

## Bo Obama Makes Waves

**The Obamas take their puppy for an introductory walk around the White House lawn.**

Posted: April 15, 2009, 5 a.m. EDT

The new first dog Bo made his debut on the White House lawn late Tuesday afternoon when the first family took him out for a walk.

Even before his first public appearance, news of the arrival of a 6-month-old Portuguese Water Dog to the White House traveled fast, as did public reaction.

"He's a star. He's got star quality," the president told reporters gathered at the unveiling. Reminded of what Harry Truman said about friends, dogs, and Washington, Obama said, "My friend. I finally got a friend. It took some time. We're very pleased with Bo."

Obama's daughter Malia said, "I love him. He's perfect."

Sasha, however, pointed out that "he doesn't know how to swim" with a giggle.

From the dog's name to where he came from, just about every major newspaper, website, and TV station has something to report about Bo. The Obama family's new dog may not be the most pressing matter to deal with, but for dog fanciers or anyone else involved in animal rescue and adoption, Bo signifies a giant opportunity.

Animal rescue groups say this was an opportunity missed because the president missed a chance to raise awareness for dog adoption nationwide. On the other hand, the American Kennel Club praised the Obama family for doing its homework and finding a breed that's best suited for their lifestyle.

The Portuguese Water Dog, or PWD, was favored by the family for its low-shed coat, important because Malia has allergies. The breed also is known to be easy to train and good with kids.

The American Humane Association says PWDs are smart, well-behaved dogs. The organization offers the first family the following tips for curbing problem puppy behaviors.

### Jumping up and pawing

Puppies jump up for attention. If Bo is allowed to jump up on people as a puppy, he will want to keep doing the same thing when he's a larger, adult dog.

Tip: The best response is to turn and walk away without saying anything.

### Playing too rough

When playing physical games with the puppy, such as play fighting, owners are teaching him that hands and arms are fun things to chew on — leading to bad behaviors.

Tip: Use toys as play objects and have Bo learn to fetch them when thrown. Exercise him with games and walks, not wrestling.

### Destructive behavior

Bo is unable to use his paws to pick up items, so he resorts to chewing on them instead. Chewing is a natural behavior for a puppy, so it's important to direct him to chew on safe items, which only owners provide to him.

Tip: Until Bo is older, and he can be trusted not to be destructive, the Obamas should not leave him unattended, or he may destroy something important. Crate training can help keep him out of trouble, meaning that destructive behavior can be stopped before it begins.

To read more about the Obama family's new puppy, [click here](#).