



Igor and Tanya Winter 2007

## CHESTER'S PRINCE IGOR

**JANUARY 10, 2007-  
JULY 27, 2008**

Igor came into our life the week after he was born. He was one of two males in a litter of ten puppies born to a Swedish champion father and an American beauty. He was also one of two puppies who were liver-colored rather than black. I fell in love with him immediately. He came home just after his eight-week birthday. There were tons of snow on the ground and I wondered how he would cope. No problem! He took to the snow the first day he arrived and would gleefully climb the snow piles to keep informed about the white world around him. It didn't take long before he was following Tanya, my husband John on snowshoes, and me on X-country skis. He would leap into the snow, disappearing in it over his head and then leap out again, a true Springer. During the big storm last winter, his post was on top the ten-foot snow-pile in front of the house.

At four months he started obedience and began agility training not much later. His first reaction to class was to gleefully rush at anything that moved in the classroom and if he could get away with it, take a pee on Fran's blue tunnels, -just to establish he was there. He caught on fast to treats at the bottom of contact obstacles, and when asked to run a course, might choose to run over the dog walk or the teeter (he loved the teeter) just in case a treat was on the other side. During one class, Igor decided that showing off by chasing himself around the room was the order of the day, Fran sternly called out, "Would all of you get behind the fencing so that Igor will no longer have an audience before whom to perform." Igor calmed down immediately. Igor could also surprise you in class. Last January during the seminar, Igor successfully did all 12 weave poles with no wires for the first time in his life. Could he do it twice without a goof? No way. But the applause he got for his first performance pleased him no end.

At home Igor was the most loving dog we have ever had. He would sit at the foot of the couch with his big head on our lap. If I was upstairs, he would come up and take up his position at the head of the stairs as if he were on guard. In the woods, he would romp and run every which way, but if I called, he came immediately. John misses Igor's head on his knee at dinnertime. Hope never failed and he just knew that John would let him lick the empty dinner plate. He loved the water and would stand for a long time in the shallows when the weather was hot. This July, he discovered frogs and from then on was never far from our little pond. He never got old enough to understand hunting. But one day in June, when Tanya put up a grouse, Igor took off after it as if he half understood what was going on.

Igor earned his Canine Good Citizenship title and always had a lot of fun at obedience classes. His greatest distraction was a German Shepard named Wizzard who barked fiercely at him. Igor was working through his issues with Wizzard at his last obedience class. He had early success in agility, earning a level 1 standard title in CPE and just missing a level-1 title by one run. He got two firsts and a Q in AKC Novice jumpers and a second and Q in AKC Novice standard. At his last trial, in Burlington, VT, he did so well the first day, it was heart-breaking and devastating to find him the morning of the second day almost totally out of it. When I took him out for his last standard run, he looked at me and weakly pulled back on the leash. We stood at the beginning of the course. I called "Igor, jump." He looked at me, gathered all his strength and jumped. Then he jumped the second jump and went through the chute showing me he had conquered his fear of it. He then stopped, looked at me again and could go no further. His last trip was to the Burlington vet where he died less than 24 hours later.

John and I will always remember Igor as the gentlest and most loving dog we have ever had. He never wanted to hurt anybody or any dog. To show he wanted to play he would lie down with his head on the ground and his butt up in the air and give a little growl. I know that he is running happily around somewhere free of that terrible infection that took him away from us. Keep running Igor and God speed!

