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No. 15 • JULY 2018

## Dock Diving

CANINE OBESITY

PACK WALKS

PET PHOTOGRAPHY  
TIPS FROM THE PROS

SUMMER  
READS

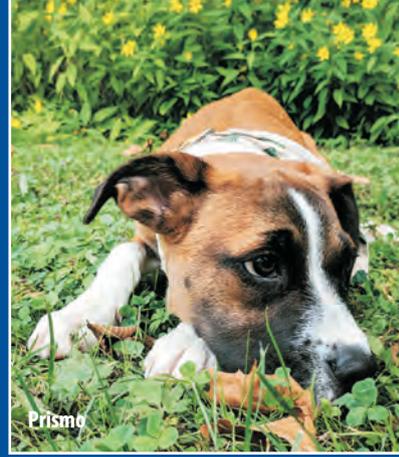




Mufasa



Finn



Prismo



Lucy



Biz



Skippy & Nowser



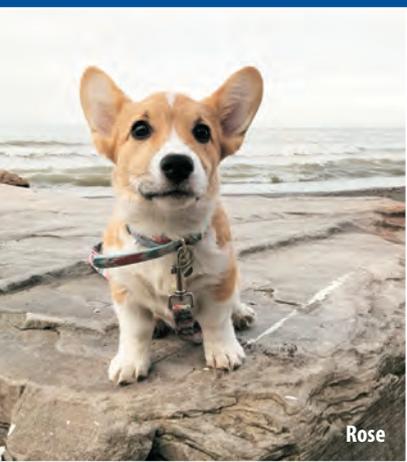
Biscotti



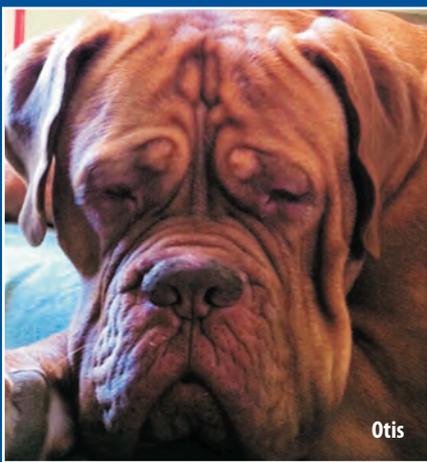
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# 🐾 DOGS OF THE CLE 🐾

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Rose



Otis



Zara



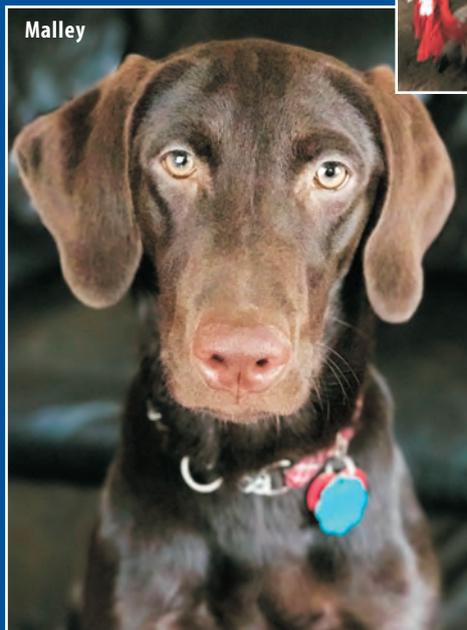
Babs



Cooper & Raylee



India



Malley



Beans & Sis

# 10



# inside

JULY 2018



◀ **Cover:** Linda Torson and dog Elektra participate in the Extreme Vertical high jump at last year's National DockDogs Competition at Victory Sports Park in North Ridgeville. Photo: Jim Zelasko - Precise Image Creations

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# ..... ASK THE TRAINER .....

BY JOHN BERGENSTEIN

## The importance of physical *and* mental exercise

**W**e do an evaluation prior to beginning any training with a client and her dog. One of the questions we ask is “How do you exercise your dog?” It is not uncommon for the answer to be “running in a fenced-in back yard” or “playing fetch.” A fenced-in back yard is nice, many dogs love a game of fetch and both are a good way to give dogs physical exercise, but that is only half the equation.

Dogs are intelligent creatures, so they also need mental exercise and stimulation. This is especially true for working and sporting breeds. Dogs that do not receive enough mental stimulation may become bored and exhibit destructive behaviors like digging or chewing. Others may become anxious or even aggressive. Working a dog mentally will tire her much faster than physical exercise. Plus, physical exercise alone increases her endurance, so she'll need more and more exercise.

There are many ways to give dogs mental exercise. Formal dog sports such as agility are great, but may not be for everyone. There are many other things anyone can do on a daily basis at home to mentally challenge a dog. First and foremost, walk. No matter how nice your yard is, if your dog never leaves your property, when she does see a person or dog she doesn't know, it becomes an explosion of excitement or anxiety. A trip to the vet or groomer becomes a nightmare. You can give her extra mental exercise by teaching her to walk politely in a nice heel instead of pulling and switching from side to side in an excited state of mind. By having her heel, you are giving her a job to do, and the walk will also become more pleasant for you. You can release her from the heel from time to time to let her sniff and take care of business, and then when you are ready to move on, it's back to heel. Clients express concern that their dogs will not enjoy the walk unless they get to do whatever they want. My response is my dogs and the rescues we work with walk every day in a structured heel and LOVE their walks.



Some dogs benefit from the extra job of carrying a weighted vest or backpack. We prefer the weighted vest sold at [leerburg.com](http://leerburg.com), but less expensive backpacks can work well as long as the fit is correct and the amount of weight is appropriate for the dog.

Games like fetch and tug can also be turned into a mental exercise. The first step is to teach her to “drop it” or “out” to willingly give up the toy. You do this by immobilizing the toy, making it boring until she gives it up. Praise her and the game begins again. Once she learns it's more fun to give up the ball or tug you can add commands. Start simple with “sit.” As soon as she sits it's “yes,” and she gets the toy. The toy becomes a reward for a job well done. Once she understands the game you can make it harder by adding commands.

Treat games and puzzles are another excellent way to work a dog mentally, and are priceless during inclement weather. Have her hold place while you walk away and place the treat in the puzzle. Then come back and release her. When she finds the treat and gets it out of the puzzle, send her back to

place and repeat. Use multiple puzzles and let her learn how to get the treat from each of them. These puzzles are also a great way for adult-supervised children to get involved with training. We use puzzles made by Nina Ottoson. Do not use any plastic pieces that can be removed by the dog and pose choking concerns.

By adding some structure to walks and play with our dogs, we are giving them the mental workout they need, while also teaching impulse control. This will help them be a happier and calmer family member. The fact that it's fun for the humans, too, is an added bonus.

-----  
**John Bergenstein** is a certified pet dog trainer and the owner of Columbia Dog Training in Hinckley. He is a member of the International Association of Canine Professionals and an approved AKC Canine Good Citizen evaluator. He is the owner of six dogs, Murphy, Zoey, Pandi, Huller, Muzzy and Mack all adopted from Fido's Companion Rescue.



Photo: Leigh Demshar

# PET

## TIPS FROM THE PROS

# PHOTOGRAPHY

By Ann McDonald

**IF YOU'RE LIKE ME, YOUR CAMERA ROLL IS FULL OF DOG PHOTOS. I'VE GOT PHOTOS OF THEM SLEEPING, PHOTOS OF THEM EATING, PHOTOS OF THEM SITTING ON THE COUCH -- THEY'RE JUST SO CUTE IT'S HARD TO RESIST!**

My technique has been to take a lot of photos and hope for the best. Although you can get some good photos this way, if you're running out of memory on your phone, you may want to take the time to actually get some good photos of your dog, especially if you're trying to step up your Instagram game. To help take my photos to the next level, I checked in with some local photographers to find out their tips for getting good pooch pics.

All the photographers I spoke with recommended, first and foremost, to have fun. Dogs are not generally going to pose perfectly for a photo, but that's what makes them dogs. You never know what you're going to get, and it's best to just let their personalities shine through.

Another point they all shared was to be patient. It's hard to force a moment with a dog unless he's a seasoned pro or trained to follow certain commands. As a photographer, some of the best photos can come from just relaxing and waiting for the right moment. This is something I realized early on after trying to take some Christmas photos of my dogs in front of the tree, and then realizing

that my favorite photos happened after the shoot when they didn't think I was taking any more photos.

If you are trying to get a certain pose, Leigh Demshar, owner of Bouncing Light Photography/Chewbone Studio, recommends keeping it positive and fun.

Offer the dog special treats like chicken or a new squeaky toy. Sounds from toys can get a big reaction from the dog, really getting them to engage with the camera and give happy eyes and smiles, she says. And, if your dog isn't doing what you want, move on to something else and then come back to it. "Don't say the dog's name or squeak the toy 10,000 times. Dogs will lose interest in it and you," Leigh says.

Local pet photographer Greg Murray of *Peanut Butter Dogs* book fame, says that to get a really good photo, it sometimes helps to think a little bit like a dog. One of his top tips is to get down to the dog's level. "Dogs spend their lives on the ground. Get on their level and photograph them from another dog's view. Don't be afraid to get dirty!"

Both photographers recommend focusing on the eyes when taking photos. Greg recommends holding a treat or toy right over your lens or smartphone to attract your dog's attention and get them to look at the camera. If you're looking to get creative though, focusing on the nose can result in a cute photo opp for a "nose boop," photo, Greg says.

There are so many great locations for photos in Cleveland, from Edgewater Park to Holden Arboretum, but if you're looking to get a good, natural photo of your dog, Martha Widdowson of Portraits by Martha, recommends going



Photo: Martha Widdowson

to your dog's favorite place, whether that's a park or just the couch at home. And, it's always a good idea to incorporate something your dog loves into the photo, like a ball or a bone, to really show his or her personality.

"Always keep it fun for the dog! Just letting your dog run around and play while you snap photos makes for great pictures," Martha says.

*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](http://dogsinthecle.com).*

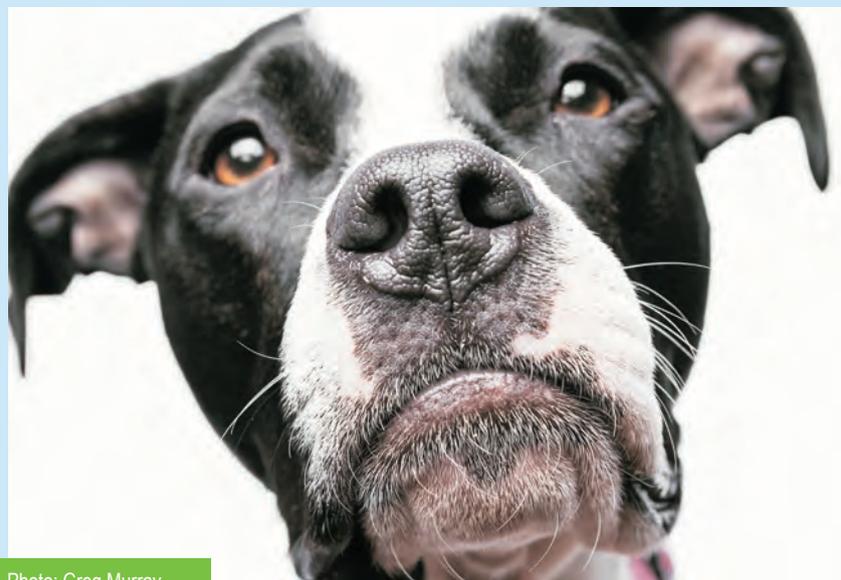


Photo: Greg Murray



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# From the Cage to the Couch

When Sanibel came into Dogs Unlimited Rescue, she was about 12 weeks old and 6 pounds. She was found wandering the streets of East Cleveland. She had ulcerations and burns in both eyes, a swollen area on her face, many sores on her body, a low white blood cell count, swollen paws, was emaciated and had a fever of 106.2. Sanibel was immediately taken to VCA Great Lakes Veterinary Specialists where she was admitted into ICU for 11 days. Once discharged, VCA staff treated her until she was cleared for adoption.



Sanibel is now a happy and healthy 5-month-old puppy who weighs 24 pounds. She is a sweet, smart, high-energy puppy who loves to cuddle, and has found her forever home with a wonderful couple in the Akron area.



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# ..... PICK OF THE PACK .....

BY JENNIFER BAKER

## GROOMING YOUR PUPPY

This is part three in our series on great products for puppies. This month we're talking about keeping them clean--grooming.

Grooming is an important part of keeping your new puppy healthy. By starting early, he will get used to being brushed and bathed.

**Grooming** needs will vary for different coat types, but every dog benefits from regular brushing to remove dust and dander, and distribute skin and hair oils evenly. Keep



Bass Brushes Boar Palm Style Pet Brush

puppy brushing sessions short and use treats to reward him (hint: bully stick!). The Bass Company makes a complete line of grooming tools, with ergonomic handles for human comfort and soft bristles for your pup's comfort. We can help you pick the right brush.

**Bathing** your dog should be a regular occurrence. Whether you use a professional groomer or do it yourself, make it a positive experience for your pup. Use a mild, tear-free shampoo like Earthbath, which has a hypoallergenic formula for puppies. Rinse thoroughly to prevent shampoo residue, which can cause itchy skin. This company also has grooming wipes in the same formula for quick touch ups in between baths.

Earthbath Ultra-Mild Puppy Shampoo



Zymox Oratene Toothpaste

Introduce **tooth brushing** to your pup at an early age. The Zymox Company's Oratene gel helps remove plaque before it becomes tartar.

Don't forget **foot and nail care**. If your puppy is used to having his feet touched, nail trims are less traumatic. Ask for a demonstration from your vet or groomer. Keep your pup's footpads



protected with a paw balm like Musher's Secret. Used regularly, it protects from hot asphalt, cement, sand and rocks.



Jennifer Baker is owner of Grateful Dog Bakery in North Ridgeville, an all-natural dog and cat supply store featuring an in-store dog bakery. She is the proud mom of five dogs and one cat. To contact Jennifer, email [news@gratefuldogbakery.com](mailto:news@gratefuldogbakery.com) or visit [gratefuldogbakery.com](http://gratefuldogbakery.com)



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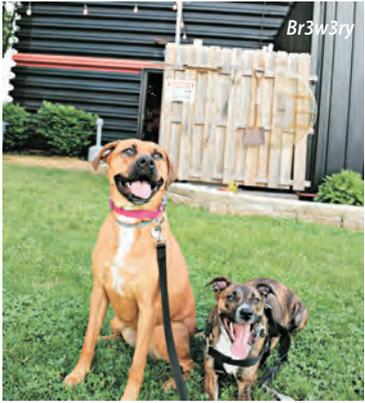
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# DOGS IN THE CITY

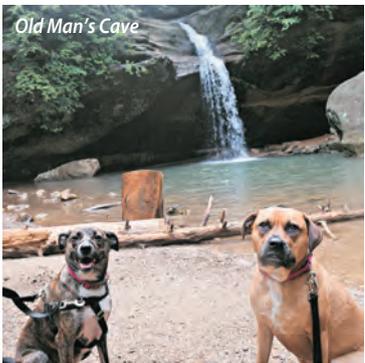
BY AMANDA ROUSH, BELLA & MIA  
from *Dog Life in CLE*



Br3w3ry



Chestnut Grove Cabins



Old Man's Cave

**N**eed to take a break from the city? Don't want to leave your dog at home? We scoped out an awesome getaway for you and your pooches! About three hours south of Cleveland, we went on a family vacation to Hocking Hills. The state park is located in Logan, and is a great dog-friendly spot. We stayed in the Chestnut Grove Cabins. Our beautiful log cabin was secluded in the woods, and allowed us to bring both our dogs. We hiked through a majority of the trails of Hocking Hills and saw many waterfalls and caves, including Old Man's Cave. It is best to get out early on the trails as the parking lots can fill up quickly! After a day of hiking, you can grab a bite to eat and drinks at a few dog-friendly patios in the area. We loved hanging at Br3w3ry, which had awesome crafted beers, treats for the pups, and allowed us to bring our dogs both inside and on the patio.

Find out more about all the places we visited on our trip at [doglifeincle.com/dog-friendly-vacation-hocking-hills/](http://doglifeincle.com/dog-friendly-vacation-hocking-hills/)



Visit [doglifeincle.com](http://doglifeincle.com) for more dog-friendly places and events in CLE, or email [doglifeincle@gmail.com](mailto:doglifeincle@gmail.com) with questions.

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Lori Bott and Rave

# Dock Diving

## Building the Bond By Jami Kinton

**FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS, DOCK DIVING HAS BEEN MAKING A SPLASH ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**

“(Dock Diving) builds an awesome relationship with your dog,” said Lori Bott, who’s diving Border Collie/Staffordshire Bull Terrier mix, Rave, has been involved in the sport for the last five years. “I recommend it for anyone with a dog, because you can be as dedicated to it as you choose. From doing it for fun, to getting titles for your pup or for the crazy competitive person!”

Dock Diving is a canine sport in which dogs are enticed to run the length of a dock and leap as far out into the water as possible to compete for height or distance. They’re motivated to fly with a prized toy, which is thrown just out of reach in order to help them keep their momentum and get the best launch angle possible, according to North America Diving Dogs.

While Rave has been practicing for five years, Bott said she’s only been competing for one. The Cleveland duo got involved with the help of friends.

“I just really enjoy watching my dog have fun, and you meet so many nice people,” Bott said. “I have made so many wonderful friends through dock diving.”

Bott said just about any dog can participate—and she’s seen all kinds. “I’ve seen Dachshunds to Great Danes competing,” she said. “Any dog that loves to retrieve a toy or likes water is ideal.”

Sometimes it is the human who struggles. “When I first started out, there were times when I accidentally threw the toy out into the crowd instead of into the pool, or straight up into the air,” Bott said. “My dog used to climb over the edge of my small pool to get out, so our first couple of competitions were embarrassing when she swam to the end of the pool, climbed out into the crowd, dropped her toy and shook water onto everyone!”

Bott said she likes to train new dogs in a lake when possible.

“This way they can walk into the water and get used to the feeling of floating,” she said. “Training can be so different for each dog. Some are naturals and others may need a bit more work. Most organizations will have time in between waves at a competition for new dogs to try it out. If you have a pool, a ramp is nice for the new dog to start on.

“There are also many training facilities popping up these days that will offer seminars and private classes or find a seasoned Dock Diving person to help.”

Bott said, whether in a pool or lake, newbies should start out at the edge of the dock and the owner should throw a toy that floats. Then ask your dog to retrieve.



Photos: Jim Zelasko - Precise Image Creations

"Keep the toy close at first until they start to jump," she said. "Always be positive and encouraging with your dog. Throwing or pushing a dog in can frighten them and cause them to never do it. Dock dog organizations do not allow this. Lots of patience for some dogs. I try to keep my dog conditioned and practice whenever we have the opportunity to."

Bott suggested that interested parties check dock diving websites, like Ultimate Air Dogs, DockDogs and North America Diving Dogs to keep up with competitions.

"There are canine training facilities with pools now that also hold local competitions," she said. "I have traveled to Pennsylvania, Michigan and Missouri. Missouri is where Ultimate Air Dogs holds its National Championship at Purina Farms. The other organizations hold their Nationals in southern states. People travel from both ends of the country for Nationals."

No matter the level or skill of your pet, Bott said it's important to just have fun. "Don't get discouraged," she said. "There are all levels of jumpers. Just enjoy it!"

*Jami Kinton is dog mom to Snowball, CLE DOG's cover model for February 2018. When she isn't taking Snowball to his next modeling assignment, you can find her voicing radio commercials for Q-104 and hosting games for the Cleveland Indians.*



Marie Buckingham with Ace

## Providing a Job

By Karen Uthe-Semancik

**M**arie Buckingham is immersed in dock diving. She owns The Gated Dock, a dock jumping training facility in Shelby (North Central Ohio); she trains dogs in the sport; and her dog, Ace, is a DockDogs Rookie of the Year.

She happened upon the sport by chance three years ago while attending Strut Your Mutt in Mansfield. Having German Shepherds for many years, and knowing they need "jobs," she decided to get her Ace involved. Little did she know then that Ace would be an ace in the sport.

"I took him to a try it, and he jumped off the dock," Buckingham said. The rest is history! He absolutely loves this sport!"

Ace was the 2014 DockDogs Rookie of the Year, and has earned multiple World Championship Invitations to both DockDogs and Dueling Dogs for the last four years. Buckingham eventually started The Gated Dock, began teaching beginner to advanced dock jumping and is a certified professional dog trainer.

For anyone else who would like to get into the sport, Buckingham suggests taking your dog to a facility like hers, or to a pond or lake where you can get him acclimated to water. Then you can bring him to a trainer to learn to jump from the dock.

"I always recommend baby steps, and never push, pull or throw your dog into the water," Buckingham said.

# Fighting Canine Obesity

## Extra Pounds Means Unhealthy Hounds

By Susan Spisak

LAST WEEK my husband griped that Bo's walking harness was getting tight. Whoops. My new meatloaf treats recipe must be the culprit since the last time we were at the vet his weight was perfect for his body frame. Time to cut the loaf.

Our overfed pooch isn't alone. According to a 2017 survey by The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, more than 55% of dogs are classified as clinically overweight. Not sure if your dog's portly? If his stomach isn't flat, his waistline isn't defined or you can't feel his ribs, he's probably carrying extra pounds. If those extra pounds don't bother you, please rethink. Being overweight can affect the quality and longevity of his life, and cause problems such as joint pain, arthritis, hip dysplasia, heart disease and respiratory problems. (For general weight guidelines, check this by-breed weight chart, [petobesityprevention.org/ideal-weight-ranges](http://petobesityprevention.org/ideal-weight-ranges). This chart is for reference only—your pet is unique, and your vet can counsel you on any weight-related matters.)

Kimberly Huppe, DVM, CCRP, CVA of Avon Lake Animal Clinic and its Up & Running Canine Rehabilitation, said that because weight gain can be a by-product of Cushing's disease, diabetes or hypothyroidism, a visit to the vet is imperative so she can perform a full exam and run blood work to rule out these associated diseases. "These problems (and others) must be identified and controlled for a successful weight-loss program. Therefore, you should never put your dog on a 'diet' without the assistance of your veterinary health care team."

### CALORIC NEEDS

While we're talking weight loss and diet, understand his caloric needs. For example, a 50-pound dog needs 700 to 900 calories daily depending on activity level, breed, genetics and medical conditions. For a guide to your boy's approximate caloric requirements, visit [petobesityprevention.org/pet-caloric-needs](http://petobesityprevention.org/pet-caloric-needs). Then visit the website of your dog's brand of

food, click on "nutrition," and it'll break down nutrients and calories per cup. Don't necessarily follow the manufacturers' suggested servings on the bag or can. They're in the business of selling product. If you've been following their guidelines, you may have unintentionally attributed to his weight gain. (Again, talk food and calories with your vet. She may also recommend a reduced-calorie blend.)

### LOW-CALORIE TREATS

I bet your guy loves treats, right? Be aware of their calories—they vary significantly and need to be included in his daily caloric tab. For healthy and low-calorie snacks, offer him a fresh green bean (two calories) or a tiny spoonful of fat-free, plain yogurt. If you're stuffing a Kong with fattening peanut butter, change to an applesauce like Mott's Unsweetened with only 25 calories per quarter cup. Fill the Kong with the applesauce and then place it into a foil-lined plastic tub and freeze. The fruity, frosty treat will not only please him, it'll last longer. And Dr. Huppe suggested using a portion of his daily kibble allowance as treats.

### GET MOVING

Exercise is going to be your pet's best friend on his journey toward renewed health. "Walking is a great low-impact exercise for weight loss. Start with just a few houses down the street, and build distance and intensity weekly...the walk should be steady and without too many 'sniff breaks,'" Dr. Huppe said. Get creative—change your trek route frequently, arrange a play date with another canine, throw him a Frisbee, play fetch and/or build a simple obstacle course in your yard (check out these budget ideas at

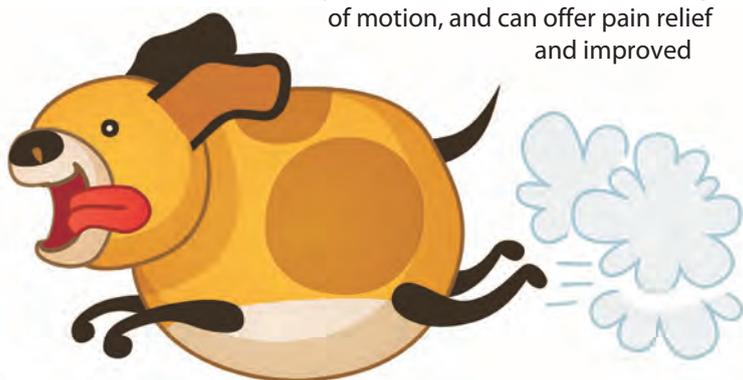


care/training/diy-dog-obstacle-course). If he's not too heavy and your vet thinks it's okay, sign him up for dock diving or an agility class. As he gets acclimated to the exercise program and drops pounds, join a walking group or add jogging or hikes to your repertoire.

## Remember, this is not going to be an overnight fix...

If regular exercise is taxing for him (it's often difficult for heavier dogs), or you have time or physical limitations, consult with a veterinarian at Up & Running Canine Rehabilitation group. They offer nutritional counseling, and will tailor an exercise program utilizing Aqua Therapy on the underwater treadmill and/or seasonal outdoor pool to facilitate weight loss. The team may add in therapeutic exercises such as core and balance work combined with an at-home regimen.

Dr. Huppe explained that the low-impact Aqua Therapy is a favorable exercise option for an overweight dog because the buoyancy of the water will lift him up and decrease weight-bearing stress on his limbs and body. The warm water will soothe his joints and muscles, improve his range of motion, and can offer pain relief and improved



mobility. The care team can alter the treadmill's water level and speed, allowing workouts to be adjusted for progress.

Remember, this is not going to be an overnight fix; it's going to require lifestyle changes. Dr. Huppe recommended setting realistic goals--shoot for shedding 3 to 5% of his body weight per month, or 1% per week. Helping him lose those excess pounds will mean a healthier and happier life for your buddy.

*Up & Running Canine Rehabilitation also offers thermotherapy, non-invasive laser therapy, therapeutic exercise and acupuncture. The team also treats a variety of orthopedic, neurologic and senior pet conditions, and has offerings for sport, agility and post-surgical dogs. For more information on all the programs, visit [upandrunningrehab.com](http://upandrunningrehab.com).*



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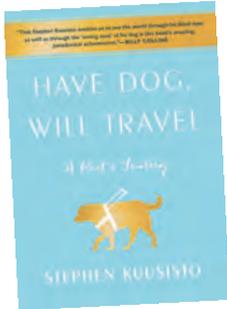
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**Have Dog, Will Travel: A Poet's Journey**  
by Stephen Kuusisto

Although he was legally blind from birth, Kuusisto's parents insisted he behave like a sighted person. He managed to get around in his small community by counting steps until he lost his college teaching job at age 38. He sought help from Guiding Eyes for the Blind and was paired with Corky—a big, yellow Labrador who became his guide and “soulful sidekick.” In addition to practicing how to walk with Corky, Kuusisto had to master many techniques, including how to fit her harness comfortably, how to place her under seats, how to

protect her tail from closing doors and how to praise, praise, praise. Soon, because of Corky, he learned to accept his blindness, yet live wholly engaged in the world.



**Madeline Finn and the Library Dog**  
by Lisa Papp (ages 4-8)

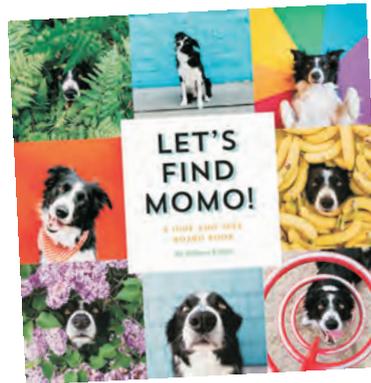
Madeline doesn't like reading, especially reading aloud. Sometimes classmates giggle at her mistakes, and she never earns a star—only a “keep trying” heart. One Saturday at the library, Madeline tries reading to Bonnie, a large white dog. At their weekly sessions, Bonnie's patience helps build Madeline's confidence and skill. The little girl's charm and changing emotions, from frustration to pleasure, are nicely conveyed through the author's softly shaded watercolor drawings.



**At Home with Dogs and their Designers: Sharing a Stylish Life**  
by Susanna Salk

Beautiful photographs give glimpses into the stylish lives of the canines who share their homes with 22 of America's top interior designers. The humans provide love letters to the dogs they adore, peeks into their drool-worthy rooms and gardens (featuring the dogs, of course), and some “tips on living a stylish

life.” The dogs themselves “speak” about such things as their pet peeves and guilty pleasures. Although the average dog owner probably won't be purchasing miniature antique furniture for access to the bed, or 19th-century English sterling silver dog bowls, this book is impossible to resist.



**Let's Find Momo! A Hide-and-Seek Board Book**  
by Andrew Knapp (ages 2-5)

Move over, Waldo. Now the youngest children can have fun locating adorable Border Collie Momo, who is waiting to be found in 12 photographed scenes. Each left page presents Momo and three additional items. On each facing page the dog and other objects are hidden in colorful settings that include a toy-filled bedroom, a tractor and an amusement park ride. (Adults may enjoy Find Momo and Momo Coast to Coast.)

*Linda lives with two Shelties in Wellington, and has had articles published in The Bark.*

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# Pack Walks

By Karen Uthe-Semancik

## Want to turn your regular dog walk into a training session?

Consider a pack walk. John Bergenstein of Columbia Dog Training and Lisa Stella of The Doggie Inn have been offering their "Training With the Pack" walks every Saturday for the last several years at various locations.

Who should attend pack walks? Anyone who wants to give his dog a physical and mental workout while working around other dogs and people. "We also offer training tips throughout the hour," John said. "Dogs that get too excited or are reactive on leash to other dogs and people are welcome. Dogs with serious aggression issues toward people and/or dogs should consult with a professional trainer prior to coming."

John and Lisa have some regulars who "really struggled at first," according to Bergenstein, "but their owners were determined, and continued to work with them, and the pack walks have helped."

### IF YOU GO:

#### Training With the Pack

10-11 a.m. Saturdays, Mill Stream Park, 1262 Maple St., Valley City \$15 per dog (Dogs that are currently being fostered through an established rescue are free.)

#### Pack walk rules:

- One dog per handler
- No retractable leashes
- Respect the space of other dogs and attendees

No reservations required, but you can click "going" on the Facebook event page *Training With the Pack*, or text 440-731-0658 to find out if the event is canceled due to weather.



#### CASE #1

Owners: Katie & Terrence Reese, North Ridgeville  
Dog: Chipper, a 3.5-year-old Hound/Terrier mix from Second Hand Mutts

#### BEHAVIOR ISSUES:

- Aggressive with other dogs when on the leash
- Light chasing that causes anxiety

**TIP TO SHARE:** "Lisa and John both stress that it's at least as much about training the person as it is the dog."

They have been bringing Chipper to the pack walks for about 18 months. Chipper is their first dog.

*"Even though Chipper can still be reactive towards other dogs while on a leash, exposing him to dogs of different breeds and energy levels has greatly helped," Katie said. "When we first started coming Chipper was the one always starting everyone else barking; he could barely be on the same side of the room as the other dogs. Now he (usually) waits for someone else to start barking before joining in. We joke that he's 'most improved.'"*



#### CASE #2

Owner: Chris Roach, Strongsville  
Dog: Daisy, 2-year-old German Shepherd from a breeder

#### BEHAVIOR ISSUES:

- At age 6 months started to take over--had no rules or boundaries
- Became tough to handle and would only get bigger and stronger

**TIP TO SHARE:** "Be consistent. At John and Lisa's suggestion, Daisy now wears a weighted vest to give her a job to do since she is a working breed."

Chris and Daisy have been regulars at the pack walks for more than a year now.

*"When I first started the pack walks, my dog couldn't even participate because she was so overwhelmed by the entire process," Chris said. "She had to stay on the sidelines and watch from a distance. Now, I am happy to say that my dog can complete any drill, be around all of the dogs and people, and even work on her agility skills at the end."*

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# Northeast Ohio leads the pack in dog-friendly walks, runs

By Bethany D. Merillat, MS, M.Ed.



While it may be common knowledge that owning a dog is good for your health, few people are aware of the vast number of canine-friendly, and canine-centered events for dogs and their humans to participate in our area.

Northeast Ohio, and Ohio in general, lead the nation (only second to California) in terms of dog-friendly walks and runs. Events like the recent Love-A-Stray Fur Fun Run 5K and Dog Walk in Avon Lake provide dogs and their people with fun opportunities to exercise, interact with others, and get a lot of cool SWAG for themselves and their furry friends.

However, despite research supporting a plethora of mental, emotional and physical health benefits linked to and enhanced by dog ownership, there were (until now) no documented research studies, or even databases, identifying the scope of dog-friendly athletic events.

While many popular dogcentric websites and publications do a good job of helping pet owners plan vacations and trips, as well as day-to-day activities with their dogs, none have a comprehensive database of dog-friendly races. The same holds true for major running websites--no databases.

To fill this gap, the research team at RunRepeat embarked on a six-month quest to document the nature and scope of dog-friendly athletic events in the U.S. The researchers were able to compile the only complete database of dog-friendly walk/run events in the U.S., now available at [runrepeat.com/the-dog-race-database-fido-fitness-and-fun](http://runrepeat.com/the-dog-race-database-fido-fitness-and-fun).

Using that data, they conducted a comprehensive analysis of what dog participation in active events looks like today, and the results were pretty amazing! Some of the most interesting findings included:

- **A range of new dog-friendly events (e.g., color runs, mud runs, warrior dashes) are now available.**
- **The majority of dog walk/run events are new, but some have existed for decades.**
- **Most dog-friendly events occur during the spring and fall.**
- **Participation rates vary by year.**
- **The average size of dog-friendly events can range widely.**
- **Most events are a walk/run, with a small number of trail runs or other events (e.g., CaniXC or mud runs).**
- **Most of the events are not specifically geared toward dogs, but allow them to participate.**
- **A small but growing number of events chip time dogs and post their results.**
- **Races are fairly well distributed across the U.S.**
- **The number of races is most closely tied to the size of the state's population.**

The paper they published also covered research supporting the connection between dog ownership, physical activity and health. It is this health connection, and the rising popularity of these events, that has led many national organizations to use dog-friendly walks/runs not just to raise money for their causes, but to promote health and wellness, as well.

Organizations such as the American Cancer Society have Bark for Life events celebrating the role of canine caregivers in fighting cancer, and the Arthritis Foundation has a "Waggers Welcome" logo which they put on their events, reminding people that "dogs get arthritis too," and the best way to prevent both dog and human arthritis is to exercise.

So what are you waiting for? Whether you're a fan of warrior dashes, 5ks or just a walk in the park, there is an event out there for you and your furry friend!

Grab your four-legged pal and join the tidal wave of people and their pets running, walking and wagging their tails for health. Not only can you make a difference in your own life, but by strutting your mutt, you can help raise money for many wonderful causes.

Dogless? Attend a fur-friendly event hosted by your local animal shelter, and you may just leave the race with more than just a t-shirt!

To read the entire study, or to access the Dog Race Database, go to [runrepeat.com/the-dog-race-database-fido-fitness-and-fun](http://runrepeat.com/the-dog-race-database-fido-fitness-and-fun).

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*Bethany D. Merillat, MS, MEd, is a health psychologist whose research focuses on ways to help people live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives. The Solon native enjoys running with her husband and dogs (Boston and Indy), ice cream and supporting all things CLE!*

# DOG EVENTS

# JULY

**DOGAPALOOZA** Sun., July 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Lakewood Dog Park, 1699 Valley Pkwy., Lakewood. Professional photos of your dog, dog-related vendors, adoptions and more. For info visit lakewooddogpark.com.

**THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER** Sun., July 1, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. in Downtown Wellington. A fun event for dogs and their people. Adoptables, games, cool-off water stations, photos, speakers, demonstrations, pet-related vendors, food and more. Admission is free. Non-retractable leashes only. Proceeds benefit Partners With Paws and Main Street Wellington.

**POOCH PARTY AT PETPEOPLE** Sun., July 1, Noon -4 p.m. at PetPeople in Avon, 35901 Detroit Road. Join Love-A-Stray for an adoption event. Come visit, do some shopping and hang out with some awesome dogs available for adoption. Visit loveastraydog.com for more information.

**BITS & LEASHES BASH** Fri., July 6 from 5 p.m.-Dark at the Chagrin Hunter Jumper Classic, Cleveland Metroparks Polo Field, Jumper Pavilion. Enjoy a ringside cocktail party, raffle, silent auction and dinner while watching the infamous Horse & Hound Relay. Horse and rider teams paired with hound and handler teams compete for a \$5,000 purse. Proceeds benefit Rescue Village. For ticket info, visit chagrinhunterjumpterclassic.org.

**GRIN's 4th ANNUAL I SCREAM SOCIAL** July 15 from Noon-3 p.m. at Oak Grove Pavilion in the Brecksville Metropark. Enjoy a Celebration of Dogs Diwali Nepal style, pet blessing, ice cream from Z's Cream & Bean, K9 ice cream, raffles and more. \$15, with proceeds benefiting GRIN. Register at grinrescue.org. All friendly dogs are welcome.

**PINTS & PUPS CALENDAR CONTEST** Sun., July 29, 2-4 p.m. at Railroad Brewing, 1010 Center Road, Avon. Join Love-A-Stray and Railroad Brewing for this monthly dog costume contest. On the last Sunday of each month a winner is chosen to be featured in the 2019 Pints for Pups calendar. Winners receive a \$25 gift card and goody bag. \$10 donation requested to enter the contest, with proceeds benefiting Love-A-Stray Dog Rescue. Visit loveastraydog.com for details.

**BASEBALL WITH YOUR DOG** Waggin' Wednesdays at Lake Erie Crushers, 2009 Baseball Blvd., Avon. Bring your dog to Sprenger Stadium on Wednesdays for some baseball. \$5 dog tickets, \$1 hot dogs. This promotion runs every Wednesday throughout the summer (except July 4 & Aug. 1). Dogs must be leashed. Visit lakeeriecrushers.com or call 440-934-3636 for ticket info.

## HOLIDAYS

- All American Pet Photo Day, July 11
- National Craft for Your Local Shelters Day, July 21
- National Pet Fire Safety Day, July 15
- National Mutt Day, July 31



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