

SPORTING GROUP

tion when diving into summer activities. That young pup who used to play for hours in any weather is a memory of a few years ago. Make sure that you don't overtax the stamina of the older dog. Just as humans are urged to ease into more strenuous activity, the same should be applied to our ever-ready, overly enthusiastic Weimaraner friend.

You'll probably be taking longer walks in the good weather, and for those who walk on paved streets and sidewalks, don't forget those surfaces heat up quickly. While our dogs have sturdy, well-cushioned pads, even those can be injured. When the air temperature is the mid-80s, asphalt will heat up to 135 to 143 degrees. To give you an idea of how hot that is, an egg will fry in five minutes at 131 degrees. Ouch!

Swimming is a joy to most Weimaraners, but remember they have to learn that skill.

Introduction to water should be done slowly, and never by a "sink or swim" method. If your dog is swimming in a pool, make sure he or she is taught where the steps are, and repeat lessons on how to safely exit the pool. Pool chemicals should be rinsed off, and drinking pool water discouraged. When boating, remember that if you're wearing a life jacket, your dog should be wearing a floatation device too.

Considering the knowledge and experience of the readers of this column, I shouldn't have

to say this, but it can't be overemphasized: Leaving a dog alone in a car is never a good idea, but when temperatures rise it is asking for trouble. Not only is it a safety hazard for your dog, it is illegal in some states. If you're going to make some stops where your dog can't come in with you, leave your dog at home or travel with another person who can stay with the car.

Summer activities are some of the ones that our dogs love the most. Indulge your dog and yourself in the joys of summer, but do it safely.

—Carole Lee Richards,
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Alaskan Malamutes

BECOMING RAVEN: A VERY SPECIAL RESCUE JOURNEY

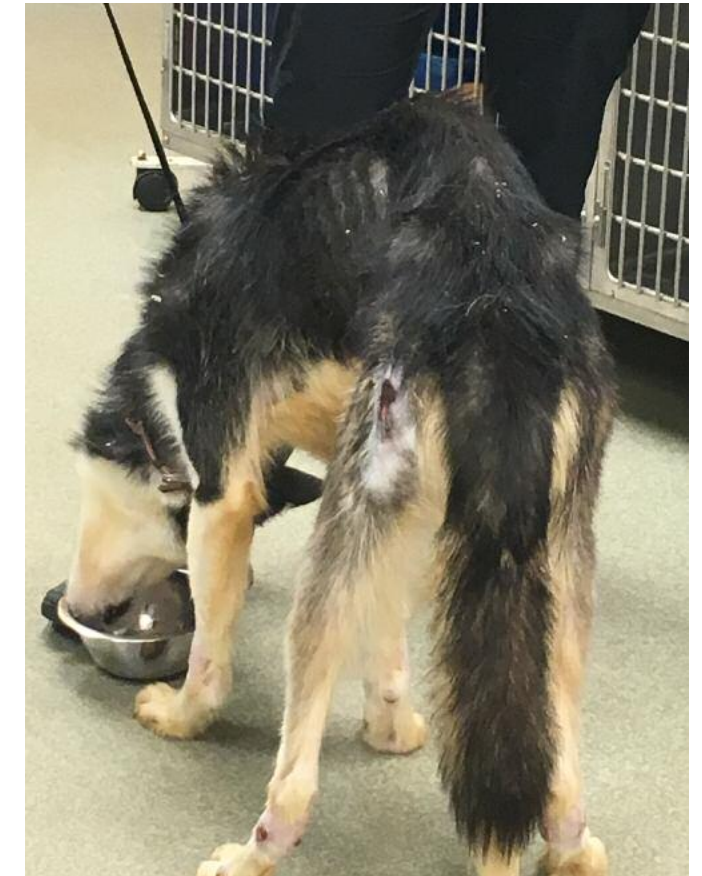
In my 50 years as an AKC exhibitor, and the past 35 years as a breeder, exhibitor, and rescuer of Alaskan Malamutes, it has been my special privilege to rescue and rehabilitate many deserving Malamutes. Each Malamute which arrives in rescue is a unique case: a blank slate to be stabilized, cared for, observed, and understood from both a behavioral perspective and a health and soundness



At 11 months old, Raven, then named Angel, was emaciated and had pressure sores when she came into rescue.

basis.

Because of the importance of this key concept, in mentoring others, I place the highest importance on this, as it is the starting point from which all else develops: setting all assumptions aside when one has the dog safely home. And so, in late November 2018, I received an emergency referral from Roseann Deutsch and Carlene Way, devoted AMCA members, that a Malamute puppy had been rescued by a humane officer in the process of



an arrest and was in critical condition. No chip, no history.

Raven, then named Angel, was 11 months old and had lived most of her life in a crate. She was food-deprived and weighed 37 pounds on the day of her rescue (the healthy weight on an 11-month-old Malamute female is 60–65 pounds). Her rescue was coordinated by the local county humane society.

Her confinement had created ulcerating sores on pressure points—hips, elbows, and

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knees. Despite her critical condition, once stabilized with fluids, her energy level was remarkably stable, she welcomed handling by staff, and eagerly downed frequent feedings, carefully proportioned to about 1 cup every two to three hours.

Remarkably, once supported with probiotics, her gastrointestinal system was able to process good food, and as later tests confirmed, she did not have an overburden of intestinal parasites (which often complicates starvation cases).

SETTING PRIORITIES

The first priority for Raven, as with all rescued Malamutes, is structure and consistency, as well as a secure indoor/outdoor airy kennel environment, with a strong, sizeable kennel run and a sturdy doghouse in which to retreat and relax. This essential fact: a safe territory, by themselves; able to see other Malamutes but not be challenged by them, is Priority One in the first days and weeks of rescue. Equally important is that they can see a consistent daily routine of knowledgeable people feed-

ing, caring for, and working with the other dogs, who express their joy and playfulness; yet subtly acknowledge the alpha status of their human family.

And so, in her new home, for her first week, Raven enjoyed small meals every three hours around the clock, and began to realize there was a rhythm to each day, and a new vocabulary of key words, paired with actions, which had meaning: “good,” “sit,” “wait,” “biscuit,” “okay,” and so on. Playtime brought more joys: toys, balls to chase and carry, basic obedience training, and food rewards which are the most meaningful of all to a Malamute, due to their unique development and evolution with the Inuit People of Alaska.

In her second week, Raven transitioned to three meals a day, gaining weight at a steady pace of several ounces per day, balanced with outside exercise both on and off lead, since she had little muscle tone and the ligaments of her legs and feet were weak from confinement. Since she could have easily ruptured a cruciate ligament or



With veterinary care, good nutrition, and gradual exercise and training, Raven became resilient and confident. Top: Lisa Silvestri helped rescue Raven and has worked with her ever since.



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suffered a sprain, I avoided fast work and sharp turns.

A TRANSFORMATION BEGINS

By weeks three and four, we were witnessing a transformation. Now weighing just over 50 pounds, Raven was blossoming into a happy, focused Malamute: now she knew who she was, and her world made sense. Gone were the pressure sores, the splayed feet, the anxiety of whether the next meal would appear. Raven was ready to begin behavior modification: the structured program which would explore and define her temperament, discover any aggression or other issues which needed retraining, and prepare her for a wonderful future home.

Behavior modification with a Malamute starvation case involves unique steps. Once Raven would sit on command and wait for me to place her food dish on the floor, I began with oral praise: a simple “good girl.” In a few days, when she would wag her tail while eating, I progressed to just a couple of petting strokes on her back, which she enjoyed without a hint of food-related aggression: a key positive!

Daily training, both on lead and at free-play, focused on food reward but with a verbal correction for any jumping up or attempt to grab the treat before it was offered, along with the

release word, “okay.” I introduced basic grooming at this time: just a few moments of a pin brush down her back and sides, followed by “okay” and a biscuit. By January 2019, Raven was standing happily on the floor and accepting a grooming noose and several minutes of combing per day, as she was shedding her old coat, and awaiting the growth of a healthy new coat. Her weight is now stable at 68 pounds, on two meals per day.

From January 2019 onward, Raven has met a whole new network of wonderful Malamute friends and discovered the joys of long walks along rural roads, and the thrill—and distraction—of squirrels, birds, bicycle riders, and cows and horses in nearby fields. She began to master the demands of learning to ignore distraction, accept firmer correction for food reward, and focus on her trainer. She performed well in this critical phase, never showing any resentment or aggression, but accepting the alpha position of the person working her. She was becoming resilient and confident: behaviors which have translated to the veterinary clinic, nail-trimming, and other new situations.

MASTERING A NEW LIFE

Now, as I write this in June of 2019, we see a lovely, confident 18-month old girl who continues to build condition and endurance, and

to express the full depth of her personality and temperament. Gone is the awkward pacing and clumsiness; now we see good gaits and coordination. She’ll have her hips radiographed when she turns two in January, and based on her hip soundness, we’ll know what lifestyle her future holds: as a beloved companion enjoying tranquil walks, or as a Malamute physically capable of enjoying her true breed heritage in our AMCA working events of backpacking, weight pull, and sledging, plus the whole spectrum of AKC’s obedience trials and recreational competition events.

Raven is surprising me in other ways too: the precious importance of finding food enabled her to survive and enter rescue in the first place. Since then, in these months of training and play, she has begun to track my scent to find hidden treats. I am starting to lay longer tracks now, and she is focused, thrilled, and going right to the target. As is characteristic of Malamutes, she air-scents as well as ground-scents. So now we see the birth of a possibility for a very different career: in Search and Rescue. Indeed, Lisa Silvestri, a close friend in Law Enforcement, who helped me rescue Raven and has worked with her ever since, plans to explore this with her in the coming year.

This is Raven’s journey, and I am blessed to

be a part of it: to shape a wonderful Malamute into the outstanding dog she was meant to be. This brings to mind the iconic Paul McCartney song, and the Raven totem of the Haida First Nation’s people:

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night,
Take these broken wings and learn to fly:
All your life, you were only waiting
For this moment to arise!*

—Phyllis I. Hamilton,

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[Alaskan Malamute Club of America](#)

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

TRYING TIMES: OR, TEENAGE MUTANT ANATOLIANS

Teenagers of any species are a handful. Anatolian Shepherds are no different. They’re neither fish nor fowl—no longer pups, but not quite yet adults. They have their adult height, but not the mass that they will achieve. They have puppy brains mixed with adult drives. They are testing boundaries and becoming more “guardy,” but they still have moments of insecurity where they behave like the pups they are. They still need input and direction—shepherding—from us as their owners, but they’re ready to leave the kennel, so to speak, and strike out on their own.

It is their last puppy hurrah before they turn