

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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“Going to the Dogs”

I have two Harleys. The first is a Harley Davidson 1200 Sportster motorcycle with a license plate that reads “AARRGH”. I think that’s funny. It’s the kind of thing I imagine a *real* biker would say. Aarrgh. I’m more of a recreational biker. A nerd on two wheels. The only “aarrgh” I utter is when I’m not getting enough fiber.

My other Harley is a nine pound apricot colored poodle who couldn’t utter a good “aarrgh” if her life depended on it. She’s more the “yee-ap” type and yet she barks like she’s packing 1200 cc’s in her tiny little frame.

She yaps at the window as if to say “Hey, you’re outside and I see you. Whattya think you’re doing walking in front of my house. Hey! Hey! I’m talking to you!”

Our first dog was also a poodle. He was black and his name was Spike (to help the poodle image). Spike had a great personality and for years, we sent our family Christmas letter as if it was written by him. I’m not sure my relatives in Southwest Virginia realized it wasn’t.

Spike’s favorite pastime was being chased by the Dustbuster. We’d rev the motor and off Spike would go, circling the house at light speed. Once during a party, while demonstrating this game to our guests, Spike ran across the chests of three people sitting on the couch. He “banked” them like a curve at the Daytona Speedway. A couple a minutes later, the running got the best of him and he made a *deposit* at the feet of those same people. They thought it was hysterical. We were embarrassed. Spike crawled under the table while keeping one eye on the Dustbuster.

When Spike died, we needed to focus on our other two purebreds, namely our children Caitlin and Ryan, and decided not to get another dog. However, when the kids got older they started whining about wanting a pet.

“You’ll have to take care of it,” I remember saying.

“Sure!” they said, “We’ll do all the work.”

Under oath, neither recalled having said this. And of course, a child’s definition of “all”, includes petting and playing but not *all* of the feeding, washing and cleaning up of *deposits*.

So, we set out in search of a new poodle. We found a breeder near West Virginia that had a large selection of toy poodles. When I asked her which one she would pick, she pointed to a tiny apricot poodle. I'm not fond of apricots and was not thrilled at the prospects of owning an apricot poodle. It's bad enough that we have an imitation dog but one that matches our bathroom color scheme is a bit much.

But her cuteness grew on me. Before I knew what happened, I was on my way back home with a new little puppy riding on my lap. She was on my lap because when I tried keeping her in the cargo area of my Explorer she was too nervous and expressed her anxiety through several runny piles of puppy *deposits*.

Harley 2, named after Harley 1, is a talented dog. She can give you high fives. She can shake. She can sit. And best of all, she can roll over – although she's not fond of this trick and tends to growl while doing it. We discovered early on that a dog's understanding of English is far less refined than a human's. Harley will respond to the command, "Roll Over" and yet she will also roll over when we say "Boll Dozer" or "Ole Nober".

Harley can also play hide and seek. It's the honest truth. I can run anywhere in the house and she will tear off looking for me and won't give up until she finds me. Usually, she finds me within seconds. I think she smells me. So, I've learned to outsmart her by hiding in my closet where everything smells like me. I'm not about to be outsmarted by an apricot poodle.

Until recently, Harley slept in a cage at night. Then my wife made the one-time fatal mistake of allowing her to sleep in the bed. After that, she cried at 3:00 a.m. every morning expressing her discontent with her accommodations. We couldn't stand it anymore. Now she sleeps with us. What's worse, if I nudge her during the night, she says, "Aarrgh."

That's when I go sleep with my other Harley. She never growls at me.

Until next time, just humor me.

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Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.