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endings: eNews

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dog rescue

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Happy Endings Dog Rescue, Inc. Hewitt • Austin • Dallas

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### Santa Dawgs

**Come out to the Hewitt Christmas parade**, starting at 4 p.m. Dec. 12 and watch for the Happy Endings Dog Rescue float. This year's theme is Winter Wonderland; we will be walking alongside handing out dog treats with coupons for our veterinary clinic. Give us a holler, and take home something special for your pup.



Last year's HEDR parade float.

## Getting the best photos of your dog

**Wouldn't you like to take great shots of your pets, especially at the holidays?** Capturing your dog's personality as well as her likeness can be challenging, but with a few tips you can show off your pup to her best advantage and sharpen your photography skills as well. (These tips are geared toward photographers with digital cameras.)

**Get down on your dog's level.** While, of course, your dog is adorable from any angle, getting on eye level lends itself to more intimate portraits. But also try many angles and options. You will start to get a feel for what works for you and your pet.



**Pick a time of day when your subject will be calm and (fingers crossed) cooperative.** If your dog curls up for the night at 7 p.m. and you want a portrait of her in flight catching a ball, don't try to get her to cooperate in the evening. If her energy peaks during the morning, that's the best time to snap a photo of mid-air athleticism. Shoot the cute snoozing pooch in the evening.

**Don't wait until you see what you want through the lens; it will be too late to capture it.** Learn to anticipate and already be shooting when the action is happening in front of you. One of the beautiful things about digital cameras is that you don't need to pay for film development, so keep clicking (and deleting) until you get what you want.

**If your camera has a continuous shooting (or burst) mode, get in the habit of using it.** The

burst mode allows the photographer to shoot several frames a second, and you might get something unexpectedly wonderful, like your pup's snout rising up behind the popcorn bowl.

**Watch the background; try to keep it clean, simple and with some contrast.** The focus should be on your dog, not the distraction of a ball game in the next room. If an unmade bed in the background is going to bother you when you look at the finished product, find another location (or if time allows, make the bed). Also, be mindful of your dog's coat color, e.g., don't shoot your tan dog on a background of yellowed fall grass.

**Use treats and toys to get your dog's attention.** If your pup perks up at the sound of squeakers, make sure you have one handy. Or really yummy, stinky, special occasion treats may result in very alert ears and a wagging tail, if that's your goal.

**Skip the flash, if at all possible.** That "white eye" is the light reflecting off your dog's retina. If you use natural light, be it morning or late afternoon, you'll have a much better chance of avoiding that eye glow. If you have to use a flash, snap the photo when your pet isn't looking directly at the camera.



photo by Clint Hancock

**If you have a camera-shy subject, try to catch her in a relaxed moment.** Get the camera ready in another room, and then approach and start shooting.

**Learn when enough is enough.** Sometimes your dog may not be cooperating or the light isn't right. Put the camera away, and try again later.

**Be patient. Play with your pup and have fun.** Because our pets can't take direction ("Tilt your head slightly to the left, Sophie"), catching that random perfect shot takes time. Enjoy the process.

Sources: [www.brighthub.com](http://www.brighthub.com); [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

## One dog owner's list of puppy training essentials

I am certainly no expert when it comes to dog training. As a matter of fact, I felt a nice sense of accomplishment when I trained my puppies to sit on command, come when called and wait at open doorways.

But I have shared a home three sensitive dogs now, and I have drawn up a list of training essentials for any future puppies in our household. We are working on some of these with our current dogs, but in some cases their behaviors (and reactions) are ingrained.

**Desensitize them to loud noises and thunderstorms:** My husband and I have lost countless hours of sleep due to raucous Texas thunderstorms and fireworks. Even if we could sleep through the noise, one of the dogs is usually sitting on top of us, quivering and panting. Or they are under the bed, whining, or they are pacing the bedroom. Scout was traumatized by a smoke alarm (which had a hair trigger), and now all loud noises send her over the edge. (Information on how to desensitize your dog to fireworks was covered in a previous newsletter; you could also research the topic on the Internet.)

**Get them accustomed to health and grooming procedures:** Jack has such beautiful teeth that I believe he could be in commercials if there were a need for a dog-tooth model. (Vet staffers and groomers have actually commented on them.) Scout, on the other hand, collects tartar at an alarmingly fast rate. By the time she was 4, her teeth had been cleaned twice. The anesthesia is hard on her, and the procedure is expensive.

**I wish I had started rubbing their teeth with canine toothpaste early on, to keep the plaque and tartar down.** Same thinking with nail trimming, grooming and cleaning their ears. The calmer the dog is during a procedure, the less stress on all concerned.

**Make riding in the car a calm experience:** Oh, boy, do they love to go. Jack is quite serene in the car; Scout's behavior is more hit-or-miss. Sometimes she settles down quickly, but other times she doesn't calm down at all. I'm unsure where this

**We have nice dogs; they just don't always act like it.**

behavior comes from. Bringing her home as a puppy (which involved a 1,300-mile trip in the car), she slept and behaved like a model dog. I think the trips to the groomer, where she gets very excited at other dog smells, fired her up for car trips.

**Socialize them with animals and people:** We have nice dogs; they just don't always act like it. Jack cannot be let loose in a dog park; he chases female dogs and trying to catch him is an exercise in frustration, embarrassment and apologies. Scout is fine at the dog park, but she doesn't particularly enjoy it. They have both been socialized with people, but they don't have any manners when meeting someone. That's our fault; we love them to jump up on us in their excitement at our homecoming. But we should have nipped that behavior early on.

**Teach them to heel, both on and off a lead:** Scout thinks attaching a lead to her harness means she's going to pull a dog sled. She pulls and pants and generally is a pain to walk. However, she's beautiful off the lead. She stands and waits by my leg until I move and give her a command. But it violates city code to have her unleashed out in public. Jack is beautiful on the lead, never surging ahead or panting. But if he ever gets his freedom, he is "dog-gone." (See above for what it's like trying to catch him.)

**Enroll them in obedience classes:** With luck, you might also have puppy play dates as a part of the class. But they will at least be introduced to basic commands and behaviors (like not jumping up on visitors). Scout does far better with commands than Jack does. She went to puppy obedience; he didn't.

**This isn't a complete list of what puppies should learn;** there are other things – make sure your dog is used to being touched, from nose to tail; train them to let you take away food and toys without a fuss; teach them not to eat anything that falls on the floor without permission -- but these are behaviors that we have found our canines have in common.

**Like overindulgent parents of a toddler,** we run the risk of being unfair to our dogs and other people if we don't train them in the way they should behave.

*Laura H. Ehret is a free-lance writer who freely admits she would rather pet a strange dog than talk to a strange person.*

## Treasure's Tales and Tidbits

Hello! Hello!

**October's over and Halloween's in the past.**

The ghosts and vampires didn't get me, but I did see a few frightful sights, to be sure! I went to a fun party at Royal Manor Health Center. We all had a ghostly good time listening to the music and socializing. I've made lots of friends there on my regular visits.

**I've started going to visit the residents at Courtyard At Hewitt too.**

That place is only 1 year old and has lots of dog-lovin' folks living there. I think we'll have oodles of good times together. Some of the residents had to leave their pets at home when they moved there, so it does their hearts good to visit with me.

**I went to Bruceville Eddy Intermediate**

**School two weeks ago.** Now that was a fun day!

About 60 students had gathered up all kinds of great stuff for me to take back to our shelter. They sent food, treats, toys, towels, you name it. When we gathered in the cafeteria to visit, they told me all about their pets and they petted and patted me and asked some really good questions about pet safety and care.

**We started our "Kids & K-9's Reading Program" at Castleman Creek Elementary**

**School.** They have the coolest library ever, and I just know we're gonna have a great year. I just luv, luv, luv to be read to!

**On Nov.7, we're going to Austin to participate in the National Pit Bull Awareness Day walk**

**downtown.** There will be lots of the Bullie breed and other breeds

too. The guys from the TV shows Rescue Ink and Pit Boss will be there too.

That's pretty cool and pretty special because the whole point is to show people what super-great dogs we Pits are.

That's why I do

what I do as an ambassador dog. Anyway, I'll tell ya all about it next month.

**Now that it's November, the smell of roasting turkey and pumpkin pies will soon be in the air.**

Don't be tempted to share them with your pets, though. They'd love it and you'd be cleaning up for days, if you get my drift. Stick to the regular pet food and everyone will be happier pilgrims.

Continue being good cause you-know-who is watching and always remember to be kind.

**Love, Treasure**



# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

*Have a Success Story to Share?*

Happy Endings Dog Rescue enjoys hearing from the fur-ever families of its alumni! If you'd like to share how your precious pooch changed your life forever, please submit a short write-up and your contact information to Newsletter editor Laura Ehret at [laura@happyendingsdogrescue.com](mailto:laura@happyendingsdogrescue.com)