



**NORTHWEST CANADIAN
GREYHOUND LEAGUE**

**Providing Greyhound Rescue and Adoption Services to
Northwest Canada**

Charitable Organization 89972 9214 RR0001

Web Site: www.ncgl.ca

Meet Mondo who will be 15 years old this November.



Mondo originally came from Kansas. He raced as Snake Man at the Woodlands track until mandatory retirement, completing 125 races. We got him as a foster in the spring of 2005 under the name of Armando, which we soon shortened to Mondo.

Shortly after we took him as a foster our elderly male died, and we decided to keep Mondo in our family. He has always been a real character. While greyhounds are known to be independent thinkers and rather stubborn, Mondo is at the extreme end of this. On walks, if he doesn't approve of the route we take he will plant his feet and just not move. He feels as if he weighs 300 pounds, and is very difficult to move. Once he did this to our dog sitter, and she ended up in tears. Eventually two other people pushed him from behind while our dog sitter pulled on his collar all the way back home. She never walked him again! On the other hand, he's a very affectionate fellow. We get frequent kisses, and he constantly asks to have his paw held.

As Mondo has aged, he is losing his hearing and to some extent his sight. He now has a weak back end and needs help on stairs. But the spirit is still there, and on walks he will disappear into someone's back yard if we don't keep track of him, or refuse to return home if he feels the walk is not long enough. There are still many trots, and the occasional canter. His favourite fair weather pass time is to soak up to his neck in our near by lake, being careful to leave the top of his back above the water to soak up the rays, while he cools his joints, semi-suspended in the water for 5 to 10 minutes. Mondo's eccentricities, along with all the experiences we have shared with him, have endeared him to us. We realize that our remaining time with him is short, and we savour every walk and every lick on the face.

This happened recently to an adopter in our area whose greyhound had way too much fun at a dog park. So beware, you have to monitor your dog so they don't overdo it. Inside and outside.

Heatstroke in Greyhounds:

What You Need to Know *By Judy Kody Paulsen, Founder* **(Excerpt from Spring/Summer 2007 issue of GCNM News)**

I am grateful for the help of Suzanne Stack, DVM, in preparing this article. Dr. Stack is a 1985 Ohio State graduate currently practicing near her home in Yuma, Arizona. Previously, she served as a State Racing Board Veterinarian in Wisconsin and as a track vet in Texas at Valley Greyhound Park. Dr. Stack worked closely with Arizona Adopt a Greyhound (AAGI) for a number of years and still volunteers with that group. The relative lack of information on canine heat-related and exertional ailments is alarming, considering how common the occurrence is among dogs of all breeds, particularly greyhounds. Not surprisingly, there is contradictory information on how to handle these sometimes fatal catastrophes. Racing greyhounds are finely-tuned athletes and are usually conditioned by professional trainers. A racer's performance while training and racing is (or should be) closely monitored. The onset of *heatstroke* or another debilitating and potentially life-threatening muscle disorder called *hyperacute exertional rhabdomyolysis (HER)* are two things no

trainer wants to see. Varying degrees of heat/exertional illness require specific treatment approaches to avoid permanent damage to muscle fibers, kidneys, and other organs. An experienced greyhound trainer has the expertise to recognize when a greyhound has been afflicted with one of these medical crises and knows the urgency in administering appropriate treatment. Once the greyhound has left the racing environment and is lucky enough to be adopted, there are still numerous perils to which the dog may be exposed. One of the most common, yet least considered dangers, is that of over-exertion. Well-meaning adopters want to give their greyhounds freedom to run and exercise, but it must be understood that unlike humans, dogs do not possess the ability to gauge their fitness and adjust their level of effort accordingly. Retired racers, depending on how long they've been off the track and how compromised their physical health might be, are at serious risk for experiencing critical problems when allowed to over-exert themselves. Both hyperacute exertional rhabdomyolysis and heatstroke can kill a greyhound, particularly an unfit one. Physical effects can vary, but these two urgent conditions can show similar signs, including heavy panting; generalized muscle pain as evidenced by showing sensitivity to touch; muscle tremors; cardiac arrhythmia; a tendency to drag the hind legs or collapse; and extreme difficulty in changing position from standing to lying or vice versa. Treatment for both these maladies is basically the same, but the key is to administer it quickly. Immediate, appropriate therapy is vital to the dog's recovery. The body temperature must be brought down as quickly as possible. Rapid cooling can be accomplished with hosing down the dog, applying cool wet towels over the body, and exposure to a fan or air conditioning in house or car. *Try to avoid producing a shivering response as this can create more heat in the body.* Transport the dog to a veterinarian as soon as possible and be sure to inform the vet's office you are on the way with a dog in severe distress from apparent heatstroke. They can then prepare the necessary items for treatment. The possibility of resulting bleeding disorders will require appropriate medications and, if available, frozen plasma. Not all vet's offices will have plasma, although an emergency vet clinic is more likely to have this on hand. IV fluids should be administered as soon as possible to prevent the onset of shock and to aid in flushing the kidneys of harmful byproducts leaking from damaged muscles. In researching this article, it is evident there is some disagreement over what solution is best for the IV. Some veterinarians feel .9% sodium chloride (normal saline) is adequate, while others feel it is prudent to use an electrolyte combination solution. The effects of heatstroke or HER are not corrected in one day at the vet's office. In-patient care is necessary for proper treatment and recovery. Several weeks of rest at home may be required for convalescence. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication should help reduce muscle inflammation and subdue the pain. Antibiotics may be recommended by your veterinarian to prevent secondary infection. Given the greyhound's purpose as a performance dog and the conditions under which they are trained, raced, confined, and transported, it is safe to assume many racers have experienced one or more episodes of heat/exertional ailments. These dogs may then have a predisposition for future episodes of similar illnesses and likely will have

compromised kidneys and other organs. Consequently, great care should be taken to protect them from over-exertion and heat-related illness. The following are some of the risk factors for heatstroke published in *The 5-minute Veterinary Consult* by Larry Tilley, DVM and Francis W.K. Smith, Jr., DVM: Previous history of heat-related disease; age extremes; heat intolerance due to poor acclimatization; obesity; poor cardiopulmonary conditioning; hyperthyroidism; underlying cardiopulmonary disease; dehydration. Anecdotal reports from adopters whose greyhounds have experienced heat- or exertion-related episodes suggest that adopters need to be better informed of the dangers of allowing their retired racers free reign to run, particularly in hot, humid conditions. **Obese greyhounds will be especially susceptible to the effects of over-exertion.** Even on cold days, given the right conditions, a greyhound can collapse from over-exertion. Extreme excitability in greyhounds, even while on a leash or in a fenced yard, can produce a combination of life-threatening factors which require immediate intervention by at least cooling the dog down and eliminating the stimulus (think high-prey-drive greyhound on a leash as a rabbit runs by!). People who report coming home to a dead or dying dog should take into consideration the environment when evaluating the cause. Broken air conditioners on hot days, lack of shade outdoors, excessive excitement or exertion (possibly running the fence line with another dog), absence of water to drink – these factors can kill a dog or take them to the brink of death. Hot, humid conditions are by far the most deadly. The frequency with which adopters report greyhounds “dropped dead from a heart attack,” when no previous indications of heart problems existed, suggests that death by heatstroke or HER may not be so uncommon. Only necropsy can identify the likely cause of death. Close supervision of retired racing greyhounds’ exercise routines, particularly those new to their homes, should be recommended to all adopters. Greyhounds who appear to tire quickly, pant excessively, and/or appear to be reluctant to move after exercise, should be limited to mild or moderate exercise and then, only under supervision. Close attention to heat and humidity in the environment is paramount in protecting a vulnerable greyhound from heatstroke or HER. A conditioning program similar to that of a human athlete (gradual increase in intensity of workouts) should be implemented before allowing retired racers to engage in physical activities which substantially increase heart rate and respiration. Greyhounds lucky enough to have been placed in a loving adoptive home deserve to have more than food, shelter, and attention. Responsible guardianship of retired racers includes being armed with the knowledge to protect them from the hidden dangers that await these athletes once they leave the tracks and training farms. A few precautions and observations can save your greyhound’s life.

Fostering

Someone fostered your dog before it came to you, perhaps you can return the favour for another family.

If you adopted a hound from NCGL, you might remember meeting the family who opened their home to foster your hound and helped your hound learn about retirement. Every hound that comes to NCGL is placed into a foster home when they arrive. **Would you consider opening your home to a foster hound?** We can't bring up dogs without foster homes to go to. Foster homes teach the dogs about their new life of retirement. They also help us to learn as much as we can about the hound's personality so that we can match each dog to an adoptive family and make successful, placements. Your temporary fostering commitment makes a permanent impact in a hound's life. **NCGL has no kennel so all dogs must go to foster homes before adoption.** We can only bring in the number of dogs for which we have foster homes.

If you already have a greyhound, your current dog will help teach the foster dog too. Dogs learn stairs much easier from another dog. Yes it can be hard to let them go, but knowing they are going to a loving home will help and you can meet the people and keep in touch. **Becoming a foster home doesn't mean you will be fostering a dog all the time.** We bring in hauls every few months to fulfill approved applications and to have dogs available for new incoming applications. Some foster homes take a dog from almost every haul, but you don't have to commit to fostering for every haul. A call for fosters will be sent by email and if you are available, then we will bring up a foster dog for you. The more foster homes we have available, the more flexibility we have for placing hounds when they arrive on the haul. Even if you are only able to commit to fostering a few dogs a year, or only during certain times of the year, it's helpful to us to have the support when you can take in a foster hound.

We would love to answer any questions you might have about fostering for NCGL. We appreciate your consideration and hope to hear from you soon!

Fostering FAQ's

How much time does it take? In most cases we try to keep your commitment to a matter of weeks however it could be a couple of months. Even if you are only able to foster for a short time, it is still very helpful to us. We work with you and your schedule.

What do I do?

You just help the dog learn about slippery floors, stairs, walks in parks, glass

and mirrors, etc. We are always available to help where necessary.

What is the cost?

The only real cost is food and NCGL can provide either reimbursement or a tax receipt if you give us your bills. We can loan you a crate and the dogs are usually completely vetted before arrival.

What if I already have cats? We ask for cat tested dogs but always advise using the muzzle with cats or small dogs till your foster is trustworthy.

What if I want to keep the dog? Foster homes have first right of refusal although if you intend ahead of time to adopt, please let us know so we don't place a dog with you that has already been brought up specifically for someone else.

Want more information? Please get in touch with us at quailrunfarm@shaw.ca (Maureen) in BC or adopt@ncgl.ca (Brandi) in AB or SK. We can answer any questions you might have about fostering. We are also happy to put you in touch with someone who fosters regularly who can answer questions.

Some fun and informative links

www.pet360.com/
www.petmd.com/
dogcancervet.com/
www.dogcancerdiet.com/
www.greyhound-data.com/

FLED (Finding Lost and Escaped Dogs) in Victoria BC area
Jill Oakley 250-479-0911/250-213-8534
FledSearch@gmail.com
Check your area to see if there is a similar service.

ALWAYS KEEP A COLLAR WITH TAGS ON YOUR DOG.

If you don't have a tag collar, contact Di at mcmahens@telus.net
Di makes tag collars, they are for tags only, not for walking. She has different colours and patterns, they are reasonably priced, you keep them on loosely enough that should the collar get caught on something they will come off rather than choking the dog. Your dog should have its NCGL traceable tag on and one with your cell numbers on it – worn at all times.

IF...

If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,
If you can overlook it when those you love take it out on you when, through no fault of yours, something goes wrong,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can face the world without lies and deceit,

Then, my friend,... you are almost as good as your dog!

Tips and info

Do not let your dog eat the mushrooms/toadstools that grow in your yard. Get outside and get rid of them. If your dog does eat mushrooms, call your veterinarian immediately, because many of these are toxic and can kill your dog.

It will soon be frosty outside and that means slippery stairs. I have found a great product called Eco-Traction that you sprinkle on the stairs and they aren't slippery. You can purchase it at Home Hardware though they may need to order it in for you. One 20 lb bag lasts a long time so it's definitely worth investing in.