

# The Dog Guardian

Newsletter for Responsible Dog Owners of Canada

## SPRING 2021

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### Highlights *by Julie More*

Goodbye Winter! Hello Spring! 😊

The pandemic affected all of our lives. Lots of things had to be cancelled and/or modified. We all had to figure out how to adjust. With this in mind, we started some new programs. One is our virtual discussion group on Sundays and Wednesdays. We discuss several topics about our pups, such as different training methods, commercial dog food ingredients, equipment for your special needs pup, etc.

Many of our fundraisers had to be postponed or cancelled. We were in lockdown and stores were closed. However, people still had birthdays etc. So we discussed how to buy presents for these special occasions during the pandemic. Thanks to our pups, we came up with a great idea - read the article 'Introducing a New Fundraiser'.

We have come up with some interesting topics in this newsletter, everything from canine autism to equipment for our special needs pups. Enjoy the newsletter. Let us know what you think of it and what other topics you would like us to cover next time.

## Board News

We had our virtual Board Meeting on January 30th. It was a short meeting. Most of our activities have had to be postponed due to the pandemic. We talked about our new discussion groups, and our new fundraiser.

### Canine Autism *by Julie More*

Nellie, my Australian Shepherd, was quite the dog. She was very smart and easy to train, but her personality presented quite a challenge. She was showing autistic behaviour traits. I started doing some research and it turned out that, yes, some dogs are autistic. Canine Autism does exist.

The article "[Can Dogs be Autistic? 5 Major Symptoms and Treatments](#)" is a very good introduction to the subject. "Veterinarians prefer to call this condition "*canine dysfunctional behavior*" instead of canine or dog autism, even when the symptoms are almost the same. The reason is that the science behind this behavioral rareness is still in diapers as the medical community doesn't fully understand this."

The article "[Autism in Dogs: Causes, Symptoms and Treatment](#)" goes into more detail. It points out that it is not well understood what causes autism in dogs. It may be linked to some missing nerve cells, called mirror neurons.

"They are activated when an animal carries out a certain function and when it sees an action performed by another animal. The neuron 'mirrors' the behavior of the other animal. It is as if it is doing the action itself. It is not surprising that mirror neurons are thought to govern how we relate to others and the world around us. If these neurons are missing, it would make sense that the dog would show autistic behavior."

If this theory is correct, it means that the dogs are born with it, so it is not triggered by anything you have done.

The next question is: How can you tell if your dog has autism? The article "[Can Dogs Have Autism?](#)" explains: "For a dog to be tentatively diagnosed with autism, he or she should exhibit atypical repetitive behaviors and some degree of impaired social interaction with dogs and/or people. Also, a veterinarian must first rule out other conditions that might be responsible for the observed clinical signs." The author also points out that it's very important to find out what your dog's trigger points are, and try to avoid them.

Now for the important and practical question - how can you help your dog? According to the article "[Could my dog have canine autism?](#)", "Fear is a huge part of survival. For dogs suffering from canine autism, survival is paramount. Dogs have learned to survive by association, both good and bad. The dog stores visual, audio, and scent associations in memory and learns to respond accordingly."

Here are some of the suggestions for working with dogs who show autistic behaviours:

- ❖ Be very patient.
- ❖ Help them adjust to new situations very slowly.
- ❖ Remember that it is important to be consistent.
- ❖ Stick to routines.
- ❖ Keep things simple and familiar.
- ❖ Keep communication simple. Use one word commands.
- ❖ Some medication may be helpful to reduce anxiety.  
However, you should always consult a vet before using any medication.

There are many more interesting articles on the web. Basically, what I found out was that there needs to be more research done on this subject. We know so far that canine autism does exist. It's genetic; your pup is born with it. Don't let others make you feel guilty. It's not your fault. There are lots of things you can do to help your pup.



*Nellie*

After doing the research for this article, I realized that Nellie didn't have autism. However, I used several of the same coping techniques, especially being patient, slowly introducing new things, and keeping to a routine.



## Why Do Dogs Do What They Do? *by Julie More*

I bet the title of this article got you wondering - LOL. This afternoon I was watching Tyler, my 13 year old lab, going round, and round, and round, then finally lying down. I thought there must be a reason for his behaviour besides amusing me. Then I wondered what the reasons are behind his other “strange” behaviours, and so the idea for this article was born.

Let’s go back to Tyler going round, and round and round before finally lying down. According to the article “[What’s Behind That Funny Dog Behavior](#)” by Ron Miller, this behavior is instinctual. In the good old days, before dogs had comfortable dog beds in nice warm houses, dogs walked round and round to flatten the grass to make themselves a comfortable bed.



This next behaviour I noticed with one of my guide puppies in training. We were in a dress shop. Cadbury, my chocolate lab, suddenly stopped in front of a 3 part mirror. He stared and stared. He couldn’t believe he was seeing 3 of his siblings. They all sat exactly like him. When he got up and moved, the other 3 did exactly the same. He also couldn’t figure out why everybody in the store was laughing at him.

In the article “[Here’s What That Funny Puppy Behavior Really Means](#)” by Hilarie Erb, Hilarie points out that it is confusing for a pup the first time he sees himself in the mirror. “He may cautiously approach that other dog and give it a sniff, or be wary of it altogether until he figures out that there is no smell and it isn’t ‘real’.”

Bibi, another guide puppy I raised, used to run in her sleep. She was funny to watch. In her article “[13 Reasons Behind Your Dog’s Weird Behavior](#)”, Lisa Marie Conklin explains these dogs are dreaming in their sleep. “What’s interesting is that studies revealed certain dog breeds acted out their hallmark traits while dreaming, like an English springer spaniel flushing out prey or a pointer ‘pointing’ in its sleep.”

I didn’t have any problem figuring out why my very first guide puppy sat between my legs when we were visiting the Experimental Farm. He watched the cows in amazement while safely sitting between my legs. He thought “My, what big dogs you are.” The cows looked at him with interest, as if to say “My, what a tiny calf you are!” (chuckle). The pup figured he was safe sitting between my legs, and that I would protect him. That’s exactly what Erin Ollila says in her article “[Interpreting Common Dog Behaviours & the Meaning Behind His Moods](#).” She says this behaviour “is most often a sign of anxiety or nervousness.”

Nellie, my Australian Shepherd, had this funny habit of tilting her head at times when I was talking to her, as if to say “You want me to do what? Are you sure about that?” She looked so funny (chuckle). In her article “[Common Canine Behaviors Explained](#)”, Jenna Stregowski, RVT gives the following explanation of this cute behaviour: “A dog might cock her head to the side to get in a better position to hear or see something. Consider that a dog’s muzzle can obstruct vision. Perhaps the ear flaps muffle some sounds. Momentarily tilting the head might be a way to see or hear better.”

I would like to end this article with Jenna’s observation: “There’s no doubt that every dog is its own person and has a specific personality. But nearly all dogs are guilty of a few bizarre behavior patterns.” My dogs have had way more than a few funny and bizarre behaviours. They have provided me with endless entertainment over the years.

## Special Equipment for Special Needs Dogs by Julie More

There are service dogs, guide dogs, hearing alert dogs...our canine friends look after us well. What happens when our dogs need special equipment because they were in an accident, have arthritis, or just get old and less mobile like we do? We can acquire walkers, wheelchairs and back braces to help us. What about our dogs? What equipment is there to help our four legged friends? Let’s find out.

First I went to YouTube and found [this heartwarming video of Pigeon](#) (the pup, not the bird) getting around very well with her new wheelchair. It’s a fun video to watch.

### Back Braces



What if your dog needs a back brace? There are plenty of different types available on the web. Take a look at [this back brace](#) from Handicapped Pets Canada. According to the website, this brace is “Ideal for pets with the following conditions: Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD), Back Pain, Arthritis, post-surgical recovery and rehabilitation.”

Does your elderly dog have a problem getting up? [This harness](#) featured on the Help 'Em Up website may help.



It's "A complete shoulder and hip harness system that literally lifts the lives of aging or recovering dogs! By placing a pair of handles where you can quickly reach them, this unique dog harness allows you to lend support at any time."

Some dogs need help getting in and out of cars, houses etc. The article on "[Disabled Dogs Products](#)" published in the Whole Dog Journal advises us to "Look for a step or ramp that is easy for you to position, wide enough to be stable, sturdy enough to support your dog, and which has a durable non-skid surface."

What if your dog is blind? Well, take a look at this device from the article "[Mobility Equipment for Dogs: Comparing All the Options](#)"



It's a Halo which acts like a white cane for a visually impaired person. The Halo "fits like a front dog harness and features a circular 'halo' that extends around your dog's face. The halo is used to protect the face from your dog walking into things as well as to forewarn of upcoming obstacles. As the halo scrapes against a wall, your blind dog will feel and hear the Halo's warning and know that there is something impeding their movement."

These are only a few of the items available to help our 4-legged friends. It's nice to know that there are adaptive devices available, not just for us, but also for our faithful pets.

## New Program



The pandemic cancelled and postponed a lot of our activities. So we became innovative, and in January we started a new virtual discussion group on **Sunday afternoons**. Some people couldn't make it on Sunday afternoons, so in mid-February we started our second virtual group on **Wednesday afternoons**. We discuss topics like clicker training, commercial dog food ingredients, equipment for your special needs pup, etc. Kit attended – virtually – the one-day conference put on by the Golden Retriever Rescue Group, and gave us a report.

To join one or both of the groups, please email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com) and we will send you an email with a link to join us on Zoom.

## RDOC Dog Park Clean-Up Events

We are hoping to hold the RDOC Spring Clean-Up events in May and June. It all depends on the pandemic restrictions. Please refer to our website for updated information.

<http://www.responsibledogowners.ca>



## Kid's Section

Welcome to our monthly Kids and Pups Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter. It is aimed at the 3-8 year old age group. You can [read the Kids and Pups newsletters here](#).

*And 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? As it says on our website, 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.responsibleowners.ca/ccgct-info.html> or email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com)

## Garage Sale *by Julie More*



We are hoping to have our annual garage sale in May. It all depends on what’s happening with the pandemic. Please refer to our website for updated information.

<http://www.responsibleowners.ca>





## 'Fundscrip' Fundraiser

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://www.fundscrip.com>. Click on 'Support a Group'; enter the group invitation code 'WMGWDR'; then click on Search.

## Introducing a New Fundraiser

### Presents for Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.

As the pandemic continues and we are stuck in our houses, it is difficult to come up with birthday, anniversary, Easter, etc. presents. Never fear, RDOC comes to the rescue. 😊

Why not make a donation in the person's name to RDOC? For more info, please email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com).

## In Memory Of...

Losing a pet is hard, especially during a pandemic. Our pets have been with us in good times and bad. Why not celebrate his life by making a donation in his name to RDOC? His name will appear on the [memories page in our website](#). For more information please email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com)



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



Our 5<sup>th</sup> annual 'Take your owner for a walk and support RDOC' fundraiser is back again this year. We are hoping that, with the money we raise this year, we will be able to continue to expand our kids' program even more. The walk will take place from Monday, September 13th to Sunday, September 19th. Each of the participants will walk a total of 7 hours during the week. We hope you will sponsor our dog-owners' team again this year. The dogs are already starting to whip their owners into shape, by making sure they practise every day.

## Membership

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

**Single / family membership: \$25**  
**Senior / disabled persons / full time student membership: \$15**  
**Non-profit groups: \$35**  
**Corporate membership: \$60**

To join RDOC or to renew your membership, please [email us](mailto:inquiries@responsibledogowners.ca)  
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)



**IF YOU LIKED THIS NEWSLETTER**

**PLEASE CONSIDER  
MAKING A DONATION TO RDOC,  
OR TAKING OUT A MEMBERSHIP.**

# 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 Kid's & Pups 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 & Pups Edition* newsletters also go to day cares, nursery schools, CHEO (The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa - their Child Life Department).

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

<u><b>Dog Guardian Newsletter:</b></u>	<u><b>Kid's Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter:</b></u>	<u><b>Brochure</b></u>
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:**

RDOC, 24 Elderwood Trail,  
Stittsville, ON K2S 1C9, Canada

**Or visit us online at:**

[www.responsibledogowners.ca](http://www.responsibledogowners.ca)

## Resources

### Canine Autism

“Can Dogs be Autistic? 5 Major Symptoms and Treatments”

<https://woofdog.org/can-dogs-have-autism/>

“Autism in Dogs: Causes, Symptoms and Treatment”

<https://www.mypetneedsthat.com/autism-in-dogs/>

“Can Dogs Have Autism?”

<https://www.petmd.com/dog/behavior/can-dogs-have-autism>

“Could my dog have canine autism?”

<https://dogsbestlife.com/home-page/canine-autism/>

## **Why Do Dogs Do What They Do?**

“What’s Behind That Funny Dog Behavior” by Ron Miller

<https://www.dogingtonpost.com/whats-behind-that-funny-dog-behavior/>

“Here’s What That Funny Puppy Behavior Really Means” by Hilarie Erb

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/heres-what-that-funny-puppy-behavior-really-means/>

“13 Reasons Behind Your Dog’s Weird Behavior”

<https://www.rd.com/list/reasons-behind-dog-weird-behavior/>

“Interpreting Common Dog Behaviours & The Meaning Behind His Moods.”

<https://www.hillspet.ca/en-ca/dog-care/behavior-appearance/types-of-common-dog-behavior>

“Common Canine Behaviors Explained” Jenna Stregowski, RVT

<https://www.thesprucepets.com/common-canine-behavior-explained-1118306>

## **Special Equipment for Special Needs Dogs**

Pigeon (the pup, not the bird) getting around very well with her new wheelchair. It’s a fun video to watch.

[https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=tfPIaEkDT\\_c](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=tfPIaEkDT_c)

What if your dog needs a back brace?

<https://handicappedpetscanada.com/back-braces/>

Does your elderly dog have a problem getting up?

<https://helpemup.com/features/>

“Disabled Dogs Products”

[https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/care/senior\\_dog/disabled-dogs-products/](https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/care/senior_dog/disabled-dogs-products/)

What if your dog is blind? “Mobility Equipment for Dogs: Comparing All the Options”

<https://topdogtips.com/mobility-equipment-for-dogs/>

## **Kids’ Section**

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

<http://www.responsible-dog-owners.ca/kidspage/activitypage-main.html>

## **CCGC**

<http://www.responsibleowners.ca/ccgct-info.html>

or email [morejulie@hotmail.com](mailto:morejulie@hotmail.com)

## **Fundscrip Fundraiser**

<https://www.fundscrip.com/>

## **In Memory Of**

<http://www.responsibleowners.ca/memories.html>

## **Membership**

To join RDOC or to renew your membership, please email:

[inquiries@responsibleowners.ca](mailto:inquiries@responsibleowners.ca)

or go to our website at: [www.responsibleowners.ca/membership.html](http://www.responsibleowners.ca/membership.html)

## **Newsletters**

The Dog Guardian Newsletter

[www.responsibleowners.ca/newsletters.html](http://www.responsibleowners.ca/newsletters.html)

The Kid's Edition of the Dog Guardian newsletter

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

