

**ANIMAL  
BEHAVIOR  
ASSOCIATES of  
WASHINGTON LLC**

**James C. Ha, PhD  
Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist**

**1405 211th Pl SW • Lynnwood, WA 98036 • 425-210-1227 • jamescraigha@gmail.com**

**Behavior Evaluation: Jenny, mixed breed dog**

I have been asked by Don Baxter, of the Seattle Animal Shelter, to render an opinion on the behavior of a dog, Jenny, currently being fostered by Amie Thao and Olli Tumelius. In summary, Jenny is considered to be a potentially dangerous dog by the SAS, raising concerns about public safety. The foster parents contend that Jenny is not a danger and should be adoptable. Prior to my assessment, I was briefed by Mr. Baxter on the background of the dog and the SAS concerns.

I visited Jenny at her foster home and assessed her behavior in several ways. In this evaluation, I am seeking information about the temperament (default reactions), reactivity (sensitivity to environment), and triggers-to-behavior of the focal animal. While each assessment is different depending on the dog, case issues, and environment, typically I attempt to place the dog into a number of assessment situations, often including but not limited to: stranger on property, stranger in house, resource-guarding of food bowl and toys, possession of food, obedience response to hand and voice signals from owner and stranger, physical displacement (how an animal responds to being physically pushed from its resting location or having its personal space entered), body sensitivity, and response to restraint. These are the assessments that I performed with Jenny.

I noted subtle, and not-so-subtle, changes in body language, micro-expressions (fleeting changes in expression which signal internal motivational state before control over such revealing 'advertising' of state is suppressed by the autonomic nervous system), vocalizations, ability to inhibit (a measure of central nervous system development), and involuntary physical responses resulting from pain, fear, and anxiety. All assessments avoid any pain or discomfort to the dog, and are conducted in a manner which maintains safety for both tester and animal.

My assessment: The foster parents have provided an excellent environment for Jenny, and she seems well-adjusted. She was surprisingly well-behaved and non-reactive on greeting me (as a stranger) at the door (I was expecting more reaction and was actually concerned that I was at the wrong apartment!). Jenny showed no anxiety reactions to me as I entered the home, and quickly settled down following my evaluation, falling asleep on my foot for the duration. It should be noted that Jenny has been started on a course of rimadyl, an anti-inflammatory medication.

My conclusions are that:

1. It is highly likely in my opinion that Jenny is suffering undiagnosed and untreated medical issues. Based on her behavioral responses and positive behavior response to recent rimadyl treatment, I suspect possible musculoskeletal issues causing pain (e.g., arthritis, disk issues, dysplasia) and/or possible endocrine issues (e.g., thyroid, adrenal, diabetes). She also shows some minor signs of possible vision problems. These issues would cause the types of behaviors which have been seen from Jenny and need to be thoroughly evaluated as soon as possible. If found, Jenny's behavior and reactivity should be re-evaluated following full treatment.
2. Jenny has been suffering from poor handling and lack of environmental stability prior to, and as an inevitable consequence, of surrender, shelter holding, and foster adoption. The foster parents report significant improvements in her reactivity and behavior which are in line with a longer period of experience in a positive environment on Jenny's part. In addition, one of the SAS case managers (Kara Main-Hester) introduced the owners to counterconditioning training, which the foster parents have implemented and to which Jenny has very positively responded. I believe, if kept in this stable environment, Jenny will continue to show improvement in her behavior, and if provided with even more counterconditioning training, her improvements will escalate.

Given these conclusions, I strongly recommend the following actions:

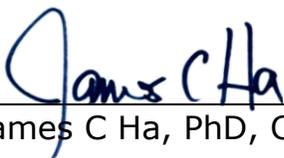
1. Allowing Jenny to remain in the Thao-Tumelius home on a semi-permanent or permanent basis,
2. Obtaining a very thorough health exam for Jenny, focusing on the possible medical issues described above, and
3. Making sure that Jenny continues to receive counterconditioning training to improve her emotional responsiveness. To achieve this latter recommendation, I would encourage the Thao-Tumelius' to obtain further education and training in these methods from a qualified dog trainer.

I do not at this time feel that Jenny is a significant threat to public safety, any more so than any average dog on the street. There are, of course, no guarantees in this work, but I am of the opinion that Jenny has been suffering from health issues and psychological trauma, causing her to exhibit protective air-snapping to help control her surroundings (keep people and animals away from her). The fact that she has only exhibited air-snapping, and no bites, indicates that she has strong inhibition, a requirement for further progress on her part. I feel that in the proper hands, Jenny will continue to improve and become a much happier and healthier dog.

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In rendering my opinion, I depend on the professional literature in the science of biology and animal behavior. It is this body of empirical research and theory that informs my professional opinions regarding dog behavior.

My opinions are also widely accepted by virtually all experts in the fields of applied animal behavior, ethology, and canine cognition. I am not aware of any dispute, much less a significant one, by qualified experts in these germane scientific communities concerning the theories and methodologies employed by me in drawing these conclusions.

The above-stated expert opinions are made with at least reasonable scientific certainty and evidentiary preponderance. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my recollection.

  
James C Ha, PhD, CAAB

7 August 2015 (Signed at Seattle, WA)  
Date