



Dear friends,

Welcome to our May Newsletter from [www.bestdoggietips.com](http://www.bestdoggietips.com).

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

If you talk to the animals they will talk with you, and you will know each other. If you do not talk with them you will not know them, and what you do not know you will fear. What one fears, one destroys – *Chief Dan George, Coast Salish Indian Tribe*

## Recipe - Shiny Coat Treat

If your pooch or feline has a dull lifeless coat, this little pick me up will work wonders.

### *Ingredients*

1 egg

1 tsp honey

### *To Make*

Crack the egg into a bowl and whisk until egg white and yolk have combined.

Add the honey and stir through vigorously.

Place bowl on floor and stand back!

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## Do Dogs Look Like Their Owners?

### You be the judge...

SCIENTISTS have proved it is possible to match a person to their dog just by their appearance.

And the study suggests a possible reason - people are drawn to pets with similar physical attributes.

Men and women shown pictures of dog owners and asked to guess whether they had a labrador, poodle or staffordshire bull terrier fared almost twice as well as would be expected by chance.

Researchers at Britain's Bath Spa University first set out to see if dogs and their masters had similar personalities.

Questionnaires filled in by owners of labradors, poodles and bull terriers found little difference in their traits and habits.

Researchers then asked a group who didn't own dogs to look at pictures of dog owners and guess which of the three breeds they had. Their answers weren't perfect but they were correct up to 60 per cent of the time, the British Psychological Society's annual conference heard.

Dr Lance Workman said there might be a simple logic behind it.

"If you are of a robust build, you probably get a robust-built dog because you'd want to get lots of exercise," he said. "If you are slight, you might be more likely to have a poodle because you think it needs less exercise."

But he warned it was quite superficial and didn't translate to personality.

*So – you be the judge ..... Photo 1 is me with Hamish (shaved down), photo 2 has Hamish mid winter and photo 3 is my first dog Bruno. So do I look like my dogs?*



## Can Dogs Get Swine Flu?

**With all the hype in the media over the so-called Swine Flu epidemic, is there anything you need to do to safeguard your pooch?**

We've seen the photographs of people wearing surgical masks worldwide. You may have even seen people locally wearing the masks.

We know we humans are susceptible to influenza viruses and there have been confirmed cases in the U.S. and the UK, but can a dog catch the recent scary strain of swine flu? There have been no cases reported so far, however it is recognized that dogs can get the flu.

During the last big scare (SARS) there were reported cases of dogs getting the avian flu (bird flu). So it wouldn't really be surprising for a dog to pick up the swine flu virus. It is, however, highly unlikely.

Dogs don't catch the flu from us (humans), so unless your dog is exposed to pigs with the virus, and the virus is able to successfully cross over to the dog, there is probably little to fear.

According to the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) "To date, there is no evidence that pets are susceptible to this new strain of influenza; it appears to be transmitted solely from person to person".

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## The Older Dog

By Kristine Edwards

We've all seen old dogs enjoying a walk with their owners. We've seen lots more, hobbling along, trying to keep up. We expect, as we age, to slow down, put on weight, develop arthritis, and generally won't cope so well. We get after, stiffer, more arthritic, it hurts to move, so we move less. It is true that we "use or lose it".

Animals and people should be healthy, moving well, and as active and pain free as possible, well into old age.

Signs that your dog is aging or sore – lethargic, difficulty standing up, trouble changing positions, can't jump onto the couch any more, seems stiff, looks depressed, poor appetite.

So what can you do to help your dog have a comfortable old age? Regular vet checks are vital. Supplements, such as glucosamine, can help with arthritis and stiff joints. Keeping weight under control (to reduce stress on the joints), exercise (to get those stiff joints moving, and even physiotherapy and acupuncture can all help.

Exercise is one of the big anti-aging factors: it keeps us energised and it helps to prevent diabetes, arthritis and heart disease.

You need to make modifications as your dog gets older. For instance, you both may be used to long walks, but notice that he is struggling to keep up once he hits middle age (7 – 8 years) .... Is limping, slow or exhibiting signs of distress at the end of the walk.

He may need some treatment for the pain, or simply a change of routine. It's much easier on his body to do 2 short walks daily rather than one long marathon.

Sometimes, changing the type of exercise is necessary, or simply beneficial. Swimming and wading in the water is great exercise and much kinder on older joints than running or walking on hard ground. Doing simple stretches and balance exercises with your dog is also helpful.

Kristine Edwards is a physiotherapist and acupuncturist. She can be contacted online at [www.sydneyanimalphysiotherapy.com](http://www.sydneyanimalphysiotherapy.com).

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## The Glow in The Dark Dog

*Please note – we here at BestDoggieTips cannot see any valid reason for this work, we do however feel more people should be aware of what's happening.....*



Ruppy the transgenic puppy at 10 days old. Even under natural light the red protein can be seen in the skin and fur.

A cloned beagle named Ruppy – short for Ruby Puppy – is the world's first transgenic dog. She and four other beagles all produce a fluorescent protein that glows red under ultraviolet light.

A team led by Byeong-Chun Lee of Seoul National University in South Korea created the dogs by cloning fibroblast cells that express a red fluorescent gene produced by sea anemones.

Lee and stem cell researcher Woo Suk Hwang were part of a team that created the first cloned dog, Snuppy, in 2005. Much of Hwang's work on human cells turned out to be fraudulent, but Snuppy was not, an investigation later concluded.

This new proof-of-principle experiment should open the door for transgenic dog models of human disease, says team member CheMyong Ko of the University of Kentucky in Lexington. "The next step for us is to generate a true disease model," he says.

However, other researchers who study domestic dogs as stand-ins for human disease are less certain that transgenic dogs will become widespread in research.

Dogs already serve as models for diseases such as narcolepsy, certain cancers and blindness. And a dog genome sequence has made the animals an even more useful model by quickening the search for disease-causing genes. Most dog genetics researchers limit their work to gene scans of DNA collected from hundreds of pet owners.

Lee's team created Ruppy by first infecting dog fibroblast cells with a virus that inserted the fluorescent gene into a cell's nucleus. They then transferred the fibroblast's nucleus to another dog's egg cell, with its nucleus removed. After a few hours dividing in a Petri dish, researchers implanted the cloned embryo into a surrogate mother.

Starting with 344 embryos implanted into 20 dogs, Lee's team ended up with seven pregnancies. One fetus died about half way through term, while an 11-week-old puppy died of pneumonia after its mother accidentally bit its chest. Five dogs are alive, healthy and starting to spawn their own fluorescent puppies, Ko says.

Besides the low efficiency of cloning – just 1.7 per cent of embryos came to term – another challenge to creating transgenic dogs is controlling where in the nuclear DNA a foreign gene lands. Lee's team used a retrovirus to transfer the fluorescent gene to dog fibroblast cells, but they could not control where the virus inserted the gene.

This would seem to prevent researchers from making dog "knockouts" lacking a specific gene or engineering dogs that produce mutant forms of a gene. These knockout procedures are now commonly done in mice and rats, and three researchers earned a Nobel prize in 2007 for developing this method, called "gene targeting".

Ko is working to adapt a procedure used so far in pigs, cows and other animals to target genes in cloned dogs. His lab hopes to knock out a specific oestrogen receptor in dogs to understand the hormone's effects on fertility.

The long lifespan of dogs and their reproductive cycle could make them more relevant to human fertility than mice, he says. "I think these dogs will be a very useful model for our research."

Greg Barsh, a geneticist at Stanford University who studies dogs as models of human disease, says creating a transgenic dog is "an important accomplishment", showing that cloning and transgenesis can be applied to a wide range of mammals.

"I do not know of specific situations where the ability to produce transgenic dogs represents an immediate experimental opportunity," Barsh adds. But transgenic dogs will give researchers another potential tool to understand disease.

However, Nathan Sutter, a geneticist specialising in dogs at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, says "transgenesis is labourious, expensive and slow".

Add the expense of caring for laboratory-reared dogs and negative public perceptions and it could mean few researchers turn to transgenic dogs like Ruppy, he says: "it's not on my horizon as a dog geneticist at all."

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## Dog Friendly Products

*The big end of town finally seem to realise how much our pets are a part of our family, as these two new products or ideas show....*

### Honda unveils dog-friendly car



Dog-crazy Americans will soon be able to buy a pet-friendly car with a cushioned dog bed in the trunk, fitted with a built-in water bowl and fan and a ramp to help less agile dogs climb in.

With the help of a rescue dog named Sammy, Japanese car maker Honda Motor Co unveiled the pet friendly version of its Element utility vehicle at the New York Auto Show.

It features easy-wash seat covers, a fitted dog bed with restraints to keep Sammy safe in the event of a crash, and a paw logo on the side. Honda said the car would go on sale across the United States from the fall of this year.

Honda spokesman Sage Marie said it was designed with both safety and comfort in mind. "(It's) a car we think is of interest to many of today's dog-crazy consumers," he said.

Senior product planner James Jenkins said Americans spend \$41 billion a year on their pets, a figure forecast to rise to \$52 billion in two years, indicating a big market for the car.

"Pets have become more like family, more important to households than ever before," Jenkins said.

The current model of the Element starts at a little over \$20,000 and Honda has yet to determine how much the pet friendly features will add on to the price tag, Jenkins said.

Sammy's owner, Heather Cammisa of the Humane Society of the United States, said she had borrowed the car for two weeks and found the ramp especially useful.

"Sammy actually needs a ramp. Before I adopted him he ended up at a shelter having been hit by a car and he needs that ramp," she said. "Otherwise I lift him to get into my car."

### Trackable Dog Collars

Realizing that cellphone sales will eventually slow in the U.S., AT&T and Verizon are racing to connect everything from netbooks to electronic readers to their networks.

Both companies insist they are receptive to any idea as long as it doesn't harm their networks. Judging from two possible future products--a wireless-enabled dog collar and an automatic cow milking system--the telcos truly are thinking outside the box.

Glenn Lurie, president of **AT&T's** emerging-devices unit, would like to support dog collars on his company's network. Lurie imagines the collars would incorporate small wireless modules that beam data to a Web site so owners could track the dog's location if it got lost or loose.

"Think how many people have pets that they treat like children," Lurie says. "People laugh about the idea, but it really is a viable application." He estimates that consumers would pay up to \$100 a year for such a service.

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## Fun Stuff - The Good Old Days & Dog Pate?

### The Good Old Days...

If you were born on the 40's, 50's or 60's, I am sure you have received one of those chain emails that celebrate how carefree life was when we were children – how we used to ride in cars without seatbelts, play outside all day without supervision, and eat whatever we could – even nuts!.

Well that got me thinking about what it was like for dogs in the good old days. Do you remember when:

- ☺ Nobody had a fence – the dogs just lay in the front yard
- ☺ Dogs would come out and play with you – and come home again by themselves
- ☺ Dogs didn't bite people
- ☺ Dogs used to live on table scraps – including the fat from our chops and cooked bones
- ☺ The butcher used to sell dog bones or off-cuts for under a dollar
- ☺ Your dog had more friends, and from further away, than you did
- ☺ Most people only had 1 dog and it lived outside all the time
- ☺ No-one put clothes on their dog (except maybe little girls who wanted to play dolly)
- ☺ Most of us didn't even have dog leads – why would you need one?

### Dog Food or Pate?

Can you tell the difference between your dog's food and, shall we say, a higher-cost alternative?

The researchers behind a new study found that, despite what we've been led to believe about the taste of Alpo or Mighty Dog, many people can't. That study tested 18 volunteers on their ability to tell between fancy fare like pâté and some less elegant-sounding alternatives like dog food and Spam.

"We have this idea in our head that dog food won't taste good and that we would be able to identify it, but it turns out that is not the case," said Robin Goldstein, a co-author of the study.

Goldstein said the tasting demonstrated that "context plays a huge role in taste and value judgment," even though researchers warned the participants that one of the five foods they were going to taste was dog food.

The five samples came from a wide price range and were processed to have a similar consistency. The foods were duck liver mousse, pork liver pâté, two imitation pâtés -- pureed liverwurst and Spam -- and Newman's Own dog food.

Of the 18 participants, 15 misidentified the substance they believed to be dog food. (Eight thought the liverwurst was dog food, four thought the Spam was, and one identified the duck liver mousse as Newman's Own canine cuisine. Two even identified the high-end pâté as dog food.)

But 72% of the participants rated the actual dog food as the worst-tasting pâté

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## The Weird & the Wonderful

### Castaway Dog Survives 4 Months on Deserted Island



After falling off her owners' boat, one Australian dog waged her own way for several months living on a tropical island, eating baby goats.

The Australian Cattle Dog, named Sophie Tucker, was thrown from her family's boat at the end of November, as the owners navigated the choppy waters off the northeast Queensland coast.

"We hit a rough patch and when we turned around the dog was gone," one of the owners, Jane Griffith, told The Telegraph.

"We were able to back track to look for her, but because it was a gray day, we just couldn't find her and we searched for well over an hour.

"We just thought that once she had hit the water she would have been gone because the wake from the boat was so big."

But Sophie Tucker, named after the famous American vaudeville entertainer, defied the odds by swimming nearly five nautical miles to a nearby, largely deserted island.

After a several month stay on St. Bees Island, Sophie Tucker, then thought to be a wild dog, was picked up by park rangers last week. They suspect Sophie survived the ordeal by hunting and consuming baby goats, given the animals' carcasses they located.

Though the Griffiths say they had basically given up hope that Sophie survived her fall, when they heard that park rangers had found a cattle dog on St. Bees, they contacted the rangers nonetheless.

On Tuesday, the couple met the rangers onshore after they brought the lost dog back to the mainland. They say they were shocked to find Sophie Tucker aboard the boat.

"She surprised us all. She was a house dog and look what she's done, she's swum over five nautical miles, she's managed to live off the land all on her own," Griffiths told The Telegraph. "We wish she could talk, we truly do."

Despite the time away, Sophie reportedly recognized her owners instantly.

"We called the dog and she started whimpering and banging the cage and they let her out and she just about flattened us," Griffith said.

"She wriggled around like a mad thing."

Roughing it on her own supposedly changed Sophie's docile nature, as Griffith told The Australian that the dog had "become quite wild and vicious."

"She wouldn't let anyone go near her or touch her," she said. "She wouldn't take food from anyone."

Now reunited with her owners, Sophie appears to have returned to her old, domesticated self.

"She's settled in well back at home now," Griffith told the Daily Mail. "I think she's appreciating the air conditioning."

Vicki Lomax, from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, told The Telegraph that Sophie's breed made her better equipped to make do on her own.

"Cattle dogs are probably the most suited type of dog to survive something like this, but it would have been a major ordeal for her," Lomax reportedly said.

"Five nautical miles is an incredibly big distance to swim for any type of dog and I dare say the current would have helped her along a bit, but she is lucky she hasn't been taken by a shark.

"If this had been a Pomeranian, I don't think it would have been a happy ending -- its hair would probably have been too heavy."

## Lucky dog's miracle cliff escape



Laddy, the wonder dog, with her team of coast-guard rescuers

Move over Lassie, Laddy is Northern Ireland's new wonder dog.

The miracle hound fell 130 ft off a cliff on the Antrim coast and survived for eight days, trapped in a cave.

Margaret Williamson from Belfast said her family were on holiday in Ballycastle when Laddy, their springer spaniel, went missing.

"He disappeared on Saturday a week ago when my husband was out for a walk. The dog seems to have lost his footing and fallen over a cliff.

"We searched everywhere, all over the cliff. My grandson Conor Donnelly and my friend helped us. There were posters all over Ballycastle and we could not leave the caravan site without Laddy."

On Easter Sunday, a yachtsman spotted the dog out on rocks and tried to get him to swim out to his boat. But Laddy refused.

He contacted the Coastguard and they rushed to the rescue.

A cliff technician scaled the cliff and winched Laddy to safety.

Ian Murdock from the Coastguard said the dog had a lucky escape.

"We are very happy to have recovered the dog. The cliff team did a great job. They used a harness and winch to get it back to the top of the cliff."

"We found the owner's number from a notice in a local chip shop and contacted them," he said.

Mrs Williamson said the dog, who is nearly three years old, was very dehydrated after his ordeal.

He had hurt his leg and had lost a lot of weight, but somehow had survived.

The family is delighted to have their wonder dog back home.

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