

# The Howler



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HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE? • PET HEALTH CARE • "MUTTNIK" - THE DOG OF THE MONTH



Monthly Newsletter

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*from the AKC newsroom*

## AKC ANNOUNCES 2007 OBEDIENCE WORLD CUP TEAM TO COMPETE AT CRUFTS

The American Kennel Club of the United States has been invited to participate in the international obedience competition that will be held at the 104th Crufts Dog Show in England. AKC's 2007 Obedience World Cup Team consists of three dog/handler teams and one alternate team. They were selected from the top Obedience Trial Champion (OTCH) dogs in the country. These top 4 dog/handler teams will be competing on March 11th, 2007 at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, England.

The 2006 Crufts event had an entry of 24,640 dogs from 178 different breeds and from 32 different countries. Those numbers placed the event in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest dog show in the world.

### 2007 USA OBEDIENCE WORLD CUP TEAM:

\* Fred Hulme, Chester, WV  
OTCH Shoreland's Thrill Chaser UDX15

- Golden Retriever
  - \* Dave Gannon, Mineola, TX  
OTCH Breakwater Ice Skater UDX28 JH
- Golden Retriever
  - \* Linda McHugh, Danvers, MA  
OTCH Heelalong Splittin Image UDX13
- Border Collie
  - Alternate
    - \* Judith Wilson, River Falls, WI  
OTCH Wirlwind Flying Wedge UDX11 HASds  
HSBs HIAs - Border Collie

The test will represent a mixture of exercises taken from The Kennel Club (UK) and AKC Obedience competitions, as well as the FCI World Obedience Championships.

Congratulations to the 2007 American Kennel Club USA Obedience World Cup Team!

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*Long Beach, California*

DECEMBER 2-3, 2006

## DOG OF THE MONTH



**Laika (from Russian “Barker”) was a Russian space dog that became the first living creature from Earth to enter orbit. Laika died a few hours after launch from stress and overheating, likely due to a malfunction in the thermal controls system. The true cause of her death was not made public until decades after the flight. Some former Soviet scientists have since expressed regret that Laika was allowed to die.**

Although Laika did not survive the trip, the experiment proved that a living passenger could survive being launched into orbit and endure weightlessness. It paved the way for human spaceflight and provided scientists with some of the first data on how living organisms react to spaceflight environments.

The dog that would later be named Laika was found as a stray wandering the streets of Moscow. She was a mongrel female, approximately three years old, and weighed about 6 kg (13 lb). Soviet personnel gave her several names and nicknames, among them Kudryavka (Russian for Little Curly), Zhuchka (Little Bug) and Limonchik (Little Lemon). Laika, the Russian name for several breeds of dogs similar to the husky, was the name popularized around the world. The American press dubbed her Muttnik (mutt + suffix -nik) as a pun on Sputnik, or

referred to her as Curly. Her true pedigree is unknown, although it is generally accepted that she was part husky or other Nordic breed, and possibly part terrier.

The Soviet Union and the United States had previously sent animals only on sub-orbital flights. To adapt the dogs to the confines of the tiny cabin of Sputnik 2, they were kept in progressively smaller cages for periods up to 20 days. The extensive close confinement caused them to stop urinating or defecating, made them restless, and caused their general condition to deteriorate. Laxatives did not improve their condition, and the researchers found that only long periods of training proved effective. The dogs were placed in centrifuges that simulated the acceleration of a rocket launch and were placed in machines that simulated the noises of the spacecraft. This caused their pulses to double and their blood pressure to increase by 30–65 torr. The dogs were trained to eat a special high-nutrition gel that would be their food in space.

According to a NASA document, Laika was placed in the satellite on October 31, 1957—three days before the start of the mission. The temperatures at the launch site were extremely cold at that time of year, so a hose connected to a heater was used to keep her container warm. Two assistants were assigned to keep a constant watch on Laika before launch. Just prior to liftoff on November 3, 1957 from Baikonur Cosmodrome, Laika’s fur was sponged in a weak alcohol solution and carefully groomed. Iodine was painted onto areas where sensors would be placed to monitor her bodily functions.

*Laika*

The Russian scientists had planned to euthanize Laika with a poisoned serving of food after ten days. For many years, the Soviet Union gave conflicting statements that she had died either from oxygen starvation when the batteries failed, or that she had been euthanized. There were many rumours circulated about the exact manner of her passing. In 1999, several Russian sources said that she died after four days when the cabin overheated.



In October 2002, Dr. Dimitri Malashenkov, one of the scientists behind the Sputnik 2 mission, revealed that Laika had died five to seven hours after launch from overheating and stress. According to a paper he presented to the World Space Congress in Houston, Texas, "It was practically impossible to create a reliable system of a temperature control in such small term". Sputnik 2 was finally destroyed (along with Laika's remains) during re-entry on April 14, 1958, after 2,570 orbits.

Laika's pioneering journey made her one of the most famous dogs in the world. A plaque commemorating fallen cosmonauts was unveiled at the Institute for Aviation and Space Medicine in Star City, Moscow, in November 1997; Laika appears in one corner. Several postage stamps from different countries have pictured her. Brands of chocolate and cigarettes were named in her honour, and a large collection of Laika memorabilia still appear in auctions today. (Resource: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com))



## NEXT MEETING

OCTOBER 16

Home of Pat and Fred Hembold

(209) 586-6126

### DIRECTION

- Get on Hiway 108 and head east, toward Twain Harte [about 12 miles]. Go past the 2 turn offs staying on Highway 108.
  - Continue on Highway 108 about 2 miles past the 2nd Twain Harte exit Watch for the large green hiway sign marked "Sugar Pine" -you're almost there.
  - About a ¼ mile past the "Sugar Pine" sign, the first road on the right, angles off slightly to the right.
  - Take this road it is marked 'Old Sugar Pine Road' Take the very first right turn on to "Wild Cat Drive"
  - Turn right at the first gravel road on to "Crossley Way" – this is our driveway! Stay on the gravel road past a house on the left, until you can turn left, and continue on "Bernese Drive" -- Go straight to the end, past some old railroad signals.
- You've found us!**

## To Have or Not to Have Testicles

**M**y brother really doesn't want to neuter his dog. It's not because he wants to breed the dog, but because he is just not convinced that the advantages of castrating outweigh the disadvantage, namely, his belief that Theo will miss his testicles. So I recruited Dr. Brad Coolman, a former veterinary surgery resident at the University of Illinois Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital in Urbana, to address my brother's concerns.

Dr. Coolman has served in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. For three years he worked with the military police dog program in San Antonio, Texas, where he trained about 400 dogs each year and was a referral hospital for military police dogs from around the world.

### Concern No. 1 "Castrated dogs are wimps."

"Many guys who don't want to castrate their non-breeding dog are concerned that losing the testicles of a dog is the same as losing the manliness of the dog," says Dr. Coolman. "At the Army facility most of the police dogs were male and many of them had been neutered for medical reasons. The handlers, the majority of whom were macho-male types, were often shocked to learn that their tough, aggressive dog was actually neutered." My brother's claim that his dog will miss his testicles is anthropomorphism-attributing human characteristics and feelings to animals.

### Concern No. 2 "Why should I neuter my dog? He can't get pregnant."

Neutering reduces roaming behavior. My brother's dog, Theo, is a farm dog who could roam to our neighbor's ground and potentially father an unwanted litter of puppies. Spaying and neutering are the best way to reduce the 4 to 6 million unwanted pets euthanized each year. Even though males can't get pregnant, they can sire multiple litters.



### Concern No. 3 "I thought you said neutering would not change my dog's behavior."

Neutering can decrease roaming behavior, marking behavior, and some forms of aggression, but genetics and training are more important contributors to your pet's behavior. "I've seen many excellent police dogs, and I've never seen a recently castrated male suddenly lose all its working drive," says Dr. Coolman.

### Concern No. 4 "All neutered dogs are sleepy and fat."

People think neutered dogs are more sleepy and less playful than usual after castration. In fact, those behavioral changes are typical of puberty, the stage of life when most neutering occurs. The changes merely reflect your pet growing up. But don't blame obesity on being neutered. Any dog can become obese. Obesity should be controlled through proper diet and exercise.

### Concern No. 5 "If I don't let my dog near unspayed females, why should I neuter?"

The list of medical reasons for castration is convincing. "Testicular tumors are very common in older dogs. If you don't have testicles you don't get testicular tumors," notes Dr. Coolman. "Castration also prevents most diseases of the prostate: hyperplasia, prostatitis, cysts, and abscesses. Unfortunately, castration does not prevent prostatic tumors."

Owners should castrate dogs who carry heritable diseases, such as hip dysplasia or other congenital conditions, to make sure that undesirable traits and disease aren't passed on.

"Dogs that are cryptorchid, i.e., with one or both testicles that did not descend, should be neutered," emphasizes Dr. Coolman. Cryptorchid dogs are at much higher risk of developing testicular cancer, and the condition is hereditary.

### Concern No. 6 "You're just telling me to do this because you're a girl. Do you tell people to neuter girl dogs too?" my brother asks me as he scrambles for a last reason.

People of both genders understand the benefits of spaying female dogs, but there still are a few myths out there. It is not true that it is best to let your female have a litter of pups before spaying her. "Spaying a dog before her first cycle decreases the risk of mammary tumors. Spaying also decreases the risk of uterine infections, pyometra, abnormal estrus cycles, cancer, and unwanted behavioral changes during heat cycles. It also helps deter unwanted attention from intact male dogs in the neighborhood," adds Dr. Coolman.

When deciding whether to neuter your pet, don't put your own perceptions or feelings into what your dog is thinking. Rather, study the medical and social benefits of having a castrated non-breeding dog and discuss the issue with your veterinarian before making your decision.

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<http://www.cvm.uiuc.edu/petcolumns/showarticle.cfm?id=64>

*I have seen a look in dogs eyes, a quickly vanishing look of amazed contempt, and I am convinced that basically dogs think humans are nuts.*

*-John Steinbeck*

***You're sitting in your veterinarian's office and you've been asked to make a very difficult decision. You've just learned that your beloved dog, Casey, needs surgery for swallowing her favorite soft string toy. The vet is confident that he can successfully remove the tangles of string out of Casey's intestine, but with anesthesia, hospitalization, medications, check-ups, etc.— the grand total will come to about \$3,000. What would you do? You have other bills piling up and you really can't afford Casey's surgery too. Yet, you dearly love your dog and can't imagine life without her.***

If you're like many people, you reluctantly tell the vet to go ahead with the surgery, convincing yourself you will figure out how to pay for it later. But consider this: if you had pet insurance for this kind of emergency, most of Casey's bills would have been covered, and you would then be regarding the annual premium for your policy as a wonderful investment.

The growing field of pet insurance has attracted a lot of interest recently, especially as healthcare costs continue to rise. As veterinary medical science keeps advancing, new and better treatments have emerged — from easy parasite control to improved cancer treatment. However, today's medical advances often come with hefty price tags. Even a CT scan, now fairly routine for vets to perform, can run close to \$1,000, and even more in

some areas. Since the AKC began offering the AKC Pet Healthcare Plan through its specialist provider, Pet-Partners, Inc. many thousands of AKC registrants have benefited from this coverage to help take increasingly better care of their pets.

The options that pet insurance offers can help provide a way to manage your veterinary expenses while giving

## PET HEALTH CARE

your pet affordable medical care. The American Kennel Club offers a choice of healthcare plans. Under these plans, you can choose your own vet and receive benefits for many medical costs. If you choose a wellness plan, it can assist in paying towards preventive care costs for annual check-ups, vaccinations, dental cleanings and parasite control. The AKC Pet Healthcare Plan can give you peace of mind for the protection of your furry friend — and your budget.

## *Is Pet Insurance Really Necessary For Healthy Dogs?*

One of the most compelling reasons to buy pet insurance is to better manage the high costs associated with sudden injury or illness -- which can occur at any stage of your pet's life. Young dogs frequently swallow things that they shouldn't, and sometimes need surgery. Active adult dogs love to run and jump, but are not aware of their own safety. Their unbridled enthusiasm puts them at risk for a variety of injuries. For example, one dog's surgery and aftercare for a swallowed sock resulted in a reimbursement of more than \$2,000. Setting and bandaging a broken leg can cost over \$1,800 alone.

Cancer, heart disease and arthritis can develop in older dogs, just as they do in humans. These experiences are traumatic enough, without having to weigh your dog's future against what you can afford to pay at a given moment. Treatment for cancer resulted in a \$5,000 reimbursement under one dog's AKC plan. While it's difficult to budget for such emergencies, pet insurance can help you to take them in your stride.

Pet insurance can also help you handle the costs of preventive care. Years ago, you'd take your dog to the vet once a year for his shots. Now we know that it's also a good idea to provide flea, tick and heartworm prevention, along with periodic dental cleanings. The AKC Pet Healthcare Plan's Wellness Plan can help defray these costs, as well as providing benefits for unexpected accidents and illnesses.

## *What does Pet Insurance Cover?*

Pet insurance offers several approaches to pet healthcare needs. You should first decide on the type of policy that interests you. Do you want pet insurance primarily to guard against major problems and catastrophes, or would you like coverage for preventive care, as well? The AKC Pet Healthcare Plan offers Essential Plans and Wellness Plans. Each plan carries a maximum amount it will cover per incident, along with deductibles and co-insurance reimbursements.

As an example, let's say your dog tears her knee ligament (ACL) while playing in the yard, as happened to Blue, an American Staffordshire Terrier who then needed surgery. This led to \$1,464 being paid under Blue's AKC plan. If you are insured by the AKC Essential Plus Plan, you have coverage of up to \$3,000 per incident, after a \$125 annual deductible. You rush your dog to the vet for an examination, possibly X-rays, and surgery. You pay the vet at the time of service. You then submit your bills to the AKC Pet Healthcare Plan provider. After the \$125 deductible, you are reimbursed for 80 percent of all covered expenses up to \$3,000, including any check-ups and medications the vet prescribes for that incident. The AKC Wellness Plans carry even higher coverage limits, up to \$5,000 per incident.

## *The Right Policy Can Help Keep Your Costs Down*

To help you evaluate the pet insurance options that are best for you, check out the plans at [www.akcphp.com](http://www.akcphp.com) or call toll-free 866-725-2747 for a free, no-obligation quote.

You may want to evaluate your vet bills from the past year or two, and see what you would have paid if you had been covered by pet insurance. Compare the Wellness Plans to the Essential Plans, and see the differences in what they would have covered. Also consider what you could have spent if your dog had suffered an injury or major illness, versus the insurance premiums you would have paid.

Any breed of dog can be covered under the AKC plan. And if you register your puppy with AKC, you can receive 60 days of free Pet Healthcare insurance. The AKC Pet Healthcare Plans accept dogs from eight weeks old to eight years old. However, older dogs can have continuous coverage if they were insured by one of the plans before they turned nine years old.

AKC Pet Healthcare Growing  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED