Pet Gift Guide

Rescue News
- Appalachian Wild
- AHS expands board
- New director at FHS
- HHS gets grant

Health
- Emergency care call
- Pet boredom busters

And furthermore...
- Adventures in pet sitting
- Pekingese profile
- Photos with Santa
- Retriever Types

Sporting vs. Show retrievers: how to choose yours.
On Saturday, December 5 from 11am to 4pm, pet parents can get their pet photographed with Santa at Wag! A Unique Pet Boutique for a $20 donation to Blue Ridge Humane Society (BRHS). The unique pet boutique is at 231 North Main Street in historic downtown Hendersonville.

Participants in the Santa Paws fundraising photo session will receive 1-3 digital photos for their use. The final number of photos provided will depend on how many good photos the professional photographers can get of sometimes overly-animated pets. Again, depending on the pet’s cooperation, the photos can include one with Santa and another in a setup to be determined. Juls Buckman and Jason Liquori will be the photographers for the day.

Buckman will be behind the camera for photos such as the one below, featuring a pet amidst many of the items available at Wag! Buckman was a labor and delivery nurse before she photographed her first newborn. Then, as she says, “I was hooked. I knew I had found my life’s calling.”

Jason Liquori will handle the photos of pets and Santa. He is a writer, director and cinematographer as well as still photographer. Liquori and his wife Nancy live in Hendersonville with their dogs, Chaya and Dom. He has lent his photography skills many times over the years to help Wag! raise funds for BRHS.

A separate donation of $20 will be asked for photos from setup – with Santa or with gifts. The entire proceeds from the Santa Paws photo shoot will be donated to the Blue Ridge Humane Society.

For more information about the Santa Paws photo fundraiser for BRHS, search Wag! A Unique Pet Boutique on Facebook and click on the events tab.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Merry Christmas and
a Happy, Healthy 2021
from all the pets
and people of PetGazette.

Wag! Santa Paws photos
to benefit BRHS
Resource Guide

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Visit WNCPetGazette.com to find the ads of these great local companies with links to their websites.

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Support our local pet businesses during the Holidays!
SPORTING BREEDS: FIELD VS SHOW DOGS

by Kathryn R. Gubista, PhD

Sporting dogs, which include pointers, setters, spaniels and retrievers, originated as field athletes to work cooperatively with waterfowl hunters. In addition, sporting dogs compete in conformation shows, akin to beauty pageants, where championships are awarded to individuals who most closely conform to AKC standards. These two different activities (fieldwork/hunting and conformation/shows) have led to distinct “types” of Labrador and Golden retrievers.

LABRADOR & GOLDEN RETRIEVER TYPES

The three most popular dog breeds include Labrador and Golden retrievers. While purebred Labradors and Goldens are easily recognizable, each breed can exhibit distinct variations in their physical appearance. For example, some Labradors are short, stout little tanks while others are long, lean, athletic specimens. Golden retrievers not only vary in stature like Labradors, they also can vary in coat color. These distinct breed types result from different selection strategies of influential dog breeders.

LABRADOR RETRIEVERS

Labrador retriever coats come in three main hues: black, yellow, chocolate. Although red and silver hues occasionally pop up, black, yellow and chocolate are the standard colors. The physical stature of Labradors, however, is quite variable. Labradors bred for conformation/shows are short, stocky dogs with relatively laid-back personalities; this breed type is referred to as English Labradors. In contrast, field/hunting Labradors are taller, lighter-weight and highly energetic dogs; this breed type is referred to as American Labradors.

GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

Golden retriever coats come in a huge variety of colors, ranging from creamy white to rich, mahogany red. The length and texture of the Golden retriever coat also varies from short to long, thin to thick, flat to curly. In addition, similar to Labradors, their physical statures distinctly vary between field and show goldens. Confirmation standards favor the British/English golden retrievers with their shorter, stockier build, broad skull, and long, cream-colored coat with extensive feathers. Hunting goldens are smaller, lighter in build with rich dark coats that vary from flat to curly textures.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The selection preferences of dog breeders have conflicting interests which have lead to the different retriever types. Variations (types) in retriever physical appearances (forms) are directly related to the dogs’ purpose (functions). Those interested in aligning their dogs to a breed’s prescribed look are breeding to achieve a specific physical appearance (form) based on the AKC standard. In contrast, those interested in field retrievers are breeding for hunting/retrieving skills (function), which results in a much different dog than conformation retrievers.

CHOOSING YOUR SPORTING DOG

Sporting dogs, such as retrievers, naturally work cooperatively with humans. This cooperative behavior, combined with their easy-going temperaments, make retrievers ideal dog companions. Does it matter if your dog is a field type or show type? The answer is “most definitely!” and your selection should be based on your lifestyle.

Field retrievers tend to be slighter in build and more energetic than their show retriever counterparts. They are active, athletic animals who thrive on physical activities, making them excellent traveling, hiking, running and/or biking partners. If you desire the living rag of a dog, the show retrievers may be the better match. Either way, you cannot go wrong with a retriever.

Kathryn R. Gubista, PhD is an evolutionary biologist, college biology instructor, former zookeeper, author and certified professional dog trainer with Lucky Dog Training Asheville. She can be followed on Instagram @LuckyDogTrainingAVL and @KyolensPup, contacted at TrainingLuckyDogs@gmail.com or 828-423-0635.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

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**Pet Gazette’s**

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**Profits from the ad revenue in this Guide will be donated to Forever Dream Senior Dog Sanctuary in Tryon**
For many of us, the first few crisp autumn days are a welcome change from the heat of summer. But as we transition further from fall into winter, many of our pets need to adjust from a life filled with outdoor adventures to a more sedentary indoor lifestyle. But do not despair, this indoor transition does not mean that we cannot provide mental stimulation for our pets. It just takes a little more creativity. Below are some ideas to help keep your dog or cat entertained when winter weather forces you indoors.

1. **Clicker training.** If your pet is motivated by food or attention, they can be clicker trained. Clicker training is a science-based method to clearly communicate with your dog or cat and is much easier for your pet to learn than the typical command-based training. You will be surprised at how quickly they pick up basic behaviors and how excited they are for their training sessions. Many online resources are available for clicker training for both dogs and cats. Just imagine how much fun you will have sharing videos with your friends and family of your clever pet giving you a high-five or rolling over on command!

2. **Food puzzles.** If you do not have all the time it requires to clicker train your pet, you can still provide your dog or cat hours of entertainment by giving them a food puzzle. Food puzzles require your dog or cat to figure out a set of steps in order to earn a food reward. They can be purchased or home-made and can range from very simple to quite complicated for more clever pets. A simple Kong toy stuffed with peanut butter and frozen overnight can keep your dog occupied for hours. For your cat, take an empty toilet paper roll and fill it with a few of their favorite treats and a pinch of catnip. Fold down both ends of the roll so they have to open it to get to the treats inside. These toys can be left with your pet when you have to leave them at home alone. Even better, give it to them when you can be present to enjoy watching them figure out the puzzle!

3. **Play hide and seek.** This is a fun activity for the whole family. Have a couple of people take a handful of treats and hide around the house in their different rooms. Take turns calling for your dog or cat to come to you when your pet finds you, give them a treat and praise them. Next, have another person call your pet from a different part of the house. This is a great way to work on the “come” command, which can be very important if your dog or cat ever finds themselves off-leash in an unsafe outdoor environment.

4. **Play together.** While it may seem obvious, do not forget that time spent playing with your pet can be one of your pet’s favorite activities. Tug-of-war and fetch are great indoor activities for your dog. Wand toys or laser pointers can keep your cat entertained and exercised and allow for some quality bonding time. Just remember to provide a treat for your cat to “catch” at the end of playing with the laser toy so they do not become frustrated about never catching that elusive red dot!

5. **Create a box fort or obstacle course.** Find items around the house to use as obstacles: a hula-hoop, a laundry basket turned over, or a tunnel made out of blankets can be made into a mini-agility course for your dog. After the holidays, make use of all of those left-over boxes to construct your cat’s dream feline fortress. Use your creativity and watch as your pet’s natural curiosity does the rest!

Hopefully, these suggestions have motivated you to keep your pet entertained when winter weather forces you inside this season. Do not forget, the best part of engaging in these activities with your dog or cat is strengthening the deep bond and connection you have already formed.

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Game runs through December 24th, 2020. Cannot be combined with other offers. Prize values range from $5 - $100.
Pekingese

I t would make sense if these little fur balls were commonly referred to as “Peeks” because they once peeked out from the voluminous sleeves of members of the ancient Chinese ruling class. But that’s not the case. These unique dogs are officially called Pekingese in the American Kennel Club (AKC) breed registry and usually called Pekes in everyday conversation. They actually got their name from the fact that they were originally bred to be companions to Chinese emperors who lived in the Forbidden City in Beijing, which Westerners used to call Peking.

The AKC breed standard for Pekes, members of the Toy Group, calls for the dogs to be between six and nine inches tall at the withers (shoulder) and weigh up to 14 pounds. Their outer coats should be long, coarse-textured and straight, while they have thick, soft undercoats. Peke coats should produce an appearance reminiscent of a lion’s mane because they are longest around the neck and shoulders. For AKC conformation competitions, a black mask or a self-colored face is equally acceptable, and regardless of coat color the exposed skin of the muzzle, nose, lips, and eye rims is black.

The Pekingese’s coat is its most identifiable asset and requires some work to keep it clean and matter-free. A few weekly brushing sessions will usually suffice, since Pekes are basically indoor dogs not prone to collect the dirt, grime, leaves, twigs and sundry surprise items that often appear on the coats of sportier canine cousins. In addition, properly handled brushing sessions can often provide a chance for dog and owner to bond over issues of doggie hygiene and appearance. Today, all Peke coat colors and markings are allowable and of equal merit in competition and in the eyes of potential owners. But that was not always the case. A few hundred years ago, some Pekes were bred to have coat colors that matched the favorite outfits of their aristocratic owners. In the ancient Chinese Imperial Palace, Pekes were not just dogs. They were fashion statements. Valuable fashion statements. In fact, they were considered so valuable that the punishment for stealing one of the emperor’s dogs was death.

Peke’s heads are proportionately large, short-muzzled and wider than they are long. When they aren’t being carried by their owners, Pekes walk with a distinctive rolling gait that exhibits the confidence, even haughtiness, consistent with their royal lineage. “This motion is smooth and effortless and is as free as possible from bouncing, prancing or jarring,” says the AKC website.

Peke trips around the show ring usually draw much applause from the crowd during dog shows, while the Pekes themselves are clearly thinking, “Of course they’re applauding. This is me.”

To put it another way, Pekes swagger way above their weight.

While Pekingese are small dogs, they are hardly dainty or delicate. They form a tight bond with their favorite person and are fiercely protective of him or her. And the smaller they are, the fiercer they can be. The smaller ones, weighing as little as six pounds, were often carried by members of the imperial Chinese families to scare off anyone threatening them. Irrespective of size, today’s Pekingese continue to exhibit the personality traits of their aristocratic ancestors: Their combination of dignity and self-importance makes them good-naturedly opinionated and wonderfully affectionate companions for those they have decided are worthy of their respect.

Malinda Johnston is a Pekingese breeder here in the Asheville area. She started breeding Pekes three and a half years ago and plans to continue, more for love than for money. Pekingese are only the 92nd most popular breed out of the 196 recognized by the AKC and don’t attract as many potential buyers as some breeds higher up on the popularity charts. That might be because Pekingese tolerate kids, but won’t put up with a lot of roughhousing. Nevertheless, Johnston considers herself and her dogs to all be Ambassadors for the Breed. She has had several Pekes that earned championships, or were “finished” in conformation-competition speak. Sadly, her first Peke, Pequest the Dude Abides, passed away before he could finish his champion’s qualifications. Her kennel name - Malikim - was created from a combination of her first name - Malinda - and that of her husband Kim.

If you happen to be considering a loving, loyal, opinionated and medium-maintenance Pekingese canine companion, Johnston would be happy to hear from you. She can be reached at weedlepup123@gmail.com.

Breed Profile

Hendersonville Kennel Club

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Heart of Horse Sense awarded federal grant

A federal program established under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) has awarded a grant to Heart of Horse Sense in Marshall to help victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and human trafficking, amongst other crimes, recover from their trauma.

“The grant funding, along with the support of donors, will allow Heart of Horse Sense to expand its programming to a level it has been striving towards for many years,” said Shannon Knapp, Founder and Executive Director. “We are so grateful for this opportunity to serve and heal survivors.”

According to Knapp, over the next two years, Heart of Horse Sense will be able to dramatically increase how many lives it touches. The organization will now be able to offer Onsite Immersions, Group Therapy and Individual Therapy for survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault of all ages. It will also continue supporting Veterans, First Responders and their families while simultaneously expanding its youth programming. Heart of Horse Sense will offer more children’s groups and see more individual youth clients, many of whom are survivors of suspected neglect and abuse.

The need for the kind of healing therapy Heart of Horse Sense provides is, sadly, immense. In the United States, on average, every two minutes, a child is bought or sold for sex. The average age of a child sold for sex is 13 years old. (RestoreCorps) Approximately 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men are survivors of sexual violence at some point in their lifetime, and over a third of survivors experience assault before the age of 18. (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey) Additionally, race, gender and sexual orientation can skew a person’s likelihood to report an incident of sexual violence. It is estimated that for every one African American woman who reports being assaulted, there are at least 15 who do not. (End Rape on Campus)

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. (National Domestic Violence Hotline)

According to the National Coalition on Domestic Violence, 43.9% of North Carolina women and 19.3% of North Carolina men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.

The VOCA grant is reimbursable, meaning Heart of Horse Sense must first provide the service and then invoice the government before getting paid. That has created a cash-flow gap which the organization has addressed by setting up a Resilient Hearts campaign to help cover basic expenses until reimbursements arrive.

Donations to the fund can be made by texting “HORSE” to 243-725, by visiting heartofhorsesense.org, or by mailing a check made out to Heart of Horse Sense to 7041 Meadows Town Rd., Marshall, NC 28753.

“The organization will now be able to offer Onsite Immersions, Group Therapy and Individual Therapy for survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault of all ages. It will also continue supporting Veterans, First Responders and their families while simultaneously expanding its youth programming.”

Dr. David T. Crouch

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Hidden away in the woods around Asheville is a winding drive that will take one to an unassuming house. Inside that house, however, hums a group as efficient and organized as a beehive. Appalachian Wild comprises a small, paid staff and devoted volunteers who share a three-fold mission. 1: Help injured and orphaned wildlife, 2: Support Western North Carolina’s wildlife rehabilitation network, and 3: Provide wildlife conservation education. Appalachian Wild is the only facility in Buncombe County that takes in a variety of species. This includes herptiles (turtles, snakes, toads, etc.), birds (songbirds, waterfowl, raptors, etc…) and small mammals.

Because of the wide variety of wildlife they help, and because of the diversity of professionals on their board and advisory council, such as a N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission wildlife biologist and specialized veterinarian, Appalachian Wild is considered unique. Since 2018, they have helped over 3,015 wild animals. They are a very collegial group of volunteers that makes this a special place to volunteer.

A vast majority of the animals Appalachian Wild sees are the result of such human activity as car strikes, lot clearing that can leave orphans, chemical poisoning, wildlife stuck to sticky insect and rodent traps, yard maintenance equipment strikes and more. Non-releasable animals, the ones who cannot be rehabilitated and released, are either euthanized to humanely end their suffering or become ambassadors to give wildlife in need a chance. These standout people all strive to make the wheels at Appalachian Wild run smoothly. They all give of their time, their talents, and out of their heart, to give wildlife in need a chance.

One big question many people have is how Appalachian Wild and the WNC Nature Center in Asheville differ or are the same. The Nature Center is owned and managed by the City of Asheville Parks & Recreation Department, and they are not set up to do wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. Originally established as a zoo, they focus on conservation programs and projects.

In that vein, it should be noted that it is illegal for someone unlicensed to keep a wild animal for more than 24 hours. Special knowledge and skills are needed to understand anatomy of each species, their nutritional needs, how to transition them from patient to preparing for release, how to include enrichment, stimulation and exercise for them and most importantly, never make them a pet. Wildlife needs to remain wild if possible and not lose that instinctive fear of humans. Like most groups, Appalachian Wild felt the effects of COVID-19. The volunteer base has changed over the summer months. Volunteers come from all walks of life. Some work outside their volunteering, some are retired, some are college students seeking experience working with wildlife. Others still just want to give back to their community. Any reason to volunteer is a good reason!

The group’s website has a Wishlist, that is updated weekly. The needs are tied to the seasons, and the majority of animals they help for any given season. That website is AppalachianWild.org/wishlist. Sometimes groups, businesses, and individuals host supply drives. Mountain Credit Union and Animal Hospital of North Asheville have been great about this. It can be as easy as setting out a box for people to drop donations in and providing a current list of Wishlist items.

People who wish to get involved can contact volunteer coordinator, Lisa O’Brien. Send an email to volunteer@appalachianwild.org or visit the website at AppalachianWild.org and click on the “Support” tab and complete the online volunteer application. Lisa will get in touch as quickly as possible. While you are there, check out the other ways to help Appalachian Wild, like donate, buy merchandise, sign up for an E-newsletter. Most importantly, like and follow them on social media. Likes and follows on non-profit social pages can attract the attention of organizations with funds to donate.

Facebook: @AppWild  www.facebook.com/AppWild/ Website: www.appalachianwild.org/ Instagram: www.instagram.com/appalachianwild/ Youtube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCyWBRMDKCh6u4c2DFEvuAg Twitter: twitter.com/SavingWildLives TikTok: @AppalachianWild Wishlist link: AppalachianWild.org/wishlist

RyanJoSummers is a local author and an animal advocate. She has worked in the professional pet care industry for more than thirty years in both business and non-profit sectors. Her home is a haven to a menagerie of rescued animals of various species. To find out more about Ryan’s writing and her pets, visit her website at www.ryanjosummers.com or her Facebook pages www.Facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor and www.facebook.com/ryanjosummers/.

“Getting to Know your Local Rescues” is an on-going series highlighting WNC animal rescue groups. Any organization interested in being featured is invited to contact Ryan Jo at www.ryanjosummers.com and use the ‘Contact’ tab.

This book will show you how to choose your adorable new friend and provide for it's very special needs:

Your Bunny Rabbit is not a Dog or Cat!

"Very informative with a wonderful twist of humor. An easy and enjoyable read."
Tracy (Roanoke, VA)

"From the interesting facts and funny excerpts to the adorable bunny photos, I hope this book brings you as much joy as it did for me."
Bill (Raleigh, NC)
The Asheville Humane Society (AHS) appointed six new members to their board of directors in October, expanding the board to thirteen members.

The newcomers are Bryan Smith (Treasurer), Sergio DeLaGuera, Chad Halliday, Dawn Marie Klug, Dr. Jill Vargo and Elly Wells. Returning board members include Jacqui Friedrich (Chair), Carla Henry (Vice Chair), Nan Cole (Secretary), Kristen Collins, Bray Creech, Anne Peden Symonds (DVM), and Theresa Trebon.

“I am excited to start a new Board year with this special group of people,” said Jacqui Friedrich. “Their hard work and dedication on behalf of Buncombe County’s animals is greatly appreciated.”

Jody Evans, AHS Executive Director, said she was “thrilled to be working with this diverse and talented group of professionals and animal welfare advocates.”

Bryan Smith is a C-level executive and consultant who has successfully worked with global teams, reformed underperforming organizations, and led many initiatives from inception to implementation. He has more than 20 years of executive leadership with P&L responsibility plus project and program management experience. He previously served on the board of Riverlink and was board chair of Blue Ridge Public Radio (formerly WCQS). Bryan lives in Asheville.

Elly Wells is the fourth generation of a family of women entrepreneurs with deep Western North Carolina roots. She grew up working in her mother’s printing business — and has been busy organizing projects and campaigns ever since. She is president of the eponymous Elly Wells Inc. marketing and project management firm. Her clients include the Great Smoky Mountains Association, the eight-center Mercy Urgent Care, and the Wortham Center for the Performing Arts.

Chad Halliday is an attorney with McGuire, Wood and Bissette. His practice focuses on closing commercial real estate transactions and resolving commercial real estate and real estate title issues for clients. Chad’s community involvement includes work with Give to the Music, Real Property Section of the North Carolina Bar Association, Buncombe County Bar, and Asheville Humane Society.

Dr. Jill Vargo earned her M.D. degree from Marshall University School of Medicine, did her residency training in Internal Medicine at West Virginia University in Charleston and her fellowship training in Rheumatology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. She is the past president of the North Carolina Rheumatology Association and a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the UNC School of Medicine. Dr. Vargo previously served on the board of Friends for Animals.

Dawn Marie Klug is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC), has a Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling, and is also a Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP). Dawn’s specialty areas include critical incident stress management, diversity in the workplace and development of leadership skills.

Sergio DeLaGuera, a ten year Asheville resident, is a tireless advocate for animal welfare and a tremendous proponent of adoption and rescue. He anticipates becoming involved in the community and helping to improve the lives of animals and animal lovers. Sergio and his rescued dog live in West Asheville.
New Executive Director joins Foothills Humane Society

Bill Coleman, who has over 25 years’ experience as a senior management leader of nonprofit organizations, has taken the helm at the Foothills Humane Society (FHS) in Columbus, NC.

Coleman brings a successful track record of diversifying programs to achieve financial stability, directing organizational development and establishing an excellent reputation within the community his organization serves. His demonstrated leadership skills will be used to help FHS thrive in a time of COVID-19-related operational and economic challenges.

“I am extremely excited to be working with a dedicated Board of Directors, volunteers and an exceptionally talented and devoted staff,” said Coleman, who started his duties at FHS in October. “I look forward to contributing to the continued growth and success of Foothills Humane Society’s inspiring and life-saving mission.”

Most recently, Coleman served as the CEO of the Roanoke Island Historical Association. Prior to that he was the CEO of Dismas House of Nashville, a social service agency that provides transitional housing and services for formerly incarcerated men.

At the end of the school year, Coleman will be joined in Columbus by wife Garnette, son Wynn, and the Coleman family pets, following Wynn’s graduation from First Flight High School in Dare County, NC. The pets include two cats, calico Cali and tabby Simba; a Golden retriever, Millie; and four hens who produce four different colored eggs.

FHS is a private non-profit, 501c3 no-kill animal welfare organization located on 11 acres nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Polk County. FHS is supported by donations, grants, a contract with Polk County Animal Control, shelter activities and fundraisers. The organization began in 1957 as the volunteer-operated, Polk County Animal Protection Society, with no facility. Eleven acres was generously donated to FHS in the 1980’s and its current facility was built in 1989.

Adventures in Petsitting

by Julie Davis

Houdini Cats

I sat for two cats who were adept at opening doors. When my clients went away during the holidays, I noticed one day that the closet door in the master bedroom was open, and thought I remembered seeing it closed the day before.

I closed the closet door, but the next morning it was open again. I closed it again, making sure it was securely closed, thinking that maybe I hadn’t closed it securely the day before, and that’s why the cats were able to open it. Sure enough, on my next visit the closet door was open again. I texted my clients that their cats must be little Houdinis because they were able to repeatedly open the door. The wife responded that she thought her husband was leaving it open. Because of cats, an innocent husband was falsely accused!

Leash Pulling Dogs

My neighbor’s golden retriever puppy was almost full-grown but was a bundle of puppy energy when I did mid-day walks for him. The dog was about seven months old but was already pretty big and strong.

One day when I walked him with his retractable leash, he pulled so hard that the leash and broke and the dog ran off into another neighbor’s yard. I couldn’t believe he could pull hard enough to actually break the leash! He now has a harness and is pulling much less on walks.

It’s the Easy Walk harness, which has the leash attachment at the dog’s chest. I recommended this harness to my neighbor because it made a big difference in curbing pulling with my own dog when he was younger.

In another instance, I sat for two dogs who were very sweet but weren’t leash trained. They had recently moved to a townhouse community from a single-family home up north with a large yard for them to run in. They weren’t used to being walked on a leash nor were they used to walking around other people and dogs since they had previously lived out in the country. Their people asked me to walk them one at a time, but even doing that, they were so strong and pulled so hard it took every ounce of my energy to hold them back. And this was with a harness on where the leash was attached on the dogs’ back. I borrowed my neighbor’s Easy Walk Harness and used that on the dogs instead for my next few visits, and it made the walks manageable. The dogs still pulled, but the harness made a big difference.

Please note: I don’t work for the Easy Walk harness company, nor do I sell it. I’m simply sharing my experience in hopes that it might help someone else. There may be other brands of similar harnesses.

Julie Davis is a pet sitter and dog walker with Family Pet Care of Asheville.
Pets and 911—When You Have to Call for Emergency Care

by Ryan Jo Summers

One of life’s scariest moments is when we need to contact 911 for an emergency. But when we do, we should consider the family pets when emergency crews arrive.

Are there protective dogs who will prevent first responders from reaching the victim without needing to endanger themselves? Do they now have to wait for backup assistance before they can aid the victim? Are there cats or other pets who might escape in the confusion, thereby adding to the stress? Is there a dog guarding the gate to keep strangers (even helpful ones) off the property?

If you live alone, and need to be transported, who is going to care for your pets? They might have to be rounded up if they escaped or released from where you secured them, depending on the emergency. What if a house fire leaves you without a home and temporarily hospitalized? What happens to your beloved pet? If you can share details, plans, and even better, contact names, with emergency responders, they could start helping you care for your pets as well as helping you.

Many first responders and emergency personnel are pet owners and animal lovers too, and only want to help as much as possible. But they have to be informed from the very beginning. Whatever the situation, emergency workers deserve to know all there is about the situation they are responding to. Is there a protective dog? Pets who might escape? All those kinds of things need to be established during that initial phone call to 911. Disclose all animals and their locations. Give rescue workers the time needed for preparations and arranging any necessary backup before they arrive. Sharing information can prevent tragic outcomes.

So, first concern during an emergency is to call 911 and share all important information. Second concern is to deal with any pets that need it, if possible.

In 2017 CNN featured dogs that are now being trained to call 911 for emergency help. Using new technology developed at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Animal Computer Interaction Lab allowed dogs to communicate with humans using a high-tech vest and paw-touch screens. Melody Jackson is behind the FIDO project and has used border collies, papillons, and Labrador retrievers successfully.*

*TopDogTips.com 6-27-2017

Perhaps one day soon we can train our own dogs trained to call 911 for us and use technology to alert emergency personnel to all household pets. Until then, it is up to us to help those who come to help.

Ryan Jo Summers is a local author and animal advocate and a professional in the pet care industry for over thirty years. Her home is a haven to a menagerie of rescued animals. To find out more about Ryan’s writing and her pets, visit ryanjosummers.com or her Facebook page Facebook.com/RyanJSummers.Author and facebook.com/ryanjsummers.

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