

Retirement Day: Caliente Racetrack

By Gerry Faludi

Retirement Day is always an exciting time at the McRorie compound as we get to see a new group of Greys start out on their journey to becoming loving pets and couch potatoes. To some people this may be their first interaction with a Greyhound while to others it is the day they get their first glance at the Grey they will foster or adopt. Retirement Day begins with an early morning trip to the Caliente Racetrack in Tijuana. Volunteers are able to go to the track to pick up dogs, so we are providing this information for those who would like to participate in a “Hound Hauling”.



If you wish to go to Tijuana to pick-up dogs, please email Tom McRorie to see if there is room. He takes the Suburban which can hold three additional people. Tom leaves right at 4:30 A.M. because we need to be at the track by about 7:00 A.M. If you're late, you'll be left behind. Due to new regulations, a passport or passport card is mandatory. Driver's licenses or birth certificates are no longer acceptable at the border. Once Tom leaves, he makes a quick stop to pick-up a box of donuts for the kennel workers. He makes one more rest stop in National City at a McDonald's which is where we meet with GAC (Greyhound Adoption Center) on the way back if we are giving them some of the dogs we pick-up. Then it's across the border and onto Caliente which is about 4 miles from the border.



Once at Caliente, we enter the kennel area and unload cans and bags of dog food into our pet kennel. Take a few minutes to walk up the ramp and see the newly built grandstand. Once the food is unloaded, the trailer is brought around to the exercise pens where we pick-up the dogs. The track personnel you may see are: Manuel, the kennel caretaker, Raul, the track veterinarian and Mr. Naim Lajud Libya, the new track manager. After the dogs are loaded into the trailer, we leave for the border. The wait at the border can be upwards of an hour and an extra 20 minutes at the secondary inspection area as the trailer compartments are checked. Once through the border, we

may stop at the McDonald's to give GAC some of the dogs or just head straight back to the McRorie's. We try to arrive back just before noon.



One thing to remember is that the dogs being picked up at the track are usually already spoken for. As enjoyable as it is to go to the track and see a group of beautiful, excited Greys, do not expect to select one from the group as your own. The foster/adoption coordinator maintains a list of foster homes and Board approved adopters and knows which will require a male, female, and small dog/cat safe Greyhound. Fosters and adoptions are based on which dog is the best fit for a certain home. This reduces the chance that a dog will bounce back and is of the greatest benefit to the dog, which in the end is our primary goal.

Hound hauling from Caliente is truly an experience. It makes for a very enjoyable and fulfilling day. If you have any questions regarding going to Caliente, please feel free to contact Tom or Joyce McRorie. Their contact information can be found on the website at <http://www.fastfriends.org>.