

News From the Doghouse

Hop on over to [OurDogHouse](#) for the Easter parade of pups! We have a great display with a new breed featured each day, now through Easter! We have heard from a number of readers who have told us that their children love seeing a new dog each day.

April is National Pet First Aid Awareness Month

Pet owners are reminded that it is important to know what to do if your pet is ever injured or has a medical emergency. Pet owners should take the time to learn how to prevent and respond to emergencies involving their pets. Good family health should also include your pets!

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month

The ASPCA will kick off Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month on April 7, 2009 with *Go Orange for Animals* when some buildings and landmarks across the country will be lit up in the signature color. You can shine, too! Show your support by wearing orange.



Feature Product

As spring begins, everyone wants to be outdoors. This month, we are featuring our I'd Rather be Walking My Dog (or fill in with any of our other 39 breeds) T-shirts. Available in men's and ladies' sizes, and a variety of colors, everyone is

certain to find the perfect fit.

[Click here](#) to go to OurDogHouse online store.

Speak!

By Timothy Glass

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We are all aware that most dogs understand basic commands, such as fetch, sit, stay, and shake. For years, dog owners have loved to showcase just how smart their canine companions are when family and friends come to visit. Did you know that doggie intelligence, and in this case, Fido's language skills are right up there with parrots, apes, and even most three-year-olds?

While many non-dog owners may think this is simply a dog owner's bragging right, let me assure you, it is not. Researchers have performed extensive studies on how dogs learn, and even what they are able to comprehend when it comes to language skills. Psychologist Stanley Coren advocates that dogs can learn and understand approximately 160 words, and in some cases, even more. While this number far exceeds the basic commands the average dog owner teaches his or her pet, dogs have the ability to understand and utilize human language. To realize your canine companion has this much brainpower is mind boggling, to say the least!

It must be stressed here that this will take patience on the part of the trainer for Fido to achieve a larger than average understanding of language. Researchers used one method termed “fast-mapping,” which is used on children, to prove their theory about doggie smarts. This method allows a child or, in this case, a dog to hypothesize the meaning of the words we use after a single exposure.

Researchers believe dogs learn language skills by association, much like a child does. Show an object to a child and repeat the word; soon the child associates that object with that word. For dogs, learning by this kind of word-object association is believed to be similar.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute tested the skills of Rico, a border collie, that knew 200 words. Rico was able to retrieve specific objects from a separate room at the owner’s command. However, the researchers decided to challenge Rico further by placing an item he had never seen before among familiar objects in the same room. When the owner asked for the new item by name, Rico was able to retrieve it. This demonstrated not only his large vocabulary, but also his ability to use the process of elimination.

While we are still gleaning more information about a dog’s intelligence and language, some researchers believe dogs can’t truly understand abstract concepts such as love or hatred the way a human can. My final argument for this would be how is it that they seem to have such a deep understanding of their human counterparts?

Vital Statistics

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A little advance knowledge about your dog and his normal vital signs may save a lot of anxiety and time when you’re deciding if you need to call the vet. If you are ever in doubt, knowing what your pet’s vital signs are when he is healthy can help to determine if your dog is seriously ill.

Making a list of your dog’s temperature, pulse, and respiration rate is easier than you think and only takes about ten minutes or so. Here’s how you can do it at home.

Temperature – If you don’t already have a standard digital thermometer exclusively for your dog, purchase one at a local drugstore. Apply a small amount of lubricant, such as petroleum jelly, to the end of the thermometer. Gently insert the thermometer so that the metal tip is inside the dog’s rectum. This will work best if you have someone who can hold and help keep the dog steady.

Follow the directions on the thermometer. It should make an audible sound when it has read the dog’s temperature. Remove the thermometer and record the reading. An average temperature is usually between 100.5 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

Pulse – You can check your dog’s pulse or heart rate by placing your hand flat against his chest, just behind his front leg. You may also do this by feeling the femoral artery, a large artery that runs inside the back leg. Using a

watch or clock, with a second hand, count the heartbeats that you feel for 15 seconds. Multiply that number by four to calculate the number of beats per minute. A dog's heart makes two contractions for each heartbeat; so each "lub dup" should be counted as one beat.

Most adult dogs have a heart rate between 60 and 120 beats per minute. Small dogs (less than 30 pounds) and puppies will average between 120 and 160 beats a minute.

Respiration Rate – Check this when your dog is awake and relaxed, and at least one hour after exercise. Count the number of breaths (one rise and one fall of the rib cage) for 15 seconds. Multiply this number by four to get the breaths per minute and note the rate.

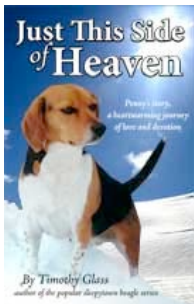
Capillary Refill Time – Lift your dog's lip and firmly press your finger against an area of the gums for one or two seconds. Once you remove your finger, it should take less than two seconds for the area where your finger was to return to its normal color. This is an indication of the amount of blood flow to tissue. If it takes more than two seconds for normal color to return, it may be a sign that your dog is dehydrated.

Skin Turgor – Gently grip the scruff of your dog's neck and pull the skin up. When you let go, it should return to its normal position quickly. Dehydration impairs the skin's elasticity, so if your pet is dehydrated, the skin will take longer than usual to return to its normal position.

Knowing your dog's vital signs may help you to know when things aren't right with your pooch. However, you should always consult your veterinarian if you discover any signs of a medical problem.

Just This Side of Heaven

See what people around the country are saying about Just This Side of Heaven,
By Timothy Glass



A must read, no matter what breed of dog you love. I found the chapter on the "Dash" to be powerful and meaningful; not only as a pet lover, but in my own life.

James Miller, Dallas, TX

I ordered Just This Side of Heaven, after hearing Timothy Glass on radio station 700 WLW here in Ohio. My Beagle, Rocket, passed 11/11/08. I did not know if I could get through this terrible loss. I thank you so much for your book; it has really helped me to deal with my Rocket's passing. It is reassuring to hear others feel the same about their dogs, I truly loved the book and will most likely read it many times.

M. Schon, Cincinnati, OH

Just This Side of Heaven, is a delightful, heartwarming story. I have had many dogs, cats, and even horses that I have shared my life with. I eventually had to say goodbye to, so it is something I know all too well. Just This Side of Heaven deals with grief, in such a way that it really gives the reader a chance to cry with

the author, but then to feel the power of faith, love and healing from the other side. I will definitely encourage my customers to pick up a copy of Just This Side of Heaven!

Kathy Licato, Kennel Manager/Dog Trainer, Daisy Hill Boarding Kennel, Inc.

[Click here](#) to learn more or purchase the book.

Until We Bark Again

For those of you who are new subscribers to our newsletter, we welcome you! To our long-time readers, we thank you for your continuing support! We hope you have enjoyed this month's newsletter and we welcome you to forward this issue to anyone else who might also enjoy it. If you have suggestions for future stories, we'd love to hear them! Please feel free to [email](#) your comments and suggestions to OurDogHouse

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