



# kingpin growl

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## imps spotlight alumnus of the month

by emily mcginnis



Paxton's "Fridge of Fame" picture  
from Joy

In January 2001, the administration of IMPS received an urgent email from Lynn, the Regional Coordinator for GA about a group of Pins nicknamed the GA Peaches. A breeder was retiring due to health issues and needed help rehoming her Min Pins. On that list was a 2-3 year old blue Min Pin named Levi with noted behavioral problems.

Levi was listed on the IMPS Web site, but once Lynn visited the Pins, it became apparent that Levi needed some work prior to going to a permanent home. Although she received many offerings from potential homes interested in Levi (because he was blue), she turned them down because of the work he needed. When Lynn was visiting them, Levi severely bit his owner's hands as she tried to pull him from his cage. Apparently, this was a pretty common thing.

I must be honest to admit that we all

were concerned if Levi would be placeable at all. But I am a softie for these Pins with "issues" and offered to foster him. I honestly didn't know if I was getting in over my head or not, but I at least wanted him to have a chance.

I decided before even picking him up that a name change was the first thing in order. I wanted him to have a completely fresh start. I picked the name Paxton for two reasons important to me. First, it's the maiden name of one of my dearest college friends and one of the kindest individuals I know. Second, it means "place of peace" and I was hoping it would prove a good omen for him.

I put out a plea on the Saluki list for advice from those who've dealt with these types of Pins. I received an email from Joy in KS almost immediately with a plethora of advice. We emailed back and forth for several days prior to my even

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## he heard you the first time and other training mistakes

by donna luzzo

Here are five common training mistakes:

**Repeating Commands.** When you tell your dog sit, down, stay, etc., rest assured, he hears you the first time. Don't repeat the command if he breaks the sit, down, etc. Simply return him to the position he should be in. If you say, "sit, sit, sit, sit, sit, sit," he'll learn to do it about the tenth time you say it.

**Asking for something you can't enforce.** Until your dog is reliable in executing a command, don't ask for the behavior unless you can enforce it. For example, if your dog is across the yard, don't call him to come unless he's on a long line so you can "reel him in." Otherwise, he'll learn to ignore your command, because you can't make him do it.

**Giving up.** Dogs generally have more stamina than we do. If you tell your dog to "down," be sure he does, and stays there until you release him. That could mean putting him back in position dozens of times until he holds it. Don't lose patience; just outlast him. Make sure he gives up before you do.

**Expecting too much too soon.** Your dog has to walk before he can run. There is no such thing as a quick fix in dog training. In order for your dog to follow instructions consistently, you'll have to put in hours of training. Don't immediately expect a two-minute down stay, or perfect leash behavior. Practice makes permanent.

**Forgetting rewards and praise.** There's got to be something in it for the dog. After all, you wouldn't go to work if there was no pay check at the end of the week. Make sure you praise and reward your dog for performing as asked. A "Good Dog!" followed by a food reward will go a long way in encouraging your dog to obey your commands.

The day after I lost my 15-year-old Husky to old age, I decided I wanted to learn how to feed my future dogs for better health. Having been raised by organic farmers, I was surprised by the lack of thought I put into feeding my dogs. As a veterinary technician, I believed the vets knew what they were talking about and fed Science Diet on their recommendation for years. I remember a rep from Science Diet coming to my nutrition class and dumping a can of Alpo onto a plate and seeing identifiable chunks of trachea and aorta—waste products from the rendering of animals. I thought, well Science Diet must be good since there are none of those parts seen in their foods! But in the back of my mind lingered a question: why did my dogs continue to have bad health even while on this revered dog food?

When I started doing my own research into dog foods I was quite surprised by what I found. Unbelievably, I had never read the labels of the food I was feeding, so I started my research by reading every label I could find. My first shock was that most dog foods start out with some sort of meat by-product. Next listed is often a “food fragment”—often the by-products of baking or cereal processing such as brewer’s rice (which I have read is actually the sweeping off the baker’s floor) and corn gluten meal. Fats were often classified with “generic sources;” “animal fat” or “poultry fat” leaves the source questionable.

Another popular addition to commercial dog food is corn. Corn is the only cereal able to sustain life as a sole food for months at a time. The trouble with corn in dog foods is it is often pre-cooked and tends to be overeaten. And corn is what I call a “hot” food. When digested it produces sugars and can cause higher activity in some breeds. Just like small children should not have too much sugar, dogs should not have too much corn—although many dog foods list corn as a second or third ingredient. Flaked corn is best, but rarely found in dog foods. Corn is one ingredient that does not lose nutrients when canned. Adding canned corn to the diet is fine in small amounts but I would avoid corn-based foods for hyperactive dogs.

The use of sugar and propylene glycol (used to moisten semi-moist foods) can make a dog become addicted to the food. With the amount of sugar added to dog food, it is no wonder Diabetes is being diagnosed in dogs in record numbers. And propylene glycol is a known carcinogen. Cancer is the number one cause of death in dogs. With no government requirement or FDA inspection of dog foods, there is no supervised quality control.

The reason I bring all this to your attention is not to make you feel at a loss, but instead I hope you will want to be more aware of what you feed your animals. The first place to start educating yourself about dog food is with the labels. Look for:

- foods that do not contain meat by-products, generic fats, food fragments, artificial preservatives, colors, sweeteners and propylene glycol
- food that has superior sources of protein, whole, fresh and single source (e.g., “chicken meal” instead of “poultry meal” or “meat meal”)
- whole grains and vegetables and other foods—the less processed food the better.
- for those with hyperactive dogs, avoid too much corn and other grains
- organic foods whenever possible

Keep in mind that the current labeling laws state that dog food manufacturers can be allowed six months to change a label after

changing ingredients in their foods. This means we need to be continually checking labels, even after finding a food we really like. For instance, when Iams and Eukanuba became available in the grocery store they changed their ingredients. They are now using lesser quality ingredients and I can only believe that is to help boost profits.

Another common suggestion given by many vets is to find a food you like, or one they recommend, and stick to that for the dog’s whole life. I find that ludicrous and think it is one of the biggest causes of upset stomachs in dogs—after eating the same thing day after day for years, one day they get into the trash and their stomachs are so “sterilized” by the same diet that they can’t handle any change and get sick. I suggest finding several types of food you like and mixing them and changing around from time to time. All changes should be done gradually, but if you do this on a regular basis the dog should be fine.

I also recommend supplementing daily with fresh people food. Leftovers are great!! Fed in small amounts and with some thought, your dogs will thrive. I would think a small piece of chicken and some broccoli and mashed potatoes are better for your dog than over-processed, packaged, and days-, sometimes months-, old kibble. Without nutritional counseling or a complete Metabolic Analysis, I would not let table scraps be more than one third of your dog’s diet.

You want to be smart about it and find out what should and shouldn’t be fed to dogs. Onions, for instance, can actually harm a dog. Too much fat isn’t good nor is too much acidic tomatoes and tomato sauces. Milk, although commonly said to be bad for dogs, is such a complete food source that unpasteurized milk in small amounts is quite good for your dog.

I get all of my dogs accustomed to raw meat by feeding small amount of ground meat and building up their tolerance. Then daily I feed them a raw meaty bone from a local organic farms. I add a homemade veggie mash slowly as well. I feed only meat bought at farms where the animals are raised free range and no added hormones or antibiotics are used. Organic would be best, but organic meat is incredibly hard to grow. I also add certain oils and other supplements as discussed with my veterinarians.

Anyone interested in the diet I feed my dogs may contact me privately.

My dogs need a fair amount of fat since I work on a farm and they come to work with me daily and have the run of the place most of the time, burning calories and fat all day long. But my dogs’ diet has too much fat for most dogs. As these girls get older I will cut the fat, and even now I cut back on fat content on days when they are less active.

My dogs are now thriving and I attribute Colby’s allergies being manageable without drugs and Jess’ yeast infection in her ears completely clearing up to their new diet. And both dogs have pearly white teeth, which hasn’t always been the case for my Jess!

One last thing: you can feed your dog the best food in the world but plenty of exercise is essential to your dog’s health. This means off-leash running. I read somewhere that a medium-sized dog needs to walk 8 miles on a leash to get the proper exercise it needs. For those without a yard that might mean finding a friend with a fenced in yard to run the dogs. Of course, Min Pins can often get decent exercise running around the house, but if you ever have behavior issues, insufficient exercise is the number one cause. A tired dog is a happy dog. An excellent diet and lots of exercise means a long and happy life for your dog.



Amy’s Queen Min Pin Colby



Jess conquers the mighty snowpile!



Timon spends the night with Connie.



Koko poses with her new family, Rhonda and daughters.

contactingimps

[www.minpinrescue.org](http://www.minpinrescue.org)

877-minpin1

next month

Meet Willow!

Moonbeam, Episode 2, Part 2

Obedience tips from Donna

## paxton, continued from page 1

bringing Paxton home. Through her work with IMPS, Joy has helped numerous puppy mill Pins find their way home. Her interest was peaked when she found out Paxton was blue.

While we've all heard that blues have many skin problems and alopecia, I still knew that his rare color would play a major role in who adopted him. Let's face it—it was his primary "selling point" because at this stage, he didn't have much else going for him.

Michael and I brought Paxton home on a Saturday. Neither of us could touch him. Once we had him in our arms (always in a towel, mind you), he would calm down. But getting him in our arms was the real battle. Joy had cautioned us to leave his lead on him so we could catch him. Michael got the bright idea to let him go without his lead and Paxton spent two hours hiding under our coffee table. We finally tricked him into letting one of us pick him up. Once one of us had his lead in hand, he started the "gator roll." We had to deal with this outside every time we went out. Thankfully, it was colder outside so Paxton didn't take too long with his business and even came to me to ask to be picked up.

He also wouldn't eat. I had to bribe him with white rice and sweet-n-sour sauce. I used this to eventually wean Paxton to eat plain dog food.

Paxton's favorite place quickly became our couch. I later found out that he had never been on a couch before. No wonder he loved it so much! He had also never been on a bed, which quickly became another of his favorite spots. When we brought Glory and Buddy home, Paxton fell deeply in love with my little girl. This time marked the first we'd seen his little nub go. And it never stopped after that.

He quickly progressed and, while still not a perfect dog, gave us



Teresa (left) with Dixie and Emily with Paxton at the GA Peaches exchange in January.

an easier time of it. He and Michael didn't exactly see eye to eye, and Michael always seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when Paxton would have an episode. Quick movements startled, and still do, and cause Paxton to react wrongly. With patience, someday he will get over this and learn to truly trust.

Joy had to wait for almost two months to make her long trip to Charleston. I knew she was serious about him when she offered to travel over 20 hours one-way. By this time, I'd fallen for Paxton, but knew that he wasn't going to be a good one to have around children. He is frightened by sudden movements and would be

terrified of a young child.

Paxton continues to make improvements in his new home with Joy. He is starting to relax and play. He's quite the goofy boy. He TRIES the hackneyed gait, but looks more like an unsteady 10-month old baby. He TRIES to play, but is very unsure of himself and sometimes scares his siblings. The key, however, is that he tries.

It's been a month since Paxton left me. He drove away early on a Sunday morning in the arms of another woman. He hasn't left me empty though. No foster ever does. What Paxton taught me was that no matter what these Pins have been through, their spirit can, and will, overcome it. On my "Fridge of Fame" hangs an 8 x 10 color photo of Paxton in his beautiful glory as a reminder.

No, he isn't the perfect dog. He probably never will be. But I can guarantee you that he's come a very long way from that scared, biting boy being pulled from a cage. And there's no telling how much farther he will go.



## my name is moonbeam

### “mandy and jake” episode 2, part 1

by i. z. sakaal

As her hunger drove her around the lake towards the resort, Moonbeam felt a heavy sadness deep within her. She didn't understand death; she knew its scent and those with it never returned but the actuality of the event is something she could never comprehend.

Rounding one last bend and coming out of a strand of trees, she could see the buildings of the resort ahead of her. She could sense human presence but could detect no movement or activity. The whole resort area was strangely quiet. As she walked from building to building looking for food, at times she would encounter the home scent she had discovered on the boat. Some places it was very faint and some places a lot stronger but in all places it was old. Her people were not here.

Around in back of a long low building she found an overturned trash can with some delightful scraps of something and ate her fill. She lay down to rest a little and as she was falling into a light sleep she detected ground vibrations and opening her eyes saw a human off in the distance coming her way. There was still a full meal plus of scraps near her so she prepared to defend her find.

The man stopped a few feet away from her and squatted down. “Well lookie here,” he said, “what do we have there growling at us? What kind of dog are you and where do you come from?”

There was kindness in his voice and he went on to tell her that the resort was closed for the season and he was just there locking everything up and would be leaving in a few minutes so she better wander on back to wherever her home was.

She understood somewhat from the tone in his voice and his body language that here was not the place to stay. She watched as the man drove off down the road and the understanding of being alone washed over her again. She knew she must move on, the nights were getting colder and her meager food supply would soon be exhausted. She would stay the night and rest up, then leave with the morning sun. Moonbeam followed the road south out of the mountains for two full days.

She managed to catch a small rodent on the morning of the second day but it barely took the edge off of her hunger. Luckily, there seemed to be an abundance of small ponds on her route and she could at least quench her thirst although the water

was strange tasting. By the late afternoon of the second day though, even these little roadside ponds of standing water had disappeared.

Night was beginning to fall again and experience had taught her to get off the road at night. She nestled up in a group of low bushes some one hundred or so feet off the road and settled down after making her customary three complete turns to sleep.

Her dreams were of yummy, tasty treats and big piles of meat. The dreams were so real she could even smell the aroma of cooking meat. As she slowly woke up, she discovered the aroma was real, coming from deeper in the woods.

Slowly she worked her way towards the enchanting smell of food—it was still very dark—staying very alert and cautious. Silently she approached a small clearing where two people sat on an old log. One was stirring something in a pot over a fire. The pot was where the aroma was coming from.

Moonbeam waited impatiently until long after the people had gone to sleep before she inched her way forward towards the pot which was now just sitting on the ground near the embers of the fire. Peering inside she saw the remnants of something in the bottom and slowly she stuck her head all the way in and grabbed. She raced back to the shelter of the trees and devoured her prize. She was so engrossed in her food that she did not even notice the movement in the little clearing by one of the people.

Finishing her stolen fare, she eyed the clearing once more. All seemed as before so she slowly crept back for an additional helping. Getting to the edge of the fire pit where the coals glowed warm and red she discovered the pot was gone and in its place was a plate full of scraps.

Taking control of her initial fear, she stood there and finished the scraps and as she did, she noticed that one of the people was looking at her. She started to run, but she could sense no danger, so she just lay down by the coals and stared back. She didn't sleep much the rest of that short night, she would nod off for a short second or two but almost instantly come wide awake and those eyes would still be open and gazing in her direction.

Sometime during the night the other set of eyes opened and now she was being watched by both of them. She could have retreated to the sanctuary of

## moonbeam continued

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the forest, but the fire embers were so nice and warm—and no one had made any threatening moves towards her—so she felt relatively safe. With the dawn, both people moved to get up and this sent her racing back to the tree line where she stopped to look back to see if there was any danger.

There appeared to be none.

Now with full daylight she could see there was a road on the far side of the clearing and on the road was parked a car. The people paid her no attention but she knew that they knew she was still there. They went about building up the fire and cooking something. Moonbeam recognized the smell of coffee from her collection of home scents. Her people always had coffee in the mornings. This must be okay then.

She slowly walked out of the trees and sat down in the clearing a ways away from the fire. One of the people got slowly up and put two plates out in the open so that she could get to them and still keep a wary eye out for any trouble or aggression from them. One was food and the other was water. The food was good but the water was great, she had been very thirsty.

Thanksgiving at the Settle household was always a gala event. Besides a warm, friendly, family gathering, there was always the suspense and excitement of Regina and Linda's cousin Tinker showing up. Each year it would be anybody's guess as to what he would show up in, always with dozens of presents for everyone, but always in some sort of outlandish vehicle or costume or both.

Like the year the snows came early and he drove up in a horse drawn sled wearing a Santa Claus outfit, beard and all, or the year it was unseasonably warm and he showed up in an ox drawn Conestoga Wagon wearing a Scottish Kilt. One year he arrived driving a little circus go cart wearing a clown suit and pulling a small trailer with the presents stacked to almost overflowing. And last year it was riding a big Harley Davidson Hog, dressed in a deep sea divers suit complete with helmet and all the presents packed into a sidecar attachment.

No one knew exactly what he did for a living and he never volunteered any information. Some one did ask once while they were having dinner and he just looked at them like they had lobsters crawling out of their ears, got up, left and wasn't seen again

until the following Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving in fact was the only time of year he had any contact with them and he always showed up mid morning accompanied by Sheriff Johnson either escorting him into town or chasing him into it.

He never ate the turkey with all the trimmings that was served, his meal consisted of food to accentuate his outfit of the year, which he always brought with him. Like the time he came wearing a complete football uniform with the helmet on backwards, he had hot dogs and beer.

The cousins had grown up together in the Maryland countryside. Their fathers had been brothers. Linda and Tinker were the same age and Regina was four years younger. After high school graduation, Tinker had joined the Army planning to make it a career. When he returned from South East Asia in 1970, he left the military and just disappeared for 20 years.

Ten years ago he had shown up on Thanksgiving day in a Great White Hunter Outfit riding an elephant and each year from then on, he was always expected at Thanksgiving. After dinner he would usually regale the kids with tales of adventures all over the world for a couple of hours, then abruptly get up, say goodbye and leave.

It had been a year now that Moonbeam had been missing. Bob and Regina had gotten very involved in Min Pin rescue since that time and currently had two fosters (Brandy and Alex), who would be going to their forever homes within a few days. They were in the back yard playing with Sunbeam (with a very large and secure lock on the back gate) and the family was just relaxing when they heard the siren.

The neighbors were all out on their porches (like I said, it was a very small town), and true to form, here came Tinker. He was driving a brand new bright yellow Mustang convertible, top down and wearing a gorilla suit. It was time to set the table.

Bob always offered a special prayer during the year at mealtimes for their little lost Moonbeam. Being Thanksgiving, he prayed for all of them that God would place the Angels around her wherever she was and bring her home safely some day. He ended his prayer this year also asking God to protect Tinker from himself if that was at all possible, even though it was very hard to remain solemn with his wife's fifty-three year old cousin sitting at the table in a Gorilla suit with three bananas on his plate.