

Dogs On Call Inc.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am wondering if I will feel crisp air soon to remind me that these short days will soon bring snow. While I find a nice walk in the snow refreshing, my Pet Partner Kooper loves the cold days and playing in the snow. He has even found that “dog boots” are his best friend!

Even though there will soon be a chill in the air, things are not slowing down for Dogs On Call, Inc. We are in full swing at the UW Madison dorms. I think we have made a record number of visits this fall and winter, and I feel the students are enjoying every one of them as much as our very first visit. We just did our first event at the Women’s Expo and WOW! did we see the people. We have participated many years in the Badger Kennel clubs event at the Alliant Energy Center and found it to be fun again this year. Visits at Gilda’s Club are also very rewarding.

Our Members always amaze me as we do all of the events listed above, plus continue to do weekly visits at hospitals, nursing homes, hospice and R.E.A.D. programs at libraries and schools. Kudos to everyone in DOC for bringing such joy to so many people throughout the year—you are a fantastic group of people and I enjoy working with all of you.

Keep up the great work in 2013,

Laura and Kooper (and Oliver the cat!)

PET PARTNER VISITING GUIDELINES

In October Pet Partners sent out new visiting Policies and Procedures that stated no PP team could visit for more than 2 hours in a day. Since then they have re-visited this guideline and changed it to read :

I will visit only with animals registered with Pet Partners and with only one animal at a time. I understand for safety and liability reasons, visiting is not to exceed 2 hours per visit. If more than one venue is scheduled, there must be a minimum break of 90 minutes between facilities/activities.

Please be sure that when you are doing visits with your Pet Partner you are following this policy.

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**Important
reminders on
pages 16 & 17 for
all DOC members.**



VISITING AT THE DRY HOOTCH

Charlotte and I were at "The Dry Hootch" yesterday for a visit. There wasn't much going on so we just hung out in the coffee shop. A veteran who had been working on the computers in the back of Dry Hootch, stopped by for a visit on his way to the bathroom. He started talking about his dog, a little Cocker Spaniel that he got from an Amish farmer around 9 years ago. He said he never realized how much a dog could change a lifeuntil he got this little dog.

This same veteran also said he saw the difference a dog can make in a person's life when Artie and Sacajawea visited a while back. He said there was a vet sitting at a table by himself. This veteran was very depressed and sad. Sacajawea slowly approached this man and very softly made her way into his heart. Pretty soon this sad, depressed vet was petting Satch and smiling a little. Satch just stayed by this man and let him pet her for a while. The vet who was telling me this story said there was a visible difference in the man. He was smiling and interacting with Satch and didn't seem so sad anymore.

Even though Artie and Satch couldn't take away this vet's sadness and depression, they gave him a few moments of relief from his confusing world. They allowed him to come out of himself and make a connection.....Satch in return did what she does best.....she just sat there, without judgements, without questions, without advice..... and quietly gave this man her unconditional love.

Liz Morrison and Charlotte



Artie and Satch

THANK YOU FROM DRY HOOTCH

"Please tell the dogs and their owners how much they mean to our veterans. We have noticed more relaxed members, more smiles, more interactions, more laughter. Thank you for helping enrich our community!"

Diane—Dry Hootch Volunteer Coordinator

WHEN DOES YOUR PET PARTNER REGISTRATION EXPIRE?

Dogs On Call has multiple evaluation dates throughout the year and we still receive that panic email when a member has waited until the last minute to re-evaluate with their Pet Partner.

Please remember that you can re-evaluate with your Pet Partner up to 6 months before your expiration date without changing your expiration date. We would rather have you sign up early in case anything unexpected comes up such as an illness of your pet or yourself and you must cancel.

Once you have expired you can't visit until you have tested, unfortunately sometimes you may have to wait a month or longer for the next evaluation date. SO SIGN UP EARLY!

To sign up for an evaluation date contact Artie at Artieb@dogsoncall.org

MERITER AND UW HOSPITAL NEWS

Not too proud to beg ...

I've written about interesting, heart-warming, or fun visits we've had while at Meriter or UW Hospital with the hope that other DOC/Pet Partners teams would want to join us. Now it's time to beg – **PLEASE** consider joining us at Meriter and UW Hospital! The UW Hospital, especially, needs more teams, as we've had a bad streak of PP teams leaving the program for retirement or health of the dog or handler. So **PLEASE** think about joining the program at Meriter and/or UW Hospital. **PLEASE** email me with questions: Karen Peckham at karenp@dogsoncall.org. **PLEASE?**

Welcoming new teams:

At Meriter:

Anna Bezruki and Mabel, a Golden Retriever

Kelly Utz and Torie, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Lynn Kalhagen and Tahoe, a Golden Retriever (in shadowing process)

Lance Williston and Matilda, a Bernese Mountain Dog (in shadowing process)

Todd Trampe and Izzie, a Labrador Retriever (in shadowing process)

Jen Morris and Scoobie, a Golden Retriever (in shadowing process)

At UW Hospital:

Virginia Wolfe and Amy, a West Highland White Terrier

Barbara Fuszard and Murray, a Black Lab mix

Jill Miller and Havana, a Smooth-coated Collie

Karen Peckham, Buddy and Raider

WELCOMING A NEW UNIT FOR DOC TEAM VISITS AT MERITER:

Teams are now able to visit part of the Family Care Center (aka the Birthing Center) at Meriter Hospital. In this unit, we will be visiting antepartum (long-term stay) and postpartum families. Pet Partners may get to experience the cry of a newborn for the first time! With the addition of this unit, teams have access to virtually all patient units in the hospital.

DOC Picnic

What fun, what fun!!! A beautiful day, lots of room to run and the smell of hotdogs and hamburgers in the air. That's what most of the dogs thought about the DOC picnic. An annual event, all members of DOC and their dogs are welcome to attend this fun picnic and we had a great turnout with over thirty dogs and about 45 people. The dogs enjoyed games of chase the ball and agility and just hanging out with the other dogs. The people got great food and lots of prizes. Many thanks go to member Don Machnik for once again volunteering his great house and yard for the picnic. Also, many thanks to Don for providing the hamburgers/hotdogs/vege burgers and more. Everyone brought a dish to pass and there was a bounty of wonderful items to taste. There was so much food that we could only take a small bite of everything available.

The DOC annual meeting was also held during the picnic and the Board related all the happenings from the previous year. President Laura Kuchta spoke about DOC in general and the R.E.A.D. program, Liz Morrison told the group about the U.W. Dorm visits, Artie Berning talked about classes, evaluations and membership, Lydia Zeller explained about facilities, Jan Hoffman talked about events, Karen Peckham related happenings at Meriter and UW Hospitals and Lynn Malayter talked about the Veteran's Hospital and Dry Hootch.

Look at all the picnic pictures and see what fun everyone had that day.

Jan Hoffman, Griffin and Ryder



Nancy, Zora and Luna



Our host Don, with more brats



Gregg working the grill

2012 DOC PICNIC



Zombie and Bailey Rose



Lynn and Tahoe



Kelly & Ron, Seamus & Torie



Liz and a Dog Treat!

WOMEN'S EXPO

The Women's Expo on November 17 and 18th was a great event with over 8,000 people attending and most of them came by the Dogs On Call, Inc. booth. So many nice people petted our dogs, asked for information about therapy animals and how they and their pet could become a member. Although the days were long the time passed rapidly because of all the many folks stopping by the booth and chatting with us. Graciously donated by Meriter Hospital, the Dogs On Call booth was in a prime location for visitors to the Expo to pass by, and as they did, they couldn't help but stop to pet one of our many volunteer therapy animals in the booth. This kind of event educates people about the job of therapy animals and the many places we visit; plus we are able to interest potential new members.

Many thanks to all the volunteers at the booth: Kay and Daisy, Julie and Sadie, Michelle and Melody, Cate and Chance, Karen and Zombie, Michelle and Kameo, Jill and Havana, Marsha and Baxter, Bri and Gerry, Staci and Disney, Jan and Ryder, Barb Wolf, Faye Antolec, and Laurie Ingwell.

Jan Hoffman, Griffin and Ryder



Marsha and Baxter



Jill and Havana



Julie and Sadie



Laurie

Barb



Bri and Gerry

DOG FAIR

People, people, people!! And lots and lots of noise! And hundreds of dogs strolling around! Wow – that's the Wisconsin Dog Fair. Dogs On Call, Inc. always has a booth at the Fair and we welcomed crowds of people who wanted to know more about therapy animals. Some just stopped by to pet all the dogs at the booth while others were interested in learning more about the Pet Partners program.

Thanks to all our many members who helped and talked with all the folks who stopped by the booth. Before or after volunteering, many of our members shopped the vendors, looked at the breed booths or watched DOC members Karen Smith and Jill Miller as they did fly ball demos. Member Carol Mahlik also took the mike at one of the areas to talk about therapy animals. It was a busy day and many, many thanks go to our volunteers: Kay and Daisy; Lydia, Justine, and Madeleine and Daisy, Liz and Charlotte, Bonnie and Snickers, Lance and Matilda, Amy and Ralphie, Scott and Skye, Andrea and Samantha, Sue and Murphy, Sara and Tazzie, Pat and Wilson, Joyce and Sacajawea, Andrea and Shayna, Kelly and Torie and Mary, Laurie, Bonnie and Karen.

Jan, Ryder and Griffin



Pat and Wilson



*Andrea & Samantha,
Scott & Skye*



Kelly and Torie, Andrea and Shayna



Lance and Matilda



Sue and Murphy,



*Jan, Lydia, Justine, Madeleine & Daisy,
Liz and Charlotte, Kay and Daisy,
Laurie*

GILDA'S CLUB

Dogs On Call has become a regular at Gilda's Club. Many evenings we visit with children at the facility and at other times we talk with adults who just want to pet our dogs. This is a perfect facility for new members as there is very little stress for us or our animals. But, that doesn't mean experienced members can't volunteer! All DOC members are so welcome at Gilda's. Check out the pictures for some of our recent visits at Gilda's Club. (Gilda's Club provides a broad range of services to support those living with cancer. Members include men, women and children/ those who have a diagnosis of cancer, their loved ones, friends, co-workers and neighbors; and survivors of cancer.)

Many thanks to DOC members for volunteering at Gilda's: Bonnie and Rusty, Bri and Gerry, Lauren and Lady, Sara and Tazzie, Kelly and Torie, Scott and Skye, Jen and Honey, Lynn and Tahoe, Ginny and Amy, Andrea and Shayna, Jill and Havana.

Jan Hoffman, Ryder and Griffin



Bonnie and Rusty



Sara and Tazzie



Jill and Havana



*Bri and Gerry, Lauren and Lady,
Sara and Tazzie, Bonnie and Rusty,*

CATE AND CHANCE VISIT AT AGRACE HOSPICE



DOC member Cate Inman and her dog Chance were recently featured in an article in the Agrace Hospice newsletter. Cate and Chance are part of the Agrace Pet Buddy program and through that program they have been visiting at community facilities in the Madison area. In the Pet Buddy program, registered therapy animal teams complete an abbreviated version of Agrace hospice training rather than the usual 24 hours of patient-care training. Then a patient-care trained volunteer accompanies the therapy team as they make visits to Agrace patients at locations other than the main facility. These dog visits are a special treat to hospice patients and their families and Agrace would like to see more Pet Buddy teams in their program.

If you are interested in this rewarding Pet Buddy program, please contact Lydia at lydiaz@dogsoncall.org

AMY AND BENJI'S VISIT AT AGRACE



My name is Amy Calvetti and I am a volunteer with Agrace Hospicecare Inc. Recently I started visiting a patient who I was told is an avid dog lover, and who asked for a pet visit. Our first visit lasted about a half hour and the patient could not keep her hands off Benji. Benji is a 9 year old toy poodle who is decked out in apricot curls galore this time of year. The next time we stopped to visit we were only there for about 10 minutes when my patient made an announcement. As she reached for a Kleenex she announced she was allergic to dogs. She has always been a dog lover, but has always been allergic to dogs. When I asked her if she wanted me to bring Benji back next week she responded "Yes. He's just so darn cute, I'll just suffer." Then she laughed. Now that is a true dog lover.

Amy and Benji

VOLUNTEERING AND YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Members who volunteer at hospitals are used to a volunteer application process which usually includes an application, an interview, references, a background check, and requirements for TB tests and flu shots. In the past, most assisted livings and nursing homes were much more relaxed about gathering information on volunteers: many did not have a volunteer application and most did not run background checks. But this is changing. While most assisted livings are still not requiring TB tests, I have noticed more asking for both a formal volunteer application and the State of Wisconsin Background Information Disclosure form, which is used to run a background check. A few also have codes of conduct or other agreements for volunteers to sign.

This can be a very good thing. It shows that the facility is being proactive about formulating policies and procedures and protecting their residents. One issue that this raises for the volunteer, however, is the question of how much personal information you are comfortable disclosing. The forms I have seen may ask, among other things, for your full name, previous names (including maiden name), your address and past addresses, your date of birth and your social security number. In other words, all of your personal identity information together on one form, which you then hope will be treated with confidentiality and later stored in a secure location.

Digging a little deeper, I discovered that providing your social security number is actually optional on the Wisconsin Background Information Disclosure form and that most services are able to run the background check with just your DOB. Meriter Hospital, which certainly has a careful volunteer approval process, does not require your SSN. But some smaller facilities ask for it not only on the background check form but also on the volunteer application. I had two such experiences recently at assisted livings. In the first, I completed the forms but left off my SSN. I received a call from a young man in the HR department saying he needed my SSN to run the background check. I explained that the background form itself said the SSN was optional, but he insisted that he needed it, and said that if I did not provide it I could not volunteer at that facility. He was fairly high pressure. Ten minutes later, as I was writing the Activity Director to tell her why I would be unable to volunteer as planned, the young man called back to say that he was very sorry, he had been mistaken, they were in fact able to run the check and everything was fine – he was sorry he had pressured me. The second experience was at another facility, where they again asked for my SSN on both the application and background check form. I explained to the Activity Director that I was happy to fill everything out except for the SSN. She replied that this was perfectly fine, that they do not need the SSN and that she has no idea why they ask for it on their application.

The point I am trying to make is that you should feel free to decide on a case-by-case basis what personal information you want to share with each facility – and in particular whether you are comfortable providing your SSN alongside your DOB and other identity information. Certainly, it is reasonable for a facility to require a certain amount of information and to run a background check. And with some facilities, things are not negotiable. For example, the VA requires fingerprints and an SSN (and much more!) without exception – but since they are a government agency with established privacy protocols, your information should be secure. Other times a facility may ask for more information than they really need and will back down on the need for your SSN if questioned politely. Bottom line, only share your SSN if you are comfortable doing so.

Lydia and Daisy

THERAPY DOGS AND THE VETERAN



Staff from Dogs on Call met with WDVA employees to discuss ways that therapy dogs can be used to improve the health of veterans.

On October 25, 2012, members of Dogs On Call and VA Hospital employees participated in a presentation to the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs titled "Therapy Dogs And The Veteran". Along with department heads of the WDVA, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, John A. Scocos, and his deputy were in attendance. Before the presentation we were all surprised to receive a Certificate of Recognition signed by not only the DVA Secretary but also our by Governor, Scott Walker, for our efforts to service the veterans on the behalf of the State of Wisconsin. Not only did the human part of the team receive the award, but also our canine partners received

a certificate too. The DOC members in attendance were: Lynn Maylater, Artie Berning and Sacajawea, Karen Smith and Zombie, Gina Smith and Button and Nancy Cahill and Luna

Participates from the VA Hospital were:

Sarah Rogers; VA Suicide Prevention Case Manager – Sarah was one of the people that were instrumental, after ten years of trying, to implement the program we have at the VA Hospital. She presented the results of the pilot program in the acute care unit which eventually expanded the program into other treatment areas in the hospital.

Cathleen Benson; VA Hospital RN in the 2B acute care PTSD area - Cathy presented the medical perspective of the PTSD acute care patients and staff from our visits. She gave examples of pre/during/post visit insights and observations.

Ann Semrow; VA Hospital Nurse Manager – Ann presented an overview and the effect the program is having on the veterans and staff. She also emphasized the success of the program and the support DOC has received from the VA staff and management and their willingness to proceed with this program in other units.

Anna Christison; VA Hospital Recreation Therapist in the Community Living Center (chronic care unit). – Anna discussed the medical and social perspective for chronic care patients and staff that our visits have provided. She also gave examples of pre/during/post visit insights and observations from the veteran's perspective.

THERAPY DOGS AND THE VETERAN—CONTINUED

Dogs On Call Presenters:

Lynn Malayter; DOC VA Hospital liaison – Lynn explained the training and the criteria needed for the Pet Partner teams to visit the various units within the hospital. Also explained was the level of the teams experience and training and reasons for this criteria to visit with veterans experiencing PTSD. She also explained the animal characteristics and qualifications needed to visit the hospital. Lynn additionally related the team's perspective of visiting both the PTSD and CLC units.

Artie Berning; DOC team member – Artie also provided the Pet Partner team's perspective of visiting with veterans in the 2B acute care unit. She related various personal experiences by citing examples of what we call "that's why we do this" moments.

Gina Smith; DOC team member – Gina filled in for Diane Szymanski, Dry Hootch Volunteer Coordinator and Executive Director, who was ill. She discussed what Dry Hootch was and the impact of our visits during the support group session and casual visits in the coffee shop. She cited quotes from the staff, veterans and visiting teams.

The presentation ended with everyone petting the dogs and asking questions. We even had people come in from the lobby who saw the dogs and wanted to interact with them. The next unit opening up at the hospital is the Alcohol Abuse Unit. If there is an interest in visiting the VA Hospital contact Lynn Malayter lynnm@dogsoncall.org for details .

Thank you to Sheldon Schall for arranging all the details for this presentation.

Written by Gina Smith and Button



GIVING BACK, MY JOURNEY WITH A THERAPY DOG



This is the last segment of an article written by Sheldon Shall about his journey with Presley as a therapy team. Sheldon has been a member of Dogs On Call since 2001, has also been a board member and was our first newsletter director. To read his complete article, please see previous DOC newsletters located on our web site, www.dogsoncall.org. In the last article Sheldon and Presley had been visiting at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital at Meriter.

Many people have said to me, “You sure have made....(name)happy,” or similar comments. My response has always been “Presley made people happy because she brought pleasure, comfort and smiles and she generated conversations. I just held the leash and acted as support.”

I became aware that my dog’s health was declining and I discontinued therapy work as I knew I would not take her loss well. However, the loss of my dog was more difficult for me to deal with than I expected. I am sure that everyone performing similar therapy dog activity would have those same emotions because the bond between handler and dog is such a strong bond. Working as a team, we gained tremendous personal satisfaction seeing smiles come from people who don’t have a lot to smile about and knowing they always look forward to your visit.

Presley loved to ride in my truck; she would lay in it all day only getting out when I finally ordered her to get out.



GIVING BACK, MY JOURNEY WITH A THERAPY DOG—CONTINUED

When she did not want to get into the truck the last Saturday and Sunday she was with us, I knew the situation had taken a drastic turn for the worse. It has been said that a dog will tell you when it is time; you just have to recognize it.” Presley not wanting to get into the truck signaled to me a dramatic ‘quality of life’ change taking place within her. We organized a family gathering for Presley together with our three sons, daughter-in-law and two grandsons on Sunday afternoon. While she appeared very happy with all the attention, she could not physically stand but always kept her head up and her eyes reflected she enjoyed being petted and in the company of the family. But even while being petted or massaged she was occasionally heard whimpering. We all tried to remain upbeat, but everyone showed emotion or shed some tears at some time during the afternoon. Presley even ate some canned dog food out of my son Adam’s hand and from my hand later in the afternoon. This was something I had not had much success at for weeks.

That following Monday morning my veterinarian, Dr. Klostermann, called me at work to tell me that the results of the tissue and blood tests from the week before weren’t good and the cancer appeared to be progressing very rapidly. Medical options were not very encouraging. The decision to let it play out and extend the time we could be together or euthanasia was in my hands. I owed this dog a lot; I wanted Presley to go with dignity and not at the point where she had not control of body functions or was constantly whimpering in pain. I believe that I owed her the opportunity move across the “Rainbow Bridge” before her mental and physical condition deteriorated any more. We scheduled the euthanasia for that afternoon. I have to admit that after making this decision I did question if this decision of mine was also God’s will. I can honestly say that I did not pull the plug on letting this play out for my benefit.

My wife, Maeline, accompanied me during our final time with Presley at Memorial Pet Services where they have a room that provides an atmosphere of comfort and solitude for such events. My emotions took over and I don’t have a clear memory of much once we walked through the door. I know there was music playing the background, but I have no recall of what music was playing or conversations that took place. I spent some time sitting on the floor with a river of tears flowing as Presley rested her head in my lap. The time came to ask Dr. Klostermann to come in and administer the injection. After the injection, Dr. Klostermann placed a stethoscope on Presley’s chest as her breathing ceased. He placed his hand on should and said, “She’s gone.” At that moment I heard very distinctly the singing of the words, “Sleep in heavenly peace; Sleep in heavenly peace” from the Christmas song, ‘Silent Night’. I thought about the song during the drive home, that evening and the next day but didn’t mention it until Maeline brought it up. She also had the same experience hearing the verses “Sleep in Heavenly Peace” at the same point in time. There is no way that Memorial Pet Services could have choreographed the setting or arranged those words from that song at that exact time. I do not believe that it was simply coincidence for those words to be heard, understood and remembered, as Presley, the Deacon Dog, was leaving us and for those particular verses to be heard at that time from all the numerous songs that had been played during our time in that room. As Pastor Kirk Morledge put it upon my sharing this experience with him, “Let’s take it as a message from the Heavenly realm.”

GIVING BACK, MY JOURNEY WITH A THERAPY DOG—CONTINUED

I have always believed that “things” happen for a reason. My faithful canine companion and I had a great journey together as we enjoyed much generating smiles and causing people to forget their troubles, even if only for the time of our visit. There is not a day that goes by where something does not trigger mental flashbacks and thought of that dog. I believe there was Devine intervention involved from the fact that Presley was initially destined for another home but the breeder decided that “Pink Girl” would have a better home with us. And from a random conversation we were steered toward therapy dog activities. Presley and I had such a trusting bond that we knew without hesitation what to expect from each other. I was blessed with a dog that had an ability to understand the need to be gentle with the elderly or roll and play with a child; we had many doors opened to us giving us opportunities that most therapy teams do not get to experience. Presley truly enjoyed being a team partner and the many and varied therapy interactions that enriched our time together. But the most significant sign of “Devine Intervention” was hearing that verse from a song at the end of Presley’s and my journey together and that verse gave me a lot back from our ‘giving back’.

Sheldon Shall remains a member of Dogs On Call as our historian and also as a mentor to many new teams. He does not have another dog.

DOGS ON CALL INVITED TO BOOK SIGNING

Dogs On Call was invited by Allen and Linda Anderson to participate in their booking signing at Barnes and Noble for their new book *A dog Named Leaf*. Gina and Button and Laura and Kooper went to the book signing to greet guests and tell them about therapy dogs.



Gina & Button, Allen Anderson, Laura & Kooper



THE PERFECT DOG



Read recently by John O'Hurley at the Philadelphia Dog Show

(The rhyme is The Night Before Christmas)

The Perfect Dog

*My son asked a question as little boys do
Of me in my wisdom and all that I knew.*

*"Is there a dog that is perfect?" he asked on a whim,
Well, I thought and I thought about where to begin.*

*"He'd have ears that were floppy... or cropped and alert
And eyes that were sleepy... or perky and pert,
He'd leap like a bunny or sit in your lap
And run fast as horses... or opt for a nap.*

*"A dog that is perfect would be covered in spots
Or maybe one-color ... and then have spots-not.*

*"He'd be small as a teacup... or big as a house,
With a nose that seemed flattened ... or long like a mouse,*

*"He'd swim and he'd hunt with a coat flying free
Or be dainty and delicate ... and 'He'd' be a 'She'*

*As I struggled to answer, and not with a clue,
My son, with a smile, said, out of the blue,
With the wisdom of children, what he already knew.*

The dog that is perfect ... is the one next to you.

- John O'Hurley



“FLUFFY! STOP LICKING THAT PATIENT’S TOES!”

I don’t know if this has happened to you, but Charlotte startled me one day by trying to lick up a piece of food that accidentally fell on the floor....unfortunately, the patient’s toes were nearby. You can imagine the rest!

With this little incident in mind, I thought it might be time to once again go over DOC’s “rules of the road”. These rules are important to follow wherever you find your pet partner and you visiting...whether it be a hospital, nursing home, UW dorm event or a community event. This is not meant to single out anyone....nor is it an admonishment of any kind. Rather, it is what it is.....a reminder of DOC rules and regulations so that we can visit safely with our furry partners. It’s also a list of suggestions that I’ve heard from other members over the last few months regarding common etiquette.

Here it goes:

A. Dog Rules

- 1) Animal bath within 24 hours of a visit, then brush out the animal’s coat just before the visit if necessary.
- 2) Animals must wear their PP ID tags at all times. PP vest/scarves are optional, but are strongly recommended by DOC.
- 3) 4-6’ leash, no retractable leashes. Your dog should never be more than 2’ to 4’ away from you. It’s best if you hold your dog close, either directly in front of you or at your side. Please keep a watchful eye on every interaction your furry friend has.
- 4) For collars, please see your PP manual.
- 5) Because of infection control issues, please...no licks, handshakes, high fives, etc. when visiting in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities or health care centers. These same rules apply when we visit the students at the UW or participate in the large community events.
- 6) While DOC’s handbook doesn’t say that having clients treat our dogs is not allowed, it does say that because of infection worries, our “Best Practice” is that we avoid having clients give treats to our dogs.
- 7) If you sit on the floor with the clients/students at an event, please make sure your dog does not walk over legs or sit on laps....even when a client is telling you they don’t mind.
- 8) Don’t visit if your pet is ill or on antibiotics.

B) People Rules

- 1) Casual dress, no blue jeans, shorts, halters, beer t-shirts, etc. Wear appropriate shoes with socks...no open toed shoes. Consider the event/venue you will be attending.
- 2) Don’t visit if you’re ill or on antibiotics.
- 3) Wear your PP/DOC badge and the nametag required by the facility you are visiting.

FLUFFY! STOP LICKING THAT PATIENT'S TOES!"

C) DOC Etiquette

- 1) Please remember when you're visiting a venue as part of a group such as any University event or a community event such as Mound's Fest, etc. this is not a social event for either you or your dog...this is a work time...this is what we do. Pick an area away from another DOC team and stay in the area as best you can. Please don't wander or let your dog wander into another team's area. Except for when there are down times, consider other areas "walled off".
- 2) We all like to visit and have our dogs sniff and greet each other, that's ok in the beginning or at the end of the event or if things are very slow....but as soon as there are people to visit with, we are back in our spots.
- 3) Being part of a big event like "Mound's Fest" or any one of the expos or even some of the University events, is fun but can be nerve-wracking. There is usually a lot of noise and a LOT of people who want to visit with our dogs.....these sorts of venues can be extremely stressful for us and especially for our furry critters. We must be extra vigilant in watching our dogs for any sign of stress or anxiety....and take them out if necessary. We also must keep them extremely close to us. Hands reach in from all over the place...we need to be sure we know where they're coming from and how our dogs are reacting to them.
- 4) Another part of the "Best Practice" guidelines is not to have treats at events. It's really hard for me to keep Charlotte's focus on visiting with people at the event when the dog next to us is being treated. All she wants to do is get a "cookie", she is no longer interested in visiting with the people around her. And even when the treats are put away, she can still smell them and of course, she remembers who has them in their bag. I think to be fair to everyone at the event, we need to leave all treats at home or in our cars. We want our dogs visiting, not begging for treats.

If you have any other suggestions or ideas on how to make our visits safer and more fun, please let me know.

Once again, thanks for all you and your furry friends do for your communities.

Liz and Charlotte

HOW DOGS LEARN

Modern dog training is based on learning theory founded in physiology, psychology, neurology and animal science. Dogs learn by association and there are two types of associative learning: classical conditioning and operant conditioning. We use these methods because they are scientifically valid, are easy for dog owners to learn, and they make it easy for dogs to learn new skills. The process is fun and rewarding for dogs and people alike.



Classical conditioning, formerly known as Pavlovian conditioning, is based on experiments by Nobel-prize-winning physiologist Ivan Pavlov. He presented neutral stimuli (ringing bell) to a dog, followed by offering food. The dog salivated when the food was offered to it. After numerous repetitions Pavlov removed the food and rang the bell, observing the dog still salivated. He concluded the dog had learned to associate the stimuli with the reward and so the previously neutral stimuli acquired new meaning and informed the dog about what was going to happen next.

A practical example of obedience training is teaching a dog to sit on cue by presenting a previously neutral stimuli (hand gesture) luring the dog into a sitting position, followed by offering food. After numerous repetitions the dog associates the hand signal as a predictor that sitting down will gain a reward. Once the behavior is established another previously neutral stimulus (saying “Sit”) precedes the behavior and so the dog learns to associate a human word with the act of sitting down and getting a reward.

Operant conditioning is gracefully described in “Dog Insight” by Pamela Reid, Ph.D. when she writes that it follows “a specific sequence: Antecedent – Behavior – Consequence. Esteem psychologist B.F. Skinner is credited with development of operant conditioning as a way of shaping behavior. It consists of positive and negative aspects, and reward and punishment aspects. To understand what positive and negative mean in the context of dog training, think about their meaning in a math equation. Positive means to add something; negative means to take something away. Reinforcement and punishment have specific meanings too. To reinforce is to do something designed to prompt the dog to repeat the behavior; to punish is to do something designed to inhibit repetition of the behavior. It is a beautiful process to witness and allows the dog to choose behaviors, while the trainer applies positive reinforcement, positive punishment, negative reinforcement or negative punishment to shape the dog’s behavior.

We apply operant conditioning in dog sports such as rally and agility, as well as puppy training and obedience/manners training. Dogs often learn more quickly and effectively because they choose behaviors rather than passively wait to be told what to do in every situation. Teaching default behaviors meeting approval of dog owners is easy and lasting. Such methods are an excellent way to shape the emotional behavior of a shy or impulsive dogs and help them gain confidence and stability, because they learn how to behave in a human-dominated culture in order to fulfill their needs, in ways that are pre-approved by humans.

We can describe the process as it applies to obedience and manners training relative to a common dog behavior: excitedly jumping upon and nipping people. Let us pretend that I am going to visit you four days in a row to see how you and your dog are doing with training.

HOW DOGS LEARN—CONTINUED

Day 1 – I knock at your door, you open it, and your happy excited dog and I are standing face-to-face at the threshold. I love dogs so I am not bothered that your dog is jumping up on me, licking and nipping me. As it does so I continue to pet your dog and laugh playfully. Whether I realize it or not, I am giving your dog positive reinforcement and it is learning that jumping and nipping are the ways to get the affection and attention it desires. The behavior is likely to continue.

Day 2 – I visit on the way to a business meeting and am wearing my new suit. When you open the door your happy and excited dog jumps up on me and nips at my clothes, because that is what the dog has learned “works” for it. I worry that my suit will be ruined and drive my knee into your dog’s chest, yelling “Get down!” Upset with your dog’s behavior, I depart. I have just given your dog positive punishment and the dog may learn that jumping on people is scary and painful, though it may also adapt to the higher cost of getting what it wants. The behavior is likely to diminish.

Day 3 – Having learned to wear old clothes when I visit, I greet your dog at the door and am eager to play with your happy excited dog. In fact, I play roughly and frighten your dog, making it yelp in distress. Your dog goes stiff, pins its ears back, raising its tail high, displays its upper teeth and growls. I feel afraid and quickly go away. Your dog feels relieved and learns that threatening a visitor is a way to stay safe and avoid fear and pain. Negative reinforcement teaches your dog how to behave the next time a person arrives at the door or reaches for its head.

Day 4 – After reviewing my numerous dog training resources I finally understand how to appropriately interact with you dog and return for a final visit. When your dog happily and excitedly jumps up on me I raise my arms above my waist, turn away, look up and away from your dog, and ignore it until the behavior stops. I actively apply negative punishment and your dog learns that jumping up on people is no longer rewarding, so the behavior is likely to diminish.

We now understand how dogs learn and how to coach dog owners so common everyday behavioral problems can be resolved. The application of positive reinforcement and negative punishment work best with the vast majority of dogs because they simply do whatever works for them. This combination of classical and operant conditioning is also called dog-friendly training. It is our job to show them what works best for both of us, relieving stress and anxiety for people and dogs alike.

By contrast, the other main camp in dog training is based on compulsion or dominance theory. Such methods rely heavily upon positive punishment and negative reinforcement. As eminent British biologist John Bradshaw writes in “Dog Sense”, European research on such harsh methods shows that about 75% of dogs develop insecurity and emotional instability, while the remaining 25% become “aggressive.” In truth, those dogs are merely trying to protect themselves and it has nothing to do with “dominance” or “challenging” human primacy. There is no scientific evidence in support of dominance theory. Why not set dogs up to succeed, rather than to fail?

By Dan Antolec and Gandhi

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