

Renaissance Poodles

The Newsletter of Poodle Rescue of New England

Welcome Note... by Mahala Beams

Winter, especially last year's winter, seems far away after the lovely fall weather we have enjoyed, but old man winter is probably still coming back. Oh dear... But meantime, sit back, keep warm and enjoy this November issue of *Renaissance Poodles*.

Baxter's story shows the kind of patience helping a dog make the transition from a difficult former life to a new home sometimes takes. Kudos to all who adopt such poodles and help them to develop trust and confidence in their new situations. The results of the process can be very rewarding for both the dog and the family.

Two articles explore the always fascinating topic of dogs' relationships with people and with other dogs. Who comes first for dogs, people or canine companions?

Enjoy the first in a series of "Silly Poodle Limericks" by talented writer, illustrator and poodle lover Charlene Dunlap. More to come in subsequent issues.

We hope you will find Dr. Kay's exploration of Pet Insurance helpful. Whether or not to invest in pet insurance is often a thorny question; her article helps to shed light on the pros and cons of this option.

As the photo essay on Snoopy shows, he is settling in to his new home just fine and is thriving on all the love and attention he is receiving.

Finally, don't miss the Autumn Gallery featuring canine trick-or-treaters! From Addie as a Patriot's deflated football to Ellie-Belle howling at the moon, it's a treat!

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Baxter

Baxter... by Mike Laverdure

Baxter has been acclimating to his new life with us better than expected. Knowing that he had a challenging life up to this point, we were expecting the worst, but in reality, adding him to our family hasn't been nearly as challenging as I was expecting.

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Baxter... *continued from page 1*

Although he is a very troubled soul who really struggles to trust people, you can see he desperately wants to cuddle up with us or just be next to us. But he can't get himself to cross that bridge consistently. We can see he is very excited to see us when we get home from work or get up in the morning as his tail wags a mile a minute. But when we approach, he still runs away. Then he will come back, and run away again. He does have a couple "safe spots" he runs to which helps him relax when we want to put a leash on him. But on occasion, when the mood hits him, he will approach us and give us a quick kiss or nuzzle before running away. So I look at that as definite progress. Knowing he hasn't had a lot of stability, I am fully expecting it to take many more months before he can finally settle down.

He is much better with females than he is with males. He will get really close to my wife and let her pat him occasionally, when he wants affection. But it is always on his terms. If she approaches and he isn't in the right frame of mind, he flees. On the other hand, he just wants me to leave him alone, which of course makes me push it even more :). Since we are trying to get him to overcome his fears, I will only approach him when he is on his leash so he can't run away from me. Then I give him treats and pat him and let him know he is safe. Of course he bolts as soon as I give him the opportunity... Even though he is incredibly food motivated (he eats everything), it is an effort to get him to take a treat from me; when he takes one, he does a grab-and-run. I suspect that he had bad interactions with a male during his previous life.

We think he is similar to someone with PTSD as he is always on alert. The poor guy has trouble relaxing if more than one person is in a room with him. He is always looking around and will dart in and out of the room. However, he is definitely making progress every day although he regresses a bit at times, so we are going slowly with him. He loves going on walks although he has missed a few due to his unwillingness to put his leash and harness on. We can only chase him for so long.

Bax loves other dogs. He and our second dog, Cooper, are buddies. They play all the time. I think that is part of the reason Baxter has acclimated so well. Baxter follows Cooper everywhere; it is quite cute. He goes to a doggie



Cooper and Baxter

daycare 2 ½ days a week and plays well with all the other dogs there. He is totally in his zone then. It is really the trust thing with people that holds him back.

Baxter loves the stuffed toy sent from PRNE. He just enjoys ripping such toys to shreds! It is pretty funny; he gets it, chews and pulls on it for a bit, then throws it up in the air to catch it. This is pretty typical of how he treats all of his toys!

Baxter really is a sweet boy, and you can tell he wants to not be afraid, but we are not there yet. We love him, despite his quirks. He is definitely part of the family. We have tried some basic commands such as sit, but he is still too skittish to really get it. All he wants to do is escape, so I think we need some professional help. We are hoping to work with some trainers to help alleviate some of his trust and flight issues. Once we can get him to be more trusting, I think he will be a great dog.



Do Dogs Love People More Than They Love Other Dogs?...

by Stanley Coren Ph.D., DSc, F.R.S.C.

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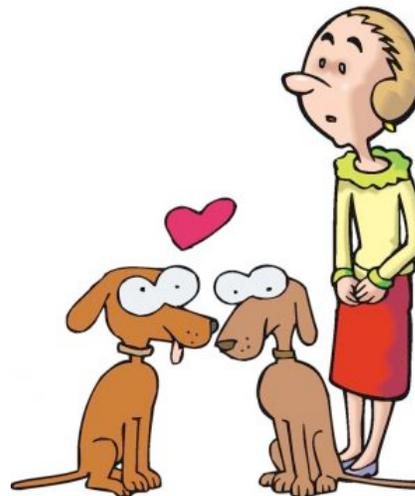


Stanley Coren is the author of many books including: [Born to Bark](#), [The Modern Dog](#), [Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?](#) [The Pawprints of History](#), [How Dogs Think](#), [How To Speak Dog](#), [Why We Love the Dogs We Do](#), [What Do Dogs Know?](#) [The Intelligence of Dogs](#), [Why Does My Dog Act That Way?](#) [Understanding Dogs for Dummies](#), [Sleep Thieves](#), [The Left-hander Syndrome](#)

Visit Dr. Coren's blog site (Psychology Today, Canine Corner at www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner) for more interesting articles on dogs.

Our domestic dogs are not wolves, and some interesting evidence about the difference between dogs and wolves comes from the way that they form attachments with other living beings. It may well be the case that we have selectively bred dogs to love humans more than they love animals of their own species. I use the word "love" even though psychologists and behavioral biologists tend to shy away from the word, and prefer terms like "attachment" or "bonding". Many scientists have the feeling that the word "love" is reserved for poets and songwriters, rather than hard-nosed researchers. Furthermore, a number of researchers who accept love as a valid feeling to reference to humans, still have doubts as to whether dogs can actually experience that same emotion.

As is often the case, we are often led to wrong conclusions about the nature of dog behavior based upon observations of captive wolves. Over the past half century it has become common place to assume that since dogs were likely domesticated from wolves that we get a clearer and undistorted look at the natural behavioral predispositions of dogs by looking at what wolves do. Thus it is well known that wolves that are isolated from other members of their pack become anxious. If they are in unfamiliar settings they seem to draw comfort from having members of their pack around them. Furthermore, wolves seldom form close attachments to their human captors. From this people have assumed that dogs naturally bond with other canines, and their attachment to people is secondary.



I recently rediscovered a research report that had been published in the Journal of Comparative Psychology by a research team headed by Michael Hennessey of Wright State University, along with some scientists from Ohio State University (David Tuber, Suzanne Sanders and Julia Miller). This study shows just how domesticated our pet dogs have become and how their orientation seems to have shifted more towards humans than to other dogs.

The animals involved in this research were eight mixed breed dogs who were 7 to 9 years of age. They had been living as littermate pairs in kennels since they were eight weeks old. All these dogs had been fully socialized when they were young and were quite comfortable around

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Do Dogs Love People More... *continued from page 3*

people. They were being looked after by one [caretaker](#) who, at least as far as the dogs were concerned, was their owner. The important factor for us is that when the experiment began these kennel mates had not been separated from each other (even for a few minutes) over the previous two years, and had seldom been apart during their entire lifetimes.

To test their attachment to each other, one member of each pair was removed from the kennel for four hours and the remaining animal was observed. If you take a puppy away from its litter mates it will usually whimper and act distressed until it is reunited with its litter mates, however these adult dogs, when left alone in their kennel, did not show any evidence of anxiety. They rarely barked or paced, and the level of the [stress](#) hormone, cortisol, in their blood didn't change as a result of their separation from their kennel mate. This was true as long as the remaining dog was left in its familiar pen.

The situation was quite different when the dogs were placed alone in an unfamiliar kennel. Now they clearly showed signs of unease and apprehension. They became agitated and their stress [hormone](#) level went up by more than 50 percent. The most important finding is that this increase in [anxiety](#) happened whether the dog was alone or if it had been moved to the unfamiliar place in the company of its kennel mate. In this unfamiliar place the dogs did not interact very much, and did not seem to draw comfort from the presence of their usual partner as shown by the level of stress hormone in their blood.

The situation was quite different, however, when their human caretaker sat quietly with each dog in this new and strange situation. Under these circumstances the dog would stay close to the human and would try to get him to interact and make contact. In response to this comfort-seeking behavior, the caretaker would briefly stroke the dog. This interaction with a human seemed to be enough to reduce the dogs level of anxiety almost completely. This was verified by the fact that the stress hormone level remained very close to normal in the presence of the person.

The conclusion that one can draw from this is that these dogs were behaving as if they had a stronger bond with their human caretaker than with their brother or sister, despite the fact that they been in the company of that dog for all of their lives. This was true even though these dogs have not led the same kind of living experience as a pet dog has, and therefore have not had continued intimate contact that pet dogs have with their human owners.

If we are to draw any comparison between dogs and wolves based on this research, it would be to note that dogs, like wolves, do have territories, at least in the sense that they feel most comfortable when they are in familiar places. We know that in the wild, wolves can move to new places without any rise in their stress levels, as long as they are in the company of members of their pack. The same is true of dogs, however it appears that the most significant pack member is likely to be a human (usually the dog's owner) and not another individual of its own species. For most dogs their owner has been a constant feature in their lives since they were puppies. It appears that we not only bred dogs to accept dogs and humans as relevant social partners, but to view humans as being more significant socially than other canines.

This has important implications for when dogs are being re-homed. Shelters often feel that dogs who have lived together in pairs must only be adopted out to a new home which is willing to take both dogs. If we extrapolate from the present research this seems like an unnecessary practice, as long as the home to which each dog is going has an individual human that the dog can bond with. Fortunately research has shown that dogs can quickly bond with a new human being based upon only a few minutes of friendly attention over a couple of days.

Dogs are not wolves. We now have data that suggests that we have selectively bred the domestic dog so that it is strongly [biased](#) to love humans (or at least one human) more strongly than it loves other dogs.

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Just People-Play for Figaro...by Mahala Beams

In my experience, some dogs seem to want only their human companions when it comes to play time while others seem to be equally, or even more, enthusiastic about play with canine buddies. Have you found this to be true with your dogs as well?

When we first adopted six-year old Triton, our now fourteen-year-old standard poodle, we learned he had been raised with two small poodles with whom he played vigorously and often. So naturally we thought a smaller companion for him would be just the ticket, and we soon adopted one-year old Figaro, our miniature poodle, now seven years old. Although they became good friends, much to our surprise Figaro would not respond to Triton's invitations to play. And Triton was obviously used to playing with smaller dogs since he would lie down after his play-bow-invitation, ready to spar gently with Figaro at Figaro's level.



Triton and Figaro



Triton and Argo

On the other hand, when we added our younger son's giant dog, Argo, to our pack for a year while our son was out of the country, Argo and Triton played happily and rambunctiously. Figaro looked on. After Argo



Triton and Avril playing

went back to his boy, we added Avril, a much smaller dog. She belonged to my older son who had joined the Marines on the condition that we take Avril into our family. Avril and Triton played wonderfully. With Triton down on her level, they sparred inside endlessly with open mouths while making enthusiastic doggie noises, and outside, they raced around delightedly chasing each other. Figaro, however, merely observed.

That Figaro was attached to all of the dogs included in our pack at various times, however, was clear. He greeted them enthusiastically when they returned from the groomer or visits to the vet, and he clearly enjoyed their company. But when it came to play, Figaro wanted only

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The pack: Avril, Triton, Argo and Figaro

Just People-Play for Figaro... *continued from page 5*

us or even better, our grandchildren, especially little girls. He invited us to play constantly, and when walking outside, he would happily approach any little girl on the sidewalk, hoping for a good game of something. Other dogs, however, were only to be approached warily. No matter how interested they were in some fun with Figaro, he declined their invitations. In the snow, he played for hours on end with sledding children, happily ignoring any other dogs around. On the few occasions when we took Figaro to a dog park, he only wanted to play with me or my husband.

Now Triton, even at his advanced age, still occasionally invites Figaro to play, but Figaro never accepts. Yet Figaro invites us to play with him all the time, dropping balls at our feet or trotting in with his ragged blankie, hoping for a rousing game of tug-of-war. Of course, we have fostered this behavior since we usually respond to his invitations enthusiastically - at least for a while.



Figaro plays with our granddaughter Mia

All of our dogs have been very attached to us, but Figaro has been the only one who in his playful moments seems to be almost completely people-oriented. Sometimes I wonder if he knows he's a dog. Perhaps he sees himself as just a little boy, albeit in a poodle costume.

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*Two fluffy young Poodles from town
Jumped into every mud puddle they found.
Then said with delight,
"This seems so right!"
"Till their groomer cried, "Baths all around!"*

From *Silly Poodle Limericks*
Limericks and Drawings by Charlene Dunlap
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The World of Pet Health Insurance

by Nancy Kay, DVM © (September 21, 2015), reproduced with permission



Dr. Kay

Dr. Kay, author of *Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life* and of *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>.



Veterinary health insurance has been around for a good long time, but only recently has it been gaining in popularity. Growth within the industry was initially stymied by inadequate, “slow-pay” and “no-pay” reimbursement policies.

Pet health insurance companies have come a long way, and are now attracting the attention of more and more pet lovers, particularly those who want to take advantage of high-end diagnostic and therapeutic options that might otherwise be unaffordable.

Perhaps you've thought about pet insurance, but haven't committed one way or another because the policies are confusing, or you truly don't know whether or not purchasing insurance makes good financial sense. Know that you are not alone in your uncertainty. To help with your understanding, I encourage you to read, "[The Changing Landscape of Pet Health Insurance](#)."

Is pet insurance right for you?

Deciding whether or not to purchase a medical insurance policy for your pet requires serious consideration. And, if you decide to go ahead, figuring out which insurance company is the best fit can be daunting. Although it is considered to be far less necessary than human medical insurance, should your pet develop a chronic disease or suffer some sort of catastrophe, such as being hit by a car, pet insurance might be your best, if not your only way of financing his or her care.

Without question, quality veterinary care is expensive, and as the cost of living continues to increase, so too will the cost of doing business with your veterinarian.

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The World of Pet Health Insurance... *continued from page 7*

When making your decision about pet health insurance, I encourage you to consider your answers to the following three questions:

What are your current financial resources?

If your pet suffered a serious accident or sudden significant illness, would you be able to finance his or her recovery? Think about the types of procedures and associated expenses you might encounter: surgery, ultrasound examination, hospitalization with or without intensive care, consultation with specialists, rehabilitation therapy, and the list goes on. Could you absorb such costs should the need arise tomorrow? How do these numbers compare to the amount needed to purchase a year's worth of medical insurance for your dog or cat?

Your six-month-old Golden Retriever may be the picture of health now, but how about several years down the road when he becomes a "golden oldie?" Purchasing and maintaining pet insurance when your dog is young may make good sense. This way, you can rest assured there will be no exclusions for pre-existing conditions, and you may have the option of locking in a lower premium rate.

Are you inclined to take the "do everything possible approach" when it comes to taking care of your pet?

The price tag for aggressive veterinary care is considerably higher than for more conservative approaches. Currently the price tag for surgical repair of a torn cruciate ligament (a common knee injury in larger dog breeds) runs between \$2,000 and \$4,000, depending on the type of surgery performed. The average fee for an MRI scan, including general anesthesia, is \$2,000 to \$3,000. Treatment of diabetes can cost several thousand dollars over an animal's lifetime. If you are inclined to take the "do everything possible approach," a pet health insurance policy is likely to be a wise investment.

What best suits your peace of mind?

Will you sleep better at night knowing that, no matter what happens, insurance will allow you to pay for excellent, top notch care for your pet? Or, will you lie awake fearing that you are throwing money away on yet one more insurance policy that may never be needed?

I hope this information has helped you determine whether or not purchasing a pet health insurance policy makes sense for you and your pets. To learn more about this topic and figure out which insurance provider is the best fit, I encourage you to visit the [North American Pet Health Insurance Association](#) and [Pet Insurance Review](#).

Do you have a health insurance policy for your pet? If so, how did you choose which provider to use?

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If you would like to respond publicly, please visit: <http://www.speakingforspot.com/blog/?p=4933>.



Snoopy's New Life...by Barbara Edgar



We meet



Getting the "lay" of the land



Tired after slaying the red coated Vikings



Saving the world from aliens



Just back from the beauty parlor

AUTUMN GALLERY

BOO!



Addie, as a Patriots' deflated football



Dexter



Mika and Meledee



Trinket



Spike and Ellie-Belle

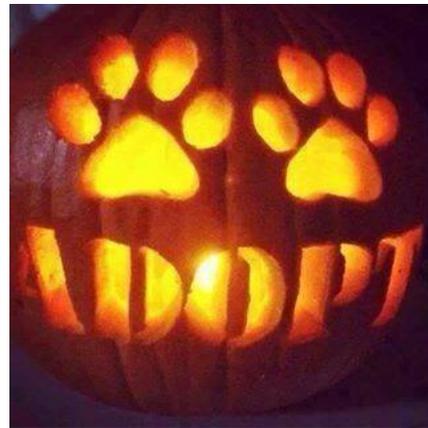


Petunia

AUTUMN GALLERY... continued from p. 10



Petunia



ADOPT!



Spike and Ellie-Belle hiking the Kancamagus Highway in NH



Snoopy



Ellie-Belle howling at the moon

The PRNE/PETCO Connection Continues!

Several PRNE representatives helped out on October 17 at PETCO's Grand Re-opening in Needham. Many poodles (and their families) are very grateful to PETCO for its ongoing generosity.

THANK YOU, PETCO!



Lulu and Anne; Gayle and Lil' Bit; Cynthia and Lorenzo at the PETCO Grand Re-opening in Needham



Lorenzo helps out at PETCO

WHO WE ARE

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Board of Directors: Merrilea Agostino, Anne Aronson, Amanda Lion, Amy Moore, and Gayle Morelli

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

www.poodlerescuenewengland.org