

Dogs On Call Inc.

June 1, 2013

President's Note

As summer approaches, Dogs On Call, Inc. is winding down from a full year of dorm visits and Liz, our UW/DOC coordinator, reported that DOC visited 46 times this school year at the dorms. DOC couldn't have done that without all of our great volunteer teams. Remember the dorms are not the only place where our teams have been busy; UW Hospital, Meriter, the VA, and many nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and libraries were visited many times by our teams. DOC just doesn't have a count on those visits.

Our summer schedule will be in full swing soon. We have safety visits scheduled, Safety Saturday On The Square and Mounds are right around the corner, and the DreamBank has invited us back for two more visits. Many libraries have scheduled teams for their summer R.E.A.D. programs. With all of these special summer programs many DOC teams still find time to visit their "regular" facilities on a weekly basis.

Thank you everyone for bringing a smile to so many faces every time you visit.

Laura Kuchta, Kooper and Oliver

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**Currently
scheduled DOC
evaluation dates
are listed on
page 9.**

Dogs On Call Picnic

Mark your calendar now!

The Dogs On Call, Inc. annual picnic will be held on Sunday September 29, 2013.

Start time is 11:00 a.m. and you can stay as long as you would like. This is for humans and their Pet Partners.

More information will be sent out as the date gets closer—watch your email inbox.

**Blankets for
Critters. Check
out page 11.**

Hospital Volunteer Appreciation Brunch and Lunch

Both Meriter and UW Hospital showed how much they value their volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 22-26. Thank-you speeches and door prizes were plentiful at both events.

UW Hospital provided a buffet of delicious brunch selections at the hospital's Four Lakes Café dining room. Hospital food has come a long way! Several Dogs On Call teams attended with their Pet Partners. The dogs were very well behaved, which was quite a feat with all the plates of food floating by their noses. Volunteer Services provided a big bowl of dog treats to help the dogs cope.

Meriter's luncheon was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison; I'm sure no one left hungry. The dogs did not attend this event, but were there in spirit. During the lunch, a continuous slide show ran with pictures of all Meriter's volunteers, including the furry ones.

Karen Peckham and Raider

Quite a Sight

When the DOC teams visit the rehab dayroom at UW Hospital, it's great to see a few people already in the room. "We've been waiting for you!" they say. Shortly after our arrival is announced, it's even more special to look down the hall and see the pilgrimage of people in wheelchairs and using walkers, making the effort to join us in the dayroom. Many of the patients have been there for weeks and they really look forward to our visits as a distraction in their routine. A few weeks ago, there was a line stretching outside the door of the dayroom, as patients waited patiently (ha-ha!) for a chance to visit with our dogs. It's so rewarding to be a part of that experience. We know we're appreciated, for sure!

Karen Peckham and Raider

Think Ahead!

If you've been thinking about volunteering at either UW Hospital or Meriter, it would be a good idea to start the volunteer process this summer. The application process at the hospitals and shadowing visits can take several weeks to complete. If you start this summer, you'll be ready in the fall, when schedules get back to normal and you're looking for a good indoor project – making hospital patients, visitors, and staff happy! Contact Karen Peckham, karenp@dogsoncall.org, for info on starting the process.

Karen Peckham and Raider

Welcome, Nicholas!



Julie Henige and her family announce the arrival of Nicholas William Henige, born March 5, 2013. He weighed in at 5 pounds, 15 ounces and was 17-1/4 inches long. Nicholas was born in Texas and adopted through an agency there. He moved to his new home in Wisconsin at the end of April.

Karen Peckham and Raider

DOC Extremes?

Just for fun, I was trying to think of the dog extremes of our DOC members. Who is the smallest? Lydia Zeller's Daisy Mae, the six-pound Papillion? How about the biggest? Artie Berning's Sacajawea, the Newfoundland? Tallest might be a newly evaluated dog, Patricia Ringelstetter's Wallace, an American Staghound. Oldest? Jen Phipp's Eva, and Jan Hoffman's Griffin are thirteen. Anyone older? Most prevalent breed? Has to be Golden Retrievers! If you think you have an "extreme" dog, send me an email with your category and we'll post them later – just for fun!

Karenp@dogsoncall.org

Karen Peckham and Raider

Be Aware of Raw Food Treats

As we all know, Pet Partners does not allow raw food diets for therapy animals (or for the therapy animal to live in the same household with an animal on a raw food diet). This goes for treats as well. Many of the bite-size freeze-dried treats are freeze-dried *raw* food, which are on the "not allowed" list. Also, prohibited are pigs' ears, raw marrow bones, bully sticks, hooves, snouts, duck feet, antlers – pretty much all animal parts – unless they've been sterilized. For more info, take a look at the Pet Partners Student Guide (2012 edition), Unit 3, page 4, "What makes an animal ineligible to be evaluated or registered for the Pet Partners program?"

Karen Peckham and Raider

Madison R.E.A.D. News

The Madison area R.E.A.D. Teams have been busy through the fall/winter/spring season and are ready for summer. We have been getting around town participating in some fun and unique events.

Lydia Zeller and Daisy, her Papillion partner, have been participating weekly at Madison's Lincoln Elementary School in Madison with a third grade classroom.

Katie Kunz and Sophie, a Standard Poodle, Sue Heidrich and Molly, a Chocolate Lab, and Karen Smith and Zombie, a Dutch Shepherd, participated at Madison's Emerson Elementary School for Tuesday Night Lights on January 22nd and April 2nd. Families are invited to enjoy the newly remodeled library that was stocked with new books from Target. Target also gave a generous grant to support Tuesday Night Lights.

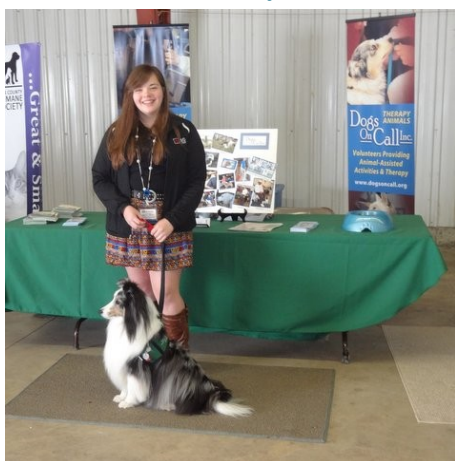
Karen Smith and Zombie, along with Marisa Welch and Billy, a Beagle, visited Middleton's Sunset Ridge Elementary School to celebrate Literacy Week on March 6th and visited several classrooms of enthusiastic children.

Katie Kunz and Sophie, visited Kids Express Learning Center on April 18th and greeted children and parents to celebrate Week of the Young Child. Children learned some dog safety tips and about READING to a Dog.

Teams also visited Madison's Pinney Branch and Meadowridge Libraries, and libraries in Middleton, Monona, and Fitchburg. Thank you Briana Nestler and Gerry, Cate Inman and Chance, Deb Brauer and Calvin, Karen Peckham and Raider, Pat Stevens and Wilson, along with the teams listed above for your many hours of volunteering. Thank you for the participation of all teams in helping develop children's reading and bring a smile to their faces!

Katie Kunz and Sophie

Sauk County Paws Walk – May 4



Tiana and Kooper

Although the weather wasn't the best, the Dogs On Call booth greeted slightly damp participants of the Paws Walk at the Sauk County Fairgrounds on Saturday, May 4th. Members Laura and Tiana Kuchta with Kooper and Jan Hoffman with Ryder staffed the booth and answered questions from visitors about Dogs On Call and therapy animals. The Sauk County Paws Walk is a fund raiser for the Sauk County Humane Society and offers not only participation in the walk to visitors but it also sponsored police dog demonstrations, sheep herding and agility, among many others. Kids also were able to paint paw prints on items and played games centered on dogs and animals. Many visitors to the DOC booth asked for information regarding their own pup becoming a therapy dog.

Jan Hoffman, Griffin and Ryder

Gilda's Club Volunteers Pose For Video

On a recent visit to Gilda's Club, a videographer took some shots of our members as they visited with children at the club. The video will be part of an outreach project for Gilda's and we're hoping some of our members made it into the final cut. If so, we'll let everyone know where they can see the video on-line.

Members attending Gilda's in April were Kelly Utz and Torie, Todd Trampe and Izzy, Scott Hubbard-Van Stelle and Sky, Barb Wolf and Zora, and Jan Hoffman.

Jan Hoffman, Griffin and Ryder



Todd and Izzie



Scott and Sky



Kelly and Torie



Barb and Zora



When not working as a Pet Partner, JoAnn Feeney's Bichon, Lexi, participates in parades like the St Patrick's Day Parade on the Capital Square.

Photo credit: Lesia Witkowsky, The Isthmus

Member Profiles



Blythe Novacheck of Madison did a lot of breeder research before settling on a Golden Retriever puppy from Webshire Kennels. Nine-year-old Maisy shares her home with Kia, a Terrier/Chihuahua mix and Willa, a gray Domestic Shorthair cat; both are six years old.

As a relatively new member of Dogs On Call, Blythe is wisely taking it slowly. She's interested in hospital visits, campus events, and special events, but plans to gain experience with Maisy in baby-steps.

Blythe works at Lodi Vet Care, and her off-hours are spent sharing activities with her dogs, kayaking, snowshoeing, gardening, and driving horse wagons at the Treinen Farm Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch.



Scott Hubbard-Van Stelle is Pet Partner with Sky, an 8-1/2 year old Golden Retriever. Sky shares his Middleton home with Ace, a five-year-old Lab mix and Fuzzle the cat, who is almost 18 years old.

Sky had a rough start in life – born in a puppy mill and spent his early life in a pet shop. The family that bought him didn't appreciate the fact that puppies have accidents in the house and turned Sky over to the local animal shelter. That's when Sky's fortune turned around. The shelter contacted a Golden Retriever rescue group in Waterloo, Iowa, who posted his availability on PetFinders. Scott was one of 100 people that applied to adopt him. Scott says, "We got lucky," but so did Sky!

As a regular visitor to Meriter Hospital, Sky charms people there as well as the UW dorms and Gilda's Club.

Scott is an outdoor enthusiast and enjoys fishing, prairie restoration, dog walking (of course!), and year-round outdoor horseshoes. When he finally sits down, he likes to play the guitar.

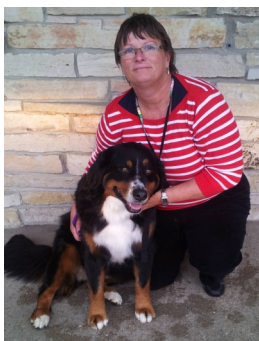


Helen Noncek, from Juneau in Dodge County, is also a member of Badgerland Animal Reading and Comfort Companions, Inc. (BARCC). Helen and 6-1/2-year-old Daisey, a Shih Tzu, visit at Deerview Meadows Nursing Facility in Hartford and Columbus Hospital in Columbus. They also participate in the R.E.A.D. program at St. Mary's School in Mayville.

Daisey was adopted from Chicagoland Pet Rescue at 11 months old. A foster mom had nursed Daisey back to health and happiness after living with an abusive and neglectful owner. Daisey is an "only-dog" at home, but often plays with her best friend, Goldendoodle Colleen.

Aside from doing therapy dog visits, Helen enjoys reading, gardening, knitting, cross-stitch, and spoiling her grandchildren.

Member Profiles



Nancy Kaufman is one of DOC's newer members with Eva, a three-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog. Eva came from a breeder in Lodi and shares Nancy's attention with Pudgy, a 15-year-old cat and Lucy, a four-year-old black Lab.

Nancy says Eva is very supportive in the car. She always wants to hold hands and she helps shifting. Eva's emotional support and lap-sitting helped Nancy get through breast cancer treatment last year.

The visiting schedule for Nancy and Eva is varied, with trips to St. Clare Hospital, the Boys and Girls Club (both in Baraboo), and the Ruth Culver Library in Prairie du Sac.

When not grooming that big fluffy dog, Nancy likes to travel, knit, and read.



Dan and Faye Antolec are our newest double-double members – husband and wife with two Pet Partners – Buddha (five years old) and Gandhi (four years old). Both dogs are Labradors and both were adopted from The Labrador Connection. Dan and Faye worked hard with both dogs to overcome their lack of training and separation anxiety.



Life in the Brooklyn countryside sounds idyllic for Buddha and Gandhi, as they join Labrador Jake (15 years old), an American Paint mare named Fancy (18 years old), and ewes Bluebell, Pearl, and Shirley (all seven years old). All animals get along "famously," says Dan, "living the easy life." Summertime is a favorite, as Buddha and Gandhi's enjoy watermelon snacks.

Dan, Faye, and their Pet Partners have attended a few events and are planning regular visits to Skaalen in Stoughton. Joining the R.E.A.D. program and participating in other events are on the horizon.

Both Dan and Faye enjoy photography and videography. Their love of nature prompted them to develop their property as a wildlife haven. Faye takes full advantage of having sheep by carding, spinning, dyeing, and knitting their wool. She also volunteers weekly at Gilda's Club (without the dogs) and enjoys reading daily. Dan runs a part-time dog training business, spends time each day caring for the animals, and also finds time for studying history, martial arts, horseback riding, and enjoys writing. Dan has volunteered at Three Gaits since 1990 and enjoys helping with the hippotherapy program.

Member Profiles



Mary Jo Sanford says “What a bonus!” about getting Harry, a Blue Merle Collie as a package deal when she married her husband, Dan. Nine-year-old Harry and Mary Jo visit at Capitol Lakes Retirement Center in Madison and at Manor Care Center in Tucson, Arizona when they are wintering there. Mary Jo’s other interests include traveling, biking, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.



Julie Henige and her stepdaughter, **Marlee**, share visiting duties with Cooper, a six-year-old Golden/Sheltie mix. It was love-at-first-sight when Julie saw Cooper on PetFinders.com. Cooper shares the love with Grace, a Border Collie mix and cats Oliver, Felix, Ginger, and Shadow – all lucky rescues.



Julie and Marlee visit at UW dorms and libraries. Julie would like to try nursing homes and the UW Hospital “when life settles down.” That may be a while, as Julie is busy with skiing, reading, movies, theatre, mentoring for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and has recently adopted baby Nicholas William! Marlee, too, has a full life with horseback riding, reading, art, photography, puzzles, and playing with all those pets!



Bonnie Shattuck lives in Middleton with her two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Snickers (five years old) and Rusty (four years old). Bonnie got the dogs from two different breeders. Both dogs are Pet Partners. They all have a full calendar, visiting at Meriter Hospital, Dryhootch, and Gilda’s Club; manning the booth at the Wisconsin Dog Fair; and helping with dog safety education at Safety Town events in the summer.

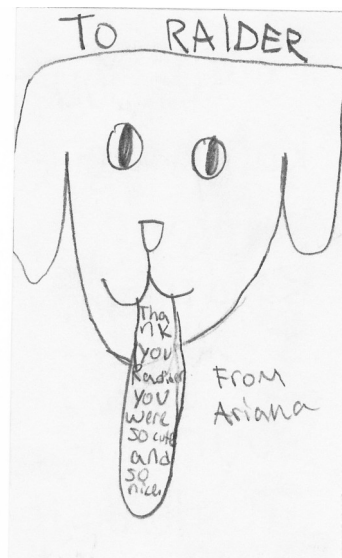
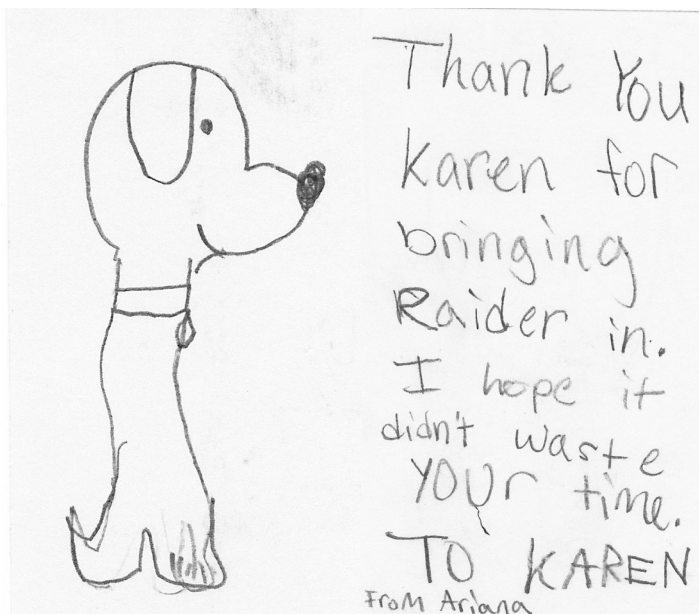
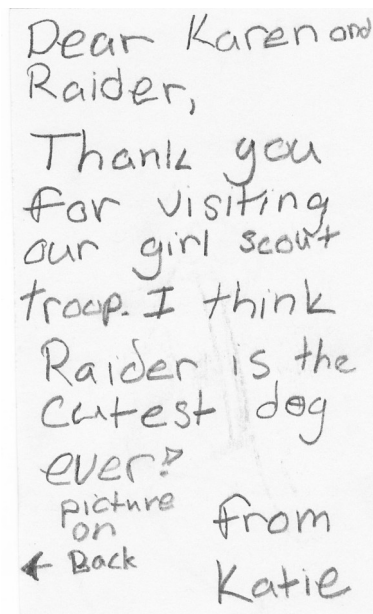


Bonnie likes to spend her spare time with sewing and quilting projects, church activities, and helping with her triplet grandchildren!

Karen Peckham and Raider

Lifelike Portraits Adorn Thank You Notes

Raider and Karen Peckham received a handful of thank you notes – complete with artwork -- from the Girl Scout troop they visited in February. Here are some selections.



Upcoming 2013 DOC Evaluation Dates

June 2, 2013 at Tabby and Jacks

June 30, 2013 at Dogs Welcome

July 28, 2013 at Tabby and Jacks

August 17, 2013 at Dogs Welcome

December 1, 2013 at Tabby and Jacks

If you are expiring this year please contact Artie Berning at Artieb@dogsoncall.org to sign up for an evaluation date.

Remember you can evaluate up to 60 days before you expire without changing your renewal date.

Read Across America Week In Waunakee



February 28-March 1, 2013, marked the third return of R.E.A.D. teams to Prairie Elementary School in Waunakee, WI to celebrate Read Across America Week in a special way. The R.E.A.D. teams consisted of Artie Berning with Sacajawea, Laura Kuchta with Kooper, and Disney with me. Henry had participated the two prior years, but this year Artie gave Sacajawea a turn. Although Henry was missed, Sacajawea quickly won over a big fan club all her own. Kooper received a cute note from an admirer, and Disney had a nice colored picture waiting for him on the first day of visits. These dogs are truly loved and appreciated at Prairie and everyone has grown to look forward to the annual visit, especially my 3rd Grade daughter, Alexis.

What seemed like an impossible vision three years ago again played out seamlessly in 2013. Although the Waunakee School District hadn't been familiar with R.E.A.D. before 2010, they were thankfully willing to listen to Alexis, a little Kindergartener with a big plan. Alexis wanted to expose ALL of her classmates to the joys of reading with a dog. Alexis was convincing and her own reading progress so impressive that the district was open to learning more about the positive impact of R.E.A.D. teams. For those who don't know, Alexis was diagnosed with Dyslexia at age 6. She began participating in structured interventions and intensive tutoring. It was a rough road early on as she was asked to embrace new reading strategies that seemed confusing and unnatural to her due to Dyslexia. At the time, Disney was only a year old and enjoying his new role as a Meriter Hospital therapy dog. He began to take on the role of a R.E.A.D. dog at home. Disney loved hearing stories and was able to keep the mood positive through the cuddles of encouragement and comedy he provided. After awhile, our self-proclaimed "book hater" started evolving into a willing student. To keep the momentum going, we encouraged Alexis to help train Disney to become an official R.E.A.D. dog. In April of 2010, we registered with R.E.A.D. and became involved with the Paws To Read Program at the Waunakee Library. Each month, Disney encourages struggling readers as they work to improve their skills and confidence. Just like with Alexis, he has helped many other kids to experience that almost magical paradigm shift that only seems to come from the power of the human-animal connection. It is a pleasure to be able to share him in this way.

I am eternally grateful to Laura and Artie for being willing to step up and begin this journey with me three years ago. Much to my relief and excitement, they too believed in Alexis' vision, saw it as a unique opportunity to positively impact her entire school of over 600, and instantly became committed to helping mold the dream into an unprecedented workable reality. Truly wonderful ladies with fantastic canine partners! Without their knowledge, guidance, dedication, and participation each year, none of this would be possible. Together we've been able to develop programming that is enjoyed by students in Early Childhood classes through Grade 4, and staff alike. It is amazingly positive and a real testament to the stellar reputation of Dogs On Call, Inc., Pet Partners, and Reading Education Assistance Dogs, that the Waunakee School District would believe enough in our mission to welcome us into every classroom. The visits continue to be so well received that we've already been invited to return in 2014. What a compliment to our teams and the quality of work we do.

This year, Disney and I met with the Early Childhood classes on Thursday, and all three teams were present for an entire day on Friday. We split up and spent 20 minutes per classroom. Each team shared a bit about their dog and the work they do, read a fun Dr. Seuss story to the class, demonstrated the dog's special R.E.A.D. training, promoted literacy, allowed students to pet the dog, answered questions, gave out coloring sheets, and handed out bookmarks. By the end of Friday, our teams had visited all 29 classrooms and left a positive impression on 600+ students and staff.

Whether as a parent volunteer or working substitute within the district, I am frequently asked how the dogs are, when we'll be returning, could I pass on a hug to them, etc. Disney, Kooper, Henry, and Sacajawea are all local celebrities. I love hearing from parents and staff how certain students particularly connected to the experience. It has been rewarding to hear stories of kids informally reading to their pets or stuffed animals and know that we modeled a fun new way for them to enjoy reading. I'm so proud of the lasting impact our teams have made at Prairie, and feel thankful to be part of a group like DOC where we support and get involved in each others causes. Thanks again Artie, Laura, Kooper, Sacajawea, Disney, and Henry for sharing your many talents to benefit others and simply being amazing on so many levels!

Staci and Disney

VA Volunteers Receive Recognition

The Veterans Hospital had their volunteer recognition luncheon on May 1 at Rex's Innkeeper Restaurant in Waunakee. Volunteers that attended were able to pick from two different entrees — grilled chicken breast with wild rice, or roast beef with mashed potatoes and gravy.

Activities at the luncheon included expressions of gratitude, presentation of volunteer awards, and cash door prizes.

The following DOC teams received awards for their hours of service:

Artie Berning and Henry & Sacajawea

Lance Williston and Matilda

Lynn Malaytar and Tootsie

Debra Schoene and Swing

Kathy Wagner and Gypsy

Nancy Thorne Cahill and Luna

Joann Kessler and Teddy

Liz Morrison and Charlotte

Gina Smith and Button

Susan Heidrich and Molly

Kay Lysne and Daisy

Jennifer Nehls and Cooper

Karen Smith and Zombie

Blankets for Critters

If you love to knit, crochet or have leftover fabric from sewing projects, here is something to do with all of that yarn and fabric.

Unused yarn and fabric can be dropped at several locations and someone else can make blankets for animals waiting for adoption. If you would rather do the work yourself, you can knit, crochet, sew, or fleece tie blankets for the animals yourself. They should be two feet square for cats and four feet square for dogs. There are several drop locations listed on their website below, the Dane County Humane society is one of them.

For more information please refer to blanketsforcritters.com

Bonnie Ackerman

Laura Kuchta, Kooper and Oliver

Pet-Related App:



Pet Master Pro

Make it fun to manage your pet's health!

Keep track of physicals, medications, and other healthcare details with this app.

“Basic” version is free, upgrade to “Pro” version is \$2.99.

I Dreamed of...Dog Food

Today began much like any other day until my wife looked at me with an expression suggesting she had been *enlightened* by some unseen force in The Universe, and then declared “I had a dream last night and I dreamed of...dog food.” Then she suggested I write an article on the topic of dog food nutrition. “Well OK, if that is what your dream told me to do” I wisely kept to myself. “Uh, I guess so,” I passively said out loud. Having been married for three decades, I knew enough to agree with *anything* she suggested. Besides, who wants to challenge the forces of The Universe?



Obviously her brain was nutrient-starved after a long night of sleep without food, or she would not have suggested such a kooky thing. Naturally, I searched for the truth of the matter and saw the most obvious and simple explanation. Our dogs have psychic power. What? You don’t get it? OK, try to follow my logic.

What do Labradors think most about in their waking hours? Food. Therefore, what do hungry Labradors dream most about in their sleeping hours? Food. If you put three food obsessed Labradors in your bedroom and then fall asleep, what sort of doggie mind power psychic messages are they going to express? Food! To compound matters, one dog is named Buddha and the other is Gandhi, so you just know there is a whole lot of weird cosmic stuff going on while we mere mortals are fast asleep, dreaming of normal things like winning the lottery, flying like a bird, or listening to the colors of the rainbow. Dogs are much more focused in their dreams and all they want is more food. In fact, their food dreams are more like prophecies, since they actually do get food shortly after waking up the next morning.

So what is the big deal about buying dog food? I mean, it is all the same stuff, right? You just hop in your car, go to the nearest gas station or food store and grab the cheapest bag of dog food you can find, right? Well, no. Look past the cute photo of the healthy playful dog on the label and the advertising lingo boasting a “complete and balanced diet,” and read the ingredients list. Chances are the first thing you will see is corn, and the first ingredient is the one the product has the most of.

So what is wrong with corn in dog food, you ask? First, grains are not naturally part of a dog’s diet and they can only digest about 50%. That means half the hard-earned money you spend on dog food will end up in smelly little piles in the yard, drawing flies, and your dog will not even have received the nutritional value you paid for. Corn also reduces serotonin in dogs, and serotonin is important for reducing anxiety. Dog food manufacturers use corn and other grains as cheap fillers, not to satisfy the food needs of dogs.

Imagine about 20-30,000 years ago when wolves first gathered near Upper Paleolithic human camps and thought about getting their next meal. You never would have heard Rex the wolf say to his pack mates, “No thanks. You guys go on and hunt without me. I am going to hang out with these hunter gatherers and hope they toss me some of those yummy corn tortillas again. Ah, if only I could eat corn every meal for the rest of my life! That would give me a complete and balanced diet.”

Heck no, those wolves hung around primitive humans hoping for some scraps of meat and bone. What might have happened if Neanderthals had hoarded all that juicy, tasty, fire-roasted mammoth meat for themselves, offering only corn to the wolves? Hah! Rex’s buddies would have hung around the camp alright, waiting for those overfed Neanderthals to fall asleep, or to stray just a bit too far from the camp when they got up in the middle of the night for a drink of water...and then meat would have been back on the menu. Gee, maybe that is what happened to the Neanderthals after all?

In this modern age, do you suppose local farmers hang out at the farm center complaining “Gosh darn if those stray dogs didn’t raid my corn field again last night. I need to put up some of those scarecrows and dress ‘em like dog catchers or something. If only I had a herd of sheep or a flock of chickens instead. Everyone knows that Canis Lupis Familiaris don’t like eating meaty lambs and chickens and such.”

In my research I went to a local food store and grabbed a bag of puppy food, produced by a major national dog food company. The photo on the package showed a plump little puppy and the caption above it read “Complete and Balanced.” Does that sound familiar? I counted 40 things in the list of ingredients, half of which were chemicals; I doubt anybody but a chemist would understand what those things were.

I Dreamed of...Dog Food—continued

Of the remaining 20 things, the first few were whole grain corn, corn gluten meal, chicken by-product (Don't ask!), brewers rice, animal fat with artificial *preservatives*, barley, chicken *flavoring*, and three artificial colors. Yum! Artificial flavors and colors sound really nutritious, but Mike Sagman wrote an article titled "The Dangerous World of Dog Food Preservatives" (<http://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/red-flag-ingredients/dog-food-preservatives/>) and the first line in his article declared "Artificial preservatives might just be some of the most dangerous ingredients in dog food."

He named several that you might see in the ingredients list for your dog food: propylene glycol (banned in cat food, allowed in dog food), ethoxyquin (pesticide, hardening agent in synthetic rubber, under suspicion as a carcinogen), butylated hydroxyanisole or BHA, and butylated hydroxytoluene or BHT (named by the World Health Organization and suspected carcinogens), TBHQ and propyl gallate (suspected carcinogen).

So what about artificial colors and flavors? The Dog Food Project (<http://www.dogfoodproject.com/index.php?page=badingredient>) lists numerous additives, binders, carbohydrate sources, coloring agents, fat sources, fiber sources, flavoring agents and more. Thus far, the "complete and balanced" dog food product I examined has flunked on every level. The ingredients list sounds like a complete and balanced diet for a rodent, not my beloved canine best friends.

If a hungry puppy could read the label, he may well ask "Where's the beef?" or wonder "Do chicken by-products include beaks and claws?" and offer sarcastic *thanks* for including the fake chicken flavoring and food colors. "How about giving me actual food that will help me grow big and healthy and give me a very long life?" he might plead. "And why are you feeding me things that are forbidden in food for people and may cause cancer?" Well, since puppies can't read and plead their case, I will speak for them.

Now let me tell you about the dog food I feed my boys. There are 28 ingredients, the first several of which are bison, lamb meal, chicken meal, egg product, sweet potatoes, peas, potatoes, canola oil, roasted bison, roasted venison, natural flavor, tomato pomace, ocean fish meal, blueberries, raspberries, and a whole bunch of vitamins. There was no grain whatsoever, but it did include protein and amino acids, antioxidants, omega fatty acids, natural preservatives, and an all-life-stages diet designed to meet the nutritional needs of dogs.

So what are the pros and cons of the two types of dog food products? Grain-based foods are not digested well by dogs and can result in food allergies. In her book "Scaredy Dog!" Certified Pet Dog Trainer Ali Brown wrote on page 44, "The top dog food allergens are corn, wheat, soy, and chicken. Food allergy develops when too much of a certain food are consumed over time, with little variation. Dogs do not naturally ingest grain and can only digest about 50%, resulting in less nutrient absorption and the increased possibility of symptoms. Symptoms of food allergy in dogs present as skin discomfort or itching, irritable behavior, barking, snapping, difficulty focusing, quicker and more intense response to stimuli. Their arousal threshold is lower and they are more likely to lunge and bite."

Low quality dog food can make your dog sick.

There are many highly digestible and nutritional dog foods containing good quality ingredients and they offer several advantages. First, you get the good nutrition you are paying for, without all the worthless grain fillers. Second, you can switch dog foods without worry about digestive tract problems because the higher quality foods are far more digestible to start with, so there is less wasted food or money. I also switch to a new high-quality food each time the previous bag runs out, minimizing the risk of developing food allergy. Third, you may reduce the amount of food you offer per meal because your dog can eat less and get more actual food value. The higher cost per bag of the good quality food is offset by the lesser amount of waste and the lower amount of food you need to give per meal, and you avoid the problems of food allergy and whatever veterinary expenses you would pay as a consequence. Most dog owners would see and feel an improvement in their dog's coat within a week or so, and may observe previous food allergy behavioral problems promptly disappear.

So show your dog that you are smarter than a Neanderthal and read the label, or you may find your dreams controlled by a hungry canine curled up at the foot of your bed as you fall asleep. Worse yet, Rex might just be *pretending* to sleep, keeping one eye open in case you make a late night groggy trip to the kitchen for a drink of water!

Dan Antolec

Cat Visit In The UW Dorm



Over the past few years, Dogs on Call, Inc. has worked with the University of Wisconsin – Madison to provide stress relief to college students preparing for exams. As an undergraduate Badger student myself, I can vouch for the value of having pets visit when feeling overwhelmed by multiple assignments, papers, quizzes, and exams all at once.

I've heard many positive remarks from fellow classmates and friends, but one question kept coming up: "We love the dogs, but are there any cats that you could bring in?"

On April 20, that request was granted when Cole Hall opened its doors to DOC's therapy cat team, Oliver and my mom, Laura. I, too, am a registered handler of Oliver, but on this visit I brought my other Pet Partner (and Oliver's housemate), Kooper, a Sheltie. Kooper is an experienced therapy dog of six years, and is registered with my sister, Tiana, my mom, and me.

Oliver was a hit. He loved the students as much as they loved him, and it was great to be able to reach out to those particularly cat-loving students in the dorm. We look forward to more visits with Oliver in the future.

Aleah Kuchta, Oliver and Kooper



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Letting Your Pet Partner Retire – Remember Who Got You Where You Are Today



I had to make a tough decision in the past few weeks to retire Sammy but hopefully I made it in Sammy's best interest. Sammy was my first Pet Partner and I wasn't ready for her to retire. She is my link to so many people and so many fun times. It is so hard to let go. But it seemed like overnight her health deteriorated. She didn't want to visit. She lagged behind when we went to the nursing home. I thought maybe she was just stepping aside for Murphy. But then she did not want to come out with us to do the horse chores. That's unheard of for an Australian Shepherd/Heeler cross. She would just lie on the front porch and wait for Murphy and me to come back up to the house.

Liz Morrison, a DOC member and pet communicator, was so kind as to talk to Sammy for me and help me understand how she was feeling. We took her for x-rays and found she has hip dysplasia along with some spondylosis in her spine. We have put her on pain meds and they do seem to help a little. She mostly hangs out around the house but she still likes to play with Murphy on her own terms. And she still loves those belly rubs! She still talks a

lot too! She even told Liz she would be ok with helping me train a new puppy as long as she didn't have to share her food bowl! And Murphy would have to play with her.

It brings tears to my eyes to even think Sammy's visiting days are over. She opened up a world of new friends for me passing her Delta test 4 years ago and in that time we have visited many nursing homes, Finley Hospital and numerous Dogs On Call events. She is the dog that I never had to worry about doing something wrong when she visited. She would inherently know which people to visit when we walked in the door and which people to walk on by. Every visit seemed so enjoyable for Sammy. She lived to visit. I'll never forget one of our first visits at an Alzheimer's unit. It was in a group family area where there must have been 20-25 patients in wheel chairs. One lady was sitting further back than the rest. Sammy almost had to squeeze between two other wheel chairs to get to her, but insisted on visiting her. The lady had no reaction at all, so I urged Sammy to continue with the other patients. Sammy hesitantly left her side. When we got back around, Sammy insisted on visiting this patient again. As she nudged the lady's hand, there was a smile that appeared on her face. The nurse was so surprised and said it was the first reaction they had ever received from this patient the entire time she had lived there. I was so proud of Sammy! She just seemed to know what to do on her own and I was just at the end of the lead.

Sammy proved this time and time again showing me who did or didn't like dogs and often found a way to change their minds. One day we were at the hospital visiting and a man walked by the door and told me dogs should be outside! I saw him walk by a couple more times and then he decided to come in and join us. Several minutes later, Sammy had him petting her and he was telling me she was a pretty nice dog.

Sammy has taught me a lot in the years we have worked together and I will always cherish the times we have had together. She can just hang out and get belly rubs for as long as she wants. She's earned every one of them! She is going to let the youngster, Murphy, take over her work. I think she must have had a talk with him, too, as he seems to be taking his work a bit more seriously. Maybe he realizes he has a big act to follow.

Sue Reid, Sammy and Murphy

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