

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

BICHON FURKIDS
RESCUE
www.bichonfurkids.com


Bichons Bits & Bytes

IN CELEBRATION & MEMORIAM

BY Regina Ayala (with a little help from Ralph!)

Willie was a little put out. He was convinced we had lost our minds. Why would we want another dog, especially a younger dog, when we had him, the perfect Bichon - older, completely trained, trustable, and mellow? What more could we possibly want?

We had waited five years after the death of our beloved poodle and his cat sister and finally decided we were ready for another dog. Living in LA during the week, we had purchased a weekend home in San Diego - and it seemed like everyone had a dog. I started noticing all these little white fluffy dogs, and searching websites. We realized we were ready.

Willie was our little Bichon FurKid. We adopted him in May 2006 and he was an absolute joy. Since Willie was picked up by animal control after running the streets of San Diego, we did not know his history - but he was sweet, loving and very well behaved. We estimated that his age was somewhere from 5 to 9 years old, probably on the older side. Willie loved to ride on my lap in the car, followed us everywhere and always wanted to know where both of us were. But when it was time to go to bed, it was time to sleep. Willie went to the foot of the bed and did not want to be bothered - he was there to sleep! After our initial shock of being so blatantly dismissed, we decided this was a pretty good plan: we would all sleep together and actually get to rest.

I was so pleased with Willie and little Bichons in general, that I couldn't stop myself from checking what new and wonderful little dogs were available on the Bichon FurKids web site. My husband kept asking me what was I looking at, and why? We already had our dog!



Then I saw PJ. PJ is a 2 ½ year old bichon. When I saw his cute face on the Bichon FurKid's website I simply left the computer open for my husband to see. I was in the other room and he came in asking, "What do you think about PJ?" I just laughed and said he was adorable. After a few days he asked me when we were going to meet PJ. I asked if he was serious, and emailed Marti to inquire. She gave me some basic information but I did not pursue it. (Even though I had been checking the website to see who was available, I was not sure I wanted another dog.) A few more days went by and my hubby again asked when were we going to see PJ. I told him I would call Marti if he was sure; he said to go ahead - so I did.

Marti told me that Pat, PJ's Mom, was meeting another couple but that she would forward my number and ask Pat to call me. I had a nice conversation with her - and set an appointment for the following Sunday. Then I started to have second thoughts, as did my husband, Ralph. We decided that we did not really want another dog and should leave well enough alone. We flip flopped for an entire week and on Sunday morning I told him I needed to call PJ's mom and let her know we weren't coming. At that point my wonderful husband said that maybe we should just go have a look at him. (Right, just go look at a sweet Bichon and turn around and go home. I agreed to go look, knowing full well what would happen.)

PJ was and still is absolutely adorable - a perfectly beautiful, show quality, little Bichon. He liked us from the minute he saw us, jumping all over the place, hopping on our laps, giving us doggy kisses. This was totally opposite of how Willie reacted to us at our first meeting. Willie wanted nothing more than to stay with his foster mom and dad, Katie and Adam, and Sonic, his foster brother, (which I guess is understandable after his stint in the shelter.) On the other hand, PJ was at home with his Mommy and we were just visitors. So he could afford to be friendly.

Willie was annoyed, probably wondering why we were with another dog. Willie peed on PJ's belongings, completely took over PJ's chew bone, and growled at him when he wanted to play, viscously growled, to the point of sounding serious about it. PJ's mom liked us and even liked Willie, although she didn't know about the peeing part (I had cleaned it up the best I could without her knowing what a rude dog my darling Willie was). She said Willie was just letting PJ know who was the Alpha dog - and that they would adjust. I kept asking my hubby what he thought, PJ's mom kept asking him if he wanted to go home with us, and my brilliant husband said we'd take him, if PJ's mom was sure that was what she wanted. Before I knew it, we were in the car, a two seat sports car, with PJ in Willie's bed on top of the console and Willie in my lap. We had never discussed where two dogs would ride and now we knew.

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• The BASH is scheduled for July 14, 2007. COME! We want to see you there!

• We are planning an on-line auction in July-August with cMarket Auctions! Donations are now being accepted!

• Our 2007-08 Calendar will be available for your to purchase at the BASH!

The boys were both very good on the two hour drive back to Claremont (LA County). PJ was a little restless, but we expected that he would be confused. When we got home we showed PJ his new house, taking him from room to room to check it all out. We had already taken them to dinner at Pacific Grill in Solana Beach (a wonderful dog friendly restaurant with an outdoor patio and a great doggie menu. They had chicken and rice and broccoli. Willie gobbled his down but PJ only ate a little of the chicken, I am sure he was wondering who we were and why he was with us) so we knew that at least Willie's tummy was full.

The next day was a little rough. They played a little, and Willie growled a lot. The final straw was when my beloved Willie tried to bite me. I was afraid, and shocked! I frantically started emailing Marti, what was I going to do? Then I finally calmed down and decided that this little 12 pound ball of fluff was not going to rule the roost, I took him by the collar, snatched away his chew bone, and told him in no uncertain terms that I was the Mommy and he was the sweet little Bichon and he was never to bite me again. Willie licked my face. (Bichons are such wonderful and smart little creatures!)

10/25/06

One Month Later

This was to be a story about how a "new" dog found his place in a home with an "old/established" dog, and it is, sort of. It took Willie and PJ two days to become friends, and about 4 days to become bonded. Most of this was because PJ was insistent that Willie was his friend and they were going to play. PJ is such a puppy; he wants to be in the middle of everything. They were such a joy, we were, and are, so glad we got PJ - he was great for Willie and for us.

PJ and Willie were getting along great, they snuggled together, both slept under my desk at work in each other's beds, and played a lot! PJ would initiate play then they would be off, chasing each other throughout whatever house/condo/office they were in at the time. It was very entertaining. It was also very sweet to watch them cuddle, back to back in the bed (our bed) and go to asleep. Willie changed his habit of going to the foot of the bed and started to sleep closer to us in order not to be outdone by PJ, who loves to cuddle. It was a wonderful end to many perfect days.

On October 13, 2006 Willie became very ill. What I thought was an upset stomach turned out to be bleeding around his heart from cancer. He was pale and cold and his breathing was extremely labored. The prognosis was 2 weeks at the best, so we made the difficult decision to put him to sleep. Willie was the sweetest little dog with the biggest heart. He had such a sweet face, when he looked at me it was as if he was looking into my soul. Ralph, I and PJ, were devastated. We cried, PJ whined, and would not eat. We wanted to get another dog as soon as possible, to help heal the ache in all our hearts.

About a week later I started searching websites for a new dog. I was contemplating getting a puppy even though we didn't want the headaches of house training and the chewing. I had decided that I wanted another "perfect" Bichon, a show quality dog. Marti gave me some names of breeders and we began interviewing dogs. They had to pass the PJ test. We went to look at a pair of 7 month old female puppies. They were typical puppies, chewing, wrestling, acting like babies. PJ wanted nothing to do with them. He sniffed them once and went to hide behind my husband. His Daddy finally picked him up and we knew this puppy thing was not going to work, PJ didn't like it.

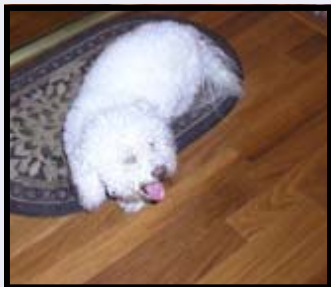
We went to look at a dog that Bichon FurKids had available. Max was sweet. PJ and Max played but the chemistry just wasn't there. Besides, his foster Mom didn't pick us; she also knew it wasn't a good match. We then looked at Scooter-but he was afraid of us. And I couldn't bear the thought of taking him away from his foster Mom and Dad. He wasn't ready and they were doing a much better job of socializing him than I thought I could ever do. (And they ended up adopting him, too!)

The next thing we did was to drive to Santa Ana to look at a young dog that was advertised on Craig's List. PJ hated that dog from the very start. My sweet, sometimes timid, loving little boy turned into a pit bull. We had never seen or heard that side of him before. He wanted to eat that poor dog. The owners kept telling us that they would get used to each other, PJ would adjust. We knew better; besides, they wouldn't have survived the ride home.

Then I got a phone call from Marti. She needed a favor. A dog needed rescuing - and was living with a family that resided near us. The owner had to go into an Alzheimer facility and the owner's family didn't want, or like, the dog. The BFK volunteer that usually handles this area was getting married the next day and just couldn't find time to go get the dog. (I can't imagine why!) Marti asked if I could help out and maybe just keep it for the weekend, or maybe a week-then she would place her in a Forever Home. I agreed to do it and wondered if my husband was going to kill me. I finally went to tell hubby that we had to go get this dog, tonight. He looked at me as if he couldn't believe I had agreed to this without discussing it with him. I was a little nervous about that part, but how could I tell Marti no, after all she had done for us and Willie and PJ. I sometimes wonder if she set me up...

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So, three weeks after Willie died we went to rescue little Candy. I walked up to the front door and this messy, dirty little dog came up to me and immediately rolled over to have her tummy rubbed. Then she stood up to lick me. PJ bounced up the walkway and she proceeded to lick him and then roll over to let him check her out. My hubby just stood there smiling at her. We were caught: hook, line, and sinker. We talked to the owner's daughter for a while, finding out about her habits and letting her get used to us a little. (The poor little dog had been sleeping in a crate in



the garage and spending her days outside.) The daughter and her family were miniature poodle people- they thought Candy was too big, too stocky - not their kind of dog. The daughter told us her mother had been giving the dog a cheeseburger whenever she got one for herself. She said the dog liked them. (It's no wonder that she weighed 23 pounds.) Candy rode home in her crate, whimpering and talking to us. As soon as we got home I got the scissors out to cut some of the hair out of her eyes so she could see. She was a mess but I knew Michelle, my groomer, could fix her up. Fortunately PJ was going to her the next day so I was going to beg Michelle to do something about making this dog look more Bichonly. I was also determined to change her name. After a little discussion she was christened Katie.

Katie slept in our room that night, in her crate. She was happy there, and felt safe. The next morning PJ bounded off the bed and went to sniff her and tell us to let her out. They were friends from the start, never even a growl. She had definitely passed the PJ test. I told her I was sorry to do it so soon but she had to go to the groomer, she couldn't sleep with us until she was clean, and she looked like a homeless pup next to PJ. I was thrilled when I picked her up; she was white and fluffy and recognized me. (I was afraid she wouldn't have a clue who I was.) Katie had a lot to get used to that day as we set off immediately after her grooming for San Diego. She wanted to sleep under the bed that night, since there wasn't a crate. After a while she decided that maybe she would join us, since PJ seemed perfectly happy on the bed with us. To this day that is her routine, go under the bed first and then join us all later.



Katie is a sweet and friendly dog. I cannot imagine why those people didn't like her. She is not show dog quality, but she is definitely a quality dog. Marti wanted to know if I was going to quit looking for a dog. I laughed and said I was keeping her, she was ours! Katie truly loves PJ. They do the most amazing Bichon Buzz all the time, and since Katie tires out sooner (she's a little heavier) she just lies down and lets PJ maul her, biting his ears all the time. They are so cute, they sleep touching us and each other, and attack us with kisses the minute we open our eyes in the morning. PJ loves toys and has taught Katie how to play. He also helped with her house training skills, letting her know that she has to do that stuff outside. While PJ is a little shy and reserved with strangers, Katie is braver and loves everybody. While PJ is very social with other dogs, Katie would just as soon be left alone with only PJ. It is very cute to watch her reprimand PJ when she thinks he has done something wrong - like the day he ran off after a dog on the beach. Katie sat down in the sand to wait for him and then really chewed him out when he came back. We love these babies, they are wonderful!

In memory of Willie and in celebration of PJ and Katie, we want to thank Bichon FurKids for all it has done for all the little fluffs, and especially for ours. We want to thank Kristin, our neighbor, for getting us interested in looking into a rescue dog, and we are thankful that Katie and Adam entrusted us with Willie. We also want to thank PJ's first Mom, Pat, for having the courage to surrender him when she knew it was best, and for choosing us to care for him for the rest of his life. We are of course very thankful to Marti for somehow knowing that we would love our Katie Girl. We will be forever grateful that Willie, PJ, and Katie came into our lives.

P.S. My children are both arguing over who gets which dog if we suddenly both drop dead, but I want to keep them together so I am 'willing' them to Marti, because I know she will take proper care of them. Three dogs, five dogs, what does it matter, as long as they are all wonderful, beautiful Bichons?

Is Your Dog Licking or Kissing?

By Dr. Nicholas Dodman



Is your dog kissing you when he slurps your face like a lollipop? Although we may never know, there are several possible explanations for this behavior, not all of which are mutually exclusive. The motivation for face licking appears to vary for different dogs and different circumstances.

Background

Dogs lick for a number of reasons, some of which are purely biological:

- Bitches lick their newborn pups to arouse them from their postpartum daze. In this situation, licking serves to remove clingy membranes from the pup, freeing him up to move and stimulating him to breathe.
- Once the birthing and clean-up processes are over, the mom dog's licking her pups stimulates them to eliminate both urine and feces. It is a couple of weeks before pups will eliminate spontaneously.
- Licking also serves another more romantic role in the sense that it is a comfort behavior that assists with pups' bonding to their mom and spurs on their mental development.
- From about six weeks of age, some pups lick their mom's lips when they want her to regurgitate food for them. They lick; she vomits; they eat it. This behavior is a vestige of their wild ancestry and was designed to ensure that they profited from the spoils of the hunt.
- Licking can also be a signal of submission and so is part of dog's body language communication system.
- Pups and adults lick and groom themselves. It is part of normal survival-oriented behavior. Licking their own lips, limbs, and trunk removes traces of the last meal that would otherwise begin to decompose and smell. Quite apart from the hygienic aspects of this behavior, it also serves to keep dogs relatively odor free and thus olfactorily invisible to their prey. Domestic dogs retain these instincts even though they are not vital today.



Psychology

Dogs, like people, engage in a number of "displacement behaviors" when nervous or stressed, and many of these behaviors involve self-grooming. You only have to glance to the side the next time you are stuck at a red light to see what I mean. The driver next to you will likely be stroking his hair, looking in the mirror, or trying to pick something out from between his teeth.

Dogs do not experience the stop-go conflict of the traffic lights but they do have their own share of dilemmas. Take going to the vet's office, for example. We vets expect our more anxious patients to begin nervously licking their own lips as they enter the clinic. They may even lick or nibble their feet or flank.

There is no doubt that some dogs lick as a gesture of appeasement and goodwill. They may lick their own lips or may lick a person to whom they wish to signal deference. If the recipient of the licking interprets this behavior as "make-up kisses," that's just fine. Perhaps the behavior is analogous to some forms of human kissing and thus their interpretation may be close to the truth.

However, not all dogs seem penitent when they slurp the faces of people they meet. For some dogs, it seems that they engage in face licking because they can get away with it and because it gets a rise out of the person. When licking is performed for such a reason, it may be component of the "center stage," attention-demanding behavior of dominant dogs. No lick! is a good command to have working for these guys.

Psychopathology

Some sensitive dogs in stressful environments compulsively groom themselves to the point of self-injury. Licking of this type leads to acral lick dermatitis (a.k.a. lick granuloma). Compulsive licking by dogs is not always self-directed. Some dogs take to licking floors, walls, or furniture. Whatever the outward expression of compulsive licking, the mechanics underlying the disorder are the same. In treatment of this condition, first the underlying anxiety must be addressed though, in some cases, it is also necessary to employ anti-compulsive medication to help break the cycle.

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Lovey Dovey?

I don't believe dogs express their sometimes quite profound feelings for their owners by licking or "kissing." In fact, I don't believe dogs really "kiss" at all. Perhaps some dogs are so awed by their owners that they feel the need to signal their ongoing deference by face licking. Call it love, if you will.

One other thing we should always bear in mind is that any behavior can be enhanced learning. Psychologist BF Skinner immortalized the concept that reward increases the likelihood of a response.

So it is with licking. If a dog licks his owner's face – perhaps as a vestige of maternal lip licking, perhaps out of anxiety, or just because his owner's face tastes salty – and his behavior is greeted with attention, hugs and (human) kisses, he will likely repeat the behavior in future. In such cases the dog learns just how to push his owners buttons and the owner becomes analogous to a vending machine.

So while face licking may not represent true romantic love, it nevertheless can sometimes be interpreted as some token of a dog's affection or respect ... and that's nothing to sniff at.

PET RULES



Used with permission



A picture is worth a thousand words..





My Life As A Foster Father by Jasper, the Lhasa Apso

The only way to tell my story is to start from the beginning. A long time ago, so my Mom tells me, she and my Dad rescued a Lhasa Apso named Dudley, who looked very much like me and was suddenly in need of a new home. He was already 8 when my parents rescued him and he lived to be 16, at which time his little legs betrayed him and he began to fall into his food. Mom and Dad were heartbroken when the Vet "put him to sleep". After that emotional wrench, Dad didn't want another dog, and he said it was nice to be able to travel at will without the worry and expense of boarding a pet. However, Mom was lonely and depressed for reasons she won't talk about, so one day 8 months later, when Dad was sleeping, Mom looked through the newspaper and found a rescue advertisement for ME! She called the rescue group and I came to visit the next day. The moment I walked through the front door Dad said "that's it - we have to have him!" I looked them over and decided this was the home for me. We bonded right away, and I happily went for my first walk with them that evening along the quiet streets of Ocean Hills Country Club.

As time went on, Dad spoiled me more and more with people food enhancing the boring old dog food in my bowl, and slipping me morsels directly under the table. I decided this was the way to live. I know I brought them increased happiness, and they call me their little angel in dog's clothing, but I made it obvious in many ways that I am Dad's dog, and this really hurt Mom as she wanted someone to love her the best. So she signed onto Bichon FurKids Rescue group and applied for a Bichon that she could cuddle. I hid under the desk as she sent in her application. I knew she wanted to adopt a new dog. . . HA! No way would I allow that!

It seemed that every day they brought another little white dog into my house. They all wanted only one thing: to play with me. Now I was 7 at that time, and had the appropriate behavior of a middle-aged man dog: grouchy and cantankerous. I do not excuse my behavior. As Popeye would say, "I yam what I yam." I growled fiercely when one of those Bichons approached me and succeeded in discouraging all of the foster moms, so the dogs went away. I also acted as obnoxiously as possible when visiting Bichons in their foster homes. No self respecting foster mom would ever choose MY home to place those little white imps.

However, it was all to no avail: Dad and I lost out to Mom's insistence on bringing a timid little white Bichon called Baxter into our family. At first I resented his presence and ignored him completely for I was no longer the only dog in the family. But as the weeks went by, I saw that the terribly shy little guy (we called him "Back-up Baxter") showed respect and affection for an elderly and persnickety male dog. Mom and Dad adopted him and paid the fee, but I have become Baxter's first love: he is MY dog! He walks very close to me when we are out, and gives me doggie kisses constantly. He cries inconsolably when I leave to go to the Vet or get groomed. He jumps into the bathtub with me when I take a bath. What fun! We cooperate in getting Mom completely soaked. More and more, I enjoy romping with him. I haven't played in years, but Baxter has rejuvenated me. We play chase, tag, wrestle and tug o' war with squeaky toys. I even allow him to eat from my dish, and have taught him to appreciate his food as I do. Mom says we are both chow hounds.

To maintain the proper and continued deference, I pretend to ignore Baxter at other times, but I really love my little dog. I never knew that life could be so much fun! I don't know how I lived before him. That's the happy ending . . . but Mom is still seeking the little dog to love HER the bestthat's the sad ending.



What's Coming Up:

BFK Happenings

*THE BASH is coming! July 14, at Cricket's Corner Dog Park, 389 Requeza Street, Encinitas, CA. The time is 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Invitations have been sent! If you have not received yours, PLEASE let us know. Contact Marti at marti@bichonfurkids.com.

* We are planning our first on-line fundraising auction happening the end of July hosted by cMarket Auctions! We are collecting items for this worthy event now.

Anything donated will be considered a tax-deductible item for you. Be generous...and creative! For more information, contact Eileen, at eileend@speakeasy.net.

*BFK has its OWN clothing/accessory line! Follow this link to CafePress, to see the items available for you to show your support for Bichon FurKids! GO TO:

www.cafepress.com/bichonfurkids

Chef Emeril Le Bichon's Doggie Deli



BAM!

We have ALL been very concerned about the recent, and on going recall of pet foods. There are many families who are cooking for their pets, and have inquired about healthy, nutritious and EASY recipes to use. I'm sharing one that my family and I enjoy~~

Easy Homemade Dog Food Recipe for Your Crock Pot

If you plan on serving your dog a regular homemade diet, check with your veterinarian first. Dogs have their own nutritional needs that should be met to ensure a healthy pet.

Crock Pot Ingredients:

- 1 fryer chicken (cut up)
- 1 package chicken organs (hearts, livers)
- 1 cup barley
- 2 medium potatoes - cubed
- 4 carrots - chopped
- 2 stalks celery - chopped
- 1/2 head garlic

Optional additions: Bone Meal (for calcium)

Toppings: Olive Oil & Parsley

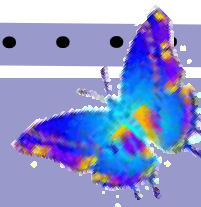
- Place potatoes in the crock pot, add chicken pieces, then cover with the rest of the vegetables and ingredients. Top with water until covered. Cook in the slow cooker for several hours until chicken is cooked and vegetables are done.
- Take the chicken out and remove all the meat from the bones. Using a food processor, or a blender, or hand masher-mix all the meat, vegetables & barley together. You could have a puree or a thick mash, both are fine. Add some broth from the crock pot to get the consistency of thick chili.
- Separate into serving portions and mix in 1 TBS of bone meal for each portion. Freeze the portions in separate containers or freezer bags.

Before each serving: Sprinkle 1 TBS parsley and drizzle about 1 TBS of olive oil over the food.

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups per serving for a 15 lb dog.



From Marti's Desk



Welcome to our fourth issue - the first issue of the summer months and the one before our world famous (well, southern California famous) Bichon Bash.

Since I wrote to you last, we have rescued more than 75 bichons, already a huge increase over last year. People always ask: "How is it possible that bichons need to be rescued? Aren't they expensive, well-loved pets? Why would they ever be in rescue?" Sadly I can tell you that there are far more dogs of all kinds needing to be rescued than homes and families to love them; the bichons coming in to rescue are just now more visible than in previous years - as more of you are also aware that bichons are available through rescue organizations. Whether it is due to a move or death in the family or a situation where a bichon gets loose and ends up in the shelter system (without the original owner looking for him or her) they come to us - week in and week out. We do our best, with your help, to keep up with the bichons entering rescue- as we know we can place all of them in Forever Homes, once we get them in to foster care.

In rescue, each of us does what we can - some volunteers work with safety checks for families who want to adopt, others help to transport dogs, some purchase and deliver supplies where they are needed. Our talented and loving group of Junior Volunteers contribute by making beautiful fleece blankets and beds for our fur kids so that they have a soft and gentle start to their new lives (You can see some of them and their handiwork at www.bichonfurkids.com/jrvolunteers.htm) and we also have loving families that foster our dogs in transition. Fostering is a critical part of what we do - as we can only save as many dogs as we have foster homes. Bichon FurKids pays for the medical expenses and supplies associated with fostering - we ask that our fosters provide love and training. The biggest concern we usually hear regarding fostering is "How will I ever be able to love a dog then give it away?" That is a challenge - although when you help to choose the family that becomes this rescued fur kid's Forever Family there is a deep sense of satisfaction. And when you are not able to let them go we call that "flunking fostering." When Max joined our family last month I officially flunked fostering for the third time. (Trust me, I had no intention of ever having three bichons... but all of us will be there to meet and greet you at the Bash!)



Another of our goals in this wonderful activity we call rescue is to build a community of bichon owners who can share information about the breed and help to protect bichons. And one of the ways we can do that is by sharing resources. In addition to information we share in our newsletter and on the web site, we invite you to contribute and share what you know and learn - so we can build an even better, more informed community.

Recently one of our volunteers in Arizona (yes, we have volunteers outside of California already!) told us about a product that she has been using to eliminate scratching, allergies and hot spots in her soon-to-be ten year old bichon. It sounded intriguing so a few of us decided to try it last month (we agreed to be the 'tasters'... actually our fur kids were!) While it is too early to determine a lot at this point, I personally think the results are going to be worthwhile. The product is a vitamin called NuVet Plus (www.nuvet.com). It is used by more than 20,000 breeders, uses no sugars or fillers, produced in a human-grade manufacturing facility and offers a money back guarantee. If you are interested in trying a bottle or two, you can call to order or I'll be ordering in bulk to try and reduce the costs further. The phone number is 800-474-7044 and our order code is 78817.

We hope you enjoy the articles our volunteers have written, the training tips our wonderful trainers provide and will plan to join us at the Bichon Bash (Mark your calendars for July 14th please - and please let other Bichon owners know that they are invited as well!) We will have lots of goodies for furkids and owners, hopefully a Rally or Agility event, all kinds of goodies for sale and a parade of rescues to enjoy. Our second annual BFK Rescue calendar will be available at the Bash as well.

In the last issue, we told you that our little Timmy found his Forever Home and that he would be undergoing cataract surgery. Timmy's surgery is now complete. He will be bringing his mom and dad to the Bash and looks forward (no pun intended) to seeing (!) and meeting all of you as well.

Until next time,

Marti

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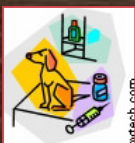
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