

PICK OF THE LITTER - THE NEW PUPPY

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First, let me be clear that this is not a new puppy for Margaret and me. We are 'pupped up' right now and already have a dog and visiting dogs on top of that. This is a puppy for our grandkids Max and Molly, their first puppy. And since dogs are big around here, this correspondingly was a big event. Everyone in the family who was not traveling came to celebrate the picking out of the puppy. And there were big eats going on and even a championship game of Boggle among the word mongers in the clan. Of course I sat those games out. The game of life is plenty for me.

Anyway, my daughter Lotis, her husband Dana, and the grandkids drove from down near Ann Arbor up to lovely snow-bound Big Rapids for the event. Many of you reading this will already know from earlier posts that I baked three berry pies. My daughter Anne (a cooking professional) arrived early and made a huge tray of vegetable lasagna, enough for a small army. We were good to go.

Food was had, games were played, and perhaps movies were watched (I went to bed early so I don't even know) and the kids were besides themselves because the very next day would be puppy day. It was a lot like Christmas and the snow spoke to that as well.

Well dawn came and the grand kids were up and moving fast by 7 AM. This was puppy day! We made the half-hour journey to the kennel on snow-packed slippery roads, driving slow in our small caravan. As it was I, managed to slide on the ice through one intersection totally against my will. Not good.

The kennel belongs to our friend Teresa Unger and she has German Shepherds, Collies, Cocker Spaniels, and I-am-not-sure what other tiny breeds of dogs, but they were all running around as we filed through three separate sets of fences and gates to get to those puppies. The mother dog was properly concerned about our troupe coming in to her sanctuary and especially about my camera.

There were nine puppies and if you know your biology and can count that meant some one puppy always comes up short at feeding time. It didn't look it though because the pups were fat, happy, and all over the place. And they were puppies, so how could anyone choose one puppy from all of them. I sure couldn't, but I didn't have to anyway. It was the kid's choice.

Well, actually it was my kid's choice because my daughter Lotis was raised taking care of wild animals and releasing them and just naturally loves dogs. It was she who had the eagle-eye (with the concurrence of her family) and selected one little (but fat) black puppy and promptly named her "Stella." And Stella she was. The caravan was soon back on the road and headed for our home where more puppy celebration (and eating) took place.

Once home the new puppy had to suffer the inspection of the two other dogs present, Molotov (my dog) and the visiting Lukah (Anne's dog). Now Molotov (Molly to us) was kind and a couple of quick sniffs was all it took for Stella to pass muster and come on in. Perhaps it was because Stella was a young lady and Molly was a gentleman. This was not the case with the Lukah, who was a little more challenging and definitely somewhat rude. Perhaps she did not want another

woman in the house. She had to be spoken to.

Anyway Stella was soon at home and sound asleep at that, probably in puppy shock from everything going on all around her. And the kids were soon off playing and totally ignoring the puppy. Stella sat (or slept) while all the adults milled around and loved her. She ate plenty and soon was tearing at and attacking a little stuffed animal called a "Bobby," something my daughter bought just for her. And she dutifully went outside and took care of her business. I won't mention the one mistake she made when the adults failed to understand why she was standing by the door. Accidents do happen and one did.

And later on there was a fierce game of Boggle between the word-champions lotis, Micah, Michael Andrew, Margaret, and Michael Lee. The undefeated Michael Lee won two out of three and that about says it all. They didn't even play the third game.

Right now I am up early (as usual) and everyone, including Stella, is still sleeping. So there you have it, the story of Stella, the new pup in the family.

