Welcome May!

I’d like to take this opportunity to remember two of my foster dogs this month. AZ Chihuahua Rescue is such an amazing rescue. We were able to care for these 2 dogs when no one else would or could. Both were considered sanctuary and needed a special home in different ways.

Dolly, who we lovingly referred to as Ms. Kinsington was pulled from county after 3 returns for biting. She was a reactive biter. We quickly learned she was unable to fully relax in the living areas of the home, so we gave her our 2nd bedroom with her own kennel. She could sleep and relax without worry of being touched. She of course did enjoy petting on her terms. Dolly was demanding and liked to boss me around when it came to going to her kennel, which again, was on her terms. It was her way of getting a treat, over and over again!

Kevin was her favorite. She loved him more but still told him she was the boss. She enjoyed peeing on the floor right in front of me, and barking for no reason at 3 a.m. Her lack of appetite is what initially brought us to the vet.

A few weeks later we found she had a cancer growing in her belly. It was untreatable. Her records show she was about 15 years old. I would not have guessed her to be that old. She had a lot of spunk for a dog that age. We are glad we could give her a place to call home in her final years.

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Nutrition: Natural, Premium, Human Grade or …

What does natural, organic, holistic, premium, and human grade mean on a pet food label? Not as much as you think.

AAFCO defines **natural** as ingredients coming from plant or animal materials, or mined out of the ground in its final form. If the ingredient requires a chemical change, if synthetic chemicals are added, or if it's treated with radiation, it’s not natural. ALL ingredients must meet the AAFCO definition with the exception of vitamins, minerals, or trace nutrients, which must be included on the label - natural with added vitamins and minerals.

Natural and organic are not the same. **Organic** products are grown without using synthetic herbicides or fertilizers, and they are not genetically engineered. Organic food must contain at least 95% organic ingredients. Something made with organic products has to contain at least 70% organic ingredients. The label must show who certified the food as organic. There are no regulations in place for organic pet foods.

**Holistic** and premium don’t mean anything. There are no regulations for using the terms. Manufacturers can use them to make their food sound healthy, special, and more appealing, but it doesn’t mean they’re using natural, premium or nutritious ingredients. Have you noticed that holistic, premium, or other special foods are more expensive. Sorta like buying from stores spelled SHOPPES rather than SHOPS!

Companies must document and prove that every **human grade** ingredient is fit for human consumption, and that the product is produced in a facility permitted to manufacture human food in accordance with the FDA’S Good Manufacturing Practices.

Caution: Claiming that food is made with human grade ingredients may be misleading and false. There are only a few products that have met regulatory standards. Purchasing human grade pet food does not ensure higher quality or healthier food.

Do you tap into your emotional self or your intellect when you buy food for your dog?

Sources:
- https://acvn.org/frequently-asked-questions/#mean
- https://www.aafco.org/consumers/understanding-pet-food/frequently-asked-questions/
- https://petkeen.com/what-is-holistic-dog-food/
Sunshine Speaks (Cont’d from page 2)

Every day I ride in Mom’s golf cart. I wonder if she expects me to play. I don’t think it’s my kind of game. It’s more fun when Mom throws my toy, although it means I need to bring it back to her. I only do it twice. After that I take the toy to my bed. I’m not falling for those tricks of me doin’ all the chasing.

I’m learning that I don’t need to bark at people when we’re out and about in the cart. I got boundaries. 20 feet. Stay at that distance. I’m on alert and attentive at what’s happening in our community. I like everything as it should be. I don’t like strangers or other people getting near me or coming into our house. Way too scary!

When we went to the dog park, I got nervous, but with time, I learned it was a fun place. I like running through the grass. More fun than a ride in a golf cart.

Mom says I have lateral strabismus. I think that means I’m cross-eyed. She calls them Marty Feldman eyes. That’s funny! So was he. I use my right eye to see where I’m going. I don’t discuss my left eye.

Mom put my food and water dishes next to the wall so I can lean against it and not lose my balance. I luv how she looks out for me.

I’m not happy when my moms leave the house. While they’re gone, I scour the place, looking for a shoe or slipper. I grab what I find and carry it to one of my beds. A little trick I play on them. When I hear them coming back, I run to the door and greet them in my most joyful voice, not letting on that a shoe awaits them in my bed.

I’m not a fan of cell phones and remote controls. What is it with humans? Why do they want that stuff? I try to bury them, but I’m not too good at it. Mom discovers them, making me wait for another chance. So I tuck in my tail and snuggle up close - hoping it’s time for a bite of watermelon or maybe a slice of orange or banana. And when she looks over at me, her eyes light up because I am her Sunshine.

I luv my Moms, Sheri and Betty. We’re gettin’ ready for a ride in the golf cart. How ‘bout a slice of watermelon first?

So Dr. Pearl, I got upset this morning when I heard that no one wants to adopt special needs kids. Everyone goes for the young and the beautiful, but what about dogs who need extra help, Dr. P. What about them?

I hear you Linus. My heart feels full of sadness and tears when I hear stories about our cousins spending their days in kennels or sanctuaries because humans believe special dogs aren’t good enough for a forever family.

It’s true. Special needs dogs require extra care and help, but they are good dogs. Loving dogs. Dogs who want someone to love them. Linus, we need to educate humans about our specially-abled cousins.

Special needs dogs require love, food and water, a regular check up from the vet, and a home that is set up so it’s a safe and protective space. Some of them will need medications or maybe physical therapy. Those things aren’t so different from what we’d give our normal furry kids.

It takes a particular person who is willing to work with a special dog. One who won’t freak out or treat the dog like he’s bad if he has an accident in the house or makes a mess with his food, or acts different than other dogs in the house.

There are humans who understand and live with special needs dogs. They can offer support, encouragement, and suggestions to a family willing to give a specially-abled dog a family.

Linus, let’s encourage humans to give our special ones a chance for a better life.
In the back of the brain, near the spinal cord, sits the cerebellum which is responsible for maintaining balance, posture, helping the body to learn gross and fine motor skills, and coordinating muscle and eye movements. When it isn’t fully developed, an affected dog will experience a variety of physical and mental challenges.

Cerebellar hypoplasia (CH) affects puppies and adult dogs the same way. Symptoms are usually noticed in puppies when they begin exploring their world at about 6 weeks.

Certain breeds, including Toy poodles, Pomeranians, and Chihuahuas show a genetic predisposition to it. If a dog from one of these breeds has a CH parent, there’s a greater chance that the puppy will be affected. If you’re planning on buying a puppy from a breeder, ask to see documented proof that the puppy is free of genetic diseases. Remember that you probably won’t know the history of shelter dogs.

Viral and Infectious diseases such as rabies, Lyme disease, leptospirosis, and distemper can cause CH. Parvovirus can lead to it if treatment is not immediate and effective. A pregnant dog exposed to toxins can increase the risk of cerebellar hypoplasia in her puppies.

Intention tremors are a classic sign of the disorder. The dogs look normal until they focus and intend on doing something like eating out of a bowl. Not so easy. Their head and neck shakes or bobs back and forth.

They have difficulty with fine motor skills. They stand with their legs wide apart so they have better balance. Wobbly legs don’t always hold them up. When walking, they do the high step march. It’s hard for them to judge distance. Their uncoordinated bodies move and flail, behaving without direction from the dog. Going to the bathroom can be challenging. Focusing on objects in front of them is problematic due to nystagmus. Many have seizures. Sleeping is about the only thing they don’t find difficult.

Cont’d on page 5
Cerebellar Hypoplasia (cont’d from page 4)

If you suspect your dog might be affected, it’s important to give the vet as much detail as possible about your pet. The more information you can provide, the better. The veterinarian will do a physical exam, blood work, perhaps an ultrasound and sometimes an MRI. The signs and symptoms are usually enough for the doctor to make an accurate diagnosis.

A CH dog needs special care which can include help with eating. Create a safe and protective environment to avoid injuries and accidents. The important thing is to pay close attention to what the dog is capable of doing. The use of ramps or stairs (if she can navigate stairs), comfortable beds or crates, and wheelchairs or strollers, non-slip mats around and under food bowls can provide safety. Feed a well balanced diet, incorporate a regular exercise and physical therapy program. The vet may recommend medications to prevent seizures and tumors. Sometimes they work. Sometimes not.

There is no treatment or cure for cerebellar hypoplasia. Consider CH dogs as “special needs” pets. They require a lot of love, extra care and continual support. If the pet parent is willing to provide such care, the dog can lead a happy, normal life.

Check out the cerebellar hypoplasia FB group and products for dogs: page 7

Sources
https://embarkvet.com/products/dog-health/health-conditions/cerebellar-hypoplasia/
Spindy - A Dog With Neurological Challenges

A short update on little Spindy since this month’s newsletter focuses on neurological disorders. Spindy has cerebellar hypoplasia (CH), and mild hydrocephalus. She inherited her CH from her mom, Sunshine.

Her prognosis is truly unknown. We don't know if we will have her a week or 20 years. As she’s aged she’s started to have more seizure events, where she will shake and lose focus on things for short periods of time, but right now these don't come too often and are manageable.

Spindy is a happy and very sweet little dog. My pack has accepted her just the way she is. I don't believe she even realizes she is different.

The struggle we have is keeping her safe from getting stuck under things or spinning herself out the dog door.

Medications don't really help her. We've tried all the ones that have been suggested by our vet and neurologist with no results.

We continue to do water therapy with Spindy to strengthen her core and help her balance. She is capable of taking 10-20 steps "straight ahead" now, and when she is in "pounce play mode" she can Chihuahua wrestle with the best of them.

She has a new "brother" with scoliosis, who we have to be watchful over. They have become the very best of friends. During water therapy they play like two kids. I honestly believe having a special pack mate helps her focus better on her exercises, and I KNOW it makes her happier.

Bailey looks towards Fig and says: "You’re a fighter Spindy. Fig doesn’t stand a chance of winning a match with you."

Round 1: Spindy focuses on Fig. Can she? Will she?

And the winner is... YES!! Spindy pinned him to the mat. Way to go Spindy!
A note I found on the Cerebellar Hypoplasia FB page: “A four wheel cart will be the best thing to help him learn to use his legs. There is an awesome woman in San Francisco, Jenny Moe, that makes custom carts that will grow with your little guy. Doggon.com. You can watch Sweet Pea progress and learn to walk if you go to her Instagram page. While they are growing is really tough!” Casey Bertlesman
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CkFSZf5AgKo/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
https://www.facebook.com/groups/966380903376136/

“Doggon' Wheels is the only animal wheelchair company headed by an animal physical therapist. Dr. Jenny Moe has over 13 years of experience working with animals of all ability levels, and has used most cart companies with her patients. She has been a physical therapist for 20 years, and brings unique expertise from the world of pediatric PT in assistive devices to the animal world. Even if you don't have access to a rehabilitation professional in your area, Dr. Jenny can help determine the best choice for your pet.”
https://doggon.com
We also would like to remember Harriet. I went and picked her up from county for another foster who offered to work with her behavior. She was on the euthanasia list for growling and biting. No one at the shelter could handle her. When I went to pick her up, she seemed fine, and when I got her home, I quickly realized she had some sort of cognitive issue. She did not like to be touched on her right side, but there was no growling, just an effortless attempt to turn her head and bite.

She couldn't even eat. I had to syringe feed her. She was not aggressive by any means. The first day she slept most of the day, and then she came outside and started circling and head pressing into corners. I immediately made her an appointment. The vet believes she had acquired hydrocephalus which all her symptoms did point to, so we tried some meds. This initially seemed to work for her. She started eating and drinking on her own and walking straight. The last few weeks she started circling again.

Harriet was not with us long, but in that short time, I know she really enjoyed her food! She liked tripping the other dogs in the yard. When they expected her to walk straight, she circled right into them, lol! She enjoyed laying in the sun.

I know both are at peace. Without AZCR, they would have never been given a chance. Fostering saves lives.

Happy Mother's Day to all the moms out there! (human and pet)

The heat is here. Be safe. Keep your pups inside!
Pet Emergency Kit

Food & Water
- 7-day supply of food in an airtight container
- 3-day supply of water
- Bowls, liquid dish soap, manual can opener

Medication
- At least a 2-week supply of medication
- Dosage and administration instructions

Documents (keep a copy in a waterproof bag)
- Emergency contact list, including your veterinarian
- Microchip and license information
- Veterinary records with vaccination history
- Photo of your pet (preferably with you)

Travel supplies
- Carrier or crate with your contact information
- Extra collar/harness with ID tags and leash
- Portable litter box and litter (for cats)
- Favorite toys, travel bed

First aid materials
- Antibiotic ointment
- Adhesive tape, scissors, disposable gloves
- Non-stick bandage-wrap
- Absorbent gauze pads
- Styptic powder (stops minor bleeding)
- Saline solution
- Instant cold pack
- Fast-acting digital thermometer
- Towels and a blanket
- Muzzle
Let's Celebrate!

INTERNATIONAL CHIHUAHUA APPRECIATION DAY

MAY 14, 2023

Young, old or in-between, It’s OUR time to celebrate.

MAY 14, 2023
Soon it's gonna be June. I'll be singin' a different tune. See you in JULY.

Let's go play!

I wanna go snorkelin'. It's a fine day for it.

Layin' around, soaking in the rays. That's how I wanna play.