

UNIQUELY AKITA

Akita Rescue Mid-Atlantic Coast Inc. (ARMAC)

Mar/Apr 2012



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A LOST GEM – NATASHA

By Puller Lanigan

*The Doctor is in:
Heatstroke* **2**

Heatstroke cont. **3**

*Heatstroke cont.,
Senior Dogs* **4**

*Super Pet Expo,
Volunteer Corner* **5**

Available Orphans **6**

*Postcards from Home,
Rainbow Bridge* **7**

FOSTER HOMES

NEEDED!!!



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fostering?

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heart, we urge you to complete
the paperwork now.

Please visit our
website for more
information:

AkitaRescue.org

Yet another call from an Akita lover who happened across an Akita at their local shelter brought me to meet Natasha.

She is the happiest dog I have seen in quite awhile! She stood, calmly in her run and smiled, wagged her tail and did her best coquettish Akita dance. I was struck by her beauty; what a looker. It remained to be seen if her personality matched her good looks. A staff member and I took Natasha out for closer interaction with us and other dogs. She danced and smiled in excitement, not pulling or showing any signs of aggression toward the other dogs. She is a social butterfly; loves people. Literally, her personality just sparkles. I could have turned her inside out and she would have continued smiling and wagging her tail. She was in great shape; clearly she had been well cared for by someone, but yet nobody was looking for her. She had been found as a stray.

Immediately upon arriving home I started making arrangements to “pull” this lovely girl. The kennel space was secured and the shelter contacted; ARMAC will take her as soon as her hold period was up. Sadly, by that time, she had contracted kennel cough and an upper respiratory infection. When she was picked-up from the shelter she was in bad shape, but wagging her tail nonetheless. The kennel owner kept Natasha quarantined in her home for the next few weeks while she recovered. During this time Natasha not only proved to be immaculately housebroken, but also found a new friend in the kennel owner’s daughter, and the resident canine family.

My more recent visit with Natasha provided the same response as before, however, now that she is healthy, she is jaw dropping gorgeous. At this same time a young mixed Chow escaped his run and dashed up to say his ‘hello’s’. He was all wiggles and jumping. Natasha was polite, but made it clear his advances were not welcome. Since my last visit she was exposed to the vets cat and ignored it.

This beautiful girl, who is between 3-5 years old, would make a wonderful addition in just about any home. She certainly deserves to share her exuberance for life with a loving family!



Visit the Akita Club of America’s Website for a detailed list of Akita rescue organizations throughout the United States.

AKITACLUB.ORG/RESCUE/RESGROUPS.HTML



THE DOCTOR IS IN: HEATSTROKE

By Meredith Murtagh DVM

Hi! I am Miyo Murtagh, an emergency veterinarian at Friendship Hospital for Animals in Washington, DC. I did my internship there 2004-2005, and have been there since. I am a huge fan of the Akita breed. I have had 6 Akitas total, and now share my house with three of them (and a cat, who, not shockingly, is actually in charge of the household). The current clan of Akitas includes Kajun (8), Saki (5), and Tado (3). The cat is named Wayne Gretskey. Four of my six Akitas have come from AR-MAC – I have been so lucky with all of them! They all get along very well and are really great dogs. They have truly been a fleet of ambassadors for the breed – my dogs have changed many opinions about the breed where I work.

I offered to write about medical topics for the newsletters. Obviously information is available everywhere, some good and some not so good. The website that I refer my clients to is www.veterinarypartner.com. It's written by veterinarians for laypeople and is part of the Veterinary Information Network, a site that I turn to regularly to get the most up-to-date information. I trust the site and the information is really good. If there are any specific topics anyone would like to know about, just let me know and I can write about them. I am also happy to address specific questions that anyone has. My email address is hotsaki@gmail.com. I will write based on my medical knowledge, perceptions, and experiences, because I have learned and read about lots of things that just don't seem to happen that way in the real world emergency room.

This time, I decided to write about a topic that is important every year and causes me to work many late nights and counsel a lot of upset clients – heatstroke. I tend to see a lot of these cases as the weather starts to get warm, when dogs haven't had a chance to acclimate to the higher temperatures. The breeds that I am generally treating for this are the labradors, the goldens, and the bulldogs (and other short-snouted breeds). The reality is, though, that this can happen to any breed, especially the kind with the extra-thick fur. I get so frustrated and angry because it is so easily prevented! And really, really expensive to treat; and is often deadly.

In the spring and early summer, many people don't think twice about taking their dogs jogging with them in the middle of the day because "it's not too hot". Or they don't think about leaving their dogs in the car when it is 70 degrees outside ("but I cracked the window open" is often heard). Even at a moderate temperature of 70 degrees, the temperature inside of a car can increase a tremendous amount. One important thing to remember is that dogs can't dissipate heat as easily as people can. We sweat and therefore are cooled by evaporative cooling – but the only thing that our dogs can do is pant...they are dependent on that air exchange only for cooling (okay, so they can dissipate some heat through their pads and non-haired areas, but it's negligible).

So what is heatstroke exactly? It is when the body temperature rises above normal (which is up to about 102.5 for a dog). The temperature can rise because of several things – fever, inflammation, seizures, or other medical conditions. What we are talking about here is a hyperthermia which is an increase in body temperature above the normal set-point due to environmental factors (heat and humidity) and increased activity.

Signs of heat stress are seen first: **thirst and discomfort associated with physical activity, which progresses to heat exhaustion: intense thirst, weakness, discomfort, anxiety, fainting.** Unfortunately, lots of dogs will just keep going without showing the initial signs – therefore, it's so important that owners notice these signs. There is so much that is going on inside the body when the temperature increases! Multi-organ involvement results in the systemic inflammatory response syndrome, which can then progress to multi-organ dysfunction syndrome – this is all secondary to the acute physiological alterations that are occurring. Temperatures greater than 109 results in enzyme dysfunction and destruction of proteins, which results in significant injury. At more extreme body temperatures, all cellular structures are destroyed and cell death occurs in less than 5 minutes.

What does all this look like to me when I am working and a pet is rushed into the treatment room that is suffering from heatstroke? I am always faced with a hysterical owner. The dog's presentation can vary depending on severity, but generally it is **recumbent, non-responsive, panting so hard that you can hear them from the next room, and are unbelievably hot to the touch -- especially the tongue. This is generally accompanied by a very high heart rate, weak pulses, brick-red gums, blow-out bloody diarrhea with chunks of tissue in it, sometimes vomiting, and sometimes bruising in the mouth and on the skin.**

The high heart rate, weak pulses, and gums are a result of circulatory shock (the gums can also be pale pink to white). The diarrhea is in essence due to the intestines being "cooked" from the high body temperature, and the bruising is due to a very serious sequela of heatstroke called disseminated intravascular coagulation (or DIC for short). DIC is something that can have its own paragraph, but generally it is when the body's blood clotting system goes haywire from serious disease or trauma – all of the clotting factors are used up, then since there are not more clotting factors, we see signs of bleeding (hence the bruising), and dogs can bleed out and die from it.

What do I have to do to help these dogs and what do I have to worry about?

continued on page 3

HEATSTROKE CONT.

So many things need to happen at the same time. The first several things listed are happening at the same time, and we are really good at doing them FAST:

- examine the dog
- give him oxygen
- start IV fluids to help with the shock (also helps to cool)
- get its temperature. if it's high, we cool it until the temperature is 104. if we keep cooling past that, the dog will then become hypothermic (temp too low). we will cool the dog by placing a wet towel and a fan on him. we do not submerge the dog in ice water! any cooling method we use has to be easily stopped/reversible so the temperature doesn't drop too low.
- get a blood pressure, and keep monitoring it as we fix the shock. same with heart rate and pulse quality.
- pull some blood and do some quick lab work to check out his blood sugar, electrolytes, lactate, kidney function, blood clotting capabilities, packed cell volume (full bloodwork will be running in the meantime to look for extent of organ damage).

These are the little things that need to happen. I have already had a very quick conversation with the owners by this point, and now that I have some idea of the extent of disease in the pet, I will have a longer conversation with the owners. Depending on these results, I can give the owners an idea of what will need to happen next to try to save the dog, and the dog's prognosis. If the dog's lactate level is very high (indicates altered cell metabolism), or if the clotting times are elevated (meaning DIC), the prognosis is poor.

Let's say that the owners want us to do whatever we can to save their dog...I present them with a very high estimate that includes lots of blood work, intensive nursing care, plasma transfusions, antibiotics, fluids, pain medications, etc. I have had heatstroke patients that have been in the hospital for 5 days with a \$5000+ bill (and sadly, they don't always survive). Treatments and continuous diagnostics for the dog include:

- oxygen
- pain medications! because a sloughing gut has got to hurt.
- IV fluids with supplements to restore circulation, electrolyte balance, hydration
- antibiotics -- any time the body temperature gets that high, I start antibiotics. The gastrointestinal tract has been compromised and can will get very leaky -- as a result we can have bacteria that leak out into the abdomen, and then the dog ends up with a wicked septic peritonitis.
- anti-nausea medications/gastric protectants -- the lack of circulation is also unhealthy for the stomach and we can see vomiting
- plasma transfusions -- these are necessary if the clotting times are above normal. the plasma will supply the dog with the clotting factors it needs until the body can make its own. If the dog's presenting temperature was really high, I will usually give him a plasma transfusion even if the clotting times are normal -- it's better to prevent DIC than to have to treat it.
- if I am treating exertional heatstroke, I will put in a urinary catheter and monitor urine output to watch for kidney failure, and if the kidneys are not making enough urine, there are different medications to try to help (and give the owner an even worse prognosis).
- liver supplements -- the liver is almost always damaged by the lack of oxygen during the episode -- luckily, it regenerates.
- if the dog's neurologic status is altered, medications to help with brain swelling
- repeat lab work to check clotting times, white blood cell count, liver and kidney values
- repeated neurologic examinations of the dog's mental status
- medications for refractory hypotension
- medications for cardiac arrhythmias

Heatstroke is neither easy nor inexpensive to treat. And it's easily prevented.

What can owners do?

1. not let dogs out when it's really hot, this is especially true of dogs with predisposing conditions like obesity, breathing issues, heart disease, and old age.
2. If they are outside, make sure that there is shade and plenty of water available at all times.
3. do not leave your dog in a parked car, even if it is in the shade and the "window is cracked open"
4. restrict outdoor activity and don't take your dog jogging or biking with you
5. do not muzzle your dog
6. avoid areas like the beach, concrete, and asphalt where the heat reflects. and the surfaces get really hot and burn paws.

continued on page 4

HEATSTROKE CONT.

What if your dog is showing signs of heatstroke?

1. remove your dog from the area where it occurred and put it somewhere cool
2. if possible, get a rectal temperature so you can tell the veterinarian how high it was
3. start to cool the dog by placing cool, wet towels on it. also wet the paw pads and the ear flaps and areas with no fur.
4. put a fan on the dog to help with evaporative cooling.
5. have cool water available if the dog wants to drink on his own
6. get to the nearest vet hospital immediately!

What should you NOT do?

1. do not use cold water or ice (this actually will constrict the blood vessels and make things worse)
2. do not overcool the dog
3. do not try to force the dog to drink. this can cause it to choke or develop aspiration pneumonia.
4. do not leave your dog alone for any length of time while he is so sick.

Thanks, everyone for reading this. I know that heatstroke is something that pretty much everyone has heard about, but it's such an important topic. As I said before, it tends to happen more in the beginning of the summer when it's not at the front of everyone's mind.

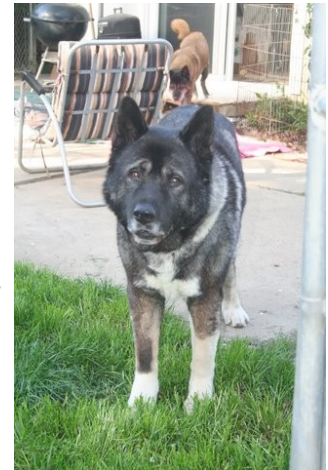
SENIOR DOGS—INSTANT COMPANIONS

By Jane Creason

Jane Creason's experience with Akitas includes showing and limited breeding. And while she has rescued dogs and found them new homes, she had never adopted an Akita from a shelter. After the loss of her male Akita last year, she was contacted about several older dogs needing homes in California. An old male Akita, name Kingsley, reminded her of some of her previous dogs and so she adopted him, he was nearly 12 years old. He bonded immediately with her 10 year old female Akita who was grieving over the loss of her brother. The following article was written by Jane about her personal experience with owning a senior dog verses a younger one.

I tell everyone I know, there is no greater gratitude and love you will ever know than from an older dog that has lost its family and been through a shelter. People think they will have a lot of vet bills. False! An older dog in relative good health, has reached its advanced age because of its genes for health. Health and a certain longevity is proven not speculative. In a puppy, health remains to be seen. Puppies have cost me more money than any older dog ever has. People say, "oh, I don't want to fall in love with an older dog and then lose it." My response, remind me of that when you go in a nursing home. We'll just put you away and out of sight so people won't fall in love with you. Oh, I will want love! So do older dogs.

Older dogs don't chew shoes, and their appreciation is bar none. The dogs I have had from puppyhood have the idea that my sole purpose in life is to chauffeur them on walks, deliver steak dinner, and take them on excursions to beaches. My older dogs wake up in the morning and go, "IT'S YOU!!!! TERRIFIC!!! I AM SO HAPPY TO SEE YOUR FACE!!!" My dogs I raised from pups go, "Must you make that noise with the hair dryer every morning? Its annoying the crap out of me. Konk. They are passed out again lounging on my bed which I have finally vacated giving them the space they have been fighting me for all night. After all, whose bed is it? Dogs we raise and spoil feel ENTITLED. Older dogs we save are APPRECIATIVE!



"Blessed is the person who has earned the love of an old dog" ~ Sydney Jeanne Seward ~

2012 SUPER PET EXPO

Wow! What a turn-out we had at this years Pet Expo. The event was a huge success, with lots of donations, sales and positive exposure for our breed. KUDOS to all the volunteers who gave of their valuable time to help at our booth. We simply could not manage this show without their help and support!



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DC/Maryland

- Mutt Magic Training Services
Baltimore (410) 889-9352
- Bark Busters
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Nokesville (703) 328-7884

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- Palmer Animal Hospital
Myersville (301) 371-3333

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Arlington (703) 528-2776
- MapleShade Animal Hospital
Dale City (703) 670-7668
- New Baltimore Animal Hospital
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Springfield (703) 451-8900
- Animal Medical Center of Cascades
Sterling (571) 434-0250
- Morgantown Vet Care
Morgantown (304) 599-8269

P E T E X P O VOLUNTEER HEROS

Becky Heath Clarie Liston and her Akita mix Jack Sean Fulmer

Rick Fledderman Bryan Hoskins Silvia Gutierrez

Caralyn Bushey Charlie Marcus with ARMAC puppy Zoey

Jeff and Carol Corzatt (who also sponsored our booth)

Sonya and Anthony Williams and their Akita Raden

Joan and Mike Gariazzo (from the Greater Baltimore Akita Club) and their two

Akitas Yuki and Tachi

Semiramis de Miranda (for her beautiful display pictures)

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AVAILABLE ORPHANS

CURRENT LIST OF AVAILABLE ARMAC ORPHANS

The majority of these dogs came from animal shelters, therefore "owner surrender" does not necessarily mean they were received directly from a home.

Spirit

Spayed female, estimated age 3 years. Spirit was rescued after having run stray long enough to lose her trust in people. She is wary of strangers but learning to trust. She is beautiful! She is playful and also a talker. Spirit is a survivor and still remains gentle. She is housebroken, ignores the other dogs and cats too! Spirit needs someone with Akita experience to win her trust and bring out the social butterfly that is peeking out behind her wary façade.



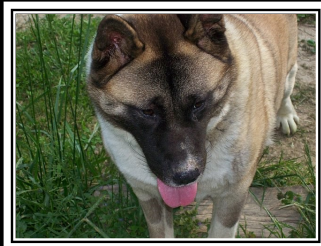
Natasha

Spayed female, estimated age 4. Natasha is a true GEM!!! She was found as a stray and never claimed. While she hasn't been technically fostered, she spent some time inside our kennel owner's home due to URI and kennel cough. She is housebroken, seems to get along with other dogs but has not been tested with cats. She seems to be very fond of children 8 years and older. She is constantly smiling and wagging her tail. She is a social butterfly in the truest sense of the word and wants only to be the grand hostess of her own home.



Princess

Spayed female, estimated age 5-6 years old. Princess is a stunningly beautiful female who loves everyone she meets. She is housebroken, good with most other dogs, obedient and very affectionate. Sadly, Princess suffers from Pemphigus, a common autoimmune dermatologic genetic condition. However, Princess is responding well to her medication and the long term management of her condition is very positive. She just patiently waits for a family that will allow her to win them over with her charm and affectionate nature



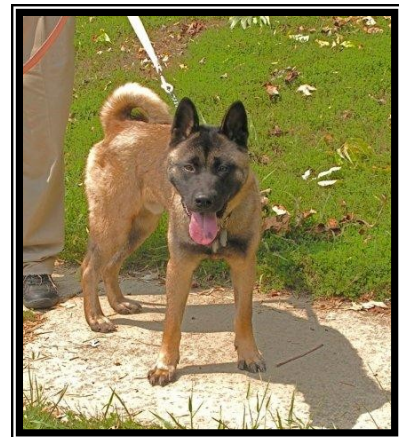
Sumo

Neutered male, estimated age 2-3 years. Sumo is a happy-go-lucky guy who loves everyone; He loves to play and be with people. He would be great in a home that is active outdoors (maybe hiking, boating). He rides great in the car, knows many commands, has good manners and is an all-around great Akita. Sumo doesn't like being crated or confined.

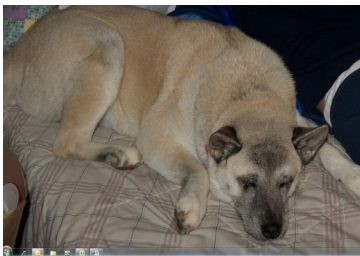


Wyatt:

Neutered male, estimated age 14-18 months old. Wyatt has a huge smile; is all playful puppy with lots of energy to burn. He appears to have been taught some rough hand/mouth games, but still has a soft mouth. Wyatt is learning to calmly interact with people and to walk on leash. He gets along with the resident female Akita and accepts her discipline without challenge. Wyatt is intelligent and strong willed. He will do best in a home with an experienced Akita owner, an active lifestyle, no cats or children under the age of 12.



POSTCARDS FROM HOME



~ Blondie ~

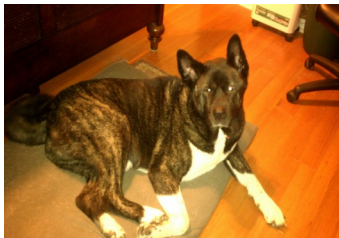
Courtesy of Greg Gabel



Yukon on one of his many walks with his new family. Courtesy of Charlotte & Randy

CoCo (aka Laurie) enjoying her new family.

Courtesy of Phaedra & Jim Harris



Couch potato Makato; how comfy! Courtesy of Mike & Cheryl Mason



Thank you for your generous donations!!

*Brenda Coley
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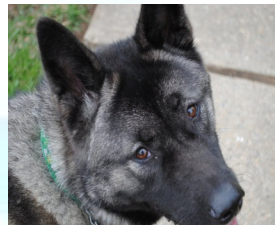
RAINBOW BRIDGE

Our deepest condolences to the following...



Semiramis de Miranda & Silvia Gutierrez on the loss of Venus

We grieve along with Hillary, George, Olivia and Zumo LeMay on the loss of their beloved Senshi



*The family and friends of Tom O'Donnell
A long time adopter, friend and supporter ~ we will miss you Tom!*

ABOUT ARMAC

Akita Rescue Mid-Atlantic Coast, Inc. has been serving the eastern seaboard for over 25 years. We fulfill a wide variety of Akita needs in the greater Washington DC area. We help educate potential Akita owners; we offer support to Akita owners, not only those who adopt from us, but all Akita owners regardless of where they got their Akita. But most importantly, we save the lives of Akitas that would otherwise be euthanized in area shelters. All of our fostered Akitas are spayed/neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped, and temperament evaluated prior to adoption. Potential adopters are screened carefully and thoroughly to ensure we have a perfect match between family and Akita. Our assistance doesn't stop at adoption. We offer support to our adoptive families throughout the lifetime of their Akita.



Please visit our website for more information on how you can get involved:

www.akitarescue.org

Congratulations

On your adoption!!

~Laurie~

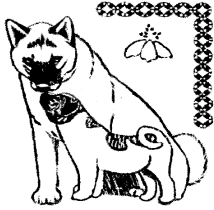
~Yukon~

~Blondie~

~Makato~

~Kodiakita~

~Akira~



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