



WALNUT CREEK DOG OWNERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, No. 2 September, 2007

WOW WOW WOW!

If you have not already done so, take a stroll over to Heather Farm Park and check out our future all-day dog park . . . it is looking beautiful. Grass, trees and the human and dog drinking fountain are in and fencing is nearing completion.



Gated entry area with water fountains (the big dog park is straight ahead, the small/elderly dog entry is to the right)

Several trees have been planted, and best of all, Stever Waymire and Joe Sadri on the city of Walnut Creek's engineering team have made us especially happy by expanding the small dog area by eliminating most of the weed-studded scrub area and planting grass there instead. This gives the small and elderly dog area a much improved appearance and function.

Later this month, WCDOG board members will have an onsite meeting at the new park with Dan Cather of Walnut Creek Parks and Rec. This meeting will be to discuss placement of the recognition wall, kiosk, picnic tables etc.



View of the small/elderly dog park

Whilst we are all looking forward to using this new facility, we still need to be patient because the turf will need a couple of months to become established.

The city will be arranging the grand opening of the dog park, and we will keep you posted when we know what arrangements have been made.

SAN MIGUEL PARK NEWS

The Big Group Poop Scoop Scoop!

Just a reminder that WCDOG spearheads a monthly group poop scoop the **first Sunday of every month at 8:30 a.m.** We continue to be very grateful for the friendly and spontaneous cooperation we receive when we ask everyone who is there to help out. Who knows what so many eyes will spot?

When Kevin Easterly lost his car keys, everyone cooperated on a park swoop. Chuck Nevius found Kevin's keys and received a round of applause from his fellow park users.

Help Tackle a Couple of Potential Park Issues: Treats, Toys, & Digging

Recently we have noticed that treats can be a problem at the dog park, so we are asking all owners and visitors to **resist the temptation to give treats to dogs that are not your own, and to be discreet when using food to train or reward your own dog(s)**. A few dogs who are otherwise great dog park visitors can be aggressive around food, others are on diets, and still others need to be careful because they have allergies. To discourage scrounging, if you do bring treats for your dog, you might carry them up high (in a shirt pocket, for example) rather than in a pants pocket or waist pack.

If you bring **toys** for your dog, please be patient if some other dog is tempted to play with them. Even responsible owners have a hard time calling off a dog following the siren call of some other dog's bright ball.

While owners chat, some dogs seem to be tunneling their way to China from the grove of San Miguel Park trees next to the turnaround near John Muir. It is easy to lose sight of your dog up in that area, and some **dogs are quietly and energetically digging out very large ground squirrel holes** when no one is watching. This is unsightly and can create a hazard to walkers. If your dog uses that area, please discourage all digging, and help keep the area in good shape by refilling any holes you notice with your shoe or a ball scooper. We have alerted park maintenance staff about this as well. Thanks!

A "Petiquette" Reminder

The WCDOG Board has been working with Walnut Creek Parks people to establish rules and guidelines for the new dog park. One of the things we want to stress is that polite handling of situations with good manners, a balanced viewpoint, and empathy (i.e., with good "petiquette") allows us to not lay down too many rules. We count on seasoned park users to set the tone so dogs and humans have an enjoyable experience socializing.

Be Aware -- You are Financially Responsible if Your Dog Injures Another Dog or a Person

If you have an aggressive dog, you are financially responsible for medical bills to take care of injuries your dog may inflict. If your dog is aggressive, the dog park is not the right place for exercise and socialization.

San Miguel Upkeep Update

The city has been notified of the damaged fence section and will arrange for its repair. And hard to believe, but the rainy season isn't too far in the

distance; help discourage dogs from digging in muddy spots in the grass. Also, please keep your dog out of the children's play area.

Baby News

Congratulations to **Michelle**, on the birth of her second baby, Harry. Her German Shepherd, Fritz, will be sharing her attention at the park from now on.

Sian Oblak and her husband will pick up their new son, Lewis Ma, on September 10. Lewis was born last December 9th. Sian says that her Newfie, Auggie, is looking forward to having a baby brother. Come by for bagels and coffee at **8 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 5th** to celebrate with Sian when we host a baby shower for her.

A Fond Farewell to Marc Jassum

Marc, longtime San Miguel park regular, recently decided to move to Portland, Oregon to be closer to family after he lost his sweet West Highland Terrier, Fritz. Marc, we wish you well in your move, and look forward to seeing you on your visits to the Bay Area!

"Failed" Fosters

Sometimes when good-hearted folks foster dogs, it just doesn't turn out as planned. Last spring, **Jennifer Brazil** agreed to foster handsome basset Mick until he was ready to move on. However, she and her other bassets, Tallulah and Wim, decided he'd be a good addition to their pack, so he has a forever home with her. More recently, **Judy and Terry McConnell**, fond owners of standard poodles Blu and Charlotte, agreed to foster a frightened little miniature poodle, Max, till he found a home. They showered him with love and attention, and he warmed his way into their hearts forever. This summer, having got a brother, Sebastian, for their lovely poodle, Saskia, **Tim and Kathy Conlin** opened their hearts to foster an abused poodle pup, Simon. You know the rest.

A San Miguel Portrait: Lori Lustig, Our Own Champion of Hard-to-Place Dogs

By Sian Oblak

Dozens of dogs visit San Miguel Park each week. The dogs know this is their place and time and their owners hang out, at first by default and then by choice.

I and my dog Auggie are regular park goers and over the three or more years we have been visiting the park we have come to know many of the other regulars. There are many special people who bring their dogs to the park. One such doggy mom is **Lori Lustig**. If you don't know Lori – look for a bright-eyed lady who is usually chatting with one of the other

regulars and is always surrounded by dogs of different sizes and colors.

Most days Lori comes to the park with her and her mother's dogs. Natasha and Kilo were adopted as pups. Boogie Man who was rescued from the Mexican border by a Samoyed rescue foundation and then adopted by Lori in March 2006. She saved Boo Boo, a gentle and somewhat tottering senior who is a dog park favorite, last November from euthanasia that was scheduled for the following day. Most recently, she became foster mom to three tiny poodle mixes – Ziggy, Bob and Damian – who have been finding their courage again in her care. (Ziggy and Damian have already found permanent homes after a healing interlude in her care.) Sweet Penelope has also found her forever home.

Lori's dogs could be considered among the most needy, since they are rescue dogs and are often older or less adoptable animals. This is what I call true animal advocacy. Lori puts her energy....heart.....and money (vet care ain't cheap), where her mouth is and steps up to the plate. As a devoted animal lover myself, I thank Lori for doing so much for the noble species.

Lori has strongly held opinions about the care of dogs: she advocates adoption from rescue shelters over the purchase of pure breed animals because so many unwanted dogs are euthanized each year. She stresses the necessary commitment of an owner when taking on a pup, in order for the pup to grow into a healthy, stable adult. An owner should also be well matched to his/her dog – for instance, a high energy dog must be given adequate exercise to thrive.

If you are considering fostering or finding a place in your life for an older dog needing a home or for a dog that has other special needs, Lori is the person to talk to. And she is still looking for a home for Bob.

If anyone would like to profile another park regular, contact Judy Hirabayashi.

CESAR MILAN SEMINAR COMING

Dog Whisperer Milan will give a 3-hour seminar on Oct 21, 2-5 P.M., at the Flint Center in Cupertino. Tickets start at \$25.
<http://www.cesarmillaninc.com/interact/seminars.php>

TAKE YOUR DOG TO TOWN . . .

Does your dog have 120% reliably great public manners? Are you willing and able to keep him or her under complete control while you are out and about? If the answer is yes, then many downtown businesses welcome your dog.

If you have never tried taking your dog into stores, start out with the pet stores (**PetCo**, and cute, independent **Scraps** on Locust St.) and **The Container Store**, where they LOVE dogs and employees jostle one another to be the one to provide a treat.

Pacific Bay Coffee, Peets and **Starbucks** all welcome dogs at outside tables, and **House of Bagels**, next to Peets, has free day-old bagels for your pal. **Hubcaps** (several doors down from Scraps) and **Pomegranate** permit dogs at outside tables, if you are looking for a place to eat.

Most stores that do not sell any food will allow your dog. When in doubt, ask at the door, especially if the goods are delicate and/or expensive. If there are already dogs in the store, consider coming back later. San Miguel park dog owners have had positive experiences in lots of places downtown in addition to the ones above – some that may surprise you. So pull out your leash and visit:

Aveda (treats inside, and sometimes water outside)
Barnes and Noble (1st floor only)
Blockbuster
Bonanza Books
Brighton Jewelry
H & M
House of Bagels
Hubcaps
Nordstrom (okay to use the elevator to upper floors)
Pacific Bay Coffee
Peets
Petco
Pomegranate
Pottery Barn
Restoration Hardware
Scraps
Smith and Hawken
Starbucks
The Container Store
Washington Mutual Bank

Just remember, if you have even the slightest doubt that your pooch is business-ready, leave him or her home. If you have other recommendations, let me know.

MEET THE NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR, JUDY HIRABAYASHI

As the new editor of the newsletter, I want to help tell our stories. So here is mine. You may know my 80-pound Ridgeback mix, Harvey (aka "Harvey the Humper"), from San Miguel park. As these things happen, several years ago I fell in love with his photo and story when I was on PetFinder.com looking for a 40-pound female lab mix (hoping to find a clone of my last dog). When not pulling Harvey off other dogs at the park, I am a consultant who studies and evaluates projects seeking to improve student, teacher and public appreciation for and understanding of science. Coincidentally, post-retirement, my husband, Don, teaches science at Orinda Intermediate School. This was a big summer for us; we traveled to the Serengeti and other Tanzanian game parks in June and our daughter was married in August. Contact me with news, ideas for newsletter content, etc. at the park, at jhirabayashi@inverness-research.org, or at 256-7828. A big thanks to Nancy Carlin for her able work on the newsletter before me.

NEWS FROM THE EAST BAY SPCA

The good folks at the East Bay SPCA, with facilities in Oakland and Dublin, offer a range of services that you may find useful.

- They offer deep discounts on their **dog training classes** at both facilities for anyone who has adopted a dog from any rescue group or shelter. (A series of classes is usually \$125. – the discount rate is \$75.) See <http://www.eastbayspca.org/dogtraining/> for a list of their classes.
- Both the Dublin and Oakland facility clinics offer drop-in **vaccinations**.
- The Dublin facility offers a dog (and cat) **boarding** program.

- **Low-cost spay/neuter facilities** at both sites are staffed with caring medical teams and both facilities are new and beautiful.
- Last, but not least, they always have wonderful dogs available for adoption.

DID YOU KNOW?

Diabetes can strike dogs as well as people. To learn about this disease, go to <http://petdiabetes.wikia.com>.

Chocolate is not the only human goody that is dangerous for dogs. Macadamia nuts, raisins and grapes are also poisonous for dogs. And who knew that onions can be dangerous too. This sounds like an urban legend, but its true; check out <http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/raisins.asp> for more info.

The WCDOG website is a great source of information and links to other websites for dog lovers. Jerry Carlin updates it frequently. Check it out.

WCDOG MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007 DISCOUNTED TO ONLY \$10

Incredibly, the year is more than half over already, so if you have not already joined WCDOG or renewed your membership for 2007, we urge you to do so now. The annual \$20 dues are discounted to \$10 for membership for the rest of the year. With the new dog park on the horizon, we appreciate your support for our efforts more than ever. Use the Membership Form below or download the form from our web site www.wcdog.org

Join or renew your membership in WCDOG - \$10 for the remainder of 2007

Fill out this form and return it with a check to:

Annual Dues (Voting Member), WC Dog, 1867 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Box 120, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Name _____ Dog(s) Names _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I don't wish to be a member but add me to your mailing list

I wish to donate _____ towards dog park expenses

This donation is in memory of/in honor of my pet(s) named _____