




NORTHWEST CANADIAN GREYHOUND LEAGUE

Providing Greyhound Rescue and Adoption Services to Northwest Canada

Charitable Organization 89972 9214 RR0001

Web Site: www.ncgl.ca

January 2020 Winter Issue

Rainbow Bridge		Dogs We Have Said Goodbye To	
	JS Seashell (Pearl)		Blixt (Sheep)
	Mirach		

Happy Tails		Welcome to Our New Dogs	
	Catty (Kira)		Basanti (Santi)
	Tommy		Duke
	Rocky		KB's Swallo (Swallo)
	WW Golden Gate (Gate)		Brent Williams (Brent)
	Final Appeal (Kipur)		PJ Popshove IT (Pops/Zoomer)
	AJN Huricanesara (Sara)		NB's Luxor (Lux)
	Jazz Kahn (Jaz)		Disco Ball (Disco)
	AMF Strangesilvr (Lincoln)		Marty Kaan (Bourbon)
	Jyl Woodress (Jyl)		RJ's Haven (Haven)
	WW Long Island (Gromy)		Everylittlething (Etti)
	Dollar		Penny
	Max (Mac)		Juno
	Houston		

Interesting websites:

7 Ways to Ease Arthritis in Cooler Weather

https://www.petmd.com/dog/care/7-ways-ease-dog-arthritis-cooler-weather?utm_source=NewsletterSubscribers&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=121719Newsletter&utm_campaign=Newsletter

Using CBD oil for your greyhounds – an update

Last newsletter had an article about using this for your pets. I was using it for Gabby for months, then one of the bottles had a different coloured liquid in it. And next thing I knew, she was sick. I took it back to the store and they contacted Hemp4Paws who make the CBD oil, and they said it was exactly the same product. Clearly it was not or it would have been the same colour. So be careful if something changes, and either start again slowly, stop altogether, or try a different product.

If you read this newsletter, please email quailrunfarm@shaw.ca and let me know. If you have suggestions for topics you would like to see addressed, or if you want to submit an article, just let me know. And if you just read it and want it to continue, just send that to me as well. If no one responds, this will be the last newsletter.....

This newsletter is mainly going to focus on older dogs. You may not have one now, but eventually you may need some of this information.

HOUND MYTHS

Greyhounds (c.1500) Gaston Phoebus, Book of the Hunt © The Bibliothèque Nationale de France FR 616, fol. 46v
Suzanne Stack, DVM

Older greyhounds need low protein "senior" diets.

- With greyhounds, we're usually trying to keep weight on the oldsters, not off them
- Low protein diets may cause muscle wasting and weight loss.

Leave him in the hospital until he eats.

- Greyhounds are sensitive dogs.
- Unless they're doing something for him there that you can't do at home, he'll likely eat better at home where he's happy and you can bribe him with tempting cookery.
- Take him in for daily rechecks if needed.

Do all you can to save bad teeth - you don't want to lose them.

- Bad teeth hurt - get them out of there!
- Bad teeth form a nidus for infection that can damage kidneys and heart valves. (Nidus - a place in which bacteria have multiplied or may multiply; a focus of infection.)
- Dogs with bad teeth often feel like new dogs once they're extracted.

His heart is enlarged.

- The greyhound heart is normally much bigger than the heart of other dogs.
- There is a huge left ventricular hypertrophy (thickening of wall) - same with marathon runners.
- An ultrasound can differentiate normal from diseased if in doubt.

His heart rate is abnormally slow.

- The greyhound's heart rate is slower than other dogs - again, due to athleticism.
- 60-90 is normal at rest, it may be faster if excited (like at the vet's office).

His blood pressure is high.

- Greyhounds often run blood pressures on the high end of normal (160,170,180).
- They can be higher if excited - again, an important consideration at the vet's office.

He needs a complete cardiac workup for this heart murmur.

- Low grade murmurs (I & II) are common in greyhounds - they are almost always benign.
- Take a chest x-ray if concerned (where you will see a "big heart!").

That hind end weakness is probably hip dysplasia.

- Hip dysplasia is rare in greyhounds.
- Hind end problems are most likely lumbosacral stenosis in older greyhounds.

She's not in pain - she just limps, has never cried out.

- If she does not put the foot down, it hurts!
- Poor appetite, panting, shaking, can't get comfortable, stops participating, and mostly, "that look in her eye" - all are signs of pain.
- Pathologic fractures (the bone breaks at the weak spot) are excruciatingly painful - euthanize before this can happen.

Lumbosacral Stenosis (Cauda Equina) by Suzanne Stack, DVM

For those of you who do not know Dr. Stack, not only is she a veterinarian, she is also the owner of greyhounds and works in an area filled with greyhounds and has probably cared for over 1200. She is a fabulous resource and willing to help vets in other areas by email or phone. If your vet needs her help, email her at Suzanne Stack yumadons@GMAIL.COM

As our greyhounds age, quite a few of them, especially the males, become weak, wobbly, and/or painful in the rear end. Many of these are affected by lumbosacral stenosis (LS), a narrowing of the last part of the spinal canal, which causes compression of the nerve roots.

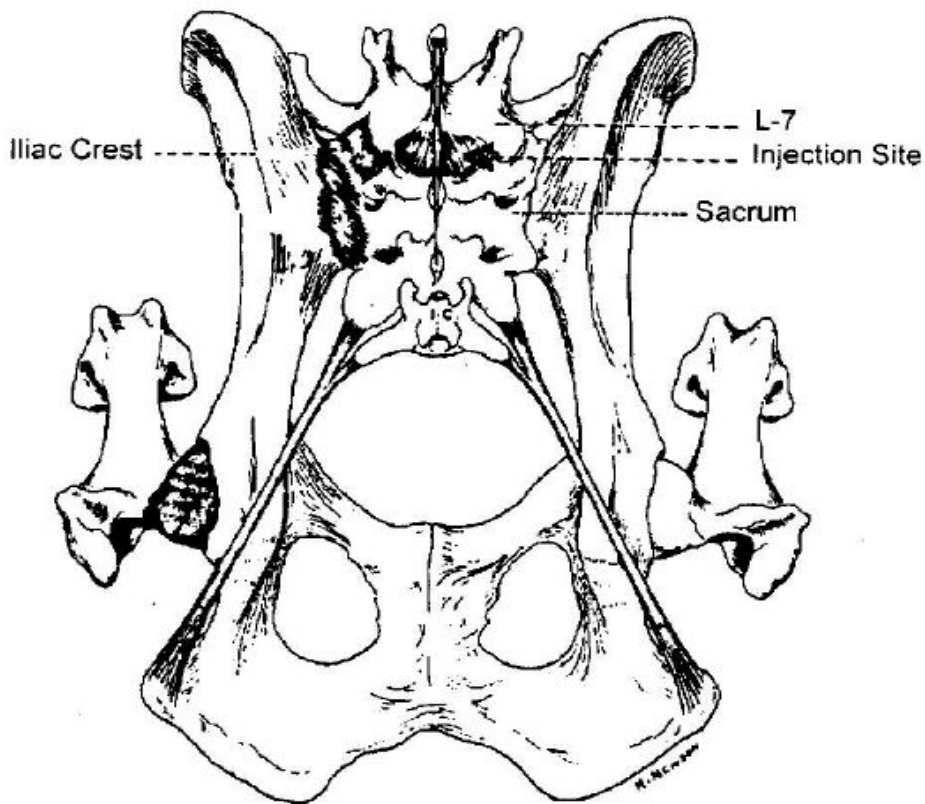
Signs are rear end pain, lameness, weakness, "shuffling," knuckling over, foot dragging, and muscle wasting. Both urinary and fecal incontinence are possible and carry a worse prognosis. Greyhounds may even lose their appetite from the pain and "waste away."

The difficulty in diagnosing LS is twofold. Many veterinarians simply do not recognize the signs. LS looks neurologic, and technically, it is. But a rare and obscure neurological disease, it is not. Beware a diagnosis of "hip dysplasia" in a greyhound - greyhound hips are by and large excellent. The second problem is that unless your greyhound is "lucky" enough to have visible arthritis on lumbosacral x-rays, the only techniques to confirm LS are pretty high tech - CT, MRI, discography, etc.

Not only can LS be difficult to "nail down," the other problem is that oral medications such as Rimadyl, Etogesic, glucosamine, aspirin, prednisone, etc. do little for LS since it is not arthritis, but rather, "doggy sciatica" i.e., pinching of the nerve roots.. It presents a sad problem. The "cure" is referral spinal surgery to free up the trapped nerve roots, not something many owners will consider in a geriatric greyhound. Many if not most greyhounds simply get worse and worse until euthanasia becomes necessary.

The good news is that there is a simple palpation technique to detect LS and a way to inject Depo-Medrol intralesionally to help it, similar to what is done in humans. It was taught to me by Dr. Mike Herron, a professor of small animal orthopedic surgery at Texas A & M for 32 years, owner of racing greyhounds, and all around "greyhound guru." You may want to clip this out for your vet to see should one of your greyhounds begin showing signs of LS.

This is an easy procedure that you do with the dog standing up, basically an intramuscular injection into the lumbosacral area. There is absolutely no danger of hitting the spinal cord or any important structures. The worst thing that can happen is that it doesn't help the dog.



Pelvis, Dorsal Aspect

First, look at the diagram to see where the L-S joint lies in relation to the iliac crests so that you hit the right spot both with your thumbs for palpating and with the needle for injecting.

Put all your fingers on the ventral ridge of the greyhound's iliac crest. Put each thumb just medial to each iliac crest about halfway down its ridge. Your thumbs should be between the iliac crest and the vertebrae. Be sure to look at the diagram so you can see where the L-S joint lies in relation to the iliac crests. Try to "crack" (move) the L-S joint. If it hurts (or he falls to the ground!), chances are he has LS.

Draw up 20 mg of Depo-Medrol and using a 1" needle, inject half of this into each side. Go about halfway down the ridge of the iliac crest, go in (medially) 1", and inject just off the midline (this is where you put your thumbs to try to "crack" the L-S joint).

If the greyhound does not show improvement within 48 hours, the problem is something else. Repeat as needed as Depo-Medrol's effect wears off - usually every 3-6 months.

A footnote worth mentioning for LS is Ultram, a human "combination" drug with both a narcotic-like and an antianxiety component. Used sometimes for bone cancer in dogs - another very painful condition - I have tried it with good results on two LS dogs when Depo-Medrol injections were not enough. A greyhound dose is 1/2 a 50 mg Ultram as needed for pain, given up to twice daily.

Tips on caring for older dogs

Feeding

As your greyhound ages there will come a time that its body shape will change. My 14-year-old greyhound Cajun had sprung ribs and a dropped back making him appear (to a novice) as very underweight since his spine and hip bones showed and all his ribs stuck out. However, he was still quite thick through the loin and had a tummy when he was lying down relaxed.

I prefer to keep an extra five pounds on my older greyhounds since even a slight illness can make the weight fall off them. It is more difficult to maintain weight on an elderly dog because they are not active and therefore not as hungry. Adding cooked meat, particularly chicken or turkey, to their diet may help. Soaking dry food helps if they have difficulty chewing and heating up the food makes it smell appetizing. The addition of, or a total change to, a canned food is a possibility. There are many good quality canned foods to choose from though this is a more expensive option.

The most important thing is to ensure that your dog is getting enough water to drink. Make sure the water is always fresh. If your dog does not appear to be drinking enough, offer the dish to the dog. Sometimes older dogs have difficulty moving and will become dehydrated before forcing themselves to the water dish. Try leaving fresh water in several locations in the house as the dog is more likely to drink if water is easily accessible. If your dog refuses to drink, try adding some low sodium baby broth (beef, chicken or lamb) to warm water and offer it to the dog.

A friend's veterinarian gave her a special diet for her older dog. She mixed one pound of cooked, lean ground beef, two cups of cooked rice, two hard boiled eggs, and ground up a couple of Tums into the mixture. The Tums helped settle his tummy as well as adding calcium to his diet.

Another friend cooks a special stew to add to her older dogs' kibble. She cooks lean ground beef, carrots, potatoes, apples or blackberries (when they're in season, thyme and oregano, pasta or rice or oats. She occasionally adds tomatoes or lentils or any other leftover vegetables she has. (Do **NOT** add onions as these are harmful to dogs.) She also gives snacks throughout the day to which she adds baking soda to help settle older tummies.

Try making special meatballs with very lean ground sirloin and kibble ground up in the food processor. Use a basic meatball recipe but substitute the ground up kibble for the breadcrumbs. Feed about 8 half dollar sized round meatballs for each meal.

If your older dog is not eating well, you may want to consider trying some of the following tips: use raised feed bowls so the dog won't have to bend; try warming up the food in the microwave; add some hot water with a teaspoon of baby beef (or other meat) broth dissolved in the water, spoon this over the dry food and let it soak in. Feed several smaller meals per day. Add cottage cheese or low-fat natural yogurt to the food. I have also resorted to melting peanut butter in the microwave and coating high quality kibble in it. Feed by hand if necessary.

Best foods for older dogs

There is no one best food for an older dog. Although pet food manufacturers advertise special "light" diets or protein reduced foods for older dogs, there is actually no proven benefit from these special diets, and, in some cases, there may be some harm.

According to Dr. Delmar Finco, in an article in Veterinary Forum (September 1994), "Benefits from a reduced protein diet typical of existing canine geriatric products have never been proven and the possibility exists that reduced protein diets are not in the best interest of the geriatric patient." Dr. Finco explains that there is very little scientific information about nutrition for senior dogs. He mentions one study that found older dogs have the same ability to digest and metabolize food as younger dogs do. And, in a study he himself conducted, Dr. Finco found that it was not clear whether older dogs gained weight because of lack of exercise or because of changes in their metabolism. Just about any of the premium dog foods will provide sound nutrition for your dog. Ask your vet to recommend one. If you'd like to read some in-depth information on dog foods, look into the *Collins Guide to Dog Nutrition* by Donald R. Collins, CVM.

**Material excerpted from the Senior Dogs Project. Website www.srdogs.com 1997.*

Exercise

Remember that older dogs still need regular exercise. They may, however, be unable to walk long distances. They will feel temperature extremes more and should wear coats in cool weather and remain indoors during the heat of summer. Shorter more frequent walks may benefit your canine senior citizen. Try three ten-minute walks instead of one thirty-minute walk. If the dog is unable to walk well, it will still benefit from a change of scenery. Take it for a drive to the park or the beach, allow it to stretch its legs for a few minutes and have a good sniff.

I used to see an elderly lady arrive at our local park to walk her dog, an elderly, arthritic basset hound. The dog is unable to get in and out of the vehicle without assistance and his owner is able to give him limited assistance. Every day she puts a briefcase beside the car's back door, lifts the old basset's front legs onto the case, followed by lifting his back legs onto the case, then she lifts his front legs into the car, followed by the back legs. He has to sit on the floor as she is unable to help him onto the seat. They repeat this in reverse when they get to the park. Obviously, it would be much easier for her to stay home with him, but she knows he enjoys his walk and his drive, so she rarely misses a day even though they may only walk one hundred yards. When I see them, I am reminded of what a good example she sets for us all.

Vitamins

Anti-oxidants are especially valuable for older dogs. At your pet's annual check-up, ask the vet for a blood test to check on kidney, liver and pancreas functions. A prescription diet for problems caught early on will prevent trouble later and give your pet a longer, better life. Regular dental exams are important too.

Geriatric greyhounds should receive supplemental vitamins. My veterinarian recommends 500 mg of Vitamin C twice a day and 400 IU of Vitamin E once a day. Both of these vitamins are antioxidants, helping your greyhound to fight disease. Or try Omega 3 supplement pills. Several good supplements assist with aging joint problems. Glucosamine hydrochloride, chondroitin sulfate, yucca, MSM, and several others. Some dogs benefit from one, others from a combination. My greyhound Boone has taken all of them, alone and in combination, and has shown no improvement. My greyhound Cajun however, took glucosamine hydrochloride twice daily (1000-1500 mg/day) and he showed improvement in his movement after six weeks. You should discuss this with your vet.

Older pets don't see or hear as well as they used, to, so keep your routine as consistent as possible. Don't move the furniture around unnecessarily and keep food and water bowls in the same place.

Special problems

Bladder Control

For a dog who is not incontinent but is simply unable to control its bladder for the same length of time as it used to, try puppy training piddle pads. These pads have a faint urine scent to them and therefore the dog will be encouraged to use them. The use of these pads will allow the dog free roam of the house but if there is no one home to let them out, they can safely go on the pads and not get in trouble.

For a male dog that is unable to go outside, try a wide-mouth bottle as canine urinal.

One of the most common problems found in older dogs, particularly spayed females, is incontinence. There are many different ways to overcome this problem. Initially you should make an appointment for the dog to be examined by a veterinarian to rule out urinary tract infections or other problems. If it is determined that the dog is incontinent, your vet may recommend drug therapy. The female urinary tract has a number of different types of receptors – estrogen receptors, histamine receptors and type A or alpha receptors. Your vet will likely try estrogen pills, daily for a week then weekly thereafter.

If you do not want to use drug therapy, try one of the following:

Purchase “seasonals” – underwear specifically designed for females in season, or a jock strap or bellyband for males. Another suggestion is men’s jockey shorts. These can be lined with sanitary napkins for extra absorbency. Simply put them on the dog so the animal’s tail goes through the front opening. Do them up at the waist with a diaper pin (do not use a regular safety pin as these can come undone). Boys’ jockey shorts usually fit the females better.

Females with incontinence can also use diapers or often “pull-ups”, the disposable diapers for older children. For the sake of economy, you might want to purchase cloth type diapers shaped like underwear. These are fully washable so two or three should be plenty.

Special Living Arrangements

Problems with stairs

Purchase or build a ramp for your dog. Cover the ramp with rough carpet for better traction, or paint with several coats of paint, remembering to add sand to the final coat. Try not to have too steep a grade. It may be possible to simply place boards over your existing stairs if there aren’t too many of them but ensure it’s not too steep. If it is, you will have to place the boards farther back to ensure there is a milder angle. Steep grades will require a lot of muscle power and you will have defeated the purpose.

Living arrangements

Patricia Gail Burnham writes, “I have an ‘old dog room,’ which doubles as my box storage room since the old dogs don’t chew cardboard. Its main feature is an oversized dog door - Great Dane sized, set low to the floor so they don’t have to hop through. And bean bags and foam mattresses since they don’t dig in the former or chew on the latter. It has industrial type, short napped carpet, which my carpet cleaners said would last forever. Old dogs need the traction of carpet when they lose their ability to walk on slick floors. The dog room has the smallest yard since they don’t need a lot of exercise. Louvered doors separate it from the living room so they can hear and smell us without mixing with the young house dogs.”

Sleeping arrangements

Laurel Drew recommends orthopedic beds for older, more frail dogs. She has purchased ready-made ones from HaHa Products, or you can make your own. The bed is very thick foam in an absorbent cover, and you can put an extra absorbent pad over top if required. Then the foam and pads go into a heavy nylon washable cover that has Velcro tape to hold it closed on one end and around the top edge. You Velcro an imitation sheepskin to the top for the ultimate comfort of an elderly dog. These beds come in any size as they are custom made. The bed can also double as a stretcher for an extremely old dog that needs to be moved, as the bed will slide quite easily while still keeping the dog flat and not jarring it.

Caring for an old greyhound with all its assorted physical and mental problems takes a lot of time and effort. This article deals with common complaints and suggestions to make the work easier.

Arthritis

Most geriatric greyhounds have some arthritis, whether it is in a specific joint or all over. Several things help with arthritis. My greyhound Boone was worse when first getting up from a nap, and since greyhounds are notorious for napping, they are often stiff. Gentle exercise helps. Do not let the dog run loose but keep it on leash and do short walks to keep it limber. If your dog has been jumping in and out of a vehicle, you may now need to either build a ramp or lift it in and out. Cartrophen, an injectable drug available through your veterinarian, helps to stimulate the body to produce more joint fluids. Your dog will need a weekly injection for four weeks with a booster shot once a month thereafter. These shots seem to work very well in early stages of arthritis and have helped my greyhound, Boone. Steroids may help arthritis. Generally used on a short-term basis, steroids act on the colon and sometimes have unfortunate side effects such as bloody diarrhea. Metacam (Meloxicam) is one NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) on the market and it has fewer side effects and is therefore considered one of the safest drugs. NSAIDs contain pain medication as well as having anti-inflammatory properties. It is always wise after medicating with any NSAID, to coat the stomach to avoid ulcers. My veterinarian recommends Sucralfate, 1 gram, given 2-3 hours after the NSAID. There are other NSAIDS such as Rimadyl or Ketoprofen, but although these are effective, they are much harder on the stomach than Metacam.

Acupuncture also helps with arthritis. While acupuncture does not always cure the problem, it eliminates the pain by redirecting the energy (chi) around the problem. Acupuncture is also used to help stimulate the appetite, to detoxify the liver, to relax the dog, and for many other health problems. It even helps with mental problems your dog experiences.

Dental

Ensure your dog has regular veterinary check-ups. Older greyhounds require twice-annual vet checks rather than annual, since problems can develop more quickly in older dogs. If your greyhound has gum disease, you may want to try Nolvadent, a product available through your veterinarian. Nolvadent is an antibacterial rinse. Purchase some gauze pads, squeeze some Nolvadent onto the pad, rub the pad along the dog's gum line, top and bottom. It isn't necessary to do the inside of the teeth next to the tongue, just the outside. You should do this every day to start, then two or three times a week. There should be an improvement in the appearance of the gums and the breath should smell better. You should be cleaning your dog's teeth daily. I use the children's soft toothbrush and Vanilla Mint dog toothpaste available from the vet. If your dog is unable to have a dental cleaning at the vet, you can consider a non-anesthetic cleaning or put your dog on a daily low dose of antibiotics (again, consult with your vet).

At the end

The last gift you give your dog when it no longer has any quality of life, is euthanasia. This time is difficult, but inevitable. Speak with your veterinarian in advance. Ensure he or she can come to your home so your dog will be in a familiar environment. Or perhaps you would prefer your dog be in your vehicle or another favourite spot. Decide if you want cremation, private cremation, or burial. Do you want the ashes returned to you? If cost is a factor, discuss this with your veterinarian. As heartbreaking as losing a beloved pet is, not planning makes it worse as you will then have to make important decisions when you are upset.

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Losing a beloved pet

There is an excellent article written by a veterinarian at: <http://www.petloss.com/muns.htm> that deals with stages of grief for people on the loss of a pet and also talks about pets grieving for other pets.

The website at: <http://www.petloss.com/> has many wonderful links to poems, books on grief, and also has a chat room, support by phone, and a candle ceremony held each Monday evening to remember pets that have passed on.

One thing that may help is to memorialize your pet in some way. Perhaps you wish to hold a ceremony for the immediate family. Or maybe by making a donation to an animal shelter or to research into veterinary medical problems such as the Morris Cancer Foundation in the US. Or by purchasing a special shrub or tree and planting it in your yard in memory of that particular pet. For some people just being able to talk to others who understand how important the pet was to you and that the grief is real, can be important. It is real and it is normal. Only time will help.

Dealing with the loss of a pet is difficult. But what if the pet survives you? Have you made plans for that possibility?

Make sure members of your family understand that the dog can and should be returned to the group through which it was adopted. Give family members contact information for that group. Perhaps you feel someone in your family would be willing to take the dog. **Ask them**, don't just assume. You may also want to consider leaving them a portion of your estate to cover the costs of caring for your animals. This will ensure that they receive the necessary veterinary care without becoming a financial burden to the family member who has taken them in.

Some people also wish to leave a portion of their estate to help more animals be rescued. All groups welcome assistance.

What is a senior greyhound?

Technically, we consider greyhounds to be seniors once they reach eight years of age. However, some dogs, like my Gabby who is almost 12, don't think they are seniors! Once your dog reaches eight, you should definitely have blood work at the vet, and start keeping a closer eye on them. That's probably a good time to start supplementing with vitamins and anti-oxidants. If they are still happy with longer walks, then leave the walk time the same. But do keep an eye on their health and well-being. You may begin to see behavioural changes, they may not hear or see as well, stiffness and joint pain can begin, and they may gain or lose weight. These are all signs they are now seniors.

Yummy Carrot Pupcakes

1 cup flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1/4 cooking oil

1 cup shredded carrots

1 tsp vanilla

1/3 cup honey

1 egg

Mix the dry and wet ingredients separately, then combine. Put about 2-3 tablespoons of batter into greased muffin tins, Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes.

Frosting:

1/2 cup peanut butter

1/3 cup honey

1/4 cup sour cream

Mix together and frost when pupcakes have cooled. Maybe your dog will let you have one too!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are always needed.

Why not join in the fun and lend a hand?