



# Bichon Bits & Bytes

April 2014 Bichon FurKids Rescue

## Tommy's Story:

### A Story of Devotion

By Cathy McCall, Proud FurKid Mom

As I was returning from a walk with Chloe and Tommy, I once again admired how Tommy stood perfectly still next to me so that I could take his leash off easily. My well trained dog Chloe was headed for the kitchen looking for handouts, her leash dangling behind her. Tommy did the same thing before each walk, positioning himself right where I could click the leash on. Once again I admired his first owner's ability to train him and Tommy's quick willingness to please and learn anything thrown his way. This was once a dog that was very much loved. And then Tommy wasn't.

Tommy's story began for me when I heard about a twelve year old dog that was surrendered to us. I was dealing with the impending loss of my beloved Cassidy, who had just turned seventeen. I was glad to know that BFK would be there with another wonderful Bichon that needed me as much as I would soon need him or her. I had thought that maybe I would get a young female, or possibly wait for a BFK puppy to enter the world. But fate had something entirely different in store for me.



Marti asked if I could pick Tommy up at the vet, and keep him a few days until a foster home became available for him. I was only allowed two dogs at my current home, so I couldn't offer him a long term foster at that time. An adoption was pending that would send a darling FurKid to a forever home - and open a foster home for Tommy. Cassidy and Chloe were used to me bringing visiting Bichons home -- and my heart ached for this poor dog when I heard his story.

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# Tommy's Story

(Continued from Front Page)

It seems that Tommy was born on July 1, 2001 and lived just north of us originally. He was a beloved pet with his first family until he was five. The family then lost their home and could not take him with them when they moved. A neighbor of theirs offered to take Tommy and give him a forever home.



What Tommy's first family didn't know is that the new family put Tommy outside to live with their golden retriever -- and left him there for the next seven years. He wasn't allowed inside, and wasn't even taken to a vet during that entire time. One day the retriever and Tommy got loose - and a BFK volunteer found both of them. She called us to see if we would take Tommy if she could get the owner to surrender him. She said she would also find a home for the retriever.

The owner then surrendered Tommy who had a tumor on his paw and was so overdue for a dental that BFK had to have many of Tommy's teeth pulled. The vet also noticed crystals that indicated the possibility that bladder stones could form and recommended a special diet and lots of good water.

When I picked up Tommy from the vet, he was still under the anesthesia and hurting from the dental work. As I helped him gingerly into my car, his huge brown eyes met mine. My heart went out to this sweet, loving boy. I knew right then that we were meant to meet. As it turned out Tommy would help me as I dealt with losing my beloved Cassidy, and I would give him what he wanted most, a forever home.

I wished I could have kept Tommy, but didn't want to get in trouble with my Home Owner's Association and the 'two dog' rule. I told Marti that when the time came, he would become my dog. I just didn't know when that would be.



Luckily, Tommy went to a wonderful foster Mom, Joan. He again learned what it was like to be a loved, spoiled Bichon. I knew he was in a perfect foster home and I knew that there was a possibility that he might be adopted before I could take him.

Last July I volunteered to help at BFK's Chico's fundraiser event and FurKid awareness event. I didn't realize that Tommy would be there. Fate, however, intervened and determined that Tommy was coming home for good. When I saw him that day I knew that the time had arrived for him to become my little guy.

I have never had a more loving, obedient dog. He is my shadow, always by my side. Having him here when Cassidy passed away was a true blessing. His gentle spirit reminds me that we are here to love and protect these trusting souls, and in turn our lives are greatly enriched.

While Tommy and I may not have a lifetime together, we do have the rest of his life for me to give him the love he so richly deserves. And that's enough for me.



# Blankets for Bichons



## Thanks for Our Junior Volunteers: Girl Scout Troop 1774

We love our volunteers who make blankets - and have never seen a FurKid pass up the opportunity to snuggle on one. One of the most popular activities for our junior volunteers is to make blankets - and the scouts from Troop 1774, under the direction of Co-Leader Lori Mitchell, did just that!

Here is a photo of these Girl Scouts with the doggie blankets that they made (along, of course, with a couple of Bichon friends.)

Thanks from all the FurKids to Lori Mitchell and the Scouts of Troop 1774.



# Your Dog is Younger than you Think!

Believe it or not dogs actually age at a SLOWER rate than traditionally believed. For decades we've bought into the rule that a dog's human age multiplied by 7 would reflect their actual age in "dog years." Little was considered with respect to a dog's genetic background, breed history of longevity, proclivities to ailments, disease or size. But these factors do play a role. Taking these factors into account has produced a more accurate way of determining your dog's age. While a variety of different formulas and calculators exist, a very simple formula can give you a simple and fairly accurate answer.

## How to Calculate Fido's Age

Subtract two from your dog's current age, multiply that by four, and then add twenty-one. That's it! Now take into consideration that this number may be adjusted a bit. Smaller dogs will typically have longer life spans with fewer physiological and medical conditions than bigger breeds, who typically have shorter life spans. Senior dogs KNOW how to have fun! Now that we know how 'YOUNG' your dog is, here are a few tips to help him or her live a long, healthy life.

## New Toys and Exercise Routines

Get out of the rut of the same walk, the same toys, the same fetch and treat habits and you may find a mentally invigorated and more interested senior pal. He'll look forward to the new 'FUN' you have brought into both of your lives. Skip the backyard and head out to a park, greenbelt, beach or dog park for the day.

## Diet is CRITICAL

As we, and our pals, age, we need to make sure that our diets have sufficient Omega 3, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Beta Carotene (carrots) Selenium, and Fatty acids. Make sure that your dog's diet is right for your senior dogs. If you have any questions ask your veterinarian for a holistic quality recommendation.

## Bonding is More Important Now

Some folks seem surprised at the suggestion that

they engage in bonding activities with their senior dogs. "After all, the dog has been with us for a decade or more...aren't we already sufficiently bonded?" NOPE... it is an ongoing process. Much like spending time with senior folks in the family to enhance familial relationships and bonds, our dogs enjoy and even need continuous reinforcement. The time spent together will contribute to a happy seniority.

## No Gorging Please

Canine obesity is a problem at any age. For senior dogs, being overweight can be an invitation to other ailments that can not only impact health and longevity but make their golden years less enjoyable.

## Good Dental Health is Essential

If your dog's teeth are in bad shape it can be an invitation to a variety of disorders that get worse with age, potentially impacting physical and mental health. Infected gums and teeth, where periodontal disease may be present, are just the tip of the iceberg. Your dog's heart, intestines and kidneys may develop infections. Her joints may experience an invasion of bacteria caused by oral bacteria and tartar. Daily brushing is recommended, and if your dog needs a professional dental cleaning there are options now available for dental cleaning that does NOT involve anesthesia.

## Supplements may help your dog feel young

A variety of holistic supplements and probiotics can help your dog maintain an overall healthy profile and happy life. Natural supplements to assist in cognitive function for senior dogs include a variety of options such as ginkgo, which supports mental function, and Neutruicks, which reportedly helps the brain with memory retention, learning and concentration. Ask your vet which may be helpful. In more serious cases there are prescription medicines such as Anipryl (selegiline), which has proven effective. Try starting with the natural therapies and progress only as needed with the advice of a holistic veterinary consultation.





## Bichon Sweetness

We have some very talented and committed volunteers who appreciate the bichons in their lives as we do. This quilt, which is called Bichon Sweetness, has been handmade (!) by one of our very talented volunteers and will be auctioned off at the Spring Bichon Bash.



It measures 53" x 53" and is a beautiful wall hanging - one that will bring joy and smiles to everyone who sees it.

The initial bid for this beautiful wall hanging is \$350.00. Can you imagine how many smiles this will evoke when you walk past this wall-hanging in your home? And remember all donations made to Bichon FurKids, are tax-deductible.

Please remember Bichon Sweetness, help us with our fundraising, and enjoy this beautiful wall hanging for years to come.

**REMINDER:** Don't forget to RSVP to your Spring Bichon Bash invitation. If you did not receive an invitation, please email [joyce@bichonfurkids.org](mailto:joyce@bichonfurkids.org) and she will send one. We have some exciting new activities for people and furkids of all ages this year. See you on Saturday, May 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Irvine Animal Care Center, 6443 Oak Canyon, Irvine, CA 92618.



# Calling All Walkers And Bichon Lovers!

We are excited about having been invited to participate in the First Annual Tails on the Trails Walk-A-Thon at Guajome Park in Oceanside. The nature walk, which can be done for either 1.5 miles or 3 miles, is a journey through the historic park with one or more of your furkids - and a lot of furry (and human) friends as well.

There will be pet photographs, demonstrations, the opportunity to learn about how your furkid could become a therapy pet - and more. BFK will also have a booth for people to meet some of our FurKids who will be available for adoptions (to pre-approved adopters, of course.) It promises to be a day of sun, fun and friendship.

If you are interested in participating, as a walker or volunteer, please email [Bobbi@bichonfurkids.org](mailto:Bobbi@bichonfurkids.org). We would love to have you join us!

