

# The River City Lab Gab

December 2011  
Volume 6, Issue 2

Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond • [generalinformation@labrescue-richmond.com](mailto:generalinformation@labrescue-richmond.com)

## Special Interest Articles

Message from the Board

Holiday Safety

Pets, Diet and Exercise

Adoption News

Pet Health Resources

"Winterizing" Your Pet



## Message from the Board

Jane Beall, Lois Mickiewicz, Liann Snipes, Christine Wilson, Dewayne Wilson

And so another year has passed. It was a quick year, with labs everywhere. The economy is still affecting lab ownership, shelters are still overflowing and we are still working daily to keep up.

This year, with 54 Labs in the Greater Richmond area needing our help, we brought them in and did everything we possibly could do for each and every one. From traditional vetting, training, extreme vetting, loving and adoring them, not one of these wonderful spirits waivered. To this date, we have re-homed 47 of them.

Veterinary costs rose, our needs increased and our incredibly hard working volunteers stepped up in so many instances to help keep us able to support the needs of these rescued labs. From the Silpada Silver Jewelry, Thirty-One Gifts,

Tastefully Simple and Michie Bags Party, to the First Annual Dog Swim, to wrapping gifts at our local Orvis store, our volunteers put on their work boots and jumped right in. Without such wonderful folks like these, we could never have accomplished what we did.

This year's veterinary care was a challenge. We had many cases of heartworm disease this year, and the treatment is impossible to get or not available at all due to the manufacturer being shut down. When we could find it, the cost was 5 times what it was last year. Though the cost was high, we saved each dog. This is a preventable disease—giving a monthly pill will protect these dogs. The treatment may be coming in 2012, we just don't know. **Invest in preventative care!**

These 54 labs came to us looking for heartworm treatments, cancer surgeries, eye surgeries,

treatment for Lymes disease, Ehrlichea disease, skin infections, simple allergies to severe allergies, and standard care. Each one received what they needed because of wonderful people who care what happens to labs in need, and because of the generosity of spirit to want to help.

This year we are asking to think about what is to come in 2012. Will our numbers TRIPLE? Will we be able to handle what these hard times are doing to the innocent labs? We don't have any doubts that with our volunteers, and the lab loving community made of people such as yourselves, we will be able to do it!

If you would like to help support Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond, you may use Paypal on our website at [www.labrescue-richmond.com](http://www.labrescue-richmond.com) or mail your donation to:

LRGR  
P.O. Box 1574  
Midlothian, VA 23113

## In this Issue:

Board Message	1
Holiday Safety	2
Holiday Plants Safety	2-3
Events and Fundraising	3
Is Your Pooch Too Pudgy?	4
Adoption Corner	5
Pet Health Resources	5
Cold Weather Tips	6
Our Featured Lab	6
About Us	7
Happy Tails	7



### Quick Tips to familiarize yourself with common holiday plants

#### Poinsettia Plant

Many people associate the Poinsettia plant with extreme toxicity, but this is not entirely true. In fact, it is largely an urban legend, dating back to 1919, according to David Emery, About.com Guide to Urban Legends. The sap of Poinsettias is considered to be mildly toxic/irritating, and will probably cause nausea or vomiting, but not death. It is better to err on the side of caution, though, and keep pets away from this plant.

#### Mistletoe and Holly

A couple of holiday plants, specifically Mistletoe and Holly, are considered to be moderately to severely toxic, and you should call your veterinarian or poison control center immediately for specific advice.

#### Lilies and Daffodils

Additionally, plant bulb kits featuring Amaryllis and other plants in the lily family, Narcissus and other plants in the daffodil family, are popular gift items at this time of year. Pet owners should be aware that these plants are very toxic for cats, and sometimes with severe symptoms of gastrointestinal signs, cardiac arrhythmias, kidney failure, convulsions and death. Daffodils are toxic to both dogs and cats, especially the bulbs.

#### Christmas Tree

Don't forget about the Christmas tree. Christmas trees are considered to be mildly toxic. The fir tree oils can be irritating to the mouth and stomach, causing excessive drooling or vomiting. The tree needles

## Holiday Safety for Dogs

The holidays are all about family, friends, fun and food - but sometimes it's easy to forget about holiday safety for your dog.

We all want our dogs to be part of the celebration, but there are some important guidelines to follow. Keep your dog safe this holiday season - no one wants their holiday celebration to end up at the veterinary emergency clinic!

**No table scraps!** Just because we humans like to indulge in the feast does not mean it is good for our dogs. Rich, fatty foods can seriously upset your dog's stomach and even be toxic. It is especially important to keep your dog away from the following dangerous foods:

Onions, which can cause anemia (high levels of garlic can, too);

Grapes and Raisins ;

Chocolate ;

Bones (especially cooked bones and ANY poultry bones);

Alcoholic beverages.

There are some human foods

that are okay for dogs, so if you want to give Max or Maggie a special treat you have some options. Try a small piece of cooked turkey or chicken without skin or bones (and hold the gravy). Raw carrots and apples in moderate amounts are actually healthy for dogs. Just remember - everything in moderation.

#### Watch the holiday decorations!

Most dogs are curious by nature, so they will want to check out any additions to the decor. Sniffing can lead to chewing, or even ingestion of foreign objects.

Keep electrical cords tucked away and other decorations or holiday plants out of reach. Watch out for dangling pulled down and cause injury. Candles should never be left unattended. Also, if you have a Christmas tree, don't let your dog drink the tree water - it can make her sick.

#### Don't let your dog get lost in the shuffle.

Holiday parties and gatherings can mean lots of commotion. This might be fun for you, but not for your dog. Lots of people in your home can result in injury or stress for

your dog. A large crowd is not the place for most dogs, so consider keeping her in a crate or quiet room - especially if she is the nervous type. If she is comfortable around a smaller group, just make sure you set down the ground rules with your company: don't feed the dog and keep the doors closed!

Many pets get loose and run off during the holiday season. Though your dog should always wear a collar with current identification, this is especially important during the holiday season. Sadly, many dogs run off and become lost during the holiday season. Don't let yours be one of them.

You and your dog can still enjoy the holiday season. Be sure to watch for any signs of illness and keep the vet's number handy. Stay safe and have fun.

Source: Stregowski, Jennifer, About.com Guide. "Holiday Safety for Your Dog".



*(Holiday Plants, cont.)*

are not easily digested either; possibly causing GI irritation, vomiting, gastrointestinal obstruction or puncture. As noted earlier, the amount of trouble depends on how much is consumed. Many times, pets don't consume mass quantities of tree material.

#### Common Clinical Signs Seen

Signs most commonly seen with toxic plant ingestion relate to the gastrointestinal tract: vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and sometimes excessive salivation (drooling). In some cases, such as holly berry ingestion, tremors or seizures may be seen, followed by coma and death.

#### Stay Safe - Watch Your Plants and Your Pets

Monitor your pet's interest in the plants. To be 100% safe, do not bring toxic live plants into your home. If unsure about a plant, [look it up to check toxicity](#). Monitor your pet's interest in eating plants, and place plants out of reach. Check the plants for any signs of chewing or missing leaves. If unsure, plastic plants are an option (with care taken not to let those get ingested, either!).

Source: Crobsy, Janet Tobiasson, About.com Guide. "Poisonous Holiday Plants".



## Events and Fundraising

Lois Mickiewicz, Public Relations and Philanthropic Coordinator

Lab Rescue was out and about a lot this year. From community festivals to partnering with various businesses throughout the greater Richmond area, our dogs and volunteers were strutting their stuff.

Below is a sampling of the events we attended in 2011.

- PetCo Adoption Day
- Mardi Paws
- Woofstock
- Bass Pro Shops Meet and Greet
- Southern States Meet and Greet
- Metro Richmond Pet Savers Adoption Day
- Canine Carnival
- Capital GMC Customer Appreciation Day
- Field Day of the Past

Whew, we get tired just reading this list! We would like to thank all of the organizations who allowed us to attend their event, to

show off our very adoptable labs and to get the word out about Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond.

Saving all of these labs takes time, love and, last but not least, money. The majority of our budget is derived from adoption fees, but not all. We hold various fundraisers throughout the year to help supplement our "kitty" (no offense meant to our wonderful labs!).

Our fundraisers serve two purposes, to help us raise some much needed funds, but they also act as an avenue to get the mission of LRGR out to the general public. Following are some of the fundraisers we sponsored this past year.

- Macy's Shop for a Cause Day
- LRGR Doggie Swim

- Fundraiser
- LRGR Shopping Day
  - Orvis Gift Wrapping

If you would be interested in serving on our fundraising committee, or if you have an idea for a fundraiser, please contact us.

Remember that we also have fundraisers that run all year! These include LRGR TShirt Sales, "I Love My Labrador" bumper stickers and car magnets, and Lab Tervis Tumblers (soon to be available on our website). Visit our website for the [link](#) to view these items.

Information on all of our fundraisers can be found on the [LRGR website](#).

If you would like more information on any of our upcoming fundraisers, please drop a line to: [LRGRInformation@labrescue-richmond.com](mailto:LRGRInformation@labrescue-richmond.com).

## Is Your Pooch Too Pudgy?

Half of the dogs and cats in this country are overweight, putting them at risk of joint pain, diabetes and shortened life spans.

Americans aren't the only ones whose waistlines are expanding—our pets are getting bigger too. Just over half of all cats and dogs in US households are either overweight or obese, reports the APOP 2009 National Pet Obesity Awareness Day Study, and the reasons our pets are packing on the pounds aren't that different from the reasons their owners are. Just as we're eating larger portions and more snacks than a generation ago, so are our pets.

Because our lives are busier, we're less likely to get the exercise we need—and less likely to take a long walk with our dogs or engage our cats with a ball of yarn.

It might seem that an extra pound or two on our four-legged companions isn't so terrible. But that little bit can be a significant percentage of a pet's total weight. For example, a

Yorkie who tips the scales at "just" 12 pounds is equivalent to a 5-foot-4 woman who weighs 218 pounds.

Overweight and obese pets not only have shorter life spans but also suffer from more medical problems during their lives, including back pain, arthritis, kidney disease, and diabetes—and they're more expensive to care for as a result. Just as disturbing is that an inactive pet is more likely to become depressed or anxious.

### Pet Exercise Dos & Don'ts

**Don't** be a weekend warrior – Exercising heavily on a Saturday after a whole week off can aggravate arthritis and cause joint injuries and sore muscles.

**Do** watch for warning signs of fatigue – Be alert to extreme panting, and check if your dog's ears are back from her face and her pupils are dilated.

**Don't** use a retractable leash – Your dog can accidentally become entangled with bikes, strollers and other dogs.

**Do** let your dog walk and run on packed wet sand – It's easier on the joints.

**Don't** tie your pet to your bike – Even if the leash doesn't get snaaed in the spokes, your



### How to Start Your Furry Friend on a Diet

1. Use Portion Control – The serving size on a bag of kibble is formulated for active adult dogs and cats, says Ernie Ward, DVM. So if your 90-pound dog needs to lose 15 pounds, follow instructions for a 75-pound dog, suggests Barbara Royal, DVM. But cats become critically ill if they don't get enough food, so instead of restricting amounts, switch to a fewer carbohydrates.

2. Limit High-Calorie Snacks – Traditional pet treats are the canine or feline version of a Twinkie: high in sugar and carbs, low in protein. Look for high-protein treats that can be torn into small pieces.

3. Give Your Dog a Workout – When it comes to exercise, not all dogs are created equal. Check with your vet before starting a new regimen.

Be sure to read the [full article](#) for great tips and guidance on getting our four-legged friends as healthy as possible!

Source: Lippman, Margaret, Prevention magazine, November 2011.



The reason a dog has so many friends is because he wags his tail instead of his tongue.

~ Unknown

## Adoption Corner

Jane Beall, Adoption Coordinator

Another year has passed, and we have been quite busy.

Our foster homes have done an outstanding job getting to understand their rescues, and the needs and requirements for each lab. Without that knowledge, we could not match the right lab to the right family.

And that is exactly what our volunteers have done. We have placed, on average, one dog per week for 2011! It takes long hours each week to interview, meet, and talk

long and hard about the potential home for each lab rescued.

We succeed because we work for each individual dog. We are there for support after the adoption, and we get to have the pleasure of hearing or seeing how well the lab is doing in their forever home.

We are grateful to each and every volunteer, and to each and every adopter who opened their hearts and homes to a wonderful rescued lab.

We never know what the

next day will bring. But what we do know is that we are dedicated to caring for and finding the perfect home for each lab we have rescued.

Some may take longer than others, but each one will receive that second chance that we have promised them.

Happy Holidays!



## Pet Health Resources Available

Improvements in pet health insurance plans may make them worth considering. Many other pet owners consider alternative treatments for their pets.

Two independent web sites have broken down plans to basic, easy-to-understand charts that can help you navigate the options. Visit [pet-insurance-university.com](http://pet-insurance-university.com) and [petinsurancereview.com](http://petinsurancereview.com).

Discover which pet health insurance plans are worth it to save money on dog surgery, cat vaccinations, pet medication and more.

Before you purchase a pet insurance policy, check

with your vet to create a list of potential health problems, given your animal's breed and history. To be sure you've taken care of the most important conditions, opt for a plan that will cover things like cancer, chronic diseases such as diabetes, hereditary diseases, and medical conditions common to your pet's breed.

Holistic pet care is becoming more widespread, but there is still no gold standard for certification. If you choose holistic pet treatment rather than the more traditional treatment, check that your practitioner is

recognized by one of the following reputable organizations:

The Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy [theavh.org](http://theavh.org)

The American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association [ahvma.org](http://ahvma.org)

American Veterinary Chiropractic Association [animalchiropractic.org](http://animalchiropractic.org)

Chi Institute of Chinese Medicine [tcvm.com](http://tcvm.com)

International Veterinary Acupuncture Society [ivas.org](http://ivas.org)

Source: Prevention magazine. November 2011.

## Cold Comfort - 7 Ways to Winterize Your Pets



Michael and Katie LeBel's dog, Hopkins, loves the cold. The 5-year old Labrador Retriever just can't get enough of the frigid air, not to mention snow and ice, of Maine's winter.

But the LeBels know that the season poses unique dangers to pets. Like you, dogs and cats can and should enjoy the outdoors in the winter.

To keep them safe and healthy, here are seven ways to weatherproof

your pet.

### Stow the chemicals

Cats and dogs like the sweet taste of antifreeze, so clean up spills promptly.

"Even one teaspoon is potentially lethal," says R.J. Krapfl, DVM.

### Honk for safety's sake

Before turning on your ignition, look under your car, tap on the hood, or honk the horn to rouse any sleeping kitties.

### Watch those tails and ears

Despite their fur, pets can develop frostbite, the tissue damage that occurs with cold exposure. If you suspect frostbite, dampen

a towel with warm (not hot) water and apply to the affected area(s). Wrap the animal in towels and take her to the vet to assess the damage.

Read the [full article](#) and learn about the remaining tips: Look for tread wear; Be cautious with senior pets; Give them shelter; and Know your pet's limits.

Also, the ASPCA's [website](#) has additional cold-weather tips to keep your pets safe.

Source: Doherty, Kathleen, Prevention magazine, November 2011.

## Cain, Our Featured Lab



We are again featuring Cain, a sweet lab for whom we have provided care and love for a number of months. We want to share another's point of view of what life is like with this wonderful boy:

We had the absolute pleasure of dogsitting Cain for four days. In those four days we had such a wonderful time. He is a sweet boy who just wants

attention. When he places his head in your lap, you cannot deny him. Walking with him is enjoyable and a must. I believe a little love affair began between this Romeo and our female lab. They ran and ran in the yard, and when not doing that they quietly chewed each other's faces!! When it was time to settle down and relax, he accommodated all of us. On another note ... caring for Cain and his allergies is SO SIMPLE. He loves his food and would never know his meds are in the bowl. Yes, he does require shots, but they could not be easier. He has no idea at all that he is getting it. If you have had to care for a sick child or someone with a broken leg, you have worked 100% harder than caring for Cain. Please do not let this little aspect of his life deter you from the love and companionship of one fabulous dog. Go to our website and complete an [application](#), and a volunteer will contact you.

## About Us

Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization serving Richmond, Virginia and nearby counties.

We rescue Labrador Retrievers and provide them with foster homes and veterinary care until they can be adopted into new, loving homes. Each one of our Labs is housed in a foster home, instead of in a kennel or shelter. We feel this is the best way to get to know the Labs we rescue.

We are not affiliated with any other Lab Rescue organization.

Please keep in mind that there are many purebred Labs available in shelters, so please visit your local shelters as well!



## Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond

**Mailing address:**  
P.O. Box 1574  
Midlothian, VA 23113

•  
**Phone:**  
804-417-7527

•  
**Email:**  
[generalinformation@  
labrescue-  
richmond.com](mailto:generalinformation@labrescue-richmond.com)

Visit us online!  
[www.labrescue-  
richmond.org](http://www.labrescue-richmond.org)

"Join" us on  
[Facebook!](#)



## Happy Tails

We never tire of hearing the wonderful success stories that our adopters share with us! In this edition, we are featuring an update on Bella (pictured) ...

"Bella came to us in February, needing so much care. She had heartworms, a severe bladder infection, and so many fears. Over the many weeks of treatment for her heartworm, she came to trust us, enjoy the comforts and love being given to her, and met so many new folks. As the weeks go by, we see more and more of her personality come out. She adores other dogs, seeks out children, will climb stairs and, of course, walks. Not understanding that the baby pool is for swimming, she climbs in and drinks from 'that really big water bowl.' Bella slid into our home, our hearts and our world. She eased the pain of the loss of our older lab, and has brought more laughter to our lives. Thank you Lab Rescue for allowing Bella to adopt us!!! You do great work. "