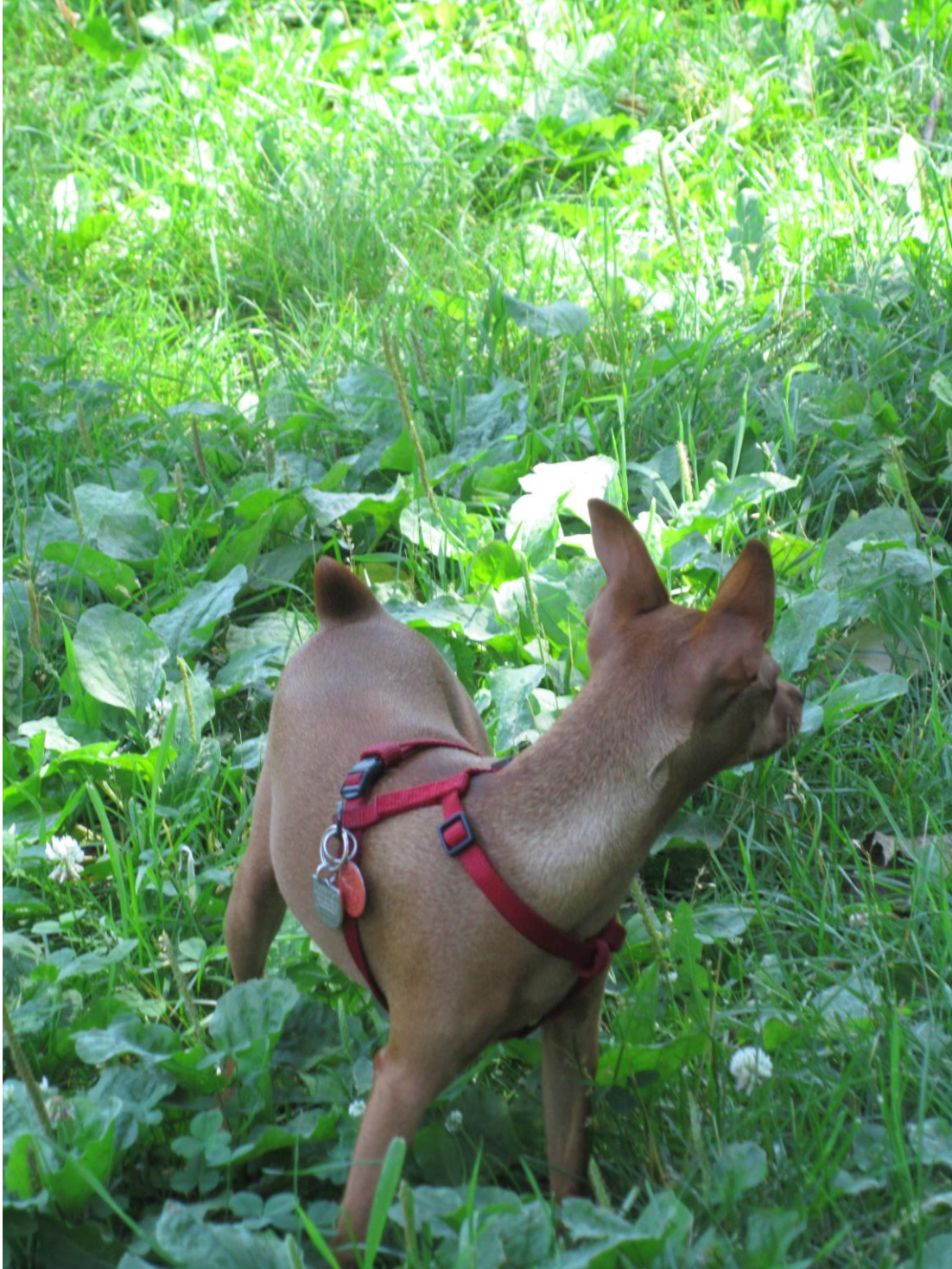


The Sunday Suzie

26 July 2015



This wild life. Suzie in the park, amid the light and shade, and alert – as always. And, as always, *very* beautiful.



Thirty-foot tether of love. Suzie with Harold on our walk through a different park – in fact, through some park parts and adjacent housing – a very nice journey.

I bought a 30-foot training leash as an alternative to the 15-foot retractable leash we ordinarily use. It gives Suzie more scope for running when the human on the other end is too slow and the neighbourhood (such as the one in the pic above) requires dogs be on a leash. This allows for more extended dashes after squirrels (allowed because she never catches one, and seems not even to want to – just like Simon and Ali – and Nicki – before her; the chase is the thing). To give her even more scope, I sometimes run after her when she dashes, when 30 feet are just not enough! It is a real challenge, however, keeping track of the leash at times – since the goal is to not have it drag on the ground. Sometimes I have to stop and spend several minutes untangling it. In this pic, Harold is doing the honors.

Suzie learns to brush her teeth



“Hmmm – not bad...” I introduced Suzie to the double-ended canine toothbrush a number of weeks ago with the intention of regularly brushing her teeth. I tried a number of times, but realized that I did it wrong when she got spooked worse every time. She even came to shy away from me whenever she saw me with it. “You’re going to do things to me in my mouth with it, aren’t you?” she was saying.

Since that time I have turned over what to do in my mind, and finally came up with the idea of introducing it to her as a “toy” – since, given the chance she will chew on almost anything. In the above picture I have presented the new toy, wiggling it about a little. She was a little hesitant at first – I think something of the memory of my previous attempts kind of surfaced. But then, when I left it with her, she took it and began to chew, in a vague, exploratory fashion. There was the residue of some canine toothpaste now on one end, which I think interested her.



“Okay ... What do you want me to do with *this*?” Suzie is hesitant when I present the toothbrush but retain hold of the other end. Ordinarily, this would be viewed as a chance to play tug-of-war, but still with this Long Blue Thing she is troubled by some vague sense of Something Else Going On.

But I kept up my pretense of indifference: “I thought you might like to chew on this, but if not – don’t feel you have to.” I tossed it aside several times, and she began to feel reassured that it was not an Instrument of Canine Torture.



“Mmm – interesting texture.” Eventually she got into chewing on it – not just the middle, but the end bits, the parts that have those odd bristly things sticking out. She wasn’t sure about them, but kind of found it interesting.

My technique (under development) is to casually get her chewing on the bristles, and then try to direct them (subtly, never forcing it) to the teeth I want to brush. Then, as she chews, I rotate the handle brushing the tops and sides of the upper and lower teeth.

It ain’t perfect, but it’s a start. She’s a good dog, and I never want to impose anything other than when I have to.



Another park stance pic. (left) An amazing shot of Suzie's stance and facial profile.



Queen of Tongues. (above) I like this pic because it suggests Suzie's arc of progress of her peregrinations, as well as her enthusiasm (witness the grin, witness the size of tongue showing).