

# PET TALES

## Celebrating the dog

BY CHRISTIE KEITH  
Universal Press Syndicate

The list of ways dogs have helped humans throughout history is almost endless.

They've guarded livestock, herded sheep, driven cattle and protected human dwellings from castles to condos. Dogs assist people with disabilities, sniff out illegal drugs and find food from birds to truffles. From detecting heart attacks and seizures before they happen to dragging drowning people to safety, it's hard to imagine any form of technology that could surpass the uncountable number of ways in which dogs lend us a helping paw.

In selectively breeding dogs for the skills that helped them help us, human beings have changed the dog both inside and out. Today, there are hundreds of dog breeds so different from each other in type that it's hard to believe they're members of the same species — and yet, each of these dogs' forms grew out of a specific function.

"If people hadn't changed the dog to do certain tasks, he'd look very much like the dingo," said Heather Russell-Revesz, co-author of the "World Atlas of Dog Breeds" (TFH, \$100). "Whether it was making a dog shorter-legged or faster, so he could catch a specific kind of prey, or making him tiny enough to sit on your lap, human intervention has brought an incredible diversity of type to the dog."

Not all the changes were about function. For example, when it became clear how easily the dog's physical appearance could be changed by human breeding choices, dog breeders in Victorian England became

interested in seeing just how extreme those changes could be.

"Look at the bulldog," said Ms. Russell-Revesz. "He's about as different from a 'natural breed' like the dingo as a dog can be. His face is flat; his legs are short and bowed. Another example is the field spaniel. The Victorians took a functional hunting dog and started breeding him smaller and smaller, until his legs were so short he could hardly walk, let alone hunt. He very nearly became extinct, until fanciers in the 1930s began to select for a less extreme dog."

Basics such as breathing and walking aside, even dogs originally developed to help humans in hunting, farm chores or family protection are increasingly out of a job in modern times. World War II threatened the existence of many dog breeds, because it was impossible to continue breeding or even feeding dogs during the war, and afterward, because human lifestyles changed profoundly in the post-war era.

"Many dog breeds were wiped out, and others were on the brink of extinction," Ms. Russell-Revesz said. "Their traditional work was largely obsolete, and it was only the extraordinary dedication of a few individuals that preserved the amazing legacy of traditional dog breeds."

Of course, not all canine work is obsolete. Dogs today are being bred for many of their traditional tasks, as well as new ones. And some dogs, once rendered unemployed by new technology, are being rehired. "When snowmobiles were introduced, the Greenland dog was out of favor as a reindeer herder," she said. "But it turns out that rein-



The ultimate coffee-table book for dog lovers, the "World Atlas of Dog Breeds" covers hundreds of breeds.

deer don't respond well to being herded by snowmobiles. It turns out the dogs are more useful than the machines — and more environmentally friendly."

A greyhound's long legs and great lung capacity or the insatiable urge to dig shared by the terriers may be a case of form following function. But there are 420 different breeds in the World Atlas, and the authors acknowledge they didn't list every breed. And yet it includes 30 French scent hounds, from the familiar basset hound to the now-extinct levesque. Does any nation need 30 different types of scent hounds?

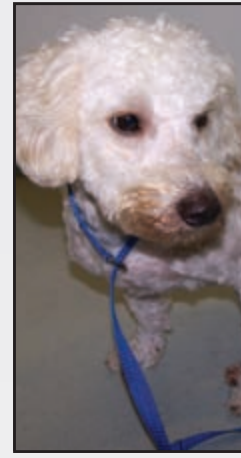
But then, of course, the French celebrate the regional differences in their cheese and wine, so why not the ones in their dogs?

Ms. Russell-Revesz laughed. "Depending on the prey, the terrain and the climate, they may have needed different-length legs or more or less coat. But the truth is that each region took great pride in its local hounds and wanted to have their own." ■

### Pets of the Week



>>>Autumn No one at the shelter can understand why Autumn (446632), a gorgeous 2-year-old orange tabby, was never claimed by her owners after being picked up as a stray. She's soft as a bunny, loves to be brushed and enjoys tummy rubs. Autumn needs a human to love. Adoption fee: \$50.



>>>Kingston Poor little Kingston (#446949) has had a rough time of it during his two years of life. The bichon frise/poodle mix was left by his owners with friends. Then the friends moved and left him behind. He was adopted from the shelter but returned because the family's other dog didn't like him. He's a sweet guy who would make someone a sweet and compact little companion. Adoption fee: \$75

### To adopt or foster a pet

There are many animals available at the Lee County Domestic Animal Services shelter at 5600 Banner Drive, Fort Myers. Call 533-7387 (LEE-PETS) or visit [www.leeostpets.com](http://www.leeostpets.com). Adoption applications may be downloaded 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 are \$25-\$95. Cats are \$25-\$75. Adoptions include sterilization, vaccinations, and license if at least 3 months old, flea treatment, a 10-day health guarantee and more. Loving foster homes are needed too. Go online and click on "Foster Homes." Those interested in helping to purchase Kuranda dog beds, which help make dogs more comfortable at the shelter, should visit the Web site.

**Mall rent too high? Onerous lease? Move your business to Fleamasters**

Sell at S.W. Florida's biggest and best fleamarket... Rental terms from only ONE DAY

- Where else can you rent a store for less than \$70 per week — with no long term commitment?
- Lots of foot traffic, much more than the average strip mall. Great for start-ups or generating sales leads.
- Perfect low risk alternative in these uncertain times.
- Excess inventory? Selling out? Here's the place to do it.

High traffic, prime spaces available. **START NOW!**  
Info at [www.fleamall.com](http://www.fleamall.com) or phone 239-334-7001.

**Super Low Rates for Garage Sales: only \$5.80/day for garage sale spaces** (Some restrictions may apply)

**Fleamasters Fleamarket** FT. MYERS FLORIDA  
SR 82 1/4-mi west of I-75, Ft. Myers

**Ka Ching**

**GIANT** F-S-S 8 to 4

Suffering from....

## Plantar Fasciitis, Knee or Back Pain?

• Full service professional fitting by professional staff  
• Large selection of health & comfort footwear  
• 23 years of commitment to making you feel better

**\$70 off** Men's Chapa Silver Style Only & Women's Chapa Covert Style Only

• All other MBT styles regular price •

**Ten-minute TEST Walk & you'll be sold!**

The MBT Superstore  
**HAPPY FEET plus**  
(239)-337-9810 [www.happyfeet.com](http://www.happyfeet.com)

Gulf Coast Town Center • I-75 exit 128 Alico Rd.  
Open Sundays (Across from Bass Pro Shops, next to Bar Louie and Border Books)

Panther Community Bank

## BUSINESS OWNERS:

*We are here! We are solid!  
We are lending! We Care!*

**PANTHER COMMUNITY BANK** N.A.  
*More Than You Expect.®*

Talk with us today and experience how a Community Bank can help business owners with their cash flow and financing needs:

- Real Estate Loans
- Lines of Credit
- Business Equipment Loans

**Panther Community Bank, N.A.**  
"More Than You Expect"

FDIC

239-303-7310 | [PantherCommunityBank.com](http://PantherCommunityBank.com)