

Questions about replacing a beloved family husky

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Dear Annie: Our beloved family dog, Dasher, passed away last year. Dasher was a husky. She was the sweetest and best dog I ever could imagine. Good with the kids and our old kitty. When I contacted the breeder I bought her from, he said that he is no longer breeding. My friend suggested I look at adopting a dog from the local shelter or a rescue

DEAR ANNIE



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group. I really want a husky, and our shelter didn't have any but suggested I reach out to local husky rescue groups. Well, I did, and I found a great one. After I filled out the application, a volunteer called me within 24 hours. She thanked me for considering adoption and gave me some very sad statistics about how many dogs get euthanized because of overpopulation. She then said my house will be a tricky place to find the right

dog for. Most huskies have a strong prey drive and are not great with cats, small dogs or small children. I was taken aback because Dasher was so great with all of the above. When I told her this, she said my best bet would be to get a puppy and socialize the dog around kids and cats as much as possible. She said that her rescue group rarely gets pups in and that it could take a long time. I want to adopt, but I also don't want to put the lives of my cat and kids in danger. Do you have any advice as to what I should do? —

Adopt or Shop?

Dear Adopt or Shop: Whenever possible, adopt; don't shop. I understand loving a particular breed and wanting a puppy of that breed. The way I see it, you have three options:
1) Wait until the husky rescue gets a puppy in.
2) Go on Petfinder and search for husky puppies. You may have to travel a bit to find a puppy, or it may not be a purebred husky, but chances are great that you can find a husky puppy. Sometimes mixed breeds are healthier than purebreds.
3) If you do decide to

buy a puppy, at least be sure you know where you're buying from. Kristina Lotz wrote a wonderful article for iHeartDogs titled "10 Signs That A Puppy Is From a Puppy Mill," and I would recommend reading it before buying from a pet shop or breeder.
Dear Annie: Your column with the letter from widower "Neil" brings back sad memories for me. I lost my mother when I was 13 years old, and it was staggering. I had no siblings and an alcoholic father. Life was a mess.
Years later, I attended

a seminar, and the most important thing I learned was how to handle major upsets. Here's the way to do it. When thinking about an upsetting incident, write down the following questions and your answers: When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved? How did you feel? What happened?
You might want to write the same upset down several times. Just do it. It will work. — *Art in Oregon*
Dear Art: Writing is a wonderful form of therapy. I second your suggestion. Thanks for it.



Photos by Madeline Kalbach

The red-breasted sapsucker sports an all red head and chest.

Woodpeckers: Major attraction for birders

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the northern flicker in action. It is amazing to watch them grasp on to small suet feeders, maneuvering and securing their position using their stiff tail feathers. As I watched, when the flicker had had its fill and flew off, the diminutive downy woodpecker flew in to take its place. It too used its tail feathers to get in to the correct position to devour the nourishing suet from my rather small cylindrical feeder. In fact, both the female and the male snuck in to feast on the insect laden suet. The male wasn't all that pleased with the lady's presence though, and proceeded to chase her all over the yard, but she held her ground and managed to get her share.
The hairy woodpecker hasn't ventured to the feeders yet, but I have been seeing it in some of our forested areas where it was probing for insects on the trunks of dead and living trees. I last saw the red-breasted sapsucker on the Peninsula during the summer perched vertically on a tree in the yard showing off its all red head and breast. One of its field marks is the white vertical stripe on its black wings.



ABOVE: Snow will do when a woodpecker is ready for a drink. **RIGHT:** Northern flickers love the bird bath both for a drink and for bathing.

Ah, woodpeckers of the Pacific Northwest are a major attraction for birders, I think — at least they are for me. They are majestic and energetic. And their foraging and feeding behavior is fascinating. Most will let us have a close-up and personal look because they will come to our feeders. Their feeding behavior and coloration is a clue to their identification. Watch for them this winter. You will love them.
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