



Newsletter

Spring
2020

Director's Letter

Dear Rescue Friends,

This winter and spring we are facing the Coronavirus and the myriad issues it brings to our daily lives, our families, and our pets. Information changes daily and we all struggle to keep up with the latest advice on how to protect ourselves. Two pieces of good news recently: 1) IDEXX Laboratories, Inc., a global leader in veterinary diagnostics and software, announced on March 13 that after evaluating "thousands of canine and feline specimens," **no positive results of the coronavirus disease COVID-19 have been found in pets**, and 2) Curtis Fritz, our California State Public Health Veterinarian, stated that **available evidence does not suggest any role for dogs (or cats) with COVID-19 virus, either as susceptible hosts or as sources for transmission to humans**. So while our dogs and cats are safe during this outbreak, we humans need to take good care of ourselves. Please review your plans for your pets in the event of your inability to care for them and be sure the plans are current and accessible to those who may need them. If you are refreshing your estate planning, please include NorCal Sheltie Rescue, Inc. Please reference our homepage for how to write us into your will: www.norcalsheltierescue.org.

With each newsletter I like to provide you with some statistics on our rescue program. Since the last newsletter from October 2019, we have taken in fifteen (15) Shelties, most often surrendered by their owners. Since January 1st, the six incoming dogs' average age is 9.3 years. In all of 2019 we took in eighteen (18) dogs. Our Special Needs program currently cares for ten (10) dogs in permanent foster homes.

You'll notice that our Special Needs program is full of senior Shelties living the good life in their golden years. We are very grateful to our permanent foster moms and dads who provide lots of love and care for these Shelties. We are always in need of more foster homes, so please let us know if you'd like to help. Foster Shelties pay you back with unconditional love — guaranteed!

If you haven't yet heard of **Nicole Wilde** and **Dr. Ian Dunbar**, two of the world's premier authors, trainers, and dog enthusiasts, now's the time to get acquainted. Both are wonderful resources for raising and training dogs; they provide valuable information online, for free, to assist all of us in improving our daily interactions and relationships with our canines. Check out their websites at www.nicolewilde.com and www.dogstardaily.com. The topics we're focusing on in this issue pop up frequently in conversations with our adopters; we hope you find them interesting and helpful. Feedback is always welcome — email Terry at the address listed at the top right of this page.

We hope to see you at our annual Sheltie Celebration later this year. I'll send out a mass email with a new flyer, once the new date has been determined. Safeguard your health with social distancing and the other public protocols so that we can all be here for our beloved Shelties and each other!

Warmest regards,
Gale Ann

NorCal Sheltie Rescue, Inc.
Board of Directors

Terry Gary, President
tgarycool@gmail.com

Liliane Morin, Secretary
morinlil@aol.com

Gale Ann Morris, Treasurer
sheltieroses@outlook.com

Website:
www.norcalsheltierescue.org

1-888-296-9350 message line

Sheltie
Celebration
postponed



Are Dog Parks Worth the Risk?

by Nicole Wilde

Recently, a woman took her dog to the dog park for some fun and exercise. She envisioned him frolicking with other dogs and coming home happy and tired. Instead, the poor dog came away needing surgery to save his life, along with more than 10 puncture wounds. I saw the photos; suffice it to say they were both sickening and heart-wrenching. Just a few days later, another woman posted on Facebook about an encounter at the same dog park. Her dog had been attacked, had suffered serious damage to a limb, and needed to be rushed to the vet. The owner of the other dog refused to acknowledge that her dog had done anything wrong, and fled the scene.

Fortunately, both of these dogs will recover—physically, at least. As anyone who has ever suffered a bodily assault knows, the toll goes far beyond physical injury. The extent of emotional damage to any dog who has been attacked depends on the seriousness of the attack and on the temperament of the individual dog. For some dogs this type of encounter can, understandably, result in a fear of other dogs. And as any trainer worth her salt knows, that can translate to fear-based reactivity, which most people call aggression.

Does every encounter at a dog park result in physical or emotional damage to dogs? Of course not. But you might be surprised at how many dogs are having no fun at all, despite what their owners might think. When I was putting together my seminar *Dissecting the Dynamics of Dog-Dog Play* (www.nicolewilde.com), I needed lots of video of dogs playing. One of the places I spent time at was our local dog park. I filmed hours and hours of various breeds and sizes of dogs playing together. Although I was already aware that some dogs enjoyed playing more than others and that some encounters were definitely not positive, when I reviewed the footage in slow motion, I was shocked. Sure, there were examples of safe, non-threatening play. But there was also a myriad of instances in which dogs were practically traumatized as their owners stood by, totally unaware. One example comes instantly to mind: Within seconds of a man and his medium-sized mixed breed dog entering the park, the dog was rushed by other dogs who wanted to inspect him, as is typical in any canine group. But one of the greeters clearly scared the newcomer, who then lunged and snapped. The owner gave his dog a verbal warning for that defensive action and kept walking deeper into the park. Another dog approached and this time, with his tail tucked, the dog snapped and lunged more intently. The owner grabbed him by the collar and chastised him. Over the next five minutes, the dog had four more encounters that resulted in his being punished by the owner, each time more harshly. It would have been clear to anyone versed in canine body language that the dog was afraid, and was becoming more and more reactive because he was on the defense. It was difficult to stand there filming, and I considered aborting to go and speak with him. Just then, a woman who was a regular there approached and struck up a conversation with the man. Thankfully, she was able to convince him that his dog was scared and to leave the park. I'm sad to say that this was far from being the only negative encounter I filmed. More importantly, this sort of thing happens daily at dog parks across the world.

By now you're probably thinking, Gee Nicole, how do you really feel? The thing is, I've seen the flip side as well. I've watched a group of ladies who meet at the park most mornings with their dogs. They're savvy about canine body language, and although they enjoy socializing with each other as their dogs play, they constantly monitor the action. If play begins to become too heated, they create a time out by calling their dogs to them for a short break before releasing them to play again. In this way, they prevent arousal from escalating into aggression. The dogs all know each other and for the most part get along well. I have absolutely no problem with this type of scenario. Unfortunately, it's far from being the norm. The typical scene at a dog park includes a random assortment of dogs whose owners range from being absolutely ignorant about dog behavior to being well informed, with most of the population falling somewhere in the middle. And why not? They're not dog professionals, but loving owners who simply want their dogs to get some exercise and have a good time. In most cases, they're not aware of the subtle or not-so-subtle signals that could indicate danger, or even that dangers exist. Comments like, "Ah, they're dogs, they'll work it out," and "Oh, he's fine" abound. It's strange if you think about it: if you were the parent of a young child, would you send him in blindly to play with a group of kids that possibly included bullies and criminals? Wouldn't you at the very least stand there and observe the play for a few minutes before allowing him to join the fray? If you did allow the child to participate, would you not keep an eye on him and leave if you felt there was a potential threat? And yet, at the dog park, the majority of owners never do those things.

Are Dog Parks Worth the Risk? (continued)

In the best of all worlds, there would be mandatory education for dog park attendees as well as a knowledgeable staff member or volunteer at every park to monitor the action and to stop dogs who are known to be aggressive from entering in the first place. Perhaps a membership model would make this possible. Unfortunately, that is not the reality in most places. And so, it falls to we owners to be advocates and protectors for our dogs. That means if you absolutely insist on taking your dog to a dog park, that you scan the environment before entering, that you monitor your dog's play even while chatting with other owners, and that you intervene even to the point of leaving if necessary when you feel something is not right, even if that means facing social ostracism. Personally, I prefer play dates with known quantities rather than a park full of potential aggressors who might do serious physical or emotional damage to my dogs. If I do take mine into the dog park to run around, it's during off hours when the park is empty. You might find this over the top or even paranoid. That's okay. If you heard all of the stories I've heard over the years and seen all of the damage I've seen, you might think twice about whether dog parks are worth the risk.

©2017 Nicole Wilde. Nicole Wilde is an award-winning author and canine behavior specialist. You can find her books, seminar DVDs, and blog at www.nicolewilde.com.



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Special Needs Seniors



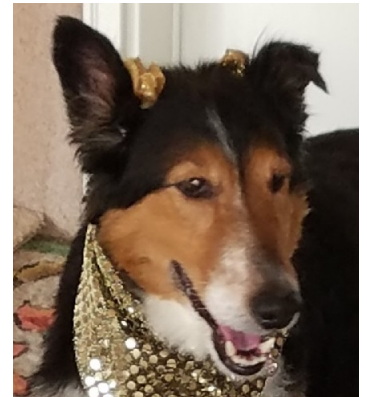
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MaryAnn



Cara & Izzy
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Laddie
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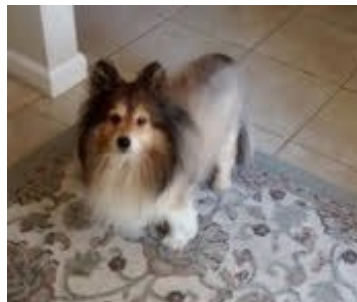
Peaches
Fostered by Luz & Bob



Mitzi
Fostered by Carole



Flash
Fostered by Roger & family



Lacy
Fostered by Nancy



Kasey
Fostered by Angel

Excessive Barking

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Dr. Ian Dunbar and James & Kenneth Publishers

Some dogs get extremely worked up when visitors ring the doorbell, or when dogs walk by the house. Some spaniels and terriers bark at the drop of a hat. And our good friend Larry Labrador will bark whenever a leaf falls from a tree three blocks away. Barking is as characteristically doggy as wagging a tail or burying a bone. It would be inane and inhumane to try to stop your dog from barking altogether:

"You'll never bark in this town again!" After all, some barking is extremely useful. My dogs are much more efficient than the doorbell and much more convincing than a burglar alarm. The goal then, is to teach dogs normally to be calm and quiet but to sound the alarm when intruders enter your property. The barking problem may be resolved to our advantage by management and education: first, immediately reduce the frequency of barking before we all go insane; and second, teach your dog to "Woof" and "Shush" on cue.

Reduce the Frequency of Barks

Dogs bark the most right after their owners leave home for the day. The easiest way to immediately reduce woof-frequency is by exclusively feeding your dog from hollow chewtoys. Each evening weigh out and moisten your dog's kibble or raw diet for the following day. Squish the goeey food into hollow chewtoys (Kong products and sterilized bones) and put them in the freezer overnight. In the morning, give your dog some frozen stuffed chewtoys. Your dog will spend well over an hour extricating his breakfast from the chewtoys. And if your dog is busying himself with chewtoys, he will be lying down quietly! (For detailed chewtoy-stuffing instructions, read our Chewing booklet.)

Do not leave an excessive barker outdoors. Yard-bound dogs are exposed to many more disturbances and their barks more easily penetrate the neighborhood. Leave your dog comfortably in a single room (away from the street) with a radio playing to mask outside disturbances. If you have been leaving your dog outside because he soils or destroys the house, housetrain and chewtoy train your dog so he may enjoy indoor comforts when you are away from home.

Teach "Woof" and "Shush" On Cue

It is easier to teach your dog to shush when he is calm and focused. Therefore, teaching your dog to "Woof" on cue is the first step in "Shush" training, thus enabling you to teach "Shush" at your convenience, and not at inconvenient times when the dog decides to bark. Moreover, teaching "Shush" is now much easier because your dog is not barking uncontrollably—barking was your idea! Station an accomplice outside the front door. Say "Woof" (or "Speak," or "Alert"), which is the cue for your assistant to ring the bell. Praise your dog profusely when he barks (prompted by the doorbell); maybe even bark along with your dog. After a few good woofs, say "Shush" and then waggle a tasty food treat in front of his nose. Your dog will stop barking as soon as he sniffs the treat because it is impossible to sniff and woof simultaneously. Praise your dog as he sniffs quietly, and then offer the treat.

Repeat this routine a dozen or so times and your dog will learn to anticipate the doorbell ringing whenever you ask him to speak. Eventually your dog will bark after your request but before the doorbell rings, meaning that your dog has learned to bark on command. Similarly, your dog will learn to anticipate the likelihood of sniffables following your "Shush" request. You have then taught your dog both to speak and shush on cue. Over repeated "Woof" and "Shush" trials, progressively increase the length of required shush-time before offering a food reward—at first just two seconds, then three, then five, eight, twelve, twenty, and so on. By alternating instructions to woof and shush, the dog is praised and rewarded for barking on request and for shushing on request.

Remember, always speak softly when instructing your dog to shush, and reinforce your dog's silence with whisper-praise. The more softly you speak, the more your dog will be inclined to pay attention and listen (and therefore, not bark).

Teach Your Dog When to Bark

Invite a dozen people for afternoon tea to teach your dog when, and when not, to bark. Instruct your visitors (some with dogs) to walk by the house a number of times before ringing the doorbell. When the first person walks by the house, it will take all of your attention to keep your dog shushed. But persevere: it will be easier when the same

Excessive Barking (continued)

person walks by the second time, and again easier on the third pass by. Eventually your dog will habituate and will no longer alert to the same person's presence in the street. Profusely praise your dog and offer treats for silent vigilance. Repeat reinforcement for quiet vigilance several times on subsequent passes by. But when the visitor starts up the garden path, eagerly and urgently say "Speak! Speak! Speak!" Praise your dog when he woofs, and then instruct him to sit and shush at the front door while you welcome the visitor. If your dog exuberantly barks and bounces at this point, simply wait until he sits and shushes and then praise and offer a treat. Have the visitor leave and come back a number of times. Eventually, your dog will greet him by sitting in silence. This procedure becomes easier with each new visitor. Your dog soon learns to watch passersby in silence and to give voice when they step on your property, but to sit and shush when they are invited indoors—a trained neighborhood watchdog, which even non-dog-owning neighbors will welcome on the street where they live.

If you require a more detailed description, read our Barking booklet. To teach your dog to be calmer and bark less, you will need numerous stuffable chewtoys. To teach your dog to "Woof" and "Shush" on cue, you need some freeze-dried liver treats. All of these products are available from your local pet store or on-line from www.amazon.com.

Adopted



Mandi

Adopted by Tim & Sam



Rocky

Adopted by Elizabeth & Peter



Sadie

Adopted by Kathy



Shelby

Adopted by Marie & Bob



Shane

Adopted by Tina & Gary



Gala

Loved by Lucie, Frank, & Jean



Penny

Loved by Denise & Bill



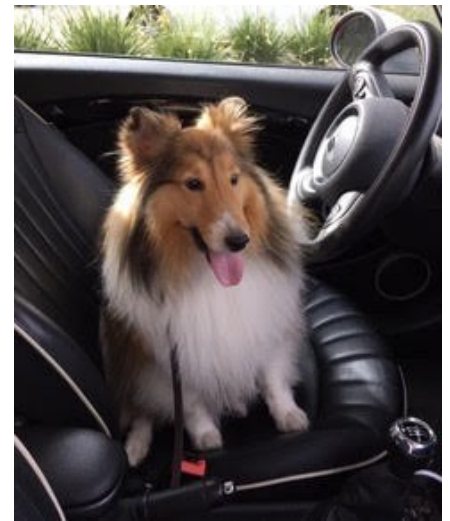
Lily

Loved by Yvone



Nigel

Loved by Dianna & Michael



Paige

Loved by Jennie, Wes, & Chris



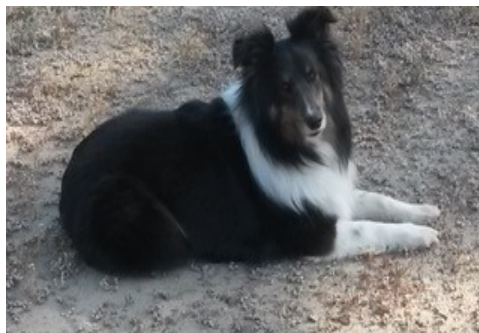
Danny

Loved by Norma & Art



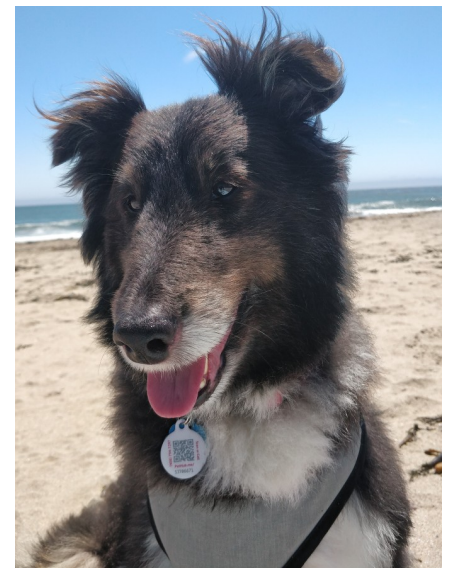
Abby

Loved by Linde & family



Skylar

Loved by Marte & Charles



Thor

Loved by Tom & Katie

Photo Gallery



Morgan packs for a trip



Best friends Jax & Mandi



Kal moves to Oregon



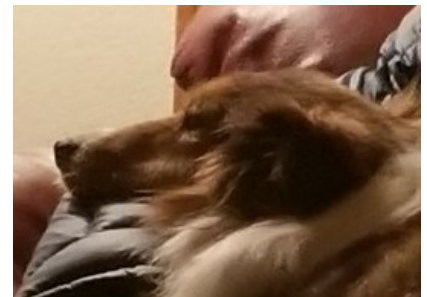
Lexie & Wager dress up for the holidays



Dexter settles into foster care



Maddie & Lacy get acquainted



Rosie cuddles

Thank you for the donation!
We appreciate it very much!



Harley naps



Photo by Bill Marn

Weed Sheltie Roundup 2019



Beach time



Our Veterinarians

Below is a list of veterinarians and clinics around Northern California that our rescue team and foster homes have used to care for our Shelties. All are knowledgeable about the Sheltie and Collie breeds and some offer discounted rates for our 501c3 nonprofit organization. We are grateful for their many contributions to our mission and to each and every Sheltie in their care.

Adobe Animal Hospital , Los Altos

Airport Pet Clinic, Cameron Park

Auburn Animal Hospital, Bakersfield

Bayside Animal Hospital, Granite Bay

Blue Ravine Animal Hospital, Folsom

Brighton Greens Veterinary Hospital, Grass Valley

Carson Valley Veterinary Hospital, Minden NV

Companion Animal Hospital, Santa Cruz

Devotion Animal Hospital, Santa Rosa

Franklin Ranch Pet Hospital, Elk Grove

Jackson Creek Veterinary Clinic, Jackson

Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital, Menlo Park

VCA Bradshaw Veterinary Clinic, Elk Grove

Walnut Creek Veterinary Hospital, Walnut Creek

Yolo Veterinary Clinic, Woodland

NorCal Sheltie Rescue, Inc.

P.O. Box 581934

Elk Grove, CA 95758



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