

# The Dog Guardian

Newsletter for Responsible Dog Owners of Canada

## SPRING 2020

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### Highlights *by Julie More*

Are you fed up with Winter? I have good news! Spring is coming! Yeepee! This newsletter covers a variety of topics, including the questions, 'To get a dog, or not to get a dog' - The Big Decision, and 'Are you ever too old to get a dog?' Our next article deals with 'Dog Myths', and we bust most of them. We will introduce you to famous dogs, including movie stars like Lassie, Chips - the most decorated dog in World War II - and Trakr, who helped save people trapped under Ground Zero in New York.

It is with a heavy heart that we pay tribute to Dagmar VanBeselaere, our co-chair. She passed away on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. She was a great friend and a great volunteer. We will miss you, Dagmar.

Come and join us for a variety of events: our Park Clean-Up days in May and June, the Teddy Bear Picnic in the middle of June, our garage sale at the end of June, and our 'Take Your Owner For a Walk and Support RDOC' Fundraiser in September. Your support is appreciated.

We would like to invite you to participate in the ['Fundscrip' Fundraiser](#). It's a year round fundraiser. Thank you everyone who has participated so far. We would also like to thank Jennifer Harris for donating part of her 'Cards and Designs by Jenn' profit to RDOC. [Click here to see Jenn's beautiful greeting cards, and to order](#) .

We hope you enjoy the newsletter. Let us know what you think of it, and what other topics you would like us to cover.

## Board News

It was strange having a board meeting without Dagmar. She will be missed. We talked about her a lot during the meeting, remembering all her funny sayings.

The rest of the meeting was focused on planning activities for the next few months. It's going to be a busy May and June, with the RDOC Dog Park Clean-Up events, Teddy Bear Picnic, and the Garage Sale.

## Remembering Dagmar *by Julie More*

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Dagmar VanBeselaere, our co-chair. She died on February 3rd after a short illness. Dagmar and I go back a long time. We met when we both volunteered with the Canadian Guide Dogs For The Blind. Dagmar puppy-raised Xavier (a very cute yellow lab), and I puppy-raised Cadbury (a very energetic and goofy chocolate lab).

Dagmar and I joined RDOC about the same time. We worked together on several projects including the Preschool and Dog Program, Going to the Dogs Fundraiser, 'Take Your Owner For a Walk and Support RDOC' Fundraiser, and the Parks Clean-Up program.

RDOC would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Dagmar's daughters, Carla and Paula, their husbands, and 5 grandchildren.



# “To Get a Dog, or Not to Get a Dog” The Big Decision

by Julie More

A friend of mine asked, “When are you too old to get a dog?” Good question. Before doing my research for this article my answer was, “A dog lives an average of about 15 years. Add 15 years to your age and try to figure out if you will be still up to taking your dog out for walks, etc. Of course, that’s if you get a puppy. If you get an older dog, then you adjust your answer.” Ok, that’s my very simplistic answer. Time to do some research 😊

I actually found an article asking the same question, by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker: [‘Conflicted About Getting a Pet Because You Think You're Too Old?’](#)

She points out that “There’s some debate over whether pet ownership is beneficial or burdensome during your golden years.” If you are healthy, financially stable and would like more love and companionship, then go ahead and get a dog. However, if you are having health issues which would make it hard to look after a dog, then you may want to consider a pet with fewer needs than a dog.

[‘Pets and Elderly People: It’s Time for a Talk’](#) by Dr. Debora Lichtenberg, VMD, lists as benefits: “Companionship, affection, stimulation, joy! Not to mention true [health benefits](#) such as lowering stress, blood pressure and increasing mental acuity.” However, having a pet requires extra work, responsibility and financial commitments.

The next question is: What type of dog to get? Jenna, in her article [‘Best Dog Breeds for Senior Citizens’](#) observes that “The key is to [find the type of dog](#) that best fits your lifestyle and abilities, regardless of your age. It's also important to make sure you can [meet your dog's needs](#), like exercise, grooming, and health care.” In the article she names 10 breeds she thinks would be perfect. Under each breed she includes size, temperament, activity level, grooming needs and medical problems.

Sometimes you just need a little extra help. Organizations like [ElderDog Canada](#) focus on helping seniors care for their dogs. The service is free. According to their website, “ElderDog volunteers will visit seniors at home and help with basic dog care activities”, including taking your dog for a walk, picking up dog food, nail

clipping, brushing, driving to and from vet offices and/or groomers, and short term care while you are in hospital. What a great service!

ElderDog Canada also matches senior dogs who need a home with seniors who are looking for a dog. According to the article, [‘This Volunteer-Run Organization is Enriching the Lives of Seniors and Senior Dogs’](#) by Andrea Karr, the goal of the organization is, “To place senior dogs with senior owners who can appreciate them, and to help elderly owners care for their beloved furry friends if they need extra assistance.” It’s a win/win situation. They look after each other.

What happens if you decide to move into a retirement home? We sent a survey to retirement homes in the Ottawa region, and were happily surprised how many retirement homes welcome dogs. Click on <http://www.responsibleogowners.ca/retirement-homes-and-pets-intro.html> to read about our research.

To answer my friend’s question, “When are you too old to get a dog?”, it’s not the age that counts, but how prepared you are in case problems arise. In the article, [‘The Healing Power of Pets for Seniors’](#), Barbara Ballinger encourages people to have backup plans. She says, “Our golden years can be very unpredictable, so it’s important to have a contingency plan in place for our furry and feathered friends before an emergency strikes.”



# Dog Myths Busted *by Julie More*

“What dog myths?”, you ask. Well, how about ‘A dog with a wagging tail is a happy dog’? or ‘A dog’s mouth is cleaner than a human’s mouth’? I always wondered how true these sayings are, so I decided to do some research on the web.

In the first article I came across, [‘What Are the Biggest Dog Myths?’](#), the author, Jenna Stregowski, RVT, starts off with “Call them legends or even ‘old wives’ tales’, but don’t call them facts. Some of these sayings about dogs have been around for centuries.”



Let’s take the myth that you can tell if your dog has a fever by feeling his nose. If it’s dry and warm, he has a fever. Well, not quite. According to the article, [‘7 Dog Myths You Totally Thought Were True’](#), “a dry nose can result from many things. [Common reasons for a dry nose](#) include sunburn (more common in dogs with pink noses) and allergies.” The best way to find out if your dog has a fever is to take his temperature. Oh well, my dog will be disappointed. He hates having his temperature taken.

What about, ‘You can’t teach an old dog new tricks’? Well, Tyler, my 12 year old lab, sure disagrees with that one. He loves to learn new tricks. In the article, [‘9 Myths About Dogs That Need To Be Busted’](#) Mike Clark agrees with Tyler. “Senior pups can [absolutely learn new things](#). In fact, it is one way to keep their brains sharp and active well into old age.” Teaching your senior dog new skills strengthens the bond between you and your dog, and it exercises his brain. In some cases they are easier to train than puppies, because they can focus longer.

How about, ‘A dog wags his tail because he is happy’? Well, not quite. According to the article, [‘What Fido Wishes You Knew: Top 10 Dog Myths Busted!’](#) by The Pet Experts, “The wagging of your dog’s tail is the most visible indicator of how he is feeling, but it doesn’t always mean that he is happy. Dogs indicate confidence, excitement, insecurity and even fear with a wagging tail.”



These are just a few of the dog myths busted. The 4 articles I quoted from cover 35 myths. Some of the most popular myths are discussed in more than one article. The authors explain how these myths started. I found them very interesting. Each myth is based on some truth, but then it was exaggerated or misinterpreted. A very interesting subject, indeed.

## Famous Dogs

Now that we have busted a lot of the dog myths, let's talk about famous dogs. Some are movie stars like Lassie, others are heroes like Chips, the most decorated dog in World War II, Laika, who went into space aboard the Soviet Union's Sputnik 2, and Trakr, who helped saved people in New York, trapped under Ground Zero. Then there are dogs who became famous because of their owners, like Sunny and Bo Obama.

We all know Lassie. Actually, I only knew about Lassie, the star of the TV series. However, in the article, [‘Top 10 Family Movies Starring Dogs, Heartwarming Live Action Films About Dogs’](#) Jenna explains that the TV series is based on the movie “Lassie Come Home”, about Lassie the loyal Collie who was “determined to be reunited with her loving but poor family who are forced to sell her to a wealthy duke.”

Chips was the most decorated dog in World War II, according to the article, [“Five Famous War Dogs”](#) by Mike, DogTime. He was a Collie/German Shepherd/Siberian Husky mix. “The pooch saw action in Germany, France, North Africa, and Sicily. Among the animal's heroic exploits are his assault on an Italian machine-gun nest, and helping take 10 enemy Italian soldiers captive.”

Did you know that Laika was the first dog in space? Reading the article, [‘From Toto to Lassie, here are the world's most famous dogs’](#) by Gabbi Shaw, I found out that Laika was the first living creature to orbit the earth, in Sputnik 2 in 1957. “Not much was known about the effects of space on animals, and in the hurry to beat

the Americans in the Space Race, Laika was sent into orbit without a means to return her to Earth.” The brave pup gave her life for space research.

Trakr, a German Shepherd police dog, rescued the last surviving person under the rubble of Ground Zero. Diane Beth Miller writes in the article, '[10 Most Famous Dogs in History](#)', “Trakr and his police officer handler, James Symington, drove to New York City from Canada to help locate those trapped or no longer breathing under the rubble of Ground Zero. Trakr and Symington are credited with finding the last survivor, a woman who had been imprisoned under heavy concrete and steel for over 24-hours.”

Some dogs become famous for their actions, others because of their owners. Sunny and Bo Obama are part of that lucky group. They are not just famous, but also very cute. You don't believe me? Well, read the article, '[Farewell, Sunny and Bo Obama](#)' by Karin Brulliard, a reporter with the Washington Post. She starts off the article: “Here's a bipartisan statement on this day of political transition: Sunny and Bo Obama are really cute.” Click on the link. The article contains great pictures of the 2 dogs. You will agree that they **are** very cute (chuckle).

## **RDOC Park Clean-Up Events**

I know it's hard to believe, but Spring is coming! Yeepee! Considering our first big snowfall in Ottawa was in the first week of November, we are more than ready for Spring. Of course, with Spring come the RDOC Park Clean-Up events.

Every year, in the Spring and Fall, we hold Park Clean-Up Days in Ottawa area dog parks. During the morning we hand out bags and gloves to dog owners, who are the ones who do all the work picking up the garbage etc. Their reward is a much cleaner park, and their pups get dog cookies. Thank you to everybody who participates in these events.

We would also like to thank the [City of Ottawa GLAD Cleaning the Capital Campaign](#) for donating garbage bags and gloves. Our dogs are very grateful.

## Here are the Clean-Up dates:

**Stittsville Dog Park** – Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Rain date – Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

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**Heritage Park** – Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Rain date – Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

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**Bruce Pit** – Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Rain date – Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

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**Conroy Pit** – Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Rain date – Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

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## Kid's Section

Message from Tyler

(Canine co-editor of the Kids' Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter)



It is with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to Morgan, my good friend and co-editor. Woooooof! Morgan and I go back a long time. We first co-edited the Dogs' Den Storybook, then this newsletter.

Morgan died on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Nellie (my big sister, who was also a co-editor of the Dogs' Den storybook and this newsletter) met Morgan at the Rainbow Bridge. They are playing ball together, chasing each other and having fun, healthy and full of energy.



In honour of Morgan, we are renaming the Kids newsletter to the “Kids and Pups Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter”. Thank you, Morgan for all your help. I will always remember you. Woofie! Woof! Tyler

*You can read the Kids newsletters [here](#).*

*Just a friendly reminder to visit the latest edition of the [Kids Activity Page](#) on our website.*

## **Canadian Canine Good Citizen (CCGC) Test Program**

Have you thought of hosting a Canadian Canine Good Citizen Test? Like our website says, “It is a great opportunity for clubs, organizations and shelters to encourage and reward responsible dog owners, and earn money to support their mandates.”



For more information, click on <http://www.responsible dog owners.ca/ccgct-info.html> or email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com)

***RDOC would like to congratulate  
our latest CCGC graduate team,***

***Jenn Thorgeirson and Ben!***

***Well done!***



# Teddy Bear Picnic



Come and bring your children to see us at the Teddy Bear Picnic on **Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>**, on the grounds of Rideau Hall. We will be sharing a booth with Ottawa Therapy Dogs.

It's a fun way for your children to learn about dog safety, especially the polite way to meet a dog. Then they can meet one of the therapy dogs, so they can practice what they learned. We hope you will come and visit us.

## Garage Sale *by Julie More*



Our annual garage sale will be held on **Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>** (rain date Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>) at 24 Elderwood Trail, Stittsville, starting at **9 a.m.** Thank you, Betty, for offering to hold the fundraiser at your house.

Everybody, go through your house. It's time to declutter. Whatever you don't need, we will be happy to take. Items can be dropped off at Betty's house on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Please put a price on each item as it will make our lives much easier. Please keep the prices low for a quick sale. If there is an item you want back, if it doesn't sell at a certain price, please mark "firm", so we don't let it go for less than the price tag.

We also need volunteers to help out on Saturday. If you can help, please email me at [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com)



## 'Fundscrip' Fundraiser

This Fundraiser was very successful during the Christmas season. For those of you who are new to RDOC, the beauty of this fundraiser is that it **will cost you nothing more than the price of a gift card** - all you need to do is purchase a gift card, and use it for a gift, or for yourself. Click on the following link to find out what the fundraiser is all about, and how to participate:

<https://group.fundscrip.com/en/WMGWDR/education-on-dog-safety-and-responsibility>

## 'Take Your Owner For A Walk And Support RDOC' Fundraiser



Tyler's warm up exercise 😊

Our board members' dogs are happy to report that the 4th annual 'Take Your Owner For a Walk and Support RDOC' Fundraiser will be held from **September 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>**. The dogs would like to tell you that they are putting us on a strict training program. As you can see, Jazz, Gus and Tyler are continuing to take us for walks. They only gave us a few weeks' rest after last September's walk-a-thon.



# Membership

Please consider joining RDOC. We would love to have you as a member.

**Corporate membership: \$60**

**Single / family membership: \$25**

**Senior / disabled persons / full time student membership: \$15**

**Non-profit groups: \$35**

To join RDOC or to renew your membership, please [email us](#)  
or go to our website at: [www.responsibledogowners.ca/membership.html](http://www.responsibledogowners.ca/membership.html)

Why not purchase a **gift certificate**? It's a great birthday gift, Father's Day gift, welcome new puppy gift, a welcome to a newly moved-in family in the neighbourhood gift, and much more. Email [inquiries@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:inquiries@responsibledogowners.ca)

## Advertising program

RDOC is pleased to introduce our newsletter and brochure advertising programs.

We have 2 newsletters:

### The Dog Guardian Newsletter

The newsletter you are reading now is a quarterly online\*\* newsletter dealing with everyday dog ownership issues. We cover a variety of topics including indoor fun with your pup; dog dementia; winter sports; travelling with your pet; moving to a retirement home with your 4-legged friend, etc. [www.responsibledogowners.ca/newsletters.html](http://www.responsibledogowners.ca/newsletters.html)

### The Kids Edition of The Dog Guardian Newsletter

A monthly online\*\* newsletter devoted to educating children on safe interactions with dogs. Some of the topics covered in past issues have been fun websites for kids about dogs; indoor activities with their pups; teach your dog a trick; dogs with jobs (e.g. guide dogs); Dogs' Den storybook (e.g. how to meet a dog), etc.

[www.responsibledogowners.ca/newsletter-kids\\_version.html](http://www.responsibledogowners.ca/newsletter-kids_version.html)

**\*\***In addition to being published online, our newsletters go to our members, vets, animal hospitals, groomers, kennels, dog training schools, dog breed clubs, etc. The *Kids Edition* newsletters also go to daycares, nursery schools, CHEO (The Ottawa Children’s Hospital - Child Life Department).

As you can see, we cover all sorts of businesses and interest groups, and our prices are very reasonable:

<b><u>Dog Guardian Newsletter:</u></b>	<b><u>Kid's Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter:</u></b>	<b><u>Brochure</u></b>
Full page \$60 Half page \$45 Quarter page \$25 Business card size \$15 <i>Members get a 10% discount</i>	Full page \$40 Half page \$25 Quarter page \$15 <i>Members get a 10% discount</i>	Full panel \$100 Half panel \$50 1/3 panel \$40 <i>Members get a 10% discount</i>

**Thank you for considering advertising in our newsletters and brochure.**



A big thank you goes to our committee for proofreading this newsletter. We really appreciate your help. You are the greatest. A special thank you goes to Kit Watson for the final proofreading. *Jill & Julie (newsletter co-editors)*

**Responsibility • Respect • Recognition**

**Contact RDOC by:**  
 E-mail: [inquiries@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:inquiries@responsibledogowners.ca)  
 Phone: 613-868-2201 Please leave a message

**Write to us at:**  
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**Or visit us online at:**  
[www.responsibledogowners.ca](http://www.responsibledogowners.ca)

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With over forty years of experience, **Cheryl Smith** has been at the forefront of the paradigm shift in the dog training discipline. Her search for innovative and effective methods brought her into contact with many of the early experts in the field. She has conducted many successful seminars in Canada, United States and elsewhere to spearhead the shift in the resolution of problem behaviour.

Cheryl Smith and her team look forward to sharing their expertise that is driven by their desire to bring your relationship with your dog to its fullest potential!

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