BICHON FURKIDS RESCUE
www.bichonfurkids.com

It's a dog's life....

Bichon Bits And Bytes

February/March 2007

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HIGGINS: A Happy Adoption

By Barbara Riggs

Higgins.....that's my name and my Mom and Dad say I'm the perfect little dog, in fact they call me Higgins the Wonder Dog!! Little did they know my start in life was not so perfect. I lived on the streets of San Diego and had to fend for myself, struggling to find food, and a warm place to sleep each night. Neighbors in the area yelled at me and shooed me away. They told the animal control that I was an aggressive dog and needed to be removed from their neighborhood. Fortunately for me, Bichon FurKids Rescue found me and I was saved by a wonderful volunteer who saw through my so called aggressive behavior and knew I was just a scared little puppy.

My foster Mom Jan and her son Patrick took such good care of me that I began to trust people once again. I lived with them and their doggies for several weeks while my "forever" Mom and Dad fostered another pair of fur kids named, Lucy and Ricky. When Lucy and Ricky found their forever Mom and Dad, I was then able to meet my sister Lily (she's a yellow Lab.) We hit it off right away and today are the best of friends. We sleep together on doggie pillows next to Mom and Dad's bed. We also love to chase each other through the house and play wrestle. Lily has taught me how to use the doggie door and also how to sneak up on Mom and Dad's bed in the morning.

My Dad says I'm really part kitty cat because I adore climbing on top of the sofa pillows and love to ride in the car on the top of the seats. I also like to sit on the chair next to our front room window and watch doggies walk by our house. I am a very good watch dog and let my Mom and Dad know each time some one walks by. I'm also terrific at turning in circles on my back legs when Mom takes out the treats. Mom says, "I'm dancing for treats." Lily does most of the talking for us; she tells Mom when it's time to get the treats out.

I'm so grateful to Bichon FurKids for their dedication to little lost dogs like me. I will always remember my wonderful foster Mom and her son.

(Continued on page 2)

- Bichon FurKids rescued 130 dogs in 2006!
- We have already rescued 28 in January 2007!
- We have 5 full-time foster families. The more fosters we have the more lives we can save. Will you foster?
- We have 40 volunteers (and would love to have many more helping hands!)
- What can you contribute to BFK? Your time, talents, and financial support are all welcome!

info@bichonfurkids.com

(Continued from page 1)

My forever Mom and Dad and my sister Lily are the best things that ever happened to me---(Mom says Lily and I are the best things that ever happened to them!) Please consider adopting a little kid like me—but if you're not certain, please consider fostering a little rescued pup. If it wasn't for Bichon FurKids Rescue, I'm certain my life would not be as wonderful as it is today. All of us rescued doggies are grateful pups who try to be on our best behavior for our new Moms and Dads. We thank them and Bichon FurKids every day for helping us.

God bless you Bichon FurKids, your wonderful volunteers, and your compassionate foster Moms and Dads.

Love, Higgins.....the wonder dog!!

What Is A Home Safety Check?

By Dorris Halter

Before you can adopt a rescued dog from Bichon FurKids, you will be meeting a volunteer who will be conducting a home safety check. The purpose of the check is to look at places in your home and yard that could cause a potential problem for a small dog – to point those out to you so you can eliminate or correct them before you adopt a Fur Kid.

If you, like most people, are used to 'seeing' your homes and yard, you may not notice problem areas. The Home Safety Check takes a fresh view of your surroundings, with the goal of keeping your new family member(s) safe at all times.

Some of you are grandparents or have friends with little ones that visit. Look at your home and think of all the things a toddler could get into or put in his or her mouth – that is a good guide for a small dog.

Bichons have such 'joie de vivre' and curiosity that they can inadvertently get into trouble. They can be very wily little fur kids…. and very inventive. I had a Bichon that would release his toy in mid-shake and chase it – or if it went over the fence, he would try his best to get it. Climb, jump or dig --he would try.

Your yard is at the top of the Safety Check. Many fences may seem secure just by looking at them - but there may be gaps between posts or under the fencing. If a cat can get through a space, so can a Bichon. Our balls of fluff have a skeletal frame that enables them to get through places that many would not believe possible. So when you look at your fence, think 'small nimble cat' as a guide.

What kind of plants do you have in your yard? Rose bushes and other prickly plants present a hazard to Bichons, as they have hair that can be easily caught by thorns. It would be horrible for your Bichon to get caught on a briar and are be unable to get free without tearing its coat or stabbing itself in the eye. This is the kind of problem you want to avoid.

These little guys and girls depend on us to keep them safe - and that is the goal of Bichon FurKids in conducting the Home Safety Check. *(And we are always looking for more volunteers to do the home safety checks. If you are interested in helping, please email Sarah Boyle, srboyle79@hotmail.com.)*

PET RULES…

To All Non-Pet Owners who Visit and Like to Complain About Our Pets:

1. They live here....you don't.
2. We like our pets better than we like most people.
3. To you, it's an animal, to me he/she is an adopted son or daughter who is short, hairy, walks on all fours and doesn't speak clearly.

"I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me they are the role model for being alive."
~Gilda Radner

How To Beat The Potty Training Blues

By Nicole Andrews

So, you are having a hard time getting your dog potty trained? Before you despair or beat yourself up, please follow this practical approach.

Successful potty training consists of three elements required to achieve the reliable results you want for your fur kid. These include consistency, confinement and praise. Let's examine each of these elements separately.

Consistency: When potty training a dog, perhaps one of the most critical things an owner needs to be is consistent. Many people believe that by putting the dog out in the yard that their dog will automatically take care of its business. In fact, owners frequently ask me why their dog will eliminate in the house after just coming back in from their yard. The answer is that potty training is a skill that must be taught -- and not something left up to the dog. Start by taking the dog on leash to the spot where you want it to relieve itself and give the command (yes it is a command) "Go potty." When the dog eliminates, praise him or her and offer a small treat. The best time to guarantee speedy results is first thing in the morning when most dogs really need to eliminate. Another ideal time to practice proper potty training is around thirty minutes after a meal. Be sure to keep your dog on a consistent feeding schedule and avoid free feeding. If a routine of taking the dog to a designated area throughout the day is maintained, most dogs will learn to "go potty" on command in a reasonable amount of time.

Confinement: When you are not able to watch the dog carefully, whether you are away from the house or occupied at home, the dog must be confined to a safe area. Never give a dog that is not reliably potty trained free rein of the house. You will set up your dog for failure – and yourself for frustration. Many owners have noticed that once a dog finds a spot or spots to eliminate in the house, it is very hard to stop the dog from re-soiling that area. The reason for this behavior can be attributed to dog's intensely keen sense of smell. No matter how well we may clean the soiled area, the dog can pick up the scent of previous accidents. To be successful, confine your dog to the area where you ideally want it to eliminate during your absence. In this way, the dog can relieve itself while you are not present but do it in the designated spot. If your dog will not do any damage in your yard and is safe from predators (remember we are having a bad coyote problem right now), leaving it in the yard is fine. The majority of dogs that are being potty trained, however, are young and therefore need to be confined in an enclosure. There are excellent chain link enclosures with shade covers that you can purchase. If you must leave your dog in the house while you are gone, confine it with gates, exercise pens or to a small room. It is best to be gone no more than four hours so that you can take the dog outside to take care of business. (Remember to take it outside before you leave as well so you can continue to reinforce the good behavior you want!)

Praise: As with all dog training, the easiest and best way to achieve the desired results is with positive reinforcement. Verbal praise, pats and treats are great ways to reward your dog for eliminating in the proper place. Never yell at or physically reprimand your dog if you find an accident after the fact. Negative corrections, after the fact, not only slow down your progress -- but they will teach your dog to be sneaky and to fear you. Reliable potty training is achievable for both puppies and other dogs being re-homed when you use consistency, confinement, and positive reinforcement. By following these three steps, you will be successful in potty training your dog!

Nicolle Andrews is the founder of K-9 Connections. She provides both individual and group training classes and has many Bichon FurKids graduates in her beginner and intermediate classes. You can reach Nicole at 760-438-3644.

DARK CHOCOLATE...Why is it so bad for your fluff?

There are two main components to chocolate that are toxic to dogs: methylxanthine alkaloids theobromine and caffeine. Humans can easily digest and excrete these alkaloids in 2-3 hours, but dogs take a very long time --18 hours -- to absorb them, thus the problem. Often, symptoms can take as long as a day to appear -- and there is no specific antidote.

Chock full of antioxidants that are beneficial to humans, unprocessed dark chocolate contains the purest, highest and most lethal concentrations of theobromine for dogs. Milk and white chocolate have a fraction of those alkaloids.

Another common sense variable to consider is the size of the dog. Small in this case is bad. When a small dog consumes any amount of dark chocolate it is dangerous.

There are also two other foods that are toxic to your dog or cat. Help your fur kid avoid grapes and onions.

DO NOT BE FOOLED!

DOGS WHO EAT A SPECK OF CHOCOLATE WILL CRAVE MORE. IT IS LETHAL TO YOUR PET.

MAKE SURE YOUR VALENTINE CANDY IS SAVED ONLY FOR YOU!

A Forever Home for Gidget

By Karen Coleman

When I realized that Bichon FurKids could be abbreviated BFK, I knew something wonderful was about to happen ... because BFK could also stand for a Bichon for Karen! And then another omen: a pooch named Gidget was rescued and became available for adoption (my very

first rescue dog was named Gidget)!

But let me start at the beginning: My last rescue dog died 3 years ago. For a variety of reasons, I just wasn't able to open my home and my heart to another animal until the beginning of last year. I did quite a bit of research, knowing that any dog I adopted absolutely had to be good with little children (I have 4 grandchildren under 5 who live in San Diego and spend lots of time at my home – lucky me!), socialized and get along with other dogs, housebroken, sleep on my bed, etc. In other words, I needed a perfect dog, the kind no one would ever abandon. I fostered two dogs from other rescue groups, but did not adopt them. I was not, however, ready to give up.

After checking the Bichon FurKids Rescue web site, I decided to submit an application—which got lost in cyberspace. In checking her 'stacks,' wonderfully kind and methodical Marti sent a lovely e-mail to me saying she'd find a fur kid for me... and she did!

Gidget was being fostered by a young couple who had another Bichon and undoubtedly would have kept Gidget had she and I

not bonded so quickly. I am happy, I am thrilled, I am lucky, I am blessed — and so, too, is Gidget (I hope)!

Thanks to BFK for all they do to keep Bichon fur kids safe -- and to honor the need so many of us have to love and be loved by our dogs.

Chef Emeril Le Bichon's Doggie Deli

Thank you, for visiting my column! I will bring you a recipe in each issue, that I know your pups will enjoy! This is a favorite of mine. Doesn't everyone LOVE ice cream??

Sending Bichon Waves~~~*Chef Emeril Le Bichon*

Frosty Paws...Doggie Ice Cream

It's true dairy products aren't good for dogs, but yogurt contains much less lactose than regular milk and the live cultures are great for your dog's digestive system. This **dog ice cream** recipe is delicious and good for your pet!

32 oz. plain yogurt
1 mashed banana
2 T peanut butter
2 T honey

1. Mix all these ingredients in your blender, then dump into ice cube trays, paper cups, or even a kong toy to freeze and serve.

2. If you want to go all out for your dog you can freeze these *homemade frosty paws* just like you would homemade ice cream. A salt-less automatic ice cream maker makes this as easy as using any other appliance in your home and the frosty paws will be ready to serve in 10 minutes.

For the ultimate treat, appropriate for dessert at a doggy birthday party, follow steps one and two, then take the mostly frozen dog ice cream product and spread it 1" to 1½" thick on wax paper. Freeze for five minutes and then remove dog ice cream from freezer. Next, use a paw shaped cookie cutter to cut a paw shaped "*frosty paws*", remove ice cream around edges, and return paw shapes to the freezer to solidify. **Now, grab your fur kid and your camera!** **BAM!**

Bichon Club of San Diego Specialty

The Bichon Club of San Diego will be sponsoring a Bichon Specialty at Del Mar Fairgrounds on February 23, 2007. The activities will begin at 10:00 am. Don't forget to leave your fluff at home! If you have any questions, e-mail Linda Rowe at ljrphd@cox.net.

Silver Bay Kennel Club Dog Show

For those who would like to see a dog show up-close and personal, consider attending Silver Bay Kennel Club Dog Show. It will be located at Del Mar Fairgrounds, on Saturday and Sunday, February 24-25, 2007. Admission to the fairgrounds is free. Parking is $9.00.

Bichon FurKids Rescue

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Making A Difference In A Dog's Life!

From Marti's Desk

Since our first newsletter we have also welcomed many new volunteers to our team. We thank you for helping to foster, transport, do shelter checks and help our precious little fur kids. We can't do it without your help … so a giant "Thanks!" to each of you.

We undertook our 'first ever' and biggest project: a rescue calendar for the end of 2006 and all of 2007. These feature some of the bichons and bichon pairs that we rescued last year. It's interesting to see the many different, yet similar, faces on our fur kids. If you did not yet get a calendar, and would like one mailed to you, please let us know. The cost is $24.20 with postage and we have about 25 left to sell. Every 20 calendars we sell helps to pay for the 'average vetting' of one of our fur kids.

As we ended 2006, the shelters were inundated with dogs. It is a time that we, in rescue, dread – as we see more dogs than almost any time of year. At least that is what we thought – until January 2007 rolled in. While it still seems unbelievable that bichons can end up in the shelters, it happens every week. And when these bichon owners want to move on with their lives, and without their dogs, they do. …because they do not value their little lives the same way we do.

In January we took in 26 bichons, 3 maltese (there is no local maltese rescue group and the bichon maltese is the first cousin to the bichon frise) and 2 little poodles. Five of these were surrendered by their owners: many were dogs we were called (by shelter managers) and asked to take. They ranged from 12 years down to 8 months. With your help we scrambled to find foster homes and then forever homes. A handful of our fur kids are in foster care, waiting to meet their families, when the time is right.

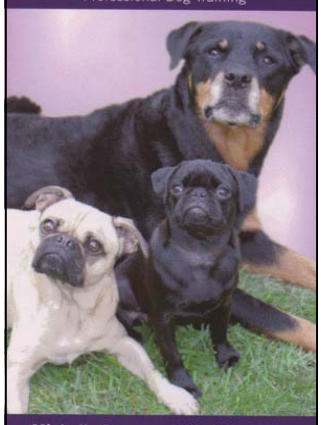
We also have a little guy who needs your help. His name is Tatum (or, as he has recently been called, Timmy) he is eight years old, a funny little guy with big brown eyes and a rocky past. Tatum was dumped at a kill shelter in Dec. by a widower who, once his wife died, decided he no longer wanted him. On his 'last day' we found out about Tatum and rescued him. He came to stay with a wonderful foster mom who really loved him – but was asked, by her employer, to go to Iraq during Christmas week (she is a civilian and the timing was not wonderful!) Tatum then went to stay with our own caring volunteer, Linda, where he hung out with her fur kids. Shortly after that we received an application from a lovely lady who wanted to adopt Tatum, see him through his cataract surgery and care for him forever. This week she accepted a new position and will be traveling about 75% of each month… and our little guy, like many bichons, does not do well in a kennel environment (or anything that reminds him of his life in a shelter.) Tatum is not the perfect bichon (he has a couple of behavioral issues that we are working on when it comes to some male dogs) but our trainer says he wants to please and can be 'trained out' of them. Before we undertake Tatum's eye surgery (and we've raised money for much of it already) he needs to be in a stable home so he can give love, be loved and get well. Please let us know if you, or someone you know, can help Tatum. When he looks at you and touches your arm with his front paws, as he has done to me, you will feel the desire to help and not let him be abandoned again. He is one of ours….

Until next time,

Marti

Thank all who support us with your time and talents! Some of the people we recommend are:

kinderpaws
Professional Dog Training



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(760) 438-3644

We **LOVE** to hear from our family of bichon owners, adopters and fosters. If you have photos, anecdotes, stories you want to share, questions you want to ask...please email: ***info@bichonfurkids.com*** and we will be happy to respond!