

RUFUS BRYANT  
Sleek Teenaged Brown Dog  
Brocton, New York, USA

Dear Gwyneth,

October 20, 2009

Dave has agreed to be my spokesman while I tell you what has happened after your work with him on surrogate tapping for my penchant to run off to the neighbor's house, especially if there is a tractor running near there. See, I just LOVE to run, and both Dave and Lucy (she is the Alpha dog, by the way!) go out for walks every day across the Locust Bridge, under the Torrey Gate, across the field near the gas well, up the terraces and to the moss-covered Breathing Space – its on a bluff over the little lake and surrounded with woods. I used to hang around for 10 or 15 minutes, but ever since I moved here from the shelter I found it irresistible to leave them and run through the woods about a quarter mile over to Doc's house. Did I tell you that running is my favorite thing aside from an interesting scent - especially rabbit, but even a mouse will do –and of course F O O D? So then I'd hang around Doc's until one of them came over in a car and took me back.

Since they returned from Michigan where Dave did the tapping by phone with you, I haven't had the usual yen to wander over to Doc's. I don't know why. We went out walking as soon as they returned – without a leash, of course, so I could play and run with the Other Dog Daisy – but I found this pile of tree cuttings ever so interesting - I'm SURE there's a rabbit in there! - and I never did go over to Doc's. We came home after about 40 minutes (Dave & Alpha were picking blueberries near the Breathing Space) and then we all went into the Big Garden. It has a gate and fence, and I and Daisy get to go in sometimes while Alpha and Dave dig and trim and stuff. But after 5 or 10 minutes I would find a weak spot in the deer fence, do a little chewing, and ESCAPE over to Doc's. especially if I could hear Doc's tractor. It's safe over there – even though Doc never feeds me. But this time Daisy and I found all sorts of interesting Possible Mouse scents and so I just kept hunting. I remember hearing a tractor over at Doc's – I even picked up my head and looked - but the Possible Mice were just too interesting and I forgot all about the tractor. After about an hour we went into the house. The house felt more like home, somehow. Maybe your tapping about my puppy years in the country is responsible?

Now its two weeks later, and I HAVE gone over to Doc's now and then, but do you know what? Well, for one thing, a lot of the time I come back by myself. But I tend not to come back by myself if I get this feeling that Alpha or Dave are Out-of-Sorts – you know, when one of them is sad or perplexed or anxious. I just sense it, is all, and so I go where it is safe again. I think Dave and Alpha are beginning to catch on. I hope they keep doing that tapping stuff.

Regards and Sniffs,

Rufus The Dog