

Needlenose News

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Spring Fever!

The official consensus of three of our neighbors is that Matt and I have spring fever. Our neighbors reached this conclusion because we were outside today, doing our semi-annual burst of gardening. We did this a couple of months ago, un-compacting the soil, coaxing piles of leaves out from under the azaleas, and planting a handful of pansies and violas. Much to my amazement, they survived the winter and are thriving (mostly), and now a kind of gardening mania has gripped me. Me, who can't even keep houseplants alive. (My secret? It started raining right about the time I got tired of regular watering. How am I going to maintain my plants as the dry season approaches, you ask? We're investigating timed drip irrigation systems.)

So, after two trips in two days to Pietro Talini's Nursery (we think this used to be an Italian neighborhood way back when; there's several Italian deli-like places as well as Mr. Talini's nursery), we decided to put in a few hours of hard labor and do some garden maintenance. Again, we removed piles of dead leaves from under the azaleas, I did some weeding, and we fertilized (for pretty much the first time since we moved in) with a special azalea fertilizer, which I hope will make them happier next year than they are right now. (Happy azaleas are covered with bloom. I know because our neighbors



Kim and Matt with freshly planted anemones (not the sea-faring kind).

have some. My azaleas can best be described as sulky.) We also moved around underperforming chrysanthemums and are trying our hand at anemones (beautiful flowers). Matt cleaned out the rain gutters. All in all, it was very productive, even if our neighbors are convinced that we're diseased.

Special points of interest:

- Philip went to the dog park, and it wasn't a disaster!
- Kim's favorite dork joke is on page 2!
- Find out more about people who see idea of a Christmas present is 31 dogs in their house.
- Learn how I "acquired" a PlayStation 2.

Grammar Fiends, I Hate This Layout, Too

I chose this layout because it had pretty snowflakes and so it's very timely. (Well, now, it's late, but it was timely when I started.) I had already customized my logo and written half of the dog park story when I realized that this layout, in the name of I-don't-

know-what, doesn't provide any distinction between regular line breaks and paragraph breaks. I experimented with manually inserting another line between paragraphs, as well as with indenting the paragraphs, but nothing looks right. Obviously, this doesn't

look right, either, but it does have the advantage of allowing me to stuff a significant amount of text in each story. I thought about choosing a new layout, but decided I could live with this. . . so you'll have to, as well. Sorry!



How Philip Became A Dog Park Dog

When I mentioned to my mom that Matt and I took Philip to the dog park, she said, “Oh, no. What happened?” Thanks for the vote of confidence, Mom. In fact, nothing happened. Well, nothing dreadful.

However, I’m putting the greyhound before the bus. Let me back up a step, here. A fellow greyhound adoptee from our group mentioned, via e-mail, that a group of greyhound owners meet at the Citrus Heights dog park Saturday mornings from 8-10 or so.

Matt and I took Philip to join them a few weeks back, somewhat apprehensive that our extremely high-prey dog would forever traumatize us by mauling a tiny rat-dog. Of course, the first dog to approach us at the park is . . . a tiny rat-dog. The kind Agatha could beat up with one paw tied behind her back. It sniffs Philip’s feet. Philip sniffs its back. And all is well.

Naturally, since greyhounds prefer other greyhounds and tend to be shy, Philip essentially spurns all the other greyhounds we’ve brought him here to see, giving them a

cursory sniff and then moving on, running to and fro throughout the dog park.

Now, the other greyhounds (and most of the other dogs at the park, for that matter), are standing around in their own little group. Occasionally one will wander off, but it’s almost always with or toward another greyhound. Philip is running

all over the place like a crazed fool, following dogs chasing balls, dogs chasing each other, people chasing dogs. . . you name it. Something new catches his attention approximately every five seconds. Matt and I decide that our dog has adult ADHD.

Adding further insult to injury, Philip has managed to

prove that he can distinguish greyhounds from other dogs.

We know this because the greyhounds are the only dogs that he (successfully) attempts to mark. By “mark,” of



This is the only picture we have of Philip at a dog park that shows him not sniffing another dog’s hindquarters.

course, I mean “urinate upon.” By the end of our get-acquainted period, Philip has marked four other greyhounds (and a water bucket. . . getting the inside). The other greyhound people say they’ll bring baby wipes next week. We do them one better and sleep in the next week, arriving after greyhound people, since

Of course, the first dog to approach us at the dog park is. . . a tiny rat-dog. The kind Agatha could beat up with one paw tied behind her back.

A Sop For The Grammar Fiends

Having traumatized grammar-fiend readers of the Needlenose News (and I know there are some), I offer you this sop (from Lynne Truss’s Eats, Shoots & Leaves). Also, I apologize in



The book from whence this story came.

advance for the fact that the dashes in this font are essentially non-existent.

A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots in the air. “Why?” asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The

panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder.

“I’m a panda,” he says, at the door. “Look it up.”

The waiter turns to the relevant entry and, sure enough, finds an explanation.

“**Panda.** Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.”

See, We're Not Suckers For All Dogs! (Part Two)

Matt and I have been discussing acquiring another greyhound, now that Philip's dietary and behavioral concerns are more or less resolved. This intent has provoked shock amongst many Needle-nose News recipients, to the tune of "You're getting another one of those?" To reassure you that there are still crazier people than us around, I bring you the tale of Jon and Alonzo.

Jon and Alonzo are adopters from Golden State Greyhounds, like ourselves. They used to live in San Francisco and ran a doggie day-care business. Business was booming,

so they moved out to Oakley, bought some land (fenced in, of course), and opened GBark (greyhound boarding). The dogs live with them, in their house, and get to run around their 3-or-so acres during the day. Clearly, this was the place for Philip during our Christmas absence.

On our way to Fresno, we made a detour to Oakley. "I'll take you into the garage," Jon told us. "Don't freak out when you meet the pack." *The pack?* we think, as

we enter the garage.



"The pack" that greeted us at GBark greyhound boarding

And there the pack is, pressed up against the baby gate separating the house from the garage. 31 dogs, mostly greyhounds, crammed shoulder to shoulder in about four rows, all looking at us and wagging their tails. I might add that of those 31 dogs, 7 belong to Jon and Alonzo, and they also have multiple long-term

foster dogs.

See, there are people crazier than us!

Things For Which I Blame Kevin and Emily

I've never been one for video games so much; I lack coordination, which plays a significant role in most video games. I do, however, enjoy watching most games, and Kevin and Emily have been playing (among other things) games from the Dragon Warrior family since approximately 1989. The Dragon Warrior games are RPGs (role-playing

games) and require a substantial investment of time to complete. I've never played before, but after watching a while, Matt decided to try; he left his game in my hands when he went to see a movie, and the rest is history. The PS2 is now ensconced in our house, and we have 59 hours invested and counting (Matt's playing right now). In other

words, this game has taken over our lives. Emily's response? "I must admit that there is part of me that is really happy that we all have the same time-consuming habit now." Kevin's response (taken directly from e-mail)? "hahahahahaha" Gee, thanks.

Emily's response? "I must admit that there is part of me that is really happy that we all have the same time-consuming habit now."

Wedding Dress Shopping

It's over! Much to my mother's relief (she enthusiastically answered, "I guess" when asked if she wanted to accompany me), Matt and I managed to procure a suitable wedding dress in just two days of shopping. I found dresses I'd



Random wedding dress picture I got online. Hey, it's relevant, right?

wear in two places, so the final decision involved a little driving around to try them on again. The winner is now hanging in my bedroom, waiting for me to decide on shoes before getting alterations done (it's about 16 feet too long.)

Thus, wedding trauma has now moved on to contemplating how on earth I'm going to find pretty shoes without heels (so as to avoid sprained ankles) and what to do with my hair. Let's just say I'm spending a lot of time online at the moment and am trying to brush up on my beading skills to attempt the creation of simple hairpins. Wish me luck!



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*It's all about the
greyhound.*



You know the drill by now. . . if you want a PDF version or want off the list, let Kim know.

Philip's Dietary Drama, Part ∞

When last I mentioned Philip's GI tract, it and I had reached a state of détente. Philip's GI tract received an approved food, Health Food For Dogs, and I received poop of an acceptable consistency. (Too much information? Stop reading now.)

There is one minor drawback to Health Food For Dogs (henceforth HFFD), however, and it's not the campy name. No, it's the fact that it contains lamb. Philip is allergic to lamb. So one day, in what I can only explain as some sort of drug-induced stupor, I suggest to Matt, "Hey, maybe it would be a good idea to try to put Philip on a food with no allergens!" Easier said than done, of course.

We purchase a bag of Innova Large Breed dog food, which gets its protein solely from

poultry. Over the course of several days, we try to transition Philip to the new food.

Result? The

squirts. This leads us back to the infamous bland diet—white rice and cottage cheese—while we wait for GI tract recovery. Things are coming along nicely and we're ready to try the Innova again when we realize that we planned to board the greyhound over the holiday season, and Jon probably doesn't want to transition his food. So he stays on cottage cheese and white rice for Christmas, on which day Jon



Philip enjoys his bland diet

gives him beef liver as a treat, with predictable results. (Philip is allergic to beef.) Still more cottage cheese and white rice. We

try Innova one more time, and get nothing but puddles of poop. Plus, Philip, whose appetite is legendary, is declining food (we think because he feels so yucky). So he gets Kaopectate (mmm) and is back on cottage cheese and rice (which he is eating, grudgingly), and when this saga is finally over, we'll end up back where we started. . . on Health Food For Dogs, lamb-allergen included.