

Canine crew feeling poorly

NEWS OF NOTE



Joel
Davis

A veritable murrain has descended on the Chez Davis dog population.

Actually, it's several murrains, or maybe a couple of murrains and a pox, but anyway, the poor Worthless Dogs are all feeling poorly at the same time.

Unfortunately, all the problems are digestion-related, or at least they manifest themselves in, ah, digestive issues, which means one must tread carefully in the dark. Our paper towel consumption has also risen markedly over the past couple of weeks.

Besides the inconvenience of these little troubles, and the genuine empathy I feel for my sad doggies when they aren't well, it looks like this might be the beginning of the end for Rupert, the portly rescued corgi. His back end is getting weaker, which may represent a neurological condition that won't get much better. Plus, he has some of the symptoms of dementia, which you don't much think about happening to dogs, but which makes sense. He's 12 after all, a good age for a small dog.

He's still game, though, charging out the door every morning on our daily chicken-feeding mission, terrorizing the other two pups with his fearsome snarling and ferocious barks. He looks like a blond puffball with teeth, which takes something away

from his terror-inducing display of fierceness, but he's sure he's the alpha wolf, keeping the lesser pack members in line and generally cutting a wide swath of impressively macho dogitude. My younger perfect daughter says he's channeling an ancient Viking ancestor dog, Vicious Gurr-r-r-r-fasson.

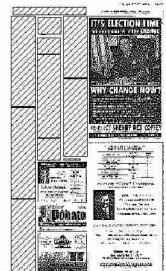
It's hard to tell with Zeke, the Maryland french fry hound, if his current troubles are something to start worrying about, or just a product of his usual habit of eat first, ask questions not at all. If it's not moving too fast, Zeke will at least taste it, and it doesn't seem to matter to him if the item in question is decayed beyond the point of recognition, belonged to the drop-pings food group in the first place, or had only a dim and long-ago connection to food (like a plastic straw that was in a milkshake six months ago).

He's only recently recovered from a bout with ehrlichiosis (which has nothing to do with politics: it's a tick-borne disease that made him more pathetic than usual and caused his spleen to swell) so he might just be having a hard time getting over that. He might be milking it for more attention, though. He still sometimes holds up a paw he sprained — about two years ago — when he wants a little love, recalling in some foggy recess of memory how we

used to make a fuss over him when he was injured.

It's Rhys, the rescued corgi who came to us from a sojourn on the street, who has me a little worried. This dog is extremely involved with his food, a product of the time when he was a stray and was literally starving to death when the shelter picked him up. His time for completely finishing his morning and evening kibble, garnished with a few chunks of Alpo and some slimming canned green beans (dogs love 'em), is routinely less than 20 seconds, and he's usually more than ready to help another dog or one of the cats with the last few molecules of theirs. (My beautiful wife and I laughed ourselves sick when we heard a local animal health expert on the radio say a dog should get the food he can eat "in 15 minutes or so." Rhys could easily eat the entire contents of our refrigerator in 15 minutes. Easily, and be licking the shelves when he was done.)

The other night he didn't finish, and stood calmly by while Rupert finished his dinner for him. We're gravely concerned, and we're seeking expert help, of the quality of the help offered by the organization mentioned (this segue is also feeling poorly and headed for a bad end) in the item below.



LifeStyles to offer tax assistance

LifeStyles of Maryland, with support from the Maryland Cash Campaign, will serve as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site starting in January, to assist low-income Charles County residents with free filing of their 2010 state and federal taxes.

In addition, the program will assist people in developing a financial plan once they receive funds through the Earned Income Tax Credit. Christine Parker of Parker Financial has offered her services to assist qualified individuals.

LifeStyles is in need of volunteers who are interested in becoming IRS-certified tax preparers. Free training is provided, and people are needed for weekdays, evenings and weekend appointments.

To sign up, call Corae Young at 301-609-9900 or e-mail cbriscoe@lifestylesofmd.org.

Area libraries focus on One Maryland One Book

Maryland's only statewide reading project, One Maryland One Book, is under way in Southern Maryland.

The initiative is designed to encourage everyone in the state to read and then discuss one common book. This year's selection is "Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference" by Warren St. John.

"Outcasts United" is the story of a refugee soccer team, a remarkable woman coach and a small Southern town turned upside down by the process of refugee resettlement. Theirs is a story about resilience, the power of one person to make a difference and the daunting challenge of creating community in a place where people seem to have little in common, according to a press release from the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association.

Charles County Public Library is offering a Life Journeys Writing Workshop at 1 p.m. Oct. 2 for people 16 and older at the La Plata branch at 2 Garrett Ave. Led by Yvonne J. Medley, a freelance journalist, participants can learn how to express their life journeys through the art of writing.

The P.D. Brown Memorial Branch at 50 Village St. in Waldorf will use One Maryland One Book's youth selection this year titled, "Home of the Brave" by Katherine Apple-

gate as the inspiration for a Life Journeys Writer's Discussion for teens 15 to 18 at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 22.

St. John will be featured at an Evening with the Author event Sept. 27 at Huntingtown High School. The program begins at 7 p.m. and will include a book-signing following the presentation.

For a list of One Maryland One Book events throughout the state, go to www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Early voting dates set

Early voting before the Sept. 14 primary will be available at the Charles County Board of Elections at 201 E. Charles St. in La Plata. The office will be open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. There will be no early voting Sept. 5.

Directions are available at www.elections.state.md.us. Voters who prefer to vote on Election Day can vote Sept. 14. On Election Day, polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. To avoid delays, voters should try to vote between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

jdavis@somdnews.com