

Holyoke

Continued from Page C1

Little Dog also loves Big Dog. A lot. Luckily, Big Dog is nice. Big Dog is tolerant and allows him to chase her around, wrestle with her, and essentially act like pesky little brothers do. She does, however, draw the line at excessive tail-biting. Unfortunately for her, she has a very long, active tail ... and it's often wagging right in Little Dog's face. The "don't bite your sister's tail" lesson is ongoing. And Big Dog is turning out to be the teacher.

About that underfoot part: We learned that Little Dog loves following his people around the house. Well, actually, it turned out he was not really "following" anything. He was, apparently, actually trying to anticipate our next steps and get to that exact spot before we did. Turns out he was very good at that trick at first. It sounded a bit like this: (Walks under foot) YIPE! (Walks under another person's foot) YIPE! It also turns out that he's a pretty fast learner. After a week of YIPES, he decided that anticipating his owner's next move was not a good strate-



JOHN HOLYOKE
Teddy the dog, an English cocker spaniel, scratches an itch on his first day at his new home. Teddy has settled in nicely and is making progress in training his new family.

gy for foot health. He's largely abandoned the practice.

Little Dog is tenacious. He is fearless. And he doesn't really seem to know what he's capable of. That, as you might expect, leads to a pretty good floor show. For in-

stance, Teddy didn't realize that he was unable to leap from the floor onto the couch quite yet. Each day, dozens of times a day, he'd fling himself at the couch, running full-speed, and try to vault onto the sofa. Each

day, dozens of times a day, he face-planted against the cushion, bounced back, and tried again. Eventually, he'd grudgingly allow us to hoist him up. Then he'd leap on slumbering Big Dog and begin chewing her tail.

Buck

Continued from Page C1

brother Kobey Ramsdell and cousin Nick Ramsdell.

"We took turns dragging," he said. "It took us the rest of the day to get him out."

They also took turns guessing the weight of the behemoth. Everyone came up short.

"I think the closest was [one of my uncles]," Zach Ramsdell said. "He said he thought it weighed 245. I actually thought it was going to go about 225. But I just couldn't get past [looking at] the antlers on him. I wasn't really looking at the size at first."

The deer weighed 254 pounds, field-dressed, including the heart and liver, and sported a monster rack with 11 points.

The deer was a milestone for the hunting family.

"My dad and his brothers have always hunted together, and that's the biggest deer that any of us have ever gotten," Zach Ramsdell said. "They've been hunting there for 20 years."

Until that Saturday, the family's big buck bragging rights belonged to Zach's uncle, Jason Ramsdell. A week earlier, he'd shot a 210-pound 6-pointer."

"He said he thought for sure he'd shoot the biggest buck of all of us this year, and then I had to go and prove him wrong," Zach Ramsdell said.

A week before, Zach Ramsdell had gotten a look at another huge deer taken in the area, a 282-pounder shot by Neal Page of Palmyra. So when he took his own deer to Newport Trading Post to tag it, he opted to not enter it in

the big buck contest that the store runs, figuring Page's deer was a sure winner.

Then he found out he might have wanted to do so.

"I later found out that they pay three places," he said with a chuckle. "I might go over and see if I can still enter. I don't know how [the contest] works."

Zach Ramsdell said shooting a big buck was something entirely new to him — his largest before this year was about 135 pounds — and said tagging out so early in the season has left him with some free time he hadn't planned on.

"I set up my schedule so I'd have Mondays free. I have every Saturday and Monday to hunt," he said. "I don't know what I'm going to do now. I'll have all of Thanksgiving break to sit at the house while everyone else is hunting."

If he's lucky, he might get a call from a relative who needs a hand dragging their own monster buck out of the woods. If that happens, he says he's ready.

It's just the way things work in St. Albans, he said, where deer hunting is a way of life: Family and neighbors help each other out.

"The whole community's into it," he said. "I had a bunch of people stop to see my deer, and I actually had five people offer to pay for the mount just to make sure I could have it mounted. They know I'm in college [and short on cash]."

Zach Ramsdell said he'd never ask someone to do such a thing for him but said he appreciated the sentiment.

"It shows the kind of people that I have around me and that we have in the community," he said.

Hike

Continued from Page C1

you'll notice many side roads. Simply stay straight on the main road. At 3.5 miles, 5.8 miles and 8.9 miles, you'll come to major roads on the left and right; simply stay straight on the main road.

At 9.9 miles, you will cross a bridge with a great view of Little Spencer Mountain to your right across a Spencer Pond. At 11.8 miles, you'll see a side road on your left; stay straight on the main road. (You'll continue to passing side roads.) At 13.7 miles, you'll cross a narrow bridge. At 15.5 miles, you'll cross another bridge. And at 15.6 miles, you'll come to a major intersection, where you'll turn right.

At 15.9 miles, you'll see a side road on the right with a bridge; stay straight on the main road. At 16.3 miles, you'll come to a fork in the road; veer left to stay on the main road. At 16.8 miles, you'll come a side road on your left; veer right to stay on the main road. At 17.4 mile, there will be a side road to your right; keep straight on maine road. And at 17.8 miles, you'll reach the trailhead parking area on your right. It's marked with a small sign and a kiosk.

Information: Mount Kineo, with its dramatic cliffs, is arguably the most famous mountain in the Moosehead Region. Located on a peninsula at the center of Moosehead Lake, Mount Kineo is topped with a large observation tower, which sees many hikers each season.

Little Kineo Mountain, on the other hand, is seldom talked about. Tucked in the forest northeast of the famous Mount Kineo, Little Kineo Mountain is another great hike to consider adding to your list.

Despite the implications of its name, Little Kineo Mountain, with an elevation of 1,926 feet, is actually taller than Kineo Mountain, which rises just 1,789 feet above sea level. From Little Kineo Mountain's rocky ridge, hikers are rewarded with great views of the lake and surrounding mountains.

The trail to the top of Little Kineo Mountain and along its ridge is about 1 mile long and marked with blue blazes and small rock piles, called cairns. Starting out in mixed forest that includes many yellow and paper birch trees, the trail approaches the mountain's south slope and climbs.

As the trail nears the top of the mountain, it becomes increasingly rocky and steep. I suggest wearing sturdy boots on this trail to avoid turning an ankle or feeling the jagged rocks in the soles of your feet. If you have a dog with you, be sure to check his or her paws from time to time for cuts, and keep medical tape on you just in case.

The mountain's peak, on the south end of the ridge, is marked with a large rock cairn on a bare bedrock.



AILINN SARNACKI | BDN
Spencer Pond is seen from an outlook on the 1.5-mile Ram Trail on Little Spencer Mountain recently, near Kokadjo. Beyond Spencer Pond is the shining surface of Moosehead Lake, as well as Kineo and Little Kineo mountains.



A sign posted high on a white birch tree marks the trailhead for a hiking trail that travels to the top of Little Kineo Mountain near the northeast shore of Moosehead Lake recently.

From that point, you will have a partial 360-degree view over the tops of evergreen trees that surround the summit.

The trail continues past the summit, traveling north along the mountain's long ridge to a scenic overlook on an open ledge. From that point, you have an unobstructed view to the west to Moosehead Lake, Mount Kineo and the mountains across the lake, such as Big Moose Mountain.

From there, the trail continues on, dipping down into the forest, then climbing up a steep rocky slope to dead-end on the rocky north high point of the ridge, which offers a view to the northeast, which includes Big Spencer and Little Spencer mountains and farther in the distance, Katahdin.

The trail is maintained by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. Dogs are permitted. Fires are not permitted. A sign at the trailhead reminds visitors to carry out what they carry in, leaving the land as they find it.

For more information, call the bureau's western office in Farmington at 778-8231.

Personal note: Under a ceiling of thick white clouds, we drove along quiet logging roads of the Moosehead Region on Sunday, Nov. 15, navigating our way to Little Kineo Mountain. "The weather report called for sunny skies," I told my husband Derek. "Maybe it will clear up."

It didn't. But the clouds remained high enough to

First, he learned how to scramble up to his desired perch. Then, this week, he finally succeeded in leaping up on his own. It was a proud moment. His mother and I nearly cried.

Then this happened: Little Dog decided he wanted to become a Flying Wallenda. Or something like that.

He's always walked along the back of the couch, tight-rope style, and has rarely fallen. But the other day, conditions were perfect for him to advance his circus act. He spied Big Dog sitting on the floor, four feet away from the couch. He stood on the edge of a cushion (apparently impressed with his newfound leaping prowess) and launched himself at her head.

Little Dog flew over the top of Big Dog, landed in a pile, and slid halfway across the floor. It was a failed dive, but was quite spectacular, in an Evel Knievel kind of way.

Little Dog has learned where dishes go to get clean, and loves the smell of human food, even if it's on a soon-to-be-washed pot or pan. He especially likes the fact that dishwashers are equipped with a convenient loading gate — the door — that he can stand upon while sniffing all those glorious dishes.

As for his bird-dog training, for now Little Dog is just enjoying being a pup. He scampers around on the lawn in the side-to-side pattern that he'll use when he's looking for grouse, and that bodes well. He's learning "No," and comes when called.

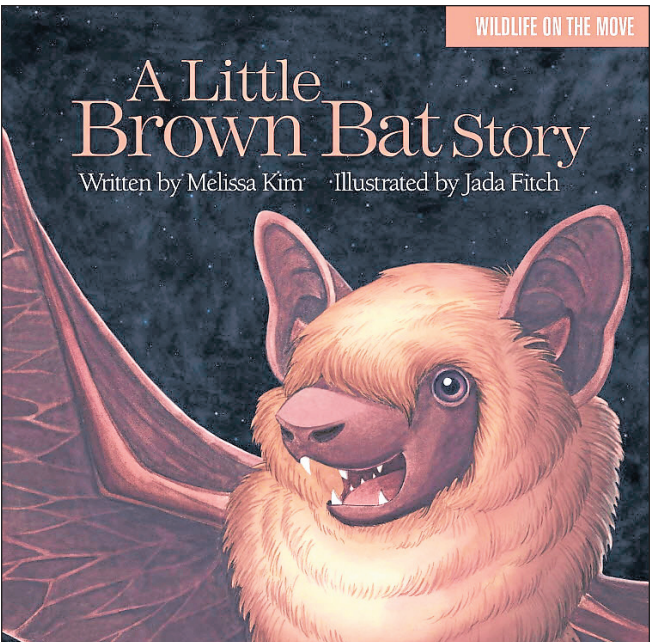
Little Dog has also made friends with our large, semi-lumpy cat. At least, I think that's how you'd describe their relationship. You could also call them "mutual chew toys" if you wanted.

Their playtime is full of hugs (or claws) and wrestling. And the other day, we had a breakthrough that could pay dividends.

I looked up and noticed that Little Dog was on top of the cat, and that the cat had wrapped his front legs around the pup. Undeterred, Little Dog pushed and pulled the cat around the hardwood floor, turning Vinnie the Claw into a virtual feline Swiffer. That section of floor has never been so clean.

Note to self: We might have to let them try that trick again when the floor needs sweeping.

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Book

Continued from Page C1

"My primary goal was to convert all those people who think bats are creepy into thinking bats are cool and valuable and deserving of our attention," Kim said. "I want people to take a second look at bats ... and if anyone can make a bat look cute, it's Jada."

Both Fitch and Kim worked with Audubon biologists Susan Gallo and Barbara Cherry to learn about the species and portray them in an accurate way.

Art from both the owl and bat stories will be on display

inside the Local Muscle Art Truck from 5 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 4, at 540 Congress St. in Portland. At the event, Kim and Fitch will sign books — \$10.95 each — and join visitors in enjoying free hot chocolate, cider and marshmallows from the Marshmallow Cart.

Kim and Fitch will also be signing copies of their books from 1 to 3 p.m. on Dec. 12, at L.L.Bean in Freeport.

The third book of the series, already in the making, will be about Maine's endangered Blanding's turtle.

For information about the series and to purchase the books online, visit www.islandportpress.com/bookshop/children/a-little-brown-bat-story.html.

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