

# Needlenose News

*A Miyasaki-Renquist Publication*

## Married! Or Are We?

So, we're back. Technically married. Thanks (repeated and fervent) to all who attended and/or helped.

To recap: Matt and I got married August 6 in the dahlia garden in the Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden. Many things went as planned. Some did not. Allow me to enumerate, as it is much more fun to dwell on things that go wrong than things that go right. In rough chronological order, a list follows.

(This list should properly be titled "Unexpected Things." Not all of them are mishaps.)

### 1. *Emily forgot the wedding license.*

The backup plan was for her to sign, for Auntie Jeanne to "witness," and for Emily to drive the license to Sac for Matt and me to sign. Turns out we'd already signed it, so it's all good, and we're married.

### 2. *Honour's wasn't expecting us.*

Yeah. Profuse thanks to Matt's parents, who dealt with this. There were other people in the restaurant when they arrived. The head waiter thought they were joking. Not so much.

### 3. *I ran out of checks.*

Our college friends mocked me for carrying traveler's checks (leftover from Paraguay), but it paid off when I used my last check to pay the



**A post-wedding run on the beach with the hounds. Photo courtesy of Brian Vallelunga.**

photographer and still had to pay for dog-sitting.

### 4. *We nearly ran down baby bobcats on the road.*

Really. Rounded a corner and there they were. Two of them.

### 5. *Harvest Market sells "adult brownies."*

So what does "adult brownie" connote to you? I thought pot. Mendocino county, right? Turns out it's just rich chocolate.

### 6. *The power went out.*

We bought a stuffed chicken breast to cook for dinner, which got delayed when we found we had no power. It was supposed to come back on between 6 and 8 pm. Then between 10 pm and 12 am. It came on at 2 am.

### 7. *Our second lodging had an*

*electric toilet.*

We decided at the last minute to stay a few more days, and fortunately found somewhere to stay. Said location had an electric toilet (it incinerates waste). Which is fine, if it works. It didn't.

### 8. *Someone approached us in the garden and asked, "Did the wedding happen?"*

As it turned out, he and his wife were sitting in the garden during our rehearsal. I realized later that I have pictures of them. They're in the background of the table number pictures we took.

9. *When we parked in the overflow lot for Art in the Gardens, I stepped on a deer carcass.* Matt said "Oh, dear." Literally.

**See page 3 for bonus pics!**

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### *Special points of interest:*

- After nearly 8 years (and a 2.5 year engagement), Matt and I got married!
- News flash: Unexpected things happen at weddings.
- In this issue, find piles and piles of Henry information. Learn about all his house-breaking mishaps.
- Tree trauma across the street (in the form of a huge branch!)

### *Inside this issue:*

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## Miracle Product? Or Snake Oil?

Henry has separation anxiety. Most greyhounds do, but his makes me miserable; he can't stay in his crate with me out of sight for more than about five minutes without engaging in piteous crying. I'm not even out of the house, just out of sight. The fits of pathetic crying are ear-splitting. Not even the whole-house fan can drown them out.

When Philip had separation anxiety, our trainer Angie recommended a product called Comfort Zone. Philip's anxiety never really reached a point where we thought it necessary, but I felt Henry would need more drastic measures. I called our local pet supply store to check that they had Comfort Zone in stock, as I would have to take Henry with me to pick it up. They did, so I set out in public with my emaciated, limping dog (a situation I've been trying to avoid) to purchase it.

As a (related) aside, one of my pet peeves is pseudoscience. As usual, I'll fall back on a Futurama (13 new episodes signed for Comedy Central!) quote to explain myself. When Bender the robot gets sick, Amy recommends he try homeopathic medicine. "Take some zinc," she says. ("I'm 40% zinc!" Bender replies.) "Then take some echinacea, or St. John's wort," she presses. The professor interjects "Or a big fat placebo; it's all the same crap!"

This is possibly my favorite line ever, and I have to really bite my tongue not to say it to people who offer me Airborne at school. My point is, I like remedies to have some basis in reality.

And this Comfort Zone stuff sets off my bogus detectors in a big way. It's labeled as a behavior modification plug-in with "D.A.P.," or "dog appeasing pheromone." Um, "dog appeasing pheromone?" How fake does that sound? Also, the box has a medal-shaped icon in the corner labeled "veterinarian recommended." I don't find any of this confidence-inducing. However, I'm already in the store, so I figure I'll buy it and keep the receipt.

The package insert informs me that "female dogs secrete special pheromones when nursing their offspring. . . [that] act to comfort and reassure the puppies. . . [and] have the same effect on adult dogs." Right. Unless this is all a lie. I hop on the internet and look for product reviews. All I can find are articles by people associated with the product. This is looking worse and worse, but. . . I plug it in anyway.

When Matt comes home, the dog is calmer (a big fat placebo effect?), but he agrees that skepticism is in order. He hops on the internet and looks up the company that manufactures the stuff; they do make actual



**Henry in his crate with the Comfort Zone (aka "snake oil") plugged in behind.**

drugs, so it's possible that 2% of the liquid in the plug-in insert is actually a pheromone and not just, well, snake oil. Matt also turns up what appears to be a professional summary of several clinical tests of Comfort Zone that appear to indicate that the stuff might possibly work. This makes me feel somewhat better, since I have no control in my "experiment," but the clinical tests did. Well, one of them did. Whatever. I'm still a little embarrassed that I bought the stuff, but, hey:

A. Anything for my dogs, right?    *and*  
B. Maybe it's working.

Anxiety update: Henry can stay home alone all day, doing little damage. :)

## Misfortune In The 'Hood

Matt and Kevin and I went out to dinner the other day (to a Greek restaurant called Opa! Opa! that Kevin refers to as "Oompa-Loompa") and came home to huge branches in the street. Apparently, we had just missed a show — a branch of the enormous old tree across the street had just crashed down. . . onto a neighbor's catering van. So, of course, everyone came out to watch. Willie and Mary, our neighbors on both sides, provided the juicy details

while Gary (whose tree it is) chatted with his insurance company and Mark (whose van it is) chatted with his.

Matt headed out later to offer digital camera services. "Go ahead and take pictures," Willie told him. "Everyone else is." So he did.

The damaged van is still sitting out on the street, large dent clearly visible. The branch has been chopped up for pickup.



**The damaged catering van and the damaging tree branch.**

## What Henry Did

I feel certain that this is the first of many installments.

Now, I learned a lesson from Philip, I really did. You may recall that when I filled out the adoption application, I requested a dog between the ages of 4 and 6. (Years, not months.) I got a 20-month old. Matt calls this the “Stu effect,” named after the adoption coordinator. So this time, *before* I volunteered to foster, I looked at the ages of the dogs. All the Juarez dogs were three or four, so I figured it was safe.

So why, you may be asking, do I have a two-year-old? It’s not my fault, I swear. When Stu told me he had a dog for me,

with a broken shoulder, no less, he said the dog was three. I thought the dog was three when I agreed to take him. It wasn’t until I scrutinized the vet paperwork for info on his shoulder that I saw his age — 24 months. Oops. You know, though, once the dog is with you, he grows on you. And he wasn’t so active at first.

However, he does like to play. Oh, not with anything so mundane as toys. With beds, or blankets, or anything big enough to really shake around. So when I heard the shaking this morning, I figured he was killing his dog beds again and I wouldn’t get up. Until I heard fabric ripping. Henry

was gleefully pulling stuffing out of sofa cushions. Um, Auntie Jean? That sofa is for us to keep, right?



Henry, surveying a morning’s work.

## Bonus “Wedding” Pictures

This heading is particularly misleading, as I really have no wedding pictures thus far. Really, what this space is for is an extension of the cover article regarding Unexpected Things. I thought I would have enough space in the article to include them, but I didn’t, and this was the only space that remained. (Hence the articles on snake oil, smashed vans, and destroyed sofas in the interim.)

I don’t have a picture for each Unexpected Thing, but I have a choice few. Drum roll, please. . .

3. *I ran out of checks.*



Our friend Brian Vallelunga, who has provided quite a few photos for this edition, sent me this photo, which he dubs “rather amusing.”

7. *Our second lodging had an electric toilet.* Innkeeper Sonny, who appears to have stepped intact out of 1968, is apparently going to ditch the electric toilet in favor of

a “tried and true” outhouse. He’s already digging it. Next to the kitchen. But never mind that. Gawk at the wonder of the electric toilet.



Toilet instructions (above) are as follows:

Put bowl liner in bowl before each and every use.

Flush with foot pedal.

Press button to start.

Empty ashcan weekly.

8. *Someone approached us in the garden and asked, “Did the wedding happen?”*

I beg your pardon? Do I know you? Well, no. However, the next thing the strange man says is, “We were in the garden during your rehearsal.” Oh, *now* I remember.

*I really have no wedding pictures thus far. Really, what this space is for is an extension of the cover article regarding Unexpected Things.*

During the rehearsal that my mother said I ran like a drill sergeant (thanks, Mom), there was a couple in the dahlia garden. She was working on a watercolor, he was reading.

After we assured them that the wedding had, in fact, taken place, I turned to Matt and said, “Hey, I have pictures of them!” He’s circled above. She’s in other pictures (those for table numbers 2 and 3, to be precise).



## A Miyasaki-Renquist Publication

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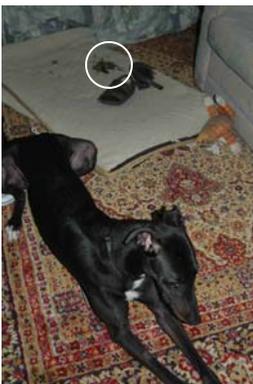


## Needlenose News



Please continue to address communication to  
Kimberly Miyasaki. I'm keeping my last  
name, e-mail address, and website.

## The Other Thing Henry Did



Henry with his  
"prize."

The stock image that came pre-loaded with this template was of adorable ducklings. The one I replaced it with isn't so pleasant.

The background: When Matt and I first adopted Philip, we thought many things (some unprintable). Mainly, we

felt he was unlike what we had been led to expect in a greyhound, and he was unlike any dog we'd known. Eventually, we created a formula to encapsulate our impres-

sions: Philip is one-half greyhound, one-quarter lab, one-eighth terrier, and one-eighth cat. This is because he exhibits many greyhound tendencies, such as sleeping a lot, grooming himself, disliking water, etc. He also, however, is very gregarious and outgoing (the lab fraction) and can be stubborn and willful (the terrier fraction). How is he like a cat? He grooms himself, hates water and baths, and likes to sleep in the sun.

Our cat comparison is not unprecedented. Barbara, one of the adoption coordinators, told us while we were waiting for Henry to arrive (and cats were draping themselves all over me, oblivious to my allergic responses) that she's not really a dog person. She's a cat person, but likes greyhounds because they are the most cat-like of the

dogs. She's horrified when people with big slobbery dogs bring their dogs to her, assuming a big dog kinship. "I only like *greyhounds*," she said, stroking a cat.

Well, Henry didn't seem to have a lot of cat-like tendencies. He rarely grooms himself, and though he does hate baths, he is willing to bob for treats in his water dish. The most recent cat-like behavior, though, overshadows all other omens.

When I woke up and surveyed the Henry damage, it looked pretty typical: a few shoes scattered about, a toilet paper roll he'd scavenged from the recycle bin. I left it alone and went about my business, happening to pop in a few hours later, only to find an unexpected item on the dog bed: a bird carcass. I got off easy, though. Toby once left a dead rat on the bed for my dad.