



Gasterville Natural's e-Newsletter

March 2006

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Featured Breed Links

<http://www.gsdca.org/>

<http://www.germanshepherds.com/>

<http://www.agsra.com/>

Lake County, Ohio:

<http://www.dogshope.com/>

Other Links

<http://gastervillepet.tripod.com>

Part blog, part photo album, the site is updated at least monthly

Contact Us

<http://www.gasterville.com>

admin@gasterville.com

Our First Contest!



The title "Gasterville Natural's e-Newsletter" is *correct*, but doesn't exactly roll off the tongue – we'd like something a little snazzier, but still in keeping with the idea of natural pet care – something along the lines of "The Gasterville Gazette" or "The Monthly Mutt". You get the idea...

Send your idea for our e-newsletter name to admin@gasterville.com with "name that newsletter" as the subject line.

The name that best reflects our mission to provide holistic-based information and care as well as natural products for pets will win a custom designed photo frame (either cat or dog themed) and an 8 oz. bag of your choice of Gasterville Natural pet treats.

Have your entries in to us by March 31. The winner and the new name will be announced in the April issue.

Animals in the News

Recycle THIS!

Officials in San Francisco are "stepping" into something new – recycling doggie doo to generate power.



Norcal Waste, a garbage hauling company, will collect

droppings from a popular dog park. The droppings will go into a machine called a methane digester – a tank in which bacteria feed on feces to create methane gas.

That gas could then be piped directly to a gas stove, heater or anything else powered by natural gas. It can also be used to generate electricity.

The technology is already used on chicken, hog and dairy farms.

San Francisco has plenty raw material for poo power. Residents of the city own an estimated 240,000 dogs and cats.

City officials said Rover, Tabby and their pals produce about 6,500 tons of doo a year.

Rocky the Realtor?



Don't let the RE/MAX folks know about this, but in Scott City, MO, Rocky the dog sold a house without a license!

Jared and Whittnie Essner were house hunting in Scott City, when they came across their dream home, and their dream dog.

Since the seller wasn't able to keep Rocky at his new home, the house and dog became a packaged deal.

The realtor is quoted as saying she's never seen a contract like it: "Rocky was in black and white under personal property to stay."

And, the former owner has visitation rights whenever he wants to see the Rocky.

Mr. Essner said he thinks the seller "had a better feeling" about the transaction after seeing the couple with the dog.

An Unusual Pet Therapy Application

Elisabeth Deffner reports in this months [Fibromyalgia](#) newsletter, that Mexican hairless dogs, "Xoloitzcuintli", renowned for their intense body heat, have been used as therapy dogs for centuries—as living hot water bottles for pain relief!



Ms. Deffner's article highlights Nancy Gordon and her Xolos "Toaster", who have been featured in *Fibromyalgia AWARE*, "Animal Planet," and many other venues. Ms. Gordon has started an organization to connect other people with Xolos: [X-CPR \(Xolos – Chronic Pain](#)

Relief).

As anyone who suffers from fibromyalgia knows, stress is a major trigger for the pain associated with the condition, and many of us find that heat helps immensely.

A UCLA study found that dog owners required much less medical care for stress-induced aches and pains than people who don't own dogs, and in a study from New York's City Hospital, it was found that heart patients who owned pets were significantly more likely than those who didn't own pets to live at least a year after they were discharged from the hospital.

All the more reason to take advantage of a four-footed therapist!

Recent Evaluation of Raw Meat Diets



A 2006 study by the JAVMA (Journal of the American Veterinary Medicine Association) was conducted to evaluate contamination of commercially available raw meat diets for dogs.

In this study, 240 samples from 20 raw meat diets for dogs (containing beef, lamb, chicken or turkey), 24 samples from two dry dog foods and 24 samples from two canned dog foods were evaluated.

Each product was purchased commercially on four dates approximately two months apart. Three samples from each product at each sampling period were evaluated via bacterial culture for three contaminants, including *Escherichia coli* ("NTSEC"), *Salmonella enterica* and *Campylobacter* spp.

The results: 153 of 288 samples (53%) were contaminated with NTSEC. Both raw and prepared foods contained NTSEC during at least one culture period. *Salmonella enterica* was recovered from 17 (5.9%) samples, all of which were raw meat products. *Campylobacter* spp was not isolated from any samples. *Cryptosporidium* spp DNA was detected in three samples.

From this study it was found that bacterial contamination is common in commercially available raw meat diets, suggesting that there is a risk of food borne illness in dogs fed these diets, as well as possible risk for humans associated with the dogs or their environments.

Studies such as these, as well as other professional journals and veterinary experts are what is behind Gasterville Natural's stand against feeding raw.

We'll explore more on the raw meat diet controversy in

future issues.

Target to Launch Superpremium Food

Petfood Industry News reports that Target is launching a new exclusive brand of superpremium dog food, "LIFELong". The LIFELong line features five formulas, designed to help support healthy immune systems and cardiovascular health, promote strong bones, muscles and teeth, freshen breath and maintain healthy coats.



Senior VP of Target, Greg Duppler, is quoted as saying that "Target recognizes that pets are important members of our guests' families, and balanced, scientifically-designed nutrition is critical to a pet's health and happiness". The line is described as "a premium product at a great price".

As always, Gasterville Natural is available to help you decide if the LIFELong line is right for your pet.

March's Breed



Recognize any of these Famous Dogs?

- Bullet, the Wonder Dog - Roy Roger's dog
- Charlie, from "All Dogs Go to Heaven"
- Clipper, pet of John F. Kennedy
- Major, pet of Franklin D. Roosevelt

And the most famous of all, Rin Tin Tin...

All these dogs are German Shepherds, one of the most recognized breeds of dogs (and a personal favorite of this writer). Let's learn more, shall we?

History

German Shepherd Dogs (the "official" name of the breed - more on that later) originated in 1899, at Karlsruhe, Germany, because of the efforts of one Captain Max von Stephanitz (the *father* of the breed, so to speak) and others. By carefully breeding selected animals and keeping only the very best, this devoted group of German breeders brought into being the breed known as the German Shepherd Dog (Deutsche Schaferhunde). Derived from the old breeds of herding and farm dogs, and associated for centuries with man as servant and



companion, the German Shepherd Dog has been subject to intensive development.

By 1905 the breed was making itself known throughout Europe and North America. In 1911 they were being registered as a separate breed, and in 1918 the German Shepherd Dog was listed by the American Kennel Club as a separate breed. In England, the breed was called "Alsatian". A movement by owners and breeders had the name changed in 1978. It is *now* known as the German Shepherd Dog in that country and throughout the world.

AKC Standards

The AKC considers the German Shepherd Dog part of the "Herding Group". AKC standards for German Shepherd Dogs require that the dog be, among other things, "strong, agile, well muscled... alert and full of life". The ideal dog is "stamped with a look of quality and nobility – difficult to define, but unmistakable when present". Temperament is described as "a distinct personality marked by direct and fearless, but not hostile, expression, self-confidence and a certain aloofness that does not lend itself to immediate and indiscriminate friendships."



In terms of show presentation, the German Shepherd Dog has a unique stack or "pose", featuring one rear leg under the body and one extended (as seen in the picture above).

Disqualifications in the show ring include cropped or hanging ears, docked tails, or, my favorite, "Any dog that attempts to bite the judge."

Personality

German Shepherd Dogs are distinguished for their loyalty, courage, and ability to adapt to a number of different special services. With their even disposition, poise, and well-controlled nerves, German Shepherd Dogs are suited for everything from herding sheep to working as a police dog to being a family companion.

With their natural aptitude for training, their natural courage and the excellent nose most possess, they are a natural for law enforcement and search and rescue work. In their work as guide dogs for the sight-impaired, the Shepherd exhibits intelligence and discrimination along with great patience, watchfulness, and even, to a certain degree, the exercise of judgment. However, because of their quality of extreme loyalty, "separation trauma" is one reason they are now used less often in guide dog roles, since guide dogs are typically trained from puppyhood by one owner and then placed with their

“employer”.

Although the German Shepherd does not give affection lightly – he has plenty of dignity and some suspicion of strangers – his friendship, once given, is given for life. The German Shepherd Dog is also known as a “one-man” breed for its tendency to display serious loyalty and fidelity, especially to its owner or main caretaker.

Is a German Shepherd the Dog for you?

While the breed can adapt to virtually any living situation, it’s best that they are given daily exercise, helping to maintain their physical and mental fitness. A German Shepherd should never be allowed to run free but instead should have a fenced backyard or a kennel run. Keeping ANY dog tied or chained up is not in their best interest because they often become injured from these restraints. As with most highly intelligent, active breeds, without regular exercise, your German Shepherd Dog may become overactive and difficult to live with because of the pent-up energy that develops from confinement.

What About Training Your German Shepherd Dog for Protection?

This is a more complicated issue than it may appear at first. Most dogs become territorial and protective of their home and their “people”. As a German Shepherd Dog matures, it will become more protective and will generally alert the family when strangers approach. Teaching them to guard or protect you is not necessary due to their naturally loyal and protective nature. Basic obedience training is probably all your German Shepherd will need, if he is to be a family companion.

Basic obedience training is an essential part of responsible dog ownership. It makes your dog a better companion and helps establish a stronger bond between the two of you. Since a German Shepherd Dog wants nothing more from life than to please you, it’s your responsibility to train this faithful companion to do as you wish. Training classes in obedience are available in most cities, offered by the local dog clubs or even some of the larger pet supply retailers. Classes can range from puppy or kindergarten to adult and advanced obedience training. For the more serious owners, there are always competition classes and dog shows.

What About Hip Dysplasia?

German Shepherd Dogs have a predisposition to joint problems, but if a puppy has parents that are OFA certified for their hips, their OFA numbers will appear on the pup’s AKC registration papers when they are received from the AKC. As with any purebred – please use a reputable breeder. It will go a long way to making sure

you find a companion who is healthy and will discourage those irresponsible individuals intent on making a fast profit with their puppy mills.

Health Issue News

German Cat Contracts Bird Flu

The March issue of Pet Food Industry News reports that a domestic cat in Germany has become the first European Union mammal to die of the H5N1 strain of bird flu. The cat was found on the Baltic island of Ruegen, where dozens of birds infected with the H5N1 strain have reportedly been found. Sweden, further to the north, had detected bird flu in two wild ducks and is testing to confirm the H5N1 strain. Vets from 50 countries have been meeting in Paris to discuss ways to combat the virus.

The infection in the German cat was confirmed by officials at the country's national laboratory, but tests are continuing to determine if it is the *exact* strain found in birds. Cats have been known to contract the virus from eating infected birds.

The good news is that there are no recorded cases of cat-to-human infection, but the findings of the German lab may raise concerns of further cross-species transmission. H5N1 does not pose a large-scale threat to humans.

Safety of Greenies™ Validated

A lawsuit has claimed that the popular green treat played a role in the death of a miniature dachshund. Questions have also been raised by some pet owners about the digestibility of Greenies. Now, in a series of testimonials, leading US veterinarians said that Greenies "remain the best, most effective dental dog treat" on the market today and that they are safe for canine consumption "when used as directed". Pet dental specialists across the nation have also given their support to the use of Greenies.

Dr. Barron P. Hall, fellow of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry from Cincinnati, makes the valuable observation that, "just as a parent must be careful what kind of food a child puts into its mouth, it is a pet owner's responsibility to ensure they buy the right size treat for their dog and that their pet consumes every treat in an appropriate manner."



Do you have any idea?

Have a question about pet care, a concern or an idea you'd like to see featured in a future issue? We'd like to hear from you. Email us with your suggestion and we'll try to address it in a future newsletter.

Thanks for reading and we'll be back in April with more....



Gasterville Natural Pet Nutrition

**Helping companion animals live happy,
healthy natural lives**