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The Great American
Dog-A-Thon
Thanksgiving Nite
8-10PM on Fox TV

*For The People Who Love Animals And
The Animals Who Need To Be Loved*

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Sylva Kelegian

**How Life As A Busy Actress and Dog Rescuer
Taught Her What God Spelled Backwards Truly Is**

By Lori Golden

Sylva Kelegian is a busy actress who has guest starred on a number of TV shows such as *CSI*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, *Southland*, *Rizzoli & Isles*, *ER*, *Cold Case*, *Desperate Housewives*, and many more. She has also starred in independent films, co-starred in Stephen King's movie of the week, *Desperation*, and appeared in *Spiderman*, *Crash*, *Atlas Shrugged* and *Return to Zero*. That's what she does for a living. But her passion is rescuing dogs from some of the most god-awful places on earth, like the streets of South Central Los Angeles to a landfill in Sun Valley. Her journey of the life of an actress into the world of dog rescue is the subject of her autobiography, *God Spelled Backwards*, available now through her website: www.sylvakelegian.com and at bookstore.xlibris.com.

I've known Sylva for years and was often the recipient of her many emails about various dogs needing forever homes. But I never knew what she went through to rescue these dogs - quite literally blood, sweat and tears.

Sylva was born in New York City where her mother was a big animal person. "We always had a Saint Bernard named Maggie, so I always thought that all dogs drooled like that," she says. "I was really more of a cat person growing up. I was closer to the cats, probably because my mother loved the dogs so much that I may have been a bit jealous. I love cats and have rescued at least



Sylva with (l-r) Nate, Shadow and Mazie

20 cats as well as a few horses. But my husband is horribly allergic to cats which is the only reason why we don't have any."

Sylva's real love for animals started when she rescued Sammy. (Her book begins and ends with her story.) "That's when I began seeing all dogs like her. I did grow up with animals but hadn't been that close with them. I was doing a play in New York, my fiance actor Jude Ciccolella was in LA, so I had a lot of extra time on my hands when I wasn't at the theater and

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Train Your Dog On A Walk (cont'd from p.10)

the treat pouch, get help before proceeding with training.
When I have a dog that grabs food hard out of my hand here's what I do... I keep the treat in a closed fist or even two closed fists touching each other and glued to my leg (the bigger the target, the less likely the dog is going to bite your finger!). I don't deliver the treat until the dog backs off a little. Then, the second he backs off, I give him the treat to reward that behavior. Never just give the treat for grabby or aggressive behavior.

Here's a little trick I use if I don't want to get my hands dirty while training or if I'm training a dog that takes food rough out of my hand... I take a non-toxic garden hose -- if you're shopping for a hose at a hardware store, look for lead-free as some garden hoses still contain lead. Cut off a four- to five-inch piece of hose. Slice a hot dog lengthwise and stuff it into the hose so it sticks out about an inch. You can also stuff the hose with my Salmon Pâté recipe, peanut butter or cream cheese. This way, you can feed your dog on a walk by letting them lick the hose filled with the tasty treat to redirect attention when passing big distractions or to curtail barking.

So why not stop using food treats all together?

Well, using food with your dog is both fun and motivating. The way I see it, I work for a paycheck and a dog should too! How would you like to go to work tomorrow and have your boss say, "You have been doing such a good job I decided not to pay you anymore?" Would you go back to work the next day and keep working? I don't think so! Practice training in different environments. Just because your dog will listen and respond to treats in the kitchen, doesn't mean they will listen on a busy street. A human can learn something in one room and be able to perform that behavior anywhere, whereas a dog has to practice in low-distraction areas first and then move to different areas. I like to use food when I first start training a new behavior. Once the dog knows it well, I start to wean down, sometimes even during the first lesson. Eventually, they might get dog bites just some of the time.

Your dog may be overwhelmed, stressed, or fearful. If this is the case, you may have to lower your criteria and build slowly. As the dog improves, you can start asking for a chain-of-behaviors before you deliver the treat. For instance, requesting your dog to perform a set of behaviors: "sit", "stay", "come", "down", "roll over"...and then giving the reward paired with a pet. Whenever you pet your dog as a reward, you have to dig deep within yourself to let your dog know that you really mean it! You can't just say "good dog" in a monotone voice and pet half-heartedly. They know when you're faking, trust me. Be aware that many dogs don't like being pet on the head and others don't like being hugged, so petting on the chest might be safer. Some dogs can be taught to like being pet if food is paired at the same time and done in a calm, controlled manner.

SALMON PATÉ

- 6 oz. fresh wild salmon (boneless, skinless)
- 1 tbsp. celery, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. Parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. butter (room temperature)
- 2 tbsp. plain cream cheese (room temperature)
- 1 lemon, cut in half
- 4 shakes dry Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Sea salt to taste (about 1/4 tsp. total)

Directions: Season salmon with a touch of salt. Poach in pan with enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely on a plate.

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HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DOG ON A WALK

By Steve Brooks, CPDT/KA

Training your dog on a walk works best if you offer small treats (*dog bites*, the good kind!) for performing a desired behavior like sit, stay/down, come, etc. I suggest using a treat pouch to keep your hands free. I like to keep the treat pouch on the opposite side of the dog so they're not as apt to jump up and grab. If I have food in my hand, I hold it high enough and close to my body so the dog can't jump up and grab.

When feeding dogs by hand on a walk, beware that food-aggressive dogs may get excited and try to "bite the hand that feeds" or grab aggressively, especially over high-value foods. You need to read your dog's body language and watch your fingers - if you have any trepidation, talk to a Veterinary Behaviorist (ACVB), Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT), Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB or ACAAB) or an experienced Force-Free Trainer from the Pet Professional Guild. It's possible that carrying a treat pouch can cause or increase protective, territorial, and guarding-type aggression as some dogs might get protective over their human carrying a treat pouch full of tasty *dog bites*. I find this rare, but if you see *any* signs of your dog getting aggressive over

(cont'd on next page)

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