



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Three crazy chihuahuas!

The saying, "First they steal your heart, then your bed," is true of Nati's dogs. His family's three Chihuahuas used their secret powers of love and humor to take over their home!

Nati's mother, Anna, explains, "Our dogs: Kiko, 14, Chalupa, seven, and Rio, one, match the same three 'odd' personality traits of our three children. The eldest dog and child are calm and good listeners, the middle dog and child are hyper and rambunctious, and the two babies of the family are a combination of the first two.

Nati and his two sisters learned to be gentle with our small dogs. It is heartwarming seeing how proud they are," said Anna, "as they have the dogs' perform tricks for friends."

Our dogs have favorites amongst our children's friends. Chalupa is in love with our daughter, Nicolette's, boyfriend. When he arrives, Chalupa projects his tiny body three feet into the air to get closer to him. In disappointment he cries for 15 minutes after the boyfriend leaves.

Rio's other 'odd' habit is when anyone walks in our front door. He runs towards them, stops half-way, then he about-faces and runs to his toy box. He grabs a toy, because he never greets anyone without a toy. His agenda is that he loves to play, so he thinks that anyone arriving has come for 'his' play date. If you don't respond to his playful overtones, he places the toy at your feet for you to 'get the hint'.

Two of their dogs are hilarious when playing tug of war. Chalupa grabs one end of the toy rope and Rio the other.

Chalupa drags tiny Rio around the slippery floor. Rio refuses to let go and all the while he is growling. The little guy is tough! Chalupa usually is the first to tire of the game and let go.

At dinner time, the dogs go crazy when they see Anna reach for their bowls. They jump, do flips and run around crazily. Then at the family's dinner time, the three dogs sit and stare at the family like itty-bitty vultures, who have not eaten in a week!

Kiko and Chalupa were not allowed to sleep on the children's beds, but when Rio arrived things shifted! Nati was having nightmares and when Rio was allowed to sleep with the youngster, it was easier for Nati to go to bed. "Besides," explains Anna, "Rio was so tiny and cute it was hard for all of us all not to want to sleep with him!"

"Life is richer when you have a dog," said Nati. "I am happier and never lonely. Chalupa smiles at us and makes funny faces and sounds. She is a thief, who eats everything she sees! One day she stole a lipstick, candy bar, and a toothbrush — and ate them! I have to keep my bedroom clean so 'things' don't disappear. If she gets into my room, it looks like a tornado hit! She messes everything and burrows under my blankets, where she likes to eat the things she finds in darkness. Our other dogs would rather eat with the family."

Nati has learned responsibilities while caring for his dogs. He lets them out for potty breaks, feeds them and baths them. "You have to commit to do what is right for your pets," said Nati. "I've trained Rio to shake a paw, lie down and retrieve toys. My life would be empty without a dog. Every day I play outside with them and toss their toys and



Photo by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Nati holds Chalupa and Rio as he shares the "dog gone truth", "Having dogs means that I am never lonely. I am happier. My life would be empty without a dog."

they never tangle their leashes when walking because several of us walk them."

When Rio arrived, he was so small, he fit into pockets! He's traveled to Italy with his family and because he slept in pockets, Nati's sister, Cassandra, said, "He was so quiet, I took him to school. When you look into our dogs' eyes, you can see what they are thinking."

"Our dogs are on a grain-free diet," said Anna, "just like my husband. We swapped from 'regular' dog food when Rio's fur began falling out. His skin and fur are now normal on his new food, so we continued with grain free for all the dogs. (My husband is doing better too.)

And my husband says, 'Chico's been a 'Papa's boy' since day one! He is the only one in this house that I can have a conversation with — who listens.'"

TIPS

Pay extra attention with small dogs, so you don't step or sit on them. Nati's family's floors are tile, hardwood and laminate, so it is easier to hear their dogs approach. They also placed cat collars (with a bell) on their dogs to better hear them.

"Our dogs' room is in the

laundry room and the front load washer," said eldest sister, Nicolette. "One day a dog jumped in and burrowed down in the clothes. We did not see her until she jumped out. It was a miracle that we had not closed the door, or turned the machine on."

Video:

Utterly cute! Pekinese puppy herds sheep.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEqyXFTTqI&feature=share>

TV dog-star Skidboot
<http://silverandgoldandthee.net/V/Sk.html>

Cute rabbit herds sheep!
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/grllscientist/2012/feb/11/1>

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Tax terminology explained (sort of)

BY NED HICKSON
News Media Corporation

After clearing off the kitchen table and finding an outlet for the calculator, I sat down to do my taxes. As always, I made sure to have all the necessary documentation and forms, like W4s, tax forms, bank statements, insurance reports, tax schedules and, most importantly, a box of Kleenex.

As I sat staring at this year's tax booklet, I noticed a special section of "Tax Terms," which is an alphabetical listing of terms one may encounter during the tax preparation process. Each term is followed by a brief description meant to enlighten the truth-seeking taxpayer through "real-life" examples. For instance, the IRS uses "Jane" and "John" to illustrate the term "Ability to Pay." In this scenario, Jane is filthy rich, with homes on both coasts that she visits by way of her own Lear jet.

By comparison, John earns what the IRS calls a "more modest salary," which affords him a flashlight and a camper shell to live in.

The only thing these two have in common is the oil industry: Jane is an executive in it, and John had his SUV re-possessed. According to the booklet, due to their income disparity, "John and Jane do NOT pay the same amount of taxes, because their ability to pay differs vastly."

This brings us to a term not included in the handbook: "Highly-paid tax lawyer."

In this example, Jane is able to filter her \$1.6 million earnings through a maze of tax shelters and special credits before wiring an undisclosed amount into a Swiss bank account, leaving her with a taxable income of: \$6.28.

John, who files his return on the 1040 EZ form, is entitled to a refund that, coincidentally, adds up to exactly... \$6.28!

See? "Jane" PAYS and "John" gets a tax CREDIT!

All together, there are 65 terms listed in the handbook, many of which seem self-ex-

planatory until you read them closely. With the tax deadline just a few weeks away, I've taken the liberty of paraphrasing some of the more complex terms that you may encounter before now and tax day.

1040EZ:

1.) Simplest tax form offered by the IRS.

2.) A wealthy white rapper.

Gross Income: The dollar amount that appears in the box after "federal income tax withheld."

Adjusted Really Gross Income: The amount left over after completing your taxes.

Bank interest income: If you make more than \$400 from your savings account, the IRS is interested.

Tax Shift: What the average taxpayer does in their seat after determining his/her adjusted gross income.

Dependent: A child, parent, spouse or household pet with a human-sounding name, such as "Fred" or "Sally," whom the creative taxpayer can claim on his/her income taxes.

Estate Tax: The amount of tax on a deceased individual's estate that has been passed on to surviving family members. Short explanation: Something my children will never have to worry about.

Passive Income: The response most writers get when people ask them about their annual income, i.e., "Thanks, but I'll pass."

Duty Deposit: What most taxpayers would like to include with their IRS payment.

While there are plenty of other terms in the new IRS tax glossary, it's probably a good idea to stop here.

To be honest, I'm already feeling taxed.

(Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com)

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