



# Bully Bark!

The Newsletter of the Bama Bully Rescue, Inc.

Volume 6

March 2009

Issue 1

## Greetings from Bama Bully Rescue!

By: Rick Stokes, Volunteer and NL Editor

It is a very busy time of the year for the volunteers of Bama Bully Rescue, Inc. Our staff members are swamped with appeals for help with dogs around the state. In addition, the process of screening applications is a time consuming effort. With the small number of volunteers we have, the effort of producing monthly newsletter is proving too difficult. Remember that each person is a volunteer with jobs, families and BBR being juggled simultaneously.

So we have decided to begin producing a quality newsletter quarterly until the staff is able to reassume the effort of doing a monthly full featured newsletter. Our first quarterly newsletter will be in June. We will also send out shorter length newsletters to update you on event happenings and other things of interest as they arise.

A rescue such as ours, as well as any rescue, is heavily dependent on volunteers. Our staff of committed volunteers have spent long hours working for pit bulls and other "power" breeds of dogs. Rescues are always in need for additional volunteers and foster homes without which no dogs are rescued.

If you have an inclination to helping with unwanted dogs, please consider working with BBR. Most everything is done over the internet beginning with the receiving applications for a particular dog. In brief, a volunteer then processes the application and calls the references given. Then if the application is acceptable, a home check is done before the adoption goes through. While there is more to the process than this brief description, this is it in a nutshell.

So if you have a few spare hours each week and want to make a difference in the lives of some unwanted or stray dogs, consider becoming a volunteer with Bama Bully Rescue. As more people join, the work becomes easier for all. Believe me, you will really enjoy doing something as cool as rescue work with a group of dedicated and ethical people that comprise BBR.

**Bama Bully  
Rescue**

## Bama Bully Rescue, Inc Staff

### Director:

Melinda  
Thompson

### Co-Director:

Jessica Hudson

### Treasurer:

Crystal Wingard

### Secretary:

Beth Green

### Event Coordinator:

Garland Clark

### Volunteers

Jessica Anderson  
Holly Ayers  
April Durden  
Alexis Houston  
Rick Stokes  
Karen Thomasino

### Foster Homes

Linda Askey  
Deanna Byers  
Frances Dauster,  
CPDT

### Newsletter Editor:

Rick Stokes

## Why I Joined BBR!

By: Holly Ayers

**T**here are many reasons why I decided to volunteer with BBR. As far back as I can remember, I have always been that person that couldn't just drive past or walk away from a stray animal in need. I have worked in animal clinics in the past, but sadly had to move on and pursue a different career path. Sitting in a cubicle all day does nothing for me, I found myself missing the animals I used to encounter and help everyday.

I was recently married and had just settled into our house, so my husband and I decided it was time to add to our family. We took a trip to the humane society where we came across Shelby, a pit bull mix who was scheduled to be euthanized in one week. Needless to say, we took her home that day and she has been the best dog I have ever had.

That's when I began reading and educating myself on the breed. I learned all about the abuse they endure from irresponsible owners, how misunderstood they are, and how pit bulls are one of the breeds targeted for BSL. That's when I decided I wanted to do all I could to help educate people on their "real" temperament, not what's reported in the news.

Saving Shelby wasn't enough. I wanted to do more, but didn't know exactly where to start. About that time, I went to the gas station and there sat the sweetest, little malnourished "Ava" who was being completely ignored by anyone who passed her. This broke my heart, if only those people knew what they were missing! I took her home and 15 pounds later she was ready to be adopted.

I contacted BBR to see if they could help me find her a permanent home and of course they were up for it. That's when I realized I wanted to be that person on the other end of the line helping others help bullies!

I am so proud to be a part of BBR and am so glad Shelby & Ava came into my life. What a great breed I was missing out on all my life!

## EVENTS

Aww, Spring! Life is bursting upon us and before we know it, it will be time again for BBR to host its annual yard sale fundraiser!

Our goal this year is to have more than one sale, but in order to do that we will need your help! While we do have items for the sales, we will need more donated items in order to continue raising funds. If you are interested in donating items for our annual sales, please contact us at [donate@bamabully.org](mailto:donate@bamabully.org).

We will be scheduling a date for our first yard sale soon, and will publish it on our website and newsletter as soon as we have one confirmed. Remember, all items donated to our rescue are considered a tax deductible donation!

**Please spay and neuter your pets!**

## Melinda Dalke Art

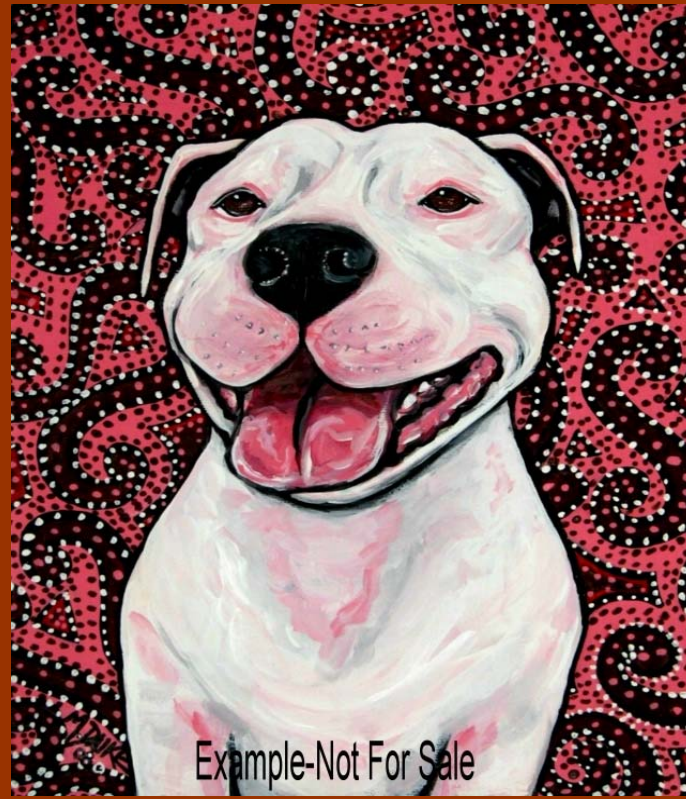
Melinda Dalke is a Naive Style Artist who is a founding member of Art Helping Animals. A portion of the sale of the featured artwork you see presented here will go to the benefit of BBR! If you are interested in purchasing this piece of art or would like more info, please contact Melinda at [dayleemojoarts@earthlink.net](mailto:dayleemojoarts@earthlink.net)

How about a  
Custom Dog Painting by Melinda Dalke?

A fun original painting of your dog!

8 x 10 inches

Varnished Acrylic on Canvas



## BBR January Volunteer Statistics

- Reviewed 40 Adoption Applications
- Approved 4 Adoption Applications
- Approved 0 Foster Applications

## The BBR Store

Bama Bully Rescue officially has its own store with apparel for those who are loving dog owners - especially those of Pit Bulls! The store has just opened up and only has a few designs, but make sure you check it often because we have plenty of new designs on the way! Proceeds from each sale will go to the benefit of the BBR Bullies.

You can visit the store by visiting: <http://www.cafepress.com/bamabully>

Make sure to tell a friend!

This month's featured product is the "More Plz" large pet bowl



Be sure to visit our Café Press store as we are adding to our products regularly.

<http://www.cafepress.com/bamabully.354029871>

## Announcing the 2009 Bama Bully Rescue, Inc. Calendar

Yes, we know we are into March! But, have you gotten your 2009 Bama Bully Rescue calendar yet? There are some really gorgeous Bullies are featured on this calendar. We are sure that you will enjoy the Bully pictured in each month!

The cost of the 2009 Bama Bully Rescue calendar is \$17.99 and the proceeds will go to benefit the dogs of Bama Bully Rescue who are looking for their forever homes.

Please visit <http://www.cafepress.com/bamabully> to get your calendar today.

The bullies we save thank you!!

## Bully for You!

Last month's poster bully was Gracie. We are happy to report she has a new home. This month, we have decided to feature two of our great adoptables, Elwood and Ava. You can go online to adopt one of these sweet dogs by first filling out an adoption application at <http://www.bamabully.org/dogs.html>



At the left is the pretty girl we call Ava. As you can see, she has a perky face and personality!

Ava is a 39lb. female pit bull mix, approximately 11 months old. She was found at a gas station with mange and starving to death! I picked her up and took her to the vet and had all the mange taken care of so her beautiful coat could be seen!

She gets along GREAT with other dogs and even cats. She has been around children and did fine.

As long as she has been fostered, she has never bitten, growled, or showed any aggression towards anyone or any other animals. She does good inside the house, but has never stayed inside overnight. I have crated her before and she didn't mind that after a couple of minutes.

Everyone who meets her falls in love with her! Ava loves to play and chase a ball, but will quickly calm down and just love on you for hours! She really wants your approval and does well at getting it! She would make a great indoor dog, but does well outside also. Her only downfall is she likes to eat the toys, so she can only play with them while under supervision.

She would make a GREAT family pet or pet companion! Won't someone please give this sweet girl a chance?

Elwood, at right, is an energetic playful male with a white coat and brown markings. Because of his energy level, our best guess is that he is under two years of age.

Elwood was found in a bad situation, but has since made a full recovery. He was found having seizures in a neighborhood forested area. He was taken to the vet where the doctor suspected he had eaten some sort of poison.

After a week at the vet's, he went to live with a foster family while waiting for his forever home. He immediately took to his new life. He was very skinny when he first came to his new home, but has since gained a healthy 18 pounds. He has also been crate-trained and house-broken.



Elwood is eager to please and wants attention from any human that he comes across. He knows "sit" and is working on other basic manners. He is so excited to greet humans, he is tempted to jump. He is also working on walking on a leash without pulling. He is very active and always ready to find his next adventure. He is currently living with a smaller (forty pound) female dog and two cats as foster siblings. He gets along well with all three.

The ideal home for Elwood would be with an active family. He would do well with kids as playmates. It would probably be best if the kids were over six years old. He also needs plenty of exercise and room to run, romp, and play. Right now, he plays in a fenced backyard and has made no attempt to get out. Elwood is up-to-date on all his vaccinations and neutered. He has been treated for heartworms and is on heartworm prevention. Elwood is ready for his forever home. Fill out an application for adoption at <http://s10.formsite.com/bamabullyrescue/form884759186/index.html>

**Editor's Note:** I am the owner of a American Bulldog mix named Pumpkin that was picked up in a Huntsville church parking lot as a tick infested stray. The good Samaritan that picked her up and fostered her until I took over her fostering. She is my first "foster failure" having fallen in love with her and as a whole she is a very loving dog.

However, she is a bit of an escape artist and once loose, she merrily dances away, happily grinning and looking over her shoulder back at me as I call. So I appealed to our very own Jessica who is a dog behaviorist and trainer for help. The response she gave was so good that I asked her to publish it in this newsletter. Thus, with this prelude, her answer is repeated below for your reading enjoyment.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Training Advice

By Jessica Hudson, Co-Founder and Director

My initial thought is good for you for always leashing her. Some dogs are just more prone to selective hearing than others, I live with both cases.

I'll first address the "bolting"... physical attempts at getting past you out of the gate/door/kennel. Begin on working on a very solid "wait" cue. Wait is different than a more formal stay in that "wait" means the dog is not allowed to move forward/exit while a "stay" cue means "don't break position".

This is easy to practice and a basic manners foundation cue. Practice this with EVERYTHING. Time to eat...she must first sit (easier to anticipate a bolting urge with a dog in a sit) and wait until the bowl is on the floor. As you lean to place the bowl on the floor if she breaks a sit, you stand back up with the bowl. Repeat and eventually she will figure out that her movement is causing her food to go back up. I suggest no verbal cues other than telling her to sit and either give her a hand signal (palm out towards her face but doesn't need to be at close range and you can tell her to wait as well, though I prefer to proof the hand signal first then add the verbal cue, either way is fine).

Do the same concept at the door. You ask her to sit and wait, reach for the doorknob, if she breaks sit, hand comes off doorknob. Increase to the point where you are able to open the door, each time she breaks sit, door closes (watch it, you have to be faster than she is). You can reward incrementally by getting the door to a point not open enough to allow her out but then give her the "okay" cue to move and open the door for her. The reward is a life reward (going outdoors) and you can enhance that by going out and further praising her or playing for a bit. Do the same on the way back inside and do this each and every time.

I do this when I am bringing them out of crates, into crates, into the car, out of the car, putting on and taking off the leash, etc. This is also an attention training exercise. You are the source of her life rewards and resources and she will begin to look \*at\* you as if to say, "I'm sitting...what's the hold up?" which is exactly what you want.

Once you have a reliable wait, you won't have to worry about her bolting by and I'd back this up by always having something extra yummy or her favorite toy on hand.

(continued below)

As for times she does manage to get out there, best thing to do is as **QUICKLY** as possible, act a fool and run in the other direction as if the ice cream truck is coming... away from Pumpkin... be loud, be excited, be **MORE** interesting than whatever it is which urges her to go in the opposite direction. Many dogs cannot resist their people when they lie down and must come see what's going on, not the most attractive of measures, of course. Always be thrilled to see her, even if you want to strangle her. The **KEY** to a great recall is to always be worth coming back to no matter what. You have to act as if you've not seen her in ten years and lavish her with praise and rewards.

If you ever punish her even in the mildest form, this will impact her decision to come to you. But if every single time she gets affection, a party in her honor, treats, play with her fave toy, etc she'll never doubt you. Reward her from coming back to you, never punish for going away b/c it will not have the effect you want.

Another thing you can do is create an emergency recall cue. I have a few. I **ONLY** use them when the dogs get the exact same thing which I have associated the cue with. One is "Ready to eat?"...my guys being chow hounds, Cajun has slipped our gate and I have cheerfully called this to him and he turned on a dime. Once inside, he gets yummy, yummy, extra goodies. I ask them each and every single time before I prepare their dinners if they are "ready to eat" so this phrase means the same thing, every time and I always follow through. "COOK KEEEEE" is a good one, too (esp since I usually always have a pocket full so I'm always prepared) lol

Another is "Let's go" which translates to "car ride"...Everytime before they go with me (which is more than any dog should) I say "let's go". It always means a car ride. If Willow loves the car and she gets out and you are able to get her to come to the car (which is exactly what my car hounds would do) reward her with a ride around the block. Make it worth her while to respond the way you want.

Another thing you can practice is using a whistle in the same way we use clickers. You must "load" the whistle by blowing it, giving her a treat (cooked chicken, freeze-dried liver/sardines, etc...the extra yummy stuff she only gets during this training and never any other time). Whistle blows, treats are doled out (pea sizes are enough each time), whistle blows, treats are doled out, over and over. At first do this for several minutes a day. Then increase to two sets of several minutes each day for several days, then sporadically. You'll know she "gets it" when you blow the whistle and she expects a treat. This is the basis of clicker training, the "marker" indicates a reward. The reward does not have to be immediate but preferably within several seconds.

Practice this around the house, in the yard, when out on leash with someone else, have someone else hold her leash, you blow the whistle at a distance of several feet and have the handler run with her to you and you reward. Practice this in sight until reliable and enthusiastic and then practice variably in sight, then out of sight. If you have a very large fenced area this will help tremendously in working on distance. But keep in mind and this is **VERY** important. When teaching a recall... the initial reward of running should be allowed to happen again after being rewarded for coming back to you. If she is out running, running and hears the whistle, comes flying to you, getting the chicken isn't enough, reward her, then allow her to go again (in fence, of course). A recall should never end the fun, but can act as a "five more minutes" type of indicator. Hopefully that makes sense, easier to explain in person than in email. ((Editor: Thanks Jessica!))



## **FOSTER HOME NEEDED!!**

Meet Tig, an 11 month old American Bulldog (mix?) in need of a foster home!! He's currently being housed at a County shelter but they are EXTREMELY overcrowded and can not hold him long. He's also in danger of catching diseases and/or getting sick. This guy was picked up on Feb. 10th, with a collar and 2008 Rabies tag. The owner was called but obviously does not care for Tig or want him

back, as he won't return phone calls. Tig showed no issues during a full temper-ament evaluation. Of course, he's in a shelter environment so new things are sure to be learned about him once he's in a foster home. He didn't show much interest in the hissing cats and was playfully interested in the ferrets. He might do well in a home with cats or small dogs, although this was not tested extensively. He was tested with another dog his size. He showed playful interest when the other dog was brought into view, tail wagging and after sniffing each other, they did not initiate play with no issues - they simply walked around each other, being interested in other things. Tig is a cute, squishy guy. He was not over the top/hyper, but would play back with me when I initiated play. He had no problems with a lot of increased physical manipulation. He was not fearful of any loud noises being quick to investigate. He seems like an all-around good guy who just needs a home Please - let's get him out of the shelter! He deserves it! Contact [Melinda@bamabully.org](mailto:Melinda@bamabully.org)

## **Bama Bully Rescue, Inc**

### **Our Mission:**

**Bama Bully Rescue, Inc. is a non-profit, 501c3 organization located in Alabama that works with shelters and the public in finding homes for Pit Bulls that have been abandoned, abused, neglected, or fallen victim to other situations in their lives.**

### **Rescue:**

**Our group exists to rescue unwanted bullies and power breeds in shelters, found as strays or who must be relinquished by their owners, through no fault of their own.**

### **Re-Home:**

**Adoptable dogs will be placed for adoption into carefully screened, loving homes. All dogs adopted with a BBR contract will be thoroughly evaluated for behavioral issues. All dogs will be up to date on vaccines and spay or neutered before placement.**

### **Educate & Support:**

**Bama Bully Rescue strives to educate the public about the true nature of bully breeds. We encourage responsible dog ownership, proper care, socialization and training. We are available at any time to lend advice and support regarding any aspect of responsible dog ownership.**

**Would you like to donate? Donations are tax-deductible and are extremely appreciated. Visit our website at [www.BamaBully.org](http://www.BamaBully.org) to donate online or send your check to Bama Bully Rescue, Inc., PO Box 189, Alabaster, AL 35007**

**Check out iGive at <http://www.igive.com/welcome/> and Goodsearch at <http://www.goodsearch.com/> to support your favorite Charity...BBR!**

**The Bully Bark! is the official internet newsletter of the  
Bama Bully Rescue, Inc. of Alabama  
Comments and suggestions are welcomed by the newsletter editor at  
[bbr.newsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:bbr.newsletter@yahoo.com).**

**To unsubscribe, send an email to the above address with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.**