



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.6.4 – June 26, 2010

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<http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/>

Welcome back to another issue of Dog Talk Weekly. With summer season on its way for those of us in the north half of the hemisphere, I thought I'd do something on skin disorders this week. I'll discuss nutrition facts you'll want to know, and a dog training idea I just taught Tyler. Well, let's say we're working on it.

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Feature Article: How Many Dogs Does It Take To Change A Light Bulb? (*Humor*)

As you might know, I spend a great deal of time at the library in search of new topics and ideas. Well, last week, I came across a piece that offers a fun look at how certain dog breeds would approach the task of changing a light bulb. You are sure to find this quite accurate, if you know of or have one of these breeds.

It goes to a dog's natural, behavioral instincts and how they think about various things. They each use their personalities to solve problems... or not.

And so, what would they when asked, "How many dogs does it take to change a light bulb?"

Border Collie: "Just one, but let me change the light fixture so it will take the more efficient fluorescent bulbs?"

Bulldog: "Not worth the bother. I'll just lie here in the dark."

German Shepherd: "Just one, but wait while I rescue all the occupants and check the house for intruders who might have crept in under darkness."

Shetland Sheepdog: "I will, as soon as I arrange all the new bulbs in a tight, orderly circle."

Golden Retriever: "It's a great day, there's no work to do, and I have this great red ball here, and you're inside worrying about some silly light bulb?"

Rottweiler: "Go ahead. See if you're tough enough to make me!"

Corgi: "First, I'll bark until the old bulb leaves on its own, and then I'll nip at the new one until it screws itself into the socket."

Labrador Retriever: "I can do it! Please... Please... I can. You know I can. Please..."

Greyhound: "It isn't going anywhere, so who cares?"

Pointer: "I see it. Look. It's right over there..."

Jack Russell Terrier: "Me! I can reach it! All I have to do is bounce off the walls and furniture."

Poodle: "I'll just whisper some sweet nothings into the border collie's ear and he'll do it. By the time he's finished putting in the new light fixture, my nails will be dry."

From the book: *"Why Does My Dog Act That Way? A Complete Guide to Your Dog's Personality,"* by Stanley Coren, Simon & Shuster, Inc., New York. 2006

I highly recommend this book if you want more fun and fascinating facts about dogs. If you've ever wondered what in the world your dog is thinking, you'll find this an interesting read. Check your local library or book store.

Knowing what goes on in your dog breed's mind will help you to determine the best training approach to take for maximum benefits. The idea is to work with the dog's natural tendencies. Where the tendencies interfere with training, then you will need to do something about them before you begin.

The Jack Russell is a perfect example. He is high energy and not likely interested in sitting still while you train him. Work off some of that exercise first. In fact, work off as much as you can so that he can concentrate on you instead of whatever he wants.

Dogs that enjoy using their intelligence can benefit from exercising them in a fun environment. If you can include brain work into your training, you will have better success. For instance, Retrievers and Shepherds can become bored quickly if they don't get to use their brain power. Greyhounds don't much care unless there is some activity involved.

Shepherds, Retrievers and Border Collies all like to work. Adapt your basic training into activities that keep them busy. For instance, while teaching your dog to sit and stay, make the reward a specific activity that fits their natural instincts.

It is important to remember that every breed and every dog within those breeds have their own personalities. Your challenge is to learn your dog's breed and individual personality and character traits and use them to your advantage.

One good place to start is either online or at the library looking through dog breed books. You can find an amazing amount of information to help you.

Personal Story: Tyler's Fun, New Training Exercise

Tyler loves ball games. In one, I kick the ball off the deck and he races down the yard to catch up to it. He loves this game and will play for hours.

Another version of that involves having him actually catch the ball as it sails through the air. He's exceptionally good at both of these games. I must say, however, that it does worry me somewhat to see him twist his body so dramatically while leaping into the air to catch the ball about 8 feet over his head.

Did you know that this breed can jump twice its height? It's really something to see.

Anyway, the other day, I decided to teach him a few new commands because, while he seems relatively content with the current ones, I was getting bored.

He already learned "back" and "over" to place him in a specific spot. Once he takes up a location, I tell him "back" and he'll back up. Each time I say "back", he will back up even more and sit.

I didn't teach him to sit. That's something he just decided to do on his own. Because he knows that sit means "wait". See how he put these two together? Dogs can be so intelligent sometimes, can't they?

Now, while waiting to get the ball, he will stand at the very bottom of the deck near my feet. I've taught him to go back so that he can catch it, but he seems hesitant to go too far. He prefers the game of "block" or "goalie", I think.

When he goes "back", where he ends up is dependent on exactly which direction he's facing, which is usually off to the right. "Back" then sends him into my flower garden.

I've started asking him to "get over" or "over" to place him more center in the yard and facing me. Sometimes he gets this right away, and other times it takes work until he gets confused... no thanks to me.

The thing is, he has done it several times on command now. It will take a bit more time to perfect this. In the meantime, he's using his brain and staying involved, which is a very good thing. When I'm not working him, he's lying down looking bored out of his mind.

Another little thing I've been teaching him his how to "place" the ball, rather than spit it at me, in which case it usually ends up rolling away. This has been fun to watch him learn.

He used to bring the ball, bob his head and kind of throw the ball at me, which meant I had to retrieve it before I could kick it for him. Here's how I taught him to "place" instead.

When he brought the ball, I said, "Put it down". He'd never hit the spot. So I pointed right at a specific spot with my hand and said, "There. Put it there." I repeated this every time he retrieved the ball. Before long, he started doing just that. But he was not always "putting", but tossed it in the general vicinity. Occasionally he would "put it".

Weeks later, he's now responding very well to "Put it" where I tap my foot on the deck. He can place it so well now. The fact that he's achieved this small command pleases him, too.

As far as placing him in the yard, that's an ongoing challenge. Even though I point, he doesn't really understand what I'm doing. He's busy sniffing around, thinking I already kicked the ball.

As he's running around, and I'm trying to redirect him, I realize that I'm issuing a series of commands that are even confusing me. "Over... Over... Over... Back... Back... No Stop... Here... Over... Back..." and then I finally remember the right command... "Wait". At this point, he knows to stop what he's doing and pay attention.

We're still working on this. After all, it's only been a few days and we're both learning. But the important thing is that he's having fun, as am I.

Dog of the Week: American Eskimo Spitz



I've chosen the American Eskimo Spitz as the dog of the week because I know the breed very well, having had 2 myself, and my friend also had one. Pictured is Kobe, the American Eskimo I adopted who had been abused in his first home and feared by his second owners. (The picture is viewable in the PDF version available in your members area: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>)

Although given the name American Eskimo, the breed is not linked to Eskimos. In fact, the American Eskimo is a Nordic breed of Spitz related to the white German Spitz. They also are closely related to the Samoyed, the Keeshond, the Pomeranian and the Italian Spitz. It is believed that the white Spitz was brought over to the U.S. by German settlers. The American Eskimo name was

established around 1913 by an owner who registered it with the United Kennel Club. The breed was not recognized by the American Kennel Club until 1995.

The breed has been used as watchdog, guard dog, narcotics detection, and in agility and obedience competitions.

This is a beautiful breed, very loyal and protective of its owner. It is a small to medium-size dog that can be confused with the miniature Samoyed. In fact, even I have trouble telling them apart sometimes.

The American Eskimo has erect, has triangular-shaped ears, a curled tail that sits over its back, and a good mane around its neck, and displays a perky expression. The mane is more prominent in the males. It has a profuse coat with good plush undercoat that requires regular brushing to remove the loose hair that can become matted easily if not cared for properly.

This breed comes in three sizes:

Toy: 9-12 inches, 6-10 lbs.

Miniature: 12-15 inches, 10-20 lbs.

Standard: 15-19 inches, 18-35 lbs.

The American Eskimo makes an excellent family dog that can be quite affectionate and loving as well as hardy and playful. It has high intelligence and a strong desire to please its owner, which makes them a joy to train. In fact, this breed often ranks near the top in obedience trials.

They are naturally suspicious of strangers and will defend their property vigorously. Once introduced to newcomers, however, the American Eskimo will accept them as friends.

This dog is happiest when made a part of the family, but it cannot be allowed to dominate you or the home. If this behavior is not deterred immediately, you could be facing behavioral issues that can include separation anxiety, obsessive barking, dog-on-dog aggression, and guarding. When this happens, it is very likely that your dog will try to bite you.

As with so many breeds, the American Eskimo needs regular mental and physical exercise to prevent them from becoming hyperactive.

Due to its size, the American Eskimo will do well in an apartment or house setting, provided it gets sufficient regular exercise. This should include long daily walks and a chance to run in an enclosed yard or dog run.

Health Concerns: This breed is at risk of developing hip dysplasia and progressive retinal atrophy. If not given sufficient exercise, or if overfed, they can gain weight easily. Some dogs develop an allergy to fleas and can suffer with skin breakouts because of the bites.

From my experience, this breed lives up to its life expectations of 15 or more years. My Nikki was just over 16 and Kobe was just over 15 when they died. While I cannot locate the information now, I have read or heard that this white breed is prone to deafness. Nikki was going deaf and Kobe appeared to be losing his hearing somewhat.

Although Kobe had issues based in his abusive puppyhood, he was full of energy during his time with me and in his own way, was protective and loyal. Nikki, on the other hand, began with me and did not suffer such abuse. He was always happy, playful, affectionate... and protective. He made me fall in love with this fun breed.

Regular Sections:

- Dog Nutrition

In recent decades, more dogs have died from cancer than once did. While it has not been fully established, some experts believe this is caused by the way dog food is manufactured.

Here are some startling facts:

Half of all dogs over 10 years of age are expected to get some form of cancer.

Half of all senior dogs die from cancer.

Not that long ago, dogs tended to die from old age.

Read the labels and see if smaller dog food companies can offer your dog a much better diet than can large dog food manufacturers.

One expert discovered that regular kibble is one of the lower quality foods on the market and did some investigating when they came out with a New Zealand Lamb version. His questions about the free range lamb that was supposed to make up this product could not be answered by the manufacturer.

He retrieved an official ingredients list and was shocked to discover that there was no mention of there being any lamb in the product. It is important, therefore, to read the labels thoroughly to see exactly what you are feeding your dog. Food from large manufacturing companies involves chemicals and preservatives that might not be an issue with smaller dog food production companies.

Don't give the dog food manufacturer the benefit of the doubt. Do your own checking. Ask for an official ingredients list. Check the Internet and especially dog forums to see if anyone is talking about this particular product or company and what they're saying.

- Dog Care

Skin disorders

It can be alarming to see something on your dog's skin, such as inflammation and odd lumps. Understandably, dogs might be more susceptible to skin problems simply because of who they are and where they travel.

The grass is filled with bugs, including ticks and fleas. Other parasites, such as ringworm, can be transmitted from infected animals. Some grounds have received dangerous chemicals that can cause an irritation on your dog's skin.

Indoors, the environment is not ideal either, with its high humidity, dryness, dust mites, chemicals that naturally drift from carpets and furniture, and cleaning solutions that contain harmful chemicals.

Other things that can affect the skin are hormonal upsets and internal disorders. Many of them result in inflammation and various sores.

Frequently check your dog's skin for any sign of inflammation, sores, itchiness, parasites and lumps.

The other day, I noticed a couple of lumps on Tyler's skin. There was no color or redness. Just the skin raised up. One of them was very pointed. The flatter one had broken open and leaked. I cleaned it off and pressed down around the remaining bump and out came a white creamy substance, obviously the sebaceous oils that lubricate the skin.

The vet says they are sebaceous cysts that are completely harmless. Thank goodness. If you see something like this, it's still worth asking your vet, just in case. She did nothing for Tyler and explained that it would eventually empty on its own and disappear.

- Dog Trivia

There is no such thing as a "tame" wolf. Becoming increasingly popular are dog and wolf crossbreeds. At last count, there were 300,000 to 500,000 wolf-dog mixes in the United States. This is a bad thing. Wild dogs and such animals with doglike personality traits can easily revert back to their wild traits. A wolf's natural fear and aggression are set at

birth and will never go away, regardless of how tame they might appear to be. As you can imagine, you could very easily end up with a dangerous pet on your hands that you will, at some point, have to put down because it is a threat to humans, including you and your family.

- Dog Talk Weekly News

Would you let me know what breed of dog you have, or will be getting? I'd like to focus some articles on specific breeds so that they are more relevant to what you need.

And... if you have any questions about dogs that you'd like me to answer, simply send them to me via my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Thank you.

- Member Submissions

Send me your stories for the newsletter. You can even include a photo if you like. Include a caption. If you'd like your name on the article, just let me know. All submissions are published as anonymous unless you request otherwise.

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That's it for this issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

Until next week...

Get out there and have fun with your dog. Take some great photos. Collect wonderful memories.

Sylvia

P.S.: Don't forget to send me your stories and ideas for upcoming issues of Dog Talk Weekly. Just send them to me through my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

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<http://healthydognutritionsecrets.com/healthydogPP1.htm>

Puppy Parenting Course: Are you drowning in a sea of questions about raising your puppy the right way? This 24-week course feeds you all the information you need in bite-size portions that you can use during your puppy's early years. Get a free trial today.

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