ireland.

Pyrenean Shepherd is assigned to the Herding Group from France.

Norwegian Buhund is also assigned to the Herding Group from Norway.

Change Agenda for Animals

(<http://www.hsus.org>)

The Humane Society of the United States has asked the new administration and Congress to require everyone who raises dogs and cats to be regulated by the USDA and to create an animal protection division with the U.S. Department of Justice. These are just two of their many proposals.

Intentions for your pets this Year

Here are a suggestions from the [American Kennel Club](#) and [Nature's Variety](#) to help jump start your list:

- **Feed smart:** The easiest way to help shed those unwanted holiday pounds is to cut back on calories. Set regular meal times and reduce meal portions.
- **Remember variety is the spice of life:** Dogs and cats thrive when they're exposed to a variety of tastes and textures. Offer your animals different flavors (beef, lamb, chicken, salmon) and forms (raw, dry kibble, canned). Not only will pets look forward to mealtimes, the variety may also help to reduce the risk of allergies, improve skin and coat condition and maintain a healthy weight.
- **Get active:** Look no further than your backyard to find the perfect training partner. For a great workout, try walking your pooch on different surfaces like sand or dirt or hoofing up and down a few of those famous San Francisco hills to build leg muscles. During winter months when pets spend more time indoors, a closed set

of stairs can provide the perfect cardio-exercise routine. Start by throwing toys up and down for your animal to run after. Another fun indoor activity for both cats and dogs is playing hide and seek. Try hiding a few of your pets favorite treats around the house and send them on a scavenger hunt!

- **Keep it interesting:** Pets need to exercise their minds just as much as their bodies. Work on simple obedience routines, such as heel work and turns, or break out the training books and begin practicing new and more difficult tricks and skills.
- **Make more time for family:** Pile everyone into the car for a day trip to a dog-friendly park or beach. Or get the everyone involved in playing with your cat or training your dog by signing up for agility classes or a fun-filled performance event.
- **Delegate:** Help your family work together by assigning roles and responsibilities to care for your animal. Decide who will be responsible for feeding, exercising, grooming, etc. Make a schedule and assign each family member a task. Be sure to rotate tasks each week so that everyone has a chance to bond with your pet in a variety of situations.
- **Try new things:** Why not offer your pet a massage? Massage therapy and acupressure can be incredibly calming in addition to helping increase flexibility and improve circulation. Pick up a book or DVD at your local bookstore to learn a few techniques that you can try out on your pet.
- **Share the wealth:** If your animal is friendly, good-natured and obedient, volunteering at a local hospital, nursing home or pediatric ward can give you and others the warm fuzzies. (The AKC even offers a [Canine Good Citizen Certificate](#).) Contact the volunteer coordinator at your local hospital or nursing home to find out how you and your pet can help spread some cheer to those in need.

[Here's to a fantastic 2009!](#)

May you always have
Love to Share,
Health to Spare,
and Friends that Care