



kingpin growl

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imps spotlight alumnus of the month

by linda lohdefinck



Teddy sits nicely for his "hearing dog" trainer, Linda with Golden Ears.

When Teddy was first found by IMPS his weight was about 5 lbs. 4 oz. In his few short months with me, he has gained another 1½ pounds—a very healthy weight for this small Min Pin. The vet is very happy with his health and condition.

Teddy is doing wonderfully—he is at the "halfway" mark in his training as a Hearing Dog. He has learned to sit, come, "tell me/touch me" (this is taught to Hearing Dogs so that they make physical contact with their person), wait and stay.

It is fun to watch Teddy stand at alert and sometimes go to find where the sound is. At the beginning, he would follow my personal Hearing Dog, a Belgian Malinois named Dominic, around when he responded to sounds for me.

At the halfway mark, Teddy is coming to find me—regardless of which end of the house I am at and which end of the

house the sound is at. Just this last week I had put something in the microwave to defrost and had gone to work on some things in the bedroom—Teddy came running into the bedroom jumping up and pawing my leg to get my attention when it had gone off. The fun part was he arrived ahead of Dominic. This response is very good, plus he was very insistent that I pay attention.

He responds to the oven timer, microwave, door bell/knock and phone. He's doing wonderfully in his training and I enjoy his enthusiasm.

Our next section in training is working on more obedience and being consistent with "In" (in your crate, which he is already doing some of the time). Next week, we begin socializing—taking Teddy places in public so he is

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exercise to help solve behavior problems

by donna luzzo

Unruly Min Pin? Never happens. 10 lbs. of trouble? Nah! Not my dog. There can be many reasons for behavior problems, but one of the most common is lack of exercise. An adult dog should get at least two hours of hard exercise every day. Why? Because a tired dog is a good dog. If your dog is prone to destructive behavior, gets into trouble or, in general, acts like a lunatic, try increasing his exercise.

Hard exercise includes playing ball, playing with another dog, running, swimming, etc. While great for socialization, taking walks with you does not count as hard exercise for your Pin. Playing with another dog is the easiest form of exercise. The running, romping and wrestling they do on their own will wear them out.

If you have only one dog, find a neighbor, friend or family member who has a similar size dog and set up some play dates. No one fit the bill? Look into doggie day care. If you've got a pool, pond or other water source nearby, teach your Pin to swim, and let him enjoy the water when weather is warm. (Always supervise him, and be sure to rinse him off after he's done - especially if he swims in a chlorinated pool.) Lure coursing, agility and flyball are fun activities that also provide great exercise. You'll be amazed at how much unruly behavior diminishes with adequate exercise. And your dog will end up with Min Pin Buns of Steel!

contacting imps

www.minpinrescue.org

877-minpin1



Jess and Colby pose for their sweet-heart picture. They own Amy, IMPS Regional Coordinator for Maine.

There are a lot of great “jobs” out there for our dogs. Agility. Obedience. Herding. Lure Coursing. Tracking. For some very special dogs, with the right temperament and the proper manners, Pet Assisted Therapy (PAT) is the best “work” of all.

What is Pet Assisted Therapy?

PAT involves taking your dog to a hospital, nursing home or other care facility to interact with the patients/residents. PAT programs can range from those designed simply to allow patients to see and pet the dogs, to very focused, goal-oriented programs that include the dog in a patient’s rehabilitation/recovery process. Both are valuable and worthwhile for the dog, owner and the patients.

Some programs include a large group of patients in each visit. Nursing Home and hospital programs might have dogs going room to room for visits with as many residents as possible; or the visit might take place in a common room. Other programs focus on a smaller population of patients in each visit.

Winnie and I participate in a goal-oriented program through Dogs In Service, a NJ-based non-profit organization. Our program is presently associated with a children’s hospital that has an established Child Life program. When we go to visit, we see only pediatric patients specifically selected by the hospital’s Child Life Specialist. There is a desired outcome for every visit with every child—so in addition to putting a smile on the child’s face, Winnie’s visit is designed to assist in some way with treatment, the recovery process or the hospital stay in general.

The goals (set by the Child Life Specialist) range from normalizing the hospital environment (helps take their mind off things), to medical instrument desensitization (children afraid of needles, stethoscopes, etc., get to “play doctor” with the dogs; the Child Life Specialist also uses medical play to help children understand procedures they will undergo), to getting the child ambulatory (if it hurts to walk around after surgery, children will refuse—but they’re usually more than happy to walk the dog!), to lowering blood pressure (just petting a dog will do this), helping with physical therapy (repetitive arm motion, for example, achieved with petting or tossing a toy for a dog to retrieve) and so on.

Winnie and her other PAT pals often meet with a small group of children in a designated meeting room. For those children who must stay in bed, the dogs can make a “room visit.” This is one of Winnie’s specialties. She’s little enough to actually get in bed with children. (Not a bad deal from her perspective... she can curl up, take a nap and get lots of pets.)

What kind of dogs can do PAT?

Mixed breed, pure breed, small, large, short hair, long hair—all can be wonderful at Pet Assisted Therapy. The key is their training. In addition to being well behaved, the dog really needs to be a “good sport” and be tolerant of noise, touch, crowding, being grabbed or picked up, and must be comfortable in new situations and environments. Not all of these things come naturally—but you can train for them. Winnie, for example, was afraid of the wheelchair—a little Easy Cheese and lots of practice helped desensitize her. If, however, your dog ever



snaps or bites (including in stressful situations), PAT is the wrong job for him. Young dogs that are still over-exuberant and highly excitable may not be ready for PAT—even if they have wonderful temperaments, and are easy to control at home. But... with consistent training, happy youngsters can grow in to excellent PAT dogs.

Training and Testing

Different programs and facilities require different testing. Many require testing by one of several national testing organizations (see resources). Some have their own tests. Others (like

ours) require national testing *and* successful completion of their own test.

Winnie and I participated in a 12-week Pet Assisted Therapy class designed to familiarize us with hospital equipment and teach behaviors that are important when visiting pediatric and other acute-care facilities. Winnie had also been through a basic obedience class as a pre-requisite.

We had to pass the AKC Canine Good Citizen test, and also passed the Therapy Dogs International test. Then... the mother of all tests... we passed the Dogs In Service exam. Our program, like others, requires annual re-testing; and we continue to participate in Pet Assisted Therapy classes to keep our skills sharp.

Good and reliable skills are essential. Whether you choose to visit hospitals, nursing homes or both, you’ll be dealing with folks who are sick, in pain, hooked up to hospital equipment, may be unsteady on their feet and so on. You’ve got to know, without question, that your dog will not do anything, even unintentionally, to jeopardize the patient. For example, if your dog jumps up, or paws at a patient, she could get tangled in an IV line. If she isn’t good at heeling, the patient could trip over her. By the same token, good skills are important to your dog’s safety.

Skills a PAT dogs MUST have:

- Reliable response to first commands (no repeating, i.e. “sit, sit, sit, sit”)
- Solid sit and down stays
- No pawing or jumping
- Absolutely reliable food/object refusal (Leave It!)
- Tolerance and preferably a tail-wagging response to hugging, poking, prodding, petting, tail-pulling, ear-pulling and “crowding” by a group of people
- Reliable recall
- Good leash manners/heeling

They should also be desensitized to things like wheel chairs, walkers, IV poles, IV boards (children always manage to reach out and pet with the hand that has the IV board on it). They should be able to walk along side this equipment without fear. Additionally they should be taught to put paws up on a chair, or sit on a chair (on command), so patients in bed or sitting in wheelchairs can reach them. It is also valuable to teach the dog to sit next to a wheelchair, close enough to be reached by the patient.

Some other skills Winnie learned were “forward” and “follow”—she walks either ahead of or behind me through narrow corridors, like between a hospital bed and a large piece of equipment. She also knows “no lick,” kisses are nice, but not really



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appropriate in a hospital environment for a number of reasons.

Though not essential, tricks are also great for PAT. Children and adults both love to be entertained by the dogs. Winnie's big trick is 'sneeze.' (Another dog in our program will retrieve a box of tissues... what a combo!) Tricks are a great icebreaker, and can be a good way to get the patient interacting with a dog.

Your Health and Your Dog's Health

Beyond behavior training and testing, a PAT program or the facility you plan to visit may require certain medical protocols be followed for the safety of the patients, the dog and the handler. As an example, I have to provide proof of Winnie's vaccinations, proof that she is given heart worm medication, and proof that flea/tick preventative is used. Winnie also has to have a throat swab done annually (to rule out strep—dogs can have it, but are asymptomatic—and we don't want to pass it on to already-sick children) and a fecal culture to rule out a number of other bacteria and infections, including staph. She has to be bathed and groomed shortly before each visit. And everything we use at a visit (her mat, blanket, toy doctor's kit, etc.) has to be washed and sterilized before the next visit.

I also had to provide information about my own vaccinations and boosters (most of which I had as a child). Each year I am required to have a TB skin test. For my own safety, I also had a series of Hepatitis B vaccinations. More than likely, I'll get TITREs done to make sure I am still immune to Measles, Rubella and Chicken Pox.

As much as Winnie and I love PAT, if either of us is feeling even remotely under the weather, we decline to participate in a visit. A simple cold can become life-threatening to some patients, and their well-being must be protected. By the same token, if Winnie has an ear infection, she shouldn't be expected to be happy and cheerful; I'd never ask her to "work" if I knew she was uncomfortable.

Getting Involved in a Local PAT Program

If you would like to get involved in PAT you can contact facilities you are interested in visiting and find out if there is a program in existence, or if PAT teams are welcome to visit. The facility may invite you to visit independently, or may be able to direct you to a local group they work with. Some of the local PAT groups organize visits, arrange for testing and so on. You can also contact the national testing organizations (see resources) for information about local

PAT groups and/or care facilities that are looking for dog/handler teams. You might also visit Dog-Play on the web at: www.dog-play.com/join.html to find out about local organizations. Also, don't skip the national testing, even if your chosen facility doesn't require it! Winnie and I are insured through Therapy Dogs International—and it's covered you don't want to be without.

Giving Back to Your Community

Pet Assisted Therapy gives you an opportunity to spend time with your dog while also working for the benefit of others. The work can be both heartwarming and heartbreaking. But, all in all, it is truly a fun and rewarding activity.

Organizations and resources for Pet Assisted Therapy testing:

Therapy Dogs International (National)
88 Bartley Road
Flanders, NJ 07836
Phone: 973-252-9800
FAX: 973-252-7171
e-mail: tdi@gti.net
Web: www.tdi-dog.org

Delta Society (National)
289 Perimeter Rd. East
Renton, WA 98055
Phone: 800-869-6898
Fax: 425-235-1076
e-mail: info@deltasociety.org
Web: www.petsforum.com/deltasociety/dsg000.htm

Therapy Dogs Inc. (National)
P.O.Bo5868
Cheyenne, Wy 82003
(877) 843-7364 (877-therdog)

Dogs In Service (Local – Northern N.J.)
765 Frenchtown Rd.
Milford, NJ
Phone: 908-996-9911
Fax: 908-996-9912
e-mail: barking@eclipse.net
Web: www.barkinghills.com/dis



Winnie was chosen as a Pet Assisted Therapy Dog of the Year by the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association this year. Winnie and her two pet therapy pals (Amanda the Maltese and Mabel the Lab-x) share the honor this year. The three girls all trained together and visit St. Joseph's Children's Hospital together. (They're our Three Musketeers...and sometimes Three Stooges!) They were inducted into NJVMA's Animal Hall of Fame on March 4, 2001.

my name is moonbeam

“george” episode 1, part 2

by i. z. sakaal

Moonbeam awoke with a start. Something was different. There was a new scent in her area. The dawn was just breaking and she could now see that she was close to the edge of a lake and a man was sitting there on the bank fishing. Her lips curled back over her teeth and her ears went down as she prepared to defend herself. A low growl started way down in her throat and her hackles went up in defiance.

The man turned his head and looked at her for a second or two, said “Good Morning”, and then resumed watching the bobber on his line as it danced in the ripples of the water.

Moonbeam could smell no danger in this man, only a slight curiosity seemed to emanate from him. After a while, the man reached into a haversack and pulled something out. He unwrapped it and took a bite. She knew this was food and her hunger was driving her insane but even though he motioned at her with the food, she was too afraid to approach the man.

He turned towards her and broke some pieces off and threw them in her direction, scaring her at first but when she smelled the rich aroma of meat her hunger overcame her fear and she gulped the pieces down.

He threw a few more pieces and then he stood up and with his pole over his shoulder, started walking into the woods. He walked very slowly, limping somewhat and she was able to stay fairly close to him even with her hurt leg. Moonbeam followed him for about 10 minutes and he came to a small clearing where a ramshackle old cabin was located.

The man bustled about building up a fire a few yards in front of the door and as the flames licked at the dry wood and crackled, the warmth of the fire hypnotized her with it’s comfort, beckoning her, and she moved over closer to it so the flames could warm her aching body.

She laid there most of the day, and every once in a while the man would come out of the cabin towards the fire but she would growl him off so he would stand back a bit and throw bits of food at her to consume. By the time the sun was setting, the ache was gone in her belly and her bones.

That night she slept better than she had in a long time and in the morning, she was awakened by the man’s moving around. Slowly, with his hand outstretched, he came over to her and this time she did not growl but only whimpered a little. The man laid some more food by her and she let him scratch her ears.

He gently reached for her battered and burned leg and somehow she knew he was trying to help her. The man very gently washed off the dirt and the grime and put something on the burn and it stopped stinging so much.

He talked to her as he went about his medications. He said his name was George and he lived out here in the woods all by himself and what a great joy it would be to have a friend like me stay with him.

He said he is very old and had decided to give up civilization many years ago and just leave the world alone

and spend the rest of his days fishing in the river and bothering nobody.

He said that she would be very welcome to stay but if she had other plans then he would understand, but it would be a good idea if she stayed a while at least and let her leg heal.

She didn’t know how she understood all this, but she did and her instincts were now telling her that this was a safe place and this man was kind and presented no danger to her.

She decided that she would stay.

The man called her Jenny. Moonbeam didn’t mind—it wasn’t as if she had any way of telling him her real name and Jenny was as good as any she supposed.

After staying outside for a couple of days, Moonbeam finally decided it would be okay to look around inside the cabin. Here there was a wood stove, some old raggedy furniture and some other odds and ends.

Finding a comfortable place, which suited her, she lay down close to the warmth of the stove and snoozed while her strength continued to return to her. Mornings would find her and George at the lake’s edge fishing. After catching two or three, they would return to the cabin.

The caught fish were put on a stinger line, which was in the shallow water and Moonbeam became their guardian. If one of them flopped around she would instantly be on top of it snapping and growling, warning the fish to stay still or suffer a few indignant bites on the tail. This always made George laugh. She was happy that George was happy, that’s all that mattered.

Every few days she would follow George to a few traps that he had set where their bounty would be increased by an occasional rabbit, squirrel or possum. One day there was a change to their diet as George killed one of the noisy tail snakes and they had it for dinner. He impressed upon her the danger that these kinds of snakes presented to her and to leave them alone. In her forays into the woods, she would always steer a wide path whenever she heard one of these snakes announcing its presence by shaking it’s tail and making the buzzing sound.

Spring turned slowly into summer and with the warmer days and nights Moonbeam would stay outside exploring her little domain to uncover its secrets. There were any number of critters to attack and roll on and when evening came she would get a fine dinner of fish or meat to fill up on.

As her daytime wanderings took her farther and farther from the cabin, she would sometimes come upon signs of other humans in the area. Their scent grew stronger the farther she got from the cabin. Not trusting people in general, she would shy away from these areas as best she could.

Topping a small ridge one day, Moonbeam could see an area of many cabins and many people off in the distance. This was as far as she dared to go.

In the evenings, George would spend hours talking to

moonbeam continued

her. He would tell her stories of his life and how he came to be a hermit living alone here on the north shore of "Big Bass Lake." He didn't much trust people and could see why she didn't either.

Sometimes they would fish from a small wooden boat and whenever they would hear distant voices carried on the wind, she would growl and he would nod knowingly. With people there always seemed to come pain and suffering and they truly were better off staying away from them.

Her leg had healed nicely and a steady food supply had brought her back to her peak physically. She weighed in at a whopping ten pounds.

Bedtime these days found her snuggled up under the old worn blanket on the bed with George's gentle snoring bringing her relaxation.

She was always on the alert though, that was her job and some nights she would race out the open door barking and snarling at some strange sound she had heard. This never even bothered George, he would just go back to sleep after giving her an ear scratch and a "Good Girl." This was much better than the beatings the other man used to give her when she barked.

Life was very good for Moonbeam now. These were golden days of butterfly mornings and wild flower afternoons and Moonbeam would have been content to live out her days with George except for two things that happened in late summer.

The first was that two men came boating up from the south end of the lake to talk to George. They said they were surveyors and had been hired to lay out a tract on this end of the lake for resort and marina expansion, and the bottom line was George was going to have to find somewhere else to live. They told him that the resort owners knew he was here and for the most part did not mind as long as he stayed to himself up here on the north end and away from the tourists and vacationers. Now with the expansion needed for the ever-increasing vacation trade, this end of the lake was scheduled for development and the construction would begin in the spring after the last thaw, probably in late March. George had to be gone by then.

George told them that he had no where to go, that he had been living here for over forty years but the men just restated their orders and said that they would have to bring the authorities to run him out if he forced them to.

The second thing was the boat they had motored up the lake in was covered with a very familiar scent.

Moonbeam sniffed at the boat for a long time while the men talked to George. Each sniff brought warm familiar memories of her people flooding back to her. They had been in this boat, and not too long ago as the scent was relatively strong, but Moonbeam had no way to connect their scent to where the boat originated from.

That train of thought was beyond her capacity to think through. It was very confusing to her. If the scent was here, the people should be here, but they were not. To follow the boat when it left was also a concept beyond her limited

reasoning skills, so she just lay by the boat with no idea of what to do next.

She dozed and loud voices woke her as George argued with the men. Springing alert she raced to the cabin, snapping and snarling at these men who angered her friend.

As she burst into the cabin area, the men backed up slowly, rather bug eyed as she placed herself between them and George. Her low throaty growl was warning them that they were in imminent danger of being torn to shreds.

Knowing this, the men backed off towards the water with a final warning to George about next spring and the fact that he better keep his dog under control while they were laying out the new resort/marina area.

George was very different now. Something had gone out of him. The lightness and carefree disposition had been replaced by one of sadness and confusion. He didn't fish everyday now, although he did enough to keep them fed. Mostly he just lay around and stayed lost in his own thoughts.

Moonbeam hadn't forgotten about the home scent on the boat but something told her she needed to be here right now. She would still go exploring and foraging on occasion but she wouldn't stay gone long. She was very worried about her friend.

There were a few people in the woods around the cabin area, with lines and levels. Trees were being cut down and hauled off but none of them came close enough to the cabin area to cause her any alarm.

The resort expansion area would be built a couple of hundred yards to the South of the cabin. George had to leave because the owners felt that it just wouldn't look right for an old hermit and his dog to be living so close to their multi-million dollar marina and cabin sites.

Fall was slowly crawling into early winter now. Late one afternoon Moonbeam came back from a short exploration and when she got close to the cabin something seemed very different. There was a strange but familiar scent in the air. She cautiously entered the cabin where the scent was coming from. George lay on the bed on his back, his lifeless eyes staring at the ceiling.

Her hackles up, she approached him slowly and sniffed. She knew this smell from the small cage time, death has it's own peculiar scent and she knew then that there would be no more fishing trips, no more long listening times when George talked to her. His kind and soft voice would comfort her no more.

She knew she was alone again. She stayed by the cabin door for three days, confused and not knowing what to do, until hunger and thirst finally drove her to the lakefront.

She turned her eyes South, the direction that the voices came from carried on the wind. There would be people, and where there were people, there would be food.

A great sorrow filled her and with a final yowling lament for her departed friend, she turned her steps southward along the water's edge.

Stay tuned for April's episode: "Mandy and Jake"



Recent IMPS rescue Bernie hangs out on the couch. Bernie was adopted by Tenita Bradley in SC.



Buddy and Glory McGinnis relax in the sunshine.

teddy, continued from page 1

used to all the activities—and working on “show me”—where Teddy actually goes back to where the sound is and I follow him.

Other sounds to train include the alarm clock and smoke alarm. I think this little guy has made wonderful progress and I’m hoping to have his training complete in April. We will be taking him with us in March to do a demonstration for Quota Club in Kent, WA (a group that does fundraising for special needs).

Teddy is a very loving sweetheart and loves to be close and follow me around. In fact, he is curled into a little ball sleeping on my lap while I write this.

did you know?

Since its inception in July 1998, IMPS has placed 1,200 Min Pins into loving homes! Of those, IMPS rescued 702 in 2000!



Frabo (red) and Lily sit by the fire on Christmas morn.



Joy Haig’s crew l-r: (front row) Midnight (cat), Sarah, Nala, Pumbaa, Chrysta, (back row) King, Maizie, Frodo and Timon

the last howl-small victories

by emily mcginnis

Those of us who foster with IMPS could spend days recounting small victories we’ve experienced with special Min Pins. Whether it’s a trusting glance or a furtive lick, those victories, though small to some, are huge when you count the big picture.

Recently we welcomed into our home a blue Min Pin named Paxton. Paxton had had no human socialization in his two years. He had never even been on a couch! When we picked up Paxton, he looked at us through fearful eyes of mistrust.

It took only a week for Paxton to be chasing my Glory around the house and stealing her toys. He had a quick turn around. There are those whose turn arounds are not so quick. For example, Elizabeth in GA spent two weeks with Willow before the little girl would let her touch her. When Willow finally did start to come around, it was the small things that eventually built to her rehabilitation.

What some don’t understand is that these dogs may never be perfect. Paxton will never be the completely carefree sprite that Glory is. I don’t expect him to be and neither does his new mom. But that isn’t our goal anyway.

Our goal is instead to teach him to trust humans. To help him learn that we have love to give. And to help him learn to receive that love. And when you get love back from him, you’ve been a success.

Some of these special babies take many months of work because they’ve been robbed of their spirit. Some, like Paxton, take a week to make a dramatic turn around. Oh, he isn’t completely what he will become YET. And that is the key. I will love him until he becomes that. And then I will love him forever.

Paxton’s name means “Place of Peace.” I won’t have succeeded until he truly finds it.