

**Are We Going to the Dogs  
or Beagles, Bassets and Labs,  
What Would We Do Without You?**

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by  
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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, fellow members of the Athenaeum Society: Tonight, reflect with me, a subject that I trust has touched all of us at one time or another in our lives. It may have been a part of your childhood that you remember fondly. It may have come to you later as you began life with your spouse. Or even later yet when you experienced this as a part of your children's lives.

I speak of that object that provides unconditional love, companionship, and that warm fuzzy feeling that we men tend to deny that we get. I speak of that family member, known as man's best friend, the dog. Tonight's paper is entitled, "Are We Going to the Dogs or Beagles, Bassets and Labs, What Would We Do Without You?"

We have archeological evidence of the earliest hunter-gatherers had dogs as a part of their lives. We also now know through DNA evidence that all dogs, of whatever breed, are direct descendants of the gray wolf, *Canis lupus*. In fact, in 1993, because of this new evidence, the scientific name of the domestic dog was changed to *Canis lupus familiaris* to reflect the fact that dogs are in fact a subspecies of the gray wolf.

The dog was the first animal domesticated by early man, and has been the most widely kept working, hunting and pet animal in human history. DNA evidence shows an evolutionary split between the modern dog and the modern wolf's lineage around 100,000 years ago but as of this date, the oldest fossil specimens genetically linked to the modern dog's lineage dates to approximately to 33,000-36,000 years ago. The dogs' value to early hunter-gatherers as an aid in hunting led them to being common in many early cultures.

Domestic dogs inherited complex behaviors from their wolf ancestors, which would have been pack hunters with complex body language. These sophisticated forms of social cognition and communication may account for their trainability, playfulness and ability to fit into human households and social situations. These attributes have given dogs a relationship with humans that have enabled them to become one of the most successful species in the animal world today.

There is evidence that dogs assisted the nomadic ancestors of the Tlingit, Eskimo and Inuit tribes of Alaska to cross the Siberian land bridge across what is now the Bering Strait into what is now Alaska, by transporting much of their goods and supplies by sled some 12,000 years ago, although the earliest archeological evidence of dog-like canids in North America dates from about 9,400 years ago. Dogs were an important part of Athabascan (Navajo, Apache and are examples) population in North America and were their only domesticated animal. Dogs also carried much of the load in the migrations of these peoples as they came into what is now the American Southwest and remained an important pack animal in these cultures, which persisted even after the introduction of the horse.

Even though archeological and biological evidence suggests isolated domestication events as early as 33,000 years ago, there is conclusive evidence that the present lineage of dog genetically diverged from their wolf ancestors at least 15,000 years ago. Evidence is accruing that there were previous domestication events, but that those lineages died out.

What is not known is whether humans domesticated the wolf as such to initiate the dog's divergence from its ancestors or whether the dog's evolutionary path had already taken a different course prior to domestication. For example, it is hypothesized that some wolves gathered around the campsites of Paleolithic camps to scavenge refuse and associated evolutionary pressure developed that favored those who were less frightened by and keener in approaching humans.

The remains of smaller dogs have been found in the Middle East including the earliest burial of a domestic dog with a human, and date to 10,000-12,000 years ago. There is a great deal of archaeological evidence for dogs throughout Europe and Asia from this date through the following 2,000 years, with examples unearthed in Germany, the French Alps, Iraq and in cave paintings in Turkey. The oldest remains of a domestic dog in the Americas were found in Texas and have been dated to 9,400 years ago.

Wolves and their dog descendents would have derived significant benefits from living in human camps, more safety, more reliable food, lesser caloric needs and more chance to breed. They would have benefited from humans' upright gait that gives them a larger range over which to see potential predators and prey, as well as color vision that by day gives humans better visual discrimination. Camp dogs would also have benefited from human tool use, as in bringing down larger prey and controlling fire for a range of purposes.

Humans likewise would have derived enormous benefit from the dogs associated with their camps. By example, dogs would have improved camp sanitation by cleaning up food scraps. Dogs may have provided warmth, as referred to in the Australian Aboriginal expression "three dog night" (an exceptionally cold night...NOT 'Just Another Love Song'). Dogs would have also been beneficial as they would have alerted the camp to the presences of predators or strangers, using their acute hearing to provide early warning.

Anthropologists believe the most significant benefit would have been the use of dogs' sensitive sense of smell to assist with the hunt. The relationship between the presence of a dog and success in the hunt is often mentioned as a primary reason for the domestication of the wolf and a 2004 study of hunter groups with and without a dog gives quantitative support to the hypothesis that the benefits of cooperative hunting was an important factor in wolf domestication.

The cohabitation of dogs and humans would have greatly improved the chances of survival for early human groups and the domestication of dogs may have been one of the key forces that led to human success.

Let us turn to the physical attributes that have attracted humans to dogs for thousands of years and how those attributes have assisted mankind. Domestic dogs have been selectively bred for millennia for various behaviors, sensory capabilities and physical attributes. Modern dog breeds show variation in size, appearance and behavior more than any other domestic animal. That being said, their basic traits are based on that of the gray wolf. Dogs are predators and scavengers and like many other predatory animals, the dog has powerful muscles, fused wrist

bones, a cardiovascular system that supports both sprinting and endurance and teeth for catching and tearing.

Dogs are highly variable in weight and height. The smallest known adult dog was a Yorkshire Terrier that stood only 2.5 inches at the shoulder and 3.7 inches in length and weighed 4 ounces! Contrast that to the largest known dog, an English Mastiff which weighed 343 pounds and was 98 inches from snout to tail. The tallest dog is a Great Dane that stands 106.7 inches at the shoulder!!

Dogs have good eyesight but have the equivalency of red/green color blindness. That is they can see blue and yellow but it is difficult for them to differentiate between red and green because dogs have only two cone photoreceptors while humans have three. Dogs use color instead of brightness to differentiate light or dark yellow/blue. Dogs are less sensitive to differences in grey shades than humans and can also detect brightness at about half the accuracy of humans.

The dogs' visual system has evolved to aid proficient hunting. While a dogs' visual acuity is poor (estimated the equivalent of 20/75 in poodles), their visual discrimination for moving objects is very high. Dogs have been shown to be able to discriminate between humans, i.e. identifying their owner from someone else at a range of between 850-1000 yards. However the range decreases if the object is stationary to 400-550 yards.

Dogs have a temporal resolution of between 60-70 Hz which explains why the family pet pays no attention to the television as most modern TV's are optimized for humans at 50-60 Hz. Dogs can detect a change in movement that exists in a single diopter of space within their eye, whereas humans require a change of between 10 and 20 diopters to detect movement.

Dogs often rely on their vision in low light situations. They have large pupils and a high density of rods and a tapetum lucidum, which is a reflective surface behind the retina that reflects light to give the photoreceptors a second chance to catch the photons. In other words, most breed have excellent night vision.

Dogs' frequency range of hearing is about 40Hz-60,000 Hz which means that dogs can detect sound far beyond the upper limit of the human auditory spectrum. In addition, dogs have ear mobility, which allows them to rapidly pinpoint the exact location of a sound. Eighteen or more muscles can tilt, rotate, raise or lower a dogs' ear. A dog can identify a sound's location much faster than a human, as well as hear at four times the distance.

While the human brain is dominated by a large visual cortex, the dog brain is dominated by an olfactory cortex. The olfactory bulb in dogs is roughly 40 times larger than the olfactory bulb in humans relative to total brain size with 125-220 million smell sensitive receptors. The Bloodhound exceeds this with nearly 300 million smell sensitive receptors. (Second only to Bloodhound is the Bassett hound . . . we will come back to that in a bit.) As a result it has been estimated that dogs, in general, have an olfactory sense ranging from one hundred thousand to one million times more sensitive than a human's with the breeds such as the Bloodhound up to one hundred million times greater. A dogs' wet nose is essential for determining the direction of

the air current containing the smell. Cold receptors in the skin are sensitive to the cooling of the skin by evaporation of the moisture by air currents.

Now that we have looked at the history of the evolution of the dog and the physical traits of the dog let us look at the modern relationship between the dog and humans and that is as the family pet. The most widespread form of interspecies bonding is between humans and dogs. While there is a long history of working relationships between humans and dogs, since World War II, the pet industry and the pet dog industry has exploded. Obviously working dogs still play an important role in the sheep and cattle industry; the dog in modern life fulfils its role primarily as the family pet.

In the 1950's and 60's dogs tended to be kept outside more often than today and were still primarily functional, acting as guard, children's playmate or walking companion. Since the 1980's there have been changes in the role of the dog in the family setting to include the increased role of dogs in the emotional support of their human guardians. People and dogs have become increasingly integrated and implicated in each other's lives, to the point where pet dogs actively shape the way a family and home are experienced.

There have been two major trends in the changing status of pet dogs. The first has been the commodification of the dog, that is shaping it to conform to the human expectations of personality and behavior. The second has been the broadening of the concept of the family and the home to include dogs-as-dogs within everyday routines and practices.

There are a vast range of commodity forms available to transform a pet dog into an ideal companion. The list of goods and services and places available is unlimited, from dog perfumes, furniture and housing, to dog groomers, therapists, trainers, caretakers, dog cafes, spas, dog parks and beaches, dog hotels, airlines and cemeteries. While dog training goes back centuries, in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became a high profile issue as many normal dog behaviors such as barking, jumping up, digging, rolling dung, fighting and urine marking became increasingly incompatible with the new role of a pet dog. Dog training books, classes and television programs proliferated as the process of commodifying the pet dog continued.

The majority of contemporary people with dogs describe their pet as part of the family, although some ambivalence about the relationship is evident in the popular reconceptualization of the dog-human family as a pack. Pet dogs play an active role in family life; for example, a study of conversations in dog-human families showed how family members use the dog as a resource, talking to the dog, or talking through the dog, to mediate their interactions with each other.

Another study of dogs' roles in families showed many dogs have set tasks or routines undertaken as family members, the most common licking plates after supper prior to them going to the dishwasher and bringing the newspaper in from the lawn. Increasingly, human family members are engaging in activities centered on the perceived needs and interests of the dog.

For the rest of my time with you tonight, indulge me while I reminisce with you some of the dogs and experiences that I have had in my life that has given me much joy and fulfillment.

My earliest memories are of our family beagle, Nuisance, a dog that had an appropriate name if ever a dog did. He loved to chew on socks, furniture, chase rabbits, roll on fresh cow piles, go on excursions for days at a time while the whole family was worried sick...in short a typical hound dog. He sat patiently, only yelping at the appropriate times, as I attempted to pluck out his whiskers with a pair of wire pliers. Dad had raised him from a pup as we also had his mom, Lady. We had just moved to Roney Drive and at that time, were actually in the county. Dad tried his best along with Lady to make Nuisance a hunting dog. In spite of their efforts, Nuisance was determined to be his own man...he would run rabbits for himself and no one else. Dad finally gave up and he moved from the dog pen into the house and became the family pet. I think Nuisance knew what he was doing all along! At any rate he spent the rest of his life doing what he wanted to do, mainly eating and sleeping with the occasional playtime with me and my sister.

Later, my grandfather and I raised beagle hounds and sold them. Pop had a little female, another Lady (my family was so original when naming female dogs) and we bred her to an AKC registered male and she had nine pups. We sold all but two males that we christened Snoopy and Droopy. As we began to train the pups to hunt rabbits and to come and follow commands, I learned the great lesson in training beagles to hunt...step back and let the mother do it. Lady would grab them by the ears and put them on the right track when they were not paying attention.

Eventually, a pecking order was established...Lady was the jump dog. She would flush the rabbit with her high pitched squeal and Snoopy and Droopy would then take over the chase with their deep baritone voices making so much noise that the rabbit took them on a merry chase with Lady bringing up the rear and then bringing the rabbit around on a great circle where one of up in the bunch would usually get an easy shot. We had those dogs for several years and I spent my adolescent years going rabbit hunting with my grandfather every Saturday morning during rabbit season. We also got another female and raised several litters with Snoopy or Droopy being the sire.

After I returned home after law school, Pop and I got another male and female and raised two litters. On the third litter, all of the pups contracted parvo and I spent money that a starving young lawyer didn't have trying to save them, to no avail, and Pop and I decided it was time to get out of the beagle business. Having decided that, I still have fond memories and I am glad I was able to experience that with my grandfather.

My Dad, when he moved to Lake Barkley, acquired a full blooded male Lab, appropriately named Trigg. Through Trigg I learned about the traits of Labs. Fiercely loyal, gentle, loved the water and loved to take walks. If the pontoon boat moved, he would be the first on it, and if the boat pulled to shore, Trigg would be the first off and would immediately find a stick for you to throw in the water so he could retrieve it. And would want you to play this game for hours!! Until your arm wore out!! But Trigg never would!

When Betty and I got married, we soon began discussing getting a dog. When she asked what kind, I replied, "Well, as far as I'm concerned there are three breeds; beagles, Labs and basset hounds." I had an experience with a child hood friend who had a basset though; I had never actually owned one. We found an ad in The Kentucky New Era advertising basset puppies

and went to investigate. We returned home with a wiggling, licking, long-eared bundle of joy...until that night when he began to miss his mama and brothers and sisters. ...oh how he howled! He slept in a box that night beside our bed sucking on Betty's finger. In good southern tradition we named him Beauregard, Beau unless he had been bad, then his full name. Betty decided, again in good southern tradition, that his middle name should be Priscilla, his mother's name.

He got into all manner of mischief, not the least of which was getting into my closet while we were at work one day, and eating the insoles out of every pair of shoes I owned. He also liked to get the end of the toilet paper and run with the end until he had unrolled the entire roll. His favorite trick was to wait until I opened the front door, shoot out between my legs and then lead me on a merry chase in an attempt to recapture him. I usually gave up and waited until he decided to come home.

I then got the bright idea that I was going to break him of that trick and borrowed a shock collar from the late Shirley Castle, which he used to train his bird dogs. The control had three shock settings and I tried all three; he just bowed his neck and kept going. He finally came back of his own accord. I took the collar off and was looking at it when Betty decided, without asking me first, to try it out to see if the batteries were good, with the shock probes resting in the palm of my hand. Let me assure you gentlemen that it was, in fact, working quite well as I quickly informed Betty in no uncertain terms!!

After about four years he outgrew the puppy stage and life assumed some normalcy in the Adams home. However, it was during his puppy phase that he decided that he was a Lab. Remember Trigg and the stick throwing in the Lake? Well Beau decided that looked like great fun and he decided that Trigg needed help. Stick thrown, Trigg in the water to retrieve said stick. Beau in water following Trigg to retrieve stick. Trigg with much longer legs reaches stick way ahead of Beau. Stick is retrieved and both dogs turn in unison in a form of doggy water ballet. Trigg catches up to Beau, Beau decides to hitch a ride on Trigg's back. When they get in shallow enough water, Beau slips off and grabs the end of the stick in Trigg's mouth and sits down. With his much lower center of gravity, Beau wrestles the stick from Trigg and both are ready to go again. This would go on until Beau's ears would get completely waterlogged and then Trigg would go on unassisted. This was an every weekend on the Lake ritual that developed and we decided that Beau fancied himself a bassadore retriever.

We had Beau for 15 years and he basically raised all three of our sons. Even though he is gone now, I would not, and I don't think any member of my family would trade the experiences we had with Beauregard

We now have two dogs. Dixie, a 12 year-old English Setter (actually son Will's dog that he acquired in college during his I want to be a veterinarian phase and somehow we wound up with her even though I swore I would NEVER have a white long-haired dog) and Flash, a four year-old...you guessed it...basset hound. Dixie is the sweetest natured dog I have ever owned though she was extremely shy and nervous when we first got her, to the point when the first police officer showed up one night to get a warrant signed, she hid, quivering, under the dining room table. She outgrew that with a lot of love and attention and is very friendly and social now.

Flash is, well, Flash. We rescued Flash from his confines in a pen on the Dougherty farm. He had been rescued as a pup by HHS weight training coach Freddie Eaves who had moved to Hopkinsville from Chattanooga and was living on the Dougherty farm. Freddie also had three dachshunds and his schedule didn't leave much time for playing with Flash in the afternoons or evenings. Once he found out we were suckers for bassets he convinced Betty to take Flash for a weekend visit. She sold this to me as a play date for Dixie but I knew what she was up to from the beginning (actually I think she and Pat Dougherty conspired together). On the second play date weekend I was hooked and we didn't take Flash home. He literally went from the dog house to the penthouse.

Now his daily jobs are to eat, sleep (boy does he snore!) and chase squirrels and deer. In the summer he loves RIDING on the pontoon boat with his massive ears twirling in the wind like a canine Dumbo the elephant. BUT unlike Beau, NO WATER SPORTS. He doesn't even like to get his feet wet! He's fairly well-behaved until cousin Eve (James' black Lab) comes to visit. They can get into more mischief than two bad kids—roaming the neighborhood, rolling in mud pits and returning home only after much searching and coercing.

In closing, scientific evidence is mixed as to whether companionship of a dog can enhance human physical health and psychological well-being. Some studies indicate that this is the case, while other studies say that the former studies were not well controlled scientifically and are therefore not valid. I do know this, whether scientifically valid or not. I love my dogs past and present and feel better when I'm in their company. I agree with my good friend, previously mentioned, Shirley Castle, who once remarked to me, "Ya know Jim, if there are no dogs in Heaven, I'm not sure I want to go!" Amen, Colonel!! And I know you and Bell are having some great quail hunts as we speak.

THANK YOU GENTLEMEN!