

PET TALES

For ULTIMATE pet lovers only

By DR. MARTY BECKE & GINA SPADAFORI
Universal Press Syndicate

This week and next, we're pulling out some of the best "must know" information from our just-released books, "The Ultimate Dog Lover" and "The Ultimate Cat Lover."

Each "must know" piece in the book has been developed with the help of one of the top experts in each area of expertise, and these experts are noted at the end of each tip.

(This week, dogs. Next week, cats will get their due.)

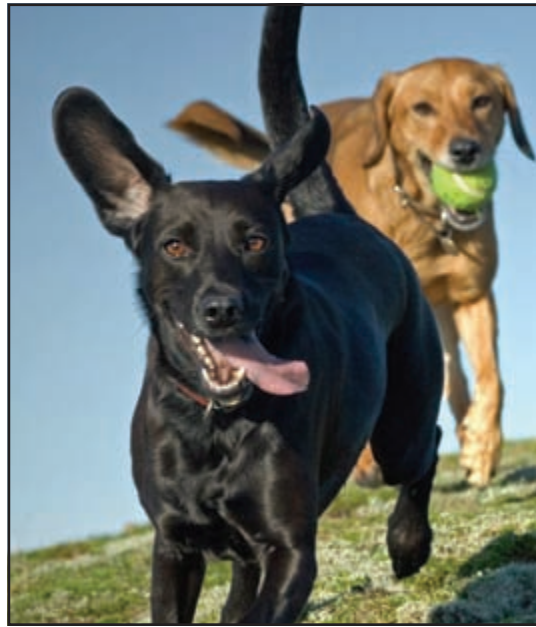
• **Socializing:** Once you have picked up your puppy at 8 weeks, you still have five weeks left of the critical socialization period. Your puppy needs to meet another 100 people in this period. If the puppy sees only family for the first months of life, he or she often will develop a fear of strangers. — Dr. Ian Dunbar, veterinarian and behaviorist, founder of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (www.apdt.com)

• **Dog parks:** Not all dogs learn to play nice, and some perfectly good dogs just aren't well-suited for the communal experience. Some will unintentionally provoke fights or fearfulness from other dogs with overly aggressive or unrelenting play. These are likely dogs who never learned to read the language of another dog's "leave me alone" cues and will keep pushing until there's a fight. Hormones can also play a role, and that's why it's usually best for dog-park play to be among spayed and

neutered animals. — Dr. Melissa Bain, veterinarian and behaviorist, head of Clinical Animal Behavior Service at the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine

• **Low-shed pets:** If you're looking specifically for a dog who won't shed much, get a small, longhaired dog and keep the coat trimmed short. Why? Because the hair of longhaired dogs falls out less frequently, and a smaller dog has less hair to shed than a larger one. If you keep the hair clipped short, the hair that does fall out will result in less volume to deal with. — Dr. Craig Griffin, veterinary dermatologist, lecturer and instructor on skin problems in animals, and founder and co-owner of the Animal Dermatology Clinic

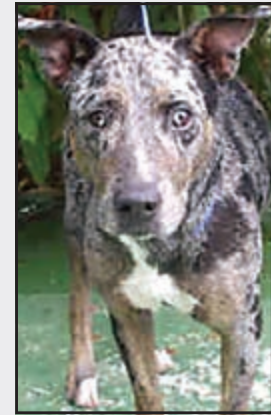
• **Canine cancer:** The best treatment for cancer is prevention. Restrict your dog's daily intake of food to maintain a fit body weight, and feed him a balanced, delicious high-quality diet with limited amounts of carbohydrates (sugars), moderate amounts of good-quality proteins and higher levels of n-3 fatty acids such as DHA. Consider supplementing omega-3 fatty acids to potentially reduce the risk of developing cancer. Add regular exercise. — Dr. Gregory Ogilvie, veterinarian and oncologist, former head of research at the Animal Cancer Center at Colorado State University, and director of the Angel Care



Cancer Center

• **Trick training:** All dogs can learn tricks. Which kind of trick depends on the dog — his physical abilities and how quickly he thinks. Some breeds have a physical advantage: Basset hounds will never be as quick as border collies, for example. Even old dogs can learn new tricks, despite the saying to the contrary. In fact, old dogs love new tricks, because they enjoy the attention and fun of trick training. — Liz Palika, certified dog-trainer for more than 25 years, award-winning author of more than 50 books, including "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Dog Tricks" (Alpha, \$15) ■

Pet of the Week



>>PJ
A fetching blue merle Catahoula mix, PJ (166740) is a 7-year-old girl who was found as a stray. She's looking for her forever home with someone who wants an intelligent, energetic and affectionate companion. She needs room to play.



>>Buttons
A 6-month-old orange tabby, Buttons (#419019) was found as a stray. He is an inquisitive and playful kitten with beautiful gold eyes. Buttons likes other pets and people so he would make a great addition to any family.

To adopt a pet

There are many dogs and cats available at Lee County Animal Services, 5600 Banner Drive, Fort Myers. Call 533-7387 or visit the agency's Web site at www.leelostpets.com, which is updated throughout the day. Adoption applications may be downloaded from the site or completed at the shelter, which is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. Please use the animal's ID number when inquiring about it. Adoption fees for dogs run \$65-\$90. Cats are \$50.

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