



# The Retriever

Labrador Education and Rescue Network's Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 1, February 2004

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*L.E.A.R.N.'s mission is to assist in the rescue of unwanted Labrador Retrievers by placing them in homes through fostering, adoption and referral. In addition, we strive to provide public education regarding Labrador Retrievers and to promote responsible ownership and the humane treatment of all dogs.*

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## Bailey's Story By Eileen Mislove

I first heard about Bailey from a volunteer at a Wisconsin shelter. A 3-year-old black male Lab with some kind of skin problem had been at the shelter for several months. A nice boy but no one would consider adopting him because he looked terrible – half his hair missing and constantly itching and biting himself. His owner, tired of dealing with his skin problems, had surrendered him.

“Allergies,” I thought immediately. Unlike people, allergy problems in dogs emerge through their skin – they can itch constantly (sometimes causing bacterial or yeast skin infections), chew themselves, have problems with ear infections, and in extreme cases, lose much of their hair. Dogs can be allergic in three areas: food, environment, and/or seasonal. Cases of untreated allergies can be heart breaking. Allergic dogs are often abandoned at shelters or given up to rescues – the owners either can't or don't want to deal with the special care and expense that maintaining a dog with allergies involves.

L.E.A.R.N. has seen more than its share of dogs with allergy problems, and many of our volunteers have learned a lot about allergies as a result.

Since one of my own dogs had passed away recently from cancer, leaving room for another dog, I decided to go visit Bailey and see if I felt he would fit into my household for fostering.

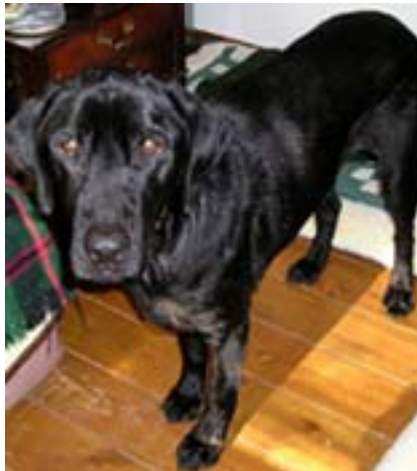
Although the shelter vet had tried his best to treat Bailey, without being able to run expensive allergy



**BAILEY BEFORE**

tests (which most shelters can't afford), it was like shooting in the dark – the vet couldn't tell what Bailey was allergic to and even thought that by Bailey's appearance, he might have mange (which

he didn't). Even though I prepared myself for the worst, Bailey's appearance shocked me – he had no undercoat, lacked a good portion of his top hair, his skin oozed and he smelled terrible. I could stand two feet away from him and feel the heat coming off his inflamed body. In addition, he was 10-15 pounds underweight – the inflammation in his body had affected his intestines and food passed right through him.



### 3 MONTHS OF PROGRESS

Because he was a nice dog, good with other dogs, and in great need, I took him home. Of course, I brought him to my vet right away. My vet took a plug of skin to make sure it was allergies and not mange mites we were dealing with, and then took some blood samples for allergy testing. While we waited for the allergy test results, Bailey was put on prednisone for skin inflammation and to help control itching, and cephalexin, an antibiotic specifically used for skin infections. Since we didn't yet know if he had food allergies, we fed Bailey Hill's Science Diet Z/D, formulated for allergy dogs. Finally, I had to bathe him 2-3 times a week with a medicated shampoo because his skin oozed with yeast and his skin infections would have otherwise persisted.

Both the vet and I were ecstatic with the test results – of all that Bailey was tested for, he had two allergies

– mold and dust mites. These are present everywhere, but dogs, like people, can receive allergy shots to desensitize them to what they are allergic to. The chances of the shots succeeding are much greater for a dog who is allergic to only one or two things.

Bailey now has weekly allergy shots that will eventually decrease to once a month. He may require the shots for the rest of his life, but if it gives him relief from the agony of allergies, it will be well worth it. Although Bailey doesn't have food allergies, a dog's diet contributes directly to its skin/coat quality, so I've changed his diet to a mix of commercial raw food and Solid Gold Wolf King (a super premium kibble of bison and salmon meal). I mix in vegetables (he loves baby carrots), cottage cheese or yogurt. For supplements, he has salmon oil, a great source of Omega 3 (critical for skin problems), Vitamin E, and Missing Link, another source of Omega 3 and 6.

Bailey is a high maintenance boy, but his change is remarkable. Although his hair is still thin in a few places, he is well on the way to sporting a full coat of shiny black hair. Bailey still has an occasional prednisone or Bendryl tablet, but he itches much less frequently so he doesn't need a daily dose. Best of all, now that he feels healthier, his true Lab personality shines through – a happy-go-lucky Lab who loves to play with people or other dogs, go to the dog park for a good romp, retrieve balls, and sleep on the sofa when tuckered out from all that playing.

Allergies— all too common in Labradors—are genetically linked. The best way to avoid having a dog with skin problems is to do your homework and get a puppy from a reputable breeder. If you do end up with a dog with allergy problems, don't despair – it takes some work but it can be dealt with. Most importantly, find yourself a good vet who wants to do more than just throw medication at the dog to treat the symptoms – it's necessary to do the proper allergy testing to find out exactly what the dog is allergic to and then go from there. Diet and supplements play a major role in helping any dog with allergies live a good life relatively free from skin problems.

# **You're Invited!**

## **L.E.A.R.N.'s 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon & Silent Auction**

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup> and join us for our Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction. The luncheon and auction are key fundraisers for L.E.A.R.N. and those who attend always have a fun, memorable time. We'll celebrate our 4<sup>th</sup> year and 500+ Adoption Anniversary—with, of course, a Lab Theme. In addition to a delicious meal, we will have an ongoing silent auction with many items to bid on before, during, and after lunch.

All proceeds help Labs in need, such as Bailey and many others in like situations. The more people who come share the fun, the more L.E.A.R.N. can help Labs. L.E.A.R.N. is pleased to hold the luncheon and silent auction once again at *The Country Squire* in Grayslake, Illinois, so it's sure to be delicious!

And, just like last year, please bring a picture of your pet with your name on the back so you can join in on our "dog" prize! We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Sunday, April 4th  
Time: 12:00 P.M. Cash Bar. 1:00 P.M. Lunch  
\$30.00 per person  
Place: *The Country Squire*, Routes 120 & 45, Grayslake, Illinois  
(847) 223-3022

Note: You'll find us through the banquet room doors at the west end of *The Country Squire*.

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*(please cut and return this portion)*

*Menu:*

*Entrée – Choice of one:*

*Roast Sirloin of Beef*    *Broiled Lake Superior Whitefish*    *Chicken Kiev with Orange Sauce*

*Entrée served with Garlic Whipped Potatoes and California Blend Vegetables, Soup & Salad  
Cheesecake with Strawberry Topping*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30.00 per person

*I will be unable to attend, but can help with my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

*Please return with your check or money order on or before March 26, 2004, payable to:*

*L.E.A.R.N.  
P.O. Box 164, Island Lake, Illinois 60042*

*Please reply early! Questions? Please call Lois at 847-949-7021 or email [tollhouse@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tollhouse@sbcglobal.net)*

# The Truth about Pet Stores

by Jill Miller

“How much is that doggie in the window?” The song evokes images of puppy breath, furry, wiggly little bodies, and big brown puppy dog eyes. While puppies in pet stores appeal to the general public, where these puppies come from is a sad, dismal story that not enough people know about.

Puppy mills stock pet stores. A puppy mill is: *“...a mass dog breeding establishment that produces puppies for profit by selling them wholesale to the pet industry. Many puppy mills are characterized by overcrowding, filth, inadequate shelter, and insufficient food, water, and veterinary care. Most puppy mill owners sell their dogs wholesale to brokers, who in turn, sell them primarily to pet stores. Because profit, not quality dogs, is the ultimate goal of the puppy mill owner, breeding practices are often shoddy, and the breeding dogs are kept under the most inexpensive possible conditions that will keep them alive and producing.”* (PuppyMills.com) Sites like PuppyMillRescue.com show photographs of living conditions for dogs incarcerated in puppy mills.

The puppies sent to pet stores are often the lucky ones. Their parents and siblings considered “breeding quality” remain to breed for profit. At best they live alone in a kennel with no toys, grooming, or interaction with people or other dogs, except when they are needed to breed. At worst, several dogs live surrounded in their own filth in a cramped cage with a wire floor, causing cut and



deformed feet. Regardless, the dogs are under-socialized, under-stimulated, and often diseased. Illnesses go undetected as no one has the time or concern to notice something is wrong.

A puppy lucky enough to leave the mill must also be lucky enough to survive the transport. While the business press can paint trucking puppies in a positive light, any dog lover would be upset to read how drivers grow “irritated” because a puppy died on a run or how difficult drivers find the “pungent odor” that fills the trailer of puppies. They treat dogs as perishable cargo like produce or frozen food. Routine problems include losses and store refusals due to “poor quality.” (For full article, see: <http://www.critterhaven.org/partners.htm>.)

Puppies lucky enough both to leave the mill and to survive transport, may run out of luck at the pet store. Since the same people do not routinely handle and socialize the puppies, often illnesses go undetected until they become a major problem. Some pet stores keep a veterinarian on retainer, but many do not. Even puppies that remain healthy are subject to the whim of employees that may or may not have adequate training, time, or compassion to e-mail: [learnnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:learnnewsletter@yahoo.com)

deal with young lives. Anecdotal reports tell of prospective buyers being told that Labrador puppies won't get much bigger than 30 pounds, or that the puppy in question is a purebred dog when any experienced eye recognizes a mix or mislabeled breed.

Due to poor breeding and husbandry practices, pet store puppies face a higher risk for genetic diseases, behavioral issues, and house-training problems than puppies purchased through responsible breeders or rescues that use experienced foster homes to rear puppies. Another potential problem for pet store puppies is that they are purchased on a whim. Pet stores don't screen owners to make sure that they know the breed, are allowed to have a dog in their housing situation, or that their family members want a dog. I personally encountered a girl who bought a \$1500 puppy and then discovered that it was too difficult to hide it in her college dorm room; another anecdote shared with me was of a mother telling her two young children, "Daddy is going to kill me when he finds out we bought this puppy!" Not surprisingly pet store dogs fill animal shelters.

**"pet store puppies face a higher risk for genetic diseases, behavioral issues, and house training problems"**

Puppy mills have been operating in the U.S. since at least the end of World War II. They won't go away overnight, but we can help them to go away. Here is what you can do to help stop puppy mills:

1. Never buy a dog from a pet store. Research responsible breeders or save a life by adopting a puppy (or adult dog) from a rescue or shelter. Buying a pet store puppy will improve conditions for one dog, but your money will go directly to the puppy mill, and you will perpetuate this tragedy.
2. Speak with your wallet - buy pet supplies only from pet stores that do not sell dogs.
3. Write your representatives stating your concerns about puppy mills. Request their help by



sponsoring or supporting anti-puppy mill legislation.

4. Become involved in organizations such as the Dog Federation of Wisconsin (<http://www.chowwelfare.com/DFOW/>) that lobbies for anti-puppy mill legislation.
5. Get the word out. Puppy mills are successful because few people realize they exist. Inform people in any way you can, whether by word of mouth, by showing them this or other articles about puppy mills, or by sharing puppy mill web sites.

Type "puppy mill" into any search engine and you'll find dozens and dozens of web pages. The following websites were sources this article:

- <http://www.pupmillerescue.com/>
- <http://www.smallpawsrescue.org/pup3/pupmills.html>
- <http://www.pupmills.com>
- <http://www.stop-puppy-mills.com>
- <http://www.petfinder.com>  
(<http://www.petfinder.com/messageboard/> links to the public message board and information from people who work to start grass-root and letter-writing campaigns)

## How To Identify Responsible Breeders

If you plan to purchase a puppy from a Labrador breeder, ALWAYS make sure that both parents of the litter have been checked and cleared by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA, [www.offa.org](http://www.offa.org)) for hips and ideally elbows, and the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF, [www.vet.purdue.edu/~yshen/cerf.html](http://www.vet.purdue.edu/~yshen/cerf.html)) for any hereditary eye diseases. A responsible breeder will be happy to show you these certifications. In addition, make sure the breeder:

- Knows the breed well. Many test the results of their breeding in different types of competition (conformation, obedience, field, hunting)
- Socializes puppies properly and keeps them with their mom and littermates until at least 7 weeks of age
- Keeps puppies as healthy as possible, provides proper vet care, and has them wormed or checks for worms. Avoid breeders who say they don't need health clearances (OFA, CERF) because they've never had a problem
- Does not breed the bitch every season—not healthy and suggests a pure profit motivation
- Has a goal for each breeding and can explain that goal to you (goal in breeding should NOT be "to make money")
- Lets you meet the mother of the litter and if available, the sire of the litter. If the sire is not owned by the breeder, the breeder should have photos and copies of certifications for the sire and be able to give

you the name/phone number of the sire's owner if you want further information.

- Evaluates puppy temperaments to help choose a dog that will fit with your temperament and lifestyle
- Is willing to take the dog back if at any time you cannot keep it. Responsible breeders do not want their puppies to end up in a shelter or a sub-par home
- Is someone you feel comfortable with and trust. This is the beginning of a long-term relationship. If you get a bad feeling, go elsewhere
- Provides appropriate documentation with the puppy (registration papers, pedigree, and a health record)
- Cares about your future plans for the puppy, particularly if you are considering breeding the dog. Some puppies ("pet quality") come with mandatory spay/neuter contracts and/or Limited Registration (offspring of the dog cannot be registered). This does not mean that the breeder wants to limit competition but rather that s/he cares enough about the breed to ensure only the very best representatives of the breed are bred

*Source: much of the above was drawn from the National Labrador Retriever Club's Breeder Guide. A special thank you to Deb Hamele for contributing to and strengthening this checklist.*

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## Congrats to Labbies who found their new families!

### November Adoptions

Hershey Ann—Shaun Barry  
Keetah—Marty & Beth Daly  
Breeze—Tim & Kathy Wiegman  
Zeno—Rachel & Jason Hanson  
Scamp—Andrew Linklater  
Fred & Ethel—Margaret Dwyer  
Autumn—Paul & Marliene Fenske  
Gus—Gerry & Martha Lemke  
Brownie—Betsy & Joe Cichowski  
Chelsea—Carrie Hill  
Tuffy/Hudson—Greg & Erin Dorn  
Poco—Brian & Tami Bottenfield  
Abby—Wendy Nelson  
Burt—Jamie & Rachel O'Brien

### December Adoptions

Sid (Tank)—Jon and Karla Boorum  
Casey—Nancy & Tom Jensch  
Billie—Sally & David Rossmiller  
Sonny—Gary & Debbie Eichorst  
Raeni—Kim & Joe Marvin  
Sophie—Pat & Dave Wenz  
Bailey—Shelley Bobb  
Jumper—Mary Ann & John  
Sonneman  
Wags—Ryan Shackelford  
Boyd—Quentin & Carolyn Johnson  
Zoe—Amy Collin & Tim  
Mosekau

Sable—Tom & Barbara Brindrim  
Tess—Carol & Ed Guzy  
Ernest—Jan & Bill Conroy  
Homer—Carolyn & Brian Duffy  
Albert—Warren & Jeanne Stahmer  
Mabel—Mark Kisselburg  
Cora—Mike & Barb Felten  
Judd—John & Michele Dietz

### January Adoptions

Zoe—Amy and Tim  
Sable—The Bidrim Family  
Heath—Cindy and Dan Dorff

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**Special congrats to Barney, "adopted" by Search and Rescue and now training in California**



## Our Labs Need Your Help!

Many dogs desperately need our help, including expensive medical care and that drains on our finances. All donations are tax-deductible. All dogs thank you!

I want to support the efforts of L.E.A.R.N. as they rescue homeless Labrador Retrievers and Lab mixes and place them in permanent adoptive homes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please find my check for: \_\_\_\$10.00 \_\_\_\$25.00 \_\_\_\$50.00 \_\_\_Other Amount \$\_\_\_\_\_

## **Enormous Thanks!**

The following people generously donated money, supplies, time, or services to help our rescued Labs. Without your help, these Labs wouldn't be alive today and enriching the lives of many humans. Thanks! (Note: \* = contributions in total/part were designated to help Codi walk again.)

Jane and Paul Abramchik	Kelly Hildebrandt	Diane Newman
Shawn Barry	Kimberly Howard & V. Scott	Barbara Nitschneider
Shaila Bolger	Solberg	Robert Nottoli
Beth Bouffleur	Michael Hunt*	Amy & Jonathan Overby*
George Bratschi*	Anne Irsay	Bina Rao
Roy and Grace Cali	Jeff and Julie Janikowski	Matt and Kathy Roach
Ann Cammack*	Daria Javid*	Linda Rosen*
James & Dolores Champagne*	Susan & David Jewell*	Nicole Scherer
Steve and Amy Corbisier	Jan and Arnie Kemper	Robert and Kathleen Schuster
Nancy Daum & Gary Rintelmann	Rachel Langtry	Kelly Schwartz
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Marianne Gizzi*	Dr. Sharon Little	Karol Stevens*
Donna Godlewski*	James Mackey*	Michael Vega
Brett Hagland*	Bonnie MacLagan	Ken Voight
Don and Judith Hayes	Mike & Diane McLean*	Lisa Zellers*
	Andrea Moen	

## **Support Labs by Shopping!**

All Boston Store, Younkers, Carson Pirie Scott, Herbege's and Bergner's stores will hold **Community Day Event** on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. This All Day Sale supports non-profit organizations in your area. L.E.A.R.N. is currently selling coupon books for this event for a \$5 donation. L.E.A.R.N. receives 100% of the sales dollars to help our Labs. The book features coupons for: \$5 off for purchase > \$5; 6-20% off

many items; registering for a chance to win a trip for four to Cancun, Mexico; bonus coupons for matching aquamarine earrings/pendant for \$19.99; selection of 3 American Tourister upright luggage for \$39. Email [learndogs@Labadoption.org](mailto:learndogs@Labadoption.org) to request information on the coupon books. Please include your full name, address and email address or phone number. Don't miss this special day of shopping and help Labs in the process! Coupon books are valid at all participating stores.

## **Labs Thank Students!**

For 2½ years, Mrs. Kapp's 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at North Cape School in Franksville, WI, have helped L.E.A.R.N. With Guidance Counselor, Katie

Witzling, students developed an assembly line, producing bags with L.E.A.R.N. information, biscuits, lifesavers and Lab-colored ribbons. They've bagged and decorated tennis balls, too. They've learned much about volunteerism, helping homeless Labs and the proper treatment of dogs.



Thanks to North Cape, the students, teachers and district administrator, Mrs. Walker. Their generosity provides us with information to give to prospective adopters at our events, shows and parades. Selling tennis balls defrays the expense of saving Labs.



## **Ain't Misbehavin'**

*Cousteau, a 4 year-old Lab who has used positive reinforcement methods to train very difficult humans, has successfully led them to earn his CGC and FDCh titles. He hopes to take them through obedience competitions soon. Send Cousteau questions at [behavior@Labadoption.org](mailto:behavior@Labadoption.org).*



Dear Cousteau,

My mom and I saw a sad event. A dog ran from his yard to meet me when we were walking. His girl called and called, but he was too busy saying hi to answer. When he finally did go to his girl, she hit him with a leash! I'm not sure how to fix this problem with a dog, but hitting a dog with the leash won't help. Any ideas?

~Shook Up in Shorewood

Dear Shook Up,

This makes me very sad, too. Your neighbor dog was acting just like a normal, friendly dog would. This is what I'd tell the girl, and anyone else who might have a problem getting their dog to listen – it worked for me!

- Keep the dog in situations where he can't make mistakes. If he tends to run out of the yard, either tie him up for the brief times he's outside unsupervised (tying dogs outside for hours is BAD—and a column for another day) or buy a fence or kennel to keep the dog safe.
- Recall is hard for dogs because usually humans call us to come away from great stuff like people, other dogs, smelly things in the yard, etc. Humans must start so it's easy for us to come – call us to come before putting the food dish down or before going outside for a walk. Call from short distances at first so we don't have much chance to get distracted.
- When the dog comes well every time from 8 feet away, call the dog from 8 feet, but have

someone hold a toy or food and stand between the dog and his human. When the dog is really good at that, then call from 15 feet away with no distractions, then add distractions and keep building from there.

- Use great treats (try summer sausage!) or play a fun game with your dog as a reward when he comes. Dry kibble and a pat on the head is hardly a fair trade off for leaving a game of keep away with another dog just because your human tells you to. As one of mom's favorite authors, Suzanne Clothier, says, "You [humans] have to be more interesting than the spit on the sidewalk."
- Most important: **THERE MUST ALWAYS BE A REWARD FOR COMING WHEN CALLED!!!!** There is no exception to this rule, even if the dog didn't come right away. My mom is always reminding my dad that dogs only remember what they did within the last 3 or 4 seconds. The dog in Shook Up's neighborhood didn't connect getting hit with not coming the first time; he connected getting hit with COMING AT ALL! Humans wouldn't want to come if they were going to be hit, so never call a dog and punish it (or do something the dog won't like, such as getting a bath—In these cases, the human should walk over to the dog, take control of collar or leash and take the dog where he needs to be without ever calling him. If the human forgets and calls the dog, the human should be sure to give the dog a good treat or play a game before doing whatever the dog won't like.)
- Finally, don't ever, EVER hit a dog. Dogs have teeth that can bite with the force of 300 pounds per square inch and we don't use them on you. Physical force isn't the answer for humans or dogs.

# THE 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR RESPONSIBLE COMPANIONS TO DOGS

1. My life is likely to last 10-15 years. Any separation from you will be painful for me. Remember that before you get me.
2. Give me time to understand what you want from me.
3. Place your trust in me. It is crucial to my well-being.
4. Don't be angry with me for long, and don't lock me up as punishment. You have your work, entertainment and friends. I only have you.
5. Talk to me sometimes. Even if I don't understand your words, I understand your voice.
6. Be aware that however you treat me, I'll never forget it.
7. Please don't hit me. I can't hit back, but I can bite and scratch and I really don't want to do that. You always win that fight.
8. Before you scold me for being uncooperative, obstinate or lazy, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. I don't speak your language. Perhaps I'm not getting the right foods, or I've been out in the sun too long, or my heart is getting old and weak.
9. Take care of me when I get old. You will grow old, too. You'll hope someone cares.
10. Go with me on difficult journeys. Never say, "I can't bear to watch" or "let it happen in my absence." Everything is easier for me if you are there. Remember, I love you.

*Author unknown. This was clipped from a newspaper and mailed to a volunteer by her mother. If you know who wrote it, please let us know and we'll give the deserved credit!*



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E-mail: [learndogs@Labadoption.org](mailto:learndogs@Labadoption.org)

## Meet LEARN Labs . . .

<u>When?</u>	<u>What?</u>	<u>Where?</u>
❖ February 28 <sup>th</sup> 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.	❖ Meet 'n Greet	❖ Dane County Humane Society, Madison, WI
❖ March 19th - 21st	❖ Chicagoland Family Pet Show Booth #115	❖ Arlington Park, IL
❖ April 4 <sup>th</sup>	❖ L.E.A.R.N.'s Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction ( <b><i>See Inside!</i></b> )	❖ Country Squire in Grayslake, IL
❖ May 15 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup>	❖ Wisconsin Pet Expo	❖ Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

