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# PyrReview

## Holiday 2008 Edition

December 2008

### Letter From The Editor

As the Holiday Season rapidly approaches, I think a great deal about giving and people and how amazing many of you are. Not only do you give financially, but you give your time. And that can be equally important when we have so many Pyrs coming into rescue.

I've been working with Great Pyrenees Rescue in different capacities since 1995. Each year, I've watched the numbers increase. The past few years, it seems as they've gone up exponentially. I often ponder all of the factors and wonder what we can do to help keep our numbers down and how we can get more folks to help. Rescue is not a job for everyone.

During the holidays, hug your pyrs, give thanks and accept our thanks for all that you do. Happy Holidays!

I hope that you enjoy this issue.

Thanks!

Karen Reiter



### Thank You!

I would like to extend sincere thanks to all of you who have sent in donations. I wish that I had the time to send individual "Thank You" cards to each and every one of you, but the time simply is not there. Rescue keeps me very busy and it takes great effort to deal with the revolving door of dogs that we've had these past months.

At this time of giving thanks and sharing with family, let me say "Thank You" for helping us out. It's greatly appreciated.

Happy Holidays from AGPR!

Victoria



**I know I can reach you, just give me a few more weeks!**

**Darn Bird!**

After the dust clears and the hair (and slime) stops flying, and I no longer have double vision, I see that they are in front of the door.



**Hey! How about adopting me! I have a great smile.!**

## **View From The Porch Walking Lotzi and Gilda**

Morning in my house usually starts with the ringing of the alarm. When I get out of bed, I'm still quite sleepy. Yet, I am surprisingly limber. Why? I've got two white, furniture-sized Great Pyrenees Mountain Dogs to walk over before I can get into the bathroom. Talk about an obstacle course. And sometimes it's really important that I get into the bathroom. (I won't go into details.) In order to get into the hallway, I have to step over a strategically placed Lotzi, who is sound asleep. There's even a slight snore. Out in the hallway I head for the bathroom door, which lies just beyond a strategically placed Gilda who is also sound asleep, though no snore. (She tells me that girls don't snore).

After washing up, I open the bathroom door, then, of course, step over Gilda, and step over Lotzi, and head downstairs. There is no sound but the slight creak of a step and the gentle occasional snore from Lotzi in dreamland. I go into the kitchen and pull out a few plastic bags (you know why) and walk back into the living room, up to the hat rack where we hang the leashes. I touch the leashes. There is an ever-so-slight clicking sound.

At this point, let me stop and ask you – can you imagine what buffalo might sound like as they thunder down steps? (This question separates the non-Pyr owners from the Pyr owners. Non-Pyr owners are answering with something like: "Buffalo?? Thundering down steps??" Pyr owners are answering with something like: "Buffalo, elephants, brontosauruses, whatever.") My daughter, by the way, never thundered down the steps like that at Christmas. But then, she was only getting a bunch of expensive toys. These guys are going for a walk!!! Outside!!! Oh Boy!!!

We are now at the point of no return.

After the dust clears and the hair (and slime) stops flying, and I no longer have double vision, I see that they are in front of the door. Since there are animals in the zoo that aren't as large as these two, opening the door becomes quite a feat and I can only get to it by doing my best impression of Mr. Fantastic, the elastic member of the Fantastic Four, and r-e-a-c-h over them. (It's a good thing I'm made of rubber. Oh, wait! I'm not!) Finally, I get the door open and there's the cloud of hair (and slime) again. (Don't forget the slime. Non-Pyr owners, don't even ask!)

Once I get caught up with them, I make sure leashes are secure, open the gate and usher them out one by one, and get all three of us are going in the same direction, (all of this can take some time). Now we actually walk, which means we proceed down the street, with two out of three noses tight to the ground, the third one being mine. I prefer not to have my nose so close to where I walk. After all, I know where I've been.

This one particular time, curiosity got the best of me and I had to ask, "What are you sniffing?"

"We're looking for something," Gilda answered. She did not look up.

"What?" I asked.

"Wolves," she said, still not looking up.

"Wolves?"

She finally looked up at me. "Wolves," she returned patiently. Humans can be such a test of a dog's patience.

"You're looking for wolves?"

I thought she was going to say something like "Read my lips," which wouldn't have helped me anyway since dogs don't have lips. But instead, she thought for a moment.

### View From The Porch, continued

"Well, not just wolves. Bears too."

"You're looking for wolves and bears? But this is Essex."

"How interesting," she replied, as she started skimming the surface of the ground with her nose again.

"But why would you look for wolves and bears in Essex?"

There was a pause, she sighed, and looked at me. "It's what we do," she said. Her normally big round eyes looked a little squinty to me right then.

At this, Lotzi looked up, and said, "What are we talking about? I'm sorry; I wasn't paying attention. I was looking for wolves and bears."

"You too?" I asked. "But there aren't any wolves or bears anywhere near here."

"That's right," Gilda said. "They wouldn't dare."

We walked on a little farther and I happened to ask, "Why the interest in wolves and bears? What would you do if you caught up with one?"

Lotzi chimed in this time, nose still to the ground. "Protect you," he said.

"Oh," I replied quietly.

After a moment of awkward silence passed, I cleared my throat and said, "Thank you." It was a meek kind of sound.

"Don't mention it," said Gilda. "Like I said," she stopped and looked back at me. "It's what we do."

We walked on some more, which gave me time to think. For the past year or so, I was just exercising my dogs. As far as they were concerned, all of that time they were patrolling the perimeter.

When we got back, I opened the gate, ushered them in one by one, got them to move so I can open the screen door, unclipped leashes and did my Mr. Fantastic impression to r-e-a-c-h over them to open the front door. (It's a good thing I'm made of rubber. Oops! Forgot again!) Finally, when we all got inside, they sauntered off to the kitchen where Mommy was, and sat down and stared at her until she got them both their morning biscuits. (I don't know if this is an act of telepathy or not. "Bring the biscuits!! Bring the biscuits!!") They split up to eat, following a rule they seem to have about eating in the same room. They don't do it. Why? I don't know. I don't ask.

"How'd it go?" my wife said to me after closing the biscuit tin lid.

"Perimeter secure," I said. She just looked at me.

"Don't ask," I said.

Later on, when they were taking their afternoon naps, she remarked, "They look content."

"No wonder," I said. "No wolves. No bears. Job done."

Lotzi

Gilda

Joe Stefan

*Many thanks to Joe Stephan for this wonderful article!*



The Great Pyrenees does not require frequent bathing like some breeds that have an oilier coat, such as the Labrador Retriever or the Newfoundland

**Why the interest in wolves and bears? What would you do if you caught up with one?"**



Visit us  
online at:

[Agprescue.com](http://Agprescue.com)



Christmas Is A'comin' - Give Some Thought To Pet Safety  
By Catherine de la Cruz



*Happy Holidays  
to you and  
yours!*

While you are  
at it, teach  
your dog the  
command  
"Leave it!"  
This is most  
effective when  
you see a dog  
**thinking**  
about getting  
into  
something.



"So save the  
chocolate treats  
for yourself and  
guests, out of  
the dogs' reach."



Whether you greet the holiday season with joy and anticipation, or with fear and depression, give some thought to the season's effect on your pet. Some advance planning can make the holidays easier for everyone, your veterinarian included.

" Since holidays always mean good things to eat, some dogs turn into beggars and even thieves when faced with temptation. Even dog-loving guests don't appreciate a drooling dog at their side when they want to enjoy their holiday dinner. Start now to teach your dog the "down/stay" command so he'll lie down quietly on the other side of the room. Practice at every meal! If your dog hasn't become reliable by holiday time, utilize your new dog crate and confine him while your guests are eating, " writes Vicky De Gruy, author of our favorite training article, "Alpha boot Camp."

While you are at it, teach your dog the command "Leave it!" This is most effective when you see a dog **thinking** about getting into something. As soon as she turns away from the forbidden item, praise lightly and offer a small treat as a reward. Since this command is only effective when you are in a position to catch the dog, start teaching yourself to put edibles out of the dog's reach - the top of the fridge and closed, above-counter cupboards are out of reach of most Pys. If your dog is able to open cupboards and refrigerator doors, go to the hardware store now and invest in some child-proof latches. While there, pick up a new garbage can with a locking lid to keep the dogs from decorating the living room with trash.

The Pets' Holiday Hazards season begins with Halloween when trick-or-treat bags are theirs for the raiding. While it takes a lot of chocolate to make a Pyr-sized dog sick, the plastic candy wrappers can cause discomfort and even intestinal blockage. While we're on the subject of chocolate, remember that chocolate contains an element, called theobromine, that is toxic to dogs. Even one ounce of pure chocolate can be lethal to a small dog (10 pounds or less). Larger quantities of chocolate can poison or even kill a medium or large dog. Dark and unsweetened baking chocolates are especially dangerous. So save the chocolate treats for yourself and guests, out of the dogs' reach.

Thanksgiving brings the danger of too much fat, poultry bones and a surfeit of leftovers. Poultry bones can splinter, puncturing the dog's intestinal tract, excess fat (including the turkey skin) and rich leftovers can cause diarrhea, vomiting and even hot spots. If you want your pets to share the Thanksgiving meal, limit their portion to a tablespoon of gravy and some leftover vegetables (not corn or onions) stirred into their regular kibble. They can skip the pie; a dog biscuit spread with peanut butter is tasty, and much better for them.

If you celebrate Chanukah, or use candles for any of the holidays, be sure they are up high where neither children nor dogs can accidentally knock them over. Christmas trees are very attractive to pets - while we smell the

### Christmas Is A'comin' - Give Some Thought To Pet Safety, continued...

scent of evergreen, they smell birds, and squirrels and other furry visitors and it's the rare male Pyr than can resist "marking" the tree at least once, to claim his ownership of it.

No home with pets should use flocking, "angel hair" (which is often spun glass) or tinsel on the tree. Ingested even accidentally, these can cause intestinal damage leading to death. The trees of long-time pet owners are easily spotted by the clustering of non-breakable ornaments on the lower branches, up to the pet's head-height, with the glass heirlooms safely wired to the topmost branches. The white trim on the lower branches is probably Pyr hair.

If you have a pup still in the chewing stage, ask your hardware store about a Ground Protection Fault (GPF) plug for the tree lights. This will cut off the electricity to the plug if the string gets grounded - in the mouth of a pup, for example. For a small investment, it can prevent electrocution, injury and even death.

Don't put preservatives into the water around the base of a tree; this is a favorite "watering hole" for both dogs and cats, so check the water level daily. If your pup is still in the "bull-in-a-china-shop" stage, consider getting a smaller tree that you can put up on a table. For additional stability, use strong nylon line to cross-tie the tree to the wall or ceiling. Visitors sometimes wonder about the strange placement of ceiling mounted planter hooks at my house - until the Christmas tree is tied to them for stability against pups and kittens!

Finally, keep ornamental holiday plants out of the dogs' reach. Some toxic holiday plants include amaryllis, boxberry, Christmas berry, Christmas cherry, Christmas pepper, Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, poinsettia, rhododendron and yew. If any of these are ingested, remember that 1-2 tablespoonfuls of hydrogen peroxide given orally to your pet will induce vomiting. Always check with your veterinarian if possible before inducing vomiting.

Remember that our pets thrive best on a regular schedule. Regular mealtimes, regular bed times, regular attention times, all contribute to the pets' peace of mind. If holiday shopping interferes with quality time with the dog (or the family), give some thought to rescheduling the shopping. If you are one of the many who suffer from depression during the holidays, keeping your pet to a regular schedule will help you as much as it helps him. Physical exercise, regular walks and quiet cuddle-times are good for both of you.

With some planning, some training of both dog and family, and attention their need for a stable schedule, the holidays can be an enjoyable time for everyone. Oh, while you are making out your Holiday giving list, don't forget a donation to your local Rescue. Happy Holidays to all.

Above article reprinted with permission, compiled by Catherine de la Cruz. For more articles on Great Pyrenees, visit her website at:

<http://www.sonic.net/~cdlcruz/GPCC/library.htm>



Lizzie found her new home this past year.



Don't put preservatives into the water around the base of a tree; this is a favorite "watering hole" for both dogs and cats, so check the water level daily.





The less hair on her feet, the less mud she will drag in. (Sort of the difference between going for a walk in the mud with fuzzy slippers vs. real shoes.)



**If you would like to make a donation, please send a check or money order to:**

Appalachian Great Pyrenees Rescue  
8976 Battlefield Park Rd  
Richmond, VA 23231

*Thank you for supporting our rescue efforts.*

### Wet Weather Grooming by Catherine de la Cruz

*It's winter, it's raining, and you've got a long-furred, double-coated, wet and muddy dog to contend with. What to do? Catherine de la Cruz shares some wet weather wisdom to help you care for your dog this season.*

#### TOOLS NEEDED

- Pin Brush
- Slicker Brush
- Blunt-point scissors
- Towels
- Corn Starch
- A long, flat pan or clean litter box
- Newspapers
- 50/50 Alcohol/vinegar mix (see below)
- A syringe or "ear bulb" to apply above mix

#### FEET

When the dog is fairly dry, use the blunt-tipped scissors to clip all the hair from between the pads. If this isn't a job you want to do, your local grooming shop can do it and "neaten" the hair between her toes. The less hair on her feet, the less mud she will drag in. (Sort of the difference between going for a walk in the mud with fuzzy slippers vs. real shoes.) You might want to shorten the hair on the hocks, above the hind feet, as well.

#### EARS

Unless your dog has infected ears, or your vet has given you special instructions about her ears, mix equal amounts of rubbing alcohol and distilled or cider vinegar and store it in a sealed jar. Label it as poisonous if taken internally. Weekly throughout the winter, using a syringe or ear bulb, pour about 1 teaspoon (5cc) into each ear, squish it around, then stand back and let the dog shake her head (best done out of doors.) Using a damp washcloth, wipe any gunk from the inside flap of the ear. **DO NOT DIG INTO THE EAR CANAL.** The alcohol is drying; the vinegar changes the pH of the ear so fungus is less likely to grow there.

#### COAT

Choose a room with hard flooring for grooming. Spread newspapers on the floor. Towel the dog as dry as you can. Open the box of cornstarch. Then, put one front foot in the flat pan (litter box). Take a handful of cornstarch and rub it into the "feathers" and leg of the foot standing in the pan. The pan is to catch whatever falls off so it can be reused. Repeat with each foot and leg. Rub cornstarch into other muddy spots as well. The cornstarch will dry and adhere to the dirt and combs easily out of the hair.

Using the pin brush, brush through the feathers of the first front leg. As the hair dries, switch to the slicker brush, starting at the bottom of the leg and gradually working up to the shoulder in front, the hip in back. Always start at the bottom and work from a clean area to a soiled one.

**Wet Weather Grooming by Catherine de la Cruz, continued...**

**TAIL**

The tail mats easily and should never be combed out while dry. Using cornstarch and the pin brush, work as much of the mud out as possible, then leave serious grooming until the dog is otherwise clean and dry. Fill a spray bottle with a one-third each mixture of Mane and Tail or Cowboy Magic hair conditioner, Absorbine Show Sheen and warm water. With the now-dry dog lying or sitting comfortably (either on a grooming table or on the floor) place the tail on the flat surface with the hair coming at a 90-degree angle to the tail bone. Spray the conditioner mixture on and rub it into the hair. Use extra on any mats.

Using the slicker brush, start brushing at the tips of the hair. Your first strokes should only be an inch or so in length – remember, at 90 degrees to the tail bone. Get that first inch of hair untangled; then move up another inch and brush downward. As you gradually work up toward the tail bone, you may encounter serious mats. These can be loosened with scissors – clipping in the direction the hair grows. Once cut into one- to two-inch segments, wet further with the conditioner mix, rub in, then try brushing out. Remember, start the slicker brush near the tip of the hair and always work your way into the mats from the bottom. Most dogs are pretty tolerant of having their tails brushed if the hair is lying on a flat surface while doing so.

**FINISHING**

When the dog is dry and clean, do a final light spritz of the whole coat with the conditioner mixture and surface-brush lightly to eliminate static cling.

**OUT OF DOOR DOGS**

Bed your outside dogs in white pine shavings; the muddiest dog will bed down in it and get up sparkling clean in the morning. It does, however, tend to get tracked in the house.



Using the slicker brush, start brushing at the tips of the hair.

Most dogs are pretty tolerant of having their tails brushed if the hair is lying on a flat surface while doing so.



Emma and Nina during an infrequent snow day...



Margit's first experience with snow in Virginia...

### In Memory of Polar, March 02, 1993 - March 24, 2008



*Below are two short articles that I wrote about Polar. The first I wrote for his 15th birthday and the second was written when he passed on. I hope that you enjoy them. Karen Reiter*

"thank you to everyone that helps with rescue. It's one of the most difficult jobs that we have, and can be thankless and endless; but it warms hearts and heals the soul. "



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8976 Battlefield Park Rd  
Richmond, VA 23231

*Thank you for supporting our rescue efforts.*

"Ahhh, what is the feast for the evening my friend? It's my 15th Birthday you know." Said Polar in his own sweet way.

"Tonight my friend, the feast consists of some very delectable kibble, mixed with some superb beef vegetable stew. I know how much you like your beef, so you'll receive a pleasurable mix. We also have a toasted French bread drizzled with the slightest hint of honey for dessert." Replied the cook.

And that is what Polar will have for his dinner this evening, for his 15th birthday.

Polar was by far the oldest rescue that I've had. He came to me via the Illinois 44. For those of you that don't know, about 2 years ago, 44 Great Pyrs were taken from a home in Illinois. National and local Pyr rescue folks helped out the 2 local shelters who quickly became overloaded.

Knowing how difficult it is to place an older dog, I let the powers that be know that I'd be willing to take in one of the older Pyrs. A few days later, I received an email from Jean Pero, who was then the president of the GPCA telling me about a 13 year old male. Apparently the shelter director felt that he was worth saving and wanted to place him in a special home. I thought "Wow! Thirteen years old! Poor old man, he needs some TLC in his remaining time here."

We arranged transportation and about 3 weeks later, I picked up Polar in Waynesboro, VA and brought him home. He is a gentle old soul, who is aging much more quickly these past few weeks. His time will come soon, but the time that I've shared with him is immeasurable.

I love you old man. Happy Birthday.

And thank you to everyone that helps with rescue. It's one of the most difficult jobs that we have, and can be thankless and endless; but it warms hearts and heals the soul. Thanks for letting me share.

We celebrated Polar's 15th birthday a few weeks ago. And this morning, he gently crossed over to the bridge while cradled in my arms. He's gone to meet up with those I've lost before him; Shelly, Trooper, Badger and Molly. He left his two good friends here; Malachi and Margit, who are currently wondering where he is and why aren't they getting his leftovers.

**In Memory of Polar, March 02, 1993 - March 24, 2008, cont...**

Polar showed me that even though something can be in your life for what may be a fleeting moment, that thing can change you forever. He is yet another who taught me lessons to be remembered and shared.

Tonight, look hard at the eastern sky. You'll find a new star, all bright and whole and young. The hole in my heart will mend over time, but there will always be that empty space, that void that needs to be filled.

To those of you who have adopted rescue dogs and to those of you who are considering it, think about an older dog; one that is hard to place. I've had two during the past couple of years and the rewards are tremendous. They far outweigh the short time that we have to spend with them, but they appreciate you and will love you and hold your heart forever.

Polar, I hope that you enjoyed your life with me as much as I loved having you in mine.



Polar, when he was 13 & 1/2



Polar showed me that even though something can be in your life for what may be a fleeting moment, that thing can change you forever.



**Dogs I've Known, In Memoriam Service...**



If you've had a Pyrenees that you've loved and lost and would like to place a "Memoriam" for him or her, please email [Karen@gratefuldog.com](mailto:Karen@gratefuldog.com) with your information and a picture if you have one.

We offer this service free of charge.

On your left is Polar, who was adopted when he was 13 years old and lived to see his 15th Birthday. Rest well old man, it was a pleasure to have known and loved you.



During the winter, check your dogs foot pads for ice after he's been playing in the snow. Ice can get caked in and be irritating to your Pyr.

**Appalachian  
Great Pyrenees  
Rescue**

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We're on the web:  
[www.agprescue.com](http://www.agprescue.com)

**Great Pyrenees Events**

What: Our next AGPR event will be held in the Spring. Please check our website for up to date information.

What: 74th Annual Great Pyrenees Club of America National Specialty Show  
When: March 24-28, 2009, Santa Barbara, California  
Hosted by the Great Pyrenees Alliance of the West (GPAW)  
For More Information visit: <http://www.2009gpcanational.org/index.php>

The week will consist of showing, health seminar, rescue and other committee meetings, great food, fun people. If you'd like more information about what's involved, please check either of the websites listed above.

This is Molly when she was 7 months old, experiencing her first snowfall



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