FIDO's hundredth Coffee Bark was held on August 4, 2007. The occasion was a bit more deluxe than the usual first Saturday of the month event, including a birthday cake, ice cream, raffles, FIDO T-shirts for sale, live music, and many roving photographers.

One hundred Coffee Barks. One hundred months of dogs and people mingling companionably, enjoying their coffee (humans), their biscuits (dogs), and their Danish (hum--

WAIT! Who was that four-legged bandit?!).

Fortunately for the historically inclined, Coffee Bark's origins are not lost in the mists of time. Diane Johnson, a Steering Committee member and also a founder of FIDO, tracked down John Lohac, whose doggy celebrations way back in 1996 were the roots of today's Coffee Bark. John's dog from those days, Superdog, is 13-1/2 and doing fine, he says. Superdog "always gets very excited" when he gets near the park.

John writes that "Prospect Park Picnics with the Dog People" began on Fridays in the summer of 1996. The biggest rally saw about 250 dogs and even more people. It really was something to bark and howl about. We then shifted toward 'Sunday Morning Breakfasts with the Dog People,' on the occasion of which I sometimes made crepes in winter.

"People came with delicious bounties from all over the place. One

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To Prez Mary

O Alpha, our leader,
The trials are finally done.
The pack has led in every race,
The prize we sought is won.

You got the Kongs a-flying;
You made the Bassets gay;
You got the Labs a-swimming;
You gave the puppies play.

For you
the tails are wagging.
For you
our banner waves.
Dogs here now, and those above,
Howl out and bark your praise.

With heavy hearts we thank you,
For we've heard by word of mouth,
That somewhere in the morrow
You'll be leaving for the South.

Your legacy stays here, though--
It will help us carry on.
New folks are coming to us
As the founders travel on.

Maureen Sanders
FIDO Poet Laureate

Coffee Bark continued.......

Continued from page 1

fellow in particular would come at six on freezing mornings with trays of smoked fish and salad, tomato, onions. Smoked salmon, smoked eel, kippers, you name it! ... I would always cover our table with a large cloth to make it special and inviting.

"One of these illustrious gastronomic gatherings was even captured by a prominent TV network.... That day was rather cold and snow had been falling. We had huge jugs of wine surrounding the crepe stove which gave the impression that we were using lots of high-density liquid fuel. ... But it was just an illusion -- the wine jugs were really filled with water. ..."

"Even before our regular Sunday breakfasts there had been a tradition of a very charming and friendly Yuletide Christmas Howling Choir around a fire. ... The Christmas events were organized by a respected chef named Steve. One day he shared with me a perfectly made 'brandade de morue,' cod with mashed potato ... Delicious. We had a really good time, as we always had, but that day there was this lovely dry white wine."

As is so often the case, our predecessors set a high standard for us to live up to. Viva Coffee Bark!
Keeping Pets in Their Homes:  
AC&C Safety Net Program....

While many are familiar with Animal Care & Control (AC&C) of New York City's mission to manage the needs of the city's stray and homeless animal population, less well known is the organization's innovative partner program, the Safety Net Program.

This progressive program was designed to provide hands-on assistance to city residents who are considering surrendering a pet because of behavioral issues, allergies, landlord or neighbor issues, pet illness, domestic violence, a hospital stay or for any other reason. Keeping New Yorkers and their pets together by offering a full spectrum of support, including reduced-cost veterinary, boarding, and allergy testing services, free pet-related landlord-tenant advice, free and reduced-cost animal behavioral training, lending of supplies, and guidance, is the goal of the program.

Pets relinquished to AC&C frequently become sick, depressed and anxious due to the stress of losing their homes. Due to limited space and health or behavioral issues, euthanasia is the only option for those animals who do not find homes. Pets are given up for a wide variety of reasons -- most are heartbreaking, and most are avoidable.

Clyde, an overweight Mastiff with hip problems, is living proof of why the Safety Net Program is crucial. Clyde’s guardian entered AC&C on a winter afternoon, prepared to surrender his dog because of a change in living arrangements following a divorce. The man was frustrated and angry, but burst into grateful tears when a Safety Net Program coordinator suggested a solution that would keep Clyde out of the shelter system -- placing Clyde in Safety Net’s low-cost boarding facility. Within a few months the dog lost 10 pounds, and found a foster family through a Mastiff rescue group.

The Safety Net Program currently relies almost exclusively on several volunteers who counsel clients in the shelters and on the phone every day. As the demand is great, the program is actively recruiting more volunteers. Also sought are more vets, foster homes, boarding facilities, trainers, and transportation providers to participate in this life-saving endeavor, as well as donations of funding and supplies. For more information on the Safety Net Program, please contact Jenny Olsen or Joyce Friedman at 917-468-2938.
In Memory of Smoke.......  

Karen Pedersen and Steve Berg have made a donation to FIDO in memory of Smoke who left them in March 2006. Smoke and his sidekick and best friend Charlie (and Diane) enjoyed years of hanging together at Prospect Park and passed through the rainbow just a few months apart. We picture them together in heaven, where dogs run free in endless fields, nap on fluffy clouds, and are given treats by passing angels.

Diane Johnson

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Sponsor the FIDO Newsletter

FIDO in Prospect Park

Reach FIDO's Membership & Beyond

Dog walking/sitting/boarding/training and supplies and more.... Non-dog business services too.

Ads should be in business card format, meaning content and size should resemble a business card. The charge per ad is $25 per quarterly issue. Make check payable to "FIDO in Prospect Park" and mail it to Bob Ipcar, FIDO Newsletter Ads, 342 16th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215

While sponsorship does not imply endorsement by FIDO, these ads represent businesses who like what we do.

Mary Jane Monahan’s Shebah, June 11, 1997 – Sept. 28, 2007

Kridler’s Queen of Shebah was the cutest puppy and the most beautiful German Shepherd. I brought Shebah home at eight weeks old, from a private breeder in Ohio who had a long line of American champion show Shepherds. My intention was to purchase a healthy pet dog as a furry friend and companion for my children, Kim and Dennis. I also had aspirations that Shebah would become a therapy dog. But, as anyone who knew her will tell you, the dog I wanted was not the dog I got. She was our first puppy and we loved her very much; she loved us right back. The problem was that she wanted to bite everyone else who got close to her. She was a shy, fearful puppy who was growling at my sister at 8 weeks old.

I knew I had a problem; I just didn’t know how serious it would become. There were many times in our early life together when I wanted to give up. I got advice from many trainers who advised harsh methods and even euthanasia. These were out of the question. The breeder wanted us to give Shebah back and start with a new puppy. We couldn’t imagine giving her up. So the companion dog I bought for my children became my focus. My goal was to help Shebah become comfortable around people. Many people wanted to pet her but close contact was a recipe for disaster, so we mostly stayed to ourselves.

Through my work with Shebah to overcome her fearfulness and shyness I was introduced to the world of clicker training dogs, behavior modification with gentle methods, and canine agility. I read countless books and took many classes, seminars and private lessons – all for Shebah. But most of all, gentleness and patience and good friends seemed to help Shebah become the playful dog some of you have seen in the park. She loved performing her favorite tricks: “Curtsy,” “Tinkerbelle,” “Does your leg hurt?,” “No way, Jose!,” and “Duck, there are bombs!” She was also very good at playing dead when it was time to leave the park; successful strategies for going home included pretend CPR and saying her favorite words to get her interested and get her moving.

Shebah’s best trick was “Lassie”: she would pick up a Lassie lunch box in her mouth, then sit and raise her paw. She loved to swim in the lake and at Dog Beach. Swimming was one of the things that increased her confidence and also had a calming effect for her around people.

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In the early years of her life, Shebah’s behavior toward humans was unpredictable, but as we worked together, she learned that people were not dangerous. She became noticeably more relaxed and could be around new people without displays of anxiety or threat. She was becoming a normal dog. In the last six years of her life Shebah loved to run in the park, swim, hike, and play with her favorite dog friends. Her favorite Prospect Park events were Coffee Bark and Pupnic, where she proved herself champion of the “biscuit toss” for five years in a row, losing once to her half brother Bentley, the food-crazed Cocker Spaniel.

Shebah always made the decisions about who would be her friend. Her human favorites were me, the kids, and a close circle of friends. She wasn’t a cuddly dog, but once she accepted someone she was friendly toward that person and would even give kisses. I started to think she was a good judge of character and chose humans who have gentle and kind spirits. She gave me the gift of friendship with many others who enjoy off-leash time in the various park meadows. I am thankful to all of you who have acknowledged her accomplishments. I am especially thankful to my friend Polly Hanson (an extraordinary dog trainer) who helped me and Shebah overcome our fears.

Ten years was such a short time to share with my beloved Shebah, but my relationship with her taught me valuable lessons about life. The most important is never to give up hope when things seem impossible. The next is the value of having good friends and family (people and dogs) in my life. And next is to make every moment count.

Sasha, an eight-year-old rescued Maltese, was endlessly affectionate and inquisitive, a constant playmate-trickster-bunny rabbit-lap sitter. During my visits to my brother and his family in Colorado, we would chase each other and roll around on the floor together. I exploited Sasha’s “kisses” to take advantage of my brother’s germ phobia. When she gave me kisses on the lips, I would chase him around, puckering up and threatening to pass the doggy kiss on. His kids found this hilarious.

Sasha was sometimes allowed to roam the neighborhood. I was always distressed by this, but they insisted that she would be all right. It wasn’t so. One Sunday afternoon, my father called to tell me she had been killed by another dog. Sadly, her last moments on earth were spent in pain, partially paralyzed and staring up at my brother and sister-in-law as they held her while she died.

By the time I paid my next visit to the Rocky Mountains, my brother and his family had brought a Maltese puppy into their home. Leilani was 15 weeks old; I doubt that I’ve ever seen brighter, spunkier eyes, or more engagement with people. She ran like a rabbit, springing out and up in the grasses. She already knew her family, but would sit in the lap of any friendly person. It was gratifying to see my muscular hockey-player nephew holding her gently against his chest.

I struggled against emotionally attaching to her, then decided to do what I could to help keep her safe. The first thing was to get my brother to promise to put a fence up for her, and not to let her roam freely. The next thing to be done was to interest my sister-in-law and younger nephew in learning some clicker training with Leilani. I had taught myself about clicker training with some books, and had used it to train my three dogs, two of them registered Therapy Dogs.

With Leilani, I started by “loading the clicker,” teaching her that when the clicker clicked it would always mean that she would get a treat immediately. I showed her the clicker, clicked, and immediately gave her a treat. I repeated this a few more times, and then paused. I then repeated again. She seemed to get it. She became very interested in and...
moment count with the people and pets who mean the most to me.

Bentley, Kim, and I were with Shebah as she passed over the Rainbow Bridge. My heart is broken. It was so hard to let her go but I know that she is happy and at peace.

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SPEAKS

This newsletter is a seasonal publication of the Prospect Park FIDO community.

We welcome photos and stories from the community, the dogs and their owners.

Please e-mail your story, ad, and photo submissions to the newsletter co-editors:

Viviane Azoumanian  
917-476-8315  
pumpkinpups@yahoo.com
or
Jolanta Benal  
jbenal@earthlink.net

Animal behavior and learning have been subjects of careful scientific study for over a century, but it’s only in the past couple of decades that the information contained in that research has filtered into the dog training and behavior community. Still, much puppy-rearing and dog-training advice is full of folklore, some of which is relatively benign and some of which can be detrimental and dangerous to both humans and dogs.

In this and the next couple of issues, we’ll offer a selection of free online resources that offer valuable and science-based material about dogs – their behavior, their training, their health. We’ll cover mailing lists and websites for family pets and for performance and working dogs. Remember, please, that if your dog has health problems she or he needs to visit a veterinarian in person, and that behavior problems, especially serious ones (various types of aggression) need help from a competent professional.

Start Puppy Training: http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/spt/. SPT describes itself as “a helpful, supportive group of pet dog owners and pet dog trainers who discuss positive solutions to common puppy training situations like crate/house training, puppy biting, leash training and household manners.” The membership varies from complete dog newbies who barely know which end of the puppy is up, to professional dog trainers who are basically volunteering their help. Traffic is heavy, so you might want to get posts in digest form.

“Before You Get Your Puppy,” by Ian Dunbar, DVM, is an excellent basic guide and available for sale at any online book dealer. However, buy your new puppy a Kong instead, because you can download the entire book for free here: http://www.jamesandkenneth.com/new_puppy.html. Dr. Dunbar really, really, really wants you and your new dog to be happy together and his advice is excellent. It can’t hurt to read it even if your puppy is all grown up.

Notice the mention of Kongs in the preceding paragraph. Without turning this into a commercial for one particular product, we’ll say that food-containing toys that puppies and dogs have to work on are a huge boon. Puppies and dogs need something legal to do with their jaws and teeth, and most dogs

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focused on me, watching and attentive. Now we could start training behaviors, by clicking and treating each time Leilani performed the desired behavior. (Note: clickers are used to train new behaviors, which once learned no longer require the clicker, and food rewards are then used intermittently to keep the behavior strongly in place.)

By the afternoon, with just a few 5-minute training sessions, Leilani had a fairly reliable recall, a nice sit, and a “look.” The humans “had” the concept, found it fun, and were excited about the prospect of continuing to train Leilani. Later that day, my dad went to call the pup from the backyard. He called her and she came immediately! I could almost cry. Their dog Sasha had never even learned to sit on cue.

I left Colorado knowing that I had done as much as I could. I hoped that my brother and his family would keep working with Leilani and that they would keep her safe. I am still haunted by my younger niece’s words: “Sasha wasn’t ready to die.”

Terry Cramer 8/15/07

http://www.kongcompany.com/worlds_best.html; click on “Tips and Advice” and then on “Recipes.”

Dog too old for Start Puppy Training, but not yet all grown up? Visit http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/Teen-Adult-Dogs/, for adolescent dogs (6 months and up). This list is much smaller and lower-traffic than SPT (maybe the people who start out on SPT don’t have as many adolescent problems?). And for adult dogs, there are a number of useful lists. http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/peaceablepaws/ is run by Pat Miller, who has decades of experience in training, behavior modification, and animal protection. The list gets chatty – maybe too chatty at times – but training and behavior questions almost always get good, solid answers from the many professional trainers and serious amateurs on the list.

Clicker Solutions (http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/ClickerSolutions/) is huge (6,000 + members) and so high-traffic that some people cycle in and out depending on how full they can stand their mailboxes to be. But you can’t beat the wealth of expertise. If you’re feeling the tickle of serious training, check out this list. Many “keeper” posts from the list are available as articles here: http://www.clickersolutions.com/articles/index.htm. Scroll down to “Specific Behaviors” for pointers on teaching your dog to come when called, walk politely on leash, pay attention to you, come when called …

For excellent brief articles answering common training and behavior questions, you can’t go wrong with the San Francisco SPCA Behavior Library, at http://www.sfsPCA.org/behavior/dog_library/index_library.html. Tips on everything from housetraining to how to play tug to introducing a new dog to your household. (Remember, if you’re having serious problems, especially with aggression, you should get in-person help.) Another very good series of articles on dozens of dog-related topics is http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.p lx?P=SRC&S=1&SourceID=47.

Watch for more resources in future issues. Happy browsing!
Join FIDO today

and become part of a community of over 400 Brooklynites who:

• love their dogs
• organized last year to help save off-leash privileges in our City’s parks.
• support the printing and mailing of this fun informative seasonal newsletter.
• have a blast year-round frolicking or hanging out with their dogs and friends sharing ideas dog and otherwise.

Use the form here to start your membership or go to our website www.fidobrooklyn.org and print out a copy if you can’t stand the idea of tearing off a piece of the newsletter.

FIDO MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Mail this form with your check payable to FIDO in Prospect Park to 230 7th Avenue, #157, Brooklyn, NY 11215