

March 30, 2007

Needlenose News



A Miyasaki-Renquist publication

Special points of interest:

- * The dogs have been a bit... *mouthy* of late.
- * Why should you write letters of complaint? See page 2!
- * Learn how to cope with feuding greyhounds.
- * The Wii rocks!
- * Kim becomes a knitter.

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All Decked Out In Greyhound Gear

As though having the greyhounds themselves wasn't enough, right? Look, everyone needs a hobby. My hobby is greyhounds.

As a well-known greyhound lover, I feel it is incumbent upon me to find appealing greyhound tags. I don't, at this time, mean tags for greyhounds. I mean tags adorned *with* greyhounds, for me. (And Matt.)

These can't be tacky, though. We have standards. Thus, my search for greyhound wearables took me to Café Press (cafepress.com), which is a sort of publishing house: a publish-your-own-designs-on-things house.

Said "things" include wearables! T-shirts and sweatshirts, among other things, are available with essentially any design you can think of. Matt

gravitated toward a very Communist shirt with the legend "Obey the Greyhound" on it. I favored cartoon images of greyhounds (in assorted colors!) doing things like lounging on the beach.

We found this site ages ago (I think I promised Matt an Obey the Greyhound shirt as a present two Christmases ago), but only now placed an order. Matt got two Obey the Greyhound shirts. I got a hooded sweatshirt with a beach-lounging greyhound on it.

As if all that weren't enough, I also put in an order from Northcoast Greyhounds (northcoastgreyhounds.com) for a greyhound zipper pull. Bonus: everything's here in time for us to take it on vacation. Yay! We anticipate being stylishly warm. (*Editor's note:* We were.)

Unavoidable Publication Delays

Unavoidable publication delays, hereafter known as UPD, are really just a code for "Kim's lazy." Most of this edition has been written and ready to go for, oh, months. It was just waiting for pictures and one or two more stories... and I even knew the topic

for one of them. Anyway, faithful blog readers will be thinking to themselves, "This is old news!" which I don't deny. Dog bite stuff dates back from December, as does the Wii. However, I have two arguments, one of them unassailable. First argument: the last time I



Vacation-ready Kim and Matt, in new greyhound gear.

Insert: Close-up of Kim's shirt logo.



Also, happy birthday, Mom. (We got you an Obey the Greyhound t-shirt!)

saw most of you was in December. (Except, of course, those of you I saw last weekend.) This is news since then. Second, unassailable argument: I don't see anyone else publishing a more timely publication. (So there.)

Dog Bite Damage

As it became apparent to me over New Year's that my mother was shirking her news-spreading duty by not informing her siblings of the carnage that descended upon my housemates, I'm taking it upon myself to update those of you not in the know (i.e., those who don't read the website).

At present, the dogs are locked in a dominance struggle. As they are



Top to bottom: Henry's damage, Matt's damage, and Philip's damage.

approximately the same size, weight, and age (as well as the same gender), the dominance hierarchy isn't clear-cut. Each dog thinks he's in charge. Although they've existed amiably for some time, things came to a head recently. One day when we came home, Henry had bleeding, Philip-inflicted scrapes on his side. While attempting to clean said scrapes out, Henry decided the treats I was offering as "distraction"

were insufficient and took a chunk out of Matt instead, necessitating an emergency room visit described in greater detail on my website (www.miyasaki.net). A few days later, I came home to find that Philip had a bite on his lip that matches the bite on Matt's arm. Everyone is healing up nicely, if itchy, but the rash of dog-bite incidents has caused some stress in the household. The dogs will be separated when they can't be supervised, and a collie-recommended dog trainer is coming over tomorrow to give us training tips. Wish us luck!

My family's New Year's resolution is to write letters of complaint frequently.

Uncle Jim's Ladder

[Unauthorized biography, as related by Irene.]

There's an OSH store near Uncle Jim's house that he frequents for his home-improvement projects. He'd been eyeing a small ladder, so he rejoiced when he saw a display advertising the ladders on sale. Naturally, he grabbed a ladder and headed off to the check-out. However, when the ladder was rung up, it came up at the non-sale

price. Inquiries revealed that the ladder on display, surrounding the sale sign, was a different model. Okay, says Uncle Jim, get me the model that's on sale, then. That can't be done, however, because the store *doesn't have said sale model in stock*. Uncle Jim returns the purchased, non-sale ladder, and writes an irate letter to the president of the company, complaining about the bait-and-switch

tactics. Since he's staying at Grandma's house to protect it from home invaders, he doesn't make it home for a few days. When he does, he finds on his porch... the ladder he wanted. With a red bow on top. Mailed to him by the president. Additionally, he has a \$50 gif certificate from the manager of the store. My family's New Year's resolution is to write letters of complaint frequently.

The Greyhound Saga, Part The First

Okay, so because of dog bite damage (*see above*), Henry and Philip are no longer allowed to stay home unsupervised. This is on the advice of both our vet and our trainer, and is sound advice for several reasons.

1. Dogs learn by doing. At the moment, our dogs are learning to be really good at fighting and hurting each other.
2. Greyhounds have very thin skin, so

they get cut easily, and greyhound hair doesn't typically grow back to cover wounds. Henry now looks even more pathetic than before.

Anyway, separating the dogs when we're gone is a problem, as we have a very small house and only one dog door. We rejected crating as an option because we're gone for too long at a stretch. Also, these dogs lived in crates on the track. I don't want them



Kim and well-trained hounds enjoy the beach.

to live like that in my home. We discussed putting one dog in the bedroom, and having someone come in to supervise a potty break mid-day.

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Wii-fer Madness

Wednesday, January 10th, 2007 was a momentous day in the Miyasaki-Renquist household, for it was on that day that the long-awaited Nintendo Wii made it to our house.

The Wii, as you might know, assuming you live somewhere other than under a rock, has been somewhat difficult to come by since its official launch date. And we've been waiting even longer, as we were promised a Wii for our wedding gift. It's been 157 days! (Of course, we have nothing on Andrew and Rebecca, who got married last May and are still waiting for their gift from Matt and me. Hey, it runs in the family! Also, I'm working on it, I swear!) So naturally, it was very exciting to get our hands on one at last.

Besides, as an additional enticement (as if we needed any), we already owned a Wii game. Yes, before we owned a Wii. It was my family's fabulous idea to get Matt and me the new Zelda game for Christmas. Naturally, they purchased the Wii version, as-



Kim bowls!

suming we'd rather wait for the new console than play the Game Cube version without the fancy draw-back-the-arrow-with-the-Wiimote stuff. They were right, of course, but that meant that we'd owned the Zelda game, but no game console, for 12 days. (Why only 12 days, not 19? We went to Matt's family for Christmas and didn't get the game until we went to Fresno for New Year's.

So, on Day 1 of Wii ownership, Kevin and Matt tangled in bowling (Kevin won). Kevin went to hang out with friends. After he left, Matt and I bowled, played tennis, golfed, and boxed. I won. All of them. I'm gloating because I've never been good at video games in my life, let alone beaten anyone consistently, and it made me feel successful. Matt



Kevin and Matt bowl. Can you tell what our favorite game is?

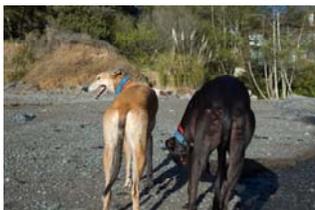
downloaded the original Legend of Zelda from the Virtual Console. I got a phone call from Kevin. "Do you want that raving rabbids game where they shoot plungers at each other?" I answered in the affirmative. Kevin came back. We bowled. (He won.) We golfed. (I won!) We boxed. (He won.) We played the raving rabbids game. (And yes, it's 'rabbids,' not "rabbits.")

Really, the whole Wii experience, day 1, was a blast, and if you know me well, you know I'm not really a video game person. I've enjoyed RPGs (role-playing games), which involve less hand-eye coordination, and have fun with party-style games, but at the risk of sounding like a shill for Nintendo, this whole Wii thing is the most fun I've ever had. It totally lives up to the hype. Next up: Wario Ware Smooth Moves, the Wii version of the game we so enjoyed at New Year's, comes out on Monday. . .

"Do you want that raving rabbids game where they shoot plungers at each other?"

— Kevin

The Greyhound Saga, Part The Second



The dogs enjoy a beach break.

However, that option rang up at \$17 a day. For five days a week, this is not a long-term option. We could install a second dog door (!) in the bedroom

and fence off a section of the yard. While the best long-term solutions, this has an obvious drawback: a hole in the wall. So, for the moment, Matt's still taking Henry to work. Since we have only one car, he's also dropping me off and picking me up. We're hoping training might resolve this stand-off (or that the long days resigns us to a hole in the wall).

Our collie-recommended trainer sug-

gested clicker training and gave me some exercises to work on. I'm training Philip not to crowd people or dogs. I'm training Henry to be more confident. The latter requires that I (or Matt) carry a clicker and treat bag at all times. Henry looks at something scary — click and treat! Henry acts like a dog, not a cowed chicken — click and treat! It's exhausting. However, we are making some progress. Stay tuned!



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Two greyhounds: Free to a good home.

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Kim Knits!

(Which would be a good name for a knitting blog, though I'd have to knit a lot more often.)

After several ill-fated attempts, I have conquered basic knitting. In chronological order, I have made a coin purse (it stores my bus fare), a scarf for me, another scarf for me, a hat for me, and a scarf for Matt. Knitting skills I have acquired, in chronological order, are: casting on, knitting, purling, binding off, decreases, ribbing, seaming, increases, and reading a pattern.

I'm almost done with a small baby cardigan and have piles of projects in the pipeline: hat for Matt, yet another

scarf for me, another baby cardigan, a child's sweater, socks. . . and so it goes.

The end goal here is to become about as proficient at knitting as I am at quilting — good enough to make something that looks complicated. (Note the modifier "looks.") I haven't given up quilting, but knitting is much more portable and can be done in bed, which is by far the most comfortable place in my house. (You have to remember that the sofas have, quite literally, gone to the dogs.) Besides, it's a useful attention-filler while Matt and I watch TV. (Something has to be *really* engrossing to get my full attention. Very few things are that interesting.

Generally, I split my attention between the TV and browsing the internet. Knitting turns out to work nicely, as well.

Want me to knit you something? You can join the queue, but don't hold your



Kim, draped in knitting.

breath. (Unless you want a furry red scarf — first come, first served.)