

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

Bichons Bits & Bytes

Sampson....A Story of Love

Even now, after a year has passed, my husband Ira and I light a candle for our first Bichon named Nicki. Nicki was the smartest dog we ever owned. I could teach him a trick in a day. He had a whole list of tricks and often entertained family and friends. When he was 7 months old I took him to his first Pet Walk, held by a local Humane Society. He walked the whole mile and loved the social time with other dogs. He continued to walk in that event for 14 years only missing the very first event as he wasn't born yet. Through the Hinsdale Humane Society Pet Walk, I became interested in volunteering. With my husband, Nicki helped raise money from sponsors for 14 annual walks. Starting with \$61, and the last year with over \$2,000, Nicki raised over \$10,000 in donations for HHS.

While I was volunteering I was asked to become the receptionist for the shelter. My job included taking in dogs that were being given up for adoption. One day someone gave up a 2 ½ yr old female Bichon named Dusty. Nicki was 8 yrs old and I wanted a companion for him. Ira, my husband, came in to the shelter to see her and we took her home that day. Dusty and Nicki bonded and had many happy years together. Seven years later, Dusty jumped off a lawn chair and ruptured a disc in her back. She was completely paralyzed in her hind legs, unable to stand or walk and was in extreme pain. We were told to take her immediately to a specialist in Phoenix if we wanted to save her life. Dusty had a disc rebuilt in her back and after 2 months of rehab at home she was walking, playing and running with a funny little pace from side to side! She made a complete recovery except that she had numbness in her right hind paw. It didn't faze her at all! She just kept on going like the little Ever Ready Rabbit. It was a miracle!



In August 2006, Nicki celebrated his 16th Birthday. He was almost blind and deaf, and he had osteoarthritis in his shoulders and hips making walking difficult, but he had a heart as strong as could be. I became Nicki's caretaker for the last 6 months of

his long life. He just wouldn't let go. He still ate well and because he was on medication, he wasn't in any pain. We hoped he would pass peacefully in his sleep and I often checked to see if he was still breathing. It was painful to watch him slowly making his way around the house and he slept a lot. In November we decided that he deserved a long rest so our Vet came to our home and on the sunny patio with the beautiful Bradshaw Mountains off in the distance, we said good bye to our dear loving little boy Nicki.

Dusty did well for two more years after surgery. Last May she had her annual exam and had her heart checked as she had developed a heart murmur, but she was in excellent health. Then one day Dusty had blood on her tail so her Vet had us take a urine sample which confirmed there was blood in her urine. After extensive tests and X-rays, it was further confirmed that Dusty had a

(Continued on page 2)

Sampson,
A Story of Love

1
2

BFK Happenings

3

Pet Rules

3

Recognizing
Pet Poisoning
Symptoms

4

From Marti's
Desk

5
6

Animal Lovers
Alert!

6

Goodsearch
Raises \$\$ for
BFK

6

Chef Emeril's
Doggie Deli

7

People We
Recommend

8

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TAKE A LOOK!

(Continued from page 1)

massive tumor in her kidney, or so we thought. We were also told that it was inoperable and she had a week or maybe two to live. A few days later, Dusty was operated on to remove the kidney, but that was not the problem. The whole area around the kidney was full of cancer and our vet couldn't remove it. Dusty was peacefully put to rest on the operating table. We said our tearful goodbyes and went home broken hearted and stunned with grief. Now we light a second candle for our dear sweet little girl, Dusty.

Our mourning was deep and crippled us with pain. Every new day we faced an empty house. No clicking of little paws. No barking at the delivery trucks that went by. No walking to the park down the street. And worst of all...no one to meet us at the door jumping with joy to see us...and it was only to go to the mail box and back. Having lost both dogs in 8 months time was so devastating. Dusty had been here to help us grieve Nicki and now she was gone too. Ira was having a very hard time with Dusty's loss. He missed her so as she would always be there to take a afternoon nap together. He saved her when her back was broken and she knew it. She was always his dog and now she was gone. Ira was very depressed and nothing I could suggest helped his pain.



In October, I contacted Bichon FurKids as I was having no luck in Arizona finding a Bichon. I could not take it anymore - I had to talk Ira into having a new companion. Marti contacted us and just per chance a representative was in our area that could come to our home for a home safety check. I took this as an omen. While we were immediately accepted for adoption, Ira was not interested. He was still mourning Dusty and did not want to replace her or go through that pain again. I emailed Marti that this just wasn't the right time. Yet a few days later Ira came to me and asked why I didn't have any more info and photos of adoptable dogs from Bichon FurKids? I was shocked! I had sadly given up. I showed him a photo of a recent

surrender named Sampson. Ira wanted to know more about this cute guy with the smile on his face. We were contacted by Michele, Sampson's foster mom, who told us all about him - he was a tall Bichon, 2 yrs old and a very good boy. Ira and I decided that night to make arrangements to drive to California to meet Sampson with the intentions of adopting him. I was joyous!

It was love at first sight! Ira loved him! He was ready to take Sampson home in 5 minutes. He looked like both our dogs, we agreed, and he liked Ira - that was important to me. On November 4, 2007, Sampson came home with us and after a 400 mile drive he became part of our family.



Sampson is a wonderful guy. He is so friendly with adults, kids and other dogs. He enjoys our young grandchildren. He loves to walk in the park every day. He has new friends that play in his big yard with him. He has just graduated from basic obedience classes and has been asked to join a AKC Rally class.



Sampson will be graded for his Canine Good Citizen certificate in March. Then he can visit nursing homes and hospital and cheer up new friends. He is so mild mannered and friendly that everyone who meets him loves him. After all, wasn't that what he did for us? We have to share him.

Sampson has brought new love to our home and warmed our hearts. Our little Valentine. He is a special dog that we believe was sent specifically to us by Dusty and Nicki. Though Sampson will never replace our beloved Dusty or Nicki, he has filled the deep hole in our hearts and made our lives very, very happy. Another word for "Joy" is "Sampson". In fact, he is going to be registered with the AKC so he can compete in Rally and his new name is going to be Sampson's Serenade of Joy. I think the name is perfect. Don't you?

Loretta , Ira & Sampson



BFK Happenings

*BFK will be participating in the 28th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival on March 15, 2008. The event, which honors service and rescue animals this year, will take place at Balboa Park. There will be a parade with floats, followed by a flag presentation, a blessing of services animals, animal demonstrations, vendors and BFK will have a 'booth' as well. Please plan on joining us for this special day! For more information about the event, contact marti@bichonfurkids.org.

* BFK will also be participating in America's Family Pet Expo, located at the Orange County Fairgrounds on April 11, 12 & 13. We will be there to meet the public and hope to recruit some wonderful volunteers, fosters and adopters -- as we continue to grow

and expand throughout Southern California. If you would like to volunteer to help at the booth, please contact, michele@bichonfurkids.org.

*Save the date: May 3, 2008 is the date of our next Bichon Bash! Our Sixth Annual Southern California Bichon Bash will again be at Critter's Corner, located adjacent to the Rancho Coastal Humane Society, in Encinitas. Our online auction will run concurrently with the Bash! (Don't know what the Bichon Bash is? Picture 150 bichons playing and frolicking in the sun with proud owners watching and smiling.. and that is one aspect of the Bichon Bash. Then there are events, vendors, food and beverages and a few special surprises.) Anyone who would like to help with either the Bash or the auction, please contact eileen@bichonfurkids.org.

PET RULES

"Dogs have given us their absolute all. We are the center of their universe. We are the focus of their love and faith and trust. They serve us in return for scraps. It is without a doubt the best deal man has ever made."

Roger Caras



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Recognizing Pet Poisoning Symptoms



Virtually every pet owner knows not to feed a dog chocolate, or that ingesting lilies can be fatal to a cat, but there are many other hazards in your home that can be equally dangerous.

In fact, as the recent pet food recall has taught us, your pets can be poisoned no matter how careful you are with them. Veterinary Pet Insurance, for example, received nearly 1,000 claims last year alone for dogs suffering from drug reactions and toxicity, ranking in the top 100 types of claims submitted.

In order to be prepared for such an accident, it is important to know the signs of poisoning in your pet. As with many illnesses, a change in normal behavior is the number one sign that something is wrong. Does your pet appear drowsy or uncomfortable? Is your pet experiencing vomiting, diarrhea or excessive urination? It can be as subtle as a change in breathing.

Potential Signs of Pet Poisoning

- *A change in your pet's normal behavior.*
- *Your pet appears drowsy or uncomfortable.*
- *Vomiting, diarrhea or excessive urination.*
- *Unusual salivation or drooling.*
- *Strange odors on the breath or skin.*
- *Unsteady walk or movements, including tremors.*
- *Disorientation or overreaction to light and sound.*

Changes in gum color to blue, pale or bright red, or burn marks on the gum.

"It is critical that people pay very close attention to their pet's normal routines and daily patterns, so that they will notice if there is a change in that behavior," explains Dr. Carol McConnell, veterinarian and chief medical officer at Veterinary Pet Insurance. "If you suspect that your pet has been poisoned, immediately take your pet to a veterinarian."

In addition to the emotional toll poisoning can have on pet owners, there is a financial impact -- treatment can be expensive. Fortunately, a pet health insurance plan can provide coverage for illnesses caused by ingestion of toxic substances, including consumption of contaminated pet food that causes illness. As with any insurance, your pet must be covered by a health insurance policy before any accident or illness occurs.

Unlike your health insurance, pet insurance doesn't restrict you to certain providers or networks. When your pet is ill or requires emergency treatment, you won't want the additional stress of worrying about which veterinarian you can visit.

You Suspect Pet Poisoning...Now What?

- *In most cases, do not induce vomiting.*
- *Immediately take your pet to your veterinarian or local emergency veterinary hospital.*
- *Be careful not to become personally contaminated. Remove yourself and your pet from the source if the atmosphere is contaminated.*
- *If you would like immediate help in your home, you may consider calling the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435.*
- *(A \$55 fee may apply to your credit card or phone bill.)*



From Marti's Desk

Welcome to our Valentines and St. Patrick's Day issue (talk about a two for one!)

I wanted to start off the year by sharing the results of a study of almost 6,000 people at the Baker Medical Research Institute in Melbourne, Australia. The study showed something that most of us as pet owners understand: those of us who own pets have lower blood pressure, as well as lower levels of triglycerides and total cholesterol than people without pets. Other studies found that if you are a person who is hesitant to reach out to others, having a dog by your side acts as a catalyst for contact (especially when it is a cute and entertaining little bichon!) This study also indicated that people are also more likely to approach a person walking with a dog, than one who is walking alone. And if you have an obedient dog and you love music, check out www.canine-freestyle.org. You and your fur kid can dance a choreographed duet, get great exercise (it's a huge cardio workout!) and teach your pup new skills as well. Best of all, while you are getting both the physical and emotional benefits of dancing, you are also deepening the bond with your fur kid.

I also want to mention several resources that I have found invaluable. The first one is the Whole Dog Journal (www.whole-dog-journal.com) which you can get in hard copy or read online. In every issue I find something that intrigues me - whether it is a training article, a review of dog food, an article on analyzing canine behavior, new homeopathic products or tips on boarding. Speaking of which, Bichon FurKids wants to thank, and recommend, Alcala Pet Care (www.alcalapetcare.com). Serving Southern California since 1975, Alcala provides luxury boarding and grooming for dogs and cats. You will see some of the cutest little bichons you'll ever meet coming in, and out, of Alcala, too. Jim Lockwood is the owner and he, and Alison Hardy, have been grooming bichons for decades - and it shows!

Another resource to consider is health insurance for your fur kid. Shelter Care, www.sheltercare.com, used to provide a free month of medical coverage for any dog that was adopted through a rescue group; the policy could then be converted to a paid plan after the first month. The fee was fairly inexpensive, averaging about \$13 a month for most fur kids (depending on the level, and type, of care selected by the new owners.) That policy was suspended in 2007 for many months. Shelter Care has, however, now started to offer a plan for rescues once again. This time the Shelter Care Pet Insurance Program is available for \$1 for the first month - then new owners can convert the policy to one of their choice. This is all pretty new to me personally - but I'm happy to share my own experience with you. I started our youngest fur kid, Max, on the Shelter Care plan months ago - and just had some major tests done on him. (He has a liver condition that we did not know about.) I will be submitting claims to Shelter Care soon for the first time - and will let you know how well they cover these tests.

February and March (and often Oct. and Nov.) are dental special months for most veterinarians. Eighty percent of dogs and cats show some oral disease by the age of three, and it is the most common health problem treated in small animal health clinics today. (My Lindsey came into rescue at 18 months with periodontal disease and actually wears braces to keep from losing some of her bottom teeth.) The build-up of bacteria in our pets' mouths may cause more than just bad breath. Bacteria are also the cause of diseases in other organs like the heart, liver and kidneys. BFK recommends yearly dental cleanings for our fur kids -- and two of the veterinarians we recommend are deeply discounting their dental services to the BFK community. Stonecreek Animal Hospital in Irvine (949-726-1800) and Pearson-Nespor Animal Hospital in San Marcos (760-598-2512) have special BFK rates. If you are interested in having your pups teeth cleaned and want to

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

know more, please email me (marti@bichonfurkids.org) and I'll share that info with you.

We hope you enjoy the articles our volunteers have written, the Bow Wow biscuit recipe (thanks Chef Emeril and Eileen!), will check out the Animal Rescue Site and will plan to join us at the Sixth Annual Southern California Bichon Bash. (Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 3rd please and let other Bichon owners know that they are invited as well!) We will have lots of goodies for fur kids and owners, our first ever Agility event, a parade of rescues and some surprises, too! Our second annual on-line BFK Rescue Auction will also be taking place concurrently - so if you have items to donate, please email eileen@bichonfurkids.org.

Thanks for being a part of Bichon FurKids! And to those of you who have recently adopted from us- we wish you many healthy, happy years together filled with doggy kisses, belly rubs, long walks in the sun, breezy rides in the car, many bichon buzzes and all the love you can receive.

Until next time,

Marti

ANIMAL LOVERS ALERT!

Hi, all you animal lovers. This is pretty simple.. Please tell ten friends to tell ten today! The Animal Rescue Site is having trouble getting enough people to click on it daily to meet their quota of getting free food donated every day to abused and neglected animals. It takes less than a minute to go to their site and click on the purple box 'fund food for animals' for free. This doesn't cost you a thing.

Their corporate sponsors/advertisers use the number of daily visits to donate food to abandoned/neglected animals in exchange for advertising.

Here's the web site! Pass it along to people you know. <http://www.theanimalrescuesite.com/>

AGAIN, PLEASE TELL 10 FRIENDS!!! THANK YOU!!!

Goodsearch Can Help BFK Raise \$\$! Here is how...

Would you like to help Bichon FurKids earn a penny every time you search for something on the Internet? With your help - and the use of a new search engine - we can!

GoodSearch (www.goodsearch.com) is a new search engine, powered by Yahoo!, that will donate half its per search revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You would use it just as you would any search engine to get great results.

Please go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Bichon FurKids Rescue as the charity you want to support. Just 500 of us searching four times a day will raise more than \$7000 in a year! And please be sure to spread the word to our your friends and family!

Thanks for your help - and happy searching! If you have questions downloading the toolbar, we'd be happy to help!

Contact marti@bichonfurkids.org Marti or eileen@bichonfurkids.org Eileen for more information!

Chef Emeril Le Bichon's Doggie Deli



BAM!

Hello, fellow fluffs! Here is my latest recipe find! It's easy, and tasty! If you try it, let us know what you think!

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

Bow Wow Biscuits

- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup wheat germ
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 8 tablespoons bacon grease -- or margarine
- 1 egg -- beaten
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons beef broth -- or chicken
- 1/2 cup ice water
- 6 slices Bacon -- crumbled
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

In a big mixing bowl, mix all the ingredients thoroughly to form a dough. Roll the dough out with a rolling pin and use a cookie cutter to make shapes for cookies, Bake cookies at 350 degrees for 20 - 25 min.

JUST AVOID THE PLASTIC, FOLKS!

by Ali's Animail

Why take a chance with yourself or your pets?

Did you ever notice on most frozen food items that have a plastic tray there's a little note NOT to reuse the plastic for that which you've microwaved? It never says why not to use it, but you just follow instructions, yes?

Here's a fact...heat causes toxins from plastic to leak into whatever it's holding, be it food or water. These toxins have been found in breast tissue and sometimes cancer is the result.

Abstain from keeping plastic bottled water,

food bowls, etc. in your car on hot summer days.

Fill up a glass bottle or jar with FILTERED water and keep it in your air conditioned car during the summer heat, NOT in the trunk. When you leave the car, take the bottle. No one enjoys drinking hot water anyway.

Ali's Animail is a FREE weekly to bi-weekly concise newsletter focusing on holistic tips and other info that will save you \$\$ and extend the lives of dogs & cats. You can sign up at a_s_phillips@animail.net

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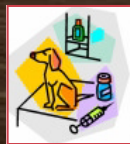
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