



SPDR Speaks!

Where second-hand dogs give first-class love.



The official newsletter of Seattle Purebred Dog Rescue

Spring 2000

Annual Statistics Issue for 1999

From Our President(s)

Outgoing President:
Margaret La Tour

What a ride these past two years have been! Working as President of SPDR is anything but boring. Years ago we added term limits to the positions of President and Board of SPDR—because new ideas come with new members. And so my tenure ended in February 2000.

No one who volunteers in any other way can understand the emotions felt by doing this job... I can't think of a more joyous or more painful volunteer position. Please think about this and try your best to keep the peace. It's not that hard to do.

Lynn Erckmann is now the President, Dixie Lehmann is now the Vice President. I will still remain in the position of Shelter Liaison, List Owner for our internal e-mail list, and Breed Rep for German Shepherd Dogs. I continue to work 6 days a week as Senior Instructor & Assistant Training Director at Family Dog Training Center, teaching Obedience, Rescue Classes, and Flyball.

So for now, I'll say goodbye. I wish you all much success as you place dogs this year. If there is anything I can do for you, just let me know.

Margaret

Editor's Note:

Margaret and one of her German Shepherd Co-Reps Paula Hooks were both featured in the April issue of Dog World, page 79-82.

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The Way God Made Them

By the Editor

I ask for the privilege of not being born... until you can assure me a home and a master to protect me, and the right to live as long as I am physically able to enjoy life.

Fact: For every 1 person born in the United States, 15 dogs are also born.

Fact: Of those 15 dogs, between 1 and 2 will find a home. The rest will be destroyed because nobody wants them.

Fact: The offspring of one unsprayed female dog and one unneutered male dog can produce 4,372 puppies in just 7 years.

Fact: Add up all those puppies... between 8-12 million companion animals are killed in America every year due to lack of homes.

Fact: The majority of animals euthanized are healthy, with no physical or mental problems.

Fact: Purebred Dogs get euthanized too—25-30% of dogs brought to a shelter are purebred.

Every day, every week, every month that an SPDR volunteer visits the local animal shelters, these statistics are there, staring back at us. We do what we can in the form of rescue, fostering, and referral of qualified families to adoptable dogs. And yet, no matter how hard we paddle, it seems we paddle upstream.

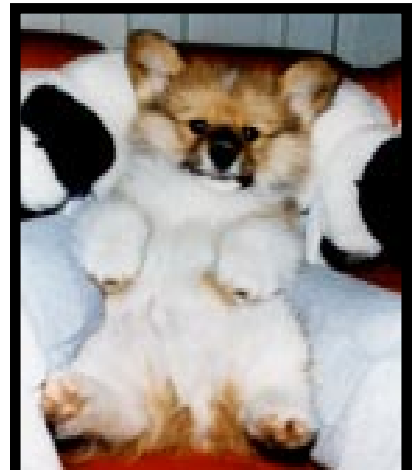
The pet overpopulation problem is clearly not going away, and we simply can't find homes for them all.

SPDR's Rescue and Referral efforts can only keep the bucket from overflowing. Education is what helps the bucket stop filling. SPDR presents this article as an education about the realities of spaying and neutering your dog.

Leaving them "the way God made them" isn't such a good idea any more. Dogs weren't made to be euthanized within weeks of being born. Dogs weren't made to be found dead in the street, victims of a car while they were roaming in response to their hormones. Dogs weren't made to undergo the pain and death caused by uterine infection, testicular or breast cancer as a result of not being spayed or neutered.

Dogs were made to be our companions, and as such, we have a responsibility to them.

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"Paddington Bear" the Corgi Honorable Mention in SPDR's Photo Contest, submitted by Linda Taylor

As God Made Them, *continued from Page 1*

The Myths and The Truths

Think you've heard it all? Talk to an SPDR Breed Rep. The following are comments we hear every day from owners whose dogs are not spayed or neutered, and the facts that may help *you* change your mind:

Myth #1:

My pet will get fat and lazy

Neutering or spaying may diminish your pet's overall activity level, natural tendency to wander, and hormonal balances, which may indeed influence appetite. However... ask any vet. Pets that become fat and lazy after being altered are usually just overfed and/or are not getting enough exercise.

Myth #2

My pet's personality will change

After being altered, your pet will become less aggressive toward other dogs, will be less likely to wander, and will have a more even-tempered, interested-in-you personality (quite simply, their hormones aren't distracting them any more). In addition, other "personality" traits such as "enjoying" a guest's leg, urinating on the neighbor's expensive flowers, and finding ever more creative ways to escape from the back yard, diminish and usually cease after pets are altered. Any change you see in your pet's personality will definitely be for the better.

Myth #3

Dogs need to have a litter first

Again, talk to your vet. There is no medical reason or need to have your pet procreate before spaying or neutering. The parts "don't have to get used before being removed." Allowing your female to have one litter does not "improve her instincts" to protect and nurture. She already has those instincts.

Myth #4

We can sell puppies and make money/recoup our expenses

Even well-known breeders are fortunate if they break even on

raising purebred litters. The cost of raising such a litter — which includes stud fees, vaccinations, early maintenance and health care, and feeding a quality food — consumes most of the "profit." Well-known breeders breed to *improve* breeds they raise. See the related article entitled "Breeding Preparedness" on page 5.



Myth #5

Anesthesia is too dangerous

Placing a pet under anesthesia is a common concern of owners. Although there is always a slight risk involved, the anesthetics used by veterinarians today are very safe. In addition, most vets use equipment that monitors heart and respiratory rates during surgery to ensure that their patients are doing well under anesthesia, moment-by-moment. The medical benefits of having your pet spayed or neutered far outweigh the slight risk involved with undergoing anesthesia. Your vet is the best person to answer these questions.

Myth #6

My children should witness the miracle of birth

There are a few things to consider when planning to share this lesson with your children:

First, pets often have their litters in the middle of the night or in a place of their own choosing.

Because pets need privacy when giving birth, any unnecessary intrusion can cause the mother to become seriously upset. These intrusions can result in an unwillingness to care for the puppies or an injury to humans or puppies.

Second, ask your vet about the frequency of pregnancies that result in emergencies... either for the mother, the puppies, or both. Having puppies is a risk, and those risks usually aren't something you want your children to witness.

Third, this miracle comes at an expensive price: Finding qualified homes for each and every puppy. While you may be lucky enough to find homes for them, take it from an SPDR Breed Rep: There is absolutely no guarantee your puppies will be ensured of a safe, loving home for their entire life. Just take a look at our statistics charts.

And finally, the miracle of birth is a lesson that ignores the more critical lesson of pet overpopulation—8-12 million pets killed each year for lack of homes. Rather than teaching your children about birth in this way, contact your local 4H or scouting club where they can visit a working farm. Even better, teach them the lesson of human compassion by taking them to your local Humane Society or Shelter.

Myth #7

Some day I plan to breed him/her so I can have another just like ___ (insert dog's name here).

Breeding two purebred animals very rarely results in offspring that are exactly like one of the parents. With mixed breeds, it is virtually impossible to have offspring that are exactly like one of the parents. Again, talk to an SPDR Breed Rep. They can tell you literally hundreds of stories of people who adopted a rescue dog and called us to say "I never thought I'd feel this way about another dog... but I love this dog more than any I have ever had

As God Made Them, *continued*

before..." The point is... every dog is uniquely wonderful, and has something special to teach us.

Myth #8

We should leave them just as God made them

Dogs are born with reproductive parts. These parts serve one purpose only: To create additional dogs. It's a natural process. What's not natural is finding your male dog hit by a speeding car in his attempts to roam and breed. Or taking him to the emergency ward with severe bite wounds from fights caused by competition over a female dog. Equally unnatural is euthanizing the puppies that result from his accidental escape, roaming, and breeding.

However, it may be that the thought of neutering your male bothers you. If so, you have the option of giving him a vasectomy. Bear in mind this will only prevent him from impregnating a female, it will not diminish the associated "need to breed" issues and behavior, because hormones are still present (only the "pathway" is removed). Likewise, if his sexual fulfillment concerns you, remember—the part that is removed during neutering is the part that triggers his desire for sexual fulfillment, without which he won't know what he's missing.

Myth #9

My dog will no longer be a good guard or hunting dog

Your dog will not lose its instinct to guard or hunt. In fact, its likelihood of being home to guard the house is higher if it's not roaming in search of a female in heat, and its ability to pay closer attention to the task at hand (guarding or hunting) is stronger without distraction from the unneutered "must obey hormones" instinct.

Myth #10

It's Just Too Expensive

Consider these figures:
Average Spay/Neuter: \$105
Average cost of 5 medium-sized puppies for 3 months: \$700 (this is just food and shots, it does not include tail docks, dewclaws, or possible illness and/or complications).

Every major metropolitan area has spay and neuter programs available to reduce the costs even further. Here are a few:

Spay USA

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

1-800-248-SPAY

SPAY USA is a national referral service for the public regarding low cost spay/neuter programs, with over 900 programs and clinics nationwide including over 7,500 top-notch veterinarians.

Friends of Animals

<http://www.friendsofanimals.org>

1-800-321-PETS

Call the **Friends of Animals** spay/neuter hotline, for a list of participating vets in your area and an order form for a low cost spay/neuter certificate.

Locally:

- People for Abandoned Pets (425) 453-9222
- Humane Society and Seattle Animal Control

Live Long and Prosper

Spaying and neutering isn't just about birth control. It's about ensuring your dog's health, longevity, and quality of life. Need proof? We've got more facts:

- √ Neutering your male dog prevents testicular tumors, helps prevent prostate problems, and decreases the possibility of perianal tumors and hernias, which are commonly observed in older, unaltered dogs.
- √ Spaying your female dog greatly reduces her chances of developing breast cancer and *completely* eliminates the threat of uterine and ovarian cancer and uterine infection, which are common occurrences in unaltered females (the rate goes down to almost zero if the spaying is done before the first heat cycle!).

Why did Spot cross the road? He loved the ladies. Unfortunately, his latest girlfriend lived on the far side of the highway. Spot never made it to the other side. About 80% of dogs hit by vehicles each year are unneutered males.

√ Because neutered dogs are less likely to roam, the threat of health complications caused by disease and dog fights over territorial and sexual competition is greatly reduced.

√ Spayed

animals no longer feel the need to roam to look for a mate. When they stay home, they have less chance of being involved in dog fights or death by cars.

- √ In females, spaying eliminates the chance of developing a serious and potentially fatal infection of the uterus (pyometra).

The simple fact about all of these myths, truths, and health facts is this: Spaying and neutering greatly increases the lifespan of your pet and increases quality of life for him/her, as well as for the millions of dogs awaiting homes in our country.



Portions of this article reprinted with permission from: Valley Oak SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals); and "Should You Spay/Neuter Your Pet?" by Alpo Pet foods.

Got dogs?

(425) 271-5433

Got dogs?

www.AgilityFun.com

Early Spay/Neuter

By Tracy Land, DVM

“Pediatric” or “Early Spay/Neuter” simply refers to spaying & neutering puppies & kittens earlier than the traditional age of six months.

Unfortunately, misunderstanding and misinformation plague Early Spay/Neuter in our part of the country. In spite of overwhelming scientific research and evidence proving the safety of Early Spay/Neuter, most people, including many veterinarians, still worry about the safety and possible long-term side effects. Please consider the following:

- In a recent survey of the National Coalition of Spay/Neuter Veterinarians, 80 veterinarians, who collectively have performed over 210,000 Early Spay/Neuters, unanimously agreed that the babies recover faster and have fewer complications than their older counterparts. This echoes the results of more scientific studies done at Texas A&M, Angell Memorial Hospital, and the University of Florida, to mention a few.
- Studies have shown that animals spayed/neutered early, rather than having “stunted” growth, may actually get about 1/32nd of an inch taller.
- Studies have shown that young patients are no more likely to develop urinary tract problems than those done at six months. The Medford Oregon SPCA, one of the first to embrace a “Neuter Before Adoption” program, surveyed adoptive owners of pets spayed at six to twelve weeks. At three to fourteen years after the surgery, owners reported *fewer* behavior problems, *fewer* weight problems, and *fewer* medical problems in those spayed or neutered early than in those done at the traditional age.
- Current Veterinary Therapy XII, a standard veterinary reference text, contains a chapter explaining the techniques. Dr. John Hoskins, author of Veterinary Pediatrics, supports early spay/neuter.
- Early Spay/Neuter is supported by the American Veterinary Medical Assoc., The Assoc. of Veterinarians for

Animal Rights, The Coalition of Spay/Neuter Veterinarians, and the Humane Society of the United States.

- I’ve personally performed over 1200 Early Spay/Neuters. Complications have been significantly lower in the babies. And not one of them ever produced an unwanted litter.

The results are in, folks. Early Spay/Neuter is state of the art. With 14 of the 16 US veterinary colleges now either supporting, teaching, and/or performing Early Spay/Neuter, it is destined to become the new standard.

NBA, or neuter-before-adoption, is the policy being adopted by many animal shelters and rescue organizations, whereby all pets are sterilized before being placed for adoption, regardless of age. NBA is the law in California.

The benefits of spaying & neutering pets before they are placed in their new homes *are tremendous!* Rescue organizations & breeders are spared the paperwork and follow-ups. New owners, and the pets, are spared a lot of grief and aggravation. The possibility of accidental or unwanted litters is eliminated. Procrastination, accidents, mistakes, ignorance, apathy, and non-compliance, all become non-issues. The procedure is, in fact, easier and safer for the pet itself.

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Bill Signed

On Friday May 12, New York City Mayor Giuliani signed a City Council bill that mandates the provision of a full-service animal shelter in each borough, along with mandatory spaying/neutering of all shelter adoptions and pet shop sales of cats and dogs. If you would like to express your appreciation for the significance of this move, you may contact Mayor Giuliani as follows:

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani
City Hall
New York, NY 10007
Phone: (212) 788-9600
Fax: (212) 788-7476

In closing, Dr. Tracy Land wanted to add: “Interestingly enough, there are no studies to support the traditional spay/neuter age of six months.”

Questions? Interested in obtaining copies of the research?

Contact Tracy by e-mail:
tland@tracylanddvm.com

Or visit her web site:
www.tracylanddvm.com



Internet Resources for Spay/Neuter

Spay/Neuter Certificates from:
<http://www.spayusa.org>

The benefits of Spay/Neuter
<http://www.athens.net/~aaacr/spay2.html>

Great article from a vet describing the health complications of not spaying female dogs:
<http://www.caninetimes.com/Articles/TJDunnJrDVMSpaying.htm>

Extensive article written by two vets about spay/neuter:
<http://acmepet.petsmart.com/content/health/neutering.html>

Early Spay/Neuter sites
<http://www.exoticbengals.com/spay.htm>
<http://infoweb.magi.com/~cfhs/fact.htm>

Excellent guide to all types of veterinary care, including a detailed spay/neuter article under the "Surgery" heading (includes photos of surgeries)
<http://www.thepetcenter.com/>

Pros and Cons of Spaying and Neutering

Without Spay/Neuter:

- √ Territory marking
- √ Escape attempts
- √ Mess and stress (female estrus cycle)
- √ Behavior problems and mood swings
- √ Embarrassing "need to breed" displays
- √ Breast, ovarian and uterine cancer (females)
- √ Testicular cancer and prostate problems (males)
- √ Higher taxes (to control roaming/fighting dogs, to provide shelter space, to euthanize unwanted dogs)
- √ Stray dogs visiting your yard day and night
- √ Increased injuries and associated vet bills
- √ Increased chance of death (cancer and roaming)

With Spay/Neuter:

- √ More affectionate
- √ Less territory marking (males)
- √ Better behavior and minding
- √ Less likely to bite
- √ No routine messes to clean (females)
- √ Less destructive behavior
- √ More interested in humans instead of dogs
- √ More likely to stay home (no longer under "hormone auto-pilot")
- √ Less vet bills (pregnancy, fights, cancer)
- √ Less unwanted stray dog visitors
- √ No uterine or ovarian cancer (females)
- √ No testicular cancer or prostate problems (males)
- √ Reduced likelihood of breast cancer (females)
- √ Longer, happier life
- √ Less burden on animal shelters

Breeding Preparedness 101

By the Officers of Kuvasz Fanciers of America

Some of the most common reasons people don't spay or neuter their dogs are either to have the opportunity to witness the miracle of birth, and/or to earn supplemental income through occasional breeding.

Here are a few recommendations: First, spend an afternoon at your local shelter. Pay close attention to the dogs' breeds and ages. Second, take a look at the statistics included in this newsletter, and see if your breed happens to fall within the top ten or twenty "most returned" dogs. Third, see how many of the following questions you can answer:

Many breeds have large litters. Do you enjoy staying up all night? Are you willing to risk that promotion at work because you had to stay home on midwife duty? Are you prepared to watch puppies die as a result of complications? Are you prepared to watch your dog die as a result of complications? Are your children prepared to witness every aspect of this? Are you prepared for a doggy cesarean or a litter of sick puppies and the accompanying \$1000.00 vet bill?



"Whatcha Doin', Mom?"
Jasper the Brittany Spaniel, Honorable Mention in SPDR's Photo Contest, Submitted by Corinne Towler

How about routine puppy duties... do you like to buy dog food by the ton? Or trim 280 toenails a week? Who will be stuck with puppy janitorial? Are you ready to be the puppies' first human example? Will you have the time to be a loving and compassionate human role model? Will you be able to help them, play with them, teach them, and comfort them when they cry?

Can you spend hundreds of dollars on advertising? Are you ready to spend your remaining time carefully interviewing potential buyers to find the right homes for your puppies? Are you ready to be insulted by people you turn down? Are you ready to be insulted by people you didn't turn down? Do you have time to be a 24-hour support system, advice-giver, doggy psychologist, and canine behavior therapist for all your adopters? How many questions did you ask your dog's breeder? If you produced a litter of ten puppies, could you answer ten times the questions you asked as a novice owner? Would you be able to pay your phone bill? Will anyone else in the house need to use the phone? What if nobody wants to buy your puppies? Do you have the room and resources to care for a house-full of six-month-old puppies?

Are you ready to assume lifelong responsibility for every puppy? Have you ever seen a puppy that is so dysplastic by the time it is 7 months old that it can not walk 20 feet? Can you explain to your adopters that they must spend \$2000 per hip to fix the puppy or put it down? Would you want to explain the reason a puppy is having a behavior problem is because it is deaf due to a recessive gene for deafness you weren't aware of because you didn't research it? How would you explain the dog who is going blind because of PRA, another inherited defect? Will you be able to take back every dog you bred regardless of age and mental or physical condition?

So much for the making money by breeding. Bottom line: most good breeders rarely break even, financially or emotionally.