



FIDO SPEAKS!

FELLOWSHIP FOR THE INTERESTS OF DOGS AND THEIR OWNERS
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TREE GROWS IN BROOKLYN

Commemorating loved ones and celebrating their lives is a universal custom older than recorded history. Now, the dogs of Prospect Park will be remembered in very special way.

FIDO, as part of the Prospect Park Alliance's Commemorative Tree Program, is sponsoring the planting of a tree near Dog Beach in the Long Meadow. The tree will be a living memorial to all the dogs, past and present, who have played in Prospect Park.

The tree will be dedicated this Spring at a public ceremony at the planting site in the Meadow. While the exact species of tree is yet to be determined, it will be of the type known as an "overstory tree", one that will grow very tall and provide excellent shade for relaxing after a swim at the dog beach. As an additional benefit

of the sponsorship, FIDO members can have their departed pets' names inscribed in a special Memorial Book in the Prospect Park Audubon Center. (Members can already post a memorial on the FIDO website.)

The Commemorative Tree Program is one of the Alliance's ongoing projects aimed at restoring and maintaining the Park. Hundreds of trees have been planted by groups and individuals.

For information on adding your dog's name to the memorial book and FIDO website, write or email to the address above.

PLAY BALL! (BUT PLEASE DON'T FETCH!)

We've finally gone and done it. FIDO is sponsoring a little league Pee-Wee Division ball team. What better way for FIDO to live up to its mission: engage other groups who use Prospect Park. And let's face it. Softball is a lot of fun!

April 5th starts the official Little League season, beginning with the traditional parade through Park Slope. Start time is 10am - from 7th Avenue & Carroll Street all the way to the Band Shell. Remember the good guys/gals will be wearing the FIDO logo on their orange shirts.

Exercise caution and maintain a low key presence if you decide to linger and take in the game. Know that Park Regs make ball fields off-limits to dogs when the fields are in use - no ifs, ands, buts or woofs!

It may be a bit inconvenient, but remember: these guys are stuck in this one area, while we still have acres and acres of meadow out there for off-leash activities.

Just to be on the safe side, add another hundred feet for safety, especially if your dog thinks he's major league caliber.

Telling people our canine pals are okay isn't enough. It really is important to keep your distance. Not everyone appreciates dogs, and even the mellowest mutt can seem intimidating to some people, especially the smaller kids and their parents. "Sit," "lie down," may well apply to both owner and dog for the duration of the game.

By The Hydrant

By Dale Kaplan

Identity Crisis...

Tony's Jupiter, the little rat terrier, doesn't think he's a rat or a terrier. Jupiter believes he's a parrot! Although he hasn't sprouted feathers yet, most mornings he can be seen perched on the shoulders of Stuart Siet (Molly's human.) At this level of elevation Jupiter can successfully scout for treats, toys, and especially Park Rangers on horses waiting to give out tickets.

Thank you Jupi! We love you!

Call NY1...

Unlike her human companion, Bob's Yuffie was actually seen to move! When an altercation erupted between two dogs over a disputed treat, Yuffie the mastiff joined the rubber necking pack in full force. Credible witnesses attested to the fact that Yuffie encircled the action at least once! Deciding that the treat was gone she resumed her elegant, statuesque posture on the 9th Street path. She's a classy gal.

Believe or Not – X Rated...

Duncan, the neutered pit, AKA:Mr D,: consummated his friendship with unspayed female, Bicardi, in broad daylight. It was an impressive, awe-inspiring performance. The owner, Natusha, recovered from shock shortly after 9am. No need for coffee that morning.

Your Mother Dresses You Funny...

Think pink for Spring 2003. All shades of this uplifting color are IN as quoted by the N.Y. Times & In Style Magazine. Harry, the big eared dog, ushered in this new fashion trend with a form-fitting monogrammed pink t-shirt with gray trim - the better to show off his amazing physique. Some male humans were overheard questioning the choice of pink for a male dog. Dale K. retorted that: "My Harvey has the confidence to wear any color. He's in touch with his feminine side. Besides pink tastes better!"

Late Breaking News...

Jack's little sister, Brenda, has been accompanying him to the park almost every morning this winter. Even on the coldest days little Reana is there with her mom Sonya. Talk about a baby boom! Theo has a new brother Aiden, Tuko a new sister Ruby Spring and Za Za has a new sister Francelia. Oh and Felix has a new sister named Kenna

Lilly the beagle announced that her mom Jennifer received a PHD in French Enlightenment Literature. Congratulations on our park Intellectuals.

A BIG THANK YOU...

To all those who helped out in Prospect Park's Long Meadow when I was injured (dislocated knee) on December 11, 2002

I wanted to thank everyone (I know there were many) who helped that morning - from the people who called for an ambulance, kept me warm when I was freezing, cared for my dog, kept the other dogs at bay, etc. Your consideration and caring response was heartwarming in a crowded city that moves too fast.

Sincerely, Connie Marder

Try The Off-Leash Network...

By Bob Ipcar

Need Work? Romance?

6:00am - 7:00am: People who work the Night Shift & Day Types who really, really love their jobs!

7:00am - 7:30am: Blue Collar Workers rule the park. Frisbee Nuts!

7:30am - 8:30am: White Collar & Management types. FBI!

8:30am - 9:00am: Home Office Types, Free Lance Graphic Artists, Film People, New Moms and the Unemployed.

5:00pm - 6:00am: Musicians and all of the above!

Therapy Dog

By Jane Landis

Almost five years ago after 10 years of pleading, wheedling and cajoling on the part of our Brooklyn born daughters, my husband Bob Ipcar and I finally gave in and got a puppy. Yuffie, named for a Sony PlayStation character, was not the compact Pug or Spaniel we had originally considered. She was a Neapolitan Mastiff; projected weight, between 120 and 150 pounds. But love is not rational; when we first saw those droopy brown eyes, we were smitten. There was something so intelligent and appealing about her that despite the massive size potential, we just HAD to have that dog!

At 5 months and 50 pounds, she already produced enough "poop" to necessitate carrying around the larger sized plastic shopping bags as opposed to the baggies we had had in mind. However it was a small price to pay for the delight she provided. Yuffie was housebroken in a matter of days, didn't jump up on people or furniture, came back when she was called and could be trusted in the same room with a roast chicken even if our backs were turned! She delighted in carrying the newspaper home after her park walks, was completely non-confrontational around other dogs, and best of all, she loved people. We knew we shouldn't keep Yuffie's good nature to ourselves.

While attending a lecture sponsored by FIDO about three years ago, a spokesperson from "The Good Dog Foundation," an organization which certifies therapy dogs, explained their aims and training procedures designed to bring dogs into hospitals for patient visitations. The idea instantly appealed to us. When the opportunity arose to participate in training sessions in nearby Windsor Terrace, we jumped at the chance. Yuffie "graduated" from The Good Dog Foundation training class and in no time we were volunteering at New York Methodist Hospital here in Park Slope, serving in the geriatric and adult psych units for one hour on a biweekly basis. The primary aim of Therapy Dog visit is to cheer the

patients, although I must say that even the staff appreciates Yuffie's presence. We've seen patients who were virtually non-communicative come out of their rooms to pet our dog. Elderly patients, many of whom have problems recalling more recent events in their lives, fondly recount past and present relationships they have with their own beloved pets.

Dogs can be so completely non-judgmental when it comes to illness. They see the spirit inside the person and react with favor to those who treat them with kindness, even people who are not feeling their best. And let's face it, what better solace is there after a bad day than to hug a warm fuzzy dog?

Research studies are currently being conducted by the Good Dog Foundation to support what hospital and nursing home personnel have observed all along: that the presence of animals in these institutions can deeply enrich and stimulate the patients in a profound and lasting way. Surprisingly, there is nothing negative or depressing at all about the hospital atmosphere; not to say that one never witnesses sorrow or disorientation on the part of patients from time to time. But it is more than made up for by the smiles and warm responses we receive on each visit.

As for Yuffie, she enjoys her ride up on the hospital elevator and the multitude of treats and hugs that greet her when she "goes to work." We think she knows that she is well loved and appreciated on the job and at 130+ pounds, she's got a lot of love to give back.

Think you have a good natured, low-key dog that you would like to share with hospital patients? Size is no object! Do a web search online for your local Therapy dog organization - among them the Delta Foundation. For those of you in Brooklyn, contact The Good Dog Foundation here in Park Slope and schedule a screening. There is a fee for the training sessions and certification. You may call Rachel McPherson or Betty Bishop at: 718 -788-2988.

VET'S CORNER

Vaccinate 'Em - When, With What?

Gary G. Swails, DVM

Edward Jenner tested the first vaccine against smallpox in 1796. Since then, researchers have, with effort, with expense, and with arduous experiment, given us vaccines that are reasonably efficacious. Safety and effectiveness is a pharmaceutical ideal.

We should not forget that vaccines protect our pets against devastating, potentially fatal diseases. It is because of vaccinations that dogs romp in the park in relative safety free of fear of the killer diseases distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, and rabies.

According to the American Animal Hospital Association Report of the Canine Vaccine Task Force: "It is safe to say that no single achievement has had greater impact on the lives and well-being of our patients, our clients, and our ability to prevent infectious diseases than the development and ongoing improvements in companion animal vaccines."

Some vaccines are safer than others, with less risk and fewer side effects. Some vaccines are more effective than others, producing a better, longer acting immunity. When used wisely, today's vaccines will produce the best immunity our current level of knowledge will allow.

Do the vaccines cause even better immunity than we thought? Perhaps the vaccination companies' recommendation of annual vaccination needs study to see if we are vaccinating too much. That research is ongoing, but not yet established, except for rabies virus for which a three-year vaccine is available. The remainders of the canine (and feline) vaccines are labeled, "for annual revaccination," by the manufacturers. This puts the practicing veterinarian in an awkward position.

The AAHA Task Force puts vaccines into

three categories:

- "Core" vaccines are considered necessary to be given to all puppies less than 6 months of age, and to dogs with unknown vaccination history. These are the vaccines for diseases that have a high morbidity (infect many) and a high mortality. They are: canine distemper virus, canine parvovirus, canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis) and rabies virus.
- "Noncore" vaccines are those whose use is dependent on the circumstances that suggest their need. These vaccines include Leptospira, Bordetella, and Borellia (Lyme vaccine).
- Finally, vaccines listed as "not generally recommended" include Giardia vaccine, canine coronavirus vaccine, and canine adenovirus-1 vaccine.

In order to avoid having to vaccinate as often as we do, why not blood test dogs regularly - that is, do a serologic titer, to measure how much immunity

previous vaccines have given. Such information could determine if revaccination is needed.

The AAHA Task Force on Canine Vaccines says: "The issue of serologic testing to determine immunity or lack of immunity is controversial. Since most noncore vaccines should be administered at least annually when used, there is no indication for serologic testing. Because state and local laws set the frequency of administration of rabies vaccines, testing is not indicated". This leaves a gray zone for the core vaccines. Serologic testing is available, but there has been little standardization to allow easy, consistent

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Vet's Corner *Continued from page 4*

interpretations of results between or among laboratories. In addition, there is still confusion surrounding the interpretation of antibody levels

So how often do we need to vaccinate our pets? The best answers to that question are: Consider each situation, each dog, and each circumstance separately. Vaccinate only healthy dogs. Use only those vaccines that are indicated for the circumstances. All puppies need to be thoroughly and well vaccinated. All dogs need to be vaccinated for rabies according to health department regulations. All dogs should probably be vaccinated annually for the core vaccines of canine distemper, canine parvovirus, and adenovirus-2, especially dogs with a high level of exposure to other dogs. Use noncore vaccines on an as needed basis.

It is difficult not to follow the manufacturers' recommendations until the day some solid proof comes along, especially when that is the current recommendation of the AAHA Task Force on Canine Vaccinations. The current vaccine recommendations have allowed millions of dogs to live a long and healthy life in spite of adverse (rare) side effects, which will be discussed in a future issue.

Dr. Swails' practice is Windsor Terrace Veterinarians, located on Prospect Avenue. He was a columnist for the Denver Post and has written for such publications as Cat Fancv.

Web Resource

The American Dog Trainers' Network is the creation and legacy of the late Robin Kovary, a professional dog trainer, writer and advocate for dogs and their humane treatment.

It is an extensive, award winning site which offers information on many topics including: training, care, dog parks, spay/neuter, shelters, and rescue, to name a few; and it provides solid information on subjects such as poisonous substances, how to choose a trainer, pet sitter, traveling with your pet, etc. It is currently located at: www.thedogsite.org or www.thedogsite.info

The Bowser Browser

By Bob Ipcar

Two Great Books by Stanley Coren

The Pawprints of History (Free Press 2002)

An entertaining overview of canine influence on civilization as we know it: the whole spectrum of human achievement from war to art, touching on such notables as Alexander The Great; Florence Nightingale and even Bill Clinton!

Picture Sigmund Freud sitting at a birthday party table with his three dogs - all four of them wearing paper party hats! Jonathan Swift had grown so deaf; his loud speech was enough to set Alexander Pope's dog, Bounce, growling in defense of his master. Frederick the Great is oft quoted as saying: "The more I see of men, the better I like my dog."

How To Speak Dog (Free Press 2000)

A must have book for those wishing to learn the art of dog-human communication. Dogs are the master of posture when it comes to their survival. Stance and expression under varying circumstances are well described and even illustrated.

For instance, pointy ears are taken as a sign of aggression until proved otherwise while down on the elbows means: "let's play." Give this one a read. To run with the pack takes on a whole new meaning...

FIDO'S MISSION

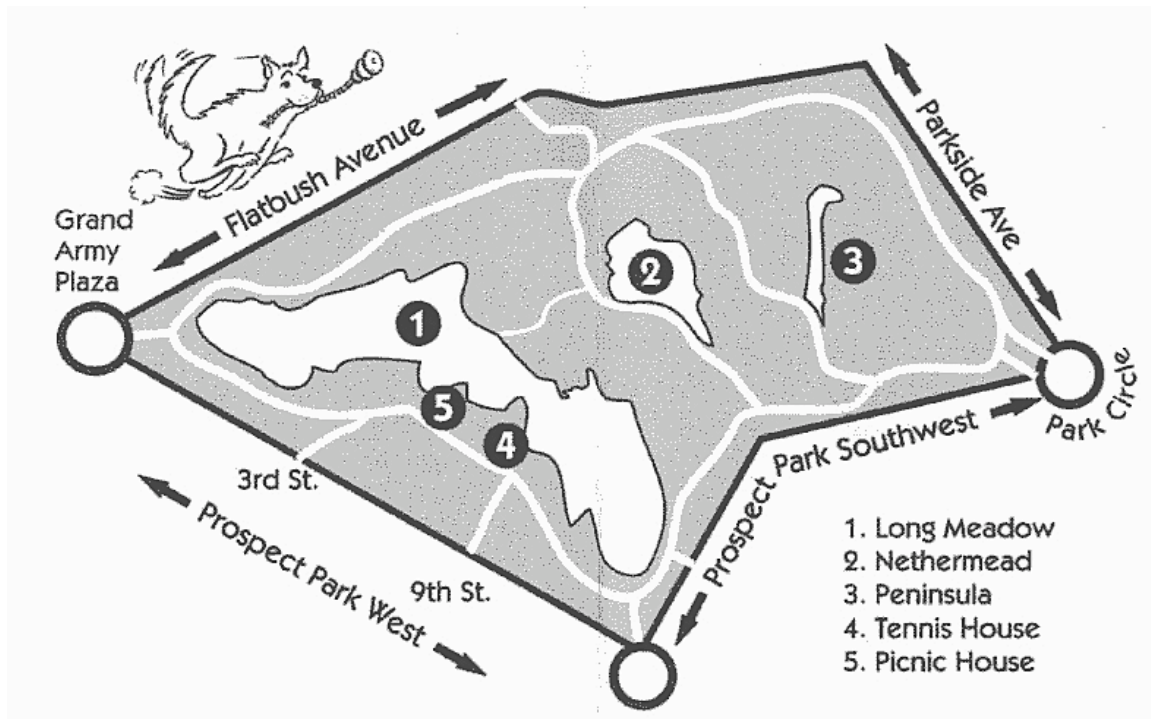
FIDO believes that in order for dogs to be healthy and well socialized, they need off-leash time to exercise and play with other dogs. We recognize that dogs must be well trained in order to be off-leash, and we strive to educate the dog-owning community regarding appropriate conduct. To foster a clean and well-kept off-leash environment we draw on a variety of resources within the companion dog community and beyond.

There is a large community of dog owners using Prospect Park, and FIDO works to harness the collective strength of this community. We educate park officials, city officials, and the general public about dogs, off-leash activity, and the need for a cleaner, better-maintained environment. We raise funds for projects that will make the Park a safer, more enjoyable place for dogs and people.

The dog community brings enormous benefits to Prospect Park, and FIDO is dedicated to increasing the public's understanding of these benefits. The companion dog contingent is among the most consistent and dedicated of park constituencies. We use the park 365 days a year, rain or shine. We provide a network of watchful eyes in the early morning and late at night. We bring stability, security, and safety to the Park as a whole.

PROSPECT PARK MAP

See Page 7 For Off-Leash Rules



OFF-LEASH RULES

FIDO has worked closely with Park officials to come up with the following rules which have been in effect for several years. These are the most liberal off leash rules currently in the Metropolitan area. Keeping Off Leash hours in place (and possibly extending them!) depends on your continued support and cooperation. These rules are not complicated or arbitrary; just important to everyone's continued enjoyment of the Off Leash scene in Prospect Park.

Besides, the minimum fine is \$100 per dog.

Off-Leash Hours:

April 1 - October 31 (Spring-Summer): 9p.m. to 9a.m.

November 1 - March 31 (Fall-Winter): 5p.m. to 9a.m.

On non-holiday weekdays, the Nethermead is open for Off Leash from 5pm to 9pm - year 'round. Weekends and civil holidays, hours are the same as the other meadows.

The ONLY legitimate Off-Leash areas are the three Meadows:

The Long Meadow, the Nethermead and the Peninsula Meadow (see map page 6)

Dogs are not allowed on ball fields when fields are in use

even before 9a.m., and even if the game has not started. If there are humans on the ball fields, dog owners must move to another part of the Meadow.

Remember...

Owners must always be in control of their dogs.

Dog waste must be picked up by owners and disposed of properly at all times.

No digging is allowed. Holes create trip hazards.

Dogs are not allowed in playgrounds.

Bridle paths are for horses only.

Areas that are NEVER Off-Leash include:

- The grassy areas between the outer street and the Circle Drive (the inner roadway.)
- Pathways between meadows
- All wooded areas
- Bridle paths

Upcoming Events

See Fido's Website for listings: www.fidobrooklyn.org