Our dog is an adventurer. We knew that from the moment we saw him at the city shelter: All he wanted to do when they let him out of the kennel was find the nearest exit and trot out of it. But his curiosity got the better of him, and he circled back to investigate us. A couple of sniffs, and we passed his test. He jumped up and licked our hands, then ran around us, silently imploring us to come and play.

We’d seen his picture on the Animal Care and Control Center website: a blurry photo of a ginger-colored, 17-month-old Shiba sitting alert, focusing his attention at something just above the camera. We checked the site four or five times a day to make sure he was still there. Finally, three days after we first saw him, we took time off work to visit him.

It turned out that a Shiba rescue group in Buffalo was planning to pick him up the following morning, but they had no placement for him; they were happy to let us take him home right away. So the three of us got on the subway—and luckily didn’t run into any policemen, because we hadn’t brought along a carrier.

Hiro charmed us silly in the next few days. He was adorable—and adorably clumsy. Though he was already house-broken, he didn’t seem to have much experience with a leash, and he’d walk right into chain link fences if we didn’t pay close attention. Pat also noticed that he sometimes tripped over his toys and bumped his nose when he was rounding corners.

We had read that Shibas often have eye trouble. Our vet told us that Hiro’s vision was indeed impaired; even though he was less than two years old, she said, he seemed to have cataracts. She referred us to a canine ophthalmologist, Dr. Sheri Berger, who confirmed the vet’s diagnosis.

But Hiro’s eye trouble didn’t stop there. He also had abnormally high ocular pressure—a condition that increases the risk of glaucoma. Dr. Berger might be able to remove Hiro’s cataract-fogged lenses and replace them with plastic ones, but the surgery would be too dangerous with his current pressure level. She prescribed eyedrops and asked us to return a few weeks later to see if his eyes responded to them.

Hiro was lucky. The drops worked, and Dr. Berger said the surgery would now have a much higher chance of success. But aside from a large chunk of change, the operation would involve a complicated and time-consuming recovery. We would have to administer five kinds of eyedrops, each on its own schedule, plus two types of pills and one liquid oral medication for three weeks, practically around the clock.

We weighed the options. Hiro was young and otherwise healthy, with ten more years—at the very least—ahead of him. Spread over a dozen years, the thousands of dollars the surgery would cost seemed reasonable. And the rigorous recovery regimen would last for only six weeks—a relatively short time. We scheduled the operation for the Fourth of July weekend and set up extra vacation days so we could take care of him afterward.

continued on page 2
By The Hydrant... with Loretta

You Are What You Eat...
You can never have too much of a good thing. At the FIDO Peninsular clean up this past summer, Angelo and Adrian’s dog Teddy led the vanguard by eating all the garbage in sight - day old pizza de rigueur!

Napoleon Complex...
Charlie, Sara’s Toy Fox Terrier has been mixing it up with much larger dogs. In one encounter, getting nipped didn’t stop Charlie. He went for the big guy with feisty determination. Human intervention was needed which all goes to prove that, in a fight, pick on the bigger guys – win or lose, you’re a hero!

Scooter Indicted...
The indictment of Scooter by a Washington Special Prosecutor for “leaking” drew a sharp yelp of protest from Prospect Park’s canines. A mass rally was held in front of the Windsor Place home of the Bellow family, with boisterous proclamations that the right to leak wherever a canine wishes (well maybe not on the living room rug) comes first and foremost in the Bill of Rights!

Scooter’s attorneys have issued the following press release: “Our enemies [such as MeowOn.org] with their godless litter boxes will never detour our worldly mission by virtue of our righteousness. Have faith, my friends, that we will continue to pee on America for generations to come.”

A Million dog “Leak-In” is planned for early February at the Washington Monument...

A True Hiro continued...

The day of the surgery, we took him in to Dr. Berger’s office at 7 a.m. Then the waiting and worrying began. We found out at 4 p.m. that the surgery had gone well, though the replacement lens in his left eye had collapsed and couldn’t be left in.

A couple of sleepless nights later, we picked up our groggy but anxious dog. The skin around his eyes had been shaved for the surgery, making him look like a raccoon or a cartoon burgler. The stitches just added to his tough-guy appearance. But he was also wearing an Elizabethan collar—basically an invitation to mischief for any other canine. He pawed at it constantly.

During his recovery, Hiro wasn’t supposed to move around, so the three of us spent the next few sunny weeks indoors. That meant no running, jumping or playing—a tall order for our adventurer. Plus, giving him the eyedrops was incredibly difficult—though he was taking pain and anti-anxiety medication, his eyes were tender and swollen. One of us had to hold him while the other tried to open his lids and aim the dropper as quickly as possible.

Somehow, we survived the cabin fever, the midsummer heat and the complicated medication schedule. Hiro’s prognosis improved with each follow-up visit. Gradually his stitches dissolved and his fur began to grow back—though two thin patches above his eyes took longer to come in, and he spent a few weeks looking constantly surprised.

As Labor Day approached and Hiro was able to interact with the outside world once again, we began to see a difference. Rather than just hearing or smelling birds or squirrels, Hiro could actually see them—and any obstacles in his path. The Elizabethan collar came off, and he took his eyes off the ground to see the sky for the first time.

His actions with other dogs, and with people, have changed. Now he recognizes his friends from a block away and knows exactly where we hide his biscuits. All the money and time were worth it in the end. We still give him two kinds of eyedrops each day—and probably will for the rest of his life. He’s not exactly overjoyed about it, but he accepts it as part of his routine. We’re thrilled about the good fortune of finding Hiro, the success of the surgery, and how happy he seems to be. He has many adventures ahead of him, and many things left to see.
Canines and Zodiac Dogs

by Maureen Sanders

Every member of my household believes that she is Leader of the Pack. But it’s just my partner and I, the mere humans of the group, who feel slighted when we realize that we hardly ever run the show! The other two housemates, a Doberman and a Lab mix, seem to be able to roll with the punches. It doesn’t faze the Dobie at all that the Lab rules the toy box. And the Lab, secure in the knowledge that her food will be brought to her, just yawns at the Dobie’s frenzied attacks on anything edible.

Fortunately, both aforementioned “rational” animals were born in a year of the dog. To the Chinese, and many other Asians, this means that we two humans share the traits of our beloved canine companions. I am convinced that it is that, and only that, that makes possible a reasonable degree of tranquility in our humble abode. What fantastic good luck! Indeed, just living in a year of the dog is fantastic good luck. To have been born in a year of the dog is even better.

A year of the dog occurs every 12 years, preceded in the Chinese zodiac by years of the rat, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit (cat to Vietnamese), the dragon, the snake, the horse, the goat, the monkey, and the rooster. A year of the dog is followed by a year of the pig. In the Chinese calendar, which is basically a lunar calendar, the year beginning 29 January 2006 and ending 17 February 2007 is a year of the dog. Simplified to Americanese, we say that 2006 is The Year of the Dog. Other dog years were:


For clarity, I like to call persons born in a year of the dog “zodiac dogs” rather than simply “dogs”, a term I reserve for members of the species Canis familiaris.

Just as no two dogs are exactly alike, no two zodiac dogs are exactly alike. Not only do genetics and environment play their roles, the zodiac signs are governed by the elements wood, fire, earth, metal, and water; and the circumstances of the month, day, and time of birth influence a person’s horoscope. Also, there have been attempts to integrate the astral signs of western astrology with the animals of the Chinese zodiac. All this stuff can get enormously complicated, so I’m just going to talk about dogs and their human counterparts, zodiac dogs.

As could be expected, both dogs and persons born in a year of the dog have not-so-welcome traits as well as welcome ones. (Admit it, now: On rare occasions, you’ve been a bit

continued on page 4

Official Prospect Park Dog Regulations

FIDO has worked closely with Park officials to come up with the following rules which have largely been in effect for the past two years - the most liberal off leash rules currently in the Metropolitan area. That these rules remain in effect for dog owners to enjoy will depend on your continued support and cooperation.

Specific Park regulations in a large nutshell:

1. Dogs must be On Leash (6ft or less) in all places, at all times between 9am - 9pm (April 1 - October31) & 9am - 5pm (November 1 - March 31).

2. All other times dogs may be Off Leash in the Long Meadow, the Nethermead, and the Peninsula Meadow

3. On weekdays only, from 5pm to 9pm, dogs may be Off Leash in the Nethermead.

4. Owners must always be in control of their dogs.

5. Dog waste must be picked up by owners and disposed of properly at all times.

6. No digging is allowed. Holes create trip hazards.

7. Dogs are not allowed in playgrounds.

8. Bridle paths are for horses only.

9. Dogs are not allowed on ballfields when games are in progress. This also means pre 9am when players are warming up.

10. In wooded areas (non- meadow) dogs must always be on leash; owners and dogs must stay on the paths. Be warned: this is interpreted by authorities to mean that dogs must be on leash when passing from Long Meadow to The Nethermead in spite of the protective fencing on either side. Get used to it!

11. (FIDO NOTE) The grassy areas anywhere below the wall along Prospect Park West are technically off limits to unleashed dogs as well. You will receive tickets for allowing their dogs to run in these areas.

Official Prospect Park Dog Regulations
testy with the crème de la crème of the canine world.)
In general, domestic canines and zodiac dogs alike are
magnanimous, courageous, noble, loyal, devoted, attentive,
faithful, modest, altruistic, dutiful, and intelligent. They can
also be disquiet, guarded, defensive, forbidding, and stub-
born. (Recognize anyone?) On the human side, we can add
prosperous, philosophical, respectable, and discreet as well
as introverted, critical, pessimistic, cynical, and moralizing.
(I’m sure you recognize someone now!)

There are several legends as to how the animals of the zodiac
were chosen. One is that these twelve alone came to bid Bud-
Dha farewell as he was about to leave earth. The rat came
first because it slipped onto the back of the powerful ox, and
technically crossed a river before it by jumping to shore be-
fore the ox could get out of the water. The other years come
in the order in which the respective animals arrived. This
selection of the zodiac animals allegedly occurred some 2637
years bce. Given that the Chinese “century” has 60 years, our
29 January 2006 begins the Chinese year 4704. In this year
of the dog, zodiac dogs can expect to overcome obstacles and
shine personally and/or professionally.

The Chinese New Year is celebrated with much fanfare. The
color red and firecrackers (originally bamboo, which cracks
when burned) are the order of the day among Chinese and
some other Asians everywhere in the world. It is traditional
to stay up New Year’s Eve night with all available lights burn-
ing so that the gods who bring good luck will be able to see
their way. At midnight, the fireworks make an exciting show
that serves to frighten off evil spirits. On New Year’s Day,
children and unmarried adults are given cash in red or gold
envelopes.

The New Year’s Festival (also known as The Spring Festival)
lasts for 15 days. It begins on the date of the second new
moon following the winter solstice, and ends on the date of
the next full moon. A lantern festival, which lasts for three
days, is the final event. Legend has it that spirits can be seen
during a full moon; and in ancient times, people would search
for them with burning sticks.

Throughout the 15 days, there is much feasting and visiting
with relatives and friends. Ancestors are honored, and re-
gardless of the year’s zodiac animal, dogs are honored. Dogs
are treated especially well on the second day of the festival,
which is traditionally the birthday of all dogs. The birthday of
all humans is celebrated on the seventh day.

Dogs were revered in ancient China. The Chinese creation
myth, of which there are many versions, has a dog as one
of the ancestors of the human race. During the course of
China’s history, dogs were frequently given royal status
and protected accordingly. As late as 1861, the Dowager
Empress Tzu Hsi personally supervised the breeding of the
royal dogs.

The Chinese have a saying that if a strange dog follows you
home, your house will be blessed with prosperity. May many
a canine pursue you. I know you will treat each as befits its
royal heritage.

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**Prospect Park**

**Gone to the Dogs**

Prospect Park’s Biggest Booster

By Clem Richardson for the New York Daily News, 9/29/05

Tupper Thomas remembers the bad old days in Prospect
Park. This was in the late 70s and much of the 80s, when
the city’s fiscal woes were made manifest in the giant park
by dilapidated equipment, graffiti, crime, litter, algae-
choked lakes and expanses devoid of people.

“Everybody was terrified of Prospect Park,” said Thomas,
who was appointed the park’s administrator in 1980. . . .

That was then. Let’s talk about now. Today Prospect Park
hosts some 7 million visitors annually, thanks in no small
part to what Thomas estimates is more than $100 million
in public and private funds spent sprucing Frederick Law
Olmsted and Calvert Vaux’s vision under her watch.

“Hard to believe, but dogs deserve a lot of the credit. Even
the threat of muggings never kept Brooklyn dog owners out
of the 585-acre park. But they were more than a bit rattled
when, in 1982, the Parks Department started ticketing
owners who let their dogs roam city parks off their leashes.
Irate owners found their way to Thomas’ office. “They were
screaming at me,” said Thomas, herself a canine fancier.
“They said, ‘Why are you doing this? We’re the only ones out
there.’” Thomas came up with a policy which is still in effect
today: Dogs can run without a leash in the Long Meadow
and Nethermead areas from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. every day.

That simple accommodation was a mini-catalyst that
helped turn things around, Thomas said. "That dog group
became a symbol that it was safe to come to the Park. It
made an enormous difference. Runners started
seeing people in the park, so people started running in the
park rather than around it. Over time, because there were
people coming to the park, the park came back to the people.” That dog owners group
[FIDO - Fellowship in the Interest of Dogs and their Owners]
is still very active in park affairs.”
In The Hood

On an early evening recently I took our dog, Jack, for his second walk of the day. To my surprise, he pooped a second time in front of a corner apartment house a half a block from home. This time I needed some leaves to help in the cleanup so I stepped away to the curb to gather some. Right then, a woman on the stoop above me said, “No you don’t. You’re walking away leaving your dog’s poop on our property. Clean it up!” “That’s what I’m doing,” I told her. “I’m stepping over here to gather some leaves.” “Sure you are! If I hadn’t stopped you, you’d have walked off. If you leave that here, I’m going to follow you home to see where you live.”

“Give me a break, please. I’ve been walking dogs around here for 15 years. I would never leave this here. ’I’m not going to give you a break. No way. If you’ve been walking dogs for 15 years, you should know to bring the proper gear. You’re one of those people who leave dog poop all over people’s property.”

The cleanup and the conversation seemed to go on interminably. I felt skewered, unable to satisfy her nor to get away from this lady’s abusive language. As I finished I said, “that’s what I can do for now. Is that good enough?” “Whatever,” she responded.

To give this exasperating stranger the benefit of the doubt, she must have encountered abandoned dog poop before, which leads me to my point — Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Clean up after your dog. It affects us all.

Holly Hallmark

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CANDLES
by Maureen Sanders

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Candle of heaven bringing light to the world.

Mutt-erly Joyous Celebrations to All!

Honda Designs Car Friendly for Dogs

WAKO, Japan - Honda Motor Co. has designed a car that’s friendly for dogs - part of the Japanese automaker’s ongoing effort to create vehicles that are easy to use and comfortable to ride in.

The W.O.W. Concept, which stands for “wonderful open-hearted wagon,” shown to reporters recently, is an exhibition model with no plans for commercial sale that will be exhibited at the Tokyo auto show later this month.

A special crate for dogs in the glove compartment allows owners to interact with their pets while driving. A bigger crate pops up from the floor in the back seat area and can be folded back into the floor when it’s not needed. For even bigger dogs, just buckle them up with a special seat belt to the floor.

The big danger for pets riding along in cars is that they get thrown out during a crash. About a fifth of Japanese households have a dog, and demand is growing for cars that cater to man’s best friend, according to Honda.

The W.O.W comes with removable, washable, rollout flooring and has wide sliding doors to keep dogs happy.

“We created this vehicle from the point of view of a dog, but it turned out to be a gentler vehicle for the elderly, children and other family members,” said Honda designer Katsuhito Nakamura.

Pet Medicine: Animals As Healers
www.dailyom.com

All pet owners have had, at one time or another, an experience in which their pet, whether golden retriever, kitten, horse, or iguana, recognized their suffering and offered comfort. Animals, both wild and domesticated, have the ability to sense changes in the body and mind and can positively influence humans in many ways. They can inspire playful thoughts in those discouraged and remind us of the need to nurture both ourselves and others. They can even affect profound physical changes in humans, by lowering our blood pressure and reducing stress. The gentle purring of a cat or a friendly nuzzle from a warm lizard can be a form of healing, and all animals, even those in the wild, are natural healers.

A house pet can tell you many things, if you observe. Your pet will choose to sleep in the places in your home that have the best energy and, when you’re ill, may concentrate its attention on the area of your body that needs healing. Stroking soft fur, a smooth, scaly back, or downy feathers can enhance memory, shorten recovery time after an injury, help curb depression, open lines of communication, and even increase a person’s chance of survival after a heart attack. For many years, schools, nursing homes, and even prisons have let their charges visit with specially trained animals periodically because a visit with a pet both calms and cheers people. With the elderly, the love of an animal can heighten cognitive ability, movement, and quality of life. Wild animals, too, have their own healing powers. The antics of a silly squirrel can lift the spirits while the industrious ant is an inspiration. A chance encounter with a dolphin or manatee can be life changing.

In mythology, the centaur was the keeper of the art of healing and the Egyptian god Anubis was the healer of the gods. It is not surprising that so many people keep pets or enjoy watching animals in nature. Animals transform us and their unique and beautiful modes of healing are as natural as they are.

For more information visit: http://www.dailyom.com/cgi-bin/display/linktofriend.cgi?fid=253

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FIDO is committed to ensuring that Prospect Park is a safe and healthy place for dogs and their people.

FIDO believes that dogs need off-leash time to exercise and to play with other dogs in order to be healthy and well socialized. We are, therefore, dedicated to protecting and enhancing off-leash opportunities in Prospect Park.

FIDO understands that there are many diverse groups who use the Park. We keep lines of communication open with these groups and seek respectful coexistence. Toward this end, FIDO recognizes that dogs must be well-trained and under control at all times in order to be off-leash. Therefore we strive to educate the dog community regarding appropriate conduct.

The dog community brings enormous benefits to Prospect Park. We are among the most consistent and dedicated of park constituencies. We use the park 365 days a year, rain or shine. We provide a network of watchful eyes in the early morning and late at night, bringing stability, security, and safety to the Park as a whole. As an organization FIDO seeks to harness our collective strength to increase the public’s awareness of these benefits and to educate park and city officials and the general public about dogs, off-leash activity, and the need for a cleaner, better maintained Prospect Park.

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*Renewals due yearly on April 1st. If you first became a member of Fido after 4/2004, you’re good until 4/2006