

Heart of Texas Akita Club
 Greater Dallas/Ft Worth

H.O.T. NEWS

FEATURED ARTICLE

Tanuki: A Hachiko Star

An interview with Karen Blohm-Mangone, of Celtic Akitas
 by Carol Speier



Tanuki

Tanuki is the youngest of the four Akita canine stars in the new Hachiko movie. Karen Blohm-Mangone, owner of Tanuki, is co-owner of his Dam, Misora (Misora Utahime Go Kurume Hirose). She is also the co-breeder of Misora's litter, which was sired by Swedish import, Kinto (Milstopen's Kintos to Hanko Sunrock), owned by Debra Anibal of Sunrock Akitas. Misora lives at home with Karen, where the puppies were whelped in on April 2, 2008. This litter of seven 100% Japanese puppies is Misora's first.

The dog trainers for the Hachiko movie were asked to find a puppy for some additional

scenes. After unsuccessfully contacting a number of Akita breeders, they asked Debra Anibal, Tanuki's co-breeder, who already had two adult dogs in the movie, if she knew of any puppies meeting their criteria. The puppy had to be a red male with a white mask, approximately 12-16 weeks of age. Although this color combination is fairly common for a Japanese Akita, it would be relatively uncommon in an American Akita. Debra contacted Karen about Misora's litter. These puppies seemed to meet the criteria perfectly.

Together, they chose Karen's pick of the litter, Tanuki, for the role. His temperament and intelligence seemed well-suited for a movie career. Since he would be away only two weeks, the additional socialization could be a positive experience. Tanuki's photos were sent. He met all the criteria, with one exception. Tanuki would be only nine and one-half weeks old at the start of filming. Special permission had to be obtained in order to use a puppy under ten weeks of age. Gleanna Doyle, the puppy trainer, was able to get the necessary permissions.

Contracts were signed. Flight arrangements were made. Tanuki traveled on Friday, was trained over the week-end, and filmed on Monday, getting his first shot with only five takes. Fantastic!

Glenna was amazed at how smart Tanuki was, and that he was so well trained for his age. (He was already potty trained, doggie door savvy and leash trained.) *Continued on page 6*

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Thank you to all who contributed to the Newsletter, PJ Savage's article on TPLO is something all will want to read. I have been told that Akitas are more prone to cruciate ligament problems due to less angulation in their back legs. John and I have owned two Akitas that had surgery for this around 1987-89. The surgery PJ describes is a much more complex surgery than our dogs had. However, had it been offered at the time, we might have tried it. Beowulf's experience is something we can learn from. Knowledge is our friend. The more we learn, the better we are equipped to make necessary decisions. Thank you PJ for sharing this experience with us. Carol

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*Wilma Montz –*

Hi Everyone,
Kudos to our editorial team for another fine edition of HOT NEWS and let's extend a big round of applause to our wonderful members for all their achievements in 2008. Talk about the WOW factor, there certainly were many both in the show ring and in obedience and agility competitions. Sadly, along with the triumphs, there were also trying times. Too many of us 'unhooked collars' to several beloved veterans and bid our sad farewells wishing there was time for just one more 'Akita kiss' or to see one more tail wag.

What is it about the start of another year that has us reflecting over months past and making those New Year's resolutions? Are dog show people superstitious? Hmmm good question? Raise your hand if you only buy blue or purple collars for your Akitas and cover their crates with blue or purple sheets.

In Asian culture, 2009 is the Year of the Ox (YOX). That means if you believe in birth years, star and animal signs then 2009 will be productive. Take a clue from the YOX that patience, hard work, calm and dedication will help you seize the day, *carpe diem*.

Your Board has many activities planned for YOX. The first big one is our annual Specialty Show scheduled for Friday, March 20th followed by the after-Specialty Awards mixer and rescue-auction. This will be followed by coordinating more training sessions combined with Akita outings and of course more public education events to showcase 'responsible dog ownership.' Take a big swig of your

energy drink because we have a busy year planned.

Anyone remember 2005 HOT survey? A definite majority voted that HOT should work towards applying for an AKC license to host independent specialty shows. To do this, there were certain criteria we had to meet among them, recruit/maintain a clear majority of local membership. Well, we finally did it. For the first time in more than 10 years, HOT has a clear majority of local members. Currently, your Board is seriously evaluating applying for AKC recognition as a local specialty club and to secure a license to host our own independent specialty shows. This is going to entail much research and documentation (not a HOT strength) but doesn't the end justify the means?

I have stated many times, "HOT can only be as effective as the members all want it to be so please pitch in and share your ideas, suggestions as well as time to help us grow and maintain the awesome momentum of yesteryear. American writer, Edward Everett Hale sums it up beautifully: "*I am only one...but still I am one. I cannot do everything ~but still, I can do something. I will NOT refuse to do the something that I can do.*" Till next time, "Best wishes for high aspirations and on-going achievements."

Do you have something to share with our group? Write your own article, or volunteer for an interview. Contact Carol at speier2@hotmail.com Or Contribute to a future group article by responding to the statement below.

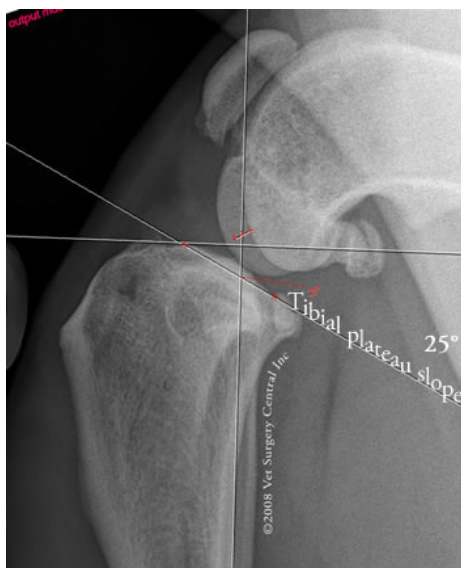
My Akita always makes me laugh when he/she ____ because ____.

FEATURED HEALTH ARTICLE

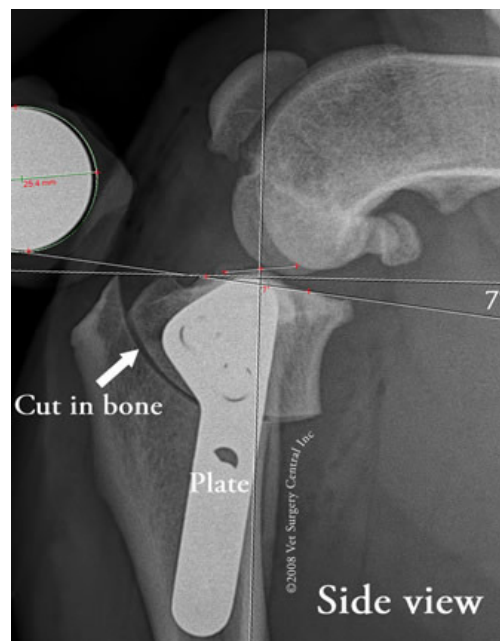
TPLO, TWICE
By PJ Savage

TPLO stands for Tibial Plateau Leveling Ostomy. It is a surgery to correct for a torn cruciate ligament (the crossed ligaments in a dog's knee joint which holds the femur and the tibia together). This surgery re-engineers the dog's knee joint to compensate for the lack of the cruciate ligaments. Normally a dog's knee or stifle operates by the tibia pushing up on the femur, causing the femur to try to slide down the tibial plateau and the tibia to be forced forward, while the dog is walking. The cruciate ligaments hold the femur from sliding too far down the tibial plateau and keep the tibia from being forced too far forward. The TPLO repositions the tibia by cutting off the tibial tuberosity and moving it to an angle (held in place by a plate and screws) so that when the dog bears weight on the joint, the tibia pushes directly up on the femur and the femur does not slide down the minimized slope. The surgery was specifically developed to treat large dogs who had damaged their cruciate ligaments.

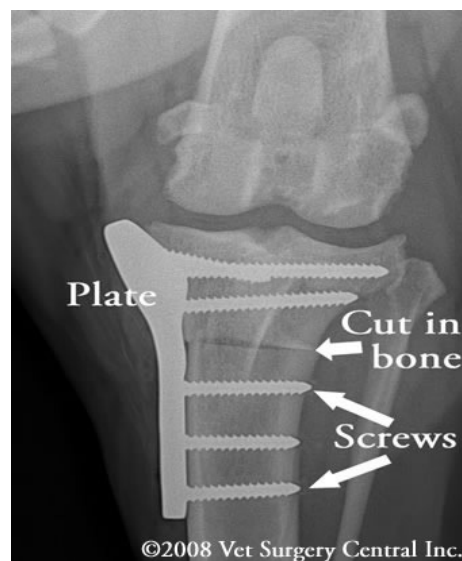
The pictures below illustrate more clearly what is done to the tibia in this surgery. Picture #1 below is the joint before surgery.



You can see how easy it would be for the femur (top bone) to slide down the tibial plateau slope if there were no ligaments to hold it in place. Picture #2 is the side view after surgery, showing the tibial tuberosity which has been cut off and is now held in place by a plate with screws after the angle was adjusted.



Picture #3 is a view from the front (the plate is on the inside of the leg) after surgery showing the screws.



¹ Vet Surgery Central Inc. ©2008

This surgery is advertised as having an excellent recovery rate, with the dog being able to be partial weight bearing on the affected leg immediately and full weight bearing after 2 weeks and a return to normal activity after 10-14 weeks.

A TPLO is not the only surgery for a torn cruciate ligament. There is also a TTA (tibial tuberosity advancement) that involves cutting the front of the tibia, just behind the tibial crest (the pointy part in picture #2 to the left of the cut) and re-aligning it to again change the angle of the plateau. This is a newer surgery and more invasive in terms of the cuts to the tibia than the TPLO, but has advantages depending on the existing slope of the tibial plateau. In addition, there is a lateral suture technique, which uses a suture to replace the cruciate ligament, the oldest technique, and usually most successful in smaller dogs. There are also other surgeries being developed utilizing bone grafting materials.

Beowulf had a TPLO on August 12, 2008. We closely followed the post-op directions and surgeon's instructions, sling-walking Beowulf to toilet and keeping him down in between toilet breaks. Just three weeks after surgery, it was discovered that Beowulf had broken all but one of the screws holding the cut off piece of tibia to the plate, broken his fibula, broken his tibial crest and one of the screws on the bottom of the plate was almost all the way backed out of the bone. It was at this point that Chuck designed the walker and we made Beowulf non-weight bearing on his surgical leg. On September 9, 2008 he had a second TPLO in addition to repairs to the bones in his leg. His fibula was not able to be repaired and is jammed up between the remaining part of the fibula and the tibia. There is not enough bone left to do any other repairs should anything else break. As of November 26, 2008, he is still not walking on his own, but has started partial weight bearing with a brace, as well as a walker and the repairs seem to be holding together. I would like to make several points based on our

experience with Beowulf. First, it is my opinion that both the TPLO and the TTA are extremely risky operations for any dog over about 80 pounds. Certainly for any dog 100 pounds and over you should strongly consider using just a brace or other conservative non-surgical treatment.

Second, if you do decide to have surgery, I strongly recommend the use of a walker to



assist in toileting the dog. (See the picture of Beowulf in his walker designed by Chuck, below) Non-weight bearing is essential for recovery and it is extremely

arduous to sling-walk a 100-pound dog and nigh on to impossible to adequately keep him off the surgical leg.

The walker, using the ratcheting tie downs to hold the dog off the ground, is a key component in the recovery process. It allows you to vary the weight bearing of each leg independently and to gradually increase the weight born by the surgical leg.

However, the walker is a two-person effort, both to get the dog into the walker as well as to keep control of the dog while he is in it and then to get him out of it. The dog CANNOT be left to walk in this device on his own. He WILL turn it over. This was constructed using a people wheelchair. A doggie wheelchair costs in the range of \$600+. A people wheelchair costs as little as \$150.00 or, if you can find one at a garage sale, about \$50.

Beowulf's leg would not have broken apart if we had been using the walker from the beginning.

Third, if this surgery fails for any reason and the bone does not adequately heal, amputation or euthanasia are the only alternatives. Fourth, there seems to be a correlation between surgical implants such as those used in TPLOs and later incidents of bone cancer.

In closing, we did not do adequate research before subjecting Beowulf to this procedure. We panicked. Beowulf was not appropriately evaluated structurally prior to surgery. We now believe that because of Beowulf's structural abnormalities, none of the proposed surgeries would have been appropriate. We were not informed as to the possible complications and ramifications of a failed surgery. We were not adequately informed as to what would be involved in the recovery process. We were given very poor post op instructions and recommendations, which led to the failure of the first TPLO, the broken bones and the necessity for the second surgery. I would not recommend this surgery for any dog, but especially not for a dog that is in the 100+ pound category. It is my opinion that non-weight bearing for the first four to six weeks is essential in a dog this size.

If you have questions or wish to discuss this in detail, please feel free to contact me at: pjsavage@sbcglobal.net.

Finally, Beowulf has been unbelievably patient and tolerant of all that we have put him through and are still putting him through. I cannot imagine going through something like this with any other dog I have ever known. He constantly gives us reassurance that he bears no grudge for all the pain and suffering he has endured at our hands. He is a totally amazing creature. We failed him miserably with this decision. He has never failed us.

Product review: *BreezeGuards* By Teresa Brown

BreezeGuards appears to be one of the most solid window barriers I've seen yet. There are two varieties: a wire-panel Screen and an Insert (both come in black).

I couldn't find a lot of construction information about the Insert, but the primary selling point is its ability to remain in place while the car window is opened or closed. Photos of the product can be found at the website <http://www.muttmanagers.com>

The Screen is another story. It is a solid welded wire panel that is formed to allow the dog to have its head an inch or so beyond the window. It is secured to the window using what appears to be wide seatbelt webbing. The bottom on the screen has a protective base, keeping dog claws away from the window frame.

The maker suggested purchasing two screens to create a cross-flow in air circulation. I know – it sounds like a conflict of interest to me, too, but in this case, it does make sense, especially if your dogs are uncrated in your vehicle and it's not moving.

I thought the Insert was a little pricy at \$250, mostly because I don't know much about its construction and can't assess its value. The Screen is \$85 for one, \$150 for a pair. The maker keeps a limited number of Screens in their inventory for specific vehicle makes/models, meaning shipment can be within a week. Otherwise, the Screen must be custom-made and turnaround is extended to six to eight weeks.

We cannot recommend this product, as we do not have personal experience with it. However, it does look like it has potential. If you have experience with this product, give us a shout with your opinion. We'll share your views in an upcoming newsletter. (More at [muttmanagers.com](http://www.muttmanagers.com))

(Tanuki Continued from page 1)



Tanuki with Glenna

His training with Glenna involved learning to come to a buzzer, sit, down, and stay. Everyone on the set raved about his brilliant performance. After a few additional shots, he wrapped up his movie career at the tender age of 11 weeks.



Tanuki with co-stars Richard and Kevin

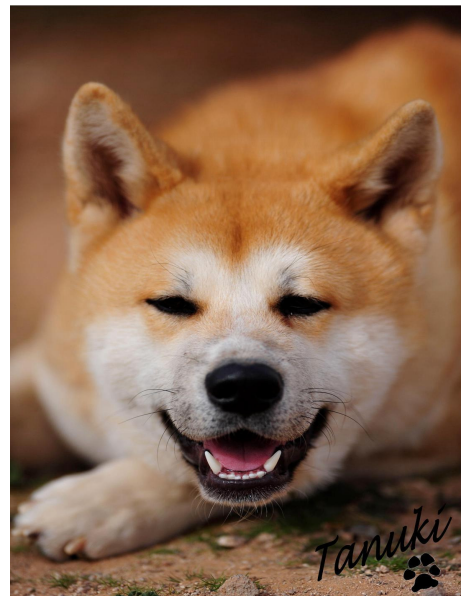


Tanuki and new friends at Glenna's

It was hard for Glenna to send Tanuki home, as he had begun to fill the hole left in her heart by the passing of her own Akita. She placed a top she had worn in his crate, providing the comfort of a familiar scent for his flight home to Phoenix. He was met at the airport by Karen and his mom, Misora. Such a joyful homecoming! He stayed with Karen and Misora for about a month and then went to live with his forever boy, Ryan Mangone, Karen's stepson. Ryan is eight years old, and totally thrilled that his puppy got to be in a movie.

This winter, Tanuki will be traveling back to Karen for agility training. Later, he will be shown in conformation at the FCI shows in Tijuana, Mexico, as well as the IABCA and UKC shows. If he passes all of his health tests, Karen says she may breed him. He will not be old enough to pass all of his health testing until he is two years old. By then, Karen believes, the Akita popularity generated by the movie will have passed. She states, "I do not breed very often and only for myself mostly. I am NOT out to fill the planet with Akitas and do not feel they are the dog for everyone."

The owners of Tanuki's littermates and I have something in common. We can't wait to see the movie. I'm sure that Tanuki will live up to his name: Celtic's Sirius Scene Stealer



Form

W-K9

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

Individual Pet Tax Return 2007

IRS Use Only—Do not write grocery lists or doodle emotions in this space.

Label

Use this form if there are any pets in your household.

L A B E L H E R E	Your first name and initial	Last name
	Pet's first name and initial	Pet's pet name
	Home address	
	City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code	

Pet Election Campaign ▶ Check here if you want \$1 to go to a fund to elect a dog or cat president.

Income

Your Pet's Contribution to Your Household

1	How cute is your pet, on a scale of 1 to 10? <input type="checkbox"/> Multiply by 100 and enter here	1	
2	2	Number of times a day you pet, play with, or talk to your pet	2
3	3	Number of times a child has claimed your pet ate his/her homework	3
4	4	Number of times your pet has protected you or your home (from a real or imagined threat)	4
5	5	Number of times your pet has eaten food someone didn't want	5
6	6	Snookums Tax: Total number of nicknames for your pet	6
7	7	Add up the numbers in lines 1–6 and multiply by \$10,000. This is your total Pet Tax ▶	7

Adjustments

Expenses You Can Deduct

8	8	Food: Estimated yearly cost of meals, snacks, and scraps eaten by your pet	
9	9	Grooming: Number of hours you spend grooming or thinking about grooming your pet, or cleaning its cage or tank. Multiply by \$10	
10	10	Number of squeaky toys, scratching posts, and hamster wheels in your home. Multiply by \$5.	
11	11	Hours a week spent exercising the animal. Multiply by \$10 (or \$20 for walks when the temperature is 32°F or below)	
12	12	Total amount spent on obedience training, veterinarians, therapists, and gifts for angry neighbors	
13	13	Add up the numbers in lines 8–12. These are your total Pet Expenses ▶	

Damages Incurred by Pet

14	14	How many times did your pet throw up or have an "accident" in your house?	
15	15	How many pieces of furniture or clothing has your pet destroyed?	
16	16	Piranha Credit: Number of other household pets destroyed by this pet	
17	17	Add up the numbers in lines 14–16 and multiply by \$100. This is your total Damages Credit ▶	

Calculate Your Pet Tax

18	18	Add up the numbers in lines 13 and 17.	
19	19	If line 18 is more than line 7, subtract line 7 from line 18. This is the amount of your refund ▶	
		Choose form of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> equivalent in pet food <input type="checkbox"/> a new pet	
20	20	If line 18 is less than line 7, subtract line 18 from line 7. This is the amount you owe ▶	

Sign Here

For details on how to pay, see publication K9-433228B73VZ9998TP.

Your signature	Date
----------------	------

Your pet's signature (or paw print, nose print, or piece of dander, feather, or scale)	Date
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WARNING: The penalty for falsifying information is cleaning up poop at the local pound for 300 hours a week.