



# NEEDLE-NEWS

Volume 1 / Issue 3 / December 17, 2008

## WELCOME TO NEEDLE-NOSE

Needle-Nose's primary geographical area for ex-racing greyhound adoption is from Kitchener to Oshawa, but did you know that we have adopters living as far as London to the west and Kingston to the east? As they say, good news travels fast and apparently far as well! In this issue, an article on how Needle-Nose goes about securing suitable ex-racers for adoption, will shed some light on what is involved in getting your beloved greyhound home. Recent adopters will appreciate the articles on how to go about clipping your greyhound's nails and will be armed with information on off-leash parks. All our readers will delight in the story of Homie, a recently adopted Needle-Nose hound who has a special job he does very well. Needle-

Nose does its best to reach far and wide, spreading the word about what wonderful pets can be found among the likes of the ex-racing greyhound. One of the ways we accomplish this is through the stories, anecdotes and useful information on the greyhound that appear in this newsletter. We hope you will enjoy it and that you will share it with your friends.

*Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season,*

*Elizabeth Hunt  
Editor, Needle-News*

## Two Places To Pace - Two Venues, Two Time Slots for our Galloping Greys to Have Fun!

Hard to believe summer has been and gone, and snow and ice have already replaced the green grass and soft soil where our beloved greyhounds play.

But don't despair - our greyhounds don't have to wait until the first tulips have emerged to safely run and play with their friends again.

In fact, this Winter there are two Greyhound play groups offering indoor play time facilities on Sundays, at two different hours, to accommodate as many Greyhounds as possible.

Greyhounds Havin' Fun (GHF) is a new group that answered the need for a venue closer to Toronto. GHF meets in a horse arena north of Ajax, just northeast of Highway 7 and Westney Road, Sundays from 9:30 - 11 a.m. The group will not meet on December 28.

Galloping Greys Play Group (GGPG), which operated out of Windfields Farm

last Winter, has moved its venue to Dreamcrest, a horse farm located just north of Oshawa, east of Simcoe Street on Shirley Road. GGPG meets on Sundays from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. The Group is on Christmas break until January 11.

Both arenas offer fine sand surfaces, excellent for ex-racers to safely stretch their legs and socialize with friends.

Each participant is required to sign a "hold harmless" form, and must adhere to rules designed to ensure the hounds' safety. Every dog must be muzzled at all times, with no exceptions.

For more information about Greyhounds Havin' Fun, e-mail Lesley Cadham at [timotheelea@rogers.com](mailto:timotheelea@rogers.com).



Muzzled hounds stretch their legs at indoor arenas

For more information about Galloping Greys Play Group, e-mail Renee Cotton at [renee\\_cotton@rogers.com](mailto:renee_cotton@rogers.com).

Editor's Note: For west-enders, there is a greyhound only hour every Sunday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at Prospect Park in Acton. For more information, see our website at [www.needle-nose.ca](http://www.needle-nose.ca)



# How Those Beautiful Greyhounds Arrive on our Doorsteps

Placing retired racing greyhounds in loving homes is Needle-Nose's goal, and it is the quality of the placements rather than the quantity that matters.

Seven greyhounds were included on Needle-Nose's recent run that took place on Saturday, November 8. Five were from Melbourne, Florida and two hitchhiker hounds came along for the ride from West Virginia. We thank Dennis and Claire Tyler for picking up the hitchhikers for us, and Kathy and Jeff Bowman for meeting Dennis' hauler on its way from Florida. As of the printing of this article, all seven of Needle-Nose's newest dogs have been placed with their adoptive homes and are doing well.

Needle-Nose brings retired racing greyhounds to Southern Ontario for adoption as the need arises, usually about five or six times each year. More effort goes into getting the dogs to their adoptive homes than is commonly known. Needle-Nose's adoption committee members and the track adoption representatives who select the greyhounds to send to Needle-Nose are the ones who keep the process moving. Throughout the entire process, Needle-Nose's concern is for the best interest of the greyhounds involved. This includes keeping good records on each dog that we receive into our care.

A shipment of retired racing greyhounds to an adoption group for the purpose of private adoption is called "a run." At one time, it was referred to as a GUR which stands for Greyhound Underground Railway, denoting a need for sneaking the greys into adoptive homes. Fortunately today, ex-racing greyhound adoption is openly and proudly undertaken, so there is no need for "secrecy". There is no exchange of money for the dogs other than for the veterinary care.

Needle-Nose receives retired racing greyhounds from two principle tracks: Tri-State Greyhound Park in Cross Lanes, West Virginia and Melbourne Greyhound Park in Melbourne, Florida. In both locations, Needle-Nose en-

joys a well-established relationship with adoption kennels, breeders and trainers, who have extensive knowledge of the personalities of the greyhounds they have which are available for adoption. It is this access to such intimate knowledge of each greyhound that allows Needle-Nose to make lasting placements of these loving creatures.

Once the adoption committee collects a list of a few approved adoptive families, the committee's adoption coordinator contacts the track adoption representative and a date is determined for the next run. If it is the West Virginia representative, a mutually convenient date is chosen and Needle-Nose volunteers meet the adoption representative at the Slippery Rock Rest Area; the halfway point along the highway in Pennsylvania (that's approximately a four hour drive one way!) If the run is from Florida, the adoption representative determines the run date. The Florida run requires more extensive planning, as you read about in our last newsletter (The Anatomy of a Melbourne Run), because it delivers dogs to several groups along the way, with Buffalo, New York usually being the final stop. This is the pick-up point for Needle-Nose.

A key factor in a quality placement is the profile. This is a two-part description of relevant factors that the track adoption representative will consider when selecting the right greyhound for his or her adoptive home. Needle-Nose's adoption committee believes that the best way to provide an accurate profile is to note not only the adoptive family's request of the greyhound's attributes and personality, but also what the adoptive household is like. For example, some relevant factors to the latter are whether the household is busy or quiet, contains young children and or other pets, and how long the greyhound will be left crated each day, etc. Two members of the adoption committee meet with the prospective family and develop the profile together. Once developed, the



Labour of Love: Geoff Aston greets some of the Needle-Nose Greyhounds arriving from the U.S. last month

profile for each applicant is provided to the track adoption representative who selects the dogs for the run.

Once the dogs have been agreed upon, the track adoption representative arranges for each of the dogs to be spayed or neutered, to receive a full panel of vaccinations, to have a heartworm test and to have their teeth checked for any dental work that may be required.

While the adoption coordinator is busy arranging the run, the fostering coordinator solidifies the foster home arrangements for each of the greyhounds arriving on the run. Every effort is made to place dogs that will be living with children or small animals in foster homes that have some exposure to children or small animals. In this way, the foster family is best suited to make a pertinent evaluation of the greyhound in surroundings similar to those of the his or her ultimate home.

About a week prior to the date of the run, the adoption coordinator secures volunteers from Needle-Nose's membership to assist on the day of the run. Volunteers with vans or trucks are needed to transport the dogs from the meeting point for the run and transport them back to Canada. Still other volunteers are needed to help bathe and dis-

# How Do They Do It? The Needle-Nose Adoption Process (cont'd)



Clockwise from top left: Mimi (Karen Walker); Sunshine (Liberty Karp); Marley (Aaron and Lyn Rudd) watching Leroy play with his tail; Tony (Joanne Sanford); Zazu (Mirela Luca and Vlad Bortnowski and their son Maxim); and Axel (Lori Sutton). Centre: Tallulah with Allegra (daughter of Cassandra Weimann)

tribute the dogs to their foster families.

When the greyhounds arrive at the pick-up location, Needle-Nose volunteers fit each dog with a new leash, collar and a muzzle that are included with the adoption of the dog. In Winter, we also have a foster coat for each dog. The dogs are usually anxious to relieve themselves after their long ride, so they are walked around a bit before they are loaded into the Needle-Nose volunteers' vehicles to return to Canada.

Thanks to careful planning on the part of the track adoption representative and adoption coordinator, all the dogs are sure to have the proper paperwork for entry to Canada. This paperwork includes updated rabies vaccination certificates and a signed letter declaring the fact that the grey-

hounds coming into Canada were given to Needle-Nose free of charge for adoption by Canadian residents.

The next step for the new greyhounds is the bathing stop. They are bathed, a careful check is done for fleas or ticks which are very rarely found these days. The dogs are towel dried, their ears are cleaned, and they are checked for bumps, bruises or anything we think may need veterinary attention. Afterward, the clean and tired greyhounds are ready to eat and have a long rest in the homes of their respective foster families, who come to pick them up. The adoption coordinator distributes a de-worming medication to the foster families for their foster dog.

If the foster family is happy with the dog's progress and does not

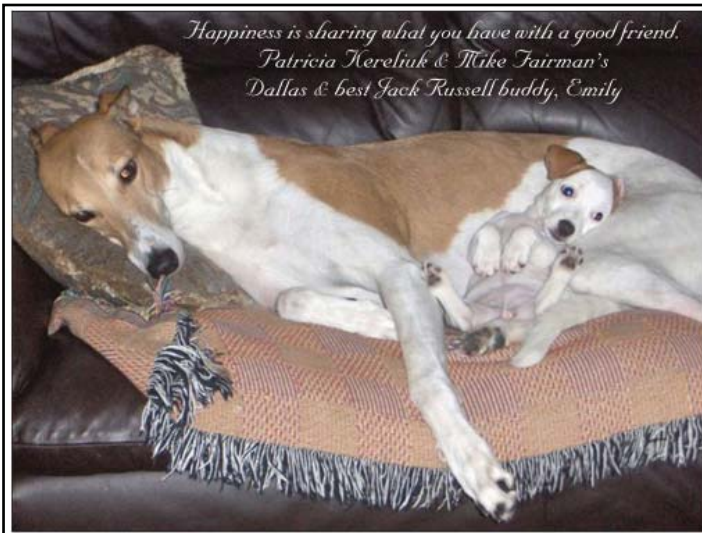
see any medical or behavioral problems, the dog will be ready to begin his/her adjustment in their forever home in about a week's time.

Needle-Nose's adoption committee remains available and ready to assist adopters through the adjustment period as the dog adapts to his or her new environment, or with any training or behavioral issues that arise throughout the lifetime of the greyhound.

Needle-Nose, being the greyhound's advocate, will be there long term to make sure each and every one of the greyhounds it places enjoys a happy retirement life. This could never happen without the dedication of the adoption committee and our foster families. A big thank you goes out to each of them!



# The 2009 Needle-Nose Calendar is Hot off the Press!



The Needle-Nose 2009 calendar is now hot off the presses and ready to be sent to you in time for your Christmas gift giving. Lesley Cadham did a beautiful job, lovingly designing each month with whimsical dog-worthy quotes to go along with the many wonderful photos of your greyhounds. Thanks to those who submitted pictures, but unfortunately, we couldn't use all of them. (There are only 12 months in a year!) You can, however, look for your pooch's photos in the *Greyt Gallery* section of the calendar.

This year's calendar is priced at \$15 (which includes postage) or \$13 if you prefer to pick it up at Brenda and Geoff Aston in Campbellville. To order your calendars, contact the Astons by email at [adopt@needlenose.ca](mailto:adopt@needlenose.ca) or by phone at 905-659-7624, to let them know how many calendars you'd like and whether you'd like them mailed or plan to pick them up. Cheques should be made payable to "Needle-Nose Greyhound Adoption" and dropped off at the Astons, or mailed to:

Needle-Nose Greyhound Adoption  
 c/o G. Aston  
 484 Mountsberg Rd  
 RR#2  
 Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0

You can also pay with PayPal\* by going to [www.paypal.ca](http://www.paypal.ca). Once connected to PayPal, click on the "Send money to

friends and family around the world" under the "Pay online" section and follow the instructions and use [adopt@needlenose.ca](mailto:adopt@needlenose.ca) in the "To" box. If you pay with PayPal, please also send an email to Geoff and Brenda so they can expedite the mailing of the calendars.

\* If you are not familiar with PayPal, it is an intermediary step to transferring money from either a credit card or bank account to another bank account. There is no cost to send money. A small charge is collected from the recipient

if the recipient is a business (Needle-Nose Greyhound Adoption has signed on as a business to allow advanced features such as bulk mailings and web site collections). The method is quite secure; once you are registered, your banking or credit card information is not transmitted over the Internet as it would if you were purchasing using your credit card number. Paypal is quick, convenient and more economical (no need to write cheques or to mail them).

## Wanted!

### Your Certifiably Greytest, Goofiest, Hammiest, Greyhound Photographs!

Do you have an especially goofy ham-hound at home who always seems to be the subject in your snapshots? Does your hound have a special story to tell? We would love to feature your greyhound in our next newsletter, or possibly in the 2010 Needle-Nose calendar. Please share your hound's photos and stories with us! Send your submissions to Elizabeth Hunt at [bethhunt@sympatico.ca](mailto:bethhunt@sympatico.ca).

# Needle-Nose Picnic 2008



Despite the rain, 36 people attended our annual picnic on September 7 and had a greyt time! We simply accommodated the weather by moving things indoors and under cover. This year, three vendors brought their tantalizing wares: Critter Cozies, House of Earl, and GNSRA. (Greyhound Supporters of the National Capital Region (Ottawa)). The rain put a damper on the games for the dogs but when it began to clear by 3 p.m., all the dogs hightailed it to the big dog run to cap off their time together. They do so love to run and had a “greyt” time. Thanks to all who came out to show their support for the group and thank you all for the wonderful potluck items you brought. We were all well-fed indeed!

Photos clockwise from top left: Critter Cozies corner; Greyhounds



stretch their legs in the “big run” at Brenda and Geoff Astons; something fascinating has the attention of these sociable Greys; the Greyhounds and their people take advantage of the unexpected sunshine to mingle outdoors; Liz Tabor brought her House of Earl goodies; Becky and Jake model plush PJs from Critter Cozies.



# Solitary Homie: From Racing to Rescuing Hearts in Need



By Terry Brazil and Sarah Byram  
(Forward by Elizabeth Hunt)

Ex-racing greyhound adoption touches people's lives with the wonderful dogs it places, and Needle-Nose Greyhound Adoption is no exception. Though the specifics of each placement usually go unknown, even to the volunteers in our adoption group, we do know that these dogs speak for themselves to help spread their message. And that message is a resounding, "We make terrific pets and we have a way of meeting and exceeding your expectations of dog ownership!"

Following is the story of Solitary Homie's adoption and a glimpse of his life with Sarah and Terry in Terra Cotta, Ontario. Terry begins with his perspective on Homie's adoption, and how he was won over by Homie's charm; then Sarah shares with us Homie's role as greyhound pet, horse lover and ambassador extraordinaire in their new life together.

It must be the svelte build of the Greyhounds that allows them to stealthfully creep into our lives unnoticed...



~ Terry's Story ~

Up until eight years ago, I had quite honestly never heard of such a thing as "Greyhound Adoption". It was a time in my adult life when I was more concerned with maintaining the status quo as a single parent and taking care of both of us; my daughter Meghan and me.

Typically with life, and though many of us resist it, change

is often inevitable and so it was that I met my lovely Sarah and her greyhound, Tia. My initial reaction (which is often a tentative one when meeting any dog) was one of trepidation. Greyhounds, despite what I have discovered and will expound upon, present themselves as a "lean, but not mean" machine, and as I entered Sarah's house I quickly froze. Over the course of our courtship I grew to enjoy Tia's company and demeanor and I quickly recognized the special bond that existed between Tia and Sarah.

We fast tracked our relationship, that is Sarah and I, and married the following year. The next few years were filled with all the delights and responsibilities of sharing space with a new woman, a female dog and two cats. Two years ago Sarah began to struggle with the declining health of Tia, and finally, having her laid down to rest. It was a trying and difficult time for everybody. We, or I should perhaps say Sarah, decided that a probationary year would be appropriate without getting another dog. I must admit that with all our other activities, and especially with Sarah being occupied with her horse and dressage training, there was from my perspective a little more flexibility with our time. I did not have to rush home to walk the dog, nor did I have to rearrange my schedule when Sarah was out of town.

Close to a year went by when Sarah, as if an alarm clock, went off and broached the subject about getting not just another dog, but another greyhound. I thought to myself selfishly, "why?" However, we went through the process of initiating the adoption and meeting with the Needle-Nose people. As a child, getting a dog simply meant selecting one from the neighbor's

## Homie raced not only into the hearts of Sarah and Terry, but patients in need of comfort (cont'd)

recent litter. I had no idea that these greyhound people were serious.

Two month's later, the newest member of our family arrived. Someone had a sense of humor, as "Solitary Homie" was his name. Sarah, having southern roots, was a little concerned about his Homie's future in his new home. It was December, and as everyone can recall, Winter 2007-2008 was one to remember. But our Homie quickly adapted to his new white environment and not getting to see green grass until late March. He has been a loving and affectionate friend, although there was an element of tension between Homie and our cat Abbey, during the first three months. To date, some form of détente exists.

Homie has eagerly learned to jump into the back seat of the truck and to patiently wait until we arrive home for his daily share of hugs. Sarah has enrolled Homie in a program where he visits at local senior homes and he has already endeared himself with certain residents receiving special attention and treats. To say Homie has settled in would be an understatement. He has filled in that certain void that did exist unbeknownst to me since Tia's departure.

Homie is at home wherever he goes...



### ~ Sarah's Story ~

My friend Sandra Hall (fellow greyhound owner) went with me to pick up Homie from Brenda Aston's house (where he was being fostered) when he was ready to come home. Homie was so very friendly and happy when we met him at Brenda's, and continued to be so when he had him in the car. It was on our ride home that day that Sandra told me that she thought Homie would make a great St. John's Therapy Dog (SJTD). Such a dog is one who undergoes a training course and must be approved and licensed to visit nursing homes or hospitals. The program seeks dogs that are outgoing and not shy of all sorts of people, but who can remain calm and even tempered in varying medical situations. This training course was an undertaking I didn't consider lightly, as I have a busy career and train my horse four evenings a week and both weekend days. I was hesitant to put anything else on my plate, but I kept the thought with me as I continued to notice how special Homie's friendly personality was with us at home.

He was truly amazing with my horse as well and from his first trip to the barn, Homie was right at home. At first he thought my horse was very big, but soon became used to her and let her nuzzle him from tip to tail. Homie has since traveled with me to a couple of horse shows, which for him includes camping in the horse trailer, waiting patiently in the tack room while I'm competing and hanging out at the stall



Homie's comfort level and patience at one of many horse shows was a testament to his ability to be a St. John's Therapy Dog

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while the tack and horse are cleaned and tucked in for the evening. A testament to his patience, yet another sought after quality for the SJTD program.

After a few months, Sandra won me over to try Homie as a SJTD. Terry asked why I wanted to commit my only free evening to the Therapy Dog program. I told him that I decided this was a way that I could give some time to my community and, at the same time, I could have extra time with and stimulation for Homie.

In June, Homie and I had our SJTD evaluation test. Three other dogs were tested with Homie and each dog was evaluated on how they dealt with wheelchairs, crowds, medical coats (Vet phobias), unresponsive people (catatonic), running people (medical emergency), rude dogs and unexpected loud noises. Homie passed with flying colors and I couldn't have been prouder. I can't describe how rewarding it is to see the smiles Homie puts on the faces of the residents at the extended care facilities in Georgetown where we visit.

The Homie saga continues.



For further information about St. John's Therapy Dogs: <http://www.sja.ca/Ontario/CommunityServices/Programs/Pages/TherapyDogServices.aspx>

# Keeping your Greyhound's Toenails in Tip-Top Shape

By Elizabeth Hunt

Greyhounds tend to have very thick nails that can come in any combination of the three main colours: white, black and horn (the colour that looks brown like a horn of an animal). White is the easiest to clip, as the quick or the vein that grows inside the nail can be easily seen. When clipping your greyhound's nails, you will want to avoid cutting his nails too short or "quicking" him, causing bleeding and discomfort. Avoiding this negative experience will help promote trust, especially if you are new to your dog or just new to cutting his nails.

**Step 1:** Determine whether you have a greyhound who will tolerate you fiddling with his feet. Sometimes a greyhound who dislikes toenail clipping will accept it more readily when a yummy treat he doesn't usually get, is included in the routine. If you aren't sure and don't want to invest in the clippers until you are, you can get any metal device, hold it in your hand and pretend you are going to clip. See if he will cooperate by letting you take his foot in your hand and tolerate the fake nail clippers next to each nail on his foot. If your hound is not crazy about this, try giving tiny bits of something savoury like Rollover, liver treats or a hot dog to win him over. Greyhounds who have readily accepted your trimming advances can get treats after each foot has been completed; hounds who would obviously rather be anywhere else in the world, should probably get a treat after each nail is trimmed. If your hound still isn't keen and vocalizes or tries with all his might to get away, leave the job to the professionals at the vet's office, groomers or large pet stores.

**Step 2:** If step one has left you feeling motivated to proceed, you will need to make sure you have a good quality scissor type canine toenail clipper. The guillotine type canine nail clippers are

not recommended for large size nails like those on a greyhound, but are more suited to small dogs or cats. Most pet stores that carry grooming supplies will have what you need. Be sure to ask the salesperson for an extra large pair. The cost will range anywhere from \$6 to \$20. Coagulating powder known commonly as Quick Stop is handy to stop bleeding if you have accidentally cut your hound's nails too close, but flour will also do the trick. If you follow the steps, however, cutting a nail too close is unlikely.

**Step 3 (Optional):** If your dog has white or horn coloured nails, you may want to mark your dogs nails with a marker to indicate where the end of the vein is located until you get a feel for approximating the right place to cut. Using a flashlight and holding your dog's paw in your hand, shine the flashlight behind his nail. Looking at the front of the nail, you will see where the nail becomes more transparent. That is approximately where the vein stops and the rest of the nail tip begins. It is safe to cut what is in the transparent area.

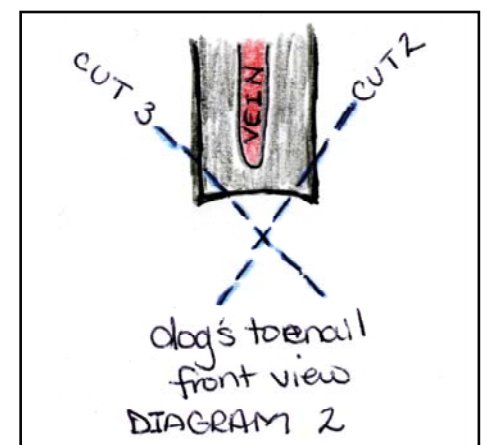
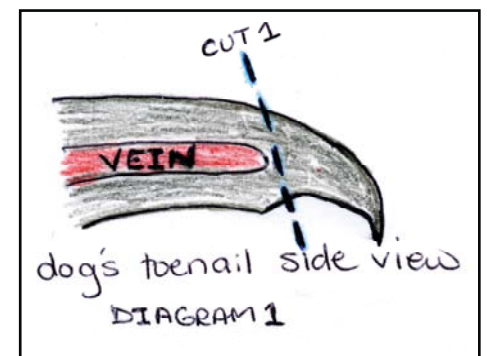
**Step 4:** Choose what position you would like your hound in while you clip the nails. I find the best way to do it have your hound standing up, with you holding a foot up and behind him, much like you would if he were a horse and you were shoeing him. This position is the most comfortable for a standing greyhound and provides the perfect angle for clipping. It is often advantageous to do it outside if possible, as the natural light is best for seeing how much you want to cut, and the mess is left on the patio deck or lawn to be easily swept away. You can also do the task indoors, but you will then have to get out the broom or vacuum. If you prefer that your hound be lying down while you trim, you will probably have to wait until he's in that position already before you clip. If he is at all

uncertain about what you're doing, he won't want to lie down and you'll have to resort to the standing position.

**Step 5:** Armed with your treats, greet your dog and give him love. Show him the clippers and let him sniff them if he wants. Then give him a treat. Stand next to him bending down, and lift one paw from the floor and bend it so the pads of his paw are facing up, exposing his nails.

**Step 6:** Angle the clippers back along the top of the nail as shown in Diagram 1. If you are unsure of yourself, take off less nail with your first cut. You can always re-examine the nail and make a second cut if necessary. If you think the nail is short enough but would like to clean up the edges a bit, you can make side cuts as shown in Diagram 2.

**Step 7:** If your hound's nails were very long when you cut them for the first time, repeat this process in 10 days. If your hound's nails were average length, repeat in three weeks to a month.





# Off-Leash Parks – Some Particular Points to Ponder

by Elizabeth Hunt

You should have a sense of adventure with your greyhound, and part of that should include a trip to an off-leash park at some point. However, we strongly advise researching the park you want to visit, and checking it out once or twice without your hound to get the lay of the land. Also, it's wise to wait until you and your dog have had a chance to really get to know each other before you release him into an off-leash park with a group of strange dogs.

For instance, a newly retired greyhound can have a higher chase instinct, and that little white fluffy dog running in the distance may be seen as prey. The converse is also possible: your new hound, perhaps even unaware that other breeds of dogs exist, may be at the very least unsure of how to handle him or herself and may act fearfully.

Other dogs can hone in on that fear response and react aggressively, resulting in injury to your dog. Physical wounds can be severe but will heal; psychological ones can linger and can be seemingly impossible to overcome.

The intent of these points to ponder is not to scare you, but to suggest that you seriously consider all aspects of the off-leash park, allowing you to make an informed decision.



Norwood Park near the Beaches in Toronto is a popular venue

## PROS:

- Off-leash parks provide a large, fenced-in area to allow your dog to run free.
- You get to spend time in the great outdoors with your dog.
- Your dog gets to socialize with other dogs.
- There may be rules and regulations posted so that all users of the park know what is expected of them; most people and dogs at the park play by the rules.
- Some off-leash parks have official or non-official time slots during which only Greyhounds are permitted.
- Frequenting an off-leash park is a good way to give your dog exercise and enjoyment of life.
- Off-leash park visits can lead to meeting other dog aficionados who provide interesting conversation and who may become recurring enjoyed acquaintances or perhaps even friends.

## CONS:

- Some parks are not fenced in or have unfenced areas that are easily traversed by your greyhound; always check before you go.
- The terrain can be rough, rocky and / or muddy. Your greyhound may be a foot prince(ss) and hate walking around on uncomfortable ground. You may end up with a messy car on the ride home if you aren't prepared.
- Although Greyhounds tend to be muzzled in playgroup situations, other breeds generally are not. Other breeds may want to play and intentionally or unintentionally hurt your hound - don't forget, your hound's skin is thin and there is no thick fur or fat to buffer bites or scratches. You don't want playtime at the park to end with a trip to the vet or worse, a trip to the emergency vet (Ka-Ching \$\$).
- This is a big one. Some visitors don't even know there are rules let alone bother to follow them. They see the park as a place to take their dog to relieve itself where they don't have to pick it up. (BTW, that is one of the rules!) Some of these people even have dogs who are socially challenged and sometimes, down right aggressive toward other dogs, yet they still come to the park. (Hello!!!)
- Frequenting an off leash park can be a frustrating experience for you and a down right dangerous one for your hound.
- Off-leash park visits can lead to meeting the dregs of dog owner-dom who will amaze you with their ignorance and astound you with their blatant stupidity. You and your dog could be much worse off for having met them.

