



Needlenose News

A Miyasaki-Renquist Publication

Volume 4, Issue 3

Back On The (Knitting) Wagon

For a while there, I'd fallen off. Unfortunately for me, I became somewhat disenchanting by knitting during the months of June and July, which really should have been peak knitting months. Back then, I had the time but lacked the inclination to knit. At the moment, even



Kim knits socks as hounds supervise.

when I really want to knit, I either don't have much time or am so tired I make piles of mistakes.

However, there's knitting aplenty in progress, mostly socks. The current count is six finished pairs, two orphans (one sock only), and two on the needles. I'm also working on a shawl, undaunted by Kevin's disparaging remarks ("Shawl? You mean like what old ladies wear?") but somewhat discouraged by my lack of skill on the pattern. Oh, yes, and there's a Christmas sock order in the queue.

Knitting has also brought me my first membership in a social networking site.

Okay, second, if you count Dogster, but those pages are:
A. for dogs *and*
B. Emily's fault

I signed up for a Ravelry account (ravelry.com; it's in beta at the moment and invites are wait-listed) and got my invitation a few weeks back. I was won over by the utility — eventually, it will serve as my project catalogue, stash minder, needle hoard record, etc. Whenever it goes public, you can check out my stuff there (always assuming I've posted it by then). It's way cool.

Want me to knit you something? Ask. But don't hold your breath — there are no guarantees in Kim's world.

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Special points of interest:

- *Dog teaches dog, who, in turn, teaches dog.*
- *How Henry and Philip made friends.*
- *Sasquatch lives!*
- *Henry, who also lives, turns four.*
- *Kim's kids suck.*
- *Greyhounds are hard on grass. Who knew?*

My Website Moves On

It's still in existence, just in a new place.

After haranguing you into visiting my website the next time you're sitting at a computer with access to the internet, I've gone and moved things around.

My reasoning? A public

school teacher in Indiana was fired for telling her kids "I honk for peace." But wait, you might say. Doesn't that fall under the category of "free speech?" Not according to the federal appeals court in Chicago. *They* say a teacher's speech is "the commodity she sells to an em-

ployer in exchange for her salary."

My district has proven again and again that the technology people are old fogies. I don't want my blog linked to my last name. You'll find me at www.akimslife.com.

Dog Teachings

I'm not referring to things our dogs have taught us, or even to things we have taught our dogs. No, I'm referring to things the dogs have taught each other.

At first, we assumed that Philip, being smarter (he is, after all, the firstborn), bolder, and longer in residence, would do most of the teaching, but Henry's taught him a few tricks, as well.

People always say that dogs are the best dog trainers. This is true, but many of the things the dogs taught each other are not necessarily things that we desire them to learn.

Philip has taught Henry to:

- Use the dog door
- Get on the up on the sofa and the bed
- Take Matt's place on the bed when he gets up in the morning
- Chase dogs chasing balls at the dog park
- Wipe his face on the nearest immovable object when he gets it wet
- Mark

Henry has taught Philip to:

- Paw at his sleeping area, no matter how futilely, to attempt to rearrange its surface
- Bump a hand with his nose for pets
- Lay down on any handy horizontal surface, thus compelling Matt to carry him to the tub
- Use the kiddie pool



Philip cools off in the play pool.

Doggerel

Or, *How Kim Got Her Car Back*

When last we visited the dog saga, Philip was picking on Henry, the dogs fought and drew blood when unsupervised, thus requiring their physical separation while Matt and I were at work.

We dealt with the situation by sending Henry to work with Matt. At Davis, Henry worked on socialization skills while spending minimal time alone.

That worked out wonderfully, except for

the minor we-only-have-one-car drawback. While Matt and Henry used the vehicle, I cavorted at work or rode the bus. Yuck-o-rama.

In an attempt to avoid a repeat, I met with Nancy, the fabulous-est dog trainer in the universe, for a check-in at the end of the summer. Thankfully, she felt the dogs had made enough positive progress in their relationship to begin leaving them alone together.

We started slowly, a few minutes at a time, and worked up to a full work day

Nancy felt the dogs had made enough positive progress in their relationship to being leaving them alone together.

by the time school started. I'm still trying to come home early, and the dogs have some separation anxiety, but. . . no blood. A victory!

Sasquatch Watch

I received a fascinating artifact in the mail a few weeks back. This item provides definitive proof of the existence of Sasquatch. Further, it proves that my web presence is substantially greater than previously thought. Sasquatch not only exists, he reads my website.

"That is preposterous!" you might be saying. You'd be wrong, though. I got a letter from Sasquatch. It said:

KIM:

~~WRITE ME~~
SEND ME SOKS. LEF FEET 30 INCHUS,
ODER FEET 33 1/2 INCHUS.

SEND TO:

SASKUASCH
HUMBOAT REDWUD FORST.

LUV YOU DOGS.YUM.YUM.

Interestingly, though Sasquatch pur-



Sasquatch sends me a letter.

portedly lives in the redwoods, his proxy mailed this missive from Fresno. So 'fess up. Who met Sasquatch and mailed his letter?

Happy Birthday to Henry

The actual date of Henry's birthday is a subject of some dispute, as various documents tell conflicting stories. None are entirely reliable. The veterinary paperwork we got at Henry's adoption indicated his birthday is July 7. It also indicates his age at the time was 24 months. Stu, adoption coordinator extraordinaire, told us he was 3, or 36 months. Hmm.

We also checked Henry's ear tattoos. One ear has a unique identifier, 5-digit or some such, and the other has a code indicating his birthday. Henry's ear says 73C. 7 means he was born in July.

3 means he was born in 2003. C means he was the third in his litter to be tattooed, which may or may not mean he was the third born. Based on the ear data, we confirm that Henry was born in July, but we don't know the day. We also confirm that Henry was 3 at adoption time, which makes one wonder about the accuracy of the rest of the vet papers.



Henry and Philip eye the cake.

Okay, now what? Upon learning Henry's racing name, I looked up his racing record. It indicates his birthday is July 7, 2003. I choose to believe this source.

Thus, we celebrated Henry's birthday on the 7th. The dogs had a "cake" of rice cake

layers, frosted with peanut butter. It was a big hit, and — bonus! — Philip's not allergic to it!

How's School Going?

Suckily. I want a do-over.

Last year, I had some fabulous kids. I had all the student council members, most of the Mathletes team, the top reader in the school (7,000,000 words), and so on. Best of all, I had my highest-skill kids at the end of the day, thus ending on a good note.

This year, not so much. I'm teaching 8th grade again, all new kids, and it always takes a while for the kids to figure out a new sheriff's in town. It's taking longer than I expected this year,

and the kids are pushing harder than I expected. Things are settling down now, but I've made three times as many phone calls and am giving out five times as much detention. On a positive note, the kids given detention actually show up (for the most part).

Worst of all, my most challenging class is my seventh period — the last class of the day. Truthfully, the kids are genuinely making an attempt to behave appropriately, but their behavior was so outrageous to begin with that even a

It always takes a while for the kids to figure out a new sheriff's in town.

magnificent effort isn't particularly impressive. Alas, it's early days yet. I'll keep you posted. Unless I die.

Grass vs. Greyhounds

As you may guess, especially if you've ever had dogs, the above-mentioned fight is an unequal match. It's especially unequal if you have a small yard, stressed grass, and dogs capable of running approximately 40 miles per hour.

My position, for about two years now, is that we are not going to win this battle, so we should give up and come up with a landscaping plan that doesn't involve

grass. Matt has been slow to come around to my point of view. It seemed for a while that he might be able to grow grass as Philip aged. Henry's arrival on the scene put paid to that idea.

And thus, every October, we look around the dirt square that is our backyard and think, "Wow, that's going to be a lot of mud." And we try to grow grass. We're trying again now. It's not



Henry learned to dig on the beach.

going so well.

A complicating factor this year is Henry's newly acquired digging habit. We're thrilled about his new trick and the three holes in the yard.

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source.



Needlenose News

Kim and Matt's Crazy Marin Adventure

As you probably know, Fort Bragg/Mendocino is my vacation getaway of choice, but it's really too far for a two-day weekend trip. Matt and I have been to Point Reyes before to visit the national seashore, and we loved it, but we never thought about going back because we didn't think we could take the dogs.

Which is mostly true, but only mostly. Dogs are allowed, as it turns out, on four beaches within the seashore itself (though not on any trails), and on a handful of trails in surrounding non-national forest land. This state of affairs is more than adequate for a weekend jaunt, especially as I can easily spend the entire time just sitting on the beach.

As a result of our research, Matt booked us a room at a bed and breakfast place

that allowed dogs near Point Reyes Station. Said place turned out to be a veritable menagerie, something that perhaps we should have divined from the forceful assurances from the proprietress that she just *loved* dogs.

She sure did. To the tune of what Matt swears were six Bichon Frises. Six *hostile* Bichon Frises. These animals were not particularly fond of having us sharing space with them, and didn't seem to understand the concept of "paid lodgers." They barked like mad every time we saw them.

And this woman did not just love dogs. She also loved birds. There were six very chatty parrots in an outside hutch on one side of the house, and untold numbers of parakeets in a hutch on the other side. Also, there was a miniature



The boys enjoy the beach.

horse in a paddock. It shared space with an alpaca.

Crazy lodgings aside, we had a very pleasant, relaxing, beach-filled trip. (More details can be found on my website, hint hint.) The weather was lovely, and we came back feeling refreshed. Now to start planning our next getaway. . .