

Teddy in Austin, TX

I don't remember the year I first sat for Teddy. He was very quiet except when he was chasing his tennis ball in the driveway or a toy in the house. He barked as he ran after them and would play for hours if you let him. His mom and dad, Peggy



and Bill, showed me the walking trails along the river in the greenbelt that ran through their neighborhood east of Bee Cave, TX. Teddy could stay off leash the entire time.

There was one place where he would walk down into the water to cool off and another place where there was a concrete dam of sorts (didn't really hold back the water but you could walk across it if you didn't mind getting your shoes wet). At the dam, he could cool off some more.

At home, Bill showed me how he would throw a tennis ball toward the garage door while he stood near the street.

Teddy would run like crazy and bring the ball back to him. In the house, Peggy showed me how she would sit on a couch in the TV room and throw a soft toy toward the formal living room. Teddy would bring it back and often drop it a little short of Peggy's reach. She would wait for him to bring it closer.

One time they cancelled their trip, but I had arranged to take my youngest granddaughter Isabella with me. We still made the trip but stayed in a hostel in Austin for a week and tubed on the river, went ziplining at Lake Travis and ate crab at Joe's Crab Shack. Peggy invited us over to swim, so Teddy met Isabella.

Their daughter Elizabeth was finishing medical school and needed a cat sitter in Dallas. The first time I went there, Peggy, Bill and Teddy handled the beginning of the sit and then I took over.

I had my own vehicle the first couple times I sat for Teddy, but then started flying in (they even provided the plane tickets!) so Peggy started letting me use her car. I drove Teddy to a self-service dog wash where they also rented out clippers. I bathed and dried him and gave him a trim on more than one of my visits. The photo above was after one of those haircuts. I would also have him lay down on the floor while we watched TV in the evening and brush him.

I sat for Teddy four times. I handled other chores too, like care for the pool and spa, watering some plants, collecting mail and taking out the trash cans. Of course, I also used the pool a few times.

I was just trying to remember which room I slept in, but I slept in four different rooms over the years. Teddy usually slept on his bed in the hallway and I'd greet him in the morning with a big hug that he seemed to like. I'd go open the doggie door for him to go out while I got his breakfast ready.

We'd walk a couple times a day, play ball outside (and inside), walk to the middle school or drive to the park to play ball. We'd also walk the trails when the weather was nice. As he got older, I had to limit play time and remember carrying him along the trail to the dam to cool off. His hearing was getting pretty bad.

Last year would have been the fifth sit, but Teddy had gotten sick and passed away. My flight to England was booked from Austin, so I went and helped Peggy and Bill move out their big house into something smaller. In a few months, they'll both be retired and traveling even more. They miss Teddy. I know I do.