

—WNC**Pet**Gazette.com—

PetGazette

INFORMATION THAT NURTURES THE PET-PEOPLE BOND

Western North Carolina

September-October 2020

Volume 9 - Issue 5



Events

Agility Trials
Dog Smile-Off

Health

Bunny First Aid Kit
Pet Skin Care

And furthermore...

Adventures in Pet Sitting
Bunny Book Review
Cavalier Breed Profile
Charlie's Angels Profile
Selling Pet-friendly Homes
Socialization Training

Ezra, winner of first Smiling Dog Contest, waiting for you at Foothills Humane Society.

Calendar of Events September-October 2020

September

Month-Long Observances

- **Happy Cat Month.** Established by the CATalyst Council.
- **National Service Dog Month.**
- **National Pet Insurance Month.**
- **Responsible Dog Ownership Month.**
- **Pet Sitter Education Month.**
- **Animal Pain Awareness Month.**

Week-Long Observances

- Sept. 14-21: **Adopt-a-Less-Adoptable-Pet Week.** Always the third week in Sept.
- Sept. 20-26: **National Deaf Dog Awareness Week.** Last full week in September.
- Sept. 20-26: **National Dog Week.** Last full week in September.

One-Day Holidays

- Sept. 1: **Ginger Cat Appreciation Day.**
- Sept. 8: **National Dog Walker Appreciation Day.** Founded in 2016 by Wag!, this day (always Sept.8) recognizes the work of professional dog walkers.
- Sept. 13: **National Pet Memorial Day.** Established by the International Association Of Pet Cemeteries & Crematories (IAOPCC). Second Sunday in September.
- Sept. 13: **National Hug Your Hound Day.** Second Sunday in September.
- Sept. 13: **Pet Birth Defect Awareness Day.** A day dedicated to the issue of pet birth defects including information on identification, prevention and treatment.
- Sept. 17: **National Pet Bird Day.** A new holiday founded by the Bird En joyment & Advantage Coalition (BEAK).
- Sept. 19: **Puppy Mill Awareness Day.** Third Saturday in September.

- Sept. 19: **Responsible Dog Ownership Day.** Always the third Saturday in September.
- Sept. 19: **National Meow Like a Pirate Day.**
- Sept. 20: **International Doodle Dog Day.** ** Originally scheduled for May but rescheduled due to coronavirus.
- Sept. 23: **Dogs in Politics Day (also known as Checkers Day).** Recognizing the dogs of politicians.
- Sept. 24: **Remember Me Thursday®** Remember Me Thursday® is an international social media awareness day that brings attention to the millions of adoptable pets waiting in shelters and remembers those pets who never got a second chance. Share your rescue pet using #Remember MeThursday.
- Sept. 26: **World's Largest Pet Walk.** Sponsored by Pet Partners.
- Sept. 28: **World Rabies Day.** Sponsored by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control.

October

Month-Long Observances

- **Adopt-A-Dog Month®.** By American Humane Association.
- **Adopt-a-Shelter Dog Month.** By ASPCA.
- **National Animal Safety and Protection Month.**
- **National Pet Wellness Month.**
- **National Pit Bull Awareness Month.**

One Day Holidays

- Oct. 1: **National Fire Pup Day.**
- Oct. 1: **National Black Dog Day.**
- Oct. 4: **World Animal Day.**
- Oct. 9: **National Pet Obesity Awareness Day.**
- Oct. 16: **Global Cat Day.**
- Oct. 17: **National Fetch Day.**
- Oct. 26: **National Pit Bull Awareness Day.**
- Oct. 27: **National Black Cat Day in the UK.**
- Oct. 28: **Plush Animal Lovers Day.**
A day that most dogs will be happy to celebrate...as they unstuff those plush toys...
- Oct. 29: **National Cat Day.**



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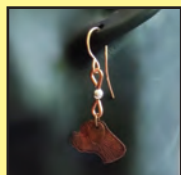
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PetGazette

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PetGazette focuses on the fun and care of pets in WNC. It is written by local experts for local pet lovers. The opinions and recommendations of contributors are their own, not necessarily those of **PetGazette**.

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PG's First Annual Best Smile Contest a Hit!

Thank you for all your entries in our First Annual Best Smile Contest!! Talk about a tough decision. We finally had to lock our impartial judge in a closet until she made one – and then she bawled that they should all be winners! She's right! So we put as many smiles as we could on this page, along with the people that they own.

And the winner, on our cover, is EZRA – an American Staffordshire Terrier Mix

currently being cared for at the Foothills Humane Society. Sweet smiley Ezra was found as a stray, and is about 2 years old, and we understand is a big baby who will crawl in your lap and never gets enough belly rubs.

We all need a smile about now, right? The great thing about dogs is, if we are temporarily low on smiles of our own, they will give us one of theirs. So here they are, help yourself. Hope they bring a smile to your face!



Tripp is smiling for Susan Young



Jade smiles at the Foothills Humane Society



Noah smiles for Carolyn Schermerhorn



Charlotte smiles at Jim and Carol Marks



Opel smiles for Karen Into



A friend smiles for Julie Davis



Chalupa is smiling at Charlie's Angels



Roman and Yoli smile for Amy Melendez



Inimitable Rosco smiles for Joey Beckham

Breed Profile

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

by Jim Marks

The American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club website calls the Cavalier “The ultimate companion. His quintessential temperament is that of a happy, devoted toy spaniel – tail wagging, and eager to please.” The website is not wrong.

Cavs are, indeed, inveterate tail wagers. If the energy involved in that endeavor could be captured it could light several sizeable cities. And talk about devoted! These dogs were developed and nurtured for over four hundred years as lap dogs, long before Velcro was invented. Maybe that material should have been called Cavalierium. Not that Cavs *only* lie by your side or sit in your lap.

One thing that all breeders and lovers of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels agree upon: They need action. They need to run and jump and play. Unleashed, they will instinctively chase almost anything that moves – from birds to chipmunks to rabbits to larger black and white striped things you really don’t want them to catch. But Cavs have zero awareness of cars. They are simply not “street wise”. That’s why they must be kept leashed when outdoors, or let loose only in an enclosed area. In fact, some breeders require that Cavalier buyers have a fenced in yard for them to play in. (By “them” we mean the Cavs, not the buyers, but the buyers will always be welcomed to the Cav’s domain.)

Cavaliers are wonderful family dogs. As members of the Toy group, they are small enough to not been clearing coffee tables with their incessantly

wagging tails nor tall enough to go counter surfing in the kitchen. Their American Kennel Club (AKC) breed standard says they should be about 12-13 inches at the withers (shoulder) and weigh 13-18 pounds. That’s a great size for the family kids to play with, although Cavs and rambunctious types



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under five years old might not be a great match.

According to the AKC website, the Cavalier breed “is notable for its four distinct color patterns, each of which, at various times, was associated with a particular noble family: Blenheim (chestnut markings on a white background), Tricolor (black

markings on a white background), Black and Tan (black with tan markings), and Ruby (a rich red)”. The Blenheim is the “default” pattern for Cavaliers in the minds of both enthusiasts and ordinary observers, but all are perfectly acceptable for AKC conformation competitions. The AKC



**Champion Athercroft
James Blonde
“Calvin”**


breed standards for Cavaliers also state: “Natural appearance with no trimming, sculpting or artificial alteration is essential to breed type.” Although they are members of the Toy group, they also carry spaniel genes from the sporting group, should look more like they’ve come from the hunt than the

salon.

The breed’s history and English royal connections can be traced at least as far back as Charles I. But it was his son, Charles II, who really popularized the breed when he assumed the throne in 1660 after returning from exile in France. He almost always had a pack of eponymous spaniels around him, and even on his deathbed insisted that his beloved dogs be with him.

There are about two dozen breeders and enthusiasts currently involved with the Cavalier in the WNC area. Two are Jim Shreffler and Betty Ann Brown. Shreffler and wife Linda are owners of the Stepamgar Kennels, a dog and cat boarding facility, and breeders of championship Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. (The Stepamgar name is an amalgam of the names of the Shreffler’s three children – Steve, Pamie and Garrett). Shreffler has also served as President of the Asheville Kennel Club and the BRCKCSC (Blue Ridge Cavalier King Spaniel Club)

Betty Ann Brown, an Asheville Certified Public Accountant, contributes her expertise to several canine organizations. She serves as Treasurer for the Obedience Club of Asheville, the Asheville Kennel Club, the Hendersonville Kennel Club, the BRCKCSC and the American CKCSC. She is also the proud owner of Champion Athercroft James Blonde, aka “Calvin”.

Editor’s full disclosure: PetGazette editor, Jim Marks and publisher Carol Marks are the owners of Lady Charlotte of Candler, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. Jim simply loves her: Carol is besotted. 

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Adventures in Petsitting

by Julie Davis

I have had some memorable experiences while pet sitting, some heartwarming, funny, challenging, scary, or unusual. The experiences make me think of the line from "Forest Gump" that Tom Hanks says, "Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get." It's been a little like that with pet sitting. The animals I've had the honor to care for never cease to amaze, surprise and amuse me and, most importantly,

warm my heart. Here are a couple of my more memorable experiences:

I care for a very sweet, elderly, frail Siamese cat named Thai. When I'm petting Thai, he'll often put a paw out on my hand or arm. On one recent visit, Thai was resting in his favorite spot, on one of the kids' beds, and I went in to pet him. While I petted him with

one hand, Thai reached out and rested a paw on my other hand and laid his head on my arm. I laid my head down next to his and we sat together like this for a while. I felt such love radiating from Thai, it warmed my heart and brought tears to my eyes. In moments like this,



Julie Davis and some of her charges.

the animals I care for give me so much more than I could ever give them. It makes me think of another quote: "Some things just fill your heart without even trying." Author Unknown

As I arrived one evening at the home of a client with four dogs, a neighbor walking by asked if I had heard about the bear. I replied that I hadn't and she proceeded to tell me that earlier that day, a very large black bear had walked through the next door neighbor's backyard.

When the weather permits, my client normally keeps the door from

the garage to the fenced backyard open, so the dogs have shelter but can go outside when they like. I immediately contacted my client, informed him about the bear, and asked if he wanted me to keep the dogs inside that night as a precaution. He said "yes." As I was leaving I saw the next door neighbor and asked him about the bear's stroll through his yard. He said it was indeed a very big bear but that his two dogs

***"It warmed my heart
and brought tears
to my eyes."***

and the four dogs I was caring for went crazy barking at it and scared it off! None of them are big dogs, by the way. The neighbor told me that one of the miniature poodles I was caring for was especially vocal and active when he saw the bear, jumping up on the fence and barking up a storm. My client called the dog "his brave little warrior!"

Julie Davis is a petsitter and dog walker at Family Pet Care of Asheville. familypetcareofasheville.com 



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Charlie's Angels Animal Rescue

In 2009 a gentleman in Brevard named Charlie passed away, leaving his 20 hunting beagles in need of new homes. In stepped a handful of concerned "angles" who found new homes for the beagles.

Then, realizing the plight that many of the animals who entered the Transylvania County shelter faced, they once more came forward and assisted many into new loving families.

From those early, humble beginnings grew Charlie's Angels Animal Rescue, now housed in Fletcher, at 5526 Hendersonville Road, next to Smiley's Flea Market.

Ninety-five percent of their animals come from county shelters over seven counties in Western North Carolina. Five percent are owner surrendered. Ninety-five percent of the people who make this organization work are volunteers, dedicated and hard-working individuals who compassionately donate their time and talents to giving each deserving animal a new home with a loving family. Charlie's Angels is a non-profit 501C3 organization that employs just five paid staff members: one full-time and four part-time employees.

All animals that arrive at Charlie's Angels from a county shelter will receive any needed medical care,

including testing for parasitic and infectious diseases, vaccines, be spayed or neutered, and microchipped. A select number of cats are held at Wild Birds Unlimited on Merrimon Ave in Asheville and the Wild Birds Unlimited behind the Chick-Fil-A



on Hendersonville Road in South Asheville. Anyone interested in adopting any pet will start with an application (available online), have a landlord check and veterinary check if applicable, and a virtual home check.

The virtual home check is just one more way animal rescue groups have had to recreate or reinvent themselves, their procedures, and their responsibilities in response to the COVID19 pandemic. The personnel fallout for animal welfare groups is fewer available volunteers. There are also fewer donations, and,

sometimes, increased animal intake as newly unemployed pet parents can no longer afford to keep their pets. Yet, despite these added challenges, groups like Charlie's Angels still must ensure proper care for animals awaiting adoption.

One way people can help is to adopt a kennel. This is a Charlie's Angels specialized fund-raiser. Individuals, groups, or businesses pay \$425 and symbolically adopt a kennel at the Fletcher location for one year. A beautiful, custom plaque is made to the donors request and hung on the kennel. It can be in memory of a departed loved one or pet, or in honor of someone special, or just a neat, innovative way to get your business name and message seen. The plaque will hang on the kennel door—dog or cat—for one year and be seen by everyone who visits the adoption center. At the end of one year, the donor can either renew for another year or keep the plaque.

Charlie's Angels also does weekly yard sales, every Saturday from 9am to 2pm. People are encouraged to donate items in good condition and/or come shop. In addition, the Charlie's Angels website includes a wish list for such things as towels, bedding, cleaning supplies, natural pine cat litter, pill pockets/ pill pouches, and specialized

pet diets.

Interested to adopt, donate, volunteer, or help? Contact Charlie's Angels via their automated phone line, 828-687-9507, or email info@CharliesAngelsAnimalRescue.com. Links and more information can be found at their website or Facebook page: www.charliesangelsanimalrescue.com and www.facebook.com/CharliesAngelsAnimalRescue.

Ryan Jo Summers 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.



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THE VALUE OF SOCIALIZATION: MORE THAN JUST FUN & GAMES

by Kathryn R. Gubista, PhD

The value of socializing with others is much more than just fun and games. Socialization encourages learning at all levels and is true for both humans and our doggie friends.

SOCIALIZATION DURING A PANDEMIC

During this global coronavirus pandemic, we are suddenly confronted with strict limitations in our ability to socialize with others. These restrictions are especially difficult for children because they impact more than just their playtime. Social restrictions have negative effects on an individual's behavioral development, which is true for dogs too, especially during their *Wonder Weeks*.

SOCIALIZATION DURING THE WONDER WEEKS

The peak time for dog socialization is 4-12 weeks. This short window of time during their early weeks is when a pup's personality is formed. Of course, dogs that do not receive adequate socialization early in their lives will still benefit from social experiences. But it may be more challenging as bad habits may have already formed.

VALUE OF DOGGIE SOCIALIZATION

Learning with the help of others is fun, effective and long lasting, which is the true value of doggie socialization. There are so many



The Muttley Crew taking five from training.

things that dogs learn in social situations – things like how to tolerate and play with other dogs and how to share toys, space and even people.

Socialization also allows dogs to become role models for other dogs to influence their behaviors. For example, calm dogs can teach anxious dogs how to

relax and be patient when they are without their beloved humans. Fearful dogs can also learn how to trust other humans and dogs by observing and mimicking the behavior of friendly, fearless dogs. And since dogs love to stick together in groups/packs, off-leash training becomes safer and more effective!

TRAINING WITH MUTTLEY CREW SOCIALIZATION

Our board and train program is based on dogs learning from our Muttley Crew, which includes three loveable golden retrievers and an adorable beagle-mix rescue pup. Lucky client dogs reside with our Muttley Crew, who love to play and train with other dogs and puppies, no matter their age, breed or size. And our successful training results prove that socialization opportunities allow dogs to learn new skills faster than they would without the help of our trained crew.

TRAINING SUCCESS WITH SOCIALIZATION

Monkey-see-monkey-do training is the secret to our board and train success. Our Muttley Crew helps client dogs overcome separation anxiety issues by staying by their side and demonstrating calm, relaxed behaviors at all times. Puppies and adult dogs learn valuable social skills through

play and imitation. Leash reactive dogs learn to tolerate other dogs by developing great leash skills with doggie training partners. When dogs struggle with obedience and manners skills, our crew leads the way and help dogs learn skills that will last a lifetime.

“Calm dogs can teach anxious dogs.”

Does your pup need training? We would love to help! Along with training you and your pup all the necessary training skills to eliminate stress in your life, our programs provide doggie socialization opportunities that are at a premium during this global pandemic.

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 @KyloRenPup. She can be contacted for more information at TrainingLuckyDogs@gmail.com or at 828-423-9635.



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The DOG'S PERSPECTIVE



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Book Review

A Bunny Rabbit is Moving In!

Available online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. 34 pages \$52.16 hardcover, \$18.99 paperback

Review by Carol Marks, chief bottle washer at PetGazette.

This delightful, informative book is a must-read for anyone thinking about getting a rabbit as a house pet. Certainly, bunnies are, as Mummey puts it, 'the cutest animals on the planet'. Editorial comment: They are also, according to the Humane Society of the United States, within the group of the third most surrendered pets to shelters in America.

Wisely, Mummey simply advises "Avoid being overwhelmed by societal battles of purchasing animals from breeders...vs. animal rescues. What you quietly observe from a distance (she describes what to observe) will give you your answer (of where to get your pet)." The author's prime concern is the health and wellbeing of the creatures she loves and it shows in every well-written page.

In her introduction, Mummey reveals the basis for all the information in this excellent book. She says: "Initial research on caring for rabbits is very important in order to fully appreciate and enjoy pet rabbits... rabbits behave quite differently from cats and dogs...Most rabbits have no desire to snuggle on demand or follow humans around like a puppy." Every chapter makes differences abundantly clear. Subjects are: specific food needs (including good wood and fresh grass and hay), litter boxes and cages, grooming, handling, children, veterinarian, lunging, selecting – and finally, a "checklist

of happiness".

For all the serious information, it is sometimes delivered in a very funny way. Here is one example: "If you are unable to provide easy access to fresh uncut grass, then consider building elaborate friendships with people living in the country (they are wonderful people). Once you have earned their trust, borrow grass clippings from them and go on hay rides together."

Sage advice when gathering your rabbit's sticks: "Don't get the haunted ones that wake you up in the middle of the night."

Some sections shouldn't be written with humor, and 'Children' is one of them. Mummey writes directly: "Putting the pressure of properly caring for an animal solely on the shoulders of a wonderful little kid is not good for the child, not is it fair to

the pet."

"Checklist of happiness" closes out this wonderful book. It includes Fun Activities, include binkies (read page 32 to find out what they are!), learning tricks for treats, chewing on everything in sight. Also included is a list of needs and training tips. And mostly, J. Mummey wants you to know in "A Bunny Rabbit is Moving In!" that YOU CAN DO THIS!

J. Mummey is originally from Bellefontaine, Ohio and has called Raleigh, North Carolina home for over 20 years. Her writings reflect her appreciation for humor, nature, farming, caring for animals and all things spooky.



Rabbit Emergency Kit

by Kimberly Whitfield, DVM

Since emergencies seem to happen when it's not easy to get to an emergency vet, I recommend that rabbit owners have an "Emergency Kit" at home. The three simple things in it will hopefully help you nurse your rabbit through until you can get it to your veterinarian. The kit should contain:

* Baby Gas Drops (Simethicone) - get these at your local drug store

* Pain Medication - get this from your veterinarian

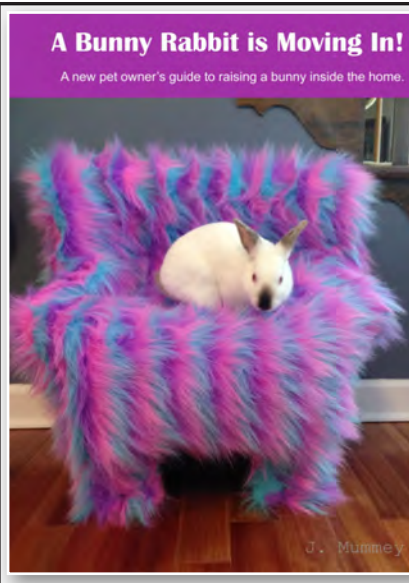
* Critical Care (or another powdered food made especially for rodents and herbivores)

Talk to your veterinarian about the proper technique and dosages, but relieving the pet's pain and gas, and

perhaps force feeding it, will give it a fighting chance until you can get it into the vet's office when it opens.

So although they are absolutely adorable, and will give you many years of love and enjoyment, please know what you are getting into before you buy a rabbit. Please don't enter into the decision lightly. Rabbits are not just a cute Easter present, they require time and care to keep them healthy. They should be spayed and neutered just like your dog and cat, and even though they don't require any shots, please have them seen yearly by your veterinarian for a complete physical exam. Take care of them, and yourselves.

Editor's note: This article originally ran in the September-October 2013 issue of PetGazette.



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

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Selling your home during a pandemic when you have pets

by Susan Young

Who would have guessed that in the middle of a pandemic the Asheville real estate market would be so hot? Last time I checked, pending home sales were up over 40% , yet the number of available homes for sale is down 42%.

This is what a seller's market looks like. If your home is priced right and habitable, it will find a buyer quickly unless.....Your pet kills the deal. Even in a seller's market, evidence of our pets can turn off buyers and affect your sale price. So how do you balance your companion's needs with the needs of a potential buyer – and keep everyone safe in the process?

Most internet articles will tell you to send your companion on a vacation. That's as likely as sending the kids to boarding school so the house can stay organized. Right now, no one is going anywhere, so we need to work around this. There are two aspects to selling a home with pets that we need to look at; cleanliness and logistics.

This is the time to be honest with yourself. Even if you groom your pets daily they still bring dirt into your home. Give everything a good scrub down. Vacuum daily to remove pet hair. Wipe down base trim and wall corners that your dogs rub up against. Remove nose prints, (aka "nose art"), from windows before each showing. Repair any damage that your pet has done to your home.

Clean litter boxes multiple times a day and use high-quality kitty litter to help mask the smell.

Put away toys and remove any pee pads. It is very important to pay attention to **odors**. We get used to the odors that our own pets bring to our home – it's called becoming "nose blind" - but be assured that buyers will smell it. Use Fabreeze liberally, baking soda in litterboxes and carpet cleaner on the rugs. In the summer, run your air-conditioning during showings and put a good HEPA filter on your furnace to help filter the air. Even if a potential buyer is also a pet owner they will be more grossed out by other peoples "dirt" than they are by their own, so eliminate it as much as you can.

Don't forget the yard. Buyers look for omens to tell them if this is the house for them and stepping in Puppy's little "gifts" is not a good omen! Lastly, don't be surprised if your pets start having house training issues. They feel your stress, plus the added stress of strangers coming in when you are not home. When pets get stressed, accidents happen.

So what do you do with your pets while your home is being shown? Cats will pretty much disappear, but if you have one that might be an escape artist then invest in a large dog crate or cat pen for extra security during showings. Locking Kitty in a bedroom is not a good option as we want buyers to see the

entire home and not worry about a pet escaping.

Dogs are a bit harder to manage than cats. It IS NOT ok to let your dog loose in the house when it is being shown. This is a very bad idea. Even people who love dogs will be nervous around a dog they don't know and you know

to give you some lead time when your home is being shown. Give yourself enough time that you can run home and crate your dog or remove them all together.

During "normal" times this would be a good time to check out a doggy day care or maybe hire a dog walker who can run over and get Fido out of the house for an hour. If they must stay home and a crate is not an option, put them in the laundry room or a bathroom (think small, easy to view from the door) and put up a secure baby gate. This confines your dog and gives them a barrier between them and the intruder, hence a sense of security for everyone.

Also, because of the pandemic we are recommending that you prepare your home for showings by turning on all lights and leaving all doors cracked. That way, people can use their feet to nudge a door open and have minimal contact in your home.

Selling a home is stressful for everyone but with some planning and a game plan, you can balance this and make it work for everyone!

Susan M. Young is a long standing Asheville, NC Real Estate Broker and has been active in dog sports with her Golden Retrievers for over 20 years. She can be reached through her website at www.SusanMYoung.com.



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Agility Trials in Waynesville October 2-4

The Blue Ridge Agility Club (BRAC) will host a dog agility* trial on the weekend of Oct 2-4, at Waynesville's Smokey Mountain Event Center (formerly the Haywood County Fairgrounds).

Action will begin just after 8am each day, continuing until about 4pm. Complete information about the trial is contained in a document called a "Premium", which can be downloaded from the club's website, blueridgeagility.com.

Agility competitors will recognize that Western Carolina Dog Fanciers Association (WCDFA) usually puts on a trial about this time at this location, and they would not be wrong. That trial has been a fixture of local dog sports for years, and it will be back next year. In the meantime, BRAC has taken on the trial, and trial chairman Bill Lang hopes "to provide an event that lives up to the high standard set by WCDFA over the years."

The trial will be run under the framework of the American Kennel Club (AKC). Although it is primarily associated with dog conformation, AKC sponsors a wide variety of dog sporting events, from Barn Hunts to Rally to Nosework competitions. While conformation events focus on the dog's structure, not its performance, and Nosework specifically prevents the human from helping, agility is unique in being a true team sport. A successful agility run requires both team members to pull their weight, with the handler signaling the course and the dog executing the course plan.

Clear, timely cues from the human must mesh with precise jumping and turning from the canine to run "clean" – successful completion of each required obstacle,

within maximum time limit. Dog/handler teams compete in classes based on the dog's height at the withers (shoulder), running an obstacle course specifically set up for dogs of their size. The dogs run the course at their handler's direction, running, jumping, and turning, weaving and crawling as needed to complete the course in the fastest possible time. The obstacles they encounter can include teeter-totters,



chutes, weaves, A-frames, tunnels, jumps of all kinds. Each new course, set up by volunteers, can include some or all of the above obstacles in just about any order. Handlers are given a chance to walk the course prior to their competitive run in order to decide on the best place to position themselves to give the needed clear direction to the dog. Experienced human competitors.

Dogs must respond to their handler's directions, which can be given only by voice, hand signals or body language. No treats allowed! Class winners are decided by the fastest time through the course without faults. These include such things as missing an obstacle entirely, knocking down a fence rail, or missing a weave gate.

Before the runs for each class, handlers are allowed to walk the course to plan where they should station themselves as the dog runs the course so they can be in the best position to give directions. Experienced handlers will usually admit that missed obstacles are most often the result of human error, rather than canine error. Experienced canines agree.

Covid-19 has impacted agility events

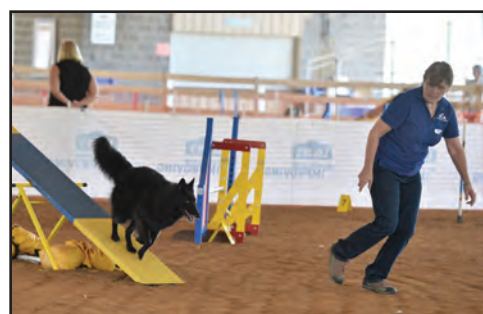
just as it has almost all other areas of life. Competitors will deal with traffic control measures aimed at avoiding close encounters, and masks will be required at all times except when actually running a course. Under the rules in effect at the start of September, BRAC is discouraging spectators, in keeping with State guidelines. If North Carolina is able to relax its status by trial time, spectating in reasonable groups, maintaining social distancing, may



be possible. BRAC will publicize new information as it becomes available.

Future area agility events will depend on the pandemic, of course. The next scheduled agility trial is slated for Dec 11-13, at the T. Ed Garrison Arena, Pendleton, SC. At the moment this facility is closed, along with all of Clemson University, so BRAC will make a decision about holding that trial as more information becomes available.

Experienced human competitors will usually admit that missed obstacles are most often the result of human, rather than canine, error. (100% of canines will probably agree.)



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Wet Your Whiskers Wine Tasting Fundraiser

The popular and familiar fundraiser for Feline Urgent Rescue of Western North Carolina (FUR) is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 12, 2020, Governor Cooper willing and the COVID-19 don't rise.

Wet Your Whiskers Wine Tasting Fundraiser is planned to run from 5:30-7:30pm at Wells Event and Reception Center, 33 Wells Event Way in Waynesville. The event could provide a way to enjoy an evening out and support FUR. Participants will be able to enjoy appetizers and drinks (wine tasting with beer option) and vote for the winners of the annual FUR cat photo contest. They will also be able to bid in a silent auction for donated gifts and services.



Individual tickets are \$35 and include multiple tastings and appetizers. Tickets are available online, by mail, or in person at either The Dog House, 310 N. Haywood St., Waynesville or at Smoky Mountain Dog Bakery, 4 N. Main St., Waynesville.



Skin Care Important for Pets

by Kim Slagle

Pet owners often ask a lot of questions about why or why not certain products are safe for humans, but not for animals. It's simple: Pets aren't human.

The skin, also called the epidermis, is there to prevent water and nutrients from escaping the body. It also keeps dangerous substances out, for both people and pets. But dog and cat skin is much different from human skin. Human skin is usually 20-25 cells thick. A dog's skin is approximately 6-10 cells thick, about half of a human's. Basically, humans are thick-skinned; pets are thin-skinned and extremely sensitive. So human shampoos, even products designed for babies or adults with sensitive skin, are too harsh for your pets and do cause irritations. They could even burn the skin.

In addition to thickness, another important factor in skin sensitivity is called the acid mantle or the pH level. The acid mantle is a barrier for the skin and protects it from bacteria and viruses. A human's skin pH level is about 4.8, while a dog's skin pH is 7.4. As well we all know, a dog's skin is 95% covered in hair, a human's skin only 5% covered in hair. This means your pet's shampoo should have high alkaline and lower acidic ingredients. But human shampoo has a higher acidic level, which will disrupt the acid mantle on your pet. This allows bacteria to grow on the skin. With that bacteria, we see yeast infections,

staph infections (which smell) and very oily hair. It can also dry the skin and causes scratching. This starts a cycle of bathing more and sending the acid mantle in a tail spin. And sending you and your pet to the vet's office.

The vicious cycle of scratching, bathing, drying, scratching, bathing, etc. is why groomers suggest a dog-safe conditioner. The conditioner will close the hair cuticle and restore hydration, moisture and elasticity. It also soothes the skin itself, much like adding lotion to your skin.

When shopping for products for your pet, read the labels! Know what the ingredients mean. Make sure there are no artificial fragrances or colors added to the shampoo. Moisturizers should be vitamin E, aloe vera, almond or coconut oil and honey. Fragrances should be natural, like chamomile, lavender, eucalyptus, and citrus. Check for the pH levels or a statement that the pH is appropriate for dogs or cats. The pH level should be 7.

A healthy pet should not be bathed more than once every 4 weeks. This keeps the pH levels healthy. If you have questions or just aren't sure, ask your local groomer!

Editor's note: The above article first appeared in the September-October 2015 issue of PetGazette. Before retiring, experienced groomer Kim Slagle worked with animals for over 20 years.



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