

THE FULL MONTY

Monty's public debut was through the viewing window of a local pet store. He was purchased by a family that soon found they had no time for such a small bundle of allergens. The kids became sneezy so the dog had to go. Monty's next people found him through a newspaper ad. When the young couple came to get him, he was sitting alone in a dark garage. His new family never expected that their tiny bundle of joy would become 120 pounds of fuzzy fun. After a cute puppy-hood of chewing sheetrock and inappropriate pooping, Monty became an active, highly intelligent adult that needed more time than a busy working couple could provide. Workdays were spent in the backyard or garage, and afterwork hours were spent "acting out" for attention. Then the human baby came.

Monty's behavior became ugly and it was clear that he and the baby could not live in the same house. For the baby's safety, the family made the heart-breaking decision to find Monty a new home. He was placed several times, but each time he was returned because of his aggression. When I was asked if I might give Monty a new home, I jumped at the chance. I was a friend of the family and had known Monty most of his life. He had been happy to spend time with me and was always on his best behavior.

Our first few weeks were wonderful until he bit one of my friends. During our first year together he managed to bite five or six people. The crisis point came when Monty and I had a disagreement over a Christmas toy and he launched himself off the kitchen floor and tried to seriously hurt me. That day I knew that our relationship needed serious help or Monty would have to be put down.

Over the next few weeks I called vets and rescue groups looking for help and couldn't find any help. The only thing I could think to do was to enroll us in obedience classes; sort of relationship therapy. For

Monty, our success was a life and death issue. Our instructor was wonderful and patient, even after Monty bit her. Once we had obedience school under our belts, we started taking agility classes and Monty blossomed. Monty is thrilled to go to class and exercise his body and brain. We both enjoy the teamwork and we have built a trusting relationship. We did our first AKC agility trial this summer and came home with many ribbons. We also started going to the Dog Park regularly and Monty became the social party animal he is today. It is amazing to see him greet all his dog friends and ask the humans for butt-rubs. People who meet Monty now would never guess what a problem dog he was.

The people of Fairbanks are blessed to have so many ways to spend quality time with their dogs. Every year Monty and I do our local Mutt March, Pets and People Day and enjoy Meet the Breed Day. All of these events have taught Monty how to interact with humans in fun and safe ways. The time we have spent in classes and out at the Dog Park has taught Monty how to get along with other dogs. And it has done wonders for MY social life too!

Lee A. Wood



Monty jumps in the Novice A Preferred class at the 2006 Tanana Valley Kennel Club agility trial.