Report on the National Dog Park Conference in Ithaca
by Dr. Christine Makowski, MS, DVM, Trumansburg, NY

Condensed from her report to conference attendees.

As an animal lover and veterinarian (Cornell ‘77) who has recently returned to the Ithaca area, I attended the Ithaca Conference for Dog Friendly Communities held April 22 at the Ithaca Holiday Inn. I wanted to network with animal lovers of the Ithaca area and explore the state of involvement of the Ithaca community. While many people who are not dog oriented may scoff at such activities as conferences for dog people, the bonds that humans have with their pets was in 2005 made glaringly obvious in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The news reports were constantly filled with reports of people who refused to evacuate their flooded homes if it meant they had to leave their pets behind. Pets were being pulled on floating rafts while their owners walked through the water. People chose to stay on the street with their animals since they were not allowed in shelters.

It is with this knowledge and experience that I was dismayed to learn of the conflicts in the Ithaca area concerning dogs and their activities in public places. In order to learn all sides of the story, I have attended meetings, and had conversations with members of TCDOG, the local dog training groups, people walking their dogs on the street, and non-dog owners. I have read all the articles in the local papers and attempted to familiarize myself with the history of this conflict, because in my experience it is not only unusual, but the level of negativity from all sides is truly unfortunate.

My conclusion (as an outsider looking in) is that this is not really a dog problem, but a people problem. Strong personalities on all sides of the conflict are clashing and refusing to talk logically, let alone compromise. People are being blind to the feelings of the other side.

It was a very confusing situation to those of us at the conference who are from communities where the presence and importance of pets - most especially dogs - is more happily accommodated. Many communities rate activities for dog owners in their quality of life assessment. The resolution of this debate in Ithaca could bring many more retirees, tourist dollars, and businesses to Ithaca. But most of all, resolution with rules, guidelines and respect could bring peace to those who appreciate dogs, and those who do not. The establishment of dog parks in other locales has proven time and again to be of benefit to the community.
The ALPHA DESK
by Mary McNemey

We Fought the Law....

And the law is on hold. As you know, a lawsuit has been filed against the City Department of Parks and Recreation that would effectively terminate offleash as we know it in Prospect Park. The suit hinges on two conflicting phrases in the law books, one that says dogs must be on a leash in public places at all times, and one that grants the Parks Commissioner authority to allow certain easements within the City’s parks. For over 20 years, our offleash time has been a courtesy of the Parks Commissioner.

The short version of the whole magillah is that a judge in Queens Supreme Court heard oral arguments from both sides and is studying the written material submitted by both.

Those in attendance at the hearing deduced from the judge’s statements that he is most likely to decide against the Parks Department and offleash hours.

The potentially good news is, however, that as part of her presentation to the judge, the City Attorney announced that the City has started the process.

Con’t. on pg. 3

Improve Your Dog’s Well-being, Naturally

by Dr. Andrea Auerbach, DC and Carol Patti, MS Nutrition

How many of you dog owners have heard of Glucosamine Sulfate on more than one occasion? What is Chondroitin Sulfate anyway? As wellness becomes a mainstream word and more and more holistic products are available for us and for our dogs, you may have questions! Let’s try to make sense of the mystery by starting with the most widely known and questioned.

Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate are scientifically researched dietary supplements formulated to help maintain the health of joints. A joint is made up of two separate bones that “articulate” or join together and are separated by cartilage and synovial fluid. Articular cartilage and joint fluid cushion the surfaces of the bones working like a shock absorber to allow flexible joint function. Cartilage consists of the substances collagen, a tough ropy protein that connects the tissues and provides resilience and tensile strength and proteoglycans, sugars that provide the compressive resilience of cartilage. Chondrocytes are cells that produce new cartilage.

Glucosamine Sulfate and Chondroitin Sulfate can help maintain the structure of the cartilage in your dog’s joints while encouraging the production of new chondrocytes. Glucosamine Sulfate acts as a building block of cartilage by supplying a key component that keeps cartilage cells healthy and functioning properly. Chondroitin Sulfate blocks the enzymes that break down cartilage. Flexibility impacts mobility and can affect the quality of their lives.

Unlike steroids and some NSAIDS, which can damage chondrocytes, Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate are not drugs; they are nutriceuticals. There are no known interactions or side effects with these supplements. However, always consult your dog’s health care practitioner if your dog has a known condition.

Recommended dosage for humans is 1500 mg/ Glucosamine Sulfate 1200 mg/Chondroitin Sulfate. Doggy dosage is from 500 mg to 2000 depending on their weight. Read recommended dosages on product. Activity and individuality may necessitate varying the dosages. Remember to monitor and tune in to your dog’s body, this will be your best guide. The coop, pet stores and health food stores carry several formulas. “People” brands are virtually the same as doggy brands.

There are many situations that impact the functioning of our pet’s joints. You can use Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate for stiffness, a change in flexibility or joint function, or for injuries. It is also used as a protective measure and is important for maintaining an active lifestyle. You will benefit from its use as well!

Questions: dc@andreaauerbach.com

“He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion.” - Unknown
Home Boarding
by Roni Henning

Vacations are always fun and eagerly anticipated, but not always so for dog owners. Where will your furry family member go when you are off playing on some island resort? The best solution would be to leave your dog with a family member or a close friend. But that is not always an option. Then there are kennels or day care centers where your dog will be caged at least part of the day. But there’s also Home Boarding, probably the closest to a natural environment that you can have.

I have been taking dogs into my home for a decade and it has been a happy experience for me and for them. My own Collie Willow loves it. She always has a new assortment of pals to play with. We use no cages, so all of our guests must be friendly and fully socialized. It always makes me feel good when a returning dog bolts up my front steps to race into my house. Unlike kenneling, the mix of dogs must be compatible and only keep a few at a time. Sometimes, there are surprises!

Elvis is a black and white cocker spaniel that I met on a rainy spring afternoon. His owners asked me to board him for a few days. There’s no easy way to prepare a dog for this, particularly when the owner is not around. It would be nice if you could leave your dog a note saying, “She’s a nice lady who will take you to her house to play with other dogs. She has a large backyard and she will feed you, pet you, love you, and return you to your home in a few days.” I picked up the key and opened the front door. Elvis took one look at me entering his home (I was not his regular dog walker) and his little body started to tremble and shake. This was not good. I called his name in a reassuring voice and stooped down to pet him. Being a gentle dog, he let me do this and allowed me to put his collar and leash on, but wouldn’t stop shaking. Frightened as he was, his response to Amanda, my granddaughter, was amazing! I told her Elvis was shy and we needed to be very gentle with him. With little Amanda, Elvis made a complete turn-around and began to enjoy his visit, evidenced by an unexpected show of confidence and excitement as he played. Home boarding can work wonders!

ALPHA DESK, Can’t from pg. 2 to change the law in question, which would allow offleash to continue.

Despite what you may have read in the papers, this is not a done deal. The process requires that both the Parks and Health Departments agree on the legislation. If both sides agree on the details, the proposed law is subject to public hearings where opposition will be very vocal.

You can help keep offleash alive in Prospect Park by being a good citizen and obeying the offleash rules. You’ve heard it a zillion times, but it’s especially important now with so much pending (plus, it is migration season again – give the birds a break while they’re here resting!) The City is prepared to give us a huge gift here. Let’s show them we appreciate it!

Second, write to your City Council Representative and to the Mayor, and tell them how important offleash is to your quality of life and remind them that at one end of every leash is a voter! (If you aren’t sure who represents you, check the City Council web site: http://www.nycouncil.info.)

Third, make sure all of your friends know what is going on. Spread the word to everyone you see in the offleash areas of the Park.

Fourth, if you possibly can, chip in some cash to the cause. There is a citywide group called the New York Council of Dog Owner Groups, or NYCDOG that consists of representatives of nearly 3 dozen dog groups from all 5 boros. Members of the Leadership Committee have put forth incredible effort to get the anti-lawsuit gears in motion and keep up the momentum. But activism costs, even when the work is done by volunteers. Several attorneys donated many hours of work pro bono, but the costs of filing various motions to give NYCDOG the right to be heard in court, plus photocopying mountains of necessary documents, plus incidentals such as messengers, etc., has left the NYCDOG treasury quite bare. NYCDOG spearheaded the process that resulted in the City’s move to change the law. It moved mountains to get offleash recreation on the radar of the media and politicians. Any chance of success in getting offleash secured once and for all rests with the efforts of the crew at NYCDOG.

For a credit card donation, go to www.nycoffleash.com and click on the tab that says “NYCDOG”. This is also a great site to get information on the lawsuit and the state of offleash in New York in general.

There is also an online petition on the NYC Offleash website and so far, there are close to a thousand signatures. So if you missed signing the paper version (over 6,000 dog lovers signed) you can join nearly 1,000 ad- mant offleash advocates and make a donation at: www.nycoffleash.com. If you are not online and want more info, or would like to help in some other way, leave a message at the FIDO voicemail at 1-888-604-3422. Let’s work together and keep offleash alive!
Coffee Bark 2048

by Bob Ipcar

Who would have thought we’d all live to see the year 2048; participate in the Commemorative Coffee Bark celebrating fifty years of Fido In Prospect Park! For those of us who remember the good old days, the sight of the Cat Run where the horse corral used to be and the heated Alligator Pool that was once the Dog Beach comes as quite a shock. Still we should be grateful to our country’s second term president, Jenna Bush, for seeing to it that all segments of society are fully allowed to participate in the national pursuit of happiness. We have Ms Bush to thank for lowering the drinking age to twelve!

All in all, the future’s a good thing…

Genetics, not plastics, is the business opportunity for today’s graduate. Even the guy who runs the “24/24 Doggy DNA” kiosk over by the 9th Street path wears a big grin. A former helio-cabby on the Manalapan/JFK run, he’s now raking in a fortune on overnight results from canine ear scrapings – your dog’s ancestral makeup traceable back twenty four generations! For $300 more you can view a hundred generations or spend the hard earned equivalent on a couple of espressos at your favorite morning hangout.

Remember that old time “mix-your-breeds-and-pray” natural selection? Who says that science isn’t intelligent when it comes to design? Not only can breeds now be split down the middle – Poodle front; Golden Retriever hindquarters – the metallic bronzed fur can be transformed to turquoise overnight, thanks to the miracle formulation of Chameleon Kibbles by Earl Sheib/GenBrush, Inc. And three cheers for the whiz-kid who came up with the Nobel Prize winning, genetically redesigned Pitbull. No longer need you fear lawsuits in those “iffy” situations thanks to detachable jaws that pop free at the push of a hand held remote.

While some admire the Vaccu-Lab, a bear of a beast who can clean a 100 square foot area of chicken bones and tinfoil with one suck of the breath, our canine companions of yesteryear did almost as well; especially on Monday mornings. Of course Dane-Dachshund creations were banned from Westminster back in 2026 when it was discovered that the disproportionate four inch front legs/three foot hind limbs, required ungainly armor plated jowls. A recalibration is in the works, but don’t bet you Wolfy-Doodle on it yet. What goes around, comes around – again…

Off-leash privileges are again under attack. Citizen groups throughout greater New York as far East as New Haven are filing lawsuits against Robotic Dogs and their owners for the lawless draining of closed circuit bandwidth in public parks and the devouring of metal fences protecting the newly restored wooded areas. Their GPS units mysteriously go off-line whenever the police are summoned.

In their defense, Robotic Dogs are certainly an improvement when it comes to bagging poop; affordable laser zappers notwithstanding. So what if Robotic Dogs lay down oil slicks whenever they become overly excited! And you know the sad outcome when one of these titanium creatures goes up against Con Edison or attempts to recharge from lampposts leaking stray voltage? Let’s just say that there’s a bunch of these flailing suckers now hurtling in geocentric orbit!

Ah, Coffee Bark 2048’s in full swing …

What a sight: vaulted bronzed ridgepoles swaying in the morning breeze; latté machines sputtering away, powered by thirteen wind turbines atop the ridge separating the Long Meadow from the Nethermead. The Fido Pavilion as it’s now called, remains a permanent year around center, replacing what was once known as the Picnic House. That was back in 2021 when Fido’s yearly donations topped the annual budget of the Prospect Park Alliance by thirteen million dollars.

And here’s Fido’s former president, Mary McNerney, gliding in over the treetops on one of those anti-grav boards. She doesn’t look a day over 25 thanks to the decade-old discovery of the regenerative powers of dog drool! Ah, the aroma of hot donuts wafting in the air reminds me of the sheets of Dizzy’s muffins that were once a monthly staple during Fido’s Paleozoic beginnings. Yeah, that’s the same Dizzy’s now franchised in airport lounges throughout the country!

What will the next fifty years bring for Fido? I can’t begin to imagine, though there’s talk of a breakthrough in the field of Time Travel over at the Gehry designed Markowitz Science Center on the site of the old 15th Street Armory. Imagine going back to any point in the past – reliving history? Imagine viewing those furtive, black-clad figures who once clandestinely gathered in the dark of night beside the ballfields; radical wild-eyed visionaries committed to making Prospect Park a safe healthy place for dogs by urging responsible supervision to ensure enhanced opportunities for off-leash activity.

Ahead of their time, you say? That’s an understatement. You won’t hear this kind of revolutionary talk for another thousand years!
The Dog in the Short Black Coat

Oscar is scratchin’
The water bowl’s dry
There’s a soft cotton shirt on my pillow beside
Noise machine’s humming
The a/c is on
You can’t tell if anyone’s here or their gone
Not a word of good-bye, not even a note.
She’d gone with the dog with the short black coat.

Somebody saw him pullin’ her ‘round
The corner on Sackett to a rusty townhouse
He found what he wanted
He sat he wouldn’t move
Til he got what he came for
He had nothing to prove

Somebody said: “He’s a dog, don’t you know?”
But there were stars on the dog with the short black coat.

She didn’t used to do this
When she was alone
She would read, have her coffee, or just talk on the phone
Now she goes
Where they gather
The dogs and their folks
And there’s dust on the dog with the short black coat.

Cats make the better pet
Some people say
And it’s true sometimes
You can see it that way.
But they do not shadow
Or lick between toes
She gave her heart to the dog with the short black coat.

There’s mist in the dog park,
It’s been there since June
The world is still dawning,
You can still see the moon
He pulls on the leash with such powerful force
Then he’s free and he gallops like a miniature horse

She leaves in the morning she don’t need a note
She’s gone with the dog in the short black coat.
She’s gone with the dog in the short black coat.
Submitted by Lee Crespi. Sung to the tune of “Man in the Long Black Coat” by Bob Dylan (‘Oh Mercy’ album)

“You’ve Got Balls, Buddy!” by Jennifer Brauer

“Gentlemen of the Jury: The one, absolute, unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog.”

- George Graham Vest

“Like this, Mom?” Roni Henning’s tri-color collie, Willow, demonstrates the perfect ‘give me’ pose.
FIDO Fall Calendar

October 7th: Coffee Bark - Blessing of the Animals - 8:15 a.m. Plus the usual coffee, cake and dog biscuits. 7am-9am, Long Meadow behind Picnic House (roughly 4th Street).

November 4th: Coffee Bark: 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. The usual coffee, cake and dog biscuits. Long Meadow behind Picnic House (roughly 4th Street)

December 2: Coffee Bark: 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. The usual coffee, cake and dog biscuits. Long Meadow behind Picnic House (roughly 4th Street)

December 16th: Bark The Herald Angels Sing Different time: 8am-10am, Long Meadow behind Picnic House (roughly 4th Street)

Watch for notices of Fido Fall Lecture Series.

For more info, log on to fidobrooklyn.org, write fidobrooklyn@att.net or call our voicemail at 1-888-604-3422.

NOTE: Dogs must be on leash at 9:00am!
Life With A Dog
by Liv Ryan, age 9

Three years ago my family got a dog. His name is Zim and he is the best dog in the world. But... he loves to chase people on wheels because he is a Sheltie which is a herding breed. Other than this little problem he is a loving and caring dog who loves people and loves to play with them.

Everyday we take him to Prospect Park where he runs around and plays with all of his dog friends. The dog run is very important to him because he needs to exercise and play when we know he will not be disturbing other people using the park, like the baseball players. Many people use the park for different reasons, like the bird watchers or the horseback riders and we all have to share the park. I really hope that some other group does not cancel the dog run because all the dogs need some free time to run around.

Getting back to Zim, we keep our eyes out for people on wheels so that he will not chase them and get hurt or scare little kids. People misunderstand Zim all the time because they think he is chasing them when he is just herding them to be safe.

All dog owners have to know how their dogs will behave so that no one gets hurt. This way, the dog run will always be a safe and fun time with your dog. I CAN'T IMAGINE MY LIFE WITHOUT ZIM.

(That's Zim to the right .... Photo by Liv Ryan.)
Keep Prospect Park Off-Leash Friendly
Here is my Membership contribution of:

___ $15  ___ $25  ___ $50  ___ $100  ____Other  ____Renewal
Renewal (annual renewal due each April 1st*)

Name_________________________________ Dog(s) Name____________________
Address__________________________________________________________Apt____
City  ________________________________________________________________
State__________________________ Zip______________________________
Phone________________________ E-mail ________________________________

Mail This Form to: Fido In Prospect Park, 230 7th Ave, #157, Brooklyn, NY 11215
Contact Us: Voice Mail 888 604 3422 - E-mail: fidobrooklyn@att.net

*Renewals due yearly on April 1st. If you first became a member of Fido after 4/2006, you’re good until 4/2008

FIDO
Prospect Park

230 7th Avenue, #157
Brooklyn, New York
11215

Address Label