



WALNUT CREEK DOG OWNERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, No. 4 December 2008

“WCDOG – Fostering community spirit through people, pets and parks”

Online at Last!

We hope you like our new online newsletter, and find it convenient to refer back to the newsletter in its new format. We moved online to reduce printing costs and to make sure that all WCDOG members receive the newsletter.

Coming Attractions

WCDOG will be starting monthly clean-ups of the Shell Ridge open space. Specific day of the month is still being determined, most likely a Sunday morning. If you would like to be part of this volunteer group please email your name and phone number to Pamela Kan at pak@bwc.com. We had a good turnout in October for the first effort and made a huge improvement in the trailhead experience at the Sutherland and Marshall entrances.

Bonnie Brown-Cali, owner of Dog Dynamics and friend to WCDOG, will offer two 6 week classes through Walnut Creek Park and Recreation beginning on January 6: Beginning Obedience at 7:15 and Off-Leash Preparation, beginning at 8:15. She will also offer Puppy Headstart through Orinda Park and Recreation beginning January 8. Check www.dogdynamics.org for more details.

The San Francisco SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers is offering a series of 4 lectures in San Francisco in January that sound fascinating, starting with “Top ten myths about dog behavior – Why does he do that?” from 7-9 p.m. on January 6. Details and online registration at: <http://www.sfspca.org/academy/lectures.shtml>

Winter holidays!! [look below for a special treat for dogs and holiday precautions]

WCDOG is Fundraising for a New Police Dog!

Many of us met Orfus, Walnut Creek’s first police dog, and his handler, Officer Pat Duggan, at the opening of the dog park at Heather Farm. Orfus is used as a patrol and narcotics dog, and is especially valuable in searches of all kinds. In fact, the K-9 team is so valuable to the department that if enough money is raised for a second dog, the department would retrofit another vehicle and prepare for another K-9 unit. Many officers are eager to work with a canine partner, and a second K-9 team could cover another patrol shift. Highly trained dogs like Orfus cost \$9,000.

If you would like to donate towards a second police dog, make your check payable to WCDOG/K-9 and mail to WCDOG, P.O. Box 120, 1839B Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. Sandra Nakamura-Bush is spearheading the effort. For more information, contact her at HRHPlease@aol.com

Rock n' Roll Halloween Howl was - dare we say it - a Howling Success

We want to thank The Sports Basement, and especially Wayne Spaulding and Blossom Barnes, for helping to make the dog-friendly Halloween Howl party at their store on November 1st a great success. The winner of the adult costume contest was Rhonda Taylor,. Kate Alva, the bee to her father's bee keeper, took the children's prize. Joy Gatasi and her dogs Chikka, Eva and Denali won the dog costume prize. Jill Harvey won the grand raffle.

Police Chief Joel Bryden spoke as a kick off to the fundraising for a second police dog for the city. The Sports Basement donated 5% of all sales that evening to the cause.

Dog park news

Incident Report Forms are now available at Wag World

Incident Report Forms are now available in the plastic box next to the Information boards at Wag World. If you have approached a park user over an issue (i.e., over any of the rules such as aggression, larger dog in the small section, poop pick-up, food in the park, small children running around, etc.) and polite discussion hasn't solved the problem, fill out an incident form. Encourage others observing the same behavior to also complete a form. They can be folded and mailed to the address on the back. Once 3 or 4 reports are collected, there is support for stronger action.

It takes time to create a dog park community. Please do your part to help Wag World reach its full potential. Chat with strangers, learn their names and the names of their dogs, model good dog park manners, and submit incident reports if necessary.

San Miguel Park

Several of the San Miguel Dog Park community's favorite canine visitors passed away recently. Their sweet presence will be missed.

Dexter Rascher, who lived an amazing 19 years, appeared at the San Francisco SPCA in 1989 as an adolescent stray. Outgoing and fearless, but sensitive to people's moods, he was drafted into the SPCA's Hearing Dog program. As alert and attentive as he was, Dexter had a "nervous cough" and was unable to qualify as a service dog. Ann King was volunteering at the SPCA the day he "flunked out: and was put up for adoption. Recognizing a great companion, she adopted him immediately. Like many dogs whose early years were traumatic, Dexter had separation anxiety. He was also an escape artist who wandered as long as 11 days. However, he relaxed when he and Ann stayed with her parents in Walnut Creek. So, seven years ago, when Dexter was 12 years old and her father had just retired, Ann felt he would be better off with her parents, Dan and Angie Rascher. And here, in his later years, he found his life's calling as an "informal social worker." He became the 24-hour companion to Dan, filling his retirement days and opening up a new social world for him as people in the community got to know the two of them on their daily rounds. Dan always said that Dexter was "a fine dog" and those of us who knew Dexter all agree.

Hannah, a lovely, friendly boxer, was a fixture at San Miguel almost every morning for a number of years. Hannah was a bit of a Velveteen Rabbit, who grew to be special in all of our hearts as we observed how much she was loved by her charming owner, Con Torget. The community was gratified that Harvey and Phyllis Caesar agreed to share ownership when Con, 87, needed help caring for her, and that they continued to bring her to the park. Con, 87, continued to take her for daily rides until a few years ago. More recently, he visited her everyday, and sometimes she stayed with him, remaining his fondest companion. Hannah was seven.

Here come the holidays!

The Perfect Christmas Gift for your Pets

Joan McClure, WCDOG President, and committed advocate for planning for pets in the case of a personal emergency or disaster, suggests that the “**The Perfect Christmas Gift for Your Pets**” is to make arrangements for their care during a personal emergency or a disaster.

Two basic steps will ensure their care even if you’re not available. Make arrangements with at least two neighbors, and prepare an emergency kits.

1. Make arrangements with at least two neighbors.
 - a. They know where your pet emergency kit is located.
 - b. They have keys to your home.
 - c. They are familiar with your pets and the animals are comfortable with them.
 - d. They have agreed to check on your pets in case you’re gone during a disaster and to respond to a call from any authorities in case you’re in an emergency situation.
 - e. You carry a card in your wallet, next to other emergency information that states PETS AT HOME and lists the names/phone numbers of the neighbors.
2. Emergency Kit
 - a. Papers in protective cover: copy of license, proof of vaccinations, microchip number, recent photo with you, description of any allergies and personality, emergency numbers (vet, home, other emergency people).
 - b. Leash and harness
 - c. Food for at least 7 days
 - d. Water and dish
 - e. Calming medication
 - f. Plastic bags for clean up
 - g. Familiar items: toy, blanket, treats
 - h. Muzzle
 - i. Booties to protect feet/cover any wounds
 - j. Medications and directions
 - k. Crate available if possible

Micro chip your pets, even cats, add a basic first kit to the emergency supplies and feel secure that your loved animals will be cared for in any emergency.

A Tasty Stocking Stuffer for Good Dogs

And in a lighter vein, dogs that have been very, very good this year would be happy to see Banana-Blueberry Dog Cookies in their stockings. Nancy Carlin reports that these dog biscuits passed the taste test it at San Miguel.. Lila, the bassets, Chaucer and several other dogs all thought they tasted just fine.

Banana-Blueberry Dog Cookies

- Preheat the oven to 350 F
- 4 cups of whole wheat flour
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 2 bananas
- 2 4.4 oz containers of blueberries (or could substitute raspberries)
- 2 eggs or equivalent of eggbeaters
- 2 tsp of vanilla

1. In a bowl combine the flour, baking powder and baking soda.
2. In the food processor combine the bananas, blueberries, eggs and vanilla. Puree until smooth and pour it into the dry ingredients and mix well.

3. Spray 1-2 cookie sheets with Pam, olive oil or other cooking oil. Use a teaspoon or melon baller to drop small cookies on the sheets.
4. Bake in the oven for c.15 minutes or until done (depends on the size of the cookies)

Holiday Precautions

At www.bestfirends.org we found a good summary of tips for keeping pets safe at Christmas time:

- If you have a real Christmas tree, keep the water in the stand covered so your animals can't drink it. The pine sap is dangerous if ingested.
- Secure the tree to a wall or the ceiling with fishing line and a hook to prevent pets from knocking it over.
- Tree lights should not be left on when you're not around, since your pets may tangle themselves in the cords. Unplug the tree lights when you're not using them.
- If your pets express interest in playing with the decorations on the tree, decorate the bottom third of the tree with wood or plastic ornaments that won't break.
- Keep all gifts that contain human food off the floor so that pets are not tempted by the smells. **Human treats can be dangerous for pets – especially food containing** chocolate, alcohol, raisins and onions. [and also keep dogs away from fat, bones that can splinter, etc.]
- Holiday plants such as poinsettias and mistletoe can be dangerous, too, if your pets chew on them. Keep holiday plants well out of reach of your pets, or buy artificial plants.
- Put burning candles in places that are inaccessible to your pets and don't let candles burn unattended.

A Walk in the Hills

We are so lucky to have the open spaces surrounding our local cities. They're beautiful and peaceful, giving us long winding trails to walk with our dogs. As first glance there is nothing to be concerned about. However, the dog walker needs to be aware of two risks: coyotes and rattle snakes. A lone coyote can be a threat to smaller breeds. Even the larger dogs need to be called back, particularly if two or more coyotes are together. Right now the rattlesnakes are less visible and active than in the summer. But they are denning in crevices and are a danger to dogs that wander. As you enjoy your walk in the hills, be sure to carry bags and pick up poop. Dog feces make the trails unsightly and they also spread diseases to the non-meat eating wild life.

Advice from Lassie

Our friend Lassie has more advice this month to our canine pals.

Dear Lassie, The holidays are around the corner, and I sure do miss my pal Butch. A 'il boy on my street got Butch for Krismas; I loved to play with Butch! But I don't sees him anymore. My human asked where he went, and Butch's mom and dad just look sad and don't want to talk about it. Why?

Freddie

A: Oh, dear, Freddie, I'm so sorry about Butch. I don't know for sure, but I'm afraid he may have ended up like so many Christmas presents of puppies and kittens. Ya see, Freddie, humans like to give their kids fun presents for the holidays and so many kids want a puppy or kitty. They are so very cute and playful! But the humans have to take care of them, and often their kids are too little to properly care for these living creatures they've brought into their homes. And lots of humans are surprised when they discover that this new life in their home needs time, attention, training, love, and lots of exercise. They try really hard to keep up with all the work but too often they get overwhelmed and give the puppy or kitty away, or take it to the pound. That's so sad because at the pound, if the puppy or kitty isn't adopted in a short time, it gets "put to sleep". That's a politically correct way of saying it's killed. Oh, it's done in a humane way, so the animal doesn't suffer, but it's still dead. Oh, it makes me cry to think about it! So Freddie, make sure everyone you meet knows to be fully informed on what it takes to bring another life into a home, so fewer animals end up dead.

Love, Lassie

Dear Lassie, How do you handle those overly amorous males who're constantly trying to get lucky? You know, the ones who hump all the time. I try telling them I have a headache but most of 'em don't wanna hear it! Thanks! Misty

A: Misty, I know what you mean! Oh, the hassles of being beautiful! Anyway, I've found that my human has the best success with this issue. She gets between me and Lothario and stakes her claim to me. She does whatever it takes to stay between us, never touches Romeo, but stays in his face while telling him I belong to her in a very assertive way. Ya know, it's worked on every clown, I mean, male she's done this to! She's the one in control and she makes sure it's known! Ask your human to start claiming you! Oh, yeah, and this works for any dog who may hump you, even if they're doing it for dominance reasons.

Winks, Lassie

Did you know?

- A small drop of fluid at the end of a bowel movement is the sign that your dog has properly expressed its anal gland? This keeps the anal gland from becoming impacted.
- Your dog's only sweat glands are between the paws. That's why it's so important to keep your dog from becoming overheated and/or dehydrated.
- When hot, your dog will pant more to cool the blood that flows through its tongue. The tongue will also get redder and wider (more blood flow).
- Your membership contribution will help fund shade structures and other amenities at Wag World and enable WCDOG to share information of interest to local dog owners via the newsletter, flyers, etc. (we printed 700 copies of our last newsletter!)
- WCDOG wants you! Coordinate or just help with the Sunday evening clean ups at the dog park at Heather Farm. Help man the WCDOG booth at Animals on Broadway and other community events. Help out at pet emergency training events. Take photos for the newsletter. Help make our motto a reality. Contact Joan McClure (joan1979@astound.net) or Judy Hirabayashi (jhirabayashi@inverness-research.org) if interested.
- **Our own WCDOG website <http://www.wcdog.org> is a great source of information and of links to other websites for dog lovers.** Check out (and save for emergencies) the recently added list of local pet friendly hotels.

ThankYouThankYouThankYou!!!

**** Sports Basement (Ygnacio Plaza) ****

Peets (Ygnacio Plaza)
Hi Tech Burrito (Ygnacio Plaza)
Your Safety Place (Dublin)
UPS (iEncina Grande)
The Container Store
Floralii Florist
Postal Annex (Ygnacio Plaza)
FedEx Kinko (Mt Diablo Blvd.)
The Balloon Man
Wags and Whiskers
Encore Theatrical
Bill Grant (for video)

AND the city's maintenance crew

We welcome other sponsors. Any business that supports WCDOG will be featured in our newsletters throughout 2009. We are planning for a **recognition wall** to recognize our corporate, business and private sponsors. Please check our website for details.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN WCDOG! Annual dues of \$20 are due in June; \$10 will pay for membership good through June 2009. Use the Membership Form below or download the form from www.wcdog.org.

Fill out this form and return it with a check for \$10 made out to WCDOG to:
2008 Annual Dues (Voting Member), WCDOG, 1839B Ygnacio Valley Rd., Box 120, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Name _____

Dog(s) Names _____ Dog(s) breed _____

Email (important!) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

(Be assured that contact info will be used only for WCDOG communications.)

- I don't wish to be a member but add me to your mailing list
- I wish to donate an additional \$_____ towards dog park expenses
- This donation is in memory of/in honor of my pet(s) named _____