



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.9.2 – September 19, 2010

DO pass this newsletter around to your friends and anyone who you feel will enjoy it. Better yet, show them where they can get their own weekly subscription: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com> – it's **FREE!**

Welcome back to another issue of Dog Talk Weekly. This issue includes some photos of my neighbor's Chihuahua. Remember the Dog of the Week I wrote a few issues back on the Chihuahua? At that time, I told you I had a little story to share. It's in this issue.

I'm always looking for ideas for the newsletter.

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>

Enjoy the issue.

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Feature Article: Is Your Vet Providing Adequate Care?

Your veterinarian is a vital resource who will be providing your dog with the care necessary to ensure he or she lives a long and healthy life. Sometimes, finding a good veterinarian isn't quite as easy as you think. As with any medical professional, some are more capable than others.

Before I give you some pointers on how to find a good vet, let me share a story of my own.

Back in the mid-1970s, I found a local vet who was excellent. The service he provided, from the reception to the care of not just my dog but me as well, was exemplary.

It was run by an older man who had one other vet working with him. Both were able to identify my dog's health issues and treat them readily. It involved quite a few treatments and a few operations. Along the way, they were compassionate with me when the fear of losing my dog was simply unbearable.

When that time came, the older vet took me into his office and introduced me to his own dog which he always brought to work with him. That gesture alone helped immensely, being able to touch and hold another dog moments after my own died.

This was the service to which I had become accustomed for about 25 years. Recently, he must have passed the business over to someone else. The new vets are three young women who probably just recently graduated.

Two of them seemed unable to cope with my over-active Tyler and simply gave up on giving him his physical. While trying to listen to his heart, they simply said, "he's panting too much." They didn't do the usual physical the previous vet had done, feeling around his body, taking his temperature, listening to his heart and lungs. They just gave up.

On several occasions, I've returned with a few issues and they seem at a loss to explain them. Perhaps most surprising was the day I tried to explain the stool he was passing. The vet cringed and said, "Ew". Her best prescription was to give him a different dog food that is free of gluten.

Those subsequent visits were less than satisfactory. While running up \$200 vet bills, I received little in the way of actual treatment for the condition and little in the way of an examination of Tyler.

Needless to say, I'm very disappointed with this vet who I have trusted for so many years. But, now it's time to move on and find a more capable vet, I think.

If you are not entirely satisfied or are left with questions after visiting your vet, you have a few options. You can pressure them for answers to specific questions. Or you can find a new one as I will be doing.

Of course, during your search one of the first things you are looking for is one who makes you and your dog feel comfortable. If you see any distrust or perhaps a dislike between you and the vet or your dog and the vet, keep looking.

It is important that you feel comfortable and now that by asking questions, your vet will provide you with good answers. Many vets, like these new ones I spoke of, seem too busy or not interested enough to actually take time to listen to you and try to understand.

Start your search by asking people you know which vet they use. Call the clinic to get specific information: hours of operation, emergency services, are appointments always necessary, how long the clinic has been there and whether the vets are original or new. Personally, I prefer a seasoned vet who has experienced a myriad of dog-related conditions, diseases and treatments. But that's just me. Some younger vets are just as capable.

Once you get in to see the vet, here are some standard questions you can ask:

- what are his or her credentials, years in the business, professional affiliations
- who should you contact if you need after-hours emergency treatment?
- what veterinarian specialists are in the area and how do referrals work?

- what are the vet's special medical interests (it's good to know when your dog needs treatment on a specific issue, like hip dysplasia or kidney disease).

After establishing these types of things, ask about your particular dog breed, including special care and considerations that he would recommend. This question will help you to identify if he is up to date on any current treatments for those breed-specific health issues.

Finally, find out what he recommends for suitable veterinary care for your dog: how frequently you need to see him, shots and vaccinations, how you can prepare yourself for any dog emergency such as building a good first aid kit.

The last thing is to ask for a tour of the facility so you can see where your dog might stay if he's kept for short-term treatments, the cleanliness of the facility, and how well equipped it is.

Don't waste your time and money on a vet that is not providing adequate care for your dog. The moment you feel dissatisfied, take it up with the vet. If you are still not happy, find yourself a new vet who you feel you can trust. One who will take the time to listen and communicate with you on all issues related to your dog's care.

My Story: Joey the Mischievous Chihuahua



Joey is my neighbor's Chihuahua. He loves to come over to my house and tease Tyler. Being so small, it's easy for him to scoot under the front gate and hide under the table.

During his visits, he takes great joy in running around Tyler in a game of "catch me if you can" and then head for that front gate to safety.

Tyler is surprisingly careful with him and so far, has not hurt him. But a word of warning. Chihuahuas seem unaware of their fragile nature and will put themselves in harms way. Although Tyler would not intentionally hurt him, it's quite common for small dogs like Joey to be injured when a larger dog steps or rolls on them.

A month or so ago, Joey's owner picked up a Chihuahua statue. When Joey first saw it, he behaved like it was real. He sniffed around it's head and private parts, licked it's lips and even tried nibbling on its nose. It was a sight to see, let me tell you. By the time I took this picture, however, he'd discovered that it is not real, but as you can see, he does seem to want to protect it.

In case you're wondering, he's looking at Tyler. Here they are together so you can see the size difference and the color similarities.



As you can see, they do get along well together. Shortly after this shot was taken, Joey dashed off with Tyler in pursuit.

Dog of the Week: The American Eskimo



The American Eskimo Spitz is an enthusiastic, fun and loyal breed that I have enjoyed for about 25 years.

This is Nikki, my first Eskie. He came to me in 1971 and lived a happy, healthy life for 16+ years. I've since discovered that this breed is one of health and vitality that lives a relatively long life compared to other breeds.

When we first got Nikki, I knew very little about the breed. Just by owning him, I've discovered that they are extremely loyal, enjoy being with their owners and getting attention. Their appearance alone provides them with the

attention they need. Very few people could resist Nikki's beautiful thick white coat, alert and fox-like expression and outgoing personality.

Unfortunately, it was a gloomy day when I took this picture so it doesn't do him the justice he deserves. And sadly, I cannot locate other photos I took of him over the years.

As a puppy, he looked like a little polar bear, so cute all you wanted to do was cuddle him. He was 5 weeks old then and full of energy and a desperate need to investigate his new home and family.

What I loved about him was the way he enlivened my life by his sheer enthusiasm, joyfulness and high intelligence.

The American Eskimo is a natural watchdog who will alert you to any outside intruders. Here's a tip, though. Some Eskies become yappers simply because their owners did not take the upper hand early on. It's the same with any breed, really. You have to let the dog know that excessive barking will not be tolerated.

Nikki was trained so that he was allowed to bark in 3 bursts only. After all, I didn't want him NOT to bark, since I did want him to alert me to visitors and scare away intruders. People told me that he sounded like a big dog from the other side of the door, yet he was only knee-high.

That's another great thing about the American Eskimo. They are a suitable size for any living environment. We got him for our apartment at the time. Be aware that there are 3 sizes of this breed – standard, toy and miniature.

Nikki was the standard size and weighed about 28-30 lbs. My friend had a much smaller one that only weighed about 18 lbs. And the last one I had, Kobe, was somewhere in between. The two smaller ones were smaller-boned dogs, too as seen in their rather spindly legs.

The American Eskimo is eager to please but also quite headstrong. To gain his attention, one book recommends grabbing him by the ruff near his cheeks and look him in the eye. While I have used this method with Nikki, be careful. It could be seen as a sign of confrontation which could trigger your dog to bite you.

There are other ways to turn his attention on you, such as using a collar and lead. Give a gentle tug on the leash to distract him during the training years and any time when you are in a situation where he is ignoring you.

Hitting is not necessary. These dogs learn quite well if you simply be the dominant pack member yourself. Remember, they love to please their owners. It's built into them, which makes them one of the easiest dogs to train.

A bit of history...

You'll hear this breed called American Eskimo, Eskie and Spitz which can be confusing. The American Eskimo is a member of the Spitz family (the Nordic or northern breed). Their appearance is characterized by erect ears, double coats and tails that curl up onto their backs. The Spitz family consists of more than 40 breeds throughout the world and includes the Chow Chow, Akita, Keeshond, Pomeranian, Siberian Husky, Alaskan Malamute, and the Samoyed.

Scientists are still debating the original of the dog, but they do agree that there are 4 basic types of dogs: Mastiff, Greyhound, Dingo and prototype northern dog. They are believed to be descended from the Woolly Tibetan Wolf, the small Asian Wolf, and the Northern Grey Wolf. The Dingo is believed to be the most ancient dog type that originated in central Asia.

Meanwhile, the Asian Wolf is the oldest ancestor of the dog. People living in the northern areas of Scandinavia and Russia developed their own dogs, probably from the Northern Grey Wolf. As people moved around and took their dogs with them, interbreeding took place naturally to produce the dogs we see today, including the Spitz breeds.

Direct ancestors of the American Eskimo were smaller dogs developed as all-purpose dogs from the Malamutes, Eskimos of North America, Samoyeds and Huskies. They were used for hunting, herding, pulling sleds and as watchdogs.

Interestingly, some tribes and cultures believed that all white animals will repel evil demons. Native Americans believed that white animals were the chiefs of their kind. The white buffalo was a particularly powerful animal that had supernatural powers.

Yet, many people considered white dogs as undesirable. In fact, white will quickly disqualify otherwise colored dogs from show competitions. Others associated a white dog with nobility. British breeders preferred white because regardless of how many times you breed white dogs, you will only ever get white. This eliminates any worries about having puppies of alternate colors as can occur with dogs of color.

I can tell you from experience that the American Eskimo makes a fantastic pet. It is not only gorgeous to look. It is an absolute joy to have around to protect you and your family and provide entertainment when you need to escape the stresses of life.

Just be certain you're ready for a dog before you go looking at them. They are far too irresistible for just a casual look.

Regular Sections:

- Dog Training

You cannot correct a dog for something he doesn't understand. You must first teach him. Think about how your dog is perceiving your commands and corrections:

As told by the dog:

"Her hand went up and I dropped to the ground. "Good," she commented. Then her other hand made some funny motion that I have never seen before. I stayed down, not knowing what else to do. She walked back to me with an angry scowl and snapped me up, insisting, "Sit". Was I supposed to know that?"

"He threw the dumbbell. I trotted out to get it, my tail waving high. I picked it up and spotted the High Jump. Wanting to please, I jumped the High Jump on my way back to him. All of a sudden there was a scream, "No!" That's funny, I thought; the last time I jumped the jump, he had really been pleased with me."

(Source: Beyond Basic Dog Training" Third Edition, by Diane L. Bauman, Copyright 1991, 2003, Howell Book House, Wiley Publishing, Indianapolis, Indiana.)

- Dog Trivia

Many dog owners with adopted or rescued dogs might think their dog was abused because they are shy and/or aggressive around people and dogs. The dog tends to cower and shake, or act aggressively. In actuality, the dog in all likelihood has not been socialized to people, dogs and new experiences. Her reaction to such situations is out of fear or lack of confidence. Before jumping to conclusions and returning the dog, try socializing your new pet.

- Resources

"The Complete American Eskimo: A Special Kind of Companion Dog" is one of the books I referenced for this issue. I found it at my local library. It is written by Barbara Beynon and is published by Howell Book House, Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1990.

- Dog Talk Weekly News

You'll want to visit the blog this week. I've just posted a series of photos of Joey, the little Chihuahua. It's on this new page where you can always check back to see the latest photos: <http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/photo-gallery>

For the next little while, I have to conduct some personal business. During that time, I might not be able to publish more than 2 issues a month, unless time permits. Please bear with me. Things will go back to normal soon.

Due to the fact that I expect to add more photos in future issues of Dog Talk Weekly, I will no longer be sending the entire newsletter via email. You will receive notices when the next issue is ready. Then, you can read the newsletter in PDF format online in the archives: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

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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>

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