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Protecting Animals: Film Monitoring



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Gary Goldberg

Gary Goldberg Loves those Dogs

When it comes to the newest members of his family, Gary Goldberg can't stop gushing. The Emmy Award-winning director gave the American Humane Association the scoop on adopting Molly and Mabel, the Newfoundlands that stole the show playing "Mother Theresa" in Goldberg's latest film [Must Love Dogs](#).

Talk about bringing work home with you at the end of the day! Once filming wrapped on his new romantic comedy starring Diane Lane and John Cusack, that's exactly what Gary Goldberg did. Goldberg adopted both Newfoundlands at the end of the production, and shared his story with American Humane.

"I've been a Newf fanatic for quite a while now," says Goldberg. "I love their temperament, their thoughtfulness. They're loving, wonderful companions, and I enjoy being in their company."

According to several American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representatives who monitored the production, this unabashed affection was not one-sided. Several field reports documented the enthusiasm with which the dogs greeted Goldberg and his wife on the set. These slobbering salutations usually involved jumping up with both paws around the director's shoulders to pull him in for a kiss!

Must Love Dogs illustrates the special bond people share with their animals by demonstrating the unwavering emotional support Lane's character receives from "Mother Theresa." Finding Newfoundland puppies to train for the role of Sarah Nolan's canine companion wasn't easy, though. Newfs aren't normally movie dogs because their pure black coloring makes them so hard to "light" on camera. In fact, trainers Boone Narr and Mark Harden of Boone's Animals for Hollywood were reluctant to take on two Newfoundlands until Goldberg promised to adopt the dogs

Must Love Dogs Keeps Dogs Safe

American Humane's Certified Animal Safety Representatives were on the set to monitor Molly and Mabel's performance during production, and *Must Love Dogs* was awarded the "No Animals Were Harmed"® End Credit Disclaimer.

Director Gary Goldberg on American Humane

"It was great comfort to look over and see the American Humane Association's people on our set. They were always helpful and their genuine affection and respect for our animals was inspiring. It was like they were agents for the dogs but didn't ask for more lines."

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himself after production.

After locating two puppies in Washington, the trainers spent many weeks preparing Molly and Mabel (now named Maeve) for the actions they would be asked to perform on screen. In addition to hitting their marks, speaking, jumping into a lake, and swimming on cue, Molly and Mabel had to master the “go-with,” in which an animal must act as if it is the actor’s pet and focus all its attention on him or her, while appearing unaware of the trainer providing the cues off-camera. “The great thing about Boone and Mark is that I never saw those men raise their voice, let alone speak sternly or harshly or in any way negatively to the dogs. It really was a lesson in affection training.”

Though the dogs may look identical, Goldberg reveals that their personalities are anything but. Whereas Mabel doesn’t care where she falls in the treat delivery order, “Molly is much more the movie star and much more dominant.” Goldberg says at home Molly never gets nervous when strangers approach. “She just thinks they’re coming over to adore her. She looks like she’s saying, ‘Oh, the camera’s on.’”

Such instant attraction, it seems, was universally felt on the set. “We had just an incredible, dog-loving cast and crew. If anything these dogs were just over-petted.”

Life after the limelight

Molly and Mabel have retired in style at Goldberg’s home in Vermont. Set against the backdrop of a national forest, with two lakes and an abundance of geese, moose, and deer, it is a paradise for both man and beast. Goldberg and his family already had two Newfoundlands and a Labrador before Molly and Mabel joined the troop, so ample space and plenty of exercise for the gang is key. One of the family’s favorite rituals is walking, and Goldberg estimates he and the dogs cover about 10 miles on their five separate daily walks. “We’re pretty fit now. The vets here in Vermont are pretty happy with our dogs.”

Whatever fame the film may generate for Molly and Mabel, Goldberg doesn’t foresee acting plans for the future—unless there’s a sequel, he quips. “No, they’ll be child actors...they’ll have their memories and their reviews.

“It’s kind of a privilege to be around them. That’s how it feels,” says Goldberg.

American Humane knows exactly what he means, having witnessed the mutual adoration between Goldberg and the dogs and the celebration of the human-animal bond that *Must Love Dogs* embodies.

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