

The Dog Scout Scoop

Official Newsletter ~ Dog Scouts of America

Volume 26 Issue 1 ~ Spring 2023

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

**Scout Scoop
& Troop Talk**
P17-41



When riding with Lou Antalick in March, even Flat Sparky buckled up!

Check out the [Travel Safety](#) merit badge for commonsense skills and best practices that responsible pet parents can learn and implement to ensure their favorite companions arrive safely for their next adventure.

Notes from National

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Rainbow Bridge
P42

Deadline: for the next newsletter is

June 1st

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

Badge Bulletin & Title Tales

By Kristie Iwamoto (Maurice's Mom)



Congratulations to Our New Title Holders!

What was your New Years Resolution? For some of our scouts, it was to earn a new Trail Title! Here are the Trail Titles earned December through February:

TRAIL DOGS

Zebi's Some Kind of Wonderful Almann – UT8K

Whitney of Silkenhome de Zeeuw – TDX

Los Suenos Cut'n Up Western Hills (Cutter) TD

CSB Agent Little Nellie TD

Patch Walker – UT9K

Murdock Weger – UT

Whitney of Silkenhome de Zeeuw (Winnie) is one of our new Trail Dog/Trail Dog Excellent Title holders from Holland!



Zebi's Some Kind of Wonderful (Taika) and her mom Dorianne out on the trail. Taika has joined the UT8K club (that's 8,000 miles)!



PACK DOGS

Jax Long – PDX

Molly Long – PDX



CSB Agent Little Nellie

If you're interested in learning more about Trail Titles, please visit our website's [Trail Dog Titles](#) page, and if you have an questions at all, feel free to email me at titles@dogscouts.org

New Dog Scouts!

By Sally Hoyle, President

Becoming a Dog Scout sets a dog on a path to new discoveries and exciting adventures. It's a point in time that should be remembered and celebrated. If it's been a while since your dog earned the Dog Scout title, you may not remember the exhilaration of knowing that you and your dog accomplished something important. Perhaps you and your dog have earned many badges since that time. If so, you know how it feels to have your dog recognized for his accomplishments. But it was the first—the Dog Scout title—that was the momentum you needed to move forward.

As we celebrate this quarter's new Dog Scouts, take a moment to remember your dog's achievements, and the many great experiences that you and your dog have shared as a result of that title. If you are still working with your dog towards his Dog Scout title, know that there are many that have come before you who know and recognize the work that you are doing and what it means. You have our support. You are building an important relationship, one that grows with each new accomplishment, no matter how big or small.

Now, please welcome these new Dog Scouts and celebrate their achievements!



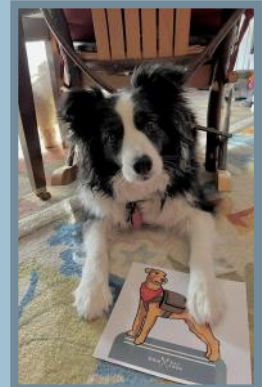
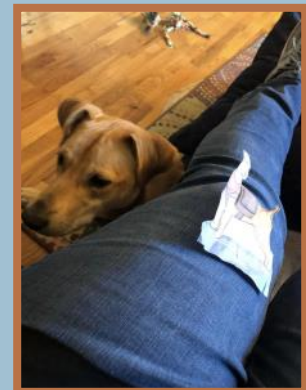
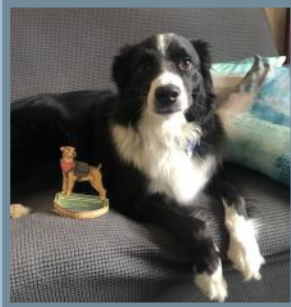
August Berryman, Troop 230
Kilgore, TX



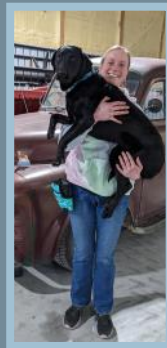
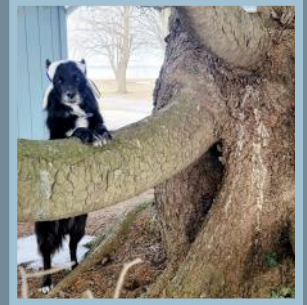
Nemo Hilburn
Atoka, OK

Congratulations!

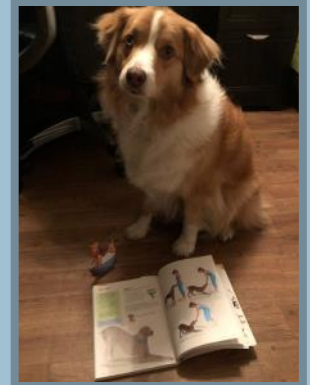
THE ADVENTURES OF FLAT SPARKY & HIS NEW FRIENDS



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THE ADVENTURES OF FLAT SPARKY & HIS NEW FRIENDS



A message to Flat Stanley from Mackenzie Hoyle...

“Come on Flat Sparky, it’s time to get up!
We’ve had tons of adventures, but now humor this pup.
The past month has been busy and oh so much fun!
I can’t think of a thing that we haven’t done.
We’ve been so many places, just you and me.
And remember that time you got stuck in a tree?
We’ve been to the office, the doctor and even the dentist.
Remember how much you liked the hygienist?
You waited at the groomer while she fluffed up this sweet pup.
We even went to the hospital to get mom’s finger stitched up!
I’ve pushed you and pulled you and carried you too.
It’s been a real busy month for this motley crew.
It has rained and it’s snowed, and we hiked in thick fog.
I know it’s been quite a lot for a flat cardboard dog.
But please! All month I’ve waited patiently to sniff.
And it won’t take me long once I get a whiff.
Just go out and hide Sparky, somewhere in the yard.
I’ll find you so quickly, no matter how hard.
I’ve waited so long to use my sniffer.
Come on! Come on! Please don’t beg to differ!
Hide somewhere low, somewhere high, somewhere in between.
I’ll find you wherever cause I’m the sniffing queen!
You’ve been such a good friend so let’s take one last journey.
You are contractually obligated, just ask your attorney!
We’ve made a good pair. We’ve been very good roomies.
And who knew a flat dog could get the zoomies?
You are carefree and funny and such a good companion for me.
Our time together is now short. I need to set you free.
I hope that you’ll find some other fun playmates.
Cause as flat dogs go, you’re one of the greats.
Thank you, Flat Sparky. I’m gonna miss you like crazy.
Please come back and see me! (I don’t want to get lazy.)”
Now mom has to go and fix the downspout.

Versatile Troop Leader Update

We are proud to recognize the personal achievements of the following 12 Troop Leaders



Troop 198, CA
Carlotta Gumbin & Crystal
Bronze—3/14/2023



Troop 198, CA
Leah Lane & Wyatt
Bronze—3/12/2023



Troop 243, WI
Renea Dahms & Sirius
Bronze—3/17/2022



Versatile Troop Leader Update (Cont.)



Troop 101, MI
Laurie Keel & Booker
Silver—2/3/2023



Troop 183, FL
Shirley Conley & Nim
Silver—3/17/2022



Troop 188, CT
Julianne Grove & Pirate
Silver—3/24/2023



Versatile Troop Leader Update (Cont.)



Troop 188, CT
Michelle Lake & Phantom
Silver—3/24/2023



Troop 188, CT
Sheri Throop & Lucy
Silver—3/24/2023



Troop 101, MI
Fay Reid & Goldy
Platinum—3/17/2022



Versatile Troop Leader Update (Cont.)



Troop 119, TX
 Mart & Cindy Ratliff & BJ
 Platinum—4/10/2022



Troop 119, TX
 Mart & Cindy Ratliff & Alex
 Platinum II—4/10/2022



Versatile Troop Leader Update (Cont.)



Troop 217, MI
Sally Hoyle & Katie
Platinum—4/10/2022



Troop 217, MI
Sally Hoyle & Mackenzie
Platinum II—4/10/2022



Versatile Troop Leader Update (Cont.)



Troop 217, MI
Sally Hoyle & Sam
Platinum III—4/10/2022



Versatile Troop Leaders

- Distinguish themselves through achieving merit badges in multiple categories
- Continue to expand their knowledge and skill set
- Lead and inspire by example
- Understand DSA's safety and skill requirements
- Confidently mentor troop members to achieve their goals

If you're a current Troop Leader or Co-Leader who has earned at least one badge from 5 different categories while you have been actively leading an official troop, we hope you'll complete the log found on the "Running a Troop" page of the DSA website and submit it to troops@dogscouts.org and allow us to recognize your achievements also.

On Grief

By Sally Hoyle, DSA President

“Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.”

~ Anatole France, writer

When we bring dogs into our lives we do it with an open heart and lots of love. For each of us, as Dog Scout members, our dogs are family members. We welcome them for their pure love, their silliness and their wonder of the world. We never want to think of the time when they are no longer with us, but in bringing these wonderful creatures into our lives we know that it is likely that they will leave this earth before us. Still, whether they are old, young or in between, whether it happens suddenly or is expected, we are never ready to live our lives without them.

Grief is such an all-encompassing feeling. It permeates our souls. It can feel like you are moving through a thick fog. It hits when we find ourselves in our dogs’ favorite places and it slams into us unexpectedly. No one can know what grief feels like to another and there’s no right or wrong way to feel it.

But we have to move forward after the loss of a precious pet. That’s part of the contract we made with them when we brought them into our lives. It’s what they expect from us and what they need. In life, our dogs make us laugh. They drive us to try new things, go to new places and make memories together. They make us happy, so we have to believe that they want us to continue to experience happiness after they are gone.

But how on earth are we supposed to feel happiness after we experience such a loss? It seems impossible. Often, finding a way to memorialize our dog after death can lead to an eventual lightness in our heart when we remember them. Memorializing a dog after he is gone is a way to create an enduring connection. It’s a way to maintain the loving bond we have with that dog and can help with the process of grieving.

There are many ways to memorialize your dog. Some include:

- Writing an obituary
- Planting a tree, bush or plant in the dog’s favorite spot
- Holding a memorial service
- Creating a scrapbook or photo album
- Creating a memory box containing things important to your journey with your dog
- Donating or volunteering in memory of your dog
- Placing some of their ashes in a piece of cremains jewelry or having some made into a charm
- Hanging a windchime
- Placing a garden statue or memorial stone
- Hanging the dog’s collar in a special place
- Writing an article for the DSA newsletter
- Placing the dog’s uniform cape in a shadow box or making it into the center of a quilt



On Grief (Continued)

If there are children in the family or who regularly spent time with the dog, make sure they are included in the process of memorializing the dog. Ask them what ideas they have and follow through with them if at all possible. Children experience grief just as adults do, though it may be expressed quite differently.

There are books that can help both children and adults who are grieving. There are many titles on the market currently. Here are a few that you may find helpful. All are readily available using the links provided.

[And I Love You Still](#), by Julianne Corbin, Ph. D.

[The Loss of a Pet: A Guide to Coping with the Grieving Process](#), by Wallace Sife, Ph. D.

[Forever Mine: A Goodbye Story](#), by Kelly Grettler

[Losing My Best Friend](#), by Jeannie Wycherley

[Dogs in Heaven](#), by Melanie Salas

[The Invisible Leash](#), by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff

Don't forget that other pets in the home will miss the one that is gone too. They may be confused and/or sad. They may look for their lost house mate. They may avoid the lost dog's favorite place or bed. Be kind and patient with them. Hold them tight and cherish them. It will help you both.

Grief is a process, and it's a hard and painful one. Your life changes when a pet dies and you have to make adjustments, first by accepting the reality of the loss. This could mean accepting that the dog is no longer where you expect him to be. He's not there to greet you at the door or at mealtimes. He's not there when it's time for his walk. Additionally, you may have to come to terms with the loss by dealing with the what, when, where and how the loss occurred.

There's no way around it. To work through the pain of grief, you simply have to feel it! You will experience a broad range of emotions about the death of your dog. You'll need to take care to not deny or minimize these feelings. Be kind to yourself.

Eventually, you will find an enduring connection to your beloved dog while embarking on a life without him. In this way, you will be able to balance your memories with the need to continue living though your dog is gone.

Grief is not a one size fits all experience. Everyone in your home will go through the grieving process, though all will likely move through the process differently. Be sure to talk about the lost dog. Sharing memories and experiences can only help with the grieving process. Reach out to others outside of your home if you need additional help. Talk to other Dog Scout members. We all have (and will again) experience this grief, and we get it.

If you need additional help you might try a support group. The Michigan State University Veterinary Hospital has a support group that meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 6:30 – 7:30 via Zoom. All are welcome to attend and there is no need to register in advance. Simply email ysw@msu.edu for the Zoom link. Many other veterinary medicine schools have similar groups.



On Grief (Continued)

Every badge that is earned goes out with a note that ends, "And when your dog has completed his life here on earth, a badge remains as a memorial to an incredibly special friend. A badge is the love and respect that is shared between you and your dog and remains forever." Each time I send that note out to someone as a part of the celebration of earning a new badge I truly feel it. But I never felt it more than the first badges I sent out after losing Sam several months ago. The badges were Obstacles 2 & 3 badges and I was instantly flooded with memories of Sam earning those same badges. It was quite difficult with the recency of the loss and there were more than a few teardrops that went in the envelope with those badges that day. I was celebrating the accomplishments of a dog, while feeling profound grief over my own. I don't always remember every badge earned by every dog, but if it was your dog that earned those particular badges last November, well...I will never forget those.



Digital portrait by Martha Thierry

Though several months have passed since Sam's death, there are days where it feels just as fresh as it did the day it happened. But now there are also days where I can smile at the memories of the life we shared together. At the very least, I've begun to figure out how to live without being crushed by grief each day. I've lost many dogs over the course of my life, but losing Sam was particularly hard. I've learned from his passing, and I hope that sharing what I've learned can help someone else at some point.

Grief is so terribly difficult. I haven't always been kind to myself during this process. I feel as if I've let Sam down a little because kindness was his superpower. But he was also forgiving, and I know he would forgive me now. He was always the first to come try and dry my tears and perhaps that's one reason why I miss him so.

Do you have other thoughts on grief? Ways in which you have memorialized your dog? Stories you'd like to share with me? If so, please reach out to me at president@dogscouts.org. I'd really like to hear from you. You might just have a thought or idea that would help me as I continue through the process of grieving Sam.

Hug your dogs close. And be kind to yourself, now and always. Sam would want that, and I do too.

Although I will miss you and some days will be hard,
I know I can't keep you for your soul must embark.
You've done so much good with the time you were given
And I consider myself lucky to have been your special human.
Even though you're no longer here, we will never be far apart
For I will hold you forever always, in my heart.

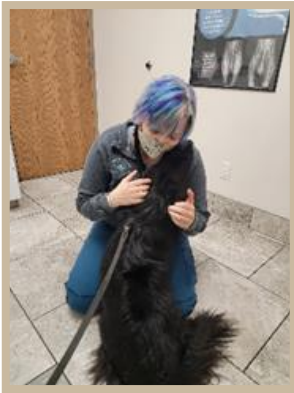
- Wendy Van de Poll



Scout Scoop & Troop Tales

Troop 101—MI

Goldy Reid (with help from Fay)



Troop 101 appreciates all veterinarians, vet techs, specialists, and office personal who care for our dogs, cats, etc.

Booker celebrating and thanking his vet on National Veterinary day.

Jax, Kaylene, Goldy, Fay, Valeria, Kyra & photographer, Teryn



We volunteered to gift wrap to help raise dollars for our local Habitat for Humanity. We also shared the DSA mission & vision with people by handing out brochures and talking about the badges on their capes.



We continue to help support other groups, including local Girl Scout troops and Toys for tots.

We closed out 2022 with a troop meeting complete with a Christmas Party including games, prizes, gift exchange and badge activities.

Improv Badge: We worked on touching objects to retrieving objects. Our troop members are at various skill levels with regards to retrieves. Some have never touched an obstacle let alone pick it up in their mouths to bringing it back to us.



Kyra is showing interest in a toy that she originally wanted nothing to do with it. Valerie played a little game with her to get her interested. She ignored Kyra and talked to the toy and got excited with the toy, then put it away several times. Kyra started to wonder what all the excitement was about and Valerie rewarded her for showing the slightest interest then put the toy away.



Kaylene is excited with Jax, a dog, if you remember her article in an earlier Scoop called "Never say Never", that was not interested in toys or food. In this photo Jax had picked up a new dinosaur toy for the first time.

Troop 101—MI (cont.)

Another way to get your dog excited about a toy is “Race to the toy” game. You can restrain your dog by holding her collar, throw the toy, place the toy, use some words like ready, set, or count, get the anticipation up by making them wait to get it. Release and run together to get it. Depends on the dog, where you start. If they have no interest, throw the toy and run for it. Work from there.



Bowling Game: The object – to get as many pins down in 30 seconds. The dogs & handlers sometimes had different ideas on how to accomplish this. Some dogs thought they had to NOT knock over any of the pins and went out of their way to stay away from them while others considered it a retrieve game.



Razzle

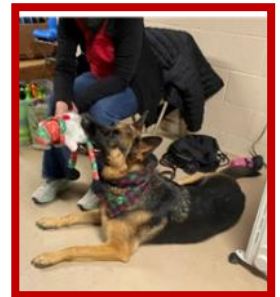


Booker



Molly

Christmas gift exchange and photo opportunities



Molly & Jax



Booker & Laurie



Kyra & Valerie



Pauline, She-ra & Razzle



Pauline & Razzle

Troop 101—MI (cont.)

Practicing for DOGa Badge



Booker demonstrates backing up to find object and then from 1 foot on to all four.



Working on Backup onto an object for backend awareness.



Pauline, She-Ra, and Razzle demonstrated different warm up exercises and stretches that they use.



After Razzle demonstrated praying and how it's a good stretching exercise as well, we committed to teaching our dogs to pray over the next month. We'll let you know what worked best for each of us.



Troop 101—MI (cont.)

While most of our members are enduring the cold (17 degrees as I write this), others are basking in the sun and hiking and exploring trails at the Kings Mountain State Park in South Carolina. The Olson gang have been letterboxing and geocaching in North & South Carolina.

Pictured: Caper Olson geocaching



Meet our newest troop member:



Hi I'm Brodie, the newest member of Troop 101. I'm the brother of She-Ra & Razzle. I'm not sure if I'll follow in their footsteps or not, they are really into agility, but I do love to jump over things and go under gates.

So far, I love to retrieve and use my nose and maybe get into a little trouble, but I can't wait to see what adventures Dog Scouts and my mom and dad have in store for me.



Troop 101—MI (cont.)

Congratulations to Northern Michigan Trailblazers Troop 101 members Kaylene and Jax, Fay and Goldy, and Laurie and Booker for passing their test to become therapy dogs with Therapy Dogs International.

On February 5th, they attended testing for TDI which consists of 13 tests, including obedience, leave-it, meeting another dog, handler leaving dog with another and going out of sight for 1 minute, reaction to children and patients with mobilization equipment, and reaction to loud noise or people running up to them.

Each of them had a part of the test that was harder for them. Booker had a hard time keeping his back to the children and that ball he could hear bouncing, but with really big bright eyes he faced Laurie as she read a book. Jax really did not want to lay down in that situation, but with a little persistence he managed it, and Goldy had a hard time with leave it, but being Goldy of course she was able to leave it.

Also double congratulations to Fay and Kaylene as they past the test with not only their own dog but also with each other's dog.



Troop 119—N TX—Lone Star Paws Squad

Cindy Ratliff—Troop Leader

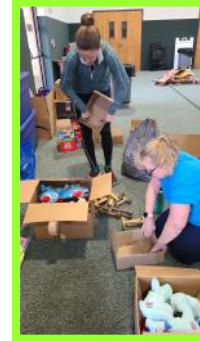
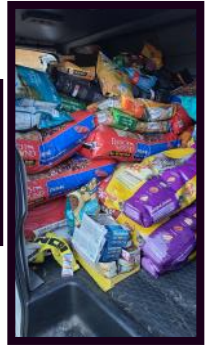
Troop 119 ended 2022 with a bang with another successful Meals On Wheels for Pets Project – our 19th annual event! We had a great “baggin’ party” putting together goodies for 160 companion dogs of MOW clients, our biggest number ever.

Troop dog, Marz Alpha, was there as representative of the troop dogs and he did a fine job allowing people to love on him and give him treats. Nita Lanter & Cheryl Nava decorated a lot of the bags ahead of time to save time since that’s usually what we end up waiting on, so the remaining bag decorating went pretty quickly. We had lots of folks repackaging treats and they seemed to get that done in record time. Nita & her family put together 85 cat bags this year so the kitties wouldn’t be left out, and that was the largest number of cat bags ever done as well. All the dogs got a great variety of toys and treats, poop bags and a holiday bandana. Additionally, we sent several boxes of collars, sweaters, harnesses, etc. to be distributed “as needed”. Leah Franczek & Neil Higdon even brought some hamster toys in case there were any little pets that needed attention. And, we collected a lot of food as well!

We collected almost 2,000 lbs of pet food, over 200 lbs of dog treats, about 1,000 toys, 50+ dog outfits (sweaters, jackets, etc.) and lots of miscellaneous items (collars, harnesses, bowls, poop bags, litter boxes and hamster toys!) One of the great things about doing this project year after year, is that we have “big box” pet store managers in the area that will call us after Christmas when their dog toys have been marked way down and they are ready to either donate them or sell them to us at an even bigger discount. So, we already have almost 1,000 toys collected for this year’s project!

We received a very nice thank you card from the folks at Meals On Wheels and they made a nice [Facebook thank you post](#) as well.

We know the clients of Meals On Wheels are extremely appreciative of our efforts and we thank everyone who participated in this event!



Troop 119—N TX (cont.)



Since our fall is always so packed, the troop takes the month of December off and then we ease back into meetings in January. Unfortunately, our planned January troop hike was met with some very cold, very windy weather that kept a lot of folks home out of the cold. We had a small handful of members who braved the cold and enjoyed hiking together.



Cheers to Maureen & Lacey, Kathy & Westen and Donna & Gizmo who braved the cold and enjoyed their time together (along with some Girl Scout cookies for the humans and On The Go energy bars for the dogs)!



February we decided on a change in scenery and met up at a different park that we had never had a troop meeting at before. It had a nice 1.25 mile loop around a pond/creek that was about half nature trail. We introduced (or re-introduced the Parkour badge) going over the badge requirements and ideas for different obstacles to search out and how to train the dogs to them. Then we ventured out for our hike together, stopped along the way to let the dogs interact with various park obstacles that would go toward their Parkour badges. It was a beautiful day and the dogs and their people all seemed to enjoy the day and the change of scenery.



We're looking forward to seeing long time friends and making some new ones this year while promoting Dog Scouts and having fun and learning along the way!

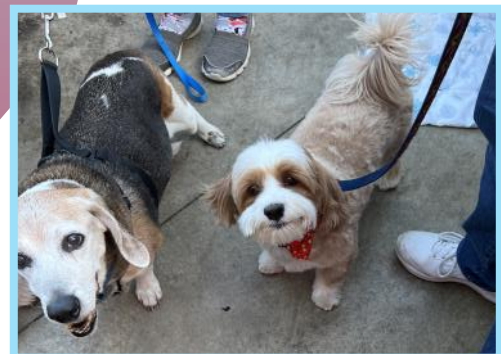
Troop 149—MO ~ River City Rovers

Submitted by Fran Beezley and Dog Scout Barney



December

We had 2 events to celebrate at this month's meeting. It was our annual Christmas party and Charlie's 2nd birthday. We met in Chesterfield for a hike first. It was a beautiful day but cold. That didn't matter because everyone warmed up by walking around the lake. Then it was on to Rock and Brews to celebrate with Charlie. He brought a cake to share with everyone. All the dogs thought that was great.



Troop 149—MO (cont.)

January

The troop started out the New Year by meeting at Des Peres Park. Those who participated in the Turkey Trot got their medallions. We were joined by a few friends from another doggy group. Since there were new dogs there, we started by doing walk-bys. Everyone did great. It was good to see so many friendly dogs and people.



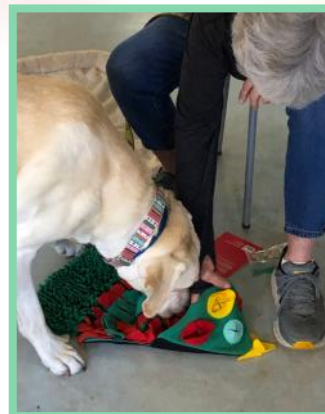
Troop 150—AR

Sharon Branyan

Troop 150 finished off the year in early December with a Christmas social event. Each dog brought several bags of their favorite treats for a “cookie exchange”. They used their licking skills to make dog-painted tree ornaments, safely sealed inside plastic baggies dabbed with peanut butter or cheese until the “painting” was completed. The dogs were enthusiastic about their surprise Christmas tree snuffle mats, which had to be refilled by popular demand. There were also several winter scene photo op stations available.



In January we had our annual planning session while the dogs enjoyed a post-holiday snuffle session with their new mats. Group interests for this year include working on Dog Scout for new dog members, with practice in Leave It throughout the year for all the dogs since it is an important skill to maintain; finishing up badges we started in 2022 (DOGa, Tricks, Urban Hiking); Dog Care badge; group outings for Letterboxing, Geocaching, camping; using cognition training guidance from the Canine Cognition badge as learning games throughout the year; and partnering with a local shelter for a fundraiser such as a spring egg hunt. At our February meeting we finalized some of our upcoming meeting plans, started training the “do I know you know” game from the canine cognition badge, and reviewed information and did checkoffs for the Dog Care badge.



Troop 157—FL ~ Broward County Paw Patrol

Teresa Irvine

New Year's Eve Hike – TY Park

For our annual New Year's Eve walk to provide our Dog Scouts River and Ripley and Cadets Aurora, Lucy, Luna and Penny some exercise we met up at our local TY Park in Hollywood, FL. It was a beautiful morning for walking and letting our dogs enjoy the natural enrichment of all the scents along the pathway, including squirrels doing an excellent job at trying to distract them. Additionally, we handed out the 2022 Turkey Trot medals to those who participated – Ripley, Lucy and Penny.

Our mission is always to get in some socialization, a novel experience, and exercise before the holiday fireworks, was certainly accomplished.



Hollywood Artwalk Guided Mural Tour

Dog Scouts Clover Geschwill and River Hanna attended The Downtown Artisan Market and Art Walk on January 21. This monthly event in Hollywood Florida celebrates artists and supports the busy downtown. Handlers Christine and Dawn enjoyed a great opportunity to practice urban hiking skills during the mural tour. Tour guide, Jill Weisburg, of the Hollywood CRA welcomed “well behaved dogs and humans” to join the tour any time. Clover and River remained calm throughout urban distractions like pedestrian and car traffic, a loud band, and plenty of surface obstacles. At the market, friendly shoppers greeted Clover and River for some head scratches. It was a fun event worthy of repeating.



Food Trucks at Plantation Heritage Park Meet Up

Our Broward County Parks finally brought back weekly Food Truck Night at one of our favorite meet up place, which was halted for over 2 years because of COVID. People came by car, bike, golf cart, and on foot to enjoy some great weather and food. It was a cooler night than expected, but enjoyable and great environment to practice basic obedience skills with our dogs, since there were lots of dogs, kids and yummy food cooking. What better place to practice/train your dog on their skill sets.



Troop 157—FL (cont.)

Troop 2022 Year End Celebration and 2023 Planning

Our year end celebration had a Valentine's Day twist! We all met at our local TY Park finding a perfect spot next to the lake with a view and wildlife. The weather was absolutely fabulous in the morning, and we had enough shade for when the temperatures started to rise. We decorated the area with Valentine decorations, bringing some light bagels and coffee, plus cookies for both human and canines. Everyone brought something to make the day fun! We created a Troop letter box with a Valentines Theme that we hid in the park, plus played some games based on Dog Scout Law trivia and obedience skills. Afterwards we planted our DSA Troop 157 Happy Valentine's Day letterbox along the walking path in a great spot. [DSA Troop 157 Happy Valentine's Day](#)



Paws Pack 183—FL

Shirley Conley—Troop Leader



Our troop held two barn hunt activities, one in December and one in February. Each handler is gaining a better understanding of their dogs response to odor, and differentiating between a live rat, a litter tube and an empty tube. All dogs and handlers showed improvement when we went back in February.

One of our agility sessions focused on introducing weave poles to our dogs, reinforcing entering with the pole on the left and the dog wrapping around the second pole.

In February Tachi Conley finished his AKC Open Agility Preferred title.



We unexpectedly lost our troop member and friend, Cyndi Mimms, in December. Cyndi had been a member of Dog Scouts for ten years and had earned the Dog Scout title with three dogs during that time and had just finished an AKC Rally Obedience title with her Flat-Coated Retriever, Jurnee. Cyndi enjoyed Rally, obedience, barn hunt, scent work, dock diving, and agility in addition to handling her own dog in conformation. She was a pillar in our troop, stepping up and helping whenever there was a need, participating in bell ringing and information booths as well as arranging opportunities for rally, agility, barn hunt, first aid, tricks, and sign language. She will be missed as both an integral part of the troop and a dear friend.

Troop 188—Ledyard CT

Michelle Lake, Co-Leader

Brags & Wags!



Tucker earned Q's in his first 6 CPE Speedway runs!



Flynn and Thunder took the top spots in a photo contest.



A group photo of several members won a photo contest.

Activities



Troop Members presented a Pet First Aid seminar with Niantic Fire HQ and Waterford-East Lyme Animal Control. Thank you Percy, for being a fabulous demo dog and letting everyone find your pulse. You did a great job at your first event! We were happy to be able to donate a breathing kit for the community as well.

Instead of shopping on Black Friday, members met up for a rainy, windy walk at a local shoreline park.



Troop 188—CT (cont.)



We got into the holiday spirit at many local events and locations!



Members met up at a Lobster Trap Tree for a group photo.

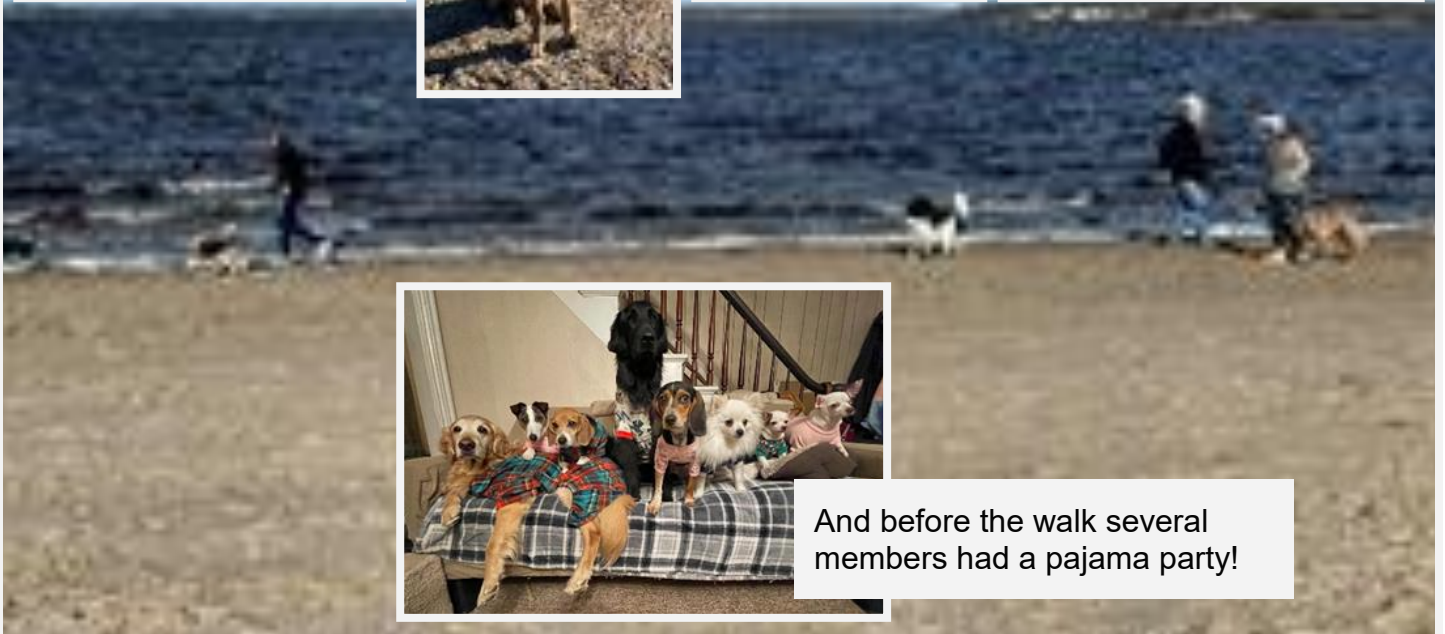


Another park put on a Starry Lights display.



Troop 188—CT (cont.)

It was a beautiful morning for our traditional New Year's Day walk at a coastal location.



And before the walk several members had a pajama party!

A monthly K9 Fitness class was started to help our dogs stay fit over the winter and to work on Tricks and K9 Fitness badges.

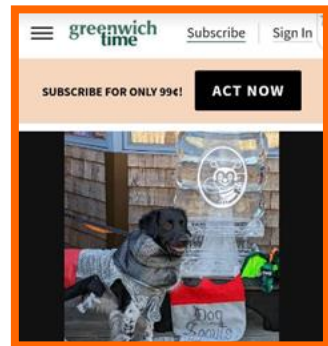


Thunder had a therapy dog visit to a local library for "Bring Your Child to the Library Day". It was also Stretch the giraffe's pirate-themed birthday party.

Troop 188—CT (cont.)



Our Troop went on a group walk at a shopping village that had ice sculptures on display for “Ice in the Village”. Last year we took first, second and third place in the pet photo contest, and one of those pictures was used as advertising for the event this year.



We were able to start having our monthly meetings in person for the first time since COVID. We worked on sits, walking around sits, stays, and leave its. We also had a Valentine’s backdrop set up for photos.

Ofc Clifton and his handler were in the area for a Valentine’s event and we stopped by to drop off a Pet Emergency Breathing Kit for their community.



Troop 198—CA

Janet Gee

This winter, we held our annual Howl-a-Day party and a training session, but Morgan Hill's Holiday of Lights parade was rained out due to a historic atmospheric river that pummeled California with heavy rain and snow. We're happy to have our reservoirs re-filled, and look forward to sunshine and more activities next quarter!

Training at San Jose's Los Paseos Park



Troop leader Carlotta led us through loose leash and watch me exercises, with troop members serving as excellent distractions. Carlotta with Luna, Jadelynn with Daphne, Leah with Trevor, Yoko with Kozi.



Bob and Seager stroll past Janet with Jelly, and next, Patty with Sprocket

Luna demonstrates how to sit pretty during a break





Howl-a Day Party – Pet Food Express in Campbell again graciously hosted our annual party, where we enjoyed ice breakers and training fun, thanks to our Hostess with the Mostess, Leah. Rylie Randall was so happy, she gave Leah a standing ovation.

Tic-Tac-Dog is always a great way to practice sit/down-stay, so Mom Leah with Trevor and Mom Sherry with Angela strategize on what square to choose – to be next to Maxwell or not to be, that was the question.



Counting down the 10-second hold with so many competitors and teammates nearby is especially challenging, so we played a few times for practice to make progress.

Crystal displays self-restraint while Sadie and Scout work on puzzles, and Mrs. Crystal Claus and Elf Sprocket wait their turns with their Santa’s Helpers’ pawrents, Patty and Dave



Accomplishments

Luna Gumbin received her Dog Scout Dog Massage badge, while Trevor Lane and Bailey, Crystal and Luna Gumbin received their Dog Scout Lure Coursing badges.

Cider Gee earned his Love on a Leash therapy dog certification, and went right to work visiting a senior living community in his official bandana.



Troop 217—MI ~ Motor City K9's

Sally Hoyle—Troop Leader



In January, we got to do one of our favorite activities – putting out lanterns for a lantern hike in one of our places to hike, Island Lake State Park. These hikes were started by a group of 4 people who later became The Friends of Island Lake. The group relies completely on community donations to fund the lanterns and hangers, and donated time to put out and take in the lanterns for each hike. The hikes can get quite crowded, yet the time before the official hike begins, when we are putting out the lanterns makes for a quite peaceful experience.



The group's last planned hike for the year was one they advertised specifically for people with dogs and they used our photos in their ads! We were very happy to be their models and intended to be present for this hike to talk with people about DSA, but a snow storm prevented our participation. We look forward to next winter's lantern hikes, and in the meantime we plan to help them out by building some wooden hangers for the lanterns to replace some that have gone missing or have broken this year.



Speaking of hikes, we enjoyed a really fun one in Maybury State Park in February. This one was a night hike and took place the night of the snow moon, the full moon that happens in February. It was a Sunday night so we anticipated a small turn out for this hike. We were surprised to see HUNDREDS of people show up to walk under the full moon! Despite the big crowd, it was a fun hike.



Troop 217 (cont.)

♥ We typically have a post-holiday party in January, but this year we had it in February due to everyone's busy schedules. Due to the timing, we turned it into a Valentine's Day party and we had so much fun. We ate some good food, played games, and had a place set up to take cool winter photos. We also did a gift exchange where each dog got to pick his own gift from inside of a hula hoop. This is always a favorite at our parties and the dogs love their gifts.



♥ We practiced some distance work by playing a game where the dogs had to go out to various hoops for points. There were few rules for the game so people were pretty creative in getting their dogs into the hoops. Our favorite special guest dog, Willow Gornstein, guest of Julie Benson won this game by a wide margin!



♥ We also practiced our leave it's by playing a game using different tempting items and changing scenarios. No matter what the temptation, Darby Jones never took the bait and easily became the champion of the game. Pumpkin Neu came in a very close second.



In other news, several of our dogs have been focusing on scent work and have done really well in trials recently. We have also had a number of dogs out doing therapy work. We have a group walk planned on the campus of Michigan State University in Lansing to visit students who are still working through their experience following a shooting on campus. We know that our dogs will be able to provide comfort to students and we are looking forward to the visit.

Maia "The Blur"

By Martha Thierry

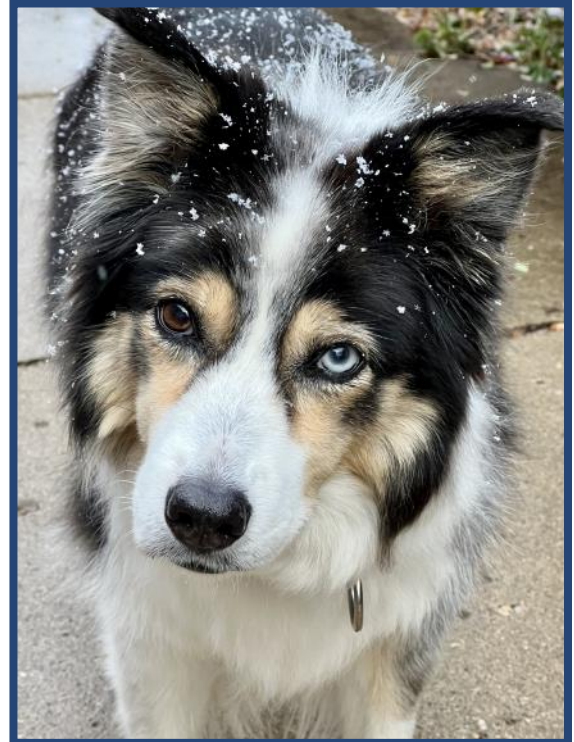
When Maia was a youngster, I gave her a nickname: "the blur." She could never hold still for a photo! There was always something fun to explore or play with. She didn't want to sit still. So agility was a perfect game for her and she brought me along for a fantastic ride. We started casually, but of course were sold on it as we progressed. She was very forgiving of my novice handling and always makes me look like I know what I'm doing. Together we've made friends and enjoy each others triumphs (and console each other for near misses.) We competed in CPE agility for about 7 years, primarily at Michigan venues. We attended a brief number of AKC and USDAA agility events, including Border Collie Nationals.

We decided it was time to slow down to respect her age (14.5) as she had clearly become a senior during the pandemic. We are glad that less physically-demanding sports such as Scent Work gives us new goals. After earning our C-ATCH2 we now practice gentle senior, bar-less agility, but always with complete joy & gratitude to play together.

Other triumphs along the way include Therapy Dog certification, titles in Scent Work, Rally Obedience, Barn Hunt and the Dog Scouts of America's highest title of Honor Scout. Dog Scouts always supplies us with new challenges.

Cheers to a Happy New Year and continued adventures with my dear friend Maia!

Maia, DSA Honor Scout, is a member of Troop 217, The Motor City K9s.



Troop 237—East Bay, CA

Ruth Robinson—Troop Leader



Doggo, It Is COLD Out There!

Berkeley, California, as shown in the SF Chronicle for 2/24/2023

This scene may just look normal in the upper and eastern part of the US, but in northern California at this time of the year, we're looking at daffodils and tree blossoms. Not this year! Actually, too cold for our normal Pack Walks. So, what's a hooman and doggo to do?

Meet Kobi, a Golden Retriever who is also an Alliance of Therapy Dogs reading dog. He would like to share some book recommendations for all of you.



Kobi Robinson, Book Reviewer

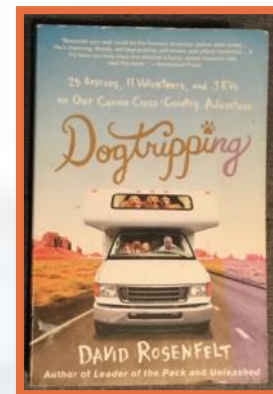
Frankly, friends, I'd like to go running in the snow. But, my hoomans would not. So, next best thing – get a good book or two or three and lounge by the fire. Here you might find a place to start.

If a Dog's Prayers Were Answered Bones Would Rain from the Sky by Suzanne Clothier. (Jane Goodall said: "All dog lovers will want to read this book.")

From Clothier's book: "It is a book for those who would become fluent in Dog and other tongues, and for those who would learn for the first time these most eloquent of languages. It is for those whose hearts have been shaped and filled by animals now gone, and for those whose hearts have yet to be broken as only an animal can break them."

Dog Tripping by David Rosenfelt

Rosenfelt is a self-admitted "dog lunatic" who, with his wife, has rescued thousands of dogs. You may know his mystery series, lots and lots of them, which are fun reads. "Dog Tripping" is non-fiction and the story of moving his own dogs, like 25 of them, from California to Maine. Plus you'll read lots of touching dog rescue stories. (No dog dies in this book, makes it OK to read.) My mom says this is likely out of print, so you'll have to dig a little to find it.



Canine Enrichment for the Real World: Making It Part of Your Dog's Daily Life

by Allie Bender, CDBC & Emily Strong, CDBC.



Kobi's opinion: *Really like all the games and suggested toys. My doggie friends do too!*

Mom said: From the authors: "This isn't just about toys and play. It's about who dogs are, the entire spectrum of their physical, behavioral, and instinctual needs, and how we can meet those needs. *Enrichment is learning what our dogs' needs are and then structuring an environment for them that allows them, as much as is feasible, to meet those needs.*"

Troop 237 (Cont.)

Pack Walk in January



Yes, that is serious fog in the background. Chilly day! This is the picture of three of our 10 participants...sitting quietly because...

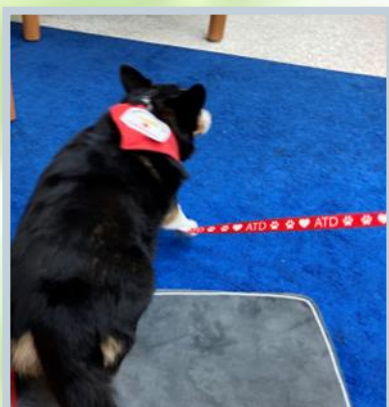
Treats were at the ready!



Aussies Gracie and Lily were patient. Mama Patty is a very fine trainer.

The winter weather was not conducive to many group activities, but most of our members found lots to do, such as serious dog training activities, including Rally, Urban Canine Good Citizen, Beginning Herding.

Many of our Pack are also Therapy Dogs.



Here is Corgi Thatcher asking one of the children at the Library to come read to her.

Good Night, all. Stay snuggled this winter.
See you in the Spring.



Rainbow Bridge

Alex Ratliff

6/11/2010 – 1/28/2023

loved by Mart & Cindy

I've been trying to write a tribute to Alex in my head and there just aren't enough words. So many friends have commented how special she was and 'special' just starts to scratch the surface. We are mourning not only the loss of a great dog, but mourning the loss of so much that she represented.

She was our first pup that we started with positive reinforcement training from day one and she loved to train! She had the best work ethic of any dog we have ever known. Her shortcomings were us. We didn't work with her enough to allow her to show all she could do. She passed the Dog Scout certification at 5 months old, just short of being the youngest ever to pass, and she passed her CGC test at 11 months old. When I was a trainer, she was my awesome demo dog, not just for classes but also for the quarterly trainers' meetings. She was the "neutral dog" when I did CGC testing and she rocked it. She enjoyed going to doggy daycare in her early years but more so for the human captive audience she had rather than for the dogs.

She earned 35 merit badges through Dog Scouts of America, as well as several titles. She was working on two others that we hadn't gotten around to checking off yet. She has met the requirements for her Community Service badge, I just need to get her documentation turned in.

She participated in many, many community projects and events doing demonstrations and fundraising and was sought after for many events. She did kids programs through schools, shelters and scout programs to teach others about responsible pet ownership, positive reinforcement training and giving back to the community.

She was the best foster sister ever to numerous foster pups that came through our home. She loved the puppies and enjoyed showing them that a senior could still keep up with them and could even show them a move or two. She was sweet with them and played gently and appropriately with them, but would correct them if they got out of line.



Rainbow Bridge (cont.)

She became a super model a little late in life, at 11 years old, and enjoyed being a Chewy.com model for over a year. We're grateful for the experience and the lasting photo memories that came out of it and glad that she got to share her golden sunshine with a whole other group of people she wouldn't have met otherwise.

She loved Stevie Ray and he adored her from day one. She always loved attention and belly rubs, but as Stevie Ray's health deteriorated, she took a backseat and allowed us to focus most of our time, energy and attention on him. She was diagnosed with large cell lymphoma exactly 4 weeks after Stevie Ray passed last November. Her cancer was in the sac around her heart and had done a lot of damage to her heart. We went through several weeks of chemo and the heart damage had mostly reversed and she was responding well. Then there were indications the cancer had penetrated the brain blood barrier. Alex fought it like a champ but when she was tired of fighting, we honored her desire to rest.

Up until the last two and a half months, we were still saying she was 12 going on 4 or 5. She was so young at heart and we thought if anyone could live forever, it would be Alex. We miss her every minute of every day. We will forever be grateful that we got to be her humans. There will never be another like her.



Contact Dog Scouts of America

Learning new things that we may be more helpful

Website: dogscouts.org

Facebook: facebook.com/DogScouts

Instagram: instagram.com/dogscoutsofamerica/

Youtube: [Dog Scouts of America - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqWz8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)

[#dogscoutsofamerica](https://twitter.com/dogscoutsofamerica)

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: Sally Hoyle — president@dogscouts.org
(Also Mini-Camp Mentor, Merit Badge Submission Process)

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

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

Membership: Shirley Conley — membership@dogscouts.org

Troop Administration: troops@dogscouts.org
(Starting a troop/Troop Leader Tests)

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

MERIT BADGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Video Evaluation: DSAVideoEval@gmail.com

Evaluator Certification: troops@dogscouts.org

TITLES/COMPETITIONS

Titles/Competition Registration Number: Kristie Iwamoto — titles@dogscouts.org

Hosting/Competing: Sally Hoyle — president@dogscouts.org

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

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