

# NEWSLETTER

August 2009

## DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

It has been a very nice summer and I hope everyone is taking time to enjoy it.

I want to thank everyone who attended the seminars on August 9th. Besides getting loads of information on nutrition & dog food, vaccines protocols and titer testing, we also raised over \$200 for the shelter.

**UPCOMING EVENT:** September 12th is the annual Zoogy's Walk for Dogs, a fundraiser for the Safe Harbor Humane Society. It will be held at Lake Andrea. I will send more information when it is available or you can call Safe Harbor Humane Society for more details. 262-694-4047

**IN THE NEWS:** The hike club was in the paper again. The July 28th Kenosha News had a picture of the group that came that day. You can see the pictures taken on the Kenosha news website. <http://www.kenoshanews.com/webextra/index.php?galleryId=1672652>.

**QUICK RESPONSE SAVED BELLE:** Some of you know Patty and Belle from classes or hikes. They both had a bit of a scare recently. Belle was in the beginning stages of heat stroke after playing ball on a very hot day. Patty acted quickly and used the tips from the July newsletter to get Belle through the episode. Belle is doing fine due to Patty's quick response. Hats off to Patty!

**NEED WORK?** Lori Mendelsohn Thomas, of Wisconsin Pet Care, ([www.wisconsinpetcare.com](http://www.wisconsinpetcare.com)) is looking for someone interested in a part time position-preferably someone who has a vet tech background or who knows how to administer sub-Q to animals. The hours are mostly weekends, but occasionally during the week. You would need to be available early morning or in the evening around 9 pm. Please call her or email her at [lori@wisconsinpetcare.com](mailto:lori@wisconsinpetcare.com) or 262-764-0823.

## New Classes

Many people have asked Laura for more information about the new classes we will be offering. Here is some basic information about each class. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Laura.

### Tricks

In this fun class we'll start with the basics like take it, drop it, carry it, roll over, etc., and work our way up to teaching the dogs to put their toys away, deliver objects and cover themselves with a blanket. This will be a 3-week class and will cost \$30. Class will begin in September.

### Frisbee

Dogs that are already Frisbee nuts will learn some fun Frisbee tricks like spin flips, weave, through and around. You'll learn how to teach your dog to use your body as a hurdle or even a launching pad. This will be a 2-week class and will cost \$20. Equipment needed: a long leash and two Frisbees (floppy or standard, whichever your dog prefers). Class will begin in September.

### Doga

Ever noticed how your dog always wants to help you do yoga? In this class, we will let them! Our goal will be to integrate our dogs into a simple yoga routine. We'll begin with basic stretching poses that we can let our dogs help us with. Their weight can often help us stretch farther than we can on our own. And petting, kissing and hugging our dogs while we do yoga is great mental therapy. This will be a 2-week class to start with and will cost \$20. Equipment needed: a yoga or exercise mat.

### Canine Freestyle

In this class you'll learn to dance with your dog. At the end of the 6-week class, you'll have the foundation to do a short dance routine with your dog. Cost is \$60. Class will begin in October or November.



Siberian husky + Alaskan malamute + Pharaoh hound = 1 Goon! (A.K.A. - Comiskey)

## Mixed Feelings about Mixed Breed Analysis: My Experience with the Wisdom Panel MX Test

By Amy Wence

In May of 2008, we had the DNA of our mixed breed dog, Comiskey, analyzed using the Wisdom Panel MX test. It was pretty simple. We made an appointment at CARE Animal Hospital in Kenosha, and they took a blood sample and sent it off to Mars Veterinary. The only information Mars Veterinary knew about Comiskey was his name and that he was a canine. They had no pictures or other identifying information given to them. We anxiously awaited the results, and within a couple of weeks we got our Wisdom Panel report. We were very curious to find out what breeds might make up Comiskey's heritage. We adopted him from Safe Harbor Humane Society at the age of 4 months, and everyone, including ourselves, thought that Comiskey was a German Shepherd/husky mix. However, as Comiskey started to grow, he looked less and less like a German shepherd and more like a husky/giraffe!

He thinned out, his legs got longer, and he became quite tall. We started to question whether he had any shepherd in him at all. When I opened the Wisdom Panel report, my excitement faded.

We were right that he did have husky in his background, but the test was only able to detect it at the "trace amount" level. In fact, the test was only able to identify three breeds in his bloodlines, all at the "trace amount." It detected Alaskan malamute, Siberian husky, and Tibetan terrier. I was very disappointed that there were no breeds detected at a more significant level and the Tibetan terrier seemed farfetched. According to the report, if a "trace amount" is detected, it means "there is a slight chance of seeing traits from the detected breeds." I had a hard time with this because I felt that Comiskey exhibited some very distinct physical and behavioral traits. So I went online to <http://wisdompanel.com/> and contacted customer service about my concerns. I wanted to know how they arrived at these

results and why only a trace amount could be detected. I have to say that the Mars Veterinary customer service is terrific. They promptly responded to my inquiry and put me in touch with Dr. Angela Hughes (DVM, veterinary geneticist and consultant for Mars Veterinary). Before speaking with Dr. Hughes, they requested a picture of Comiskey. They said the reason for this was "to understand whether there has been a sample mix-up in the laboratory or if a computer algorithm generated breed signature mismatch is to blame."

Also, if Dr. Hughes determines that there was no mix-up, she may be able to scientifically explain some of the physical traits seen in Comiskey, based on his genetic profile. After submitting a picture of Comiskey, Dr. Hughes called me to discuss his results. She was able to take a closer look at Comiskey's breed specific patterns, or "trees" as she called them. You see, the test works by extracting Comiskey's DNA from his white blood cells and then analyzing it using a computer test program that forms breed-specific patterns by identifying slight variations in his DNA makeup. The confidence level of the test is to go back three generations, to the great-grandparent level. At the time Comiskey was tested, the Wisdom Panel MX was only 84% accurate for first-generation mutts (i.e. – 2 different purebred parents) and detected 134 AKC breeds. However, Dr. Hughes explained to me that the accuracy of the test decreases somewhat significantly with each generation of mixed breed. She told me that Comiskey's bloodlines may be too mixed for the test to accurately identify specific breeds. When I asked about the Tibetan terrier, she said that it appeared to be a "false positive" which can occur when pushing the lower limits of detection capability, such as at the great-grandparent level. After reviewing his "trees," Dr. Hughes concluded

that Comiskey had both husky and malamute at the great-grandparent level. She also told me that they are planning to add more breeds to the test and that I could call back any time to ask her to take another look at Comiskey's analysis. I was very pleased with her explanations and the level of customer service I received from Mars Veterinary.

However, I was still disappointed in the test capabilities and longed to find out where Comiskey's trademark ears came from. Then, about 6 months later, I got an email from Mars Veterinary announcing that they had just improved the accuracy of the test and added more breeds. I was very happy about this because they could now detect 157 breeds and had an accuracy of 90% for first generation mutts. I called Dr. Hughes back (she actually gave me her direct number) and asked her to take another look at Comiskey's profile. She said that with the improved accuracy of the test, the genetic marker patterns or "trees" were now simpler and that the new analysis revealed that Comiskey does have a greater percentage of husky and malamute than originally detected. She said those two breeds could now be seen at the grandparent level, as opposed to the great-grandparent level. She also verified that the Tibetan terrier result was inaccurate and did not show up on the new analysis. I asked her if he had any Ibizan hound in his lineage because I was still trying to find out where he got those huge ears. She looked and said no, so then I asked her to check the Pharaoh hound, which is similar in appearance to the Ibizan hound. As she examined the results, I could hear her thinking aloud and to both our surprise, she said yes, that it did reveal Pharaoh hound at either the grandparent or great-grandparent level! I was very happy to hear this because finally I knew where those rabbit ears came from! In the end, I have to say that I was pleased with Comiskey's DNA results. I feel more

confident in the results than I did initially. I think it's because I am more confident in having an expert veterinary geneticist analyze his genetic profile, rather than simply running it through a computer. Although, I am sure there are more breeds in his heritage, I do feel that he strongly resembles these three breeds the most, both physically and behaviorally. I think that mixed breed DNA analysis is a new and exciting technology that will continue to improve in both its accuracy and detection capabilities. To find out more about Wisdom Panel MX, go to: <http://wisdompanel.com/>



Comiskey the Wabbit?



## Hiking Club Rewards

We have started a reward system for Hiking Club members! Every dog that attends at least ten hikes will receive a Hiking Club bandana to wear on hikes. So far, the dogs that have met the goal are:

- Casey Lueck
- Charlie Rode
- ChaCha Rode
- Olive Andersen
- Chloe Hansen



Congrats, guys!

Weather permitting, the Hiking Club walks three times a week at various locations in Kenosha. We meet on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. If you are

interested in joining, please contact Laura at [laura@lovingpawslc.com](mailto:laura@lovingpawslc.com).

## American Heart Association Walk



Jennifer's employer, Supervalu, is co-sponsoring the 2009 Southeast Wisconsin Start! Heart Walk on September 26, 2009, which will be held at the University of Wisconsin –

Parkside in Kenosha. Supervalu is encouraging employees to form teams of friends and family. Dogs are allowed at the walk, so Jennifer is forming a Hiking Club team! If anyone is interested in participating, please contact Jennifer at [jennifer.e.lueck@supervalu.com](mailto:jennifer.e.lueck@supervalu.com) by August 21st. Everyone who signs up by then will receive a **t-shirt** from Supervalu to wear at the walk. There is no fee to walk, but everyone is encouraged to get sponsors from their friends and families.

Details:

- Date: September 26, 2009
- Registration starts at 8:30 am
- The walk starts at 9:00 am
- Breakfast and lunch will be provided for all participants
- A mini health fair will include blood pressure checks, massages, and more

# Fixin' the Fridge

By Jennifer Lueck

It was one thing when the milk in my fridge spoiled before the expiration date, but when the half & half curdled as soon as it hit my coffee, I got really worried (and upset because I couldn't drink my coffee!). I bought a refrigerator thermometer and was shocked to see that my fridge was only 50 degrees inside (the recommended temperature is between 35 and 38 degrees). It's a fairly new refrigerator, so I really didn't think it could be failing, especially since the freezer was functioning normally. I did some research and ended up learning a lot more about refrigerators than I ever wanted to know. Since part of my problem was



Chilly Dog

possibly related to my dogs, I'm going to share my new knowledge with you.

One thing I learned is that you're supposed to clean under your refrigerator regularly, especially if you have pets. Now that I think about it, it's a no-brainer, but it just never occurred to me to do it in the four years I've lived in this house. It makes perfect sense (now) that dust and pet hair on the refrigerator's coils will make the motor work harder and that keeping the coils clean will make a refrigerator work more efficiently and might even prevent expensive repairs down the road.

My research also revealed that refrigerators work by circulating air from the freezer.\* If the vents inside the refrigerator are blocked, cold air can't enter the refrigerator and it will not be as cold as it should be, no matter how high you crank the cold setting. (Yes, I tried that.)



Nope! The vent is not blocked!

With my new fridge knowledge, I carried out a two-part fix-it strategy. First, I removed the vent on the bottom of the fridge and the panel in the back of the fridge. Not surprisingly, I found a lot of dust and dog hair. I vacuumed both compartments thoroughly... and I'm pretty sure I heard the fridge sigh in relief. Next I investigated inside the fridge and, sure enough, there was a small plastic bag blocking the main vent. I moved the bag, and within a few hours my fridge was back to the normal temperature. I suspect the bag in front of the vent was the main problem, but cleaning the coils had to have helped, too. Either way, there's a note on the calendar to clean under the fridge again in December and I plan to be a lot more careful to avoid putting things in front of the vent.



I smell CHEESE!

\*That's how the Whirlpool website explained it. It might be an oversimplification because HowStuffWorks.com had a much more complicated explanation for how refrigerators work.

\*\* Yes, the pictures are in here to make the article more interesting to dog owners. :)

# Through A Dog's Ear – Book and CD's

Review by Laura Yurchak

As you all know, Brandy, my foster dog, had to go through a series of injections to kill the heartworms in her body. The injections were painful and the discomfort would last for a couple weeks. I worried about how I would get her through that first day of injections until I remembered a book and CD I bought titled *Through A Dog's Ear* written by Joshua Leeds & Susan Wagner, DVM,MS.

*Through a Dog's Ear* is a book accompanied by various CD's of specific music. The book suggests that we take a look (or an ear) at our environment to see if we give our dogs and ourselves the best sensory space possible to support behavioral balance and health. To do this you must first take a test to see how the sound is affecting you and your dog.

I didn't take the test for the full 30 minutes but I did find it to be a very interesting tool. I took the outside test first. I noticed the birds chirping and the wind fluttering through the trees where before it was part of the

background noise. It was so very cool to take note of that again. The most bothersome noise came from the street we live on. It is soooo very noisy!!!! The dogs both noticed the birds, the branches moving in the trees but they only went to the fence line by the street when a person or a dog was there. They didn't want any part of that noise unless there was something worth checking out.

When I took the inside test the dogs were more relaxed when I didn't have the windows open. The noise from the street is constant and just too much for them. I love having the windows open but now I only open the ones that are not on the street side of the house. A timer went off on my stove and instead of turning it off right away I let it go for a few seconds. It drove me nuts! I don't think the dogs cared for it either.

Last week we took the dogs to a park where there wasn't any street noise, just nature. They totally enjoyed it and so did I. It reminded me of Amy's article

about her trip to Door County in an earlier newsletter. Amy, Jose and the dogs were so relaxed and enjoyed being away from the noise of the city. I know now that I plan to take my dogs away from the city noise as often as I can.

Some of us can handle noise better than others. Unresolved sensory input (sensory confusion)—a sight, sound or smell that don't compute, translates into confusion of one degree or another. Over-stimulation causes sensory confusion because we are unable to process it or put it into context. This then leads to stress which affects our nervous system. It is believed that many anxiety behaviors common in people and their dogs may be from the cumulative sensory overload, starting with the sound environment, that we live in.

There are many meditation CD's and classical pieces that calmed my dogs down. These are some tips to help you give your dog the most positive experience when introducing any calming music to help reduce stress.

- Play the music in a non-stressful environment. Do this a few times to create a positive association.
- Take the "Noise test" and see what you can eliminate from the noisy environment.
- Once the music is soothing to your dog, play it in a more stressful situation. This does not have to be played loud.

The authors suggest the following tips to calm your dog and help abate behavioral issues.

- Separation anxiety, fear based aggression, thunderstorm anxiety: Put the music to "Calm Your Canine Companion"

## The Noise Test

Take the noise test inside your home, and then do it outside. Take 30 minutes to sitting quietly in one place and write down all of the sounds you hear on a notepad. When doing this see how the sounds affect your dog. How do the sounds affect you? Now, rate the sounds from 1-10 with 10 being the most disturbing to you. Do the same with the sounds the affected your dog. Once this is done, is there anything you can change?

## Tips to Reduce Sound Inside the Home

- Keep the volume of the TV at a level where it can't be heard in another room.
- Don't play the radio and TV at the same time (this includes noisy video games)
- If you are not listening or watching the TV or radio, turn them off.
- Reduce the noise on sound producing appliances and phones. Turn the volume down if at all possible.
- Instead of yelling from one room to the next, get up and go to the other room to speak to someone.
- Avoid slamming doors and clanging pots, pans and dishes.
- If those watching TV get overly enthusiastic, put your dog in a

Humans hear sounds between 20-20,000Hz. Canines hear almost as low as a human's lowest frequencies. They hear almost twice as high as human's frequency varying from 40,000 – 55,000Hz depending on breed. Maybe this is why we have dogs with floppy ears? Malcolm Gamble, a British researcher and publisher of "Sound and Its Significance for Laboratory Animals" states, "Available data confirms that exposure to sound can stress animals, and the results could still be apparent several weeks later." He continues with saying that several hormonal, blood and reproductive measurement are disturbed by sounds above 80 decibels (dB).

on 20 minutes before leaving the house. The volumes should be fairly low but high enough to mask disturbing sounds. Once your dog is relaxed, leave for a couple minutes. Don't make a big deal out of leaving, just leave. Increase the time you are gone as your dog shows that they more relaxed about your departure.

- If leaving for a long period of time, put multiple calming music CD's into the CD player. Test the music before doing this to make sure it is truly calming. There are many yoga and meditation CD's out there that works.
- More on thunderstorms: let your dog go to their "safe" spot but continue to play the music if it is truly calming music to your dog.
- For fireworks: let your dog go into the basement of the furthest away from the noise and play the music if it is truly calming to your dog.
- Houseguest: play the music for an hour or longer when you have houseguests.
- Boarding: Ask your boarding facility to play this music during your dog's stay.
- Shelters: tell the shelters you visit the benefit of this music.
- Driving: prior to getting in the car, play the music for the 20 minutes and then take the music for "Driving Edition of through a Dog's Ear" CD (or any other calming music) with you to play as you drive.
- Recovering from illness or surgery: this helped Brandy get

through those injections!

- Euthanasia and Hospice: this is a very hard time for everyone. Playing the music can bring peace and calm to you and your dog.

In the beginning of this article I mentioned my concern about Brandy. As soon as I got Brandy home from the vet, I sprayed DAP spray where she would be resting and I put the CD's into the player. I was amazed at how well she responded to the spray and the music after only a half hour had gone by. She was able to relax more with the music than she did without it. Harley, my Border Collie fell asleep! I was so impressed by the results that I had to write about it in this month's newsletter. I will discuss the DAP spray next month.

- Lawn Mower – 90dB
- Screaming child – 90dB
- Snowmobile -105db
- Snow blower – 110db
- Power drill, chain saw – 110db
- Automobile horn – 110dB
- Jackhammer – 110db
- Barking in most animal shelters and boarding facilities – 110dB
- Gunshot – 130dB
- Ambulance – 130dB
- Fire engine siren – 140dB

Look at the world from your dog's point of view and recognize that the same environment that affects our dogs affect us too. Improve the quality of life for your entire family. Remove yourself from the noise and sensory overload whenever possible. You won't regret it. Learn more about this topic at [www.ThroughADogsEar.com](http://www.ThroughADogsEar.com).

### Two studies behind the *Through a Dog's Ear* music came to the following conclusions:

Study 1- the purpose was to determine the effect of rhythm and pattern identification in dogs in a kennel and home environment.

- In the kennel environment, 70% of the dogs became calmer with simplified 50-60 BPM of piano music.
- In the home environment, 85% of the dogs became calmer with the 50-60bpm with over half falling asleep.

Study 2- the purpose was to determine if music arranged according to psychoacoustic (the study of the perception of sound) principles would have an effect on anxiety issues in dogs (separation, thunderstorms and fireworks).

- 70% of anxiety behaviors we reduced with the psychoacoustic designed music.
- 36% of anxiety behaviors were reduced with the non-psychoacoustic classical music.

## Recipes

From Barb and Toby Ironside:

Mosquito Repellent

2 cups white vinegar

1 cup Avon Skin So Soft oil

1 cup water

1 Tbsp. eucalyptus oil

Shake well and put in a spray bottle. (Put extra in a 1/2 gal container.)

You can rub this on the dog's face as well. Be careful not to get in their eyes.

Emergency Skunk De-scenter

1 Quart 3% hydrogen peroxide

1/4 cup baking soda

1 teaspoon liquid soap (Dawn works great.)

Mix ingredients and wash pet. Rinse with tap water and repeat if necessary. Be extremely careful not to get it in their eyes.

Also works when you dog has rolled in something disgusting and you can't get rid of the smell.

From Lori and Bauer Pallamolla:

Frosty Pups

32 oz. vanilla yogurt

1 mashed banana or large jar of baby fruit

2 T. peanut butter

2 T. honey

Blend together and freeze in 3 ounce paper cups or ice cube trays.

Microwave just a few seconds before serving.