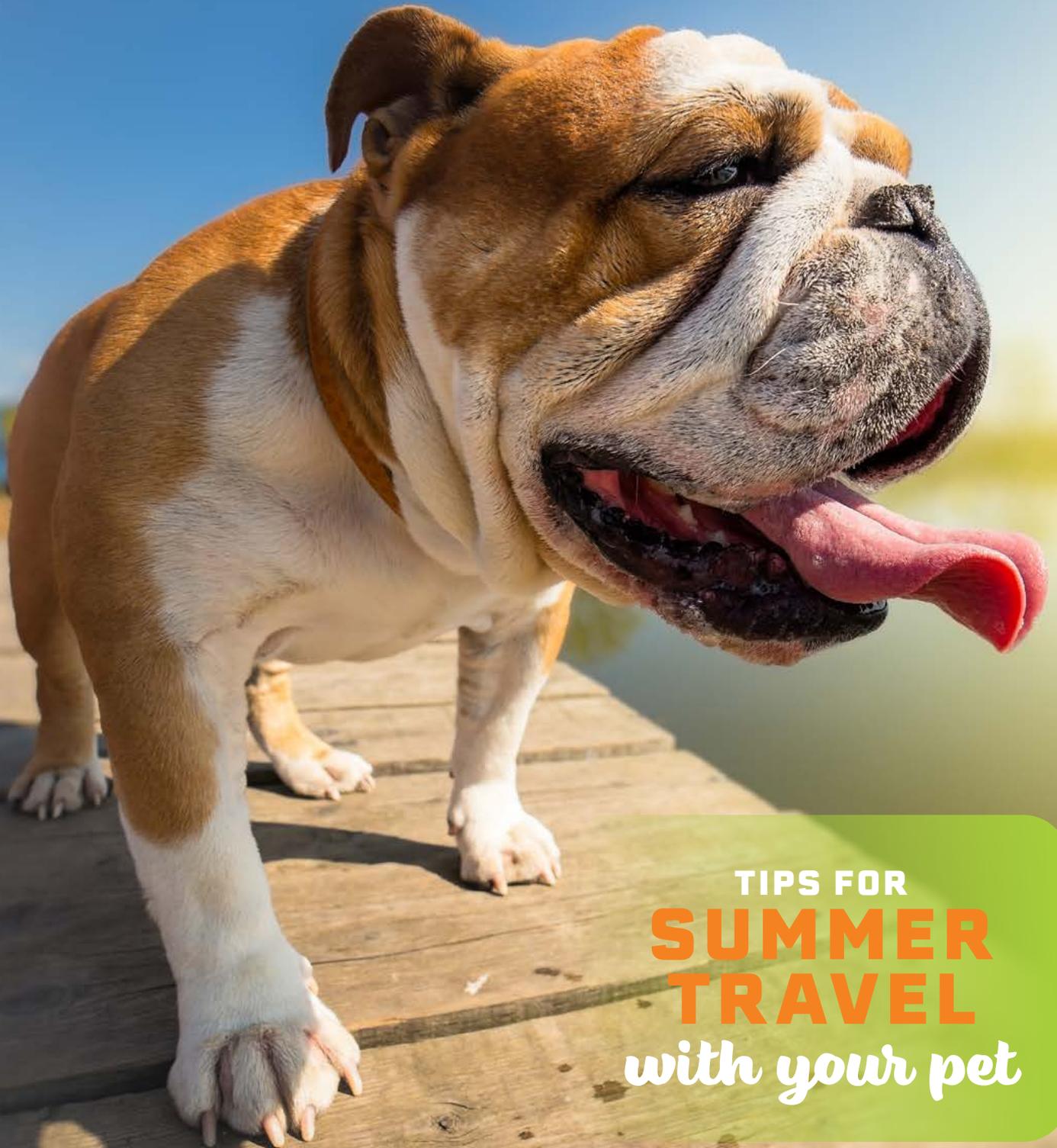


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I would give Angel's six stars if possible. The funeral home is beautiful, pristine, and immaculate—comparable to any fine human funeral home.

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I travel for work but wanted to ensure I was there to see our girl one last time and confirm that I was truly getting my dog back—especially given the unfortunate stories I've heard about other similar businesses.

Angel completely understood this and went out of her way to accommodate my schedule, allowing my wife and me (and even our two other dogs) to spend final moments with Lucy and personally escort her to the crematory. While this may sound unusual to some, it brought us immense peace knowing how Lucy's remains would be treated.

Angel and her assistant, Jessie, were consummate professionals—kind, compassionate, and deeply understanding of the grief their clients experience. They are pet lovers themselves. The entire staff, including the transport team, was respectful and courteous.

I highly recommend Angel's. Under such difficult circumstances, they made our heartbreak a little easier to bear.

For those wondering, the fees are very reasonable, and there are numerous options available to honor your pet.

When the time comes for my other dogs to cross the Rainbow Bridge, I now know exactly who to call. Trust is everything to me. — Kris R.

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Products, services, and friends of pets

As the days grow longer and the Oklahoma sun begins to turn up the heat, there's no better time to get outside and enjoy all that summer has to offer — especially with our furry, feathered, and four-legged companions by our side.

This May/June issue of *TulsaPets* is packed with timely tips and thoughtful stories to help you and your pets make the most of the season. Whether you're exploring dog parks, taking road trips, or just enjoying the backyard, we've gathered expert advice and inspiring voices from right here in our community.

Julie Wenger Watson brings us an insightful piece on raising backyard chickens in the city — yes, it's doable, even in Tulsa! Kim Doner takes a deeper look at how rising temperatures affect a variety of animals, and Andrea Chancellor explores how mobile and virtual vet care is helping more pet owners connect with the services they need.

If you've ever faced the joys and challenges of bonding with a particularly "unique" pet, Karen Holman's article will speak to your heart. Nancy Gallimore shares important signs to watch for when it comes to emergency care for puppies — a must-read for new pet parents. And for a lighter moment, Connie Cronley reminds us why talking to our pets might be the best kind of therapy.

We're also digging into the benefits of dog parks — what makes them great for both dogs and their humans — and offering some basic dos and don'ts to help make your visit safe and enjoyable. Whether you're a first-timer or a seasoned dog-park regular, there's something here for everyone.

And if you're planning a summer getaway, don't miss our training tips to help your pets become excellent travel companions.

Here's to a safe, sunny, and joy-filled summer with your pets. Stay cool, stay curious, and enjoy every moment with your animals — and hey, don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with your dog or cat. While my boy Duke's conversational strengths lean more toward squirrel diplomacy and snack negotiations, he's always a loyal listener.

Warmly,



VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

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Providing Tulsa pet owners with a one-stop resource for local products, services, and information.

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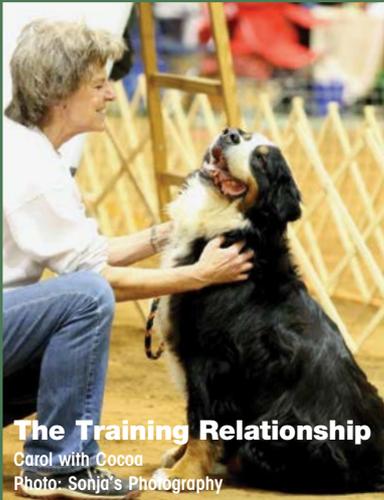
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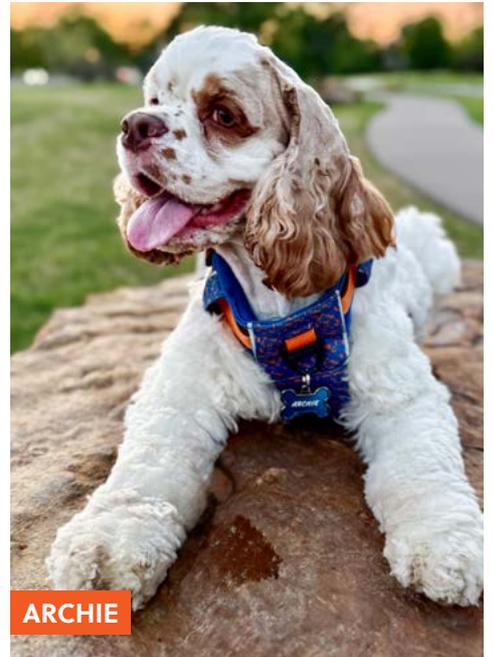
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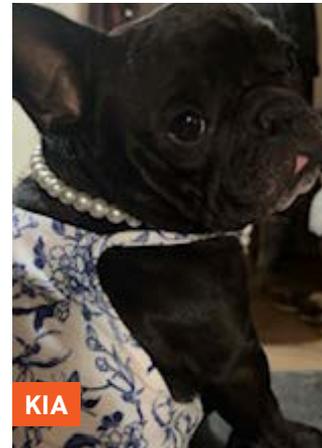
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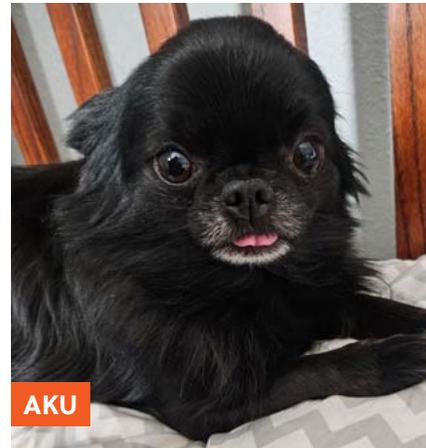
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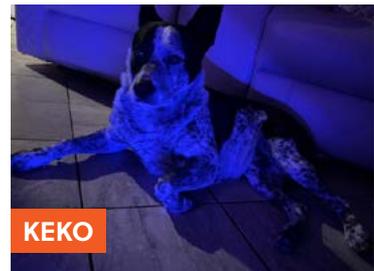
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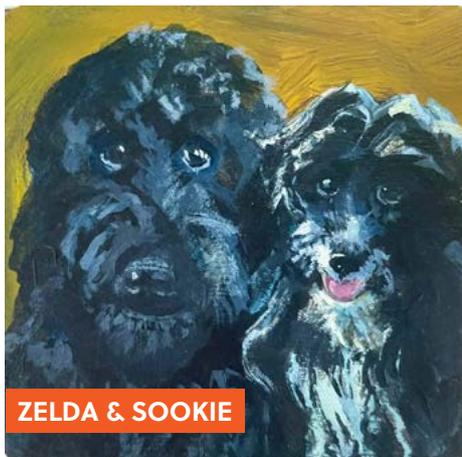
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Dog Gone!

Canines Can Become Seasoned Travelers by **MARY GREEN**

IN 2024, my dogs traveled to eight states to compete in dog sports. They are seasoned travelers for sure, but I have learned many tips and tricks to aid in successful travels.

If you are even thinking of taking your dog with you on a trip, be prepared! Before you go, make sure your dog is up to date on vaccines, and keep a copy of the vaccine records with you. I keep a paper copy and a photo of the veterinarian's statement on my phone. Some states will require you to present documentation of rabies vaccination, and the rabies tag is insufficient.

Have multiple methods of identification for your dog. Tags on the collar,

kennel/crate, and harness are necessary. I also have my phone number written on the collars in Sharpie or embroidered in case the tags come off. Your dogs should be microchipped, and it's a good idea to ask your veterinarian to scan your pup to be sure the chip can be located. And be sure the registration information is correct.

Several GPS options are available to keep track of your pup if he becomes separated from you. You can put an AirTag on the collar (be sure it is in a waterproof cover), or you can invest in a tracking service such as Tractive, Fi, or Halo.

Always have a current photo of your dog.

Does your dog have motion sickness? Talk with your veterinarian about remedies, and try them out before you leave.

If you are taking a road trip in a car or RV, there are some things you can do to help your pup be secure and comfortable.

Secure the pet in a crate in your vehicle if at all possible. The crate you use at home might not be sufficient protection if you have a vehicle accident. Impact-resistant crates are made by Gunner, RuffLand, and Impact.

If you can't fit a crate into your vehicle, be sure the dog is secured with a seat-belt harness. Get a well-fitted harness with a substantial chest piece, and attach that to the seat-belt receiver.

You can never have enough "poop bags" with you. Tie one onto the dog's leash so you will always have one handy. Properly disposing of pet waste is your responsibility.

Be Considerate

Are you staying in a hotel, Airbnb, or private home? Be a responsible, considerate dog owner. Be sure your dog is welcome. Know the pet policy. Most hotels charge a pet fee or deposit. Many hotels also have pet weight restrictions. Bring a sheet from home to cover the beds if your pup is likely to get on them.

Bring your own food and water bowls from home to help your dog feel more secure.

I prefer that my dogs are crated in a hotel or Airbnb if I am not with them. I can either use my vehicle crate or a lighter, collapsible crate. Just be sure your dog is comfortable in the crate and won't chew it up!

I also leave my cell-phone number in case of emergency or if my dog is disturbing other guests by barking (which, thank goodness, has not happened on any of my travels!).

Enjoy the Outdoors

Camping with your dog, whether tenting, RVing, or glamping, can be so much fun! Being prepared can make the experience much easier for all.

Consider a hiking harness for your dog if you will be exploring. I love Ruffwear harnesses, which have reflective strips and sturdy construction. A backpack is

another great option so your pups can carry their own water bottles. Just be sure to practice with them. A dog should never carry more than 10 percent to 15 percent of his body weight in the backpack.

If you are in an RV, you might want to bring an exercise pen to give your pup

You can never have enough “poop bags” with you. Tie one onto the dog’s leash so you will always have one handy. Properly disposing of pet waste is your responsibility.

some outdoor freedom at your campsite. You might want to use an outdoor rug or a woven multipurpose mat to provide some comfort and protection for your dog on bare ground.

If you are boating or swimming, consider having a life jacket on your dog. Even dogs that are the strongest swimmers should wear vests on the lake in case of going overboard.

Take to the Air

Traveling by air with your dog can be smooth with a little planning. Here are some solid tips to help make the experience as stress free as possible for both of you.

Feed your pet only a light meal about four to six hours before departure, and choose direct flights whenever possible.

If your dog is traveling by cargo, check airline policies. Different airlines have different rules on weight limits, crate dimensions, fees, etc. You will also need a health certificate for the dog.

Be sure the crate meets all the requirements of the airline. Post clear identification, instructions, and a photo of your dog on the outside of the crate. The airline should provide you with “LIVE ANIMAL” stickers for the crate.

If your dog is traveling in the cabin, be sure the size of the dog and the size of the carrier meet the requirements. Airlines are becoming stricter about service dogs because of so many fake service dogs. This is making travel more difficult for people with disabilities to travel by air with their trained service dogs. You should never represent your pet as a service dog just so you can get him on the plane with you. 🐾

Mary Green is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA), Certified Dog Behavior Counselor (CDBC), and Certified Nose Work Instructor (CNWI) at K9 Manners & More in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.



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Meowin' in the Wind

Bob Dylan Is a Friend of Cats by ROWENA MILLS

AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER

Bob Dylan, who turns 84 in May and is still going strong, has had an enormous impact on music and culture since the 1960s and has won many awards, including the first Nobel Prize in literature given to a musician. His powerful lyrics incorporate political, social, and philosophical aspects. He is considered one of the most influential people of the past century. And like some other famous musicians, he has regard for life on earth and is fond of felines, canines, and other animals. He has been photographed with them many times and has written songs about them.

Dylan, born Robert Allen Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota, on May 24, 1941, released his first album in 1962, launching a varied and evolving career as a musician, artist, and writer. His

songs “Blowin’ in the Wind,” which he performed at one of his first public appearances, and “The Times They Are a-Changin’” became anthems of the civil-rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s.

His honors include an Academy Award, 10 Grammy Awards, a Golden Globe, the Kennedy Center Honors, National Medal of Arts, and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Dylan has a unique tie to Oklahoma. In March 2016, the George Kaiser Family Foundation and the University of Tulsa announced the purchase of Dylan’s archives, consisting of about 6,000 notebooks, drafts of lyrics, recordings, and correspondence. To house the collection, the Bob Dylan Center was opened in the Tulsa Arts District on May 10, 2022.

Only a short distance away, Dylan



Bob Dylan carefully cradles a small cat. Photo courtesy of Cat Clowder.

kicked off his 57-concert Rough and Rowdy Ways tour in the historic Tulsa Theater on March 25, 2025, wowing the audience with his energy and skill.

And perhaps some echoes of the music reached the ears of nearby street cats pausing silently in the darkness. Did they know they were hearing Bob Dylan? Maybe so. 🐾

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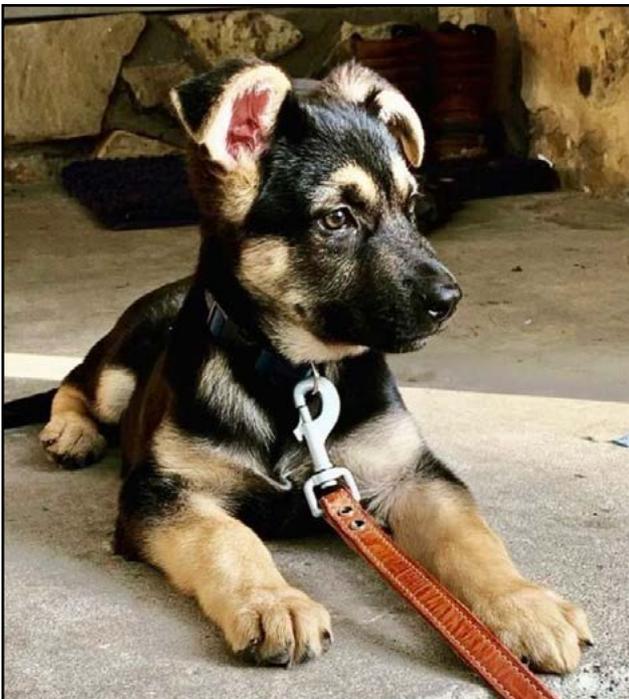
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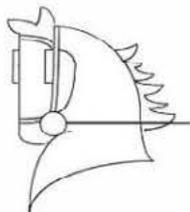
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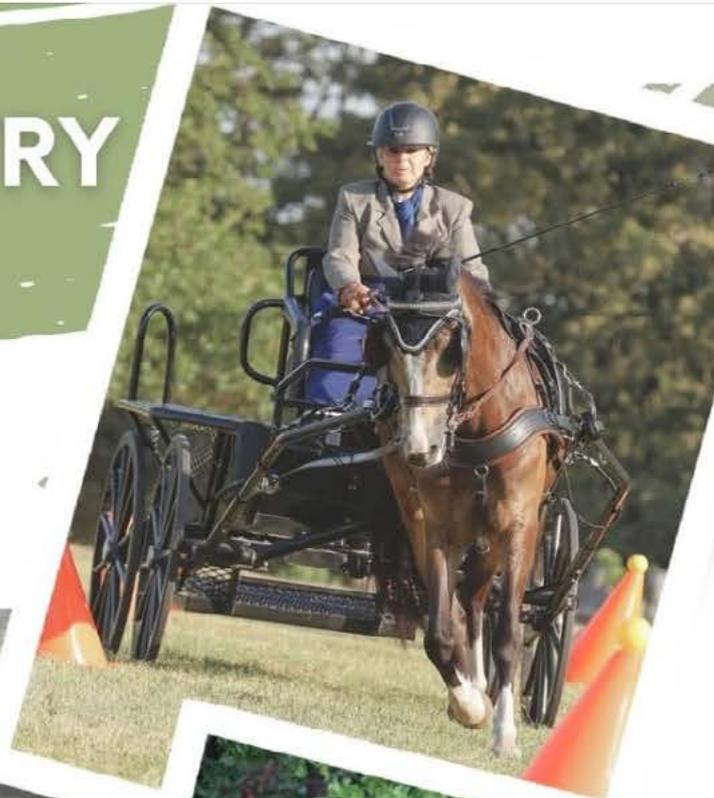
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Linda Earley photos

Working Partners

Reagan and Her Human Collaborate by ROWENA MILLS



Susan Miller and Reagan are ready to greet clients at Clinical Aesthetics of Tulsa. Photo courtesy of Susan Miller.

"I HAVE BEEN bringing animals of all types home with me since I was a small child," says Susan Miller. "I've had many dogs, cats, birds, and horses in my life."

But these days, Miller, owner of Clinical Aesthetics of Tulsa, is "mostly a dog person" — and a one-dog person at that. Her chosen canine is nine-year-old Reagan, who lives and works with Miller.

Going to Work

"I adopted Reagan when she was eight weeks old. I had never had a clinic animal before, but Reagan has come to work with me every day since I got her. She has a ramp she walks up and down to get into the back of my SUV. She mainly stays in the main hallway of the office because she likes to be where all the action is. The only day she doesn't come with me is Monday. Every Monday, she has her hair done at Ruff to Fluff Dog Grooming."

Miller says, "I have been in medical aesthetics for 22 years and opened Clinical Aesthetics of Tulsa in 2011." Clinical Aesthetics, at 7707 East 111th Street, is dedicated to restoring balance and harmony to the face and body. The clinic uses medical-grade treatments and prescriptive-strength products to reverse the signs of aging and enhance a person's natural attributes.

"Reagan loves most of my clients," Miller says. "Many of the clients bring their children to the office just to see Reagan, and several bring their dogs with them to appointments. Because Reagan is used to going to the dog park and grooming salon, she likes all other animals she has come in contact with."

A Family-Friendly Pet

Miller adds, "Reagan is my second Bernese mountain dog. They are gentle, family-friendly pets. However, they shed a lot. Because of the extreme heat in Oklahoma, you must be prepared to keep them in the house during the summer. Reagan loves the winter and would stay outside if I would let her."

When the clinic closes for the evening, Miller and Reagan head home. "I do not have any other animals at home right now," Miller says. So she and Reagan can relax together and look forward to another day at the clinic — and greeting those friends! 🐾

Beth and her babies — Gene, Ace, Paul, and Peter — are eager to start the day. Photo by Nancy Gallimore.



Puppy

911

When Is It an Emergency?

by NANCY GALLIMORE

I FORCED MY eyelids open at still-dark o'clock in the morning. When you have a houseful of foster dogs who need to go potty, you don't sleep in. This morning was especially pressing because our rescue, Tails You Win K-9 Rescue, had a sweet mama dog and her four little sons recently released from Tulsa Animal Services in its care.

If you have never cared for a litter of growing puppies, let me assure you that jumping out of bed and getting straight into cleaning mode are vital. Mature dogs wake up and go outside to take care of nature's call. Baby puppies wake up and immediately decorate just about every square inch of the floor in their puppy pen. So speed in providing necessary attention is vital or you'll end up giving puppy baths in addition to cleaning the nursery.

Initially, all seemed very normal in puppy land — a spacious pen in our heated garage where the family was afforded quarantine as well as privacy from the prying sniffs of our other canine residents. Four little tail-waggers swarmed my feet vying for attention. The pen cleaned and noses smooched, I headed inside to start handing out breakfast.

After the dogs in the house were satisfied, it was back to my foster family to feed their mom, dubbed Beth, and offer warm puppy mash to Gene, Ace, Paul, and Peter (bonus points to everyone who understands the name theme). The puppies, now about five weeks old, although still enjoying the occasional visit to Beth's milk bar, had

also started eating soaked-to-soggy puppy food. This addition to their menu met with great enthusiasm, and all pups appeared to be thriving.

Everything Was OK Until It Wasn't

All thriving, that is, until that Friday morning. Three of the puppies swarmed the bowl as usual, but little Paul sat back, seemingly uninterested. Just 30 minutes prior, he had appeared fine, seeking attention and hopping around with his brothers. Now he moved away from the breakfast buffet and curled up solo on a dog bed.

You could shrug this off by saying he possibly had filled up when he nursed a bit earlier. You could decide that disinterest in just one meal was probably no big deal. You could choose to wait and see how he feels later, right?

Wrong. The wait-and-see approach that I might adopt for a few hours with an adult dog who seems a little off does not apply to a young puppy. Any change in behavior or activity is cause for concern.

I picked Paul up and noticed that he felt very warm. I checked his gums and found them pale and a little tacky to the touch. I offered Paul a little bite of chicken — a treat normally met with sharklike enthusiasm. Paul sniffed and turned his head away. Then I noticed Paul's breathing seemed a bit rapid and shallow. That was enough for me to know we had a problem.

Pajamas quickly swapped for jeans and a hoodie, Paul and I headed to the

animal urgent care. Time is often not on your side with a sick puppy. Getting veterinary support is crucial.

Urgent Care Required

Chris Johnson, D.V.M., at Tulsa Animal Urgent Care immediately took Paul for an exam. In a short time, my concerns were confirmed. Paul had a high temperature and congestion in his lungs. Because Paul had been quarantined for three weeks since leaving the animal shelter and the other puppies remained healthy, Dr. Johnson believed Paul had possibly aspirated fluid into his lungs while nursing or eating.

Aspiration pneumonia is a very serious diagnosis for a young puppy and one that requires aggressive treatment and supportive care. Paul remained hospitalized on oxygen and IV fluids and antibiotics while also receiving steroids to lessen inflammation in his lungs. I was told he was resting quietly, which was not comforting news. A five-week-old puppy is generally anything but sedate.

Change in Behavior or Condition Is Cause for Concern

According to Dr. Johnson, any alterations in normal behavior — including energy level, appetite, stool character, breathing, or the presence of vomiting/regurgitation — warrants evaluation by a veterinarian.

"Energy level and appetite are paramount to me in any patient, but puppies can make changes for the worse all the more quickly," said Dr. Johnson. "Younger dogs, especially in the first several weeks of life, have a much higher risk of developing low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Puppies do not have sufficient stores of sugar in their bodies; therefore, they must get sugar (carbohydrates) directly from a food source. If they skip a meal, hypoglycemia can ensue and if not treated quickly, can even be fatal."

After treatment, Paul rests quietly. Photo courtesy of Tulsa Animal Urgent Care.



“Another thing to consider besides energy level and appetite is breathing and temperature,” added Dr. Johnson. “If a puppy has a consistent change in respiratory rate or effort, he should be seen by a veterinarian.” Little Paul was the perfect example of this.

Dr. Johnson went on to explain that because puppies do not have fully developed immune systems, they can develop impressively high fevers. This was the case with Paul. Although fevers exist to fight against infection, an extremely high fever can create secondary issues in the body which can lead to organ failure, blood-clotting issues, and other complications.

One thing Dr. Johnson also stresses with new puppy owners is the need for appropriate vaccines and preventive care. “Puppies should always receive three to four sets of immunizations and should be kept away from areas that other dogs frequent until they are fully vaccinated,” he advises. “Equally important is deworming. Even if a puppy has been dewormed, it is still necessary to perform a fecal examination with your veterinar-



Chris Johnson, D.V.M., treated Paul when he unexpectedly became very ill. Photo courtesy of Tulsa Animal Urgent Care.

ian so the appropriate deworming medication can be administered.”

A Tale with a Happy Ending

So how did Paul’s story end? Thankfully, my little spotted guy responded quickly to treatment. Just 12 hours after walking into urgent care, I was able to take Paul home for the night with instructions for

strict supervision and prescribed medications. A follow-up exam the next morning was met with the great news that Paul was on the mend almost as quickly as he had become critically ill.

The moral of Paul’s story is this: Overreaction is far better than the wait-and-see approach potentially leading to a puppy who no longer has a fighting chance. To the untrained eye, Paul’s initial symptoms might not have seemed profound. It would have been easy to wait an hour or two to seek help. But at that point, his outcome might not have been so rosy. I would rather pay an exam fee to find out nothing is wrong than to have a more conservative approach result in tragedy.

It’s now Sunday morning, and I feel a fierce tug at the cuff of my pants. I look down to see sweet Paul yanking at his fabric foe with all his six-pound might. As I gently remind him that “killing” a toy instead of my clothing is a much better idea, I must also smile in gratitude at his antics. A healthy, ornery puppy is a beautiful sight. 🐾

Managing Behavioral Issues

Families Can Build Bonds with Challenging Pets

by KAREN DUGAN HOLMAN, B.S., M.S., B.S.E.



Karen Dugan Holman and Csonka were bonded despite his behavioral issues. Management and reinforcement provided the solution to Csonka's difficulties.

MY CSONKA was a gorgeous black lovable lug of a Labrador retriever. He was extremely obedient, skilled, and highly bonded to his family and was the most wonderful dog — until he wasn't. He exhibited impulse-control issues, startling easily, and could cause a serious bite. Csonka was a large teddy bear 99.9 percent of the time. Why could I not "fix" him? We needed to determine the "why" behind his behavior.

Having a dog that was predictably unpredictable was a deeper problem than dealing with disobedience or misbehavior. I remember clearly feeling that I had done something wrong. I was overwhelmed, embarrassed, scared, and burdened. I was heavyhearted with grief at the possibility

of euthanasia as the solution and end to the problem. I felt suffocated.

Behavioral problems are a common cause of the disruption of the human-animal bond and can result in pet relinquishment, abandonment, and euthanasia. Even when the animals remain in their homes, they can experience poor welfare and quality of life.

Even responsible people can have pets with behavioral problems, similar to a therapist or physician having a sick child. How you handle problems when they arise matters more than whether you have perfection. Predictably, it is the most responsible and loving pet owners who experience the most anger and angst about their pets' behaviors.

How Can Owners Manage the Problems?

Many behavioral problems can be treated, but often, management is the first step. Safety must be a priority. Finding solutions is the right direction, not carrying shame and guilt.

Responsible pet owners acknowledge their pets' problems and ask questions. Where and when are these events likely to occur? What precipitates the behavior? How should we manage it?

If your dog attacks every canine in the dog park every time you go there, maybe he is telling you he truly doesn't like the dog park and being around all the other dogs. Stop going to the dog park. Don't set your dog up to fail. You have not failed but are acknowledging your pet's perceptions and — almost always — fear.

Studies have investigated how pets' behavioral problems affect the owners. Research shows that pet owners encounter similar challenges and outcomes. Caring for those animals is similar to caring for a human family member with mental illness or caring for chronically ill pets. Many owners experience caregiver burden.

What Do Owners Experience?

Owners of pets with behavioral problems were surveyed on issues they encountered in four major topics: caretaking, emotions experienced, coping strategies, and lack of understanding and support. Here is a sampling of responses.

Caretaking: extra time required for management; training difficulties; managing the pet in public; degree of planning; vigilance required to keep pets and people safe; limited time out of the house for the owner; lack of money and time to pursue help; strain on family.

Emotions experienced: anger; frustration; stress; worry; sadness; fear and anxiety; guilt; shame; fatigue; pride when their pets improve; working hard to fix the issues develops a stronger bond between the pet and family; love mixed with resentment and frustration; feeling sorry for the pet; feeling that the pet is suffering; failing as a pet parent; embarrassment.

Coping strategies: seeking additional education, increasing their knowledge;

using the expertise of a behaviorist, therapist, or veterinarian; learning to manage the pet; positive mind-set; talking, breathing, stress management; support groups, finding someone to listen to frustrations; working with the pet and seeing progress was supportive and very rewarding; behavioral medications and dramatic improvement gave hope.

Lack of understanding and support: misinformation and myths about animal behavior; unsupportive or harmful reactions of others to the pet's behavioral problems; people bark, scream, and make noise at the pet; comments such as "It's just a dog, get another one"; lack of understanding from trainers and veterinarians, day-care staff, friends, family, and hateful strangers; "I wish people would stop listening to misinformation and try telling me he is trying to be the alpha or dominant dog. And when you try to say otherwise, they argue with me due to all the wrong information that they see on TV and read on the Internet."

I understand the responses shared by those surveyed because I experienced many of the same emotions.



Csonka was a lovable Labrador who eventually overcame behavioral problems.

through his problems. With structured management and science-based positive-reinforcement protocols, Csonka spent 10 years without fear, anxiety, and bites.

Through the journey, I gained a better understanding and appreciation of the heartache

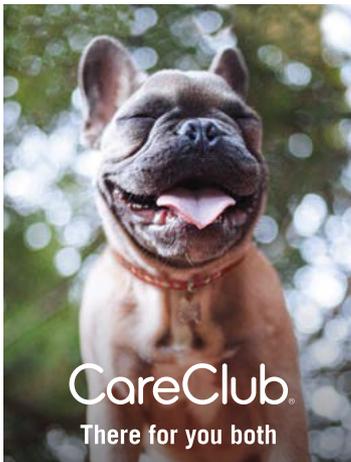
that can come with a pet with behavioral issues. I have learned that through hard work, consistency, and a positive approach, the bond between you and your pet can become unbreakable. 🐾

Happy Tails, Karen
Three Oaks Animal Behavior
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karen@animalbehaviorok.com

How Do Owners Build a Bond?

My Csonka, who in the beginning struggled to be good, was diagnosed later in life with a medical issue. It most likely had been present since birth. It was the root of his behavioral issues all along.

Dealing with the complexities of caring for Csonka, with nose to the grindstone and grit and a big dose of hope, my family gained the strength to work



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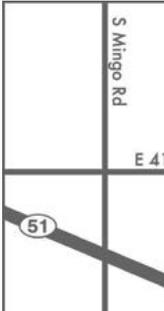
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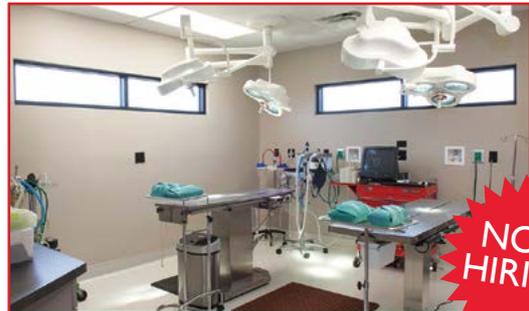
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Listen Up!

Talking Can Benefit People and Pets

by **CONNIE CRONLEY**

A YOUNG WOMAN walks her dog Simon by my house regularly. We wave, sometimes call out “Hi.”

One day recently, I was hungry for conversation, so I was waiting by my garden gate as she walked by and asked, “Have you ever thought about the effects the French Revolution had on the United States?”

“What?”

I began to explain some influence on Americans from the social upheaval of the late 1700s. Sadly, she and Simon were on a schedule and moved away quickly.

“Nobody talks anymore,” I grumbled to Zeke when I was back inside.

“Eh,” he answered.

Zeke is my nine-year-old springer spaniel, and I always have conversations with him. Especially since COVID, I have talked to my pets more than to people. Zeke was originally Jay Cronley’s dog. Raised from puppydom by Jay, naturally Zeke is well read, articulate, and opinionated, with a wicked wit.

As this morning’s nonexchange demonstrates, pets are more attentive than people. I’m sure Zeke knows all about the French Revolution, but I continued.

“We can track partisan politics in this country directly to the French Revolution.”

Zeke growled. He’s right, of course. We’re all growling at partisan politics.

Anybody who has a pet knows that they understand human words and phrases. Whether or not they choose to acknowledge them is another thing. I have shared my home with many cats that let me know how well they understood English.

Once when I was trying to wrap a gift, my cat Abigail kept playing with the ribbon until I lost my patience and snapped at her, “Abigail! Stop that!” She had just turned and was walking away. She stopped, turned, walked back, and



Jay Cronley raised the very articulate Zeke. Photo courtesy of Connie Cronley.

slapped me. How dare I speak to her in that way!

Conversing with Our Pets

According to online research, 55 percent of pet owners think their pets understand them better than people do. In Oklahoma, 86 percent of people with pets talk to them. In Montana, only 45 percent talk to their pets. Nevada pet owners are the most talkative at 95 percent.

An article in *Psychology Today* says we tend to talk to pets the same way we do to infants and small children, a sort of baby talk. Pet talk is similar (higher pitch, repetitive and exaggerated emotion) but lacks the exaggerated, drawn-out vowels we use for babies.

Not Zeke and me. I speak to him respectfully. I say, “I’ll be right back” when I leave the room and “Excuse me” when I dislodge him for cleaning. I do address him with lots of “pet names,” special terms of endearment known as hypo-

corism, and he responds to all of them. (He also responds to the crinkle of a treat bag.)

The same *Psychology Today* article cited a study that proved cats can distinguish between speech directed at them instead of to another human, but only if the speaker is the cat owner.

Talking to pets raises lots of questions. Do we talk to them the way we wish people talked to us? Do they understand? Do they answer?

I read in the *Wall Street Journal* that in times of personal crisis, actress Christina Ricci talks to the birds outside in her garden and begs them for help. In Sigrid Nunez’ award-winning book *The Friend*, the narrator reads to a Great Dane named Apollo who is grieving the loss of his owner. She tries to comfort him with music, but that doesn’t work. She reads to him from her own writing, but that bores him. (I can say from experience this is demoralizing.) Apollo is soothed when she reads aloud from Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*.

I took a quick survey of friends who talk to their pets and asked what they say:

Pam tells her horse Charlie what a handsome boy he is.

Curtis tells his cats Victoria and Betty over and over that he loves them and praises Penny for being so soothing.

Strengthening the Bond

It’s good for us to talk to our pets, according to research. It reduces our stress, makes the pet feel valued, and strengthens the bond between us. However, we should always speak in a happy tone, even if we’re blue, and that will elevate our mood.

Studies show that cats can understand only 20 to 40 words, but the average trained dog understands about 165 words, equivalent to a human toddler. Highly trained dogs with the military, police forces, or search-and-rescue work have a vocabulary 1.5 times larger. Border collies, German shepherds, and poodles can understand 1,000 words or more. Those breeds were described as the cream of the canine crop and supersmart.

Oh, yeah? Zeke just turned to me and said, “Don’t forget the Louisiana Purchase. That’s a result of the French Revolution.” 🐾



Zeke and Connie Cronley begin an earnest conversation. Photo by Samantha Polen.



House Calls

Above, Kristie Plunkett, D.V.M., operates Mobile Veterinary Hospital of Tulsa. Photo courtesy of Kristie Plunkett, D.V.M.

Mobile and Online Options Expand Pet Care

by ANDREA CHANCELLOR

THE WORK OF best-selling writer James Herriot (real-life British veterinary surgeon Alfred James Wight, 1916–1995) has delighted readers since 1970 as he shares joyful and tragic experiences treating great and small creatures in their own environments.

Some veterinarians today are exploring new ways to deliver medical care — treating small animals at home or by telephone appointment. The development of new delivery methods could be much like the traveling veterinarian of years ago who arrived at the farm to care for large animals — cattle, horses, and donkeys. Changes in veterinary health-care approaches could help veterinarians distinguish their practices from those of others.

Home health-care delivery can present challenges, but apparently, that doesn't preclude some providers from thinking about trying something different.

Veterinary Home Care in Oklahoma

We contacted several veterinary practices across the state to determine where they stand on changing health-care delivery

options. We learned that most veterinarians already offer home euthanasia services for the privacy of the family, and some offer house calls.

In Edmond, All Care Pet Hospital has a track record of 40-plus years of caring for animals in its brick-and-mortar facility. House calls are offered when necessary, especially if the animal cannot make it into the office.

"It's very difficult," said a member of the staff, referring to home pet care. For starters, the veterinarian needs to determine the medical equipment required before reaching the sick animal. "You don't know what you'll find on a call."

Waggin' Wheels Housecall Veterinary Service, also in Edmond, does house calls exclusively. Tracey Ann Alden, D.V.M., said, "I'm the only game in town. I love what I do. It's very rewarding." If possible, she could schedule house calls seven to eight hours a day. However, "I'm too full," she said.

Alden cautions that mobile veterinarians must be mindful about accepting clients who live beyond a defined service territory. Already, one house-call

veterinarian in Alden's area has retired, increasing her volume of appointment requests. "Retire? I don't want to retire until I'm dead," Alden said.

In Tulsa, Dan Danner, D.V.M., of Danner Veterinary Hospital no longer makes house calls as a rule, unless it's for a longtime client or for euthanasia. "We cherish our longtime patients and are glad to help out in distressing times" for euthanasia, Danner said.

He is proud of his expanded health care for exotic animals.

As for diagnostic telephone appointments, Danner relies on FaceTime, especially for patients living out of state.

Another Tulsa veterinarian offers mobile service from a customized van. Kristie Plunkett, D.V.M., established the Mobile Veterinary Hospital of Tulsa in 2012. The service includes heartworm testing, fecal analysis, ear-swab analysis, complex blood work, digital X-rays, skin biopsy analysis, some surgeries, and dental care and X-rays.

Plunkett specializes in felines and exotics. She finds that pets are definitely calmer when care is delivered in the home.

One veterinarian delivers medical care in the home, but only for one particular dog who suffers from anxiety attacks at the sight of a parking lot.



Mobile versus Traditional Care

Many veterinarians remain lukewarm about full mobile care, preferring a traditional clinic. Others are keeping an eye on developing trends.

“We don’t do house calls, but thankfully, some veterinarians are doing them,” said Lou Anne Wolfe, D.V.M., of Tulsa’s Marina Animal Clinic.

Some veterinarians choose not to offer mobile care for various reasons such as whether it is efficient for a veterinarian to be out of the office driving to see a patient.

In addition to the initial travel time, there could be delays in reaching the patient’s address if it’s in an apartment complex and isn’t labeled clearly.

Advertisements for Mobile Service

Nonetheless, mobile veterinarian services are being pitched online. One Internet statement said, “Count on us to be in your house in no time.” Another selling point on the Internet says mobile veterinarians can “save the day” in some cases.

Dozens of contacts on the Internet advertise traveling veterinarians in locations across the state, but many are listed with nonworking telephone numbers. Perhaps some clinics once made house calls but no longer do.

Financial Investment of House Calls

The financial investment for home-delivered pet care might be one deterrent. The

Above, FaceTime appointments for patients at a distance are available from Dan Danner, D.V.M., of Danner Veterinary Hospital.

Photo by Andrea Chancellor.

costs add up, including travel time and the expense of stocking medical equipment and supplies dedicated to road trips. There is also the basic expense of operating a separate office. And what about the investment in a dedicated van or other vehicle?

Operating a mobile health-care service can be costly, but many veterinarians do seem intrigued by the possibility of offering house calls. And some of them believe the approach could be the next phase in small-animal care. 🐾



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Backyard chickens make reasonably good pets. They can be trained to come when called and eat out of your hand. Photo courtesy of Pexels.



Flocking to the City

Raising Backyard Chickens Is Rewarding

by JULIE WENGER WATSON

YOU DON'T HAVE TO be a farmer or live in the country to enjoy the benefits of agriculture. A remarkable amount of food can be raised in a small space. With a few containers of tomato plants, you'll have produce to share by summer—and don't get me started on zucchini!

If you're ready to expand your urban farming beyond the basics, however, consider chickens. Smart and endlessly interesting, poultry make excellent backyard companions, returning beautiful and delicious eggs for your efforts.



Be sure to predator-proof your chicken coop. Use fencing with small holes and bury it six to 12 inches below the surface. Photo courtesy of Unsplash.

Why Raise Chickens?

The vast majority of city dwellers who raise backyard flocks do so for eggs, not for meat. Although breed, age, diet, and light are all factors, some hens can lay an egg a day during peak laying season, so a small number of hens can provide plenty of omelets for an entire family.

Beyond high-quality, fresh eggs, chickens bring educational opportunities, natural fertilizer and pest control, kitchen-scrap disposal, and a surprising amount of fun. They can be pretty good pets too, especially if raised from chicks. Chickens can be trained to come when called, fly onto your shoulder, and eat from your hand.

With countless breeds, it's easy to find a good fit for your particular needs.

Chickens in the City Limits

Many Oklahomans are surprised to learn that it's legal to keep poultry in the city limits. Regulations vary by city, so it's important to check local ordinances before purchasing a backyard flock. In Tulsa, homeowners are allowed as many as six adult chickens and 14 chicks younger than eight weeks. In Oklahoma City, homeowners can keep as many as six hens, but roosters are not allowed.

Remember that neighborhood covenants and homeowners' associations might still prohibit poultry even if the city allows it.

Getting Started

Living in an agricultural state such as Oklahoma, resources are readily available to help you on your poultry journey. One of the best places to start is Oklahoma State University Extension. The website, <http://extension.okstate.edu>, has information on a wide range of topics, including fact sheets and an online course related to backyard flocks. Extension offices are in all 77 counties. If you prefer to visit in person, find the location at <http://extension.okstate.edu/county>.

Starting your flock with baby chicks offers a rewarding experience, especially for young kids who are captivated by the tiny, fluffy creatures. In spring, chicks are available from agricultural supply stores such as Atwoods, feed stores, and local producers. Purchasing your animals from a reputable seller, such as Murray McMurray Hatchery, <https://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com>, for example, ensures a healthy beginning.



Everyone loves watching these cute balls of fluff and their antics.

Photo courtesy of Pexels.

Housing Your Chicks

Until chicks are six weeks old, house them in a draft-free, well-ventilated, escape-proof, heated pen, or “brooder,” with walls at least two feet high. These pens are commercially available, but they can also be made from other enclosures such as large plastic storage bins. Cover the bottom of the brooder with three to four inches of absorbent bedding, and keep it clean and fresh. Provide age-appropriate fresh food and water in chick-specific dispensers.

Newly hatched chicks need a minimum of one-half square foot of space each, and chicks older than four weeks need at least three-fourths square foot of space each. Once chicks are about six weeks and have their feathers, they can be moved outside, assuming the weather is warm enough.

Countless options exist for premanufactured chicken coops with nesting boxes. If you're handy, you can easily find plans in books and online to build your own. Don't forget to make your coop and run predator proof — use fencing with small holes, bury it deep enough to discourage digging under, and use netting at the top of the run to deter attacks from the air.

Chicken feed, feeders, and waterers can be purchased at many regular pet stores and at agricultural supply and feed stores. The nutritional needs of your particular flock will vary by age, and the requirements differ for egg layers versus meat production.

Keeping Chickens Healthy

Purchasing healthy chicks or pullets (young hens) from a reputable seller is the first step to building a healthy flock, along with maintaining a clean, sanitized environment for your animals.

In recent months, “avian influenza” has been in the news, in connection with national egg shortages. Commonly known as “bird flu,” it is a contagious viral infection that affects birds but can also infect other animals and humans.

Although the risk of avian influenza to humans is relatively low, it's always important to practice good “biosecurity” when raising any kind of livestock — even backyard chickens. Those measures begin with good hygiene for yourself (washing hands before and after working with chickens, for example) and for the environment (feed, water, and bedding all should be kept fresh).

Wild birds, particularly waterfowl, can carry avian flu. It is important to keep your domestic chickens away from wild birds, especially in migratory seasons. Housing your birds indoors or in a fully covered run will also help to reduce the potential for exposure.

Finally, monitor the health of your flock. Keep an eye out for symptoms such as increased mortality, coughing, or lethargy, and report any sudden health changes to the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

Above all, enjoy your flock! Take good care of your chickens, and they will reward you with delicious eggs and countless hours of entertainment. 🐾



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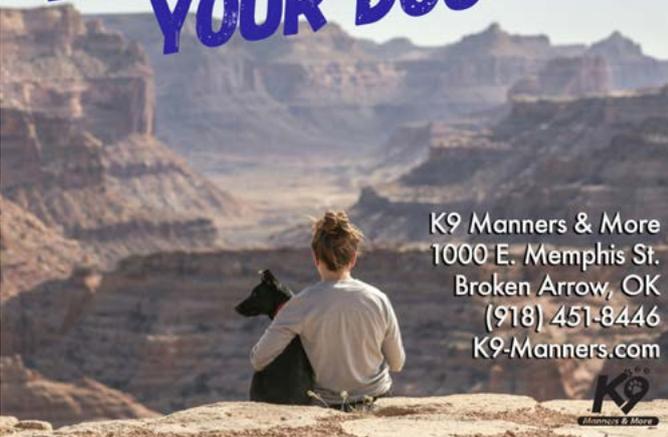
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Off Leash

Dog Parks Provide Freedom, Socialization

by JULIE WENGER WATSON

ALTHOUGH THERE can be plenty of fun in your own backyard, local dog parks provide a great opportunity for you and your pup to participate in some canine and human interaction. Before you head out the door with your pooch, here are a few things to consider.

Benefits of Dog Parks

Visits to dog parks have many benefits for you and your furry friend. Dog parks allow your pet to be free of a leash and to roam in a large area. It's also an excellent opportunity for your dog to socialize with other canines while you meet new human friends. Some dog parks even have extra amenities for owners, serving coffee or beer or providing benches and picnic tables.

"Socialization is important for both dogs and people! I love taking my dog to the park so that I can be outside, interact with my dog, learn more about her personality, and meet new people in the community," says Alex Mitchell Gardner, co-owner of Fetch Social Club, scheduled to open this summer at 728 South Wheeling Avenue in Tulsa.

Although Gardner notes that dog parks aren't the only form of socialization that dogs need, they can provide enrichment for many canine senses and innate behaviors.

Dog parks also allow you to observe your animal interacting with other dogs and other people. It's an ideal chance for you to learn from other pet owners too, everything from how to deal with nega-

tive behavior to tips on food or training. At the community level, the parks help promote healthy lifestyles and attract new residents.

Are Dog Parks for Every Dog?

Dog parks aren't all alike. Some public parks might not be monitored or require proof of vaccination. If they have heavy traffic, there is a risk of spreading diseases and parasites. Mismatched dog sizes and inattentive owners can result in harm to your pet. In addition, not every dog has the right temperament for the park environment.

"Unfortunately, parks aren't for everyone," says Gardner. "We all have an idea in our head that we want a social dog that behaves well in public and gets along with every person and every dog. However, that is not always the case."

If you're not sure whether dog parks are for you and your pooch, Gardner recommends taking a group obedience class with your dog first. That would enable you to learn more about how your dog acts in new places and around other

dogs and strangers while being in a controlled environment with a trainer who can educate you on body language.

“Although dog parks might not work for every dog, I don’t want owners to feel that after one negative experience, they can’t try again in a safe environment under the education of a professional,” Gardner adds.

Finally, keep in mind that puppies younger than four months without all vaccinations should never be around dogs you don’t know. Dogs who aren’t up to date on vaccinations should also stay home, as should dogs in heat or showing signs of illness.

Park Etiquette

Know the rules of the park before you go. Most parks require dogs to be tagged with a collar and vaccinated. Some parks have fees. Some parks do not allow children; others do not allow outside toys or treats. If treats are allowed, don’t give them to other dogs. Bring a personal portable water bowl and water for your pup. Always pick up after your dog.

Most important, don’t ignore your dog.

“Please, please pay attention to your dog,” says Gardner. “I see many dogs being bullied or bullying other dogs, and the owner is nowhere to be found or is focused on a cell phone. It is not fair to your dog or others to not attend to your dog.”

To help alleviate this problem, Fetch Social Club will have fully trained staff members monitoring the park.

If you’ve been considering a visit to a local dog park, there’s no better season to give it a try. With a little thought and planning, you and your pup will be in for a great time! 🐾

First Visit

Tips from Alex Mitchell Gardner

Walk your dog or let him burn out energy prior to the first visit to the dog park. Overstimulation can cause behavioral challenges in a new environment with unknown people and dogs. You can also walk the dog on leash around the dog park to familiarize it with the environment, sounds, and smells before entering.

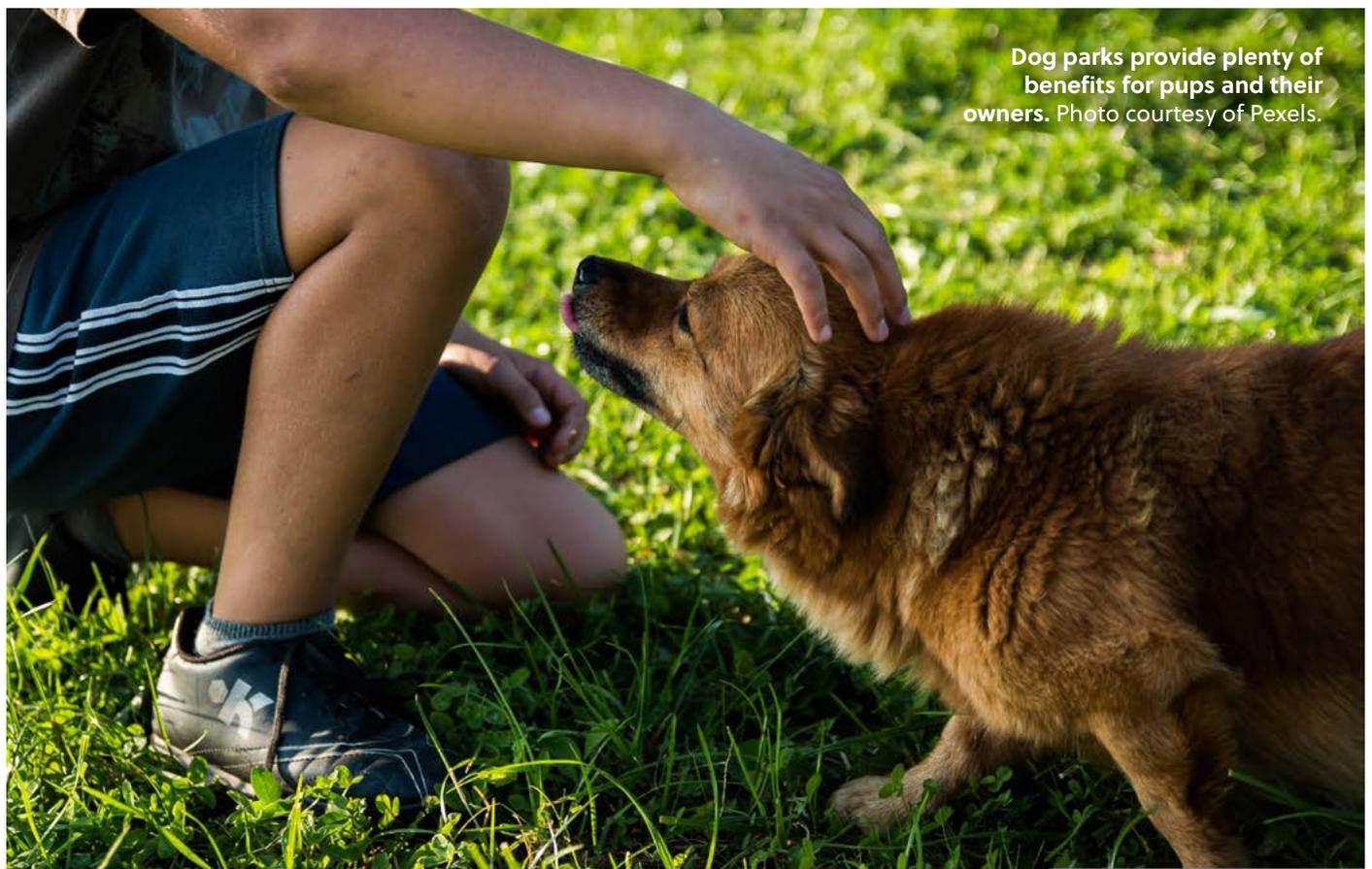
Introduce your dog to a family member or friend’s dog in a controlled environment. If possible, try to have them meet outdoors in a neutral area.

Take a group obedience class. It can give great insight to your dog’s behavior in social settings.

Research the breed or breeds that your dog might be mixed with. This can give insight to social behaviors such as herding, chasing, alert barking, etc., that your dog might exhibit and that might become troublesome.

Watch “Dog Fighting or Playing” by Dr. Ian Dunbar on YouTube. This quick video shows examples of play styles and body language.

I prefer my dog to keep a thick collar or harness on in a public dog park in case I need to get hold quickly.



Dog parks provide plenty of benefits for pups and their owners. Photo courtesy of Pexels.

Cool It!

Animals Find Diverse Ways To Cope with Hot Weather

by KIM DONER

HORSES SWEAT. Men perspire. Ladies glow. (Yeah. Right.)

So where does that leave the rest of the animal kingdom when things heat up?

I'm so glad you asked!

Sweat glands are handy things that release water from our systems to evaporate and cool us, but not every creature owns a set. Most pets, such as dogs and cats, pant by opening their mouths, exposing as many square inches of mucous membranes as possible. However, other species cope with summertime differently — some through evolution, some through behavior, and some through community.

Underground prairie-dog villages are a maze of tunnels, but if one knows where to look, there will be small, open “towers” of earth strategically placed. Those mounds will catch a breeze and channel it into the burrows, flushing out hot air and lowering the temperature for the residents.

Aboveground, squirrels will “sploot,” stretching their bellies as far as possible against cooler surfaces. This is known as “heat dumping” and can be observed in other species — notably, koala bears, who will spread-eagle against a heavy tree trunk so the bark allows cooler air to flow across their tummies.

Another notable Australian animal is the red kangaroo, which has quite a solution for desert days. They spit on and lick their forearms until the fur is soaked. As the saliva evaporates, the blood vessels near the surface send cooled blood back into their bodies for quick relief.

I do not recommend doing this publicly. That's only for red kangaroos.

The last of the Land Down Under “cooler critters” is the echidna. Monotremes, or egg-laying mammals, they are found throughout Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea in all climates. They have weird, tunnelish snouts — or beaks — that are very vascular. To cool this blood, they blow snot bubbles out the tip of their beaks and hope for a breeze.

Again, don't do that publicly either.

African Adventures

Next, take a look at African animals — rhinos, for instance. The plates of skin on their body are superthick, which shield them in many ways, but if you look inside the folds, the skin is much thinner and more sensitive. (Word has it that tame





rhinos like scratches there, but I have yet to try.) Swimming helps water reach that thin skin to achieve lower body temps.

Hippos, though, are already in water, right? What they've figured out — and pigs of all varieties do this too — is how well a solid mud bath works. By coating the skin, the drying mud steadily carries away body heat. The plus is that the animals can meander anywhere postmudding and then waddle back into the water once they feel toasty.

But hippos have yet another superpower! They secrete a pinkish, sweatlike liquid that not only cools them but repels insects. Why it's pink is something of a mystery because it's not blood — and it's fairly waterproof. Maybe it's hippos that glow.

Although hippos and rhinos have found solutions to heat via physical structure and habitat, giraffes have evolved specialized skin. Their patterned coats consist of dark patches with channels of lighter tan around them. As the animal heats up, blood migrates to the outer edge of the dark patches and into the lighter channels, where heat is released from the body.

Another heat-resistant ungulate is the camel. Camel fur is much thicker on top. It's dense and fluffy, so it works much like insulation from the sun. And the fur on their bellies is pale and fine, allowing their bodies to flush warmth away when they need to.



You might ask what elephants and hares have in common. They differ quite a bit, but look at the ears on those guys — large, heavily veined, and thin-skinned. Lifting or perking or flapping those appendages allows airflow. Elephants are especially adept at inhaling and blowing water across their ears as an added bonus.

Avian Adaptations

But what about our feathered friends? Birds have their own styles of beating a heat wave. Storks and vultures will poop down the backs of their legs, which al-

lows the matter to dry and cool them, much like the mud bath a hippo might use. Less repellent is “gular fluttering,” used by (most notably) owls, herons, and pelicans. The bird might or might not have its beak open, but it will rapidly vibrate the muscles and bones in the throat as air is pulled over and through the mouth. In some birds, no sound occurs, but for the shoebill stork, it's like a machine gun going off.

Oddly, this act uses very little energy, which I'm sure is a plus during an oppressively hot day.

Future Outlook

Sadly, our wild friends will have to scramble as climate change continues to cook the earth. Wildlife IS responding to the heat, faster than most evolutionary steps but slower than the climb. Several species of Australian parrots have shown as much as a 10 percent increase in bill size in the past 150 years, correlating with the rising temperatures. The larger the bill, the more surface area to cool the bird. Let's hope.

This kind of shape-shifting will make a stressful demand on the animal kingdom, with surviving species adapting through, perhaps, larger ears? Bigger wings? Longer tails? Migration, estivation (when an animal becomes torpid from heat), a whole lot of luck?

Maybe it's time for us humans to cool it too. 🐾



Striped skunk mothers are fiercely protective. WildCare Oklahoma receives babies when the mother has been trapped and relocated. Only later, people realize they have orphaned a litter of kits. Photo courtesy of WildCare Oklahoma.

Celebrating Mother's Day and Father's Day

Wildlife Parents Work Hard To Raise Their Babies

by INGER GIUFFRIDA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WILDCARE OKLAHOMA

SPRING IS ASSOCIATED with birth and rebirth. Seeds grow, flowers bloom, grasses green, trees grow leaves, and wildlife have babies. During May, Mother's Day is celebrated, and June brings Father's Day. These occasions represent a time to honor and celebrate the work, commitment, dedication, and love that human parents provide their offspring. Wildlife parents also work hard, are fiercely dedicated to their young, and are singularly driven to protect and raise them to independence. In honor of Mother's Day and Father's Day, this article will explore the roles that parents play in the wild.

Hardworking Moms

Most mammals are raised solely by their mothers. Although many mammals such as striped skunks, northern raccoons, and foxes are on the move within their territories, when they have babies, they establish dens. Logs, holes in trees, brush piles, small caves, and dense undergrowth provide ideal den sites because they are warm, dark, and quiet and provide protection from predators.

With unabated development of roads, buildings, and houses, natural habitats have been destroyed, fragmented, or polluted, forcing wildlife to live closer to humans. Mammal moms find their way into attics, under homes and buildings, and into sheds or abandoned buildings that provide safety and comfort. Access points are often areas of disrepair.

In many cases, people who find a den want the animals removed, but repairs made in early fall prevent animals from denning in locations that are perceived as inconvenient for humans. Trapping and relocating in spring are unforgivably cruel. The result is an intensely distressed mother that has been relocated away from her babies into an unfamiliar territory and orphaned babies that eventually starve to death.



Black-tailed prairie dogs live in complex family systems. Relocating prairie dogs nearly always means death unless their family system is replicated in the new location. Photo by Paul Rusinko, WildCare Oklahoma.

Safe locations for babies are essential because skunk, raccoon, and fox mothers must leave the babies alone while they search for food. Although they are nocturnal, skunks, raccoons, and foxes are commonly seen during the day in spring and

summer when they search for food. They need enough food for themselves to produce the milk required for their babies, and once babies are weaned, enough food for the growing youngsters. As single parents, these mothers are working extra hard.

Striped skunks, northern raccoons, and red and gray foxes are excellent mothers and will defend their young against predators. Any of these moms will move her entire litter to a new den site if she thinks a location has become unsafe. Skunks and raccoons have been recorded going into burning buildings and swimming through floodwater to save their babies.

Complex Family Systems

Some mammals are raised in complex family systems with both mom and dad, such as North American beavers. Beavers are monogamous, meaning the parents mate for life. Each year, they have as many as four kits. Babies stick around and help raise the babies born the next year. Destroying a beaver dam or trapping and relocating some members of the family are unnecessarily cruel because it means the destruction of three generations of beavers.

North American beavers are a keystone species because their dam-building activities create or enhance the freshwater habitats in which they live, including wetlands. Beaver-created habitats support a wide range of other animals, including insects, spiders, frogs, turtles, fish and other aquatic life, ducks, geese, herons, rails, bitterns, songbirds, owls, and otters.

Beaver families benefit people too. Where beavers live, water tables are maintained, and land is more resistant to drought and fire.

Another keystone species, prairie dogs, live in coterie or clans with one adult male, several females, and their offspring. All care for the young. Coterie are part of neighborhoods or wards, which are part of towns. Relationships between coterie in wards and within towns are complex and interdependent.

Relocating prairie dogs nearly always means death unless the coterie and ward structure is replicated in the new location. Like beaver habitats, prairie-dog towns are host to a wide range of other animals, including burrowing owls, snakes, toads, badgers, and black-footed ferrets.

Mom and Dad Work Together

With most species of birds, mom and dad work together to rear their youngsters, including geese, eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, many waterbirds, and songbirds. One of the most obvious in Oklahoma is the Mississippi kite. They are the small, gray hawks with distinctive high-pitched calls that fill Oklahoma skies in summer.

The kites migrate from Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina to breed in central and western Oklahoma, the panhandle of Texas, and the southernmost parts of the southeastern United States. They have their babies, rear them, and then leave in early fall to make it back to central South America for winter — with their babies, which are juveniles by then.

Both mom and dad kites are fiercely protective. They might dive-bomb peo-

ple or pets that they perceive as threats to their babies. Although this can be scary, the behavior is the result of these birds being excellent parents — they are protecting their young. (Northern mockingbirds, although smaller, will also dive-bomb.) People can use umbrellas while walking near nests or avoid those areas for the brief time Mississippi kites are raising their offspring.

When baby birds fall out of nests, most mother and father birds will accept them back if people are kind enough to put them there. From March through August, baby raptors are commonly found on the ground before it's time for them to fledge. That can result from poorly built nests, overcrowding in nests, or storm, winds, or excessive heat. In many cases, the birds can be re-nested and reunited with their parents, where they will get the best possible care. Great horned owls, among others, will even accept foster babies if they do not have a nest overfilled with their own babies.

Bird parents often work together to build nests, incubate eggs, find food, feed their young, teach them how to fly and other skills, and protect them from predators and other threats.

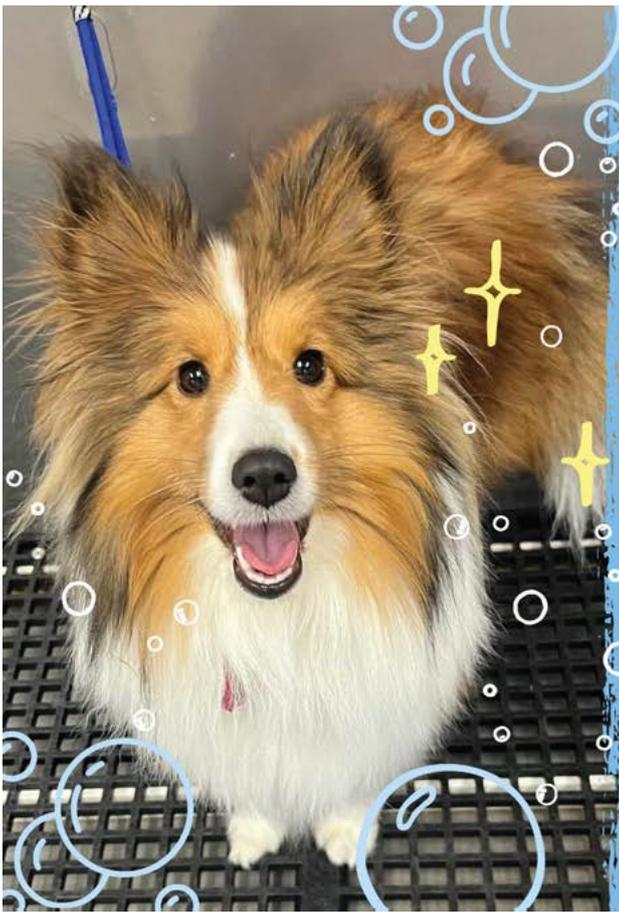
This year on Mother's Day and Father's Day, take a moment to think about the wildlife parents all around us, working extra hard in an increasingly hostile environment to do their best for their babies. 🐾



Like most birds, both mother and father Mississippi kites care for their young. They fiercely protect them, often dive-bombing people or pets that they perceive as threats. Photo by Jesse Pline, WildCare Oklahoma.



Great horned owl parents rear their young together. When babies such as this one fall out of the nest, WildCare Oklahoma has good success in re-nesting them. Photo courtesy of WildCare Oklahoma.



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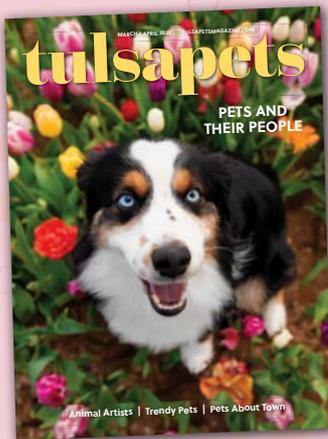
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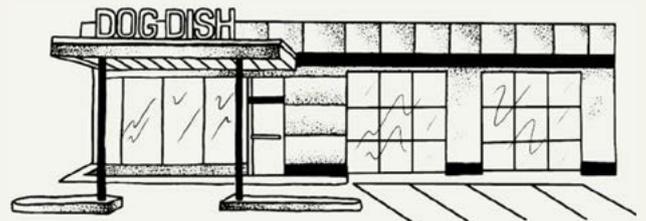


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Left, this pup surveys the Tulsa Flea Market from the safety of a stroller.



On a trek through the Tulsa Flea Market, these two canine buddies stick close to their owner.

Sniffing Out Treasures

Dogs Explore Tulsa Flea Market

Story and photos by **ANDREA CHANCELLOR**

IT HAS BEEN YEARS since the Tulsa Flea Market first invited dog shoppers to accompany their humans. Today, more and more national and some local business owners have hung out their own "Welcome" signs at the flea market, signaling that dogs can come in and shop. And why not?

Tulsa Flea Market has been held at

Tulsa Expo Center since 1972. The operators have long believed that it makes good "scents" for dogs to be part of the treasure hunt. The backstory is that a Labrador-mutt mix named Goddard once freely roamed market aisles, often showing up in a booth for a snack just about lunchtime. Check out the Tulsa Flea Market website, which features

a lovely drawing of Goddard by Matt Wing.

Sadly, Goddard passed away in 2018, but his spirit must still be working the flea market. We see good behavior in all dogs who visit the flea market — all are as well behaved as Goddard was.

Wing, part owner of Tulsa Flea Market, proudly says, "We're dog friendly if the owner keeps the canine on a leash."

The flea market does have some house rules. Owners must clean up if dogs have "accidents." Dogs must remain on their best behavior, and owners must follow certain rules of decorum in public. Sometimes a dog will approach a canine cousin for a brief conversation, but active conflicts are not allowed.

Ubiquitous Dogs

These days, many commercial places of business allow dogs. Pottery Barn, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Ace Hardware, and



Kirby, a beautiful, mischievous Samoyed, traveled in and around two booths, getting his leash tangled up.

many other retail establishments might not formally put a welcome notice in the window, but those places do indeed welcome dogs.

We've seen dogs at community meetings, at grocery stores, and waiting outside restaurants. Alert dog lovers can observe four-pawed friends at antique stores and lumberyards and tucked asleep behind the counter in many locations.

For treasure-market hunters, it is believed that dogs serve as a great public-relations tool. And because of their charm, dogs can put a smile on just about anyone's face.

Canine Shoppers

Bella, half Yorkie and half Shih Tzu, wasted no time checking out the Tulsa Flea Market once the doors opened on a Saturday in late winter 2025. She was fashionably dressed in a pink coat and matching leash.

Max, whose owner fondly calls him Maxer, chose a red knit coat with *Spoiled* woven across the back. He had just passed a table display of highly breakable and collectible Snowbabies ornaments, and his owner was quick to rein him in.

A rescue dog named Missy — with one blue eye and one brown — appeared a bit jittery, probably because of the shopper noise and floor traffic at the flea market. Her owner said, "That's why we take her out" once in a while so she can learn to calm down.

Below, a little dog and his human pause for a moment at the Tulsa Flea Market.



And a big puffy, fluffy white dog named Kirby seemed to always be one step ahead of his owner, who was tugging at the leash.

Two puppies were escorted across the floor separately, riding in high style in strollers. One was showcased riding in an impressive pink stroller. The other seemed happy in his black-and-white polka-dot stroller.

Another dog was running in circles on the floor around its owner — he would not take a breather. We didn't stop him for a picture — he was too fast for us.

Everyone knows dogs are good workers. Two dog buddies, one appearing to be a boxer and the other a shepherd, were spotted many times sniffing out various booths. Another dog was helping his owner assemble a booth display piece. He was another fast mover who never slowed down.

Traditionally, a flea market sells rustic collectibles and antiques to its shoppers. Food and beverage sites offer treats from sandwiches to popcorn to sodas, and Girl Scouts pitch their cookies at one end of the market at certain times of the year.

The things missing from the food fare are probably very obvious to dogs and their owners — doggy treats and water. Their addition would make the canines' trip to the flea market even more fulfilling.

Tulsa Flea Market is free and is held on some Saturdays. Check tulsaflea-market.net for upcoming dates. 🐾

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southernagriculture.com
(918) 488-1993

Tulsa Hills
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Torchlight K9
1123 E. Archer, Tulsa 74120
torchlightk9.com, (918) 947-9743

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6307 S. 107th E. Ave., Tulsa 74133
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fetchtulsa.square.site, (918) 943-5458

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southernagriculture.com

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streetcatstulsa.org, (918) 298-0104

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(918) 960-2828

PET PHYSICAL THERAPY

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animalacupuncturellc.com
(918) 728-2351

Oklahoma K9 PT: Canine Therapy & Wellness
oklahomak9pt.com, (918) 856-6018

PET TRANSPORT

City Veterinary Hospital
3550 S. Peoria, Tulsa 74105, (918) 747-1641

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medpharmok.com
(918) 994-6025

Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa
mckctulsa.com

Oklahoma Alliance for Animals
5321 S. Sheridan Rd., Ste 30, Tulsa 74145
animalallianceok.com

Oklahoma Harness Horse Association
okharnesshorse.com

Pat Becker Books
PatBeckerBooks.com

Pause4Paws
pause4pawsok.org

Tulsa Community College
tulsucc.edu

PET PHOTOGRAPHY

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