

KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

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KAR Friends

February 2010

Dear Reader,

Our feature article addresses the importance of pet grooming and hygiene to keep your pet looking their best.

This month's Doggie Den addresses heartworm disease and the importance of protecting your pet from this life-threatening parasite. We also share some stories of heartworm positive dogs that got a second chance at life after treatment. Cat's Corner tells the happy tail of Charlie Boy .

Danielle Wallis
KAR Marketing Coordinator

Lynn Bolhuis
KAR Friends Editor

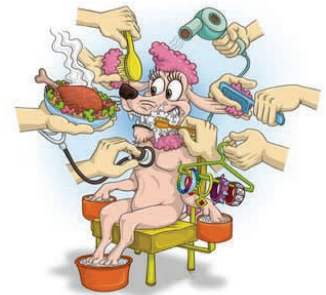
P.S. Tuesday, February 23rd is Spay Day. KAR supports the Humane Society of the United States' annual campaign to inspire people to spay and neuter dogs and cats to save lives. [Click here](#) to learn how you can help stop pet overpopulation.

PET CARE

Grooming Your Pet

By The American Animal Hospital Association

Fifi comes prancing out of the groomer's, one delicate paw in front of the next. Blue ribbons tied to his ears, his tail cut into a tidy little pompom. He's perfectly pretty-maybe too perfect to be playing fetch in the backyard, you worry.



Grooming your pets doesn't mean that they have to be made-up and untouchable; it simply means that you're taking good care of their health by keeping a watchful eye on their hygiene. Pets, like humans, are more likely to remain healthy when they are clean and well groomed. Contrary to popular belief, dogs and cats are not wild animals; they require regular grooming attention to keep them healthy in their domestic environments. One of the major benefits of a regular grooming regimen is that you will become familiar with your pet's body. This allows you to quickly recognize problems with his health, so you can bring them to your veterinarian's attention sooner. Remember that you should seek help from your veterinarian if you think that your pet will be difficult to groom alone.

Basic Brushing

Brushing your furred friend removes dead hair and skin, spreads out natural oils in their coat, and helps keep them from developing an odor. It is one of the simplest things you can do for your dog or cat, but it is also one of the most necessary. A variety of brushes and combs are available-make sure that you use one appropriate

OUR SPONSORS

**PET CARE** (continued)

for your pet's coat. How often you brush them depends on whether they have long or short hair. For animals with short hair, a weekly brushing may be enough to keep their coat in good order. Critters with longer locks require more frequent sessions with the brush. And some breeds require daily attention to keep their tresses in good condition.

Cats are well known for their exemplary grooming habits, but even they need a weekly brushing. In fact, brushing your kitty is great for his health because it helps prevent hairballs, keeping his digestive track healthy. During shedding seasons, increase your brushing frequency as needed to remove the excess dead hair.

Exceptional Ears

Ears are a prime place for infection—keeping your little buddy's ears clean is a great way to prevent illness. Regularly pick up his ear flaps and examine the inside. Make sure that they are a healthy pink color. If everything looks good, wipe the outer flap of the ear with a cotton ball, being careful not to touch any part of the ear that you cannot easily see. If you notice any symptoms (sensitivity to touch; brown, black, or yellow discharge; foul odor; shaking or continuously tilting head; or circling in one direction) take your pet to the veterinarian to have his ears examined. Another option for cleaning the ears is to use a liquid ear cleanser. But never use an ear cleanser on your pet if you have noticed what could be a problem. The cleansers could cause severe damage if your pet has an inner ear infection or if something has damaged his ear drum.

Tip-Top Teeth

Routine dental care is essential to your pet's overall good health. Approximately 80 percent of all three-year-old cats and dogs show some sign of periodontal disease, characterized by a build-up of plaque and tartar on their teeth above and below the gum line. This disease can lead to gum infection and tooth loss. Your pet's poor dental hygiene is much more serious than his embarrassingly bad breath—infected gums and dirty teeth have been linked to kidney and secondary heart disease in pets. For information on cleaning your pet's teeth, consult your veterinarian. In addition to your home care, your veterinarian should perform yearly dental check-ups on your pal; she will let you know when you need to have your pet's teeth professionally cleaned.

Fantastic Feet

Many of our four-legged friends prefer not to have their paws handled, making nail trimming especially traumatic for them. Like it or not, it still must be done. Try touching his ears or paws when you praise him, and before you know it, your little buddy will love to be handled in those sensitive spots. Indoor cats should have their nails trimmed occasionally whether they use a scratching post or not. Your dog's claws should not ever extend so far that his nails come in contact with the ground when he's standing normally on a flat surface. Nails this long place unneeded stress on your pooch's paws, which in turn can lead to foot problems. Be careful not to trim your critter's nails too far down; you could cut into the quick (the part of their nail which contains the blood). If you should cut their nails too close, apply pressure or use clotting powder to stop the bleeding. Make sure you use nail clippers designed especially for animals. Cats, for example, have brittle nails that can shatter easily, so it is best to use tools that are designed for them. Here's an excellent strategy for those who hate the clippers: only cut a nail or two in one sitting. Who said you have to do it all at once? Spread it out over a few days and you'll lower the stress level immensely.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Visit the "Events" page on our website](#) for upcoming adoption (and other) events.



PET CARE (continued)

Extraordinary Eyes

Examine your pet's baby blues often to make sure that everything looks good. You want to ensure that any abnormal conditions are noticed as soon as possible so that your veterinarian can begin treatment immediately. Be extremely careful with your pet's eyes during all parts of the grooming process. You might consider applying protection, like sterile ophthalmic ointment or drops, to your little buddy's eyes before bathing. Dogs and cats have very sensitive eyes, and soap—even "tearless" soap—can damage their corneas. Also, trim away any hair that is falling into your animal's eyes so that it doesn't inflict damage. Make sure to use blunt scissors (children's safety scissors are great) when trimming the hair close to their eyes to minimize the chance of injury. If tear staining is a problem, you might consider looking at some of the products available commercially to help you care for your pet, or ask your veterinarian or groomer for advice.

Serious Suds

The ever-popular "B" word—few animals feel that bath time is something to celebrate. In fact, the majority of our pets probably dread a bath more than anything else. Nevertheless, sometimes it is a necessary evil. On the bright side, the more often you brush your friend, the less often you will have to subject him to the dreaded bath-time experience. Here are some basics to cover before putting your pet in the water. First, always brush your critter thoroughly before bathing him. Any mats and tangles that your pet may have will only get worse during the bathing process, so take care of those problems in the beginning. Second, protect your pal's ears by placing cotton inside them. This will avoid getting soap in his ears which could be painful to him. Make sure you have everything you need where you can reach it. After your pal is wet and unhappy, it will be much more difficult to leave him to retrieve the shampoo. And finally, close off all escape routes. This will help you avoid chasing a wet pet around the couch. You may consider putting a towel or screen on the bottom of the tub or sink—if your furred friend has a secured footing he will not be so upset.

Now you're ready to let the fun begin! Always use shampoo designed especially for your animal. Human shampoo is not made for dogs and cats; it can be harmful to their skin, drying it out and destroying their natural oils. Lather him thoroughly, leaving his face until the end. After you have washed him well, make sure that you rinse him just as well, as leaving soap in his fur can irritate his skin. Towel your little buddy off and rub him down. If he'll accept it, you can blow dry him. And then finish him off with a good brushing.

Though it might sometimes be a struggle to keep your furry pal in clean condition, it's well worth it. Not only are you improving his health, you're bonding with him in the process. He'll appreciate the attention he's getting, and you'll appreciate the lack of fur stuck in your ice cube trays. Good grooming habits are a must for any happy household!

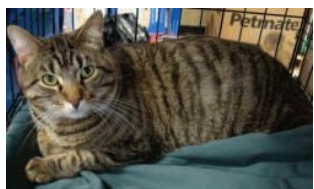
[Click here](#) for an instructive video by the Cornell Feline Health Center on trimming your cat's claws.

Source: This article has been republished with permission of the American Animal Hospital Association and its website, www.HealthyPet.com.

PETS OF THE MONTH



[Freddie](#)



[Austin](#)

See all of our adoptable [Cats](#), [Dogs](#) and [Kittens!](#)

SPECIAL EVENT

Bennigan's FUNdraiser

Bennigan's restaurant is hosting a fundraiser to benefit Kalamazoo Animal Rescue. They will donate 20% of all sales that we generate (for each person/group that brings in a donation ticket).

Place: Bennigan's Restaurant
5314 S. Westnedge Avenue
Portage, MI 49008
269.344.7553

Dates: Saturday, February 20 and
Sunday, February 21, 2010

Time: All Day and Night

Click on the image to print the donation ticket.

Tell all of your friends, family and KAR supporters to have lunch or dinner at Bennigan's on the 20th or 21st. All you have to do is:

1. Eat a delicious lunch or dinner at Bennigan's on February 20th and/or 21st
2. Give the **donation ticket** to your server when you pay,
3. You've just donated 20% of your bill to KAR!

That's it! You pay no more than you normally would and Bennigan's donates 20% of your bill to us!



BEHIND THE SCENES

Animal Spotlight ~ Helen

Typically KAR volunteers are profiled in this column. However, for the next couple of months we are going to highlight some of the exceptional animals that have been in the rescue for a long time waiting for their new home. Some of these pets have particular needs and require special people to step forward to adopt them. KAR has a very special cat in the rescue, Helen, and here is her story.

Helen has a neurological problem, a non-contagious disease called Vestibular Disease. This condition affects both dogs and cats in the same way. The neurological equipment that is "responsible for perceiving one's body's orientation relative to the earth (determining if you are upside-down, standing up straight, falling etc.) and informing one's eyes and extremities how they should move accordingly." is affected by this disease. Our "vestibular apparatus allows us to walk, even run, on very uneven ground without falling, helps us know when we need to right ourselves, and allows our eyes to follow moving objects without becoming dizzy."

For more information about the causes and signs of vestibular disease, please [click here](#).

Since being in the loving care of her foster mom, Helen has shown signs of major improvement; she can now walk without falling over and even run. She has some insecurities due to her disabilities but with the right person willing to love and care for



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- KAR [Website](#)



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BEHIND THE SCENES (continued)

her, there is no end to the affection she yearns to show you. Due to her disabilities, Helen will need to live in a house with her litter box on the same level as her (stairs can be dangerous) and no young children. Apart from her disability, she is a picture of health and would make a loving companion for someone who is patient, understanding and willing to love her unconditionally and forever.

To read Helen's complete profile, [click here](#).

DOGGIE DEN

Heartworm Disease

By Alyssa Finkel

What is it? Heartworm is a parasitic roundworm that is spread by the bite of mosquitoes. It is a disease that produces itself in cats and dogs, as well as many other animals. If not treated, heartworm disease can be fatal.

How Do Animals Get Heartworm? In order for an animal to get infected with heartworm, they must be bitten by a mosquito that is carrying the disease. The disease is not transmittable directly from animal to animal. An animal must have heartworm disease, and have adult female heartworms living in them (these are called microfilaria) which are in the bloodstream. A mosquito will become infected by the microfilaria while taking blood from the infected animal. Then, between 10 and 14 days, the microfilaria continues to mature to the infective larval stage while living in the mosquito. So when the mosquito bites another animal (dog, cat, etc.), the infective larvae is injected into the animal's bloodstream through this fresh bite wound. These larvae will either be killed by heartworm prevention, or take a little over six months to develop into adult heartworms. At this point, the heartworms can live to be five to seven years old. Animals can be any age or breed and be infected with heartworm.

How is it Diagnosed? A blood test to check for the antigens is the most common test in dogs. It takes between six and seven months from the time of infection until the antigen test becomes positive due to the heartworm's life cycle. This means that a dog can be infected with heartworms that are five months old, and the test will turn out negative. Also, a dog with very few heartworms may also show a false-negative. For cats, there is no effective test at this time. Annual testing is recommended even with monthly prevention, since there are often no symptoms until the heartworms have become very advanced in the animal's body.

Is it Treatable? Fortunately for dogs, there is treatment. Usually, dogs are treated with an injection of Immiticide, the only FDA approved treatment at this time. It is a series of injections given either over a 24-hour period, or two separate treatments a month apart. Some dogs may need multiple treatments, but they usually react well to the first. A series of preliminary tests should be done to make sure the dog is healthy enough to undergo treatment. Unfortunately, there is no treatment for cats because the risk is too high. Also, because there is no valid testing, a diagnosis is not usually made before death occurs.

Is it Preventable? Absolutely! There are many heartworm preventions available that should be given to both cats and dogs. These should be used at least during the



DOGGIE DEN (continued)

heartworm “season”, being April through December, but year round if possible. Even if your cat is indoors, there is no way to guarantee that one mosquito with heartworm won’t sneak in your house and bite your cat. There are many different options between topical and oral preventions, and some also treat against many intestinal parasites, fleas, and ticks. These should be given once a month to prevent heartworm. Most heartworm pills have flavoring so animals take them easily, but with allergies, this may cause an allergic reaction. There are non-flavored and topical treatments for animals that may have allergies.

For more information, visit the [American Heartworm Society](#) or talk to your veterinarian!

Remember, all of KAR’s animals are on heartworm prevention and, if old enough and a canine, they have been tested for heartworm disease.

Additional Resources:

- [Canine Heartworm Disease](#)
- [Heartworm lifecycle](#)
- [FDA – Prevention vs. Treatment](#)

HW+ DOGS GET SECOND CHANCE

By Lynn Bolhuis

Life isn’t necessarily over if a dog tests positive for heartworm disease. KAR has had many dogs come through the rescue that were HW+. The rescue covers the cost of treatment, which can run several hundred dollars. Our dog foster volunteers make sure the animals are kept as inactive as possible, comfortable and quiet until their treatment is over. Here are a couple happy tails that show there is hope for HW+ dogs.

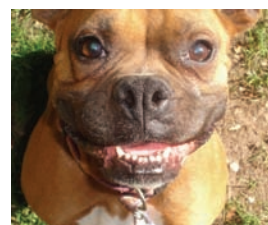
Beauty is a gorgeous American Pit Bull Terrier mix that was brought to Animal Services as a stray along with her puppy. She was almost adopted from the shelter, but when the adopters found out she was heartworm positive and the treatment would be expensive, they backed out. Animal Services thought this gentle girl deserved a second chance so they contacted JoAnne, a KAR dog foster volunteer in early September. JoAnne brought Beauty into the rescue and she began heartworm treatment.



After treatment, Beauty had to be kept quiet and inactive so she would not throw clots and suffer strokes or pulmonary embolisms. Keeping a dog quiet can be a challenge, especially in a household with multiple dogs. Beauty wanted to play and run with the others, but she wasn’t allowed to. After 30 days had passed, she was able to be spayed and then put up for adoption.

Today, Beauty is enjoying a healthy and happy life in Portage with her new family... a mom and nine-year old boy who cherish her.

Sasha is a purebred Boxer that was bred over and over again. When her owners found out she was pregnant and had heartworms, and that she and the pups might not survive, as well as the cost to treat her, they choose to have her put to sleep. Fortunately, one of our foster volunteers and the



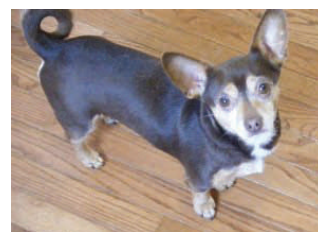
HW+ DOGS GET SECOND CHANCE (continued)

veterinarians at Mattawan Animal Hospital talked to Sasha's owners about her being allowed to come into the rescue, which they agreed to.

Sasha had her babies and they were healthy. When the puppies were old enough to be adopted out, she underwent heartworm treatment and handled it very well. Sasha was underweight from the heartworms and quite sick, but such a sweetheart. Her foster family kept her quiet and away from the activity of the other dogs in the household. Sasha spent quite a bit of time cuddling with Gretchen, her foster mom, while she recovered.

Sasha is now living with her new family in Schoolcraft. The family thinks she is such a blessing and they don't know what they would do without her.

Mighty Mouse is a cute little Chihuahua mix that tested positive for heartworm disease after he came into KAR. He sailed through the Imiticide treatment, which consisted of two shots given 24-hours apart. The shots went into his spine and were quite painful. After the shots, his foster, Dusty, decided his recuperative time would be better spent at a foster home with fewer dogs. Mighty Mouse went to stay with another foster, Kendalyn, who said "he was pretty sore after the treatment but was mostly in good spirits."



The second phase of treatment for Mighty Mouse, now called Monty, was an eight-week rest period. The first two weeks were the most critical, as this is when the adult worms die and get reabsorbed by his body. Monty needed to be kept calm so that the worms did not move into the pulmonary arteries and cause problems. Keeping a dog calm, quiet and inactive is no easy task. There were days when Monty seemed to be bouncing off the walls with energy and it was a challenge to keep him still.

To keep Monty's mind occupied but not his body, he was given things to chew on like Kongs stuffed with food, large beef marrow bones and Nylabones. Since Monty came into the rescue with almost no training, Kendalyn spent brief periods of time teaching him simple commands. Mental exercise seemed to wear him out nearly as much as physical activity. Fortunately, Monty didn't seem to need a whole lot of exercise to be happy. He was content to snooze on the sofa while his foster family watched TV or worked on the computer. It probably also helped that the treatment happened in the dead of winter, as there were days when Monty preferred to be indoors sleeping by the fire!

When the eight-week rest period ended, Kendalyn began taking him for short walks which he really enjoyed. Monty will receive his last heartworm test in April when he should test negative. At that point he will be able to take monthly heartworm preventative so this doesn't happen again.

The happy ending for Monty is that Kendalyn and her family plan to adopt him. They lost a senior Chihuahua in early December and miss having a little dog in their lives. Monty is probably the biggest little dog they have ever met. His funny personality keeps them laughing and he gets along with their other dog and cats. He still has a ways to go in the training department but he will soon be theirs to keep and love forever!

CONTACT US

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Visit our [website](#)

[Questions or
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newsletter?

CAT'S CORNER

Charlie Boy

By Danielle Wallis



When Charlie Boy came into the rescue, he was severely matted and showed signs that he had been a stray for quite some time.

After losing their beloved Maine Coon in the fall, Dale and Sharron Myers wanted another cat to love. They specifically wanted a large cat with personality and one that would be friends with their Shitzu, Mikie. They saw Charlie Boy's picture on the KAR website and fell in love with him. The Myers came to visit him at his foster home, along with his future canine brother. They all hit it off and he went home the very same day.

Dale and Sharron changed Charlie Boy's name to Gabby, as he is such a talker. He fits in well to their lifestyle and home, and has become great friends with their dog, Mikie. Apparently, "They play a great deal and that means we can watch them instead of TV!"

The Myers are working to overcome some of Gabby's problems that he had with food – believing he had to eat everything in sight! Visiting their veterinarian's office has also proven to be a challenge. To combat this, "He now goes for frequent visits to the vet's office purely for socialization." His new family is working with Gabby to let him know that he doesn't need to be fearful and that they love him. The Myers say, "He loves to ride in their vehicle and watch out the windows, he also lets Dale comb and brush him daily so he no longer has any mats in his fur."

KAR WISH LIST ~ FEBRUARY

If you can help or know someone who might like to help, Kalamazoo Animal Rescue welcomes monetary donations that enable us to purchase items we need to care for cats and dogs until they are adopted.

- A gift of \$10 ~ buys a box of cat litter
- \$20 ~ buys a bag of dry dog food
- \$35 ~ buys a top-loading cat carrier
- \$50 ~ buys 7 microchips for cats or dogs
- \$75 ~ buys a large, 36-inch wire dog crate
- \$125 ~ buys 50 vaccine doses for cats or 25 doses for dogs
- \$150 ~ enables KAR to have a dog or cat spayed/neutered



Whatever you are able to give: \$10, \$20 or more, your donation goes directly toward the care and nurturing of the animals KAR volunteers foster until they find new forever homes.

About Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through private donations.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Southwest Michigan.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent homes.