

# Pets Are Popular With U.S. Presidents



Most people have heard by now that President-elect Barack Obama promised his two daughters a puppy if he were elected president. Obama called choosing a dog a “major issue” for the new first family.

It seems that pets have always been very popular with U.S. presidents. Only two of the 44 presidents -- Chester A. Arthur and Franklin Pierce -- left no record of having pets. Many presidents and their children had dogs and cats in the White House. President and Mrs. Bush have two dogs and a cat living with them -- the dogs are named Barney and Miss Beazley and the cat is India. But there have been many unusual presidential pets as well.

President Calvin Coolidge may have had the most pets. He had a pygmy hippopotamus, six dogs, a bobcat, a goose, a donkey, a cat, two lion cubs, an antelope, and a wallaby. President Herbert Hoover had several dogs and his son had two pet alligators, which sometimes took walks outside the White House.

## NEWS WORD BOX

popular    issue  
record    wallaby  
pygmy hippopotamus

Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of President John F. Kennedy, had a pony named Macaroni. She would ride Macaroni around the White House grounds.

Some pets also worked while at the White House. Pauline the cow was the last cow to live at the White House. She provided milk for President William Taft. To save money during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson brought in a flock of sheep to trim the White House lawn. The flock included a ram named Old Ike.

## MORE FACTS ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL PETS

People all over the U.S. -- and the world -- want to help the Obamas pick the perfect dog for Malia, age 10, and Sasha, 7. The Obamas have to be careful choosing a puppy because Malia is allergic to most dogs.

## THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Learn more about dogs that do not cause allergies to act up. If you were allergic to dogs, which *hypoallergenic* breed would you choose?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://news.aol.com/article/peruvians-offer-bald-puppy-to-obamas/244364>

## **Peruvians Offer Bald Puppy to Obamas**

By TERRY WADE

LIMA, Peru (Nov. 11) - Peruvians crazy about their national dog, a bald and often toothless breed popular among Incan kings, have offered to send a hypoallergenic puppy to the Obama family. President-elect Barack Obama has promised daughters Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7, a new pet for the White House. But Malia is allergic to most breeds, he said Friday as speculation swirled about the dog the family would choose.

*My, what big ears you have!* And that's how this 4-month-old Peruvian Hairless Dog got his name, "Ears." Peruvians crazy about their national dog are offering Ears to President-elect Barack Obama for his daughters Sasha and Malia. "We want to give a male puppy to Obama's daughters, so they get to experience the joys of having a dog but without having any allergies," said Claudia Galvez.

(Note: Please disable your pop-up blocker)

Owners of the Peruvian Hairless Dog, a breed dating back 3,000 years and depicted in pre-Hispanic ceramics, say it is perfect for kids who are sensitive to dogs.

"They do not cause any type of allergy and are very friendly and sweet," said Claudia Galvez, 38, director of the Friends of the Peruvian Hairless Dog Association.

"We want to give a male puppy to Obama's daughters, so they get to experience all the joys of having a dog but without any allergies."

According to Peruvian folklore, the dogs have above-average body temperature, which compensates for their lack of hair and helps alleviate symptoms of asthma or arthritis suffered by their owners.

Galvez delivered a letter detailing her offer to the U.S. Embassy in Lima Monday and hopes Obama will accept it.

Galvez has a 4-month-old pedigree puppy to send to the Obama family. For now, she is calling it Ears because it has two large, perky ones.

"But if we send it to the United States, its official name will be Machu Picchu," she said, referring to the ancient Incan citadel, Peru's top tourist attraction.

(Editing by John O'Callaghan)

<http://news.aol.com/article/dog-breeds-obama-family-might-consider/241700?icid=sphere>

## **Dog breeds Obama family might consider as a pet**

By The Associated Press

AP

posted: 4 DAYS 15 HOURS AGO

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-President-elect Obama says a main criterion for his family's first dog would be whether it is hypoallergenic, since his daughter Malia is allergic. Experts say an ideal first dog should also be good with kids and visitors.

A look at dog breeds that might be good candidates:

Breeds that typically don't shed:

- \_ Poodles
- \_ Bichon frise
- \_ Portuguese water dogs
- \_ Maltese
- \_ Schnauzers
- \_ Westies (West Highland White Terriers)
- \_ Scottish Terriers
- \_ Goldendoodles

Breeds with a more friendly temperament:

- \_ Beagles
- \_ Cocker spaniels
- \_ Golden retrievers
- \_ Labrador retrievers

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<http://news.aol.com/article/obama-getting-a-family-dog-isnt-easy/241529?icid=sphere>

# Who should be the first dog? Here are candidates

By LINDA LOMBARDI

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AP

posted: 4 DAYS 4 HOURS AGO

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WASHINGTON -Among the offices Barack Obama has yet to fill, one has a special importance to his family: first dog. At his first postelection news conference on Friday, the president-elect called choosing a dog a "major issue" in the Obama household and a hot topic on his Web site.

"We have two criteria that have to be reconciled. One is that Malia is allergic, so it has to be hypoallergenic," he said. "On the other hand, our preference would be to get a shelter dog, but a lot of shelter dogs are mutts like me."

Add to that the strain of the inevitable attention that comes to a cute pup in the White House. On Thursday, President Bush's normally docile Scottish terrier Barney bit a Reuters reporter on the right index finger.

So, how to choose?

No breeds are completely hypoallergenic. However, some breeds have a tendency to cause fewer problems — mostly those that don't shed and need to have their coats trimmed regularly, or those that tend to shed less, said Stephen Zawistowski, an executive vice president for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Relatively common no-shed breeds include poodles, bichon frise, Portuguese water dogs and Maltese, but these breeds need professional grooming, which can be expensive. Other breeds that have a tendency to shed less are Schnauzers, Westies (West Highland white terriers) and Scottish terriers, Zawistowski says.

Purposely bred crosses like goldendoodles also have the no-shed coat, but random-bred mixes of dogs like poodles will also tend to have that coat, Zawistowski says.

The Obamas could adopt from either a shelter or a breed-specific rescue group. Gary Weitzman, director of the Washington Animal Rescue League, says that right now about a quarter of the 250 dogs in their shelter are purebred, but the number can be higher.

"In September we had 78 dachshunds — we'd just done a rescue from a dachshund puppy mill," he says.

An ideal first dog should also be good with kids and visitors. One advantage to adopting an adult dog is that personality traits are fully developed and good temperament testing can help choose a dog that's suitably sociable.

If the kids insist on a puppy, it's harder to predict. Almost any breed of dog can do well with children if raised with them.

Stanley Coren, a psychologist who has written a series of best-selling books on dogs, recommends breeds including beagles, cocker spaniels, golden retrievers, Labrador retrievers and poodles for families. But whatever breed is chosen, a puppy will need intensive socialization.

"Start introducing it to what it's going to be dealing with around the household," says Zawistowski. That includes children, but dogs can also be afraid of anything — men with mustaches, people with hats — if they're not used to them, he notes.

"Those Secret Service guys look intimidating even on television."

A new dog can be a daunting choice, especially when made in the spotlight. But it's worth it — and for more than just the kids.

"I'd like to know that President Obama has a dog," Zawistowski says. "When he has a bad day, what's better than having a dog walk over and say, 'Hey, things aren't so bad?'"

<http://money.aol.com/news/articles/ a/bbdp/american-kennel-club-offers-to-help/239420?icid=sphere>

## American Kennel Club Offers to Help Obama Make Good on His Campaign Promise to His Daughters

PR Newswire

posted: 6 DAYS 15 HOURS AGO

comments: 2

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Text Size **AA**

--Results of AKC's [www.presidentialpup.com](http://www.presidentialpup.com) Poll Point to the Poodle--

NEW YORK , Nov. 5 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As President-Elect Barack Obama prepares to move into the White House, he will now have to make good on all his campaign promises, including his most important vow to his family -- to get his daughters a dog. Obama reiterated his promise in last night's acceptance speech, telling his daughters "you have earned the new puppy that's coming with us to the White House."

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20081105/DC44316> )

In August, more than 42,000 Americans cast their vote in the AKC(R)'s poll to determine the right breed of dog for the Obamas at [www.presidentialpup.com](http://www.presidentialpup.com) . The Poodle was chosen from a list of five hypoallergenic breeds, each with distinct characteristics that made them uniquely suited for Obama's daughter, who suffers from allergies. Learn more about Poodles at

<http://www.akc.org/poll/special/PoodleFactSheet.pdf>

"We hope the Obamas consider the survey results," said AKC Spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "This poodle is a breed that doesn't always get the respect it deserves, but it is truly an ideal family pet. They are currently the eighth most popular breed in the U.S., according to 2007 AKC registration statistics, and the breed spent more than two decades in the top spot -- a true testament to its suitability as a family pet. And while Poodles require frequent grooming, their consistent and predictable coat is crucial for Obama's daughter and all who suffer from allergies."

And, it seems the whole ticket is going to the dogs. It has been widely reported that Vice President elect Joe Biden also made a deal with his wife, "If you get the vice presidency and get elected, you can get a dog," Biden said his wife told him.

No matter what breed the Obamas or Bidens choose, the AKC hopes they can assist both families.

"I would be happy to personally assist Obama and Biden in identifying a responsible breeder if they are looking for a puppy," said AKC President & CEO Dennis Sprung . The best way to start a search for a puppy is through the AKC parent club for your chosen breed or local all-breed kennel clubs in your neighborhood. AKC clubs can be located using this directory: <http://www.akc.org/clubs/search/index.cfm>

AKC recommends that prospective buyers educate themselves on the hallmarks of a reputable breeder. Visiting the breeder's home or kennel and seeing at least one of the puppy's parents is ideal and will let you know what the future holds for your pup in terms of temperament and appearance.

Also, every AKC registered breed, from Affenpinscher to Yorkshire Terrier, has a rescue organization devoted to their particular breed. These breed experts carefully screen prospective homes and are adept at making the best match for both the dog and the prospective family. Before being re-homed, the dogs typically receive extensive veterinary exams, shots and preventive care.

The Poodle Club of America (PCA) ( <http://www.poodleclubofamerica.org/>) consists of responsible breeders and individuals devoted to Poodle Rescue. They are the ideal resource for the Obamas as they conduct their search.

With the PCA's help, the AKC located potential Poodles for consideration as Obama's new canine cabinet member. Among the eligible candidates:

-- AKC Delegate Mary Ellen Fishler of Halcyon/Camelot Miniature Poodles has a 7-week-old litter of Miniature Poodles available in Gaithersburg, MD, just outside of Washington, D.C. Contact: [PoodleClubOfAmerica@yahoo.com](mailto:PoodleClubOfAmerica@yahoo.com) -- Six-week-old Toy Poodle puppies rescued by Flora's Pet Project/Poodle Rescue Connecticut will be available for new homes in early January. They can be adopted by contacting Marianne Smith, President, Flora's Pet Project at 203-592-8282 or [flora@floraspetproject.org](mailto:flora@floraspetproject.org) (for a hi-res version of photo visit [http://images.akc.org/press/Poodles0038\\_AKCKas.jpg](http://images.akc.org/press/Poodles0038_AKCKas.jpg)) -- Rescue dog "Ollie" is a 2 year old Toy Poodle. He is housetrained, neutered, vetted, vaccinated and is on flea, tick and heartworm preventative. Ollie can be adopted by contacting Poodle Club of America Rescue Chair Sally Poindexter at [PoodleClubOfAmerica@yahoo.com](mailto:PoodleClubOfAmerica@yahoo.com)

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a not-for-profit organization which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States . The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its nearly 5,000 member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 20,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

SOURCE American Kennel Club

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/wayoflife/11/07/mf.presidential.pets/index.html>

# White House pets: Hippo, gator and 'Satan'

Story Highlights

Barack Obama promised puppy for girls; past presidential pets have been strange

What the heck? First lady Abigail Adams had a dog named Satan

President Harding's dog gave "interviews" and had a seat at Cabinet meetings

Original name of FDR's dog: Big Boy; President Grant had fighting gamecocks

By Ethan Trex

**(Mental Floss)** -- In his victory speech on Tuesday night, Barack Obama promised his daughters Sasha and Malia that they'd get to bring a new puppy with them to the White House in January.

It's a good thing Obama said "Yes, we can" to the girls' request to getting a dog; for all of his charm, ability, and oratorical flair, he could never be our nation's chief executive without a White House pet.

Counting Obama, the country has had 44 Presidents, and only two of them -- Chester A. Arthur and Franklin Pierce -- left no record of having pets.

Like Obama himself, the family pooch will have some big shoes to fill. Previous White House pets have set the bar pretty high.

[iReport.com: What pet would you want if you lived in the White House?](#)

Here are a few of our favorites:  [Watch Obama on "mutts like me" »](#)

## 1. Billy: Calvin Coolidge's pygmy hippopotamus

Calvin Coolidge may have been known for his reticence, but he showed little of his trademark reserve when it came to acquiring pets.

After taking over the presidency upon the death of Warren G. Harding, Coolidge assembled a menagerie that would rival most zoos' collections.

He had six [dogs](#), a bobcat, a goose, a donkey, a cat, two lion cubs, an antelope, and a wallaby. The main attraction in his personal zoo, though, was Billy, a pygmy hippopotamus.  [Watch new baby pygmy hippo »](#)

Billy was born in Liberia, but was captured at a young age.

He came into the possession of tire mogul Harvey Firestone, who gave Billy to President Coolidge as a gift, possibly because Firestone didn't want to feed the critter. (Even a pygmy hippo is still quite rotund; Billy was six feet long and weighed upwards of 600 pounds.)

Coolidge donated Billy to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. Because there were only a handful of pygmy hippos in the U.S. at the time, Billy quickly went to work as a stud, an endeavor at which he found some success.

He sired 23 little hippos, and many of the pygmy hippos you see in American zoos today are his offspring. [Mental Floss: 7 crafty zoo escapes](#)

## 2. The White House gators

Herbert Hoover wanted to put a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage, and ... a gator in the Oval Office? It's true.

Hoover owned a slew of dogs, but those weren't his only [pets](#). His second son, Allan Henry Hoover, owned a pair of gators that were occasionally allowed to wander around the White House grounds.

Sound crazy? Blame John Quincy Adams for setting the precedent. The sixth president also had a pet gator. His was a gift from the Marquis de Lafayette; it lived in a bathroom in the East Room of the White House. According to some reports, he enjoyed using the gator to scare his guests.

### 3. Fala: FDR's traveling companion

What do you get the Depression-conquering president who has everything? A lapdog.

In 1940 Franklin Roosevelt received a Scottish Terrier puppy named Big Boy as an early Christmas gift from a family friend.

FDR immediately realized that Big Boy was no name for a presidential companion and rechristened the pooch Murray the Outlaw of Falahill, after a Scottish ancestor. For the sake of simplicity, though, he called his new pal Fala.

After that, Fala became FDR's inseparable companion and traveled everywhere the President went.

The dog "gave" \$1 a day to the war effort, generosity that earned him the rank of honorary private in the Army. Each morning when FDR's breakfast tray came in, it included a bone for Fala.

Fala also made a famous appearance in one of his master's speeches. When FDR was decrying personal attacks from his political opponents, he jokingly said that it was okay to mock him, but leave Fala alone.

"You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress and out had concocted a story that I had left him behind on the Aleutian Islands and had sent a destroyer back to find him -- at a cost to the taxpayers of two or three, or eight or 20 million dollars -- his Scotch soul was furious.

"He has not been the same dog since!"

Fala stayed with FDR until the President's death in 1945 and lived in the care of Eleanor Roosevelt until his death in 1952. [Mental Floss: 6 utterly loyal dogs](#)

### 4. Millie: Literary sensation

When George H.W. Bush took office in 1989, he brought his pet springer spaniel Millie to the White House.

The bubbly canine won over the nation's heart so completely that she even collaborated with the First Lady on Millie's Book: As Dictated to Barbara Bush.

Millie brought further joy to the Bush family when she gave birth to a litter of six presidential puppies in 1989.

Just as her master helped slip one of his boys into the White House, so did Millie: when George W. Bush moved into the Oval Office, so did his dog, Millie's son Spot Fetcher.

### 5. Barney, Miss Beazley & India: The current residents

Sadly, Spot Fetcher had to be put down in 2004, but the Bushes aren't pet-deprived now.

They have a pair of Scottish Terriers named Barney and Miss Beazley, both of whom have websites and appear in White House-produced web videos. (Your tax dollars adorably at work!) The Bushes also have a black cat named India, who also goes by "Willie."

 [Watch Barney bite a reporter »](#)

The name India rankled some citizens of the country of the same name to the point that many Indians supposedly named their dogs "Bush."

The name wasn't meant to be controversial, though; the Bushes merely named their cat after Ruben "El Indio" Sierra, who played for the Texas Rangers while George W. owned the team. Spot Fetcher was similarly named after former Rangers middle infielder Scott Fletcher.

#### **Other first pets of note:**

Mr. Reciprocity and Mr. Protection -- Benjamin Harrison's two opossums. Harrison's son Russell also had a pet goat named Old Whiskers.

Pauline -- The last cow to live at the White House. She made milk for President Taft's consumption.

Old Ike -- To save cash during World War I, Woodrow Wilson brought in a flock of sheep to take care of the White House's groundskeeping duties. Old Ike, a ram, supposedly chewed tobacco.

Laddie Boy -- Warren G. Harding's beloved Airedale who had his own seat at Cabinet meetings and gave a 1921 "interview" with The Washington Post in which he talked about Prohibition and shortening the workday for guard dogs.

Liberty -- Gerald Ford's golden retriever hung out in the Oval Office and could supposedly read a sign from Ford that she should go be affectionate to guests -- a cute and cuddly way to gracefully end the President's conversations.

Socks and Buddy -- President Clinton's faithful [cat](#) and the chocolate lab he acquired while in office. Socks didn't like Buddy's youthful friendliness, so the two pets had to be kept separated at all times. The tensions were so bad that the family couldn't keep both pets at the end of Bill's second term, so Socks went to live with Clinton's secretary, Betty Currie.

Gamecocks -- Ulysses S. Grant supposedly kept some gamecocks at the White House.

Two tiger cubs -- Martin Van Buren received the cats as a gift from the Sultan of Oman. Congress supposedly made him give the gift to a zoo.

Satan -- One of Abigail Adams' unfortunately named dogs. She called the other one Juno.

Jonathan Edwards -- Theodore Roosevelt received this black bear cub as a gift from supporters in West Virginia who gave the bear the name, he wrote to a friend, "partly because they thought they detected Calvinistic traits in the bear's character."

Dr. Johnson, Bishop Doane, Fighting Bob Evans, and Father O'Grady -- Teddy Roosevelt's kids also had these tremendously named guinea pigs.

Josiah -- Roosevelt also had a pet badger, of course.

#### **Bonus trivia: Checkers**

Nixon's dog was immortalized in the "Checkers speech," which Nixon gave while facing allegations of illegal campaign contributions.

He said the only gift he'd accepted was a cocker spaniel named Checkers for his daughters. [Mental Floss: Why was the 'Checkers speech' so important?](#)

Checkers, however, was never the White House dog. This scandal bubbled up while Nixon was Eisenhower's running mate in the 1952 election, and Nixon gave the Checkers speech to convince Republicans to keep him on the ticket.

Although the speech was a success and Nixon later made it to the White House, Checkers never got to be First Dog; he passed away in 1964.