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Sean Casey Animal Rescue: How FIDO Is Helping and You Can, Too!

by Vivane Arzoumanian

FIDO's primary mission is to support and promote responsible off-leash use of Prospect Park for the benefit of Brooklyn residents and their dogs. While FIDO does not take an active or direct role in the rescue of lost and/or abused animals, there has been growing interest among our members in finding new ways to help rescue organizations do their good work.

This year you may have noticed a couple of new activities at the Coffee Bark. FIDO member Peggy Cyphers initiated a drive to collect old towels, blankets, and linen at the monthly Bark. Most of these items are given to AC&C for use in their kennels. The second change you may have noticed at Coffee Bark is the presence of Sean Casey Animal Rescue.

When interest in formally supporting rescue work surfaced at FIDO board meetings, it was suggested that this was a group to explore. FIDO's Bob Ipcar knew Sean and had followed his rescue work with animals for many years, as Sean has been the person the Parks Department calls when a lost animal is spotted in the park. Sean has helped to rescue everything from chickens to a boa constrictor to a goat found wandering around the park. Injured ducks, geese, and swans are brought to Sean, who holds them until they can go to wildlife rehabilitators and then be reintroduced to appropriate environments. Stuart Siet, who heads FIDO's new Rescue Committee, and several other FIDO members visited Sean's storefront on several occasions and explored the best and most reasonable ways to be of help.

FIDO decided to make a modest financial contribution and to invite the group to attend Coffee Bark to bring more attention to the shelter animals and their needs, which do not only include adoption.

Sean Casey Animal Rescue's first shelter site was located at Kennedy Airport. Because of problems with the physical plant and the need for a higher public profile and additional financial support, Sean closed that site and opened a combined shelter and retail space in a double storefront between Caton Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway, in November 2007. The retail space is a pet supply store called The Hamilton Dog House.

The main shelter space houses dogs and cats, while rabbits, hamsters, rats, kittens, and reptiles are kept in the store. Many of the animals come from the Brooklyn shelter run by NYC Animal Care and Control; some arrive as owner relinquishments or as strays found by good Samaritans. Dogs and cats remain in the shelter, on average, two weeks before finding a home. This figure includes a few hard-to-place dogs who remain for extended periods.

Sean Casey and NY Animal Rescue have been rescuing, rehabilitating, and finding homes for all species imaginable for more than ten years. Exotic species and farm animals use the rescue as a way station to zoo exhibits, farms, and private owners in states where exotic pets are not

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(Sean Casey: continued from pg 1)

banned as they are in NYC. The shelter, which has limited funding (mostly from the Mayor's Alliance for Animals www.animalalliancencyc.org and adoption fees) and very few paid staff, depends in great part on dedicated volunteers and benefactors who donate needed supplies and time to the animals in its care.

The needs of the shelter include cleaning supplies, paper towels, bleach, plastic bags for cleaning up on dog walks, and more newspaper than you can imagine. Beyond supplies, which are crucial to keeping the kennels clean and sanitary, the shelter depends on a pool of volunteers to walk dogs. Walks serve many valuable needs for the dogs -- exercise, fresh air, a chance to spend time with one person who is paying attention only to them, socialization to city sights, sounds, and smells: all the things that our family dogs take for granted. If you would like to visit, contribute, or volunteer you are welcome to drop by anytime. The shelter (155 East 3rd Street) is open 7 days a week, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dogs can be walked between noon and 5 p.m. any day. If you come to visit, look for a green awning that says Tutti Frutti -- a vestige of the previous tenant. A new awning should be in place sometime in late June.

For more information:

- ❑ visit the rescue website at www.scarnyc.org
- ❑ call 718-436-5163
- ❑ send an e-mail to nyanimalrescue@yahoo.com
- ❑ visit the animals for adoption pages at www.nyanimalrescue.petfinder.com.



Hemolytic Anemia in Dogs

by Otto Avila

My 9 year old 80lb female pit bull mix, Kika, was diagnosed as having Hemolytic Anemia almost a year ago. Coming home from work one Friday night she was visibly ill and moving slowly - Saturday, noon, we were at the vets and by monday night she was diagnosed as having Hemolytic Anemia with a Hematocrit value of 10 - her blood had turned the consistency of grape juice, watery and gritty.

The vets and myself decided on a course of catabolic steroids - Prednisone. She was on them for 4 months. A dog, any animal, or a human should *not* be on steroids for longer than necessary -- steroids are a wonderful-horrible drug.

Her body mass shifted visibly every day. I would stare at her, and could feel myself seeing her body shape shift. That was from the Prednisone. She also developed 2 holes in her tongue and lost 4 teeth from the Prednisone. In addition the dog should be taking carafate to coat the stomach, if this is not done, or if the carafate protection is taken away too early, there is a good probability that stomach and intestinal damage will occur. For Kika, the carafate was withdrawn too quickly and her intestinal lining started to peel off and come out in white/black glistening chunks in her bowel movements.

She was also megadosed with milk thistle extract in a glycerin base, which is highly bio-available to help her liver. Many dogs that don't make it through this auto-immune disease, are those whose liver values are allowed to bounce all over the place, and the subsequent liver failure finally takes them. It was difficult to hear her as she wheezed for oxygen. not from lack of air, but from her cells not being fed enough oxygen. It took an alarmingly long time for the steroids to suppress her body's natural auto-immune response. But, in a week, her body stopped eating her own healthy red blood cells, and her blood looked like blood again!

For some reason, and over-vaccination is one of the suspects, her immune system had 'tilted'. And then came the side effects from the Prednisone. She was always hungry, and thirsty, and the heat became unbearable. Urine would stream down her legs (dogs taking Prednisone lose muscle control along with the body shift and can't sleep, so you can't sleep either).

For the 4 months on Prednisone, she had a bland diet of steamed chicken and white rice so as to have a minimal footprint on her already stressed liver. A fish diet is optimal but I had trouble finding a fish source that didn't run the danger of spines in the food, or being thrown back up.

Today, with the immense help of her veterinarians at Hope Vet Clinic, she is good again. She was weaned off the steroids slowly so as to avoid the risk of an adrenal insufficiency as her own immune system cranked back up. She gets urinary tract infections more often, but adding an occasional cup of cranberry tea, with Uva Ursi along with her home-cooked diet of beef stew and yogurt has helped her recovery immensely. (We tried the b.a.r.f. diet for a while but it consistently kept giving her urinary tract infections, her compromised immune system could not keep the raw food bacteria in check - so i switched back to home-cooked food.)

For more information regarding Hemolytic Anemia in dogs and cats check out:

<http://www.vetnet.co.uk/cgi-bin/gen5?runprog=vetnetbbs&access=00000000000000&mode=tlist&subject=7>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU! FIDO TURNS 10!

How would the age of a puppy who sat on the steps of Litchfield Villa on September 2, 1998 be measured in human years?

Well, it depends on the size of your dog. For a tiny dog of ten years, the human equivalent would be about 55 years, a youngster compared to the really big guys who'd have hit 80 at age 9 and might or might not be able to attend the 10th anniversary celebration. In between, small dogs who are bigger than cats (pardon the expression) would be about 60, and medium size dogs would be a bit over 70.



None of the humans on that historic evening were as little as puppies, but we sat “in the doghouse” with the canines on the steps of the Villa. They wouldn’t let the dogs inside. Never the less, we made some progress. We talked of off-leash hours and various sorts of opposition to them. We talked of ticketing by PEP officers and about the idea that in unity there is strength. Quite a few people signed up for a future meeting in the Villa sans dogs. Not everyone showed, but we had enough in attendance to get started. We never really had elections, but people began to assume rolls. Jane Cameron, a prime mover, took on the presidency and Maureen Sanders, who volunteered to take notes, soon became known as secretary. Small donations were given from here and there and Maureen kept the records in the minutes; thus becoming secretary-treasurer.

During those early meetings, Maureen created the acronym, FIDO and Barbara Burger created the well known logo you might have seen on our donated trash pails before (I’m told) people from other parks stole them (I guess budget cuts make people desperate.) But to this day FIDO continues to donate money for more trash pails. We’ve also donated money for the dog beach, the dog water fountains and the tree and bench where memorials are held.

The Steering Committee soon settled into some ten regulars who are listed as initial directors in the not for profit incorporation papers that were approved by New York State in 1999. Today only 3 of these original founders: Charlotte Gemmel, Diane Johnson and Maureen Sanders: remain on the Steering Committee but many other talented individuals have joined. Even some of those who have left continue to serve in more limited capacities. Founder, Paul Belliveau, continues to do design work for the newsletter, and founder, Mary McInerney, who recently resigned after 7 years as president, stays in touch. Unfortunately founder, Nadine McGann passed away in 2004. Nadine was the force behind the spring and fall lectures. Now Diane Johnson is working with the Education committee headed by Theresa de Paul. We hope to resume our seminar series in the near future.

One of the first activities sponsored by FIDO was Coffee Bark. Coffee Bark made such a hit that it’s still held on a monthly basis, and over 100 months of coffee, tea and dog and human treats have been enjoyed. Jana Brenning, Charlotte Gemmel and Mary McInerney carried the ball (I mean Kong) for many years, and now Bob Ipcar is the coordinator. Over the years we began to sponsor several annual events including Pupnic, a memorial ceremony for dogs who passed away and a holiday celebration, Bark! The Herald Angels Sing!. This year a special event will be held on August 2nd to celebrate our mutterly wonderful 10 years.

Perhaps the crowning achievement of those 10 years was Commissioner Benepe’s agreeing to make a long standing “Off Leash” courtesy a park regulation. It is now legal for dogs to be off leash in New York City parks between 9pm until the park closes and from the time the park opens until 9am. Your dog can run, meet other dogs and even swim (and you wont get a ticket!). You can just socialize with other dog owners. Vaya con perros!

Of course, none of this could have been achieved without our lifeblood, our members. We should congratulate and thank ourselves for what FIDO has made possible for our beloved companions. May the years to come bring even more benefits to the dogs of Prospect Park. Under our new president, Tony Chiappellone, a new committee, Rescue, has been added to the existing Communications, Education, Events, and Membership committees. Please join one or many of them if you can add an extra hour or 2 to your weekly or monthly schedules. Be dogged! You CAN do it.

—M. Sanders

The Dog's Bowl:

FIDO events & happenings

Senator Eric Adams hosts: "Celebrate Our Diversity Day"

Saturday, September 6, 2008

The objective of the day is to observe and honor the multiplicity of ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyles that make up our great borough. I hope to draw meaning from the issues and themes that are important to each of them. Our celebration will be constructed around two separate events.

The first will involve pet owners. We invite all dog owners and non-owners to assemble in the Prospect Park Long Meadow during the hours of 7am to 9am (off-leash hours). It is my aim to construct an occasion during which dog owners and non-owners can use pets as vehicles to recognize how much we actually have in common. If brown dogs, beige dogs, German Shepherds, poodles, retrievers, etc. can play in and enjoy the park together, then we humans should also be able to share our community in mutual esteem and brotherhood/sisterhood.

The second part of the day will involve a bike ride between the hours of 10am & 1pm throughout the 20th Senatorial District. We will ride through the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Boro Park, Crown Heights, Flatbush, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Sunset Park, and Windsor Terrace.



FIDO Calendar

The long-awaited FIDO dog photo calendar is being produced at the Coffee Bark, Oct. 4, 2008. You can purchase thumbnail photos to be placed on the top of a calendar page, along with your dog's name on the corresponding date. This is \$10.00. For a photo on 1/2 of the top page, the cost is \$200. This can be an individual photo or a group photo. In addition, you can have your dog's photo on a collage for \$5.00 and Vets, Pet Stores, Trainers, can have their cards on the calendar for \$25.00. We hope to have the calendar finished and for sale on Nov. 1 at that Coffee Bark.

For more information call: 718-965-0273.

FIDO Staff/Steering Committee:

Anthony Chiappelloni
David Singer
Maureen Sanders
Charlotte Gemmel
Stuart Seit
Julius Harrison
Holly Hallmark
Lynn Radov
Jane Landis
Denise Mortelaro
Betty Dowling
Lisa Dowling
Robert Herskovitz
Bob Ipcar
Dena Allen
Michelle Sevik

Have a story or an opinion?
We'd love to hear from you!
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FIDO photo credits: Rina Deych

Yo, Does Your Dog Bite? (Yes.)

The Art of Responsible Muzzling

by Keely Savoie

There's nothing quite like the sight of a dog in a muzzle that evokes reactions of all kinds from complete strangers, even in this city where everyone has seen everything. Rarely do I manage to walk more than a block without hearing at least one of the three most common reactions:

"Yo, does your dog bite?" (Yes.)

"Mommy, why dat dog has a cage on his face?" (so she won't bite your precious little hand off as you grab a handful of fur as we pass by.)

"Hey there goes Hannibal!" (Nope, never heard that one before!)



But lately there have been a growing number of people who have stopped and asked me honestly about the muzzle. Sometimes I even get an earnest thanks for being a responsible dog owner. All this to me is an encouraging sign that there is growing recognition among the dog-owning community that, for as much as we spoil, dote on and love our beasts sometimes even more than our human companions, they are and always will be dogs.

Some background: I share my life with two beautiful, loving, loyal pit-rott-shepherd mixes that I adopted when they were 10 weeks old. Despite their identical upbringing and shared DNA, their personalities couldn't be more different: Ozzie is your average, dopey, mud-eating easy-going lover-dog. Kaytu, on the other hand, is shy and anxious, occasionally dog-aggressive, and even known to have bouts of fear-aggression toward humans.

Accepting that I could not train, trick or wish Kaytu into being a better dog was a long and expensive process. I spent thousands of dollars on trainers, books and accessories—pinch collars, special leashes, even shock collars. Each and every one came with the promise to stop her lunging, biting, snarling and snapping. Each and everyone failed to make Kaytu a different dog.

Denial, it is said, ends when you hit rock-bottom. My rock-bottom was when Kaytu lunged at another dog that had haplessly strolled too close. Kaytu's flashing teeth caught his ear, resulting in an alarming amount of blood, an angry owner and an emergency visit to the vet. That day I decided that she would be muzzled every time we went out of the house.

Finding the correct muzzle:

Finding the correct muzzle for me was not as easy as walking into the nearest pet store. Adjustable "soft" muzzles looked like an option, but when I talked to the owner of the store that sold them, he pointed out that because they don't allow for panting or drinking they were really only suited for short-term, indoor use—outside use can be dangerous.

I found a plastic "Italian" basket muzzle that I thought would work, but it was instantly reduced to brittle shards the first time Kaytu rolled in the snow with it.

Then I tried a "PSI" wire basket muzzle, but it was flimsy—the leather straps were easily stretched and broken, and the poorly welded wires would occasionally break and bend outward, making her a walking tetanus hazard. I went through two of those before I finally did some research and found the sturdy metal and thick leather muzzle that she wears now. There are a number of resources to get decent muzzles—I used www.fordogtrainers.com—Look for something that is sturdy and well ventilated and properly fit, with enough room for your dogs to open its mouth to pant, drink and, if necessary, vomit.



It has been three years since she has been muzzled. The most interesting thing is that presence of the muzzle has had an unexpected calming effect on Kaytu—or maybe it has increased my confidence, putting her more at ease. Even when she does encounter a dog that triggers her aggression, the muzzle prevents a scuffle from escalating into a full-blown fight. On the handful of times that she has lunged at a dog since being muzzled, she has only been nipped once—and because she could not nip back, the situation de-escalated, and both she and the other dogs emerged unscathed.

Because of this experience, I have become a passionate advocate of muzzling. It helps keep you, your dog, and your community safe, and it encourages responsibility in other dog owners. Even if your dog isn't "always" aggressive, isn't it better to be safe than sorry? Of course, aggressive behavior isn't the only reason to muzzle your dog. Garbage-scavengers, squirrel-chasers and poop-eaters should also be muzzled for their own safety, not to mention your peace of mind.

How to Get Your Dog a Companion, Without Getting Another Dog

By Mical Moser

We've had dog play-dates since my pooch was a pup. Initially, it was to give her more wrestling time, but everything grew and now she's 55 pounds and we have an extended pack. I didn't anticipate most of the benefits. If we're out late, for instance, she's almost always got someone - human or canine - to be with.

Other benefits include:

- More intensive socialization with other dogs means that she gets along peacefully with all types: giant, teeny, male, female, pup, arthritic, neurotic, and she knows to avoid the aggressive ones.
- Socializing with more people means that she's flexible in her understanding of different commands. This makes it easier for other people to have her over, take her to the park, bring her on adventures. She's also had practice with children, babies, the nervous, etc.
- Spending time at other people's homes has made her a better, more flexible guest, relaxed in new environments, attentive to different rules, respectful of cats, and furniture.
- The dogs in our extended pack get to do things with their other human friends. For our extended pack, these experiences have included camping trips, visits to New Hampshire, the Catskills, Cape Cod, and the beach. Their dogs' lives are richer because they have working relationships with multiple people. They know our commands. We know their behaviors.

For the humans, the benefits include:

- We have evenings when we don't need to rush home.
- We don't need to worry about taking the dog into new situations.
- We have other dogs without actually having other dogs (think grandparenting).
- If we have to go away overnight, she has sleepovers someplace where she's comfortable, with dogs and people who she loves, with people familiar with her signals.
- Sometimes our friends take our dog out on last walk for us (how great is that?), or feed her when we're out late, or give us a morning off by taking her to the park, or once our dog was at home waiting for a walk, and we were unexpectedly caught in traffic, but one of our friends was able to come over and take the desperate pup out.

So how do you establish an extended pack? A lot of people have indicated to me that they want the benefits of an extended pack without the work, so the first thing to say is that there are fantastic doggy day-care and overnight options in Brooklyn if that sounds like you. Extended packs take time and love. If you're up for it, here are the steps that worked for us.

1. Initiate/Reciprocate.

Gandhi said, be the change you want to see. Is there a dog your dog likes to play with? Invite that dog and its people over for an after-park breakfast. Hang out. Did someone once invite you and your dog over? It's your turn to invite them back! Extended packs only work if the humans have excellent manners.

2. Be prepared for accidents.

Excitement, anxiety, a need to mark territory or to submit, whatever the reason, dogs often pee in a new place.

Get to know your dog's signals or it may become habit! Also:

- Make sure the visiting dog peed before coming in.
- Say hello where there's no carpet. Submission peeing happens with "hello."
- Don't get distracted by the delightful conversation and delicious food. You all need to keep a hawk eye on the dogs, and this probably means confining them to the room you're in. Is anyone circling? Looking for an exit? Signaling? Whisk them out! Nothing cramps a budding friendship like discovering piss in the laundry basket.
- Keep the bedroom area off limits! It's the den of dens, and a prime marking spot.
- If someone pees, anyone (it's OK to let the dog know that it's your house!) has to be there immediately, hands on withers, saying, "no!," scooting the little pisser out.
- The truth is, babies do it too. Have a deodorizing product like Nature's Miracle on hand.

3. Watch carefully.

Are the dogs interacting and enjoying themselves? Are they arguing over a toy or a bone? If you remove the bone of contention, do they get along? Like people, a dog will like some individuals more than others, but most dogs (like most people) can find someone they LOVE.

- Remember that it's not safe to be intimidated by a dog who's in your house. If you're feeling this way, then you need to rise to the occasion or bow out.
- Please note that dogs who lie lovingly with a toy when home alone can be morphed by the pack into a gleefully, fierce ripper of toy carcasses. Hide toys that you love.

4. Repeat the process a few times.

The dog needs to be comfortable and familiar with the home, it needs an established relationship with the other dog and with the people before you vanish.

We've tried to shortcut this; the dogs pay and the hosting humans pay. (Think abandonment.)

5. Establish a schedule that you enjoy.

Regular weekly visits are good for everyone but remember to build reciprocation into the schedule or the relationship isn't likely to last.

6. Remember your manners.

- Reciprocate early and reciprocate often.
- When you ask someone to care for your dog for free, you're asking for work. Don't ask for six walks a day, on a precise schedule, with precise commands, and by the way could you also pick up AND drop off?
- Don't assume that an extra three hours is no big deal. Don't assume that your dog can stay overnight. Remember that it's a huge imposition for your perfect poochy to stay a week while you're away for work. But if someone is nice enough to do this for you, there are excellent restaurants in the area. Take them as a thank you, and also to reinforce the human element of the relationship.

It's true that we spend time every week facilitating our dog's social schedule. This may seem silly to some people, but without our extended pack, my dog wouldn't be as happy as she is, my social life wouldn't be as rich, and my schedule wouldn't be nearly as flexible. For me, it's just a matter of finding a pack with similar needs and tweaking the process until it works.

Mical Moser's dog, Dora, currently has a full dance ticket. She spends almost every day with Sam the Beagle; Isaac, the big, black mix; or Nala, the shepherd cross. Most of Dora's toys are shredded.

Did you know your dog is blind?

The life of a visually impaired dog

Sometimes it seems that Molly can sense when you're getting ready to give her a treat which is a good thing since she is visually impaired. Molly is our six and a half year old brown standard poodle. My wife and I have had Molly since she was seven weeks old. It wasn't until a vet visit when she was three months old and the doctor asked, "Did you know your dog is blind?" that we realized Molly was sight impaired.

After seeing a veterinary optometrist and a veterinary neurologist, Molly was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, a condition where fluid doesn't drain properly from the brain causing swelling within the skull. In the confined space of the skull this swelling causes increased pressure on the brain. Molly's condition was confirmed by an MRI when she was three years old.

Hydrocephalus in humans is treated by placing a shunt in the brain to drain the excess fluid out of the skull. Unfortunately, due to the physiology of dogs, the procedure is not as simple and the shunt requires daily maintenance and seriously impacts the life of the dog. Since Molly has always been a happy, well adjusted and high functioning dog, we opted to treat her with medication. This choice has been successful in treating her condition but the medicine could not help with her impaired sight.

Molly is not blind, she sees well at night and in low light conditions, but she doesn't see well during the day and has very poor depth perception. This has led us to develop strategies to help her avoid injuring herself by walking into objects. We try to be vigilant and always be aware of the environment around her. The primary means for helping Molly navigate is the use of audio cues. Of course verbal commands are important for all dogs, but it is especially important for visually impaired dogs like Molly. I found early on that clicks and whistles cut through ambient sounds and other dog owners better than verbal commands. This is especially true in the park on weekends and especially during coffee bark. When walking Molly on the street or off leash in the park, we keep in almost constant verbal contact with her so she knows where we are in relation to her. The clicks and whistles alert Molly to our location and that she needs to pay attention.

We do have specific verbal commands for Molly. The two primary verbal commands we use are "step" and "careful." We live on the third floor of a walk up and Molly's first verbal cue was "step" to tell her that she is not on a level surface. We also use "step" at curbs along with a gentle leash correction of lifting the leash. Molly's second cue is "careful." We use careful when she is in imminent danger of walking into something and it alerts her to stop and pivot, she usually pivots 45 to 90 degrees. Sometimes a second careful is necessary, but usually one is sufficient in helping her avoid obstacles.

So next time you're in the park and a brown poodle gently walks into your legs, just turn around and say hello to Molly!



Keep Prospect Park Off-Leash Friendly

Here is my Membership contribution of:

\$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other Renewal
Renewal (annual renewal due each April 1st*)

Name _____ Dog(s) Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Mail This Form to:
Fido In Prospect Park
230 7th Ave #157
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Voice Mail: 888 604 3422

E-mail: fidobrooklyn@gmail.com