

# **Togo's Summer Camp**

Letters Home from a Lonesome Dog  
May to July, 2009



From: R.E. Butler [mailto:rebutler@storm.ca]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2009 9:47 AM  
To: 'Butler, Lanna'; 'Ken Butler'  
Cc: 'chanfamily'  
Subject: My First Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Well, I have been with Grandma and Grandpa for a week now, and I guess it's ok.

They feed me regularly and take me outside often enough to do my business.

I don't much like being left outside. Grandpa thought he was going to tie me up in the back yard and leave me there. But I solved that problem. I peed on their well a couple of times and now he doesn't leave me there any more.

The MacNabbs next door have 2 poodles. Kirby came running up to me the other day and we went nose to nose. He thinks he owns the whole street. He was wagging his tail so I guess he decided there was no use trying to keep me away. No problem. I'd like to meet his sister though. I know she is there but nobody will introduce us. Do I have bad breath or something?

There is also another dog up the street named Shadow. I went nose to nose with him and he backed away. He was a little nervous but I don't think he will make any trouble. So, I guess I own the street as much as anyone.

What's a saddle? We were walking up the street the other day, and Mr. Elliston offered Grandpa a saddle. Should I be worried about this?

Jeez, am I glad the doc only wanted that junk sprayed in my ears for a week. I didn't like that a bit, but Grandpa wouldn't let me miss it. I let him get away with doing it just to stay on good terms with him.

I am getting enough exercise because I go out more often than at home. My only complaint is that Grandpa won't let me loose to run. It's more fun going out with Daddy and Boshe and going for a run.

I miss you all, but I guess I'll get through it ok. I guess you could call me a Happy Camper.

Love  
Togo

Sent: Sunday, May 10, 2009 5:26 PM  
Subject: My Second Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Well, I have been with Grandma and Grandpa for 2 weeks now, and everything is ok.

Although they seem to get confused sometimes. I had an itchy chin the other day and was scratching it on the rug. I had my bum up in the air. Grandpa said: "Look Grandma, Togo is doing a Whiskey". I can't figure out what that means... What's a guy supposed to do with an itchy chin? Ever since then, Grandpa sometimes calls me Whiskey. It could be worse. Grandma sometimes calls me Boshe.

Grandpa took me shopping today. He left me in the car while he went into the store. So, I sat up in his seat so I could see what was going on. He came back and said I shouldn't be in his seat, so I sat in Grandma's. Makes sense to me.

What's a Rhodie? The other day we were walking down to the mailbox and a white car stopped beside us. The lady was really excited.... " Oh, I love your Rhodie !" she said. "I used to have one just like it." "Where did you get him, from Fergus or Guelph?" Grandpa said he wasn't sure but it was somewhere down there.... After a while she came back going the other way, and honked and waved. Now I know I'm pretty good looking, and I know I am perfectly

behaved (most of the time), but I thought the lady was a little over the top. I tried to ignore her.

Frogs! Did you know there are a lot of frogs around here? I've been trying to catch one, but grandpa keeps holding me back. I'll get one yet.... But, what should I do with it? Have you ever eaten a raw frog?

And Chipmunks! I was looking out the kitchen window the other day and this cheeky chipmunk walked right under my nose. I tried to go after him the next time I went outside, but he ran into some hole.....

I'm feeling pretty well. The sores on my ears have cleared up, so I guess those awful ear squirts were useful after all. My blue pills came on Friday. I'm eating one with every meal.

I'm ok, but I miss you all

Love  
Togo

Sent: Sunday, May 17, 2009 2:55 PM  
Subject: My Third Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

I'm still feeling pretty well and behaving myself after 3 weeks.

Today I felt like a run. So I pulled a little on my leash and got grandpa to jog. We didn't really go very fast, but what would you expect?

Anyway, it looks like there might be some hope for Grandpa. I might get him trained a little before its time to come home. He's doing all right, actually. He learned to clean up after me right away. It's a good thing that I'm the boss and he's the cleaner. Can you imagine what a nuisance it would be if he were the boss?

The other day when I took Grandpa out for a walk, we met a lady who seemed a little afraid of me. She asked Grandpa if my ridgeback hair was standing on end because I was angry. Can you imagine? Some people are sure silly. So Grandpa told her I was sometimes a Lion dog but most of the time a Lying dog, and that I wouldn't hurt a flea. Grandpa said I bark a little bit, but only with a smile on my face and a wag of my tail. That sounds about right, except I haven't figured out how to smile.

On another day we met a lady who kept calling me She. She ! I am not a She. I thought it was obvious. Some other people are even sillier than others.

I had another run in with the chipmunks... or at least I tried to. The chipmunk was so cheeky that he was actually drinking out of my water dish! So far I haven't quite caught him because Grandpa keeps holding me back until the chipmunk runs into the woodpile. I'll get him yet.

I'm ok, but I miss you all

Love  
Togo



Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2009 10:35 AM  
Subject: My Fourth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Wow! I can't believe 4 weeks have gone by.

After 3 1/2 weeks I decided I needed a bath. I was getting a little smelly. And I began to wonder if that's why the girl next door is avoiding me.

So Grandma bought a big sponge and found some Avon Smoothing Shampoo for Straight or Wavy Hair. It sounded a bit sissified to me, but we all agreed hair was hair. Grandpa got my bath ready, like a good servant should. Nice warm water, just like in a tub. So he sponged me up and down and over and under, and then Grandma dumped the bucket on me. And then he did it again with warm rinse water.

So I felt pretty good when it was over, and I put my chin on Grandpa's knee for a long time, sort of a doggy hug, just to say thank you.

Grandma washed my beds, just like Daddy suggested, and now everything is nice and fresh.

Do you know what else? I discovered Grandpa has a nasty thing in the basement that tried to bite me. I smelled some peanut butter so I went to check it out. Snap! This thing jumped at me. But I was too quick for it and got out of the

way. Grandpa heard all the noise and came to check. "It's a mouse trap.", he said. Then he found another one and made it bite a stick. I went back later and ate the peanut butter. It didn't try to bite me again.

Grandpa has been working outside in the garden. I wasn't very far away, but he kept ignoring me. So I had to cry a bit to let him know he wasn't being very polite. After a while, Grandma came outside and told Grandpa to talk to me. Finally, he did, and now everything is ok. He yatters away talking about silly stuff but it doesn't matter, as long as he is not ignoring me.

Now that Grandpa is finally treating me like a guest, instead of a boarder, everything is just fine. So, I have decided I like it here, after all. I miss you all and will be very happy when I can come home. But in the meantime, I am ok and I don't want anybody to worry about me. I hope you are all ok too.

Love  
Togo.

Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2009 1:37 PM  
Subject: My Fifth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Look at that. Five weeks already.

I had an argument with Grandpa this week. It was a cold and rainy day, and I really didn't want to go outside. Grandpa said: "Come on Togo, are you one of those people who lets the weather affect your plans?" Well, at least he called me "people". Anyway, I told him he wouldn't want to go outside in this weather without any clothes on. He said, "It's not as bad as that, you have a fur coat." So I said, OK, lets see you go outside with a fur coat on your back, and your private parts hanging out in the weather... He stopped arguing after that. I think I won the argument,... except we did go outside....

One day we saw some geese. I wanted to chase them but Grandpa said no. He said they would just fly away a bit, and I would chase them again, and they would fly again, and before I knew it I would be a long way from home. He never lets me go.

I did get away from him once. I was cabled up to the garage door, and he was working in the garden. I pulled my collar right off and went next door to see if I could find the girl. She was away so I went back home and let Grandpa catch me. He tightened my collar a one notch, so I guess I won't be able to do that again.

His next trick was to cable me up to his wheel barrow. So, now wherever he goes I can stick with him and keep an eye on him. He needs to be watched you know.

Hey, I did finally meet the girl next door ! What a sweetie!. What a beauty!. Woof ! Woof !. And I think she kind of liked me. ... But she came with her brother and her mother, and I was all tied up... Two chaperones! As if one wasn't enough. Jeez. Maybe later...

I'm fine, but I miss you all. I wish I could have a run with Boshe.

Love  
Togo

Sent: Sunday, June 07, 2009 2:49 PM  
Subject: My Sixth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

We had a little excitement here yesterday. Grandpa was raking the grass and he tied me up to his wheelbarrow. I saw a squirrel and ran after it. But Grandpa was on the wrong side of the cable and when I reached the end of the cable I pulled him off his feet, and pulled the wheelbarrow over. Wow! It was spectacular! There he was with his feet in the air, landing on his head. When he got up he said: "OK, that's enough of that game." And then he tied me up to a post. What a downer. I had to spend a long time tied up to the post. Of course I had to cry.

Later, when he took me for a walk, I saw another squirrel at MacNabb's and ran after it. Grandpa saw the squirrel too, so that when I ran out of leash he was ready and didn't fall over. But I pulled him quite a ways across MacNabb's yard before I decided to stop. That cheeky squirrel was sitting on a fence teasing me. I'll get him, yet.

So, when we went out into the fields to walk, Grandpa took my leash off and said: "OK, if you want to run, run." Now that was fun. I ran back and forth until I was tired. Grandpa seemed to be a little worried that I might run away. But he didn't know that I was a little worried that he might run away, because he sometimes goes away without me. So, I didn't let him out of my sight, and when he went back into the

house I was right there to make sure he didn't leave me again.

And then he let me run again today. This is getting better.

Grandma and Grandpa say I am the most demanding house guest they have ever seen. They say I'm the only animal house guest that needs to be entertained, like people. And, unlike people, I'm the only house guest that needs to be exercised and taken to the bathroom. But they don't seem to mind doing it all, because I think they kind of like me. And I'm not complaining. They do look after me, and scratch my ears, and everything. I kind of like them, too.

I still miss you all.  
Love Togo.

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2009 8:22 PM  
Subject: My Seventh Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Well, this has been freedom week for me. I have been off my leash almost every day, sometimes 2 or 3 times a day. Grandpa says he will let me loose as long as there are no dogs around, and as long as MacNabb's garage door is closed. I have had a lot of fun running around. Grandma sometimes comes to walk too. She likes to see me run.

I do have to keep my eye on Grandpa. Yesterday I was looking the other way and he disappeared. When I realized he was gone, I ran home as fast as I could to find him. And he was just hiding on me, behind a light pole. I found him, and I stayed really close to him after that. I can't really let him out of my sight.

One day he let me off the leash while he was working in the back yard. So I ran around the yard for a while, and then decided I better stay and watch him.

Grandma and Grandpa went out without me 3 times this week. They left me in the house by myself. Well, I don't much like being left home alone, but it wasn't too bad really. I was so happy when they came home I jumped around a bit, so Grandpa took me outside to run it off.

One morning I was enjoying the sun in the kitchen so much that I didn't go straight to the door when he called me to go

out. Do you know what? He went out without me, and got the paper by himself. I didn't get to go out for quite a while after that. I guess I better pay attention.

We discovered 2 mud turtles laying eggs in the driveway. They were only about 6 inches long, and ran away if we came too close. Grandpa says wait a couple of weeks until the big 16 inch snapping turtles show up. He says they would bite a piece out of my nose, so I think I might have to go back on the leash. We'll see.

How is everybody? I do miss you all.  
Love Togo.



Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2009 9:14 PM  
Subject: My Eighth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

Turtles, Turtles, Turtles. This was the week for turtles. Every day there was at least one more.

How did you like the picture of me staring down the turtle? Grandma took it to the newspaper.

One day Grandpa didn't see a turtle and let me off the leash for a run. So I ran over to the turtle and had a close look. Did you know those stupid things have eyelids that open sideways? When they blink their eyelids come in from both sides. Pretty creepy. Anyway, they don't do very much, so I lost interest and walked away.

Today there was a turtle in the driveway who looked like it laid its eggs and then hung around all day. Grandma said maybe it couldn't find its way back to the river. So Grandpa flipped it over with a shovel and lifted it into the wheelbarrow, wheeled it over to the top of the hill, and dumped it out and got it started down the hill. We'll see if it is gone by tomorrow. The turtle tried to bite the shovel and made quite a ding when he hit it. I'll bet he got a surprise.

We just got back from a good walk this evening. We walked through some empty lots to a corn field and then Grandpa let me run. So, I ran way out into the field to get some exercise. I was careful to step over the corn plants

so that I wouldn't damage them. I helped the farmer by killing a couple of weeds by peeing on them, and also by leaving a little fertilizer by the corn plants. Then Grandpa started walking away and I had to run hard to make sure he didn't get away. I ran right past him all the way to Grandma who was back on the road talking to Mrs. MacNabb. Boy am I tired.

My fingernails are getting a bit long, so I started to chew them off. So I think Grandpa is going to take me to the vet to get them cut off.

I'm getting a little smelly again so I asked for a bath. I think I might get it tomorrow.

What does "expressive" mean? Grandma and Grandpa say I am the most expressive dog they have ever seen. Sometimes I move my eyes, sometimes I raise my eyebrows, sometimes I raise my ears, sometimes I wag my tail, and sometimes I talk to them.... Actually, I think they are starting to understand me. They were a little slow at figuring it out, but they are getting there.

Anyway, I'm doing fine, but I will sure be ready to come home when the time comes. I miss you all.

Love  
Togo

Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2009 1:06 PM  
Subject: My Ninth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

What a week.

Monday was an easy day. I had a bath, and I had my nails clipped. My beds were washed. It was all very relaxing. Suitable for a person of my stature, I thought.

Tuesday was a nightmare. Grandma was away all day on a school trip, and Grandpa was in and out all day. He went to ping pong, and the dentist, and he went to MacNabb's several times to take over the BBQ and lawn chairs and so on. Tuesday night, Grandma and Grandpa went to a party at MacNabbs. And grandpa went back and forth a couple of times. I was left alone too many times, and felt soooo lonely and left out. Every time somebody came home, I jumped for joy and then was all sad again when they left. By the end of the night I was a total wreck. I tried to sit on Grandma's lap 4 times, but she said I was a little too big to be her lap dog. Finally we got to sleep. I hope I don't have a day like that again.

On another day I was sleeping at my guard post upstairs when Grandpa came home. I went tearing down the stairs to greet him, and wiped out at the bottom. I hit a metal ostrich that is sitting there as a decoration, and it went clattering over the floor. It was an awful racket. By the time I got to Grandpa, I was feeling so guilty I was walking

with my bum low. Grandpa said there was no damage done, and put the ostrich back where it belongs. He was laughing at me. It certainly didn't do much for my dignity. Grandpa says the german word for ostrich is Strauss. So they call him Johann. I don't get it.

By the end of the week MacNabbs were away and their garage was locked up, so Grandpa let me off leash when he was working in the yard. So I ran around a bit but I kept coming back. After a while I was so tired I just lay down on the garage floor and slept. A while after that, Grandpa said he didn't want to worry about me any more so he tied me up at the same place where I had been sleeping.... So of course I had to cry about being tied up, even though that is where I wanted to be.

I hear you started moving into our new house. I can hardly wait to see it. And of course, I miss you all. I'll be home a week next Thursday.

Love  
Togo.

Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2009 3:45 PM  
Subject: My Tenth Week at Summer Camp

Dear Mommy and Daddy.

One day when I was off leash there was a really interesting new smell so I followed it towards the river. I didn't go back to Grandpa when he called, and he had to come and get me. Mr. MacNabb said he had seen a deer and a fawn. A couple of days later, Grandpa let me off leash again and told me I had to come back when he called. But the smell was so interesting that I went right down to the river and waded around in the swampy water next to MacNabbs. Grandpa had to come and get me again, and this time he said he was not going to let me off the leash again. Oh well, it was fun while it lasted. He gave me another bath so I am nice and fresh again.

Another day I wanted to be close to Grandma. So I sat in front of her at the dinner table and talked to her. I sort of yawned and talked ... yeeowooo a couple of times but she didn't seem to understand. So then I sat beside her and leaned my head on her arm while she ate. She gave me a big hug and said she was going to miss me. But she never gave me any of her food to eat.

Yesterday I sat beside Grandpa and leaned my head on his arm while he ate too. He said, yes you are a very nice doggy, and yes, I like you too, but you are not getting any of my supper. He reminded me that we made a deal when I came. He wouldn't eat my supper and I wouldn't eat his.

I guess that's fair... but I can't figure out why his food is more interesting than mine.

Grandma had a migraine headache and was in bed for 2 days. So I stayed on my bed beside her almost all day to keep her company. I think she liked me there.

One thing I have been forgetting to tell you is that Grandpa has been wiping my feet every time I come into the house. Most of the time there isn't much dirt on my feet, but there was lots on the day I had been in the swamp. Do we have a creek behind our house? That will be fun. I don't mind if you want to wipe my feet when I come home.

Home.... Yea. I have really liked it here, and I really like Grandma and Grandpa, but I am really ready to come home. Only 4 days to go !

Love  
Togo