



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.8.1 – August 7, 2010

Remember... if you miss any issues of Dog Talk Weekly, you can find them within the archives at <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

Welcome back to another issue of Dog Talk Weekly. I hope you're enjoying your summer as much as I'm enjoying mine. This is my kind of summer – hot and humid. Perhaps you're one of those people who prefers winters. Fortunately, our dogs don't care about the weather. Hot/cold, dry/humid, sunny/cloudy, rain or snow, it doesn't matter. They still expect those walks, don't they? Thank goodness for umbrellas and raincoats.

What type of dog do you have?

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.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

1. **Feature Article: Dogs Love Adventures, Too!**
2. **Personal Story: Our Trip to Niagara Falls**
3. **Dog of the Week: Golden Retriever**
4. **Regular Sections:**
 - Dog Nutrition
 - Dog Care
 - Dog Training
 - Dog Trivia
 - Dog Talk Weekly News
 - Member Submissions
 - Competitions
 - Free Stuff

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## Feature Article: Dogs Love Adventures, Too!

Are you the type of dog owner who has a certain route that you take every day with your dog? Do you automatically turn right, walk 10 blocks, turn the corner, cross over 2 blocks, and return 8 blocks to your house? Does each day bring the same walk?

It can get rather boring, can't it? Imagine how your dog feels, although since there are always new scents falling along the wayside all the time, he will probably find something to feed his curiosity.

There are many benefits to taking alternate routes and new routes regularly, and it's not what you might think.

Yes, the scenery will change but so do the sights and sounds and experiences. If you take your adult dog on the same route as you did when he was a puppy, he will miss out on many things that make his life interesting and educational.

The same goes for dogs that don't even get walks. They get to wander around the house and/or the garden and that's about it. If another animal doesn't sneak into the yard and leave fresh scents, your dog will lack that pleasure. That's right. Pleasure. Finding new things to investigate is a dog's form of entertainment.

Imagine if you couldn't watch more than one TV station – forever. You'd see the same programming every day, week after week, year after year. How boring! Eventually, you'd want to just give up. What's the point of living when there's no stimulation?

Well, that's similar to how your dog would feel if he isn't stimulated regularly. Walking into new territory will do that for him. He'll get excited when he knows another dog has been there recently.

But, it's not all about other animals. Dogs need to experience as many sights and sounds as possible so that they develop confidence. Dogs that get out and about, see unusual sights and hear odd and frightening sounds will learn to accept them, rather than be timid and afraid. Socializing with people outside the family is important, too. It gives your dog a wide variety of experiences.

Here's what to do.

Pull out a map of your town and see where are all the parks and playgrounds. What better place for your dog to experience chaos than in a playground. Walk to a new location every day or week. Stop by the ball diamond or tennis court. Let your dog play with the kids (just make sure your dog is not the type to bite, though). Take a walk through the local mall. Visit tourist spots and let your dog inhale all those unique people smells.

See if your town has a dog park where you can let your dog run free with other dogs. Take care until you are sure your dog won't get into any fights.

After your fun outing, drop by the pet store and let him choose a treat.

And don't forget to take along a jug of nice cold water for him to drink.

Your dog will love these experiences.

### **Personal Story: Our Trip to Niagara Falls**

Two weeks ago, Tyler and I drove down to Niagara Falls to spend some time with an old friend of mine. When we take new routes around here, he tends to become extremely excited and pulls excessively on the leash. I expected the same fight in Niagara Falls.

To my surprise, he wasn't nearly as forceful although still anxious to get going. Perhaps it was the long 3 hour drive that tired him out. Or perhaps meeting my friend and investigating her house satisfied some of his energy needs.

Whatever it was, it turned out to be a very pleasant trip.

Last year when we went for a long drive, Tyler experienced a little nausea. Fortunately, he didn't throw up in my new car or even outside. Once we exited the vehicle, he just wanted to run, he was so glad to get out. He had become quite upset at the loud noises and the chaos of driving down the highway with heavy trucks passing us.

This trip was much different. He didn't seem nearly as afraid on the highway, even though the traffic was passing us on both sides and much of it was heavy vehicles and speeding sports cars. The cars frequently surprised even me when they came out of nowhere and streaked by us. I suppose it's possible that this drive was much longer than any others and that Tyler eventually just accepted it as we drove along.

We took a long walk down to the Falls where he had the opportunity to revel in all the attention from the tourists. You'd think he'd feel intimidated with the swarms of people on the small sidewalk, but it didn't seem to bother him. He got his picture taken with a few tourists, and loved every minute of it.

Only one place did he show any anxiety. We stopped outside an arcade where people had gathered. From inside came a lot of noises, some mechanical and some of people on microphones. I think it was the noise that bothered him. He seemed flustered and a bit confused. We didn't stay long.

At the Falls, we sat on the damp grass near a hedge so he could cool off. It didn't take him long to work his way into the hedge to get away from the heat. Any other time, he'd be anxious to get going, but this time he was content to just relax while my friend and I sat in the cool mist and talked.

Tyler loved the walk. He got to see so many new things, smell new odors, meet new people.

Funny though. Since our trip, Tyler has been much more subdued. He doesn't fly out of the car when we park, but instead he sits and waits for me to get him. And he isn't as forceful on the leash – most of the time.

Who knows what goes on in a dog's mind. His change has me puzzled though, but at least it's a good change. Perhaps he's learned to respect me more now. Regardless, we will be taking a lot more trips to unfamiliar places in the future.

### **Dog of the Week – The Golden Retriever**



I chose this breed simply because they are gorgeous animals. It is impossible not to turn and watch them as they pass by, that beautiful coat rippling in the breeze. My first impressions of the Golden Retriever is that they have a great sense of humor, love people, and are proud and loyal. This I have determined simply from watching them, by the way they carry themselves and how they relate to their owners.

But those are just my personal feelings. Let's see what the dog books have to say.

I found 2 great library books on the Golden Retriever, but there were many more. Obviously, this is a very popular breed. This information comes from "Golden Retrievers" by James E. Walsh, Jr., T.F.H. Publications Inc., New Jersey, Published 1988, and "The Golden Retriever" A Comprehensive Guide to Buying, Owning and Training, by Jason Smith, Willow Creek Press, Wisconsin, Published 2000.

If you want to read up on this breed, these books contain a lot of good information, but so do many of the others.

The Golden Retriever was developed in part by Lord Tweedmouth of Britain beginning line-breeding in 1865 to fill the need for an animal to retrieve game that he and other nobles shot while hunting.

He mixed the Tweed water spaniel and the wavy-coated retriever with the Irish setter, bloodhound and St. John's Waterdog (believed to be the stock for today's Labrador retriever and Newfoundland). In 1903, the Kennel Club of England registered the first flat-coated golden and the Labrador retriever. The Golden Retriever was registered in 1911.

James Walsh's book goes into great detail about the breeding process that produced the Golden Retriever we see today. Here is part of the information he provides, based on logs (stud books) maintained by Lord Tweedmouth.

To create a dog that was stable and of pleasant temperament, he introduced the water spaniel into the breed because they were noted for this character. To enrich the dog's color, he added the Irish Setter, which also enhanced the new breed's scent abilities. The introduction of a sandy-colored bloodhound was expected to sharpen the dog's tracking abilities.

Golden Retrievers started competing in sport field trials in 1899 and in 1908, they were first entered into a Golden Retriever bench show competition, but at this point, the breed was not yet recognized and was entered as a flat-coat golden.

The Golden Retriever Club of America was started in 1930 to promote the breed which was both a capable hunting companion and a breed standard.

The Golden's most attractive feature is it's temperament, according to Mr. Walsh. They are all-round family dogs, accepting and loving to all members of the family including children and the elderly. They make good watch dogs and warn of approaching strangers, yet they will welcome them once they enter the home.

The breed is willing to please, which makes them easy to train. They love affection and are content to lie at your feet. They are adaptable to any living situation, whether in an apartment or a farm. They can play many roles well and make perfect guide dogs, trackers, gun dogs and show dogs. They do exceptionally well in obedience trials.

Typical health problems for a Golden Retriever:

Prone to allergies from pollen, molds, dust mites, food, fleas and other bugs. Allergies usually cause itchy skin. If your dog is constantly scratching, licking or biting his or her skin, and if the coat is dull and lacking texture and strength, consider that it could be a result of allergies.

Hip Dysplasia usually results in a painful malformation of the hip ball-and-socket joint that shortens the dog's life expectancy. You can help avoid having to deal with this horrid condition by getting your puppy from a reputable Golden Retriever breeder. Check the

certification of the puppy's parents to ensure they do not have this condition in their history. Ask to see the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) certification. A dog with this condition should not be bred.

Talk to your vet about any treatments available.

Other health concerns are ear infections, inherited eye problems such as cataracts, epilepsy, thyroid problems and heart conditions.

## **Regular Sections:**

### **- Dog Nutrition**

There is a lot of controversy about dog nutrition that I don't think even the specialists know what is best. Some stand by raw food diets while others reject it. With so much inconsistent advice, how do you know what to feed your dog to ensure he or she enjoys a long, healthy and fit life?

About the only thing you can be sure of is that the majority of dog food products contain preservatives of some sort. Now, these can present no threat at all to your dog, but some do. The only way to try to avoid this problem is to look for dog foods that have the least amount of preservatives.

Remember that dogs need a well-rounded diet, just like we do. They need the vitamins, minerals and proteins. With recent scares about gluten and other chemicals in dog foods, more companies are springing up that provide safer dog foods based on natural, wholesome ingredients.

Dogs are at risk from some of the same things we are: salt, sugar, fatty foods, carbohydrates. The results are often the same: heart problems, diabetes, cancer, obesity and overall poor health.

Consider for a moment what dogs ate before man created dog food. They lived on meat and bones from the butcher shop. In the wild, they would eat whatever fresh products they could find such as fish, small prey, berries and certain plants. The closer you can come to such a natural diet, the better it is for your dog.

You can find a lot of great books at the library or even online that provide good recipes that you can create for your dog.

I provide a great resource in my recent book, [Healthy Dog Nutrition Secrets](#), which has a lot of information about diet and includes a dog recipe book with lots of great meals your dog will love.

### **- Dog Care**

Summer is a great time to give your dog a much-needed bath, especially if you spend a lot of time outdoors romping together through forests and fields, or just rolling around in the back yard. The problem is that many shampoos can be harmful to your dog.

The best shampoo for a dog must be detergent free, biodegradable, hypoallergenic and free of artificial ingredients including color, fragrance and preservatives. Many additives can cause skin irritation and hair loss, as well as intestinal upset if your dog licks himself or herself after the bath.

We tend to want lots of foam when we wash, but for a dog, that's a bad thing because it is difficult to remove from the dog's coat, especially on long-haired breeds. That's why you want a soap that rinses off completely.

Right now, remove any dog shampoos that contain sodium laurel sulfate, sodium laureth sulfate, or ammonium laurel sulfate. These caustic detergents create a good lather, but do not rinse out well and can dry the skin and coat and cause hair loss. Sodium laurel sulfate can interact with other ingredients to form potentially carcinogenic nitrates and dioxins. Large amounts of nitrates can enter the bloodstream and cause long-term problems, especially in dogs with sensitive eyes, the nose and ear areas.

Look for products that have castile, jojoba, olive and rosemary. Castile is a vegetable-based soap that originally was made from olive oil. When mixed with lye, the result is a pure, mild and gentle soap that is also environmentally friendly.

## **- Dog Training**

You might have noticed that your dog is much more cooperative when you are in your secluded back yard or in your house. Yet, he becomes a completely different dog when you go out in public. That's because there are so many new things to see and investigate, and distract him. So how do you train your dog at the local park?

Before you begin this exercise, make sure your dog has learned to come to you reliably when he is off the leash. For instance, when you are in the yard and he is free, see that he always comes on command. Once that is set, you can venture out to the park.

The first thing you need is a long leash or line that extends a great distance, even as much as 600 feet.

Typically, a dog will keep going until he reaches the end of the line. Once he knows this, he will use it to his advantage; therefore, you do not want him to discover this limitations of your control. Call him to you before the line is fully extended. "Come". When he obeys, make him sit, wait a few seconds, and then release him again.

If he runs about 300 feet away from you, the 600 foot line will trail behind him. Casually walk up to the dog and pick up the line as you go. Call the dog to you. If he responds, great, but if he is slow to respond or ignores you, snap the line sharply to remind him that you are in control.

If he comes half way to you, turn and run backwards away from him and call, "Come" and he should respond accordingly.

To be sure the dog has learned the lesson well, continue this exercise for 21 days. Use this method in as many different locations as possible. You can use a favorite toy to speed up the learning process.

The next test is how to get your dog off this line yet have him still obey your commands.

Your dog is most likely to revert to his old behavior of ignoring you once you take off the line. Rather than removing it entirely in one swoop, shorten the line a bit each week until you have only 3-4 feet left. Continue with this length for a few more weeks.

As with any training, always reward your dog for good behavior. Give him a treat and/or heavy praise, but only when he obeys.

## **- Dog Trivia**

Your vocal tones will attract different reactions in your dog, and will vary depending on how high or low the tone is. For this reason, it will help to keep your commands to single syllables, like "No", rather than sentences or phrases. Your dog will understand this type of command, regardless of whether an adult or a child issues it.

**- Dog Talk Weekly News**

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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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**Dog Nutrition** is vital to your dog's life expectancy and quality of life. I've written a book on how to make sure your dog gets a healthy, nutritious diet and avoids many of the dangers that come with certain foods. Find out more at <http://healthydognutritionsecrets.com/healthydogPP1.htm>

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