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No. 9 • JANUARY 2018

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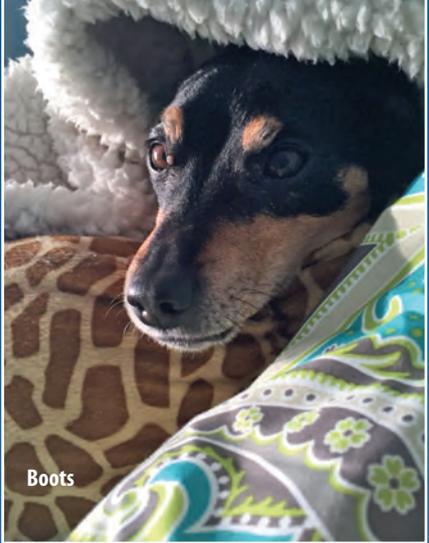
**CANINE
COGNITION**

Melt's
**MATT
FISH**

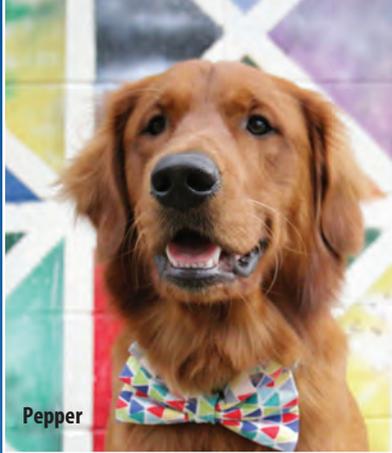
**DOG
OWNER
LIFE
HACKS**

**LAKWOOD'S
PET-FRIENDLY
CHURCH**





Boots



Pepper



Chelsey



Moxie & friend



Maggie



Zero

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 OF THE
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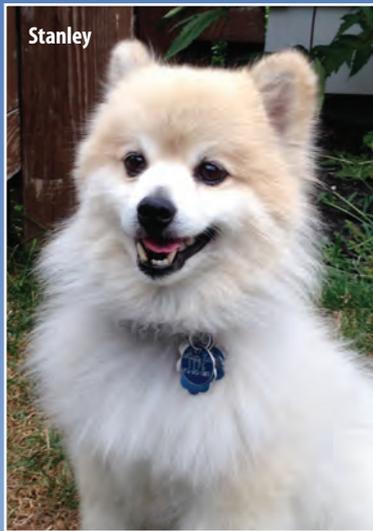
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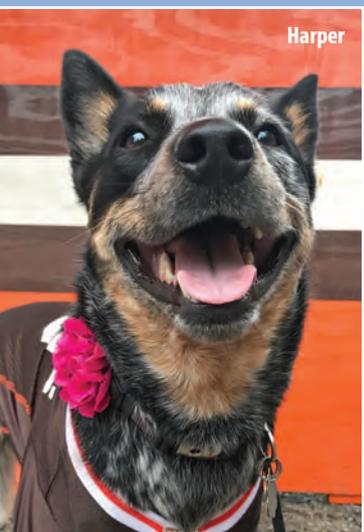
Reggie



Stanley



Bailey & Rocksy



Harper



Brando



Jimmy



Doyahkin

HAPPY NEW YEAR...

It's the time for fresh starts and resolutions, so this issue is all about helping CLE dog owners be the best pooch parents they can be. From health tips to dog owner hacks, and even a pet-friendly worship service, we've got that!

We're also warming up with grilled-cheese guru Matt Fish of Melt Bar and Grilled. Turns out he likes his dogs as big as his sandwiches. Meet Fish's Great Danes, Isabella and Odin on page 10.

January is also dog license month, so keep Luna legal, and get your tag now. You can find out more on page 13.

Want to know how smart your dog really is? Page 16 talks about the Dognition canine intelligence project, and how you can have your dog tested.

We're also sharing ways to keep your canine warm this winter in Pick of the Pack, and when you should start puppy training in this month's Ask the Trainer column.

Read on and get started on being the best paw-rent ever during 2018, the "Year of the Dog!"

It takes a pack!

Karen Mark



JANUARY 2018

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On the cover

Matt Fish of Melt Bar and Grilled hams it up with his family, including wife, Jessica, and Great Danes Isabella and Odin. Find out more about this CLE grilled-cheese guru and his gentle giants on page 10.

Photos by Greg Murray



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ASK THE TRAINER

BY ABBE MOEN

Q. “When should I start training my puppy?”

A. You can never start training too soon. Some breeders now even start early neurological stimulation programs when puppies are just days old. When your puppy comes home to live with you is when you should start training. When you start off with training immediately, you don't have bad habits you need to break.

Of course the question, “What about vaccines and exposing puppies too soon to other dogs?” Yes, this is a concern, but this does not prevent you from private, one-on-one classes in your home with a trainer. A puppy's initial imprinting stage is up to 12 weeks old. We can start molding our puppies with behaviors we desire as soon as we bring them home, and provide them with a solid foundation to build on as they grow. Dogs mature much quicker than we do as humans, and the learning process, too, can be much quicker. When we start molding our dogs' behaviors at such young ages, we can help prevent a lot of unwanted behaviors we see as puppies begin to mature.

Another big question related to how soon to start training our puppies is socialization. Socialization does not mean your puppy needs to play with other puppies. Socialization is your dog being able to be in and around other dogs, people and new environments. Socialization does not require your puppy to have to interact with anyone or anything. You want your puppy to remain focused on you, as his handler, while around other dogs, people or in new environments, no matter what the distractions are. Engagement exercises are a perfect example of helping to teach your puppy to stay focused on you, no matter what his surroundings are.

Another part of raising a new puppy is teaching the puppy the rules of the house. Having a solid foundation with potty training, crate training, puppy biting, jumping, introducing leash behaviors, eye contact, proper toys, proper nutrition, recall (come command), recovery

from external stimuli and so much more can help long-term success with your puppy well beyond the puppy stages.

As for group puppy classes, we recommend starting as soon as your puppy has received his second round of vaccines (as long as the first

round was not given prior to six weeks of age). Some veterinarians recommend waiting, so please discuss with your vet. If yours suggests waiting, I would recommend starting with private lessons to not lose out on a very formidable part of your puppy's mental growth. What your puppy learns in the first 12-16 weeks of his life is the main building blocks of his behavior. Genetics, of course, also play a large role in your puppy's behavior, so ensuring your breeder is breeding for health and temperament is extremely important, as well.

Training your puppy is not just about sits and downs. It is about providing a foundation for your puppy and his ability to make good decisions. Provide clarity in your

communication in a way your puppy can understand. Provide marker words that your puppy can apply even as an adult dog (such as learning “no”, “good” and “yes”). The timing of when to treat your puppy is more important than just treating your puppy. Provide the proper structure and leadership for your puppy in a way your puppy can understand. Remember, your puppy is a dog, not a human. Teaching your puppy how to live in a human world begins day one.



Abbe Moen is a certified trainer with Elite K911 in North Ridgeville. She is a member of the International Association of Canine Professionals, an approved AKC Canine Good Citizen evaluator, and dog mom to five: Gemma and Oliver (both American Staffordshire Terriers), Tango (Lab), Scout (Bloodhound) and Sly (Chihuahua mix).

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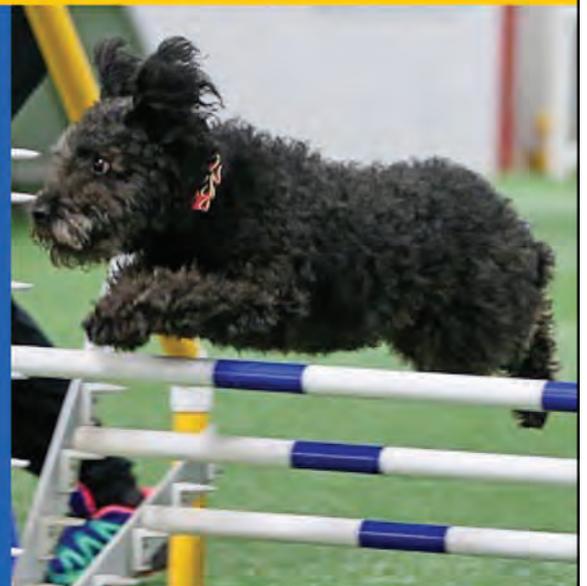
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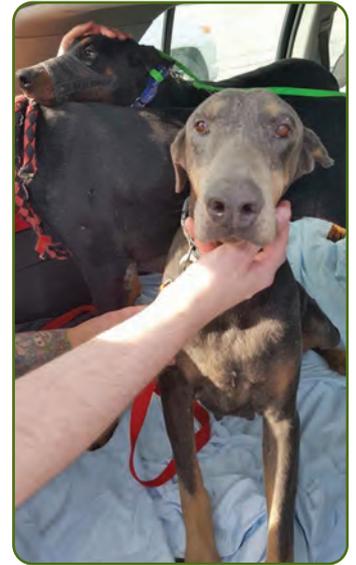


@Snagglefootclevelandwest

From the **Cage** to the **Couch**

Holley came from a South Carolina hoarding situation. She and 115 other Doberman Pinchers were seized after they were found in very poor condition, ranging from starvation to mange. Thirty additional dogs were already dead. Northeast Ohio's Doberman Underground brought Holley and 32 others up north in September of 2016 to be vetted, fostered and placed in permanent, loving homes.

And Holley found that home just a little over a year ago. Her foster family fell in love with her, and knew right away she'd be staying. Her family says she has come full circle and is finally a dog. Holley loves to eat blueberries, go for walks, lay on the electric blanket with her parents, chew on bones, go to the pet store and play with her baby brother, Grizzly. She now lives in Broadview Hts., and is an amazing ambassador at Doberman Underground's rescue events.



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..... PICK OF THE PACK

BY TRAVIS S. RAYMOND

WINTER ESSENTIALS



COATS Just because dogs wear a fur coat, doesn't mean they're good to go in harsh, winter weather. Double-coated dogs are fine without coats (Huskies, Malamutes, Akitas), but single-coated dogs (Greyhounds, Boxers, Pit Bulls) benefit greatly from wearing a coat in the cold weather.

Besides single-coated dogs, coats for small dogs and puppies are important. Little dogs can be particularly susceptible to the cold, as they have less muscle mass, which produces less heat. Standing closer to the ground doesn't help either, as the cold radiates upward from the surface. Puppies face the same challenges, and also have a higher water content, which causes them to lose their heat faster.



BOOTS Last year, a rescue dog came to me in need of a foster home. During one of those frigid cold snaps last winter, I took this beautiful pooch out to potty, and found the entire yard to be a solid sheet of jagged ice. When we came in, I saw that her poor paws had been thoroughly lacerated by the rough terrain.

There is no way to control such things and dogs have to go out, so boots come in handy. Yes, they can look silly wearing them--we've all seen the videos--but dogs do get used to the sensation, and their paws will be protected not only from ice, but from other hazards like slippery or rough surfaces, and chemicals and harsher ice melts you may encounter.



PET-SAFE ICE MELTS Safety for people and dogs is paramount, but standard ice-melting salt is very harsh, and can be sharp for dogs to walk on. From Pestell's Pet Products, Paw Thaw's pet-friendly ice melter is a safe, biodegradable deicer that is fast acting, and breaks

the bond between the ice and surface area. Paw Thaw is also noncorrosive, environmentally safe and water soluble, so it won't leave a sticky, harmful residue on pathways and footwear.

MUSER'S SECRET Made from 100% food-safe waxes and oils, Musher's Secret is a malleable wax originally developed in Canada for sled dogs. Think of it like how we use lip balm. It contains no soy or flax oil, and is designed to protect against ice build-up, rough terrain, salt and chemicals.



This preventative measure protects sensitive noses and paws against drying and cracking, forming a semi-permeable barrier. Musher's is absorbed into the pads within minutes, and creates a breathable layer of protection that won't block perspiration or stain carpeting. The company also recommends applying the wax in between toes during particularly harsh weather to prevent "snowballing," the buildup of ice and snow in these areas.



Travis S. Raymond is manager of the Grateful Dog Bakery in North Ridgeville, an all-natural dog and cat supply store featuring an in-store dog bakery.



Cheers to Being a Better Dog Parent

By Susan Spisak

IT'S A NEW YEAR, and with it comes resolutions to be a better version of yourself. You know those resolutions--eat healthier, exercise more, watch the budget and have a positive outlook on life. But this year, think beyond yourself; add a resolution to be a better dog parent, so your fur kid can be healthier and happier, too. Here are a few suggestions to help you help your dog be the best version of herself in 2018...and beyond!

Start with her health. An annual wellness exam is an excellent way for your vet to monitor any changes in her overall condition. And if there are any changes, he can address them quickly. Dr. Brian Mills of Avon Lake Animal Clinic agrees.

"Annual exams are very important to pets because it allows veterinarians the opportunity to give those animals a full physical examination, to look for abnormalities and signs of disease, develop a vaccination protocol that is tailored to the needs of that particular pet, and run routine yearly tests such as heartworm tests, tick-borne disease tests and fecal examinations," says Dr. Mills.

He says another reason for an annual exam is pets can mask disease.

"Many times when a pet first shows signs of disease it really isn't an acute problem, but more often a chronic problem that an owner was unaware of. As such, these animals come into the clinic very sick and need comprehensive testing and possibly expensive hospitalization that may have been prevented or identified sooner with routine exams and diagnostics."

Administer heartworm and flea/tick preventatives monthly. If you're on a budget, ask your vet if you can buy them monthly. Dr. Mills explains their importance:

"Unfortunately heartworm disease can be fatal if left undiagnosed or untreated, and can be prevented with regular monthly

medication, which not only prevents heartworm disease, but generally deworms for intestinal parasites every month, as well."

"When it comes to fleas and ticks, they not only directly affect pets by causing potential skin disease, but they can transmit parasites such as tapeworms, or even worse, they can infect animals with diseases such as Lyme disease, anaplasma or ehrlichia," he adds.

If your vet recommends a dental, consider doing so. Dr. Mills acknowledges that clients often decline this service due to cost and wariness of anesthesia, but he feels a dental is beneficial.

"The reasons why [clients] should clean their pets' teeth more routinely include fresher breath, healthier teeth and gums, and because multiple organ systems such as the cardiac and urinary systems can be negatively impacted from poor oral hygiene."

Vetinfo.com says dentals average \$300, depending on teeth condition and any necessary lab work. Check to see if your vet accepts CareCredit, which offers pet financing for dentals, medications, preventatives, and routine and emergency visits. For details visit carecredit.com/vetmed.

Good nutrition is important, so research products--and talk to your vet--to ensure you're feeding her the right stuff. Know that the often-hyped grain free, organic or holistic may not be best. Gear food choices toward her breed, age, size and issues like a sensitive

stomach. Make sure the label says "complete and balanced," meaning it's been verified by the strict Association of American Feed Control Officials. For more info, check out reviews by category on dogfoodadvisor.com.

Keep her exercised and mentally engaged. This is important because physical activity releases endorphins and other important chemicals in the brain, and as in humans, they enhance a feeling of happiness, wellbeing and add to an overall good mood. Regular walks will make you both feel better. If your dog can't walk far due to age or health reasons, buy a soft-sided wagon so she can still enjoy neighborhood strolls with you (about \$68 on Amazon.com).

Regular "spa days" (aka grooming) are also important. Who doesn't love being treated to some pampering? It doesn't matter if you doll her up yourself or take her to your local pooch salon. A nice shampoo and nail trim will not only keep her stylish, but she'll look and feel (and smell) better.

Improve your bond with your dog. Pick up a library book on dog tricks and have fun working on them together. Snuggle on the couch while you're binge-watching Netflix shows. Make a big deal of seeing her when you come home from work. Training classes are also a great way to improve the canine-human bond. Take up agility over the winter or brush up on some obedience training. You'll both enjoy it, and it'll make the winter go quickly!

DOGS IN THE CITY

BY AMANDA ROUSH, BELLA & MIA
from *Dog Life in CLE*



Bella, Mia and I are excited to return in 2018 with our monthly column about all the things you can do with your dogs in the CLE!

The end of 2017 was a bit chaotic for us with a move to a new house. A couple weeks went by without much online posting due to all the work in preparing a cozy place for us to live. It's our first time being in a single-family home with a lot of room for the pups to have zoomies! While home improvements were happening in the new house, Mia and Bella had to stay at the old place until it was safe for them to visit. The last thing we needed was one of them getting a nail stuck in her paw!

It's common for dogs to get stressed during a move, but Mia and Bella took it pretty well, thankfully, and made themselves right at home. One thing not to forget during a move or reno is to set aside time for your dogs. They still need love, attention and exercise every day, and it's best to stick to the usual schedule with feeding and walking. It's sometimes hard to do that in a move when you are busy trying to get everything done, but it's important when keeping the stress level down for your dogs.

In 2018, we plan to explore new dog-friendly places and events, and continue to expand this resource on our website, doglifeincle.com. Each year, Cleveland is becoming more dog friendly as new places open up, and this is very exciting! This year, I also hope to plan more events for dogs and their owners. In 2017, we opened up our Etsy shop, and it has been a success, fundraising over \$2,000 for seven local animal shelters. We plan to continue doing this in 2018, also, and hope to raise even more money for these very worthwhile organizations. We hope to see you soon!

Visit doglifeincle.com for event information and a link to our Etsy shop!



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PROFILE



Big Sandwiches, *Really* **Big Dogs**





2017 was a pretty doggone good year for Matt Fish, owner, operator and founder of Melt Bar and Grilled. The restaurant entrepreneur opened four locations (he's now in double digits), bought a new house, celebrated his 1-year wedding anniversary and got a second dog.

And speaking of dogs, grilled cheese

We love everything about them--except the short life span. That is obviously the only drawback," Fish says.

Isabella

She just turned 4 and weighs in at 120 pounds. Fish says she is a bit shy and very emotional.

different from his older "sister." He describes him as "a testosterone-filled terror who is 'on' all the time." According to Fish, Odin is also emotional, but has absolutely no fear and apparently feels no pain. His nickname suits him, as he plows through anything in his way, including his owners. Despite all this, he is a momma's boy, and follows Jessica everywhere--even to the bathroom.



Meet Melt's Matt Fish

By Karen Uthe-Semancik

sandwiches aren't the only things this native Clevelander likes large. After a lifetime of "rescues or secondhand dogs," Fish decided to go the breeder route, and is now dog dad to Great Danes Isabella and Odin. (Fish is a large supporter of Cleveland APL, and has worked with the humane society since 2011.)

"I never had a puppy before or had the chance to raise a dog with training from the start. I researched several breeds based on my lifestyle and living space," Fish says.

So why Great Danes? Fish says he and his wife, Jessica, are fans of bigger breeds. When they first got together, Fish had an English Mastiff named Doris. She lived to be 9, and when she passed, they talked about getting another one, but had both researched Great Danes separately. When the time came to get a new puppy, they decided to go the Great Dane route.

"They're beautiful and majestic, but also incredibly goofy and lovable at the same time.

"I definitely know I am living with two girls in the house. She is even more sensitive than any human I have met. You can definitely tell if she is happy, sad, mad or glad by her expressions and body language."

Her favorite things are treats, bones and fluffy squeaky toys. Fish says Isabella has never been destructive when it comes to household items or clothing. She is very respectful and well trained, and loves walks, playtime and sleeping.

"If she could take an hour walk a day, then sleep for the remaining 23 hours, she would be the happiest dog on the planet."

Odin

Nicknamed "The Destroyer," Odin is 7 months and already weighs over 100 pounds. Odin is named for the Norse god of chaos, battle, death and royalty. Fish says, "Yep, that sounds about right!"

He also says Odin couldn't be any more

"They're beautiful and majestic, but also incredibly goofy and lovable at the same time."

"He is a great guy, but is incredibly head strong, so he gets much daily training. He is a puppy and has a ton of energy. He is getting calmer and better trained each day, but he still has his moments," says Fish.

Some of those moments have included chewing on "non-approved household items" like furniture, carpet, bedding, clothing, decorative trim and Sam Malone, the cat (think Cheers). Some legal items he enjoys are bones and squeaky toys, but Fish says Odin would choose roughhousing with Isabella or the neighbor's dog over a toy any day. He also loves fetch and will play for hours.

So what does this grilled cheese-loving dog owner like to do when he's not wrestling 100-pound dogs or coming up with yummy sandwiches of the month? Spend time with his wife and friends, and play music. The Tri-C graduate has been playing drums since he was 12, growing up in Parma.

"Music was the first life passion I had before





Isabella, Odin (then 2 months old) and Matt in July

I discovered cooking and restaurants," Fish says. "I don't play for the dogs. I discovered early on that dogs and drums do not mix."

Fish is hoping he has a little more time to enjoy things like his music this year. Expansion plans for Melt are on hold until 2019-2020, when he expects to expand out of state. Until then, the plan this year is to re-group with regional and store management teams to ensure "the Melt experience is perfect in all locations, and we are operating on a high and profitable level."

Cleveland sure has embraced Fish and his Melt Bar and Grilled concept since opening in Lakewood in 2006. And the feeling is mutual with Fish, who calls Cleveland "the greatest big small town." He says it has a great community feel,

is very dog friendly, and is incredibly affordable to live, work and play in.

"The culinary scene is one of the tops in the nation. The music scene has always been great with many local and national touring bands playing often. The amount of green space in and close to Cleveland is incredible. Where else can you be in a dense national forest less than 15 minutes from a major metropolitan downtown? And the best part--the people in Greater Cleveland...incredibly genuine and honest." 🐾



DOG OWNER AT A GLANCE

MATT FISH, DOG DAD TO ISABELLA AND ODIN, GREAT DANES.

Breeder or Shelter/Rescue? Both. Three rescue dogs and now three from breeders.

Flexi or Web Leashes? I have always used a 5-foot, woven-type leash.

Regular or Raw Feeding? Regular. The wife and I tried raw feeding two years ago with our first Great Dane. She has a sensitive stomach and actually responded better to regular, high-quality, store-bought kibble.

Free Feeding or Fixed Meal Schedule? Fixed meal schedules with our two Great Danes. However, I have used both methods in the past.

Your Bed or Dog Bed? Dog bed for sure! Two 100 pound-plus dogs take up too much bed space!

Dog Park or Metropark? Metropark, and definitely not the public areas. We like to venture off the path to areas less traveled.

Doggie Daycare or Daily Walk? Daily walks. I don't have much time, but my wife takes them out daily for some exercise.

Trainer or Homeschool? Both. We have an excellent in-house trainer we use for guidance, then put all the lessons into practice on a daily basis at home. Daily training is a must with large breeds.

Pet sitter or Boarding? Pet sitter or family friends. We are fortunate to have two separate great friends who are incredible dog people. We have the ability to take the dogs to a friendly place or can have our friend stay at the house when we travel.

Purebred or Mix? Both. Two rescues were mixed and one was purebred. The recent breeder dogs have all been purebred. I am fond of both variety.



Dog licensing: 'cause it's the law!

By Skye Bar

January is dog license month, so it's very important that we all remember to get our dogs' licenses renewed.

Importance:

Having an unlicensed dog is illegal in Ohio, but that's not the only reason to get your dog licensed. If he ever gets lost, being licensed can help animal control officers and rescue organizations find you and bring your pet home. They can look up your information online, and reunite the two of you much faster than a few lost dog signs around the neighborhood would.

Cost:

In Cuyahoga County, a dog license for one year is \$20, and in Lorain County it's \$16, with both counties having multiple-year options, as well. Cuyahoga allows you to buy a license that's good for three years, which is \$60. You don't save any money, but it's one less thing you'll have to worry about for two more years. Lorain has its 3-year license priced at \$48, with the opportunity to donate \$5 to the Lorain County Dog Kennel's medical fund. Lorain even offers a "lifetime" license for \$160, which could be beneficial if you have a young pooch.

Where to get one:

Cuyahoga County allows you to purchase

and renew dog licenses online at the county's website, cuyahogacounty.us. Simply type in dog license and click "Dog License Renewal."

You can also buy one in person at many places, including Discount Drug Mart or Cleveland APL. Other retail locations are also listed online, but please note: they usually require payment by cash.

Lorain County offers the same convenience, at loraincounty.com. You can also purchase one in person at Friendship Animal Protective League, the county auditor's office, Discount Drug Mart and other retailers listed online. Again, you may be required to pay with cash.

Deadlines and late fees:

Cuyahoga and Lorain counties both have deadlines of January 31, 2018 to acquire or renew your dog's license. After that deadline, you will incur a fee of \$20 in Cuyahoga, or \$16 in Lorain. In Cuyahoga County, there's also a \$1 processing fee to file online, and a \$.75 fee at most neighborhood vendors.

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by greg murray

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Life Hacks for Dog Owners

By Ann McDonald

As a pet parent, you sometimes have to come up with innovative ideas to get your dog to do certain things or to keep him entertained. For example, although my dogs are generally pretty amenable, my one dog hates taking pills. I basically have to blindfold him and bury the pill in a gallon of peanut butter to get him to take it.

We all have struggles with our dogs, but lucky for us, other owners have come up with some pretty creative ways to deal with issues or concerns we may also be experiencing. Here are some of the best pet parent hacks I've come across over the years:



MAKE CLIPPING NAILS EASY

If you have a dog that hates getting his nails clipped, as most do, here's an easy trick to distract them. Smear a glob of peanut butter on the kitchen floor (or other easily cleaned surface), before you begin to cut his nails. I guarantee he will be more focused on licking up all the peanut butter than what you're doing with his paws. You can also use this trick for bathing your dog.

Smear some peanut butter on the shower wall and let him lick it up while you scrub him down.

SAVE MONEY ON VET BILLS

Medications that your vet prescribes can be very pricey. Asking your vet if the medication can be called into a regular pharmacy like CVS or Target may save you money.

CLEANING FUR OFF YOUR FURNITURE

As a Pomeranian owner, I know the pain of trying to have nice furniture in a house with a dog who is constantly shedding. Using a rubber glove to get pet fur off the furniture is a great way to rid your couch and other furniture of stubborn pet fur. Dryer sheets are another hack that helps rid furniture of dog hair. Plus, it makes things smell nice!

PROTECT YOUR DOG'S PAWS

Winter is here! One great way to protect your dog's paws is to put Vaseline on his pads to protect them from salt. This trick is much easier—and cheaper—than putting on those dog booties that your dog doesn't want to wear!

SLOW DOWN A FAST EATER

Dealing with a dog that gobbles up his food in five seconds flat can be a challenge. When dogs eat too quickly, they can swallow air with their food, which can lead to throwing up, or worse yet, bloat. No need to buy a new, fancy bowl. A good trick for these fast eaters is to put a ball in their food bowl so they have to move the ball around to get to their food.



EASY KIBBLE STORAGE

If you buy the large bags of dog food, you know they aren't re-sealable. To keep varmint out and to keep food fresh, consider storing it in a large plastic bin or tub with a secure lid. I keep mine in the garage. Each Sunday, I scoop out enough for the week, and store it in a plastic drink pitcher. It's easy to pour, and the lid keeps it fresh all week.

PET URINE CLEANUP

If Pixie pees on the carpet, use baking soda to help clean up. Pour baking soda over the spot, let it sit for 20 minutes, and then vacuum. This is a great and natural odor remover.

These pet parent hacks can make your life easier, and even save you money. If you have a pet-related hack of your own to share, email Karen@cledog.net, and we may just share it in a future issue or post it on social media!



Ann McDonald is a writer, dog foster and dog mom to two rescue dogs. You can find her writing about her dogs, dog-friendly activities and dog rescue at dogsinthecle.com.

DOGNITION

Provides Insight into Canine Intelligence

By Linda Slusser



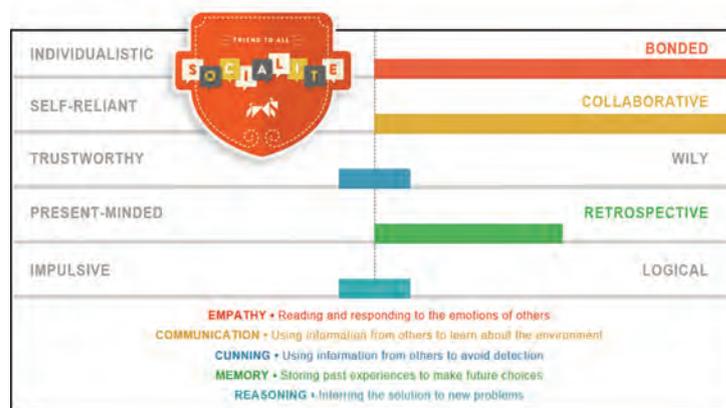
Dr. Brian Hare, an evolutionary anthropologist and Director of Duke University's Canine Cognition Center, launched the Dognition project in 2013. He believes that dogs, like humans, have multiple kinds of intelligence. By focusing on the cooperative way dogs use human communicative gestures, Dognition enlists ordinary citizens in studying what Dr. Hare calls canines' special "genius."

After I became one of these "citizen scientists," I discovered that I live with two "Socialites," the label given to the cognitive profile both my Shelties fit after we had played 20 games on the Dognition website. Scientists, trainers and behavioral specialists designed the 20 interactive games to assess each "dog's individual cognitive style—the thinking, learning, and problem-solving strategies" that affect much of his behavior (Dognition). Five key areas are examined: empathy, communication, cunning, memory and reasoning. An analysis of the submitted game results reveals which of the nine profiles each dog matches.

I received a 13-page evaluation of my Sheltie Sonnet's choices. (Answers are never right or wrong; different choices simply align with different characteristics.) As a Socialite, Sonnet relies most heavily on her ability to use the humans in her pack to get what she wants. A bar graph displays conclusions about my girl's performance in the five areas, such as being extremely bonded as opposed to independent (empathy), or being midway between wily and trustworthy (cunning). A scientifically based, detailed interpretation for each area and each

game follows. For example, in the memory vs. smell game, Sonnet's sense of smell was so outstanding that she depended on it rather than her memory to choose the cup with the treat.

The Dognition website makes playing the games easy. Only a few items are needed beyond the dog and the internet: a yardstick, Post-it notes, cups, paper and treats. An assistant is helpful, but not essential if a dog has a reliable sit-stay. After a questionnaire, videos and explicit written directions guide the owner step-by-step through the games; some are repeated several times. The results are recorded and submitted for every game before moving on to the next one. Over 25,000 owners have now participated in Dognition's assessments (Hoffman).



Sonnet's cognitive graph (dognition.com)



Sonnet ready for game time.

Finding out more about your furry friend at dognition.com will cost \$19 for the games, analysis and profile. A yearly membership fee of \$79 (or \$9 per month plus the initial \$19) will provide additional monthly games, expert tips and tricks--all tailored to the matched profile.



Sonnet in action. Photos by Gary Hrusch

I can think of three reasons you, too, might want to become a citizen scientist with Dognition. First, you and your dog will be engaging in fun activities. Second, you will be contributing to a growing research database that is already helping everyone better understand all canines "from shelter dogs, to service dogs" (Cook). Third, as you learn more about your companion's cognitive abilities and preferences for interacting with you and his environment, you may discover that you are living with a Socialite--or perhaps a Maverick or a Charmer or an Einstein!

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Linda lives with two Shelties in Wellington. She enjoys writing about dogs, and has had articles published in Heart of Ohio's Focus issue on Pets, Maine Dog Magazine and The Bark.

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A pet-friendly worship service?

Amen to that!

By Karen Uthe-Semancik

The New Year is a great time to reflect and recharge, and many times finding a faith-based outlet helps us do just that. For over five years, Pastor Mark Rollenhagen has been offering a pet-friendly worship at Faith Lutheran Church in Lakewood. The worship service, also known as PAWS (Pets Are Welcome Service), is held at 2 p.m. the first Sunday of the month.

Attendance at the monthly PAWS service ranges from 8-20 people and 6-12 pets. The 4-leggeds are mostly dogs, but there have been a few other pets in attendance.

"We have a very brave cat named Ranger who often attends, a Senegal parrot named Flipper, and I once blessed a hedgehog--very carefully," says Pastor Mark.

You don't have to be a member of Faith Lakewood to attend the PAWS worship. Pastor Mark says some attendees are members of other churches, while some aren't connected to any church, but they all have one thing in common.

"The pet-friendly worshippers are, of course, people deeply connected to their pets. It's a loose, and yet connected, and welcoming group of folks who share a love of God and pets," says Pastor Mark.

The service lasts about 30 minutes, and Pastor Mark says he is very cognizant of how the pets are doing.

"Sometimes, there's this amazing peace that we bask in. Other times, it's clear things should move along," he laughs.

"The pet-friendly service is a very special part of our lives; we wouldn't miss it for anything!"

Dianne McDonald

The Faith Lutheran PAWS service grew out of a St. Francis Feast Day event. Pastor Mark thought there should be something more often, and more than just a blessing. PAWS offers blessings for people and pets, and Holy Communion.

Dogs are kept on leashes and under control during worship, and there's time before and after--and sometimes during--for them to get to know each other. The rule of thumb is if you wouldn't take your dog to a dog park, this might not work, but there are seats to hang in the back.

"We expect barking, howling, scratching, licking and the full spectrum of dog behavior--and we take it in stride and gratitude."

Pastor Mark's dog, Lucy, a 14-year-old black Labrador Retriever mix regularly attends, despite some bad behavior at the first-ever PAWS worship.

"Some said she was a typical ill-behaved PK (pastor's kid), though we refined to 'PD' (Pastor's Dog). I jokingly refer to her as 'my old church lady' for pet-friendly worship. And one of the regular pet-friendly worshippers recently called her a 'Holy Roller' because of her Lab tendency to drop down and roll over on her back for belly rubs."

Faith Lakewood, which is in the process of becoming the Lakewood campus of Good Soil Lutheran Ministries, is located at 16511 Hilliard Road, Lakewood. For more information about the PAWS service, visit faithlakewood.org, email pastor@faithlakewood.org or call 216.226.6500. The next PAWS service is January 7.

CALENDAR

..... JANUARY

HOLIDAYS

- National Train Your Dog Month
- Walk Your Pet Month
- National Pet Travel Safety Day, January 2
- National Dress Up Your Pet Day, January 14
- Change a Pet's Life Day, January 24



POOCH PARTY AT PETPEOPLE-Sunday, January 7 from Noon-3 p.m. at PetPeople in Avon, 35901 Detroit Road. Join Love-A-Stray for an adoption event. Visit loveastraydog.com for more information.

DINNER WITH DELILAH-Saturday, January 27 from 5-7 p.m. at St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church, 3038 Charleston Ave., Lorain. Storm's Angels rescue is holding a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for one of its rescue dogs, Delilah, who needs a special surgery on her leg. \$10 per person, \$5 for children under 10. Carryout available. Raffles, door prizes and guest speaker Jason Cooke. For more information, call 440.782.1268 or email stormsangelsrescue@gmail.com.

RAFFLE TO THE RESCUE 2018-Now through Monday, February 5, Partners With Paws of Lorain County, Inc. is holding its annual raffle for a \$1,000 cash prize. Tickets are \$10 each, and purchasing six tickets will help rescue one dog from a dog pound. For more information on purchasing raffle tickets, visit PartnersWithPawsLC.com, email lawilber@oberlin.net or call 440.897.8696.



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