

DOG TALK *With Nancy Truax*



Hey, You're the Dog Lady!

As I sit here pondering how to get back into my pre-Thanksgiving clothes, I am also reflecting on the identity I have acquired this year. In May, I wrote my first article for Tualatin Life. Since then, I have contributed my thoughts on a monthly basis. The amount of feedback I get after each issue never ceases to amaze me. The other discovery I have made is that more people recognize me. I have answered my doorbell to strangers only to hear, "Hey, you're the dog lady." Last week I walked into a business meeting and was greeted with the same refrain. So okay, I'm the dog lady. I just wonder what bystanders think if they don't get the reference. For example, is someone deciding if I look like a Poodle or a Golden Retriever?



Most of my interactions as the Dog Lady have been wonderful. I meet engaging people and terrific dogs. Just today, I met a lovely couple outside of Paper Caper with their black Standard Poodle (as opposed to the Sub-standard Poodle my mother has). Sophie, the four-legged member of the group, was beautiful and friendly. I even got a couple of kisses. And I get phone calls from lovely people with whom I otherwise would not have conversed.

There is a downside, though. People expect the Dog Lady to know a lot about dogs. I am reasonably good at guessing breeds. I love to pet and talk to dogs. However, medical questions are not up my alley. In addition, I am the worst dog trainer on the planet. Lots of new faces that don't know this ask me about their pooch's behavioral issues. If I knew how to solve these problems, I would not have ill-behaved dogs. Some of you will remember from past columns that I have Labradoodles who are counter-surfers. Upon returning from Thanksgiving dinner last night, I found a 10-pound bag of flour scattered on the floor. Flour? Yuk. These are the dogs who hurl themselves at the front door at the sound of a falling leaf. Also the dogs who tore all the stuffing

out of a dog bed during my absence this week. So please greet me and let me visit with your dog. But please, please, please do not ask me what to do about your dog's behavioral problems, because the only solution I have is to let you borrow one of the Doodles for a week. When the week is over, your issues will seem minor.

Now that Thanksgiving is over, I can think about Christmas. One of the things I think about is the families who will get dogs for Christmas and well-meaning people who will surprise others with puppies. As a volunteer for Oregon Dog Rescue, I can tell you that we have a list of doggies waiting to get into our adoption program. Many of the pooches were purchased or adopted as puppies. Puppies are adorable, but they require a lot of time, exercise, and training. Many people, particularly those who have not had puppies before, don't realize how much work is involved. After a couple of months, they understand how difficult it is and have to find a new home for the dog. Breed research is also very important. While lots of dogs are cute, it is critical to select a dog that fits in with your lifestyle. If a dog is in your future, but a puppy is not suitable for your situation, perhaps you should consider a senior dog. There are loving senior dogs available who have been given up due to the illness or death of an owner, and would be grateful for a devoted companion. It is also important to ponder what your situation will be several years from now. Will you be having children or moving to a smaller place? Having a dog is a long-term commitment and adding one to your family, or someone else's, should not be done impulsively.

Thank you for listening. And reading. The Dog Lady wishes everyone a happy holiday season.

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Oregon Dog Rescue is incredibly grateful for the support shown by the residents of Tualatin. If you are able to make a donation, foster, or volunteer, please feel free to visit us at the Tualatin Petsmart on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., go to our website at www.oregondogrescue.org, or call Nancy at (503) 692-8241. It will make our dogs' tails wag!