

# Needlenose News

## Special points of interest:

- > Kevin is now the proud owner of a Subaru Impreza WRX TR.
- > Even the tiniest trace of Henry-food disagrees with Philip.
- > Greyhounds like candles.
- > Liquid nitrogen rocks the house!
- > Auntie Marge's neighborhood is labyrinthine.



*Close-up:* Kevin in pain. After faking trauma from kneeling and dishtowel snapping all afternoon, he felt real pain when I inadvertently kneeed him in the back after setting the camera timer.

## Happy New Year!

As usual, Matt and I saw off 2006 in Fresno, with my family and a lot of video games. Both dogs accompanied us to Fresno, which worked out about as well as you'd expect. The dogs, tuckered out from their three-walk-a-day schedule, spent most of their time napping. Philip, of course, also took some time out for whining and crying. But back to the video games. This is an integral part of the Fresno New Year's tradition for the young folk. It's the only time we have four Game Cube players. Also, it's the only time Kevin has competition. (In descending skill level, the players are: Kevin, Emily, Matt, and me.) The games of choice are generally Mario

Kart DD and Super Smash Brothers Melee. This year, the perennial favorites (well, favorite, really, as I forgot Super

to purchase. (We tried to play intergenerational Apples to Apples, but the allure of football championships and



Smash Brothers at home) were supplemented by Mario Party 7, WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Party Game\$, and Apples to Apples, a non-video game Matt and I were inspired by Brian and Julie's wedding

James Bond defeated us.) And so we began the new year, with courtesies like "Ha! Take that!" and "Suck it!" ringing in the air. Happy New Year, everyone! The Needle-nose News wishes you the best!

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## Top 10 Reasons I'm Keeping My Name

Okay, so perhaps I only have seven reasons. There's only so much space, anyway.

7. OMG, the paperwork. My SSN, the IRS, the DMV, the bank, and so on forever.

6. What about all of my school stuff that says "Miyasaki?" Scissors, rulers,

door signs? I have to change all that?

5. What would happen to my website? My e-mail address? I'd just have to piggy-back onto Matt's? Suck.

4. Do I look like a Renquist? A Japanese Renquist?

3. How do you spell that?

2. Look, I can't even remem-

ber to call Matt my husband. He's still my boyfriend (he never even got upgraded to fiancé). Do you really think I would be able to change my name and remember?

1. I don't want to spend the rest of my life answering the question "Any relation to the (now deceased) chief justice?"

### Kevin Buys A Car!

As loyal Needlenose News readers may recall, Kevin has been “borrowing” our father’s truck for the last three thousand years or so. At least, that’s what it must have felt like to Dad, who eagerly acquiesced when invited by Kevin to abet his proposed new car purchase. Kevin has been talking about getting a new car for, oh, two thousand nine hundred ninety nine years, but decided he had to get one *right now* – in time for snow season. Kevin’s car of choice, you see, is a Subaru Impreza

WRX, all-wheel drive, with turbo. The all-weather tires that come standard on said car will allow him to avoid chain usage. Plus, it’s just a cool car. Unfortunately for Kevin, it’s also a stick shift. At the time of purchase, Kevin knew how to drive a stick. In theory. Theory alone, however, doesn’t keep one’s car from stalling. So Dad drove the WRX from the dealer to my house, where it stayed for two days while Kevin tried to get someone to tutor him in the fine art of driving stick. All appears

now to be going well, however, thanks to help from a friend who tipped Kevin off that he ought to put the car into neutral before stopping (thus dramatically decreasing the odds of stalling), as well as alerting Kevin to the “sweet spot” in the clutch. Kevin claims that this help was foretold by a fortune cookie. (“Help will come from an unexpected source.”) Anyway, now the car is safely in Davis with Kevin, and the truck resides in our driveway, waiting for Dad.



Kevin thought it would be amusing to take a picture of his rear with the car’s rear. I wonder how amusing he finds it now.

In a book about language, the publisher couldn’t capitalize the first letter of a sentence? Even my kids know to do that.

### In Which I Rant About Aesthetics

You may have noticed that the layout of this edition of the Needlenose News is in a format that, once again, makes no distinction between line breaks and paragraph breaks. (See Needlenose News 3.1.) While I understand that this is an aesthetic choice on the part of the layout designer/graphic artist, it, in a word, sucks. So I thought I’d complain to my captive audience.

Similarly incongruous is the formatting of the book I’m reading at the moment, Talking Right, by Geoffrey Nunberg. It’s about how Republicans use language to dominate public conversation, and it’s very interesting and well-written. Except for the minor fact that at the beginning of each section the first letter is stylized and enlarged, as demonstrated in

this sentence. My problem? **t**he stylized letter at the beginning of each sentence is lowercase. In a book about language, the publisher couldn’t capitalize the first letter of a sentence? Even my kids know to do that. (Well, most of my kids know to do that. Most of the time.) Again, I realize this is an aesthetic call, but. . . it makes me crazy every time I see it.

### Philip’s Dietary Update, Part Eighty-Bazillion

As we’ve already determined *ad nauseam*, Philip has a sensitive stomach. Also, he’s allergic to a pile of things, including, but probably not limited to, wheat, corn, beef, and lamb. It’s the last item that forced him off Canidae and Health Food for Dogs and onto the less-palatable California Natural. We thought we were out of the woods. We were wrong.

Philip recently had an inexplicable bout of diarrhea. As far as we could tell, he’d not gotten into anything untoward (a key suspicion with these types of outbreaks). So what could be causing this problem? Suspicion soon settled on Henry’s food. Since Henry’s digestive system is just fine, thank you, he eats Canidae. And Philip eats out of the same

bowl, which we rinse but don’t always wash. Impossible, you say? Yes, but washing the bowl (and the measuring cup) in hot water every time we feed does seem to have eliminated (so to speak) the problem.

The amount of Henry-food residue that apparently gives Philip diarrhea.



### Tasty Candles



Henry demonstrates the palatability of candle wax retrieved from the trash bag.

When we were planning table decorations for our wedding dinner in Fort Bragg, we thought we'd do a centerpiece of flowers and scatter paper cranes and votive candles about. We ended up scratching the paper cranes because I didn't have time to fold them, and we scratched the candles because the restaurant wouldn't allow them.

Of course, we didn't find out that we couldn't have the candles until after we'd bought them. So we put the candles and votive

holders aside with the receipt, intending to return them to Ikea when we got back. Of course, by the time we got back, we'd lost the receipt.

This brings us to yesterday, when we were cleaning out the front room of all the wedding detritus. Among the detritus was the aforementioned candles (four boxes of a dozen candles each) and votive holders (nine-odd boxes of four). We made a pile in the living room, intending to donate them later.

The dogs had other plans. When Matt and I went out for breakfast Sunday, the dogs dined on candles and scattered glass votive holders about. When we got home, we recovered approximately half the candles (meaning that the other half were consumed), and picked up gnawed wax bits from all over the rug. The dogs tried to help us by consuming more candle bits from the trash bag. We're eagerly awaiting the inevitable colored poop.

### Matt's Bus Makes the Newspaper . . .

. . . but not for a good reason. On the contrary, for a very bad reason.

Background: Matt works at UC Davis. We live in Sacramento, but have one car, which I drive to work. On the way to work, I drop Matt off at the UCD Medical Center, where he catches a bus to work. Matt's bus leaves UCDCM at 7:10 and arrives at UCD about 7:45. It leaves Davis

for the med center again at 8:10. Only that didn't go quite as planned on the 30th. According to the SF Chronicle story, "A UC Davis bus . . . overturned during rush-hour Thursday, causing minor injuries. . . and snarling traffic. . . for miles. The accident, which took place about 8:44 a.m., closed all five lanes of U.S. Highway 50."

Matt spent the day reading uni-

versity statements regarding the accident. Fortunately, it doesn't sound like anyone was hurt too seriously.

You can find the full story, plus pictures of the overturned bus (on its side, stretching diagonally across the road) at the Chronicle website: [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com). (I looked up "overturned bus" and it was the first story that came up.)

**Matt's bus makes the newspaper, but not for a good reason. On the contrary, for a very bad reason.**

Top: Making liquid nitrogen ice cream.

Bottom: Sampling liquid nitrogen ice cream.



### Fun With Liquid Nitrogen

I knew there was a reason I attended all of those training seminars over the summer. Besides professional development (that old chestnut), I made contacts. Useful contacts. Useful contacts who got me liquid nitrogen, ostensibly for me to demonstrate the difference in volume between a liquid and a gas. Which I did. During the

day. The kids adored liquid nitrogen. Four kids (boys, of course) stayed after class to play around with the leftovers, until I kicked them out. Leftover leftovers came home with me. That night, Matt and I amused ourselves with leftover liquid nitrogen. We made liquid nitrogen ice cream (using a stand

mixer dramatically improves the texture compared to using a whisk). Matt emulated Bill Nye, who blew steam out of his nose. (Most of it came out of his mouth, but whatever.) We used liquid nitrogen to clean the floor. (It blows dust bunnies out of the way.) I took copious pictures, more of which are available on my website. ([www.miyasaki.net](http://www.miyasaki.net))

Find all your greyhound information here!

## A Miyasaki-Renquist Publication

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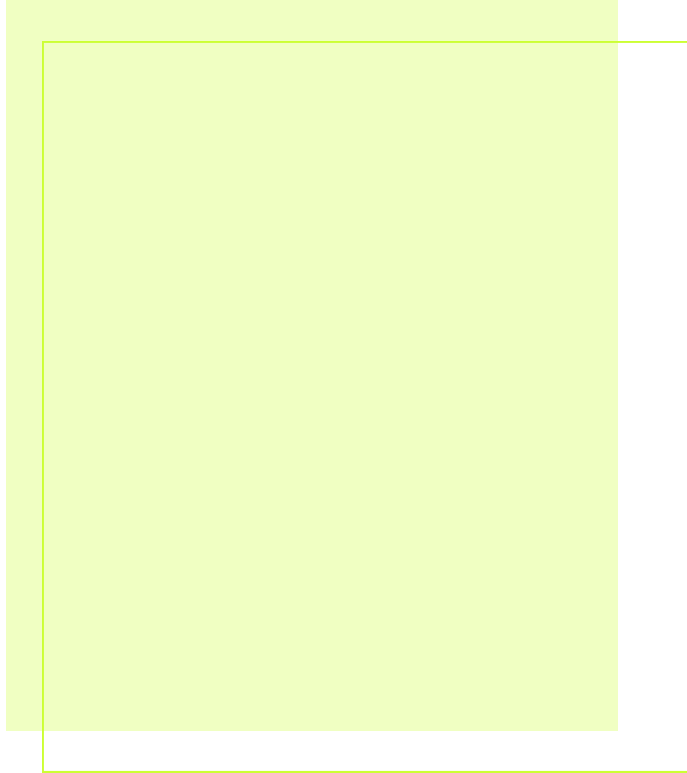


### Needlenose News

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Matt (with Sugar) and Kim (with Sadie in a buggy)

### In Which We Walk Dogs (And Get Lost)

Thanksgiving lunch was at Auntie Marge's house this year. Matt and I headed over early, with a turkey and my father, the turkey carver. We unloaded the loot from the car, my dad started carving the turkey, and Auntie Marge started looking in her desk. Straightening up, garage door opener in hand, she asked, "Want to see really cute dogs? And take them for a walk? One of them needs to be pushed in a buggy." Um, okay. We head next door into her neighbor's garage. Two fluffy dogs come bounding out to greet us.

Well, one dog comes bounding out (she does helicopter tail, as well). This turns out to be Sugar. The other dog comes limping out. This turns out to be Sadie, the dog who needs to be pushed in a buggy. Auntie Marge puts Sadie in her buggy, straps her in, and waves us off. It's a beautiful day, so we really don't mind, although I do feel a little self-conscious pushing a dog in a buggy. For some reason, Matt declined this task. As we walk down the middle of the street (there are no sidewalks in Auntie Marge's neighborhood),

men in big trucks drive by and snicker and point at me. (Okay, they don't snicker. They do point.) So we walk for a while, turning left and right as the street ends here and there, and when we've been walking for a while, we realize we have no idea where we're going. Or how to get back. Also, we realize we've been walking on sidewalks for a long time, meaning we're not even in the right neighborhood. Also, we're on Fruit. Auntie Marge lives on West. So we asked for directions. And got back. Eventually.