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## 'Rockne' gets rehabilitated

By Danielle Paine

Reminder Assistant Editor

As the grand prize for winning Reminder Publications' Bad Dog contest, the Pierce family's problematic pooch "Rockne" has finally met with dog training guru Scot Masamary of Bark Busters.



Rockne, a nine-month-old standard poodle, has plenty of problems including jumping, chewing, destroying furniture, an intense fear of the outdoors and severe separation anxiety that causes him to drool puddles when left inside his crate.

Many of these problems became a thing of the past when Masamary paid a visit to the Pierce home last week.

"Just the fact that he's minding and we got him to walk on a leash, it is unbelievable that he's just listening," said Mary Lou Pierce. "Even if we hadn't won the contest, we should have looked into this man. If you have a troubled dog, this is the guy you want and everyone is happier this way."

Together, the family and Masamary trained Rockne to wait in another room while the door is being answered, to walk by his master's side while on a leash, and to become just a member of the family pack, not the pack leader.

Relieving the stress caused when a dog assumes it is the leader will also help with Rockne's separation anxiety, a problem that can be eased but not fixed in one session.

"Everything went absolutely phenomenal, they really want it to work," Masamary

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said. "The only thing that wasn't overly successful was [fixing] the separation anxiety, but they know how to treat it now and it's going to get better little by little."

The only solution for Rockne's intense drooling and chewing (when he is left alone in his crate,) is to accustom him to being left alone for just a few minutes at a time. As their homework, the Pierce family was told to leave Rockne in his crate for two minutes one day, then five the next, slowly easing his fears of it. But if they can get Rockne to stop chewing the furniture, Pierce hopes to give up the crate altogether.

"I corrected him once for chewing and he hasn't chewed since and that was just one day," Pierce said. "It's just unbelievable. He just seems calmer to me and is very anxious to please."

The Pierce family are finally gaining the upper hand with Rockne by mimicking the behavior of canine pack leaders. Passive dominance, ignoring the dog's whining, and Bark Buster's growling technique are powerful tools in this training.

"Once the dog sees them as the leader, he will relax a bit and realize they're doing it for his own safety and that they always come home," Masamary explained.

Perhaps the most amazing improvement came when the group went out for Rockne's first walk. Terrified by the world outside of his own backyard, Rockne has never allowed anyone to walk him. In fact, he pulls his owners back towards the house every time they attempt to go beyond the driveway.

"The walk was huge, Rockne had never been outside of his property," Masamary said. "At the beginning it was a little tough because once the dog got into the streets, he realized there was more to the world than his own yard."

After the initial excitement wore off, Rockne was focused, Masamary said, looking up at his owners and waiting for their next command.

"He loved being in the street," Pierce said. "He was just exhausted after, it was just wonderful."

For more information about Bark Busters, call 726-2911.





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