



The Dog Scout Scoop

Published for DSA's responsible dog-loving members and for the friends of dogs everywhere



Volume 19 Issue 3 May/June 2016

Badge Program Updates

Last fall we made changes to the way we process badge forms and evaluations that are done by video. We've seen a lot of success since making these changes and we are continually evaluating the process and making smaller behind-the-scenes changes to ensure that you have the best experience possible when you send in badge forms. After all, you and your dog work hard to earn those badges!

Recently, the Board of Directors voted to make changes to several existing badges. These changes are the result of members asking us to take a look at specific badge requirements. The check off sheets for these badges are being revised and all details will be clearly outlined on the web site.



Rally 1 – Revisions have been made to better align the requirements with AKC Novice Rally guidelines. Any Rally signs that would not appear on a Novice Rally course have been removed from the badge requirements and will now appear on the Rally 2 requirements.



Treibball Badges – Distances on the Treibball Beginner 1, 2 & 3 and Treibball 1 badges have been changed to match the American Treibball Association requirements. The Treibball 2 badge has been put on hold pending some more major revisions that will warrant an advanced level Treibball badge.



Letterboxing 3 – The requirements for this badge have been changed to include finding boxes in 2 states in addition to the home state OR 2 boxes that are a minimum of 250 miles from home. This change allows for differences in geography and density in box locations across the country.

And in really exciting news...we have 2 NEW badges! Both the **Stand Up Paddle Board (SUP)** badge and the **Scent Discrimination – Advanced** badge will be taught at camp in Michigan in June and July. Both of these badges have prerequisites so they can only be offered to dogs at an advanced level. Badge forms, check off sheets, safety information and training guides will be up on our web site soon.

Deadline

for the next newsletter is

July 15th

Please e-mail your news, articles, and pictures to thescoop@dogscouts.org

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Spring Clean Up in Michigan!

By Sally Hoyle

Several people got together recently at camp in Michigan to clean up and get the camp ready for summer fun. Kelly Ford, Sally Hoyle, Claudette Smith and Lonnie Olson worked very hard for nearly a week to make sure that everyone who comes to camp will be able to enjoy everything it has to offer. If something needed scrubbing, sweeping, power washing, repairing, chopping, moving, organizing, locating, or even burning, this group took care of it.

The benches, arbor and solar lights were moved to the chapel area and flowers were planted there. If the birds don't carry away all the seeds flowers will make a nice addition to the chapel area. Trails were cleared of as much brush and debris as this group could manage. Everything was moved to the burn area and the bonfires were huge! In addition, the group cut a new trail in the woods with three different access points! Though this project isn't finished it is well on the way.

All of the letterboxes and geocaches on the property were verified and the spring cleaning even extended to the camp computer as clues to old boxes and caches that are no longer there were removed. Anyone searching on camp grounds can be sure that the boxes and caches they are looking for are still there, at least until an animal carries one away. Additionally, several new boxes and caches were planted.

The pond was readied and the boathouse was opened. Algae remover was added to the pond, the docks and raft were floated out and the kayaks came out of their winter hibernation spot. And in exciting news, an excavator was hired to remove some trees and finish up the puppy pond so those dogs learning to swim are not competing for space with the water lovers who are playing, retrieving or dock diving. The pond is going to look huge!

The inside of the lodge was cleaned up too. All of the lodge rooms and cabins are now ready for campers. The main room in the lodge got a lot of attention. There was quite a bit of cleaning, sorting and organizing to be done and the group was up for the challenge!

The project list at camp is never finished but the team was successful none the less. Even with all the work was done there was still time for everyone to have some fun with their dogs, hiking, swimming or just relaxing.



Kelly celebrates a victory after taking down a particularly difficult tree



Dani helped to move the benches out to the chapel



There were plenty of trees to cut down as the crew cut a new path



Katie acted as crew chief as debris was cleared from trails

MICHIGAN CAMP

June 13-18

July 11-16

Saint Helens, MI

Have you registered yet?

Dogscouts.org

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

By Fay Reid

The Michigan DSA camp hosted the Leadership Retreat May 6-8. I have been a member for around 15 years but this was the first time I was able to come to the Leadership Retreat. I'm so glad I did. We had sixteen people from around Michigan, Ohio, Connecticut and Texas. It was fun meeting new friends and renewing friendships with others. We were "fortunate" to experience all of Michigan's seasons in one weekend. From rain and snow to beautiful sun-filled days. Our dogs enjoyed games put on from a team exercise that proved to be a challenge - even for the most seasoned dog.

The weekend was set up so that each person came prepared to present a topic of their choice. There was a wide range of topics from Paws to Fitness, how to make your own equipment with PVC pipes, Badge information on Carriage Dogs and Hunting Retrieve and how to care for your pets after you are gone. It was not only fun but very informative.

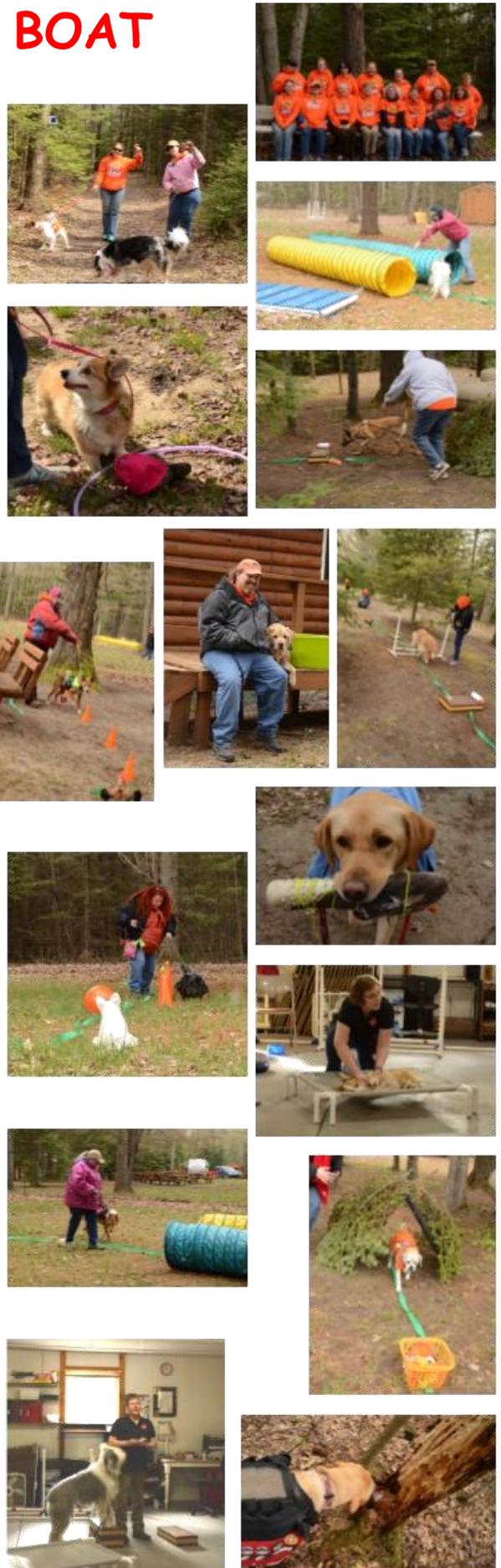
I'm hoping to come back again next year and hope others will take advantage of it in the future. Don't worry about having to make a presentation I heard talk of allowing people to come as just an auditor vs. a presenter. Either way there is a lot of support before and during the retreat to make everyone feel comfortable.

I think the best part was sharing ideas of what is working for each troop. This was a wealth of information. A lady from Troop 130 showed us a great memory trick for remembering the DSA laws. Another lady from Texas discussed how to get troop members more involved. We also discussed best practices for checking out badges.

Something new that was introduced this year was "take homes". Each presentation had little take home items to help keep their presentation fresh in your mind. These were awesome and people put some creative effort into them. Leather key chains to train your dogs on scent work - never lose your keys again! Scented decoys made from socks! Pathtags commemorating our weekend for the geocaching presentation!

Another new thing that was added was a t-shirt contest. Lots of wonderful ideas were submitted and voted on for our next t-shirt fundraiser.. stay tuned you too can own one!

I certainly hope that more and more of you will consider joining us for this fantastic and informative weekend... you won't leave disappointed.



Dog Life Jacket Reviews: How to Choose the Best

by Sarah Wilson MySmartPuppy.com

A dog life jacket is a product that must work properly. Too many are poorly designed making swimming difficult and getting your dog out of the water awkward, possibly painful and even dangerous.

Over the years, I've learned a few things which I share with you here, including very simple tests you can do that will tell you if the dog life jacket you are considering is a good one for your dog.

Freedom of Movement

The first priority in a dog life vest is that your dog be able to swim in it. This isn't as common as you would hope and expect.

The most frequent design flaw that causes problems is a large/wide band of fabric/floatation that straps across the center of your dog's chest. Feel your dog's sides near the front of his body, you'll find a "point" where the shoulder blade meets the upper arm. To be able to swim freely, the fabric/floatation must be above this point.

Simple test: Put it on your dog. If he cannot walk comfortably in it, he cannot swim comfortably in it. If he tips forward or walks in an abnormal way, chances are it is binding his front legs. Asking him to swim in that is like asking you to swim with your upper arms belted to your sides.

Handle/Strap Placement

These two aspects go together. You want a handle so you can easily fish your dog out of the water should he need help. To do that safely, the handle needs to be forward on the body, up between the shoulder blades, and the first strap needs to be snug around the body just behind the front legs.

This arrangement guarantees that when you lift your dog, the weight is borne by the well-protected and sturdy ribcage and that his head comes out of the water first. Imagine yourself in the

water. Would you prefer to be lifted out by a belt around your waist or by one up around your chest/under your arms? Well, so would your dog.

Frequently companies put straps down around the tender belly and then place the handle in the visual center of the dog's back. The problem? Dogs carry most of their weight up front so if you lift in the center you will actually tip the dog forward dunking the head into the water while, at the same moment, pulling hard on his tender belly. Ugh and ouch!

Simple test: Put the life jacket on your dog. Using the handle, start to lift him off the ground. His front feet should lift off first. Perfect. If his rear end tips up off the ground, you'll dunk your dog's head underwater as you're trying to help him.

Sarah's Pick Dog Life Jackets



Both of the **Ruffwear K9 Float Coat Dog Life Jacket** and the **Kurgo Surf n' Turf Dog Lifejacket and Coat** are well-designed. The handles are way up front so your dog's head comes out of the water first. The straps and the floatation are well forward, keeping the front end buoyant and making lifting safer and more comfortable for your dog. Both have large cut outs for the front legs making swimming natural and unrestricted (as you can see in the Kurgo pix below).

Dog life vests are a "once in a lifetime" purchase to help keep my dog safe. Buying design and quality is important to me here. Armed with this info, go find a life jacket that does what it should do – keep your dog safe!

Editor's Note: In a later blog on life vests for small dog, Sarah recommended "EzyDog Micro Doggy Flotation Device (DFD) - Big handle up front, nice D-ring for a leash, wide padding for front floatation, two straps close together to give a snug but comfy fit on a little dog. . . . Sizes XS, XXS and XXXS."



Shaping the Retrieve

by Lonnie Olson

This is an excellent, no force method for teaching a reliable retrieve in with a minimum investment of time and effort!

At Dog Scout Camp there are many reasons for having a good retrieve on your dog. For Water Rescue, IMPROV Obedience, Flyball, Scent Hurdle Racing, Retriever Training, and other activities, the dog needs to retrieve. . . .

Each summer, I demonstrate this at camp on a dog whose owner says he "won't retrieve." By the end of the first one-hour session, I often have a retrieving maniac. When people see it happen right before their eyes, like that, they realize that there's nothing magical or difficult about teaching a dog to retrieve, you just have to show him that it pays off to do so.

You will need a clicker and a large pile of small treats (break them up to the size of small peas). These need to be yummy, too. Don't get cheap on me and try to pass off some jive dry dog biscuit to teach your dog to fetch. You will also need an object to get your dog to learn on. Depending on the dog, this might work best with a slender wooden dowel (or even a plastic soda straw), or a small rubber ball.

I teach the retrieve by using backward behavior chaining, because the retrieve is not ONE behavior, but a SERIES of behaviors put together to get the finished product. The exercise involves having the dog GET something and place it into the palm of my hand. The principal part of this exercise is the "palm of my hand" part, not the "getting" part, and that's where everyone goes wrong. They are trying too hard to get the dog to "TAKE" something (which he doesn't want to do at the moment), instead of trying to get the dog to give something.

Because back chaining starts with the last link in the chain, we begin

by teaching the dog to SPIT OUT the dowel into the hand. This is ever so easy to do, since the first thing the dog wants to do with this object is to spit it out! Eureka! He's got that part right already! We're off to a good start!



The GIVE

Begin by ever so calmly and quietly and with as little ado as possible, slipping the dowel into the dog's mouth. This is NOT the important part, so don't make a big production out of it! DO NOT say "take it" or anything. Just slide it in there and I can almost guarantee you that he will instantly spew it back out at you. When he does this, click it, and give him a treat (if you don't understand clicker training yet, you better go visit that web page first--right NOW!). Repeat this several times... dozens of times. The dog is going to start wondering what it is that he's doing that is earning him a treat. "Could it be so simple as spitting this wretched dowel into my owner's hand?" You want him to say to himself, "Cool! I'll spit that sucker all day long!--Let's do it again!"

As this starts to become predictable, add the new cue, "THANK YOU," before you let him spit it out. I say "new" cue... what was the old cue? Putting it in his mouth was the old cue to spit it out. Now, the new cue has to come BEFORE the old cue, for the dog to learn it, so practice that for a while. To get the behavior under stimulus control, show the dog that you will only

reward the behavior if you've asked for it with the cue. In other words, if he spits it out without hearing the cue word, don't reward him. Just slip it in again and make sure you get out the cue before he can spit it.

The HOLD

According to "Don't Shoot The Dog," by Karen Pryor, to eliminate a behavior you don't want, you can put it on cue, and then just never give the cue, right? So, theoretically, you can, once you have the behavior under stimulus control, not give the cue, and you will not get the spitting out behavior. What is left for the dog to do then, but to hold the dowel?

Now, sometimes it's not all that easy for a novice trainer to quickly get a behavior under stimulus control like this, so I will go on to the next step back in the behavior chain, the HOLD. If your dog is waiting for the cue to spit the dowel into your hand, as he has been taught, you will have an automatic "hold." If there is still some reluctance to hold the dowel, despite not giving the cue to release it to your hand, you may encourage the dog to hold it, by gently holding his mouth closed on the dowel for a fraction of a second, then asking him to release it ("THANK YOU"), and clicking and treating. Your fractions of a second will get longer and longer, as you require the dog to hold the dowel a little bit more each time before he gives it up. The click and food always come at the end of the chain, but it's ok to give what I call a "KEEP GOING" cue, to tell the dog he's on the right track and should continue. I say, "Good Hold", in a praiseful tone of voice. As the dog gets better and better at holding for longer and longer periods before dropping the dowel into your hand on cue, you are getting closer to adding the first part of the chain: the TAKE.

The TAKE

If, while you're working on the hold, YOU SCREW UP, and the dog somehow was allowed to drop the dumbbell without a cue, do not scold the dog. Do better the next time, so that you can make the dog successful, ending up in a click and food. If he drops it, you just have to do it over. There is no penalty, except that the dog does not earn a treat for that.

To teach the dog to take it would be more difficult if we started on "that" end to begin with, but now that he already knows how to hold it and give it up, the "take it" is a "piece of cake." Hold the dowel out in front of your dog's nose (about 2 inches away). If he even so much as flexes a neck muscle to lean toward it, click and feed. Forget the hold and give for right now, we're only working on the take. Shape the dog to make more and more contact with the dowel. First a bob, then a poke, then a nudge, then an open-mouthed reach, then a tooth touch, then an open mouthed, double teeth touch, then a bite, then a grab, then a reach and grab. Pretty soon, you won't be rewarding anything but a nice reach and grab. **Have him reach to the left and right for it, and up and down for it.** Have him get up and walk one step to it. This is like teaching a touch cue all over again (similar to using a touch/target stick), but this time, he must close his mouth on the target to get a click. . . . When he will take several steps to the dowel to take it into his mouth, each time you present it to him, replace the old cue with the new cue. The new cue is the word, "Get it". The old cue was what? Placing the dowel in front of him was the old cue. Remember, new cue first, then old cue, then behavior and reinforcement.

The WHOLE CHAIN

Ok, the next step is to put the "take" together with the "hold" and "give" which were previously taught. This means, that you must immediately STOP rewarding just

the "take." You are going to go back to rewarding just the last part of the chain, the "give." So, you hold out the dowel, you say "Get it!" The dog walks out and takes it. You DON'T click (however, you can and should praise). You let the dog bring it to you. You hold out your hand and place it on the dowel, you say "Thank you!" and you click and feed (big time!). This all happens very quickly. You don't want him to have to perform a long "hold" the first time he puts it all together. Don't worry, you can build extended holds by placing or throwing the dowel farther from you, or by backing up once you hand it off to him.



Are you a doubting Thomas? Let's examine this. Your dog is not stupid. You have systematically taught him what will work. He has to hand it to you to get the pay-off right? He has to be within touching distance to hand it to you, right? If he's not, then he has to come to you (with the dowel) to get the pay-off, right? Placing yourself further and further away will require him to have to hold it for longer and longer periods without dropping it, correct? Your dog now sees this as a trade-off. He delivers this object to you, which has a cash value of one yummy snack, and you exchange it for him. Earning treats has never been so easy!

Now, what about actually throwing or dropping the article on the floor? For many dogs, it is a quantum leap to go from taking the dow-

el which the trainer is holding in his hand ON THE FLOOR, to actually picking up a dowel which is lying there on the floor all by itself. Then, we have to wean these dogs off the "hand on the dowel" stage. We will set the dowel on the floor, but continue to hold on to it with the thumb and index finger of one hand (cue, "take it," back up, let him present it to you, cue, "thank you," click and feed). Then just touch the dowel with one index finger as it sits on the floor, and do the same. Then set the dowel on the floor and take your finger 1/2 inch away. Then one inch, then two inches, then three, until you can stand up straight and cue the dog to "Get it" up off the floor with none of your body parts anywhere near it. **Where many trainers go wrong is that they continue to click the pick-up.** When the dog hears the click, the exercise is over, and he's ready to get his treat, so the dog will often just spit out the dowel at the point where you clicked him, and you are unable to get any farther along with your training. What you've done is to train the dog to spit out the dowel, rather than bring it to you. It is important that when you combine the parts of the chain, that you only reward the last link in the series.

For other dogs, the no-handed floor pick up is not that much of a quantum leap, and when they see that dowel on the floor, it's like they've found a five dollar bill! They leap on it, because they know if they hand it to you it has the cash value of one treat. To trade it in, they first must pick it up, and now you have a complete retrieve. When you give the cue, "Get it!" your dog should be thinking in his mind about delivering something to the palm of your hand. When we think of "Get it," our focus is to go pick up something. A dog doesn't think like we do. If we want to be better dog trainers, we have to think like dogs do. We can't expect them to think like we do.

Rainbow Bridge



Duncan Lomas – April 3, 2016

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. It saddens me to tell you that Duncan went on a final journey to Rainbow Bridge on April 3. He's been my buddy for going on 13 years and brought a lot of joy and love into my life. He was my first Dog Scout and quite the neighborhood ambassador. The number of times people who would say "Oh your Duncan's Mom!" when I would meet them for the first time brings a smile. I remember many times looking out the window and seeing a bike or skateboard on the driveway and seeing a kid snuggling up next to Duncan on the grass. I know Duncan will miss sitting in the yard, rain, shine or snow surveying his territory. My heart is broken into pieces but I know Duncan will take care of the piece he took with him just as he took care of me here.

<https://rainbowsbridge.com/Poem.htm>

Vickie Lomas

Editor Apologies: Sorry, the Rainbow Bridge tribute for Red Charles of Carriage Lane in the last newsletter was missing the name of his pet parent. Charly is loved and missed by Peggy Zweber.

Michigan Camp Obituary Plaques

With camp coming up soon, I am in the process of getting the plates engraved for the Michigan Camp Rainbow Bridge Troop Plaque for our dogs who have crossed the Rainbow Bridge since July 2015. If you have a dog that has attended the Michigan camp and has crossed the bridge, please let me know—I don't want to miss any dogs.

Thanks,
Chris Kloski—ChrisBill1966@gmail.com

MINI CAMP 2016 PLANNING

Texas

Nov 10-13 FULL

Fort Worth, TX

Contact Cindy Ratliff

To be placed on the waiting list!
dogluvurz@prodigy.net

Blue Ridge

Aug 8-13

Swanton, MD

Contact Noelle Weeks

newcap@comcast.net

Registration & schedule

also available at dogscouts.org

MICHIGAN CAMP 2016

June 13-18

July 11-16

Saint Helens, MI

On-line registration:

Dogscouts.org

Contact Lonnie Olson

Dogscoutcamp@gmail.com

Scout Scoop & Troop Talk

Troop 119—TX

Cindy Ratliff—Troop Leader

Spring has brought Troop 119 lots of great opportunities!

In March we had our annual Easter Egg Hunt, an event that has become a favorite of the troop! We gathered at the beautiful YMCA Camp Carter and troop dogs searched over many acres for 600+ plastic eggs filled with freeze-dried liver treats. Prizes were given for finding the most eggs, finding the special prize eggs & for the most festive human/dog teams. All the dogs & humans had a great afternoon!

As many of you heard, Texas has had more than its share of rain this spring. Unfortunately, the rains caused us to have to cancel our April troop meeting. However, we still had plenty of excitement in April anyway!



On April 1, we were invited to participate in a Yappy Hour Wine Walk hosted by the Parks & Rec. department of Arlington, TX. Dog owners could walk their dogs along a path that included beer & wine tasting for the humans, as well as doggie beer, wine & treats provided by Connie Romano's Bark Out Loud. Troop 119 was asked to provide all the doggie entertainment for the event which included painting, agility, treibball, scent & obedience demos and a drill team performance. All the performances were a big hit with the crowd and organizers.



We also were asked to have a booth at Pet Pawlooza, hosted by the City of Irving's animal services where troop member, Susan Waits, is animal shelter supervisor. We had several troop members help out at the booth & passed out DSA information, as well as rolls of poop bags to everyone who stopped by & got lots of great responses from the community. Troop member, Becky Paxson, was interviewed by a local cable access station covering the event & had the opportunity to tell what DSA is all about!



Troop 119—TX (cont.)



Later in April we were asked to provide a dog safety presentation to two groups of about 30 preschoolers each. Nita Lanter & her Dog Scout, Sage, provided a presentation to all the kids about dog safety and even provided them with a “Sage, DSA trading card” with her photo and safety reminders on the back. They were a real hit with the kids & their parents!



On April 17 we received an email from the public information officer with the Arlington Fire Department advising us that another dog was saved from a burning house with the animal oxygen masks donated by the troop! Zarek, the German shepherd, was unconscious when removed from the home. Firefighters used the animal oxygen mask to provide him oxygen & set him up on an IV. Zarek regained consciousness and was transported by fire engine to the closest emergency vet. He received treatment over several days that included breathing treatments and therapy in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber to treat Carbon Monoxide poisoning damage to Zarek’s lungs. However, several days later he was discharged to his loving owner & has made a full recovery. The following week Zarek & his owner visited the fire station to thank the men who saved him. There was a lot of great press around this event and several updates were included on AFD’s Facebook page which gave a lot of credit to DSA Troop 119 for donating the masks. We have since received donations from area residents and inquiries regarding DSA. We are so excited about the great outcome for this beloved dog and plan to continue our oxygen mask donation program to help the odds of saving many more loved pets.



Troop 157—TX

Neely Waring—Troop Leader



Dog Scout Troop 157 has continued to be busy in the community. We provided a Dog Safety Booth to Citrix's Annual Earth Day /Bring Your Child to Work Day Event for the second year in a row. We set up a meet and greet station where the kids learned proper ways to approach and pet dogs and about dog body language.



DSA members also worked on their hiking and kayaking badges. It was exciting to see some new members come out and 'get their feet wet' with the kayaking.



Troop 157—TX (cont.)

Our annual Doggie Olympics were held this past month. Games included: Leave-It, Fastest Dog, Toilet Paper Wrap, Kiss Off, Relay Race, Marathon Down, Reverse Recall, Spoon Race, Musical Sits, Go Wild & Freeze, Clean Plate Club, and Obedience Contest.



Congratulations
to our newest
Dog Scout
Peanut!

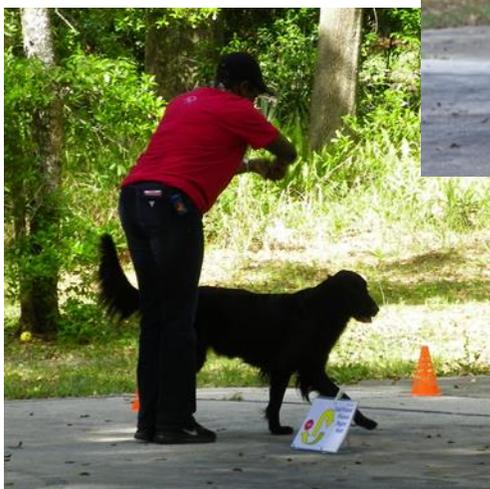


Troop 183—FL

Shirley Conley—Troop Leader

Making the most of the Florida spring weather, Troop 183 got together in April to run through some Rally courses. Although a number of our troop members have earned AKC Rally and Obedience titles, none of the dogs participating had earned DSA's Rally O 1 merit badge, so after warming up on a course, we set up the two courses troop leader, Shirley, had designed that would allow us to perform all the required rally signs needed for the Rally I merit badge. Our two advanced dogs worked through the two courses without treats and video was taken. Our novice dogs were rewarded and helped as the team worked through each course. It was nice to see Dog Scout Kingston sitting quietly watching what everyone was doing while his pet parent, Carol, took video –

sometimes we forget the little things that are easier when we've worked with and rewarded our dogs so that they offer calm appropriate behaviors when we need them. We're hoping that a couple of our members will be on their way to submitting the required video for the Rally O 1 badge very soon. Thanks to Mary Ann and Beth for taking photos and video during our activity.



Troop 183—FL (cont.)



Already hot in Florida, we were pleased to spend a couple of hours in May under shade, having fun working on Barn Hunt. The dogs who were new to Barn Hunt spent some time getting used to tunnels and climbs, and figuring out that rats are exciting. Those that had done Barn Hunt previously got to work on climbing and tunnels in a new location. Then we got to enjoy watching our dogs use their noses and find rats. We worked on looking for our dogs' indication signals with the instinct set up (3 tubes in a row—one with a rat, one with litter and one empty). After multiple successes we ended our session with finding the live tube hidden in the hay bales, encouraging our dogs to tunnel and climb as they hunted.



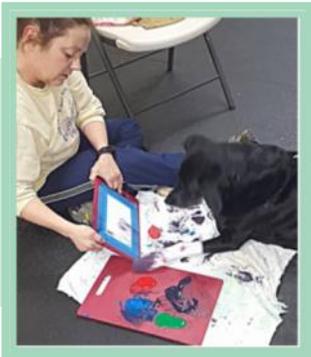
Troop 188—CT

Sheri Throop—Troop Leader

In the last two months Troop 188 has held many badge workshops where we made new friends, enjoyed new experiences with some of our dogs and worked on obstacles. In one particularly successful workshop, members earned over 25 badges! One scout earned her DSA yesterday as well as Obstacle I and II! Also the Troop's oldest scout (18 years young) earned an obstacle badge and his DSA! (More on his story later.)



Ever wonder what a Bergamasco Sheepdog looks like jumping?



Other workshops held recently included shaping workshops where we worked on the Art of Shaping (Painting) and the Band badges. Congratulations to Sawyer for earning his Painting badge. His painting is displayed on his dad's desk at work. Kayla has learned the painting skill and will be testing for her badge very soon.



In another workshop our scouts worked on Rally and Obedience skills as well as some individual and group tricks. Two of our Bergamasco Sheepdog Scouts became the first of the breed to earn NTD titles! (Novice Trick Dog – with the Do More with Your Dog programs) One of the members of our Troop is a Trick Dog Instructor. Other scouts also earned trick dog titles learning tricks as part of working on the Tricks badge.



In our Rally sessions we are working on improving our skills while working on our Rally 1 & 2 badges.

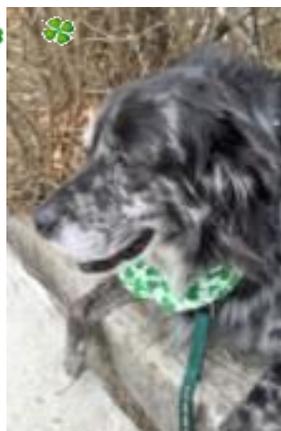
We also learned some agility skills like "get out".



Troop 188—CT (cont.)



The Mystic St. Patrick's Day Parade is an area favorite. Some of the scouts from 188 spent the afternoon enjoying the festivities.



Here comes JoJo Cottontail walking down the bunny trail...

Troop 188 sponsors an annual Pet Easter Bonnet Contest and Parade, where dogs, cats, guinea pigs, llamas and the occasional bunny enjoy celebrating spring with egg hunts, demos, treats, pictures with the Easter Bunny and a parade around Mistick Village in Stonington, CT. This year the judges included the First Selectman of Stonington Colonel Rob Simmons and Tom Zukowski, programming director for the local Hartford, Connecticut television station (pictured on the next page). Treat bags, ribbons and bragging rights were awarded for Best Bonnet, Best Couple, Best Celebrity and more. If you are ever visiting the area the Saturday before Easter hop over for a furry fun time!

Troop 188—CT (cont.)

Two of our prize winners along with our two judges getting to know the contestants.



**Meanwhile
at the
Senior Center ...**

The scouts also entertained the Ledyard, CT senior citizens at their Easter Luncheon where the pups paraded their flowery headwear and received treats and pets in return. Scout Ella demonstrated her scent training by hunting and identifying the Easter bunny with the desired scent inside, as well as collecting eggs that the seniors tossed for her and dropping them in her basket, luckily the eggs are fabric!



Troop 188—CT (cont.)

Have you ever heard the phrase “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks”? Well, I’d like to introduce you to a very old dog who thinks that learning new “tricks” is the best thing ever. Yippity Yodel Grove, DSA, NTD, RATI, RATN is an 18 year old, 4lbs soaking wet, long-haired zombie Chihuahua with a storied history.



I first met Yippity when his was 12 years old and attempting to starve himself to death at the pound. I had been alerted to a little Chihuahua at the pound a few weeks earlier and had called to inquire. I was informed that several families were interested in him. I left my phone number and asked to be called if he was there for any length of time. I figured someone would adopt him and that would be that. Plus, I had just adopted another Chihuahua less than 48 hours ago! A couple weeks passed and I got a phone call. Was I still interested in the little Chihuahua? He was still at the pound and not doing well. He was depressed, cold, and refusing to eat anything other than bits of lunch meat from the ACO’s sandwich. I drove over immediately. Standing in front of the kennel, holding a little white puff of nothing, I turned my head to ask the ACO a question. “Cody” reached up, grabbed my cheek with his sharp little nails, pulled my face back toward him, and licked the end of my nose. I was done. I signed the papers and put him in the kennel in the car.



Over time I was able to piece together my new little friend’s history. He’d been in three pounds. People kept returning him because he howled. LOUDLY. And nearly non-stop. He thought it was fun. It’s why I changed his name to Yippity Yodel. First trick, putting his singing on cue. It took about two weeks. Now he only sings if asked. I also discovered that he lived next door to a friend of mine for a few months. She thought he’d been run over because that family let him run loose and they lived by the highway. Before the pounds, he’d been rescued from a hoarding situation. He was lucky to be alive.

I took my old dog to classes. Lots of them. We went to Basic Manners, Beyond Basics, Agility, and Flyball. Yippity enjoyed learning so I indulged him. He was awesome at agility, flinging himself onto the table twice his height with glee. He learned all aspects of flyball, but was just not heavy enough to trigger the box. It didn’t stop him; he would stretch up on his tiptoes and “steal” his ball from the box. People enjoyed watching him at class, and we enjoyed pointing out that he learned the game at age 14.

Troop 188—CT (cont.)

You are probably wondering about that zombie bit in the beginning? Let me tell you that story now. One day, getting out of the car at work, Yip stumbled and fell, flipping over backwards and hitting the back of his head on the pavement. This knocked the wind out of him but also caused some other trauma that made him stop breathing. I rushed him into the office, my boss used to be a vet tech. She took one look at him, told me to get in her car, and rushed us to the nearest vet. On the way there, she talked me through giving my old man canine CPR. She left us at the vet and returned to work. She sent another co-worker over to check on me a couple hours later, convinced that Yippity was dead by then. He was not. He was alert and breathing on his own. They kept him for the afternoon. I took him home that night. He showed no ill effects. He was lucky to be alive. He also had a new nickname, zombie dog.



I hadn't bothered to put any titles or badges on Yippy until recently, because I had other younger and more active dogs. He got his novice trick title because his brother had already gotten all four trick titles and I got bored. He still got to go to class and have fun but we weren't serious about anything. Then we discovered Barn Hunt. Yippity loves to hunt. He entered his first barn hunt trial at age 17. He earned his RATI at his second trial. I never expected him to earn more titles than that but we were having fun. I entered him in a trial on his 18th birthday. His next trial he Q'd on both his runs, earning his RATN. Everyone cheered, even the judge. I may have cried. I was so proud of him.



Yippity and I decided that he needed his barn hunt badge and a little red cape. Of course this meant he needed his Dog Scout Badge. He knew pretty much everything. Our only hang up was heeling. Yippity had been going off-leash for years. Time to teach the old dog another new trick. Yippity learned to heel on leash and passed his dog scout badge. He's also earned a couple of agility badges. We're going to be working on letterboxing this summer.

Yippity's story is as interesting as he is. It's got drama, tragedy, hope and comedy. And I hope it's got many more chapters, because old dogs are great for learning new tricks.



Troop 198—CA

Leah Lane—Troop Leader

Another San Francisco Bay Area Troop coming soon! Cadet Kobi, Ruth and Mike are working hard to get their Dog Scout Title so that can start a new troop in the SF East Bay Area, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. They are doing their training and videotaping with Troop 198 in Milpitas.



The Burlingame Pre-Troop continues to meet and work as well, but they are not waiting to give back to the community. They joined Milpitas Troop 198 members at the Morris Foundation K-9 Cancer walk in Los Gatos where over \$125,000.00 was raised for cancer research this year. Dog Scouts pulled a wagon with a DSA sign and pictures in honor and in memory of troop members that have crossed the rainbow bridge due to cancer.



Sporting backpacks with the DSA logo along the three mile walk, Troop 198 members helped raise funds at the March of Dimes March for Babies at the Silicon Valley Fund Raiser for premature babies and posed for a photo op with K-9 celebrity Snoopy and his human Charlie Brown!



Troop 198—CA (cont.)



In March, April & May we came together one Sunday each month to do informal outdoor "Mall Walk About" at both Stanford Shopping Center in Palo Alto and Santana Row Mall in San Jose, inviting the public to join us in training and socializing with our dogs. Another great way to get the word out about DSA!



All the troops came together for training and video recording of the behaviors necessary to earn the DSA Title and other badges.



Troop 217—The Motor City K9s—MI

Sally Hoyle—Troop Leader with an assist from Katie and Sam



Two of Samantha Winslow's dogs take a break while hiking. They are guarding their mom's hiking stick because it is truly a work of art!

The spring has been very enjoyable so far for our troop as we've finally been able to get outside and use the hiking sticks we worked so hard to create over the winter. This project was a lot of fun for us and now that our sticks are getting some trail time we are getting LOTS of compliments as we hike. Hiking sticks aside, we're just glad to finally be able to get outside.



Sam doing his part to clean up Michigan.

We've been able to get together several times in small groups to do some letter-boxing and have even been able to find a couple of boxes that have proved difficult to locate in the past. I guess a few of us got spring fever and have done a lot of carving too, so we have quite a bit of planting to do as well. We've also been picking up a lot of poop on the trails. We don't like it that so many don't pick up after their dogs but Sam was able to earn his Clean Up America 2 badge. Sam also is good at educating the public about this issue with his cute and useful "find the poop" trick.



Our booth at the Health Fair in Toledo, OH.

A number of us participated in our first community event of the year when we went down to Toledo for a community



Merlin took advantage of a lull in the crowd to get some rest.



Katie loved interacting with the kids!

Health Fair at a church that one of our members attends. We did this event last year for their inaugural year but this year's crowd was much bigger and no doubt will continue to grow in future years.

Troop 217—MI (cont.)



We set up a small agility course beside our booth and also had games and musical instruments for our dogs to play. Our dogs just loved showing off all of their tricks and the crowd really loved seeing them. Of course the dogs loved just soaking up all the attention they got, especially from the kids in attendance. All of our dogs, Lizzy, Odie, Bert, Merlin, Sam and Katie had a great time participating in this event.

We held a Rally day the first Saturday in May and it was a very popular event for our members including our newest member Carrie and her Golden Retriever, Darby. This activity came together with the help of many members all lending their assistance to find and secure the location, provide course maps, set up and/or tear down the course, teach the class and do badge check offs. Lizzy, Merlin, Sunny, Dottie, Darby, Ember, Heikki and Fletcher all participated in the class and every dog that attempted it passed the evaluation and earned the badge. Shelby came with mom Julie Benson to do badge check offs, Sassy came with mom Michelle Neu to socialize and help with teaching, and Katie was there as well as my constant companion. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this activity. It was a fun afternoon!

Following Rally several of us stuck around to work on the requirements for the Disaster Preparedness badge and to video segments the dogs had already mastered. This badge is a pretty big undertaking but it's SO important! At this point Katie has completed everything that she is required to do for the badge and she's just waiting on me to pick up the pace on my part. Sam and I are still working on his and he'll be ready for video soon. Thanks to Shelby with her mom Julie and Sassy with her mom Michelle for working with me on this badge and to Samantha Winslow for helping us to capture our videos.

Lizzy and her mom Diane Baughman along with Katie and I attended the Leadership Weekend at camp recently. Each participant shared information on a topic of their choosing with the rest of the group. The presentations were very interesting and well thought out and I think everyone attending learned quite a bit. Diane and I joined forces and presented DOGA...a form of K9 body conditioning similar to yoga. Since Diane is a Physical Therapist by profession this topic was right up her alley, even if she normally works with humans. Lizzy was a hit when doing demos with Diane and she was just so cute showing off her stretches! I learned so much by exploring this topic with my dogs and I am blessed that both Katie and Sam are extremely patient dogs and stuck with me even if they did look at me often as if to say, "You want me to stand on what?!?!?" There's so much more I can learn and teach my dogs about DOGA so the adventure continues!



"What's up Momma?"

Unfortunately our letterboxing event scheduled for April had to be postponed due to the very fickle Michigan weather. The day we were scheduled to plant our boxes was bitterly cold and snowy and not fit for anyone to be outside. We will reschedule the event for fall when the weather is a little more predictable...fingers crossed.

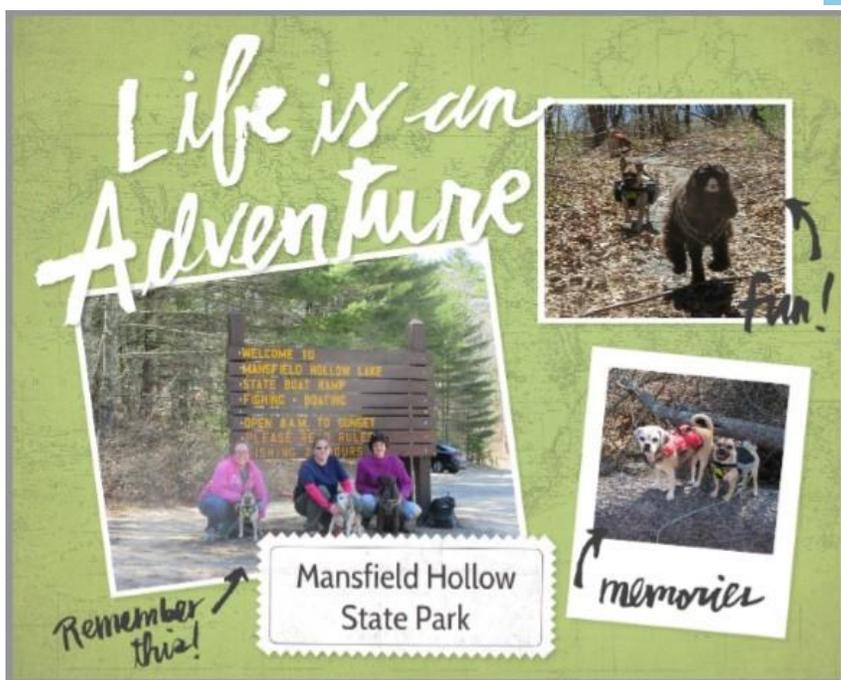
Troop 219—CT—New England Explorers

Kelly Ford—Troop Leader, CRN Secretary and Trails Titling Program Coordinator

Zora DSA, Danica Joy and I attended the annual Snowman Burning Geocache event in March to celebrate the end of winter. Larry, the snowman piñata was smashed at the event and then burned to bring on spring. It was pretty warm that day, giving us high hopes for spring. Several people were even able to paddle across the lake to the event. Sadly, we had snow on the first day of spring.



Zora basking in the heat of the burning snowman.



We are continuing to work on the Sky's the Limit Challenge. This month we hiked Mansfield Hollow. We completed the 5.75 mile loop around the pond on a beautiful sunny day. This was also the check-out hike for Danica Joy's Pack Dog title.

On April 16th, Wyatt DSA and Lori attended their first letterbox event. The event was part of an MS walk. Wyatt and Lori raised \$80 for MS. Troop 219 is so proud of their ongoing fundraising efforts. Wyatt made lots of new friends and helped spread the DSA message.



Troop 220—NV

Pamela Sauer

Troop 220 Silver Paws Dog Scout group has used the last few months to elect officers and find the best ways of communicating with each other. Much time has been spent with our humans getting to know one another, as well as our dogs learning to communicate.



Troop leader, Terry Cuyler continues to teach best and polite approaches with dogs in general. We have talked about on-leash socialization for the past few months. A fun activity called paw painting is scheduled in the near future which should be a great adventure. There was a discussion about the importance of safe travel for our dogs. Crates or seat belts are highly recommended for the safety of the passengers and the safety of the canines. A dog can act as a missile if not restrained in a vehicle while in an accident or lost after an accident if not restrained.



We have had agility demonstrations at our meetings lately and Dog Scout badges were discussed and are a priority for our group. The first badges we will start with are collecting trash and cans as soon as the weather cooperates. We are excited that Terry was able to arrange plans with our local training center for a series of Rocket Recall sessions.

The foundation for Rocket Recalls is a history of high-value reinforcement. To get troop members and the public on the right track we often reference the great information on the Dog Scout's website, such as the article on Reward Based Training. (dogscouts.org/base/training/reward-based-training/).

Contact Dog Scouts of America

Learning new things that we may be more helpful

Website: Dogscouts.org
Facebook: facebook.com/DogScouts
Yahoo Discussion List:
pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/DSA_TalkList

Dog Scouts of America (DSA) was established in 1995. It is a non-profit organization with people dedicated to enriching their dog's lives and the lives of others with dogs. Founder Lonnie Olson has made it her life's ambition to experience as many dog sports and skills as possible with her dogs.

If you believe that dogs really enjoy learning new things and spending time with their owners, you're our kind of dog person. Dogs were not meant to be "furniture." Working dogs want to work. Without having an acceptable activity in which to use up all of the energy that comes "built-in" with a dog, our canine companions often get into trouble.

By better understanding how your dog thinks, how he learns, and what drives his behavior, and by participating in a variety of dog sports and activities, you will become a more responsible dog owner.

We hope to prevent misunderstandings, communication failures, and behavioral problems which often lead to dogs being given up as a "lost cause."

President: Lonnie Olson — DogScoutCamp@gmail.com
(Also for Dog Scout Calendar, Sparky's Camp Store, Dog Scout Camp (MI), Camp Scholarships)

Mini-Camp Mentor: Sally Hoyle — sally.hoyle@yahoo.com

Dog Scout Obituaries: Chris Kloski — ChrisBill1966@gmail.com
(Memorial recognition and engraving)

Membership: Julie Benson — bensonjulie@earthlink.net

Troop Administration: Brenda Katz — dogs2katz@yahoo.com
(Starting a troop/Troop Leader Tests)

Treasurer/Donations: Barb Whiting — bwhitingdsa@comcast.net

MERIT BADGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Program Coordinator: Heddie Leger pawzone@yahoo.com
Recording Secretary: Julie Benson — bensonjulie@earthlink.net
Evaluator Certification: Chris Kloski — ChrisBill1966@gmail.com

TITLES/COMPETITIONS

Hosting/Competing: Ann Withun — Ann@Withun.com
Trail Dog Titles: Kelly Ford — DSA.Troop219@yahoo.com
(Also for competition registration numbers)

Newsletter: Shirley Conley (Editor) — thescoop@dogscouts.org

Website/Communications: Sonja Klattenberg — webadmin1@dogscouts.org
(Also for newsletter distribution)
