



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

The big 'Burley' dog



Barb and Les love big dogs, so when they saw a photograph of a Leonberger they knew it would be a perfect fit for their family.

Barb mentioned her family's search to a friend. As miracles would have it, her friend "just happened" to have met a woman who bred the rare Leonbergers! AND Voila! Just like that an instant super-sized, eight-week-old, 18 pound puppy waddled into Barb and Les's family.

The breed is named after Leonberg, Germany where the dogs are its town's mascots. These amazing dogs are a planned "mutt mix" of St. Bernard, Newfie and Great Pyrenees. This explains their size, height, color and intelligence. They are gentle with children, used for their ferocious livestock guarding, and are famous for water rescue. The expected life span of a Leonberger is 8-10 years. Burley is five and a half years old. When they drink, they plunge their whole head into the water bucket. So most Leonberger pet parents keep the water bucket outside.

"My husband and I were at odds as to

what to name our fast growing puppy," said Barb, "She's a BIG burley 'girly' dog so we named her after Burley Street, where we used to live."

Ms. Burley is a couch-potato with fairly low energy who insists on sleeping in. "She is definitely not a morning-dog," laughs Barb. "She has an hour walk a day, that includes a swim."

Then the 130 pound dog cat-naps on her back, with her short legs in the air and her long fur spreading out over the floor like melted ice cream.

Leonbergers are very vocal, making funny yodel noises. Barb's friend calls them Burley's "wookie" noises, because the big dog sounds and looks like the hairy humanoids, Wookies, featured in Star Wars.

"Our dog makes us laugh," said Barb. "We re-fur to her, as 'Squirrely Burley' because she LOVES chasing squirrels and is tireless in their pursuit. Thankfully, she has never caught one. We can't say 'squirrel' without her rushing to the window at full attention. Every bone we give her she immediately buries in the yard. Then later, when

she digs them up, she parades them round the yard tossing her head like a horse in a parade. Then she begins her hilarious 'bone dance' ritual where she places the bone on the ground and jumps around it, alternating little hops and play bows."

Her other favorite game is tug of war with her blanket, but if it's with a big stick and another dog, she thinks it is the best.

Burley is O.C.D. (An Obsessive Compulsive Dog)! Every time she passes the hook where her leash and collar hang or her bag of food, she stops and double checks that they are still there.

"When she's mad at me or wants attention," said Barb, "she takes a HUGE mouthful of kibble and drops it all over the kitchen floor. She is stubborn and doesn't like her daily walking route changed and in purr-test sits down refusing to budge until we go the 'usual' way. She knows she'll always 'win' because of her size. She also has to know where everyone is, only relaxing when we are all in the same room."

The oddest thing happened as I stood interviewing Barb. A woman walked up and asked, "Is your dog a Leonberger? I saw a litter of them five years ago." Barb confirmed that was her dog's breed and gave the breeder's name who lives a five hour drive away. The other woman exclaimed that was the breeder! She had actually met Burley before Barb did! What are the odds!

TIPS

"Drying our dog off after her daily swim is an arduous task," said Barb. "A portable four horse powered 'Blaster' dryer is a must-have for any large-wet dog. Also a Roomba robotic vacuum helps deal with Burley's prolific shedding."

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•CORRECTION•

In the second installment of "Guns and our schools" *The Sentinel* referred to a 3030 rifle. It should have read .30-30.

•CLARIFICATION•

In the third and final installment of 'Guns and our schools' printed on March 28, *The Sentinel* referred to Kip Kinkel as a gun owner. The .22 -caliber semi-automatic Ruger rifle Kinkel used to kill two classmates after killing his parents was purchased for Kinkel by his father in the fall of 1997. A shotgun and pistol were also found in Kinkel's room by his father prior to the shooting.

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