

Renaissance Poodles

The Newsletter of Poodle Rescue of New England

Welcome Note... by Mahala Beams

After a mostly gorgeous fall, the weather has changed, bringing us an unusually cold November. Out have come the winter coats, hats and mittens, and yes, the dog coats. Here we go again!

But to keep us toasty as the weather grows colder, this issue of *Renaissance Poodles* includes the heartwarming stories of Guinness, Tucker, Michael and Titi. Thanks to their adopters for giving these fortunate poodles such wonderful homes and for sharing their stories with us.

Don't forget that in cold weather small dogs lose more heat than larger dogs since smaller dogs have a greater surface area from which to lose heat relative to their weight than do larger dogs. So bundle up the little ones especially. However, if we are lucky, indian summer will visit us at least once before the Holiday Season. Until then, and after that, stay warm!



Figaro ready for the cold



Guinness with his pal Toby

Guinness... by Kim Keough

After losing our beloved sixteen-year-old Bichon, Jack, in February, our house no longer felt like home. How one little dog can fill a house and hearts with so much love and joy is hard to understand, unless you have a Jack of your own. Left behind were a devastated dog Mom and a very, very sad, and lost little dog brother –Toby.

We adopted Toby when he was a seven-month-old undernourished and scared little puppy, and Jack was eight-years-old. Toby had no idea how to be a dog, but Jack welcomed him with open paws, shared everything he had, and taught him well. The two were inseparable – eating and sleeping side-by-side, patrolling the back yard, enjoying all the smells on long walks, and watching out the window each night for Mom to come home from work.

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Guinness... *continued from page 1*

Having never been an only dog and so bonded to Jack, Toby was inconsolable at the loss of his big brother. While Mommy grieved the loss of her four-legged soul mate and tried to comfort Toby, nothing seemed to help. He went through the motions of daily life, but the light in his eyes had dulled. Although I felt I'd never be ready for another dog, I knew Toby needed us to move on.

Having followed Poodle Rescue of New England (PRNE) online, I kept my eyes out for a dog whose story touched my heart and I thought would be a good fit for our lives. I thought we found that dog when we brought a PRNE maltipoo named Benji home, but although he was a sweet and adorable dog that bonded quickly to me – he preferred to be an only dog and wasn't the right brother for Toby. With a heavy heart, and compassionate support from Amy at PRNE, I once again had to say goodbye to a little white fluffball.

About two months later, as if it was always meant to be, the owners of Winston, a ten-month-old fluffy and loving little apricot poodle, made a similar decision – that he might be happier in a another home, maybe one with another dog that would love the exuberance and antics of a puppy. His family loved him enough to contact PRNE and we immediately expressed an interest in meeting him.

It was love at first wag for Toby and Winston (Winne-the-poodle)! From the very first day, the two were inseparable. Toby welcomed Winnie – now named Guinness in honor of Mom's love of all things Irish – with open paws, happily sharing all his toys, his favorite spot on the back of the couch, and his Mom with his new little brother. The two run and wrestle for hours at time,



Guinness and Alice, fast friends

protect the backyard from bunnies, squirrels and chipmunks, and right now are playing tug-a-war with one of their toys while I try to write this. Now it's Toby's turn to pay-it-forward. Jack taught him well and he'd be so proud of Toby for being so kind to Guinness, and Toby is really enjoying his new role as the big brother.

Guinness is a curious, silly and delightful dog. He LOVES going to the amazing home-based doggie daycare down the street. He bonded quickly with the daycare owners Barbara and Lauren and fit in from the very first day. He is quite smitten with an adorable little puppy named Alice, who started the same day he did, and plays well with all the other dogs. He's even charmed his new groomer, Karen, who helps keep his beautiful coat clean and tangle-free.

His gentle demeanor and sweet temperament are signs that he was dearly loved in his former home. He happily greets everyone he meets, is especially fond of my 8 year-old niece and nephew, and is always eager to clean anyone's ears, nose, and face!

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Guinness and Toby romping



Guinness... *continued from page 2*

I can't thank PRNE for all they do for dogs, and their people, in need. Their mission is to place the right poodle in the right home and Benji, Guinness and Toby would certainly agree that they know what they're doing! They spent time getting to know me and Toby, including our lifestyle, veterinarian, home and yard, and wanted to know where the dog would sleep - in the big bed of course! They also really understand small dogs and recognize the quirks and special needs of each one. They found the right homes for both Benji and Guinness, leaving behind a lot of wagging tails and helped make our house a home again.

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Guinness

Self-calming Behaviors... by Mahala Beams

One of the most interesting and useful things I learned when I attended a workshop required for pet therapy certification a few years ago, was an aspect of canine body language I had never been aware of before. The leaders of the workshop called our attention to three particular behaviors that dogs use as "self-calming" mechanisms. Since then I have paid close attention to the signals my dogs give about their state of mind - to us, their human companions, to each other, and to other dogs. The behaviors are licking their lips, yawning and in certain situations, moving very slowly.

I notice these behaviors particularly in my miniature poodle, Figaro, who is by far the most high strung of my three dogs and thus most likely has the greatest need for self-calming. He loves to cuddle and frequently jumps up into our laps when we are seated. But if I pick him up to put him in my lap or to give him a hug, he invariably licks his lips and often yawns too. Why might this be? Well, if a giant creature suddenly hoisted me into the air, no matter how gently, I might be a little stressed too, even if I were fond of that creature!

My most extravert and self-confident dog, a poodle-beagle mix, Avril, also sometimes displays these behaviors, but most often when she is waiting for me to place her food bowl on the floor. The oldest dog in our household, Triton, gets his bowl first. While I tuck his ears back under his collar so they don't drag in his food,

Avril licks her lips, yawns and shifts her weight from side to side as she struggles to control her impulse to dash over and gobble up his food. Fortunately, this doesn't last long as I quickly put down her bowl in her eating spot.

The third behavior, moving very slowly, is not only self-calming, but also intended to calm other dogs and/or people. Triton and Avril like to play with each other and with other dogs, but Figaro does not although he gets along just fine with Avril and Triton. So when either Triton or Avril becomes playful and with a play-bow invites Figaro to join in, Figaro moves out of the way very slowly. He does this also when he is carrying a favorite toy past one of the other dogs. This signals to them that he is not interested in playing and the slow movement is intended also to calm them down and to avoid inciting rambunctious behavior. On very rainy days when I get out the raincoats, Figaro, who hates to wear a raincoat, moves very slowly as I approach, in hopes perhaps that I'll give up the idea of the dreaded raincoat. When we are out for walks, Triton, who is somewhat of a "nervous Nelly" outside of his yard, shows this slow-motion behavior as we pass unknown dogs. As they sniff interestedly, Triton moves very slowly by them, head down, carefully not engaging them.

Watch your dogs and see if you notice any of these clues in their body language. They can give us important insights into how our canine companions are feeling.

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Tucker loves to play ball!



Tucker with his beloved ball

The Tale of Tucker... by Dan Thurman

When we had to say goodbye to our beloved standard poodle Charlie, we decided to wait a while before getting a new dog. "A while" lasted about three weeks before our daughter referred us to the picture of a miniature four-year-old poodle named Tucker on the Vermont Poodle Rescue website. We were instantly smitten and were pleasantly surprised to find that he was still looking for a new home. Happily, a member of Poodle Rescue of New England was fostering Tucker, right here in Massachusetts. The adoption process went smoothly and Tucker was quickly ours.

Tucker is incredibly cute, but comes with a history about which we know little. We understand that he came from a breeder who was closing her business. He apparently was accustomed to living with female humans and latched onto my wife immediately; however, he kept his distance from me and often eyed me with some suspicion. He spent much time during his first few days with us, cowering on a sofa or shadowing my wife.

It was apparent he had not been walked on a leash. On our first walks he would either become entangled in his leash or would dart from side to side. He would not sniff and, at first, he would not do his business while on a leash. He did enjoy meeting other dogs, but was skittish when people tried to pet him.

Happily, he is gradually settling in with us and becoming a "dog." He now relishes his walks with us, sniffs everything and, if it's a really good aroma, he might even

roll on the spot. He can be trusted off leash and the highlight of each walk is a ball game. He loves the chase and is becoming adept at catching the ball in the air.

During the past few months Tucker has also grown more comfortable with people, male and female, and usually does not shy away when someone bends down to pet him. He also shares affection with me, snuggling up beside me on the sofa. We wish we knew more about Tucker's former life, but are content in having him write his own story with us.

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Tucker with Dan and Karin



Roxanne, Michael and Monet



Michael watches over Dora, a foster

Michael... by Susan McDonald

There were always rescue dogs in my life, or dogs someone else couldn't take of care. Hobo was a black cockapoo, the size of a standard poodle. He was a real character and a great companion. Then I had lab/shepherd/pitbull mixes. When my last big dog died, I was ready for a smaller, portable dog, and I remembered my wonderful Hobo, so I contacted PRNE for two miniature poodles.

First came Michael, a year-and-a-half-old black mini. Apparently his previous owner had been told he needed major hip surgery which was her reason for surrendering him. However, PRNE's local surgeon evaluated Michael and said he was walking fine and needed no surgery, so he was ready for adoption. Next I adopted Roxanne, a Bichon Frise, and Michael soon grew to love her. She was the boss, and I think Mikey liked it that way. Then Monet, a sassy toy who was one of our foster dogs, joined our family for good. Sadly, Roxanne died recently. Mike obviously misses her and has become a little more assertive around the other dogs as Roxanne was.



Michael, handsome boy

People are fascinated when they meet Michael; he has an old soul expression and looks at you as if he is thinking deeply about something. He is not very interested in other dogs apart from his housemates, but after some initial barking, he accepts a new foster dog into our home. Michael loves squeaky toys, playing hide-and-seek in blankets and plush throws, and me. When I have company, he fusses over them at first and then spends the rest of the time snuggled next to me or at my feet. When we are outside, he does his business, explores the yard for a while, then stands or sits next to me. Now that Roxanne is gone, he sleeps next to me, against the other pillow.

Ten years old now, Michael has chronic pancreatitis. He is on a low fat diet and can only have rice cakes and fruit for snacks, but he enjoys his food and will eat anything. He also has Cushing's disease, but with the medication his beautiful hair has grown back completely, and he is full of energy again. He leads the life of a normal dog, chasing rabbits and taking walks every morning. Mike is my faithful good boy. He takes life seriously and

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Michael... *continued from page 5*



Michael enjoys time in his garden



Monet, Michael and Buddy, a foster dog

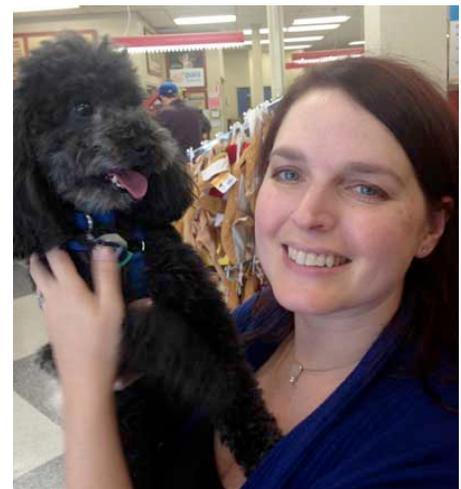
cooperates fully with the vet and groomer. He likes men and they like him. He knows lots of words, and he loves it when I tell him how wonderful he is.

Because they are such good, sensible, smart, friendly dogs, we have been able to foster and meet many new poodles. I cannot describe the joy and personal satisfaction that living with all these poodles has brought to my life. I like to foster because it is so rewarding to save a life and help the dog find a new home. I can give them up because there is always another dog waiting for a chance too. I am so grateful to PRNE for Mikey, Roxie, Monet, and all the fosters I fondly remember. What true blessings they are! But my Mikey was my first dog from PRNE; it all began with him, my very special little guy.

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**PRNE and PETCO
The Connection
Continues!**

J.J. helped Diana represent PRNE at PETCO recently.



J.J. and Diana at PETCO

Titi... by Holly De Nike

I've been working with PRNE for over ten years now, mainly as an adopter of older dogs who come into rescue. My first adoption was Charlie, who was an old soul who had been found wandering on the side of the Massachusetts Turnpike, matted, starving, blind and deaf. It was a miracle that he didn't wander out into traffic. Charlie despite all of his infirmities stayed with me for a year and a half. He never missed a meal and took great joy in hopping around the backyard.

Since then I've had the good fortune to adopt Alex, who was 13 or so, Buddy, who was also 13, another Buddy, 14, and now Titi, 15, who will be a permanent foster dog in my care. Each has come with their own issues, health and behavioral, but each has grown and adapted and loved in ways that I didn't think possible when I met them.

When I picked Titi up from the shelter the shelter workers told me that me this was for hospice care, meaning that Titi already had one foot in the grave, to put it crassly. I was so angry that they would write him off without knowing him better. I'm very happy to say that Titi has blossomed into a very active senior dog. He loves his meals and treats; he trots after his foster brothers and has little trouble navigating the back deck area. His vet visit revealed him to be in very good health with the exception

of some nasty teeth. He's now had his dental cleaning and has taken to eating dry kibble as his dinner of choice. Not so much "hospice care" after all, thankfully.

Soon after I picked Titi up from the shelter I was talking with a friend about him. She knows how much my animals mean to me and that I had just recently lost two of them to cancer. She asked me why I would foster an older gentleman like Titi given all that I had been through in the past few months. My answer was that if I could give him even one more day of happiness and good care, then I had been given a blessing.



Titi

I thought about her question more that night. One of my favorite quotes is by Ram Das: "We are all just walking each other home." I realized that this is why I chose to foster Titi and adopt the seniors that came before him. If I can help a senior animal have a more comfortable, happy, healthy

journey home, for however long it lasts, then my walk has been worth the while.

Poodle Rescue of New England does an amazing job supporting adopters and the poodles that come into its care. I would highly recommend adopting a senior dog. The rewards are immeasurable.

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If you can start the day without caffeine,
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can conquer tension without medical help,
If you can relax without alcohol,
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,
Then You Are Probably The Family Dog!



Dr. Kay and Lexie

Lumps and Bumps by Nancy Kay, DVM © (June 16, 2014)

Dr. Kay, author of *Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life* and *Your Dog's Best Health: A Dozen Reasonable Things to Expect of Your Vet* has graciously granted permission for PRNE to reprint one of her informative articles in each issue of *Renaissance Poodles*. Dr. Kay's extensive credentials follow:

Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine; Recipient, Leo K. Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award; Recipient, American Animal Hospital Association Animal Welfare and Humane Ethics Award; Recipient, Dog Writers Association of America Award for Best Blog; Recipient, Eukanuba Canine Health Award; Recipient, AKC Club Publication Excellence Award. For more information, visit her website: <http://www.speakingforspot.com>.

Given the opportunity to examine an older dog, I'll very likely find at least one or two cutaneous (within the skin) or subcutaneous (just beneath the skin surface) lumps and bumps. Such growths are common by-products of the aging process. In this regard, I liken them to the brown spots that appear on our skin as we get older.

The good news is that most cutaneous and subcutaneous canine tumors are benign. It's that small population of malignant masses that keeps us on our toes. They are the reason it's important to have your veterinarian inspect any newly discovered lumps and bumps your dog develops. The smaller a cancerous growth is at the time of treatment, in general, the better the outcome.

Pet your dog!

In terms of "lump and bump patrol," your first order of business is to pet your dog. No doubt you and your best buddy already enjoy some doggie massage time. What I'm asking you to do is a more methodical petting session. Once a month, slowly and mindfully slide your fingers, palm sides down, along your dog's body. Move systematically from stem to stern while inspecting for any new lumps or bumps.

Also, look and feel for changes in the size or appearance of those previously discovered. Any new findings should be addressed with your veterinarian who relies upon your help with this surveillance. Imagine your vet trying to find a tiny growth on a shaggy Sheepdog or Sheltie during the course of a single exam. Some lumps and bumps are bound to be missed without your assistance.

When to see your veterinarian

Does finding a new growth mean that you must see your veterinarian right away? Not necessarily. Say that you've just spotted a new bump in your dog's skin that is the size of a small pea. She is due for her annual physical examination in three months. Must you go rushing in this week with this new finding, or can it wait the three months? The answer depends on the behavior of this newly discovered growth.

My recommendation is that you continue to observe the new lump once a week. Examining it more frequently can make it difficult to accurately assess change. If the mass is growing, or otherwise changing in appearance, best to have it checked out sooner rather than later. If no changes are observed, waiting to address it at the time of the annual physical exam makes perfectly good sense.

In contrast, say that in the course of examining your best buddy you discover a prune sized, firm, subcutaneous growth that feels attached to her shoulder blade. Based on the larger size and deep attachment of this mass, better to have this one checked out right away. If in doubt, contact your veterinarian to figure out the best course of action. As with most things medical, better to be safe than sorry.

In advance of your veterinary visit, be sure to mark the location of any lumps or bumps requiring inspection. You can clip some hair over the site or mark the fur with a ribbon, hair band, or marking pen. Growths discovered at home when an animal is lying down in a relaxed, comfortable position have a habit of magically disappearing when the dog is upright and uptight in the exam room.

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Lumps and Bumps... *continued from page 8*

Fine needle aspirate for cytology

If a newly discovered growth is large enough, the usual first step your veterinarian will recommend is a fine needle aspirate for cytology. The purpose of this step is to attempt to noninvasively clarify the cell type within the mass, and whether it is benign or malignant.

Collection of a fine needle aspirate is a simple process that is easy on the dog and rarely requires any sort of sedation. Using a needle no larger than the size of a vaccination needle along with some gentle suction, your vet will remove a smattering of cells from the growth. These cells are then spit out onto a glass slide and evaluated under the microscope.

Some cytology interpretations are a slam-dunk, and can readily be interpreted by your family vet. Others require the eyeballs of a specialist- a clinical pathologist who works in a veterinary diagnostic laboratory. Remember, the goal of the cytology testing is to determine the underlying cell type, therefore whether the growth can be left alone or requires more attention. Fine needle aspirate cytology is often (but not always) definitive. If the results do not provide clarity, a surgical biopsy of the mass may be recommended.

If your veterinarian recommends surgical removal of a mass as the very first step (chooses to forego the fine needle aspirate), I encourage you to consider getting a second opinion. It is always disappointing and frustrating when a veterinarian foregoes cytology, proceeds with surgery, and the biopsy report reveals a malignancy with cancer cells extending beyond the margins of the tissue that was removed. In other words, cancer cells were clearly left behind. Had the veterinarian known in advance from the cytology report that the tumor was malignant, a different approach (much more aggressive surgery and/or radiation therapy) would have been undertaken, almost certainly resulting in a better outcome.

A second “bad news scenario” that can arise from forging ahead with surgery without benefit of fine needle aspirate cytology is failure to identify a cancerous growth that may have already spread elsewhere in the body. If the cytology reveals a malignancy, screening the rest of the body for metastasis (spread) is the logical next step. If metastasis is discovered, removal of the originally discovered mass is unlikely to provide any benefit. Rather, such surgery will only subject the patient (and the client’s pocketbook) to a needless procedure. Leaping into surgery to remove a mass without the benefit of cytology is risky business.

The importance of histopathology

If your veterinarian surgically removes a growth from your dog, do not, I repeat, do not let that tissue sample wind up in the vet clinic garbage can! A far better choice is to have the mass submitted to a veterinary diagnostic laboratory for histopathology (biopsy). There, a veterinary pathologist will evaluate paper-thin slices of the mass under the microscope to confirm the identity of the mass.

Even if a fine needle aspirate cytology indicated that the growth was benign, histopathology is warranted. On occasion, the pathologist discovers something quirky such as a malignant tumor within the center of one that is benign.

If histopathology is not affordable, ask your vet to place the growth that was removed in a small container of formalin (preservative) that you can take home for safekeeping. This way, should multiple masses begin growing at the surgery site or should your dog develop a tumor at another site, you will still be able to request histopathology on the original sample. Formalin is toxic stuff, so keep the container lid sealed tightly.

Lumps and bumps are a very normal part of the canine aging process. Teaming up with your veterinarian to assess them on a regular basis is the very best way to insure that they never create a health issue for your wonderful dog.

Does your dog have any cutaneous or subcutaneous masses? If so, have you had them evaluated by your veterinarian?

If you would like to respond publicly, please visit <http://www.speakingforspot.com/blog/?p=4425>.

AUTUMN GALLERY



Dexter



Ace goes for a walk



Ace

Trick or Treat?



Maggie waits for trick-re-treaters



Marta and Beijo

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Oliver (black) with his new family, Joe, Cindy and Frosty

WHO WE ARE

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For more information on Poodle Rescue of New England, please visit our website:

www.poodlerescuenewengland.org