



THE SHOGUN CHRONICLES

The life and times of the newest member of the Marks family

GODZILLA-SIZED ATTITUDE

The past two weeks have brought remarkable changes in both size and behavior. Shogun has had another growth spurt, jumping up to just over forty pounds. In a recent checkup the vet opined that Shogun would be a “gorgeous big boy” while the nurses gave a gaping “wow - he’s HUGE!”

Along with his size is an emerging Godzilla-sized play drive. He is bouncing around, pouncing on things, and wrestling with great gusto. He is gripping deep in his jaws and the pressure he can exert has jumped from firm to wincingly fierce.

Here is a bit of shared insight for those getting a puppy. Of all the expensive, cute toys we have (and trust me, there are many), the hands-down winner is The Sock Monster, a playful name we’ve given to nothing more than a knotted ball of Mike’s old socks. Indestructible, dense enough to throw, with a dozen stretchy tentacles sticking out everywhere, the Sock Monster is Shogun’s arch-nemesis and most frequent combat foe. Its a hoot to watch him toss it, leap on it and then shake it into submission.

Of course, like any growing boy, big attitude is not without its challenges and Shogun is in a phase of testing his Godzilla-sized defiance as well. But to his credit -- if not to his parent’s dismay -- he will look you right in the eye when he does something that he knows full well he shouldn’t. In fact after one recent act of puppy petulance in front of Alla, he quietly slinked into his crate, from the safety of which he put his head down and looked up with those hypnotic big puppy eyes, mind-controlling Alla to merely shake her head and laugh.

I thought Godzilla’s eyes shot laser beams....



If BOLI, the animated film about a tough little puppy, can make a few million bucks, why can't Shogun be the next Tokyo-smashing Japanese monster movie sensation? It is easy to imagine him crushing the little model buildings!

BITE-SIZED NEWS

ALLERGIC EYEBROWS?

Shogun has been grappling with one small medical anomaly, which looks now to be an allergic reaction to something. Oddly, the only place it presents is across both eyelids and eyebrows. The vet's initial comment was "if this were a police dog I'd say he got maced." The first instance was after some outside play away from home and we assumed he stuck his face in some plant, but he's had a second bout here at home. The guess is that some regional outdoor plant is the culprit. Shogun is taking a brief lap of antibiotics and a steroid which is having very rapid results, but we are working to determine the cause so we can prevent a recurrence.

SOCIALIZATION TAKES A STAGGERING STEP... SIDEWAYS

All things in life involve give and take, and this week was no different in our outdoor "lets go meet people" effort. While Shogun's earlier exploits were almost a model of good behavior, well, lets just say that this week he would have been the poster boy for puppy ADD. Nothing really bad mind you, no jumping at anybody, just complete and utter distraction by literally everything that moved in a hundred yard radius. *Watch?* Bah! *Sit?* Not on your life! (well, not until Dad took a knee and we had a quiet nose to nose moment.) But this, we assume, is all part of being a kid and like any good fan of the Miami Dolphins, we're well acquainted with the phrase "wait till next time!"



GRRRRRRRR!

Playtime is a big part of every day around here and it has been amusing to see how much of our day has evolved around having a puppy in the family. Shogun continues to get better about sleeping through the night, and much of his internal clock is synchronized to breakfast at 7am and dinner at 6pm. After breakfast he has a short play-energy burst followed by a lot of napping. In the evening though, we can only assume that at 7pm his little Energizer Bunny batteries snap on because our sweet, mild-mannered puppy becomes a whirlwind of activity. We've learned to capture and direct this energy, if not for the least of reasons that, left undirected, it will very quickly direct itself into a game Shogun calls "I'll bet I can GET your attention."

Rough and tumble play is the theme for this hour, and with all the cold rain of late it plays out in the foyer where carpet gives him good footing and a soft landing when he flops over. He will go go go (wrestling at left with Alla for control of the Sock Monster) until he abruptly collapses into puppy recharge mode.

WE PLATZED!

Now if I told you my puppy "platzed," few would take that as a good thing, assuming that it resulted in a smelly pile under the piano. But in the small puppy-steps that lead to the road of Schutzhund competition, *Platz* (lay down) has been a bigger hurdle than *Watch* and *Sit*, which Shogun grasped much more readily. Alla has really been working *Platz* with Shogun, an effort that requires some almost gymnastic balance on the part of the trainer to lead the puppy into a lay-down action. Well last night, on a simple word and one finger touching the floor, Shogun very smoothly and quietly... platzed. We were so proud.

