

The October Suzie

11 October 2015



Suzie and her first Jack-o-lantern – an eerie image made more haunting by the blur from the seconds-long shutter time.

As fall progresses, the weather is at times brisk, but still for the most part fairly warm. Suzie continues to thrive, still growing in every way: more energetic (in part due to the cooler weather), more knowing about things, and better at training her humans. If one attends, one can feel the bough of human behavior bending ever so slightly, more and more in the direction of the pup's desires, pulled by her will and the humans' indulgence.

Suzie's Toys

Being an Only Dog, having no playmate, Suzie must entertain herself at times, and fortunately for this she has many toys.

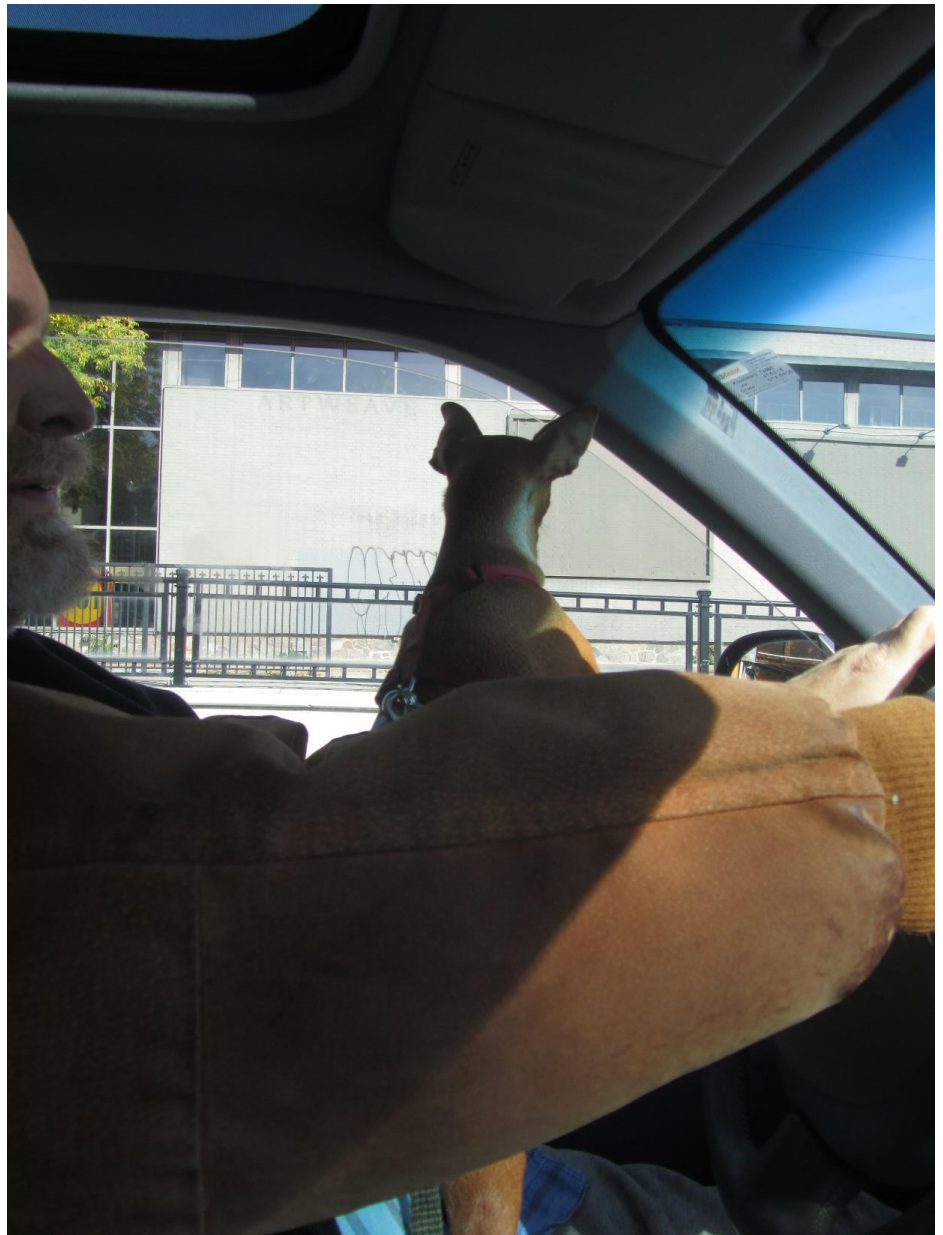
Recently we went to Canadian Tire to get a stepladder – Suzie's first time in a large store, and very exciting. Even though they have a No Dogs sign on the door, they have never objected – Simon and Alistair went with us there many times.

We got what we were looking for, and then, in one of those big bins near the front they had enormous orange foam cylinders - \$1.99 each.

Now, Suzie had been very good in the store, and I wanted to treat her. So I thought, "Why not?"

To test the idea out, I got one of these things out and held one end down toward her. She leapt toward it and – put her front paws around it, holding it the way she will hold a pant leg when she wants you to stop, or pay attention.

Irresistible! I was sold.



Right: Suzie looking out the window, while I drive to – where else? – the park!

When we got home I put the orange foam Thing in the back yard and let Suzie get acquainted with it:



Above: Suzie was game. She took the enormous thing in hand, so to speak, and gave it what for.

Left: a close-up of her patented Suzie Grip. That piece of foam never stood a chance ...



Suzie explores the end of the Thing. It is actually a tube, with a one-inch hole through its length. This, of course, was something Suzie investigated.



More investigation of the Hole in the End of the Thing. Suzie is quite scrupulous.

Above: the hole provides a way for her to grip the Thing – her narrow jaw and lower teeth penetrate the hole as she grabs on.

Left: she nips bits of the foam. “Hmmmmmmm! Interesting!”



A Suzie-eye-view of the situation. The pup is considering the Thing very earnestly.



Things are getting – well – a little grimmer for the foam cylinder. Suzie has seized the matter and is showing the big thing who is boss. Notice the marks in the cylinder – scars from previous Suzie attacks.



Undoubtedly, images like the one above are very disturbing. The sheer viciousness of the canine as predator, the helplessness of the Foam Cylinder.

The horror! The horror!

This image made me think of something else...

... something with a similar theme ...

... a similar message ...

... now what was that? Oh yes! It was ...

Below is a screen capture from one of my favorite YouTube videos (entitled: “Jaguar attacks Caiman Crocodile”).



Note the similarity between this image and the one with Suzie on the previous page – the grip, the coming-from-behind, the helplessness of the prey – they tell the same tale.

The mammal is clearly in the ascendance. (*Die, reptiles, die!*)

And this reminded me of an image I encountered years ago.

I did a search for it, and found it! It is one a web-site under the title: “dog-pack-attacks-kills-alligator.” I remember the first time I saw that, years ago. I clicked on it in high hopes of enjoying an example of the supremacy of dog over reptile.

The sight first displayed some tantalizing introductory text:

“At times nature can be cruel, but there is also a raw beauty, and even a certain justice manifested within that cruelty.

The alligator, one of the oldest and ultimate predators, normally considered the "apex predator", can still fall victim to implemented 'team work' strategy, made possible due to the tight knit social structure and "survival of the pack mentality" bred into the canines.

See the remarkable photograph below courtesy of Nature Magazine. Note that the Alpha dog has a muzzle hold on the gator preventing it from breathing, while another dog has a hold on the tail to keep it from thrashing. The third dog attacks the soft underbelly of the gator.”

Warning! Not for the squeamish!”

I was eager to see this image. I scrolled down to see the gory scene ...

... scrolling down

... scrolling down ...



OMG! The caninity!

But I am, as the French say, “straying from my sheep.”

Back to Suzie. She has been to the park, many times, and under a very careful watch of her humans, has been making friends – big time!

Suzie Makes Friends: Emma-lou

Suzie meets a new dog, Emma-lou. Here Suzie is sizing her up.



Then (right), the inevitable attack!





Harold watches the canine battle from a safe distance...



Suzie goes for the throat – again...



Showing teeth!

Suzie and Rex

Suzie meets Rex – a 3-month-old rat terrier – and teaches him how to play.

At first Rex was a little taken aback by this small-but-aggressive dog. We had to pull Suzie back. But Suzie worked on him – “C’mon! C’mon, kid! Let’s *play!*”



“Hey!” says Rex. “Please! Not so aggressive.”

He was tentative at first, and I held Suzie back a bit. Suzie has taught younger dogs to play a number of times. It was fun to watch as Rex gradually (very) come to terms with the phenomenon of Suzie’s enthusiasm and energy.

He was a little bigger, and as he got used to the idea of play – for Suzie never means any harm – she’s just a party-girl, puppy who just wants to have fun – he discovered his own physical resources. Again, fun to watch.



“*Woah!*” Rex is bowled over, and thinks, “What is this little red dog’s *problem?*”

This is still early in the proceedings. Suzie, unfortunately, is still a little overwhelming. But Rex was a real sport – and a related breed – a terrier, so he started to get into it...



Here Rex is beginning to get into it. *Below*, Suzie bowled over – and *loving* it!





Above, more Suzie attacks – Rex is taking it better now. Below, leash problems.





Suzie goes off-leash – and at our suggestion, Rex’s owner put her dog on our 30 foot leash, so he would have more space to play (still too young to be taken off-leash).

So Suzie takes full advantage and gets in another vicious attack – but Rex is learning – he holds Suzie off, which of course just makes it better for her.

Below: Suzie and Rex just chilling, friends from now on!



Suzie and Milo



Milo was a collie dog, the best part of which was his Scottish owner's accent when he said, "Easy, Milo!"

Milo had some "issues" with Suzie – evidently from time to time unsure whether she was a dog or perhaps a new type of squirrel (which was where the owner's "Easy, Milo!" would come in).

But Suzie (right) stood up to the challenge, and gradually Milo came to accept her into the dog-hood membership. On repeated meetings, everything was okay.



Suzie has made a new friend, playing (upper) with him, or just lounging about with him (lower).



him (lower). Milo was very impressed with Suzie's spunk, but still looked a little bit confused.

I imagined him pondering: "I *think* she's a dog, even if she is so small."



Suzie finally gets Milo just where she wants everyone:



That is, on the defensive and prepared to be “Suzied.”

Right: Milo endures another Suzie attack...





Suzie says hello to an elderly back-and-white dog whose name I didn't get, while Milo and Milo's owner stand by.

I chatted with the owner of the elderly dog. It's very old and with health problems, but still was enjoying the park, the warmth and the sunshine and the smells big time. Really got to me – the ability, within the limits of our little lives that are rounded with a sleep, dogs can teach us *so well* how to enjoy our time here.

Amen!

But for Suzie, it's the morning still – and how she *does* make the most of every minute!

Uber Day at the Park, Part 1: Suzie and Pala

Suzie encounters an old friend – and dives right in!

Pala is about the same age as Suzie (she is just over 8 months), and they have similar energy levels – and have met a number of times before – always they do a lot of running and playing: A chasing B and then B chasing A.



Suzie's favorite play move activity: going for the throat.

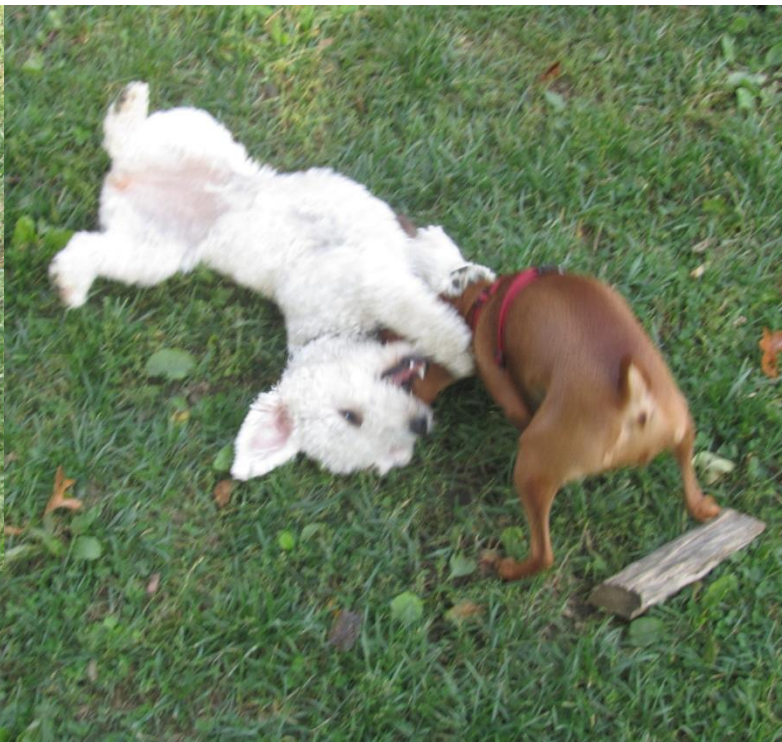


The above photo, despite being blurred, does suggest the joy-in-speed Suzie and Pala share.

Pala is part miniature poodle and something else.

Right, she is taking a break – on Harold's shoes.





Above: Paws up, everybody!

Right: War and rumors of war.

The running and playing went on and on, but all good things must come to an end...



Parting time has come; Pala's owner has put her leash on. But both dogs are momentarily distracted by another dog further down the park.

Uber Day at the Park, Part 2: Suzie and Astrid

Suzie encounters a new friend – a loud one too! – who is delightful but likes to bark and bark when she is chasing Suzie. My poor ears! And that was outside. I felt sorry for her owner.



Above, Suzie greets Astrid's owner. Below, Suzie *loves* being chased.





Suzie and Astrid after their intense play.

There were lots of squirrels in the park today too. Unfortunately, Suzie got a little over-stimulated – she ran, and ran, and ran, and finally wouldn't allow me to get her on the leash. She swept past, just out of reach, and her peregrinations took her closer to the roads on either side of the park (but not quite) – and finally I got scared – and used my “don't you *dare!*” voice.

Whereupon Suzie turned around, ran up to me and lay down – thankfully! What an amazing dog! Two intense dog-friend crazy-run encounters, apparently, were one too many for her sense of self. She got into the state that Alistair used to get into, when he'd had too many squirrel chases: squirrely. I made the mental note to, if that happened again, to put her on the leash when she was still far from the edges of the park. My nerves will thank me.

When we got home, Suzie had a good nap in her bed – a full day at the park!



That night we carved a pumpkin to make a Jack-o-lantern, then lit it and took pics.

Most didn't turn out. The only half-good one was the one on the first page: "Suzie's eye!"

The next best are these two: the one above of Harold that is too dark, and the one to the right of Suzie (with a light one) that is blurred. Oh well!

