



Summer 2021

Lend a Heart News

The Quarterly Publication of Lend a Heart Animal-Assisted Therapy, Inc.
Proud to be an American Kennel Club recognized Therapy Dog Organization



*Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.
Happy 4th of July*



*Lend a Heart Role-play and Team Gathering
Jacinto Creek Park Elk Grove, CA May 20, 2021*

Active and potential Lend a Heart teams recently got together at Jacinto Creek Park in Elk Grove to role-play, socialize and shake the dust off after a year long absence from volunteer work. Teams practiced various skills to prepare themselves for the upcoming June 26 evaluations and for future client visits. This "Role Play" event was helpful in reminding the dogs, as well as the handlers, how to deal with different situations and was a great refresher on basic commands. Each handler and canine practiced walking past each other as well as stopping to greet one another while keeping their dogs calm and focused. The dogs worked on sit, down, and stay as well as distraction training which involved a very tempting squeaky toy.

Lend a Heart will be requiring that each team participate in at least one role-play park event but strongly encourages several role-play park events. We will be using Better Impact to keep a record of who has been a participant in these events. Prior participants of a role-play will have their time counted toward meeting this requirement.

Bringing comfort to those who need it most.

We are setting up park visits thru the summer and they will be offered at different days/times. We have plans to offer another two or three in various locations to accommodate teams that have not participated. All Active teams along with Associates with new pups are invited!

MISSION STATEMENT

Lend A Heart is a volunteer organization comprised of certified handler and animal teams, and associated volunteers, dedicated to provide compassion and understanding for our clients through animal-assisted therapy.

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Can You Speak Dog?

by Lori Cicchini

I am sure most of us can “speak” dog with our dogs and can “read” some of their body language – are they happy? Upset? Not feeling well? We have gotten to know our own dogs well and have a bond that makes it easier to understand what our dogs may be trying to tell us.

The following is an article published by the AKC in January of 2020 by Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT, and provides some interesting tips on communicating with your dog.

HOW TO READ DOG BODY LANGUAGE

Much of canine communication consists of barks, whines, and growls, it's important to know what dog sounds mean. More often, though, dogs rely on non-verbal body language. This can lead to plenty of human-dog misunderstandings. Sometimes, dog body language is simply unfamiliar. At other times, it's in direct contrast with that same signal means to a human, such as with yawning or looking away. To better communicate with your dog, learn some tips on reading dog body language.

Tail Wagging

Tail wagging seems like an obvious body language signal. If a dog's tail is wagging, the dog is happy, right? Wrong. People misinterpret this signal all the time. All a wagging tail means is that the dog is emotionally aroused. It could be excitement, but it could be frustration or worse. To interpret the dog's emotions and intentions, look at the speed and direction of the wag as well as the position of the tail.

Basically, the faster the wag, the more aroused the dog. Think about those long, slow, side-to-side tail sweeps your dog makes when greeting you — the type that wags the dog's whole body. That's a relaxed dog. A faster twitch-like wag indicates a higher level of arousal and possibly in a negative way. Think of a guard dog on alert.

The direction of the wag may hold clues as well. A recent study on tail-wagging showed that dogs tend to wag more to the right when they feel positive about something, like interacting with their owner. Tails wagged more to the left when dogs faced something negative. Then, there's the helicopter tail wag where the dog's tail spins in a circle. Without question, that's a happy wag. You'll usually see it when a dog is greeting a beloved person.

Finally, the position of the dog's tail relative to the ground holds important clues about their emotional state. Essentially, the higher the tail, the more assertive the dog. Dogs with their tails pointing down to the ground or even tucked between their legs are feeling fear and stress. Dogs with their tails held up like a flag are feeling confident, perhaps even aggressive. Relaxed dogs hold their tails in a neutral position, but neutral depends on the breed.

Some breeds, like Chow Chows, have tails that naturally curl over their backs whereas breeds like the Italian Greyhound have a very low neutral tail position. If you get to know your dog's neutral tail position, you will more quickly recognize when their emotions have shifted.

Raised Hackles

When a dog's hackles are raised, it means the hair along their back is standing up. Technically called piloerection, the fur can fluff up across the shoulders or down the back and all the way to the tail. This is a definite sign that the dog is aroused, but not necessarily in a negative way. The dog might be upset or stressed but could also be excited or intensely interested in something. It's often an involuntary reaction, like goosebumps in people.

Posture

A dog's weight distribution can tell a lot about mood and intention. Consider a cowering dog that is hunched toward the ground. That's a sign of fear or stress. The dog may be trying to get away from something and the posture makes the dog appear smaller. In other words, it says, “I mean no harm.” The extreme of this posture is a dog that rolls onto their back exposing the belly. This may look like a dog soliciting a belly rub, and in a relaxed dog, it often is. But it can actually be a sign of considerable stress and anxiety. The dog may even urinate a little in appeasement.

The opposite posture is a dog with his or her weight shifted forward. This dog is trying to get closer to something. This might simply indicate the dog's interest. But it could also indicate offensive intentions, particularly paired with other aggressive body language cues like a twitching tail held high. In this case, the dog is trying to appear larger.

An easy-to-read aspect of dog body language is the play bow. This is when dogs place their chest on the ground with their rump in the air. As the name implies, it's used to initiate play with other dogs and even with people.

A less easily understood signal is the paw raise. In the pointing breeds like the English Setter, the paw raise is part of pointing behavior where the dog indicates nearby prey. But outside of this context, a raised paw often indicates a dog is uncertain about a situation or perhaps feels a bit insecure.

Facial Expressions

Dogs have similar facial features as people, but they don't use them in the same way. Consider yawning. People yawn when they're tired or bored, but dogs yawn when they're stressed. According to Turid Rugaas, author of *On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals*, dogs use yawning to calm themselves in tense situations and to calm others, including their owners. She suggests yawning at your dog to provide comfort at stressful moments like a vet visit.

Volunteers Helping

Stella Remembered

by Margot Vandercapellen



Sweet, beautiful Stella was rescued by me from Homeward Bound in 2012. I immediately found out that she was not only sweet and beautiful but was also super well trained. So, I decided to put her wonderful disposition to work and found that Lend a Heart was the perfect organization to join, and she could share her love to young and old and to special need kids at different facilities. She was loved by all.

Stella also spent a lot of time on our 30 ft sailboat in the Bay. Did she like it? We think she loved it. Of course, the car ride from Roseville to Brickyard Cove was already a treat but being on the boat was the ultimate. She loved laying on top of the bench in the cockpit overlooking the marina in Brickyard Cove. She was so much at peace. We also had a system going she immediately adjusted to, meaning, once the sails went up and we sailed out of the Marina into the Bay, her place was on her bed on the floor. She was totally fine there. But the Bay can be extremely rough, and the boat would heel quite a bit, "toenails in the water" we would call it. You would think she would freak out, but not Stella. She would raise herself up to look out to check out the waves and her surroundings, just checking, and no matter how rough, choppy, and high the waves were, she found her stability being down in her bed with her head up flat on the bench so she could still see what was going on. She didn't really have her sea legs, but she was unbelievably calm even in stormy weather. There was one minor challenge we faced every evening before we went to bed down in the salon where she was unable to get to, due to the steep stairs. So, we built her a canopy using two turned over flexible blue canvas lounge chairs as a roof and with extra canvas coverage over it, so that she was totally protected from the wind. She was ok with that too. She was remarkable. Stella crossed The Rainbow Bridge in Dec. 2019. 🐾

Can you speak dog? continued



But don't be surprised if your dog yawns back. Just as yawning is contagious in people, dogs can "catch" yawns too.

Lip-licking is another bit of dog body language that people often misinterpret. Just like people, dogs will lick their lips after a delicious meal, but they will also do it when they feel anxious. Sometimes the tongue flick is so quick it's tricky to notice. Your dog isn't signaling a desire to lick your face, but rather discomfort with a given situation.

The most confusing facial expression is smiling. Yes, some dogs smile, and if you're not familiar with the expression it can look terrifying. Usually, when dogs bare their teeth, it serves as a warning, as if they're saying, "Look at my weapons." It's hard to mistake the aggressive intention of a snarl, especially when it's paired with a menacing growl. The corners of the dog's lips form the shape of a C and the front teeth are fully displayed.

Smiling dogs also display their front teeth, but the meaning is the complete opposite. Also known as a submissive grin, this expression is often found on a happy dog with a loose and wiggly posture. The dog's overall attitude says, "Hello, I come in peace."

Eyes

You can learn a lot about your dog's internal state by looking at the eyes. First, a dog's eyes can be soft or hard. Soft eyes have relaxed lids and sometimes look like the dog is squinting. They indicate the dog is calm or happy. The opposite is hard eyes where the eyes seem to go cold. These indicate a negative state of mind, and you'll know them when you see them. The dog might be guarding a toy or feeling aggressive. A hard stare, where the dog looks intently at something, especially for a long time, usually signals a threat.

Eye contact is an important signal for dogs. Just as the hard stare can be a precursor to aggression, looking away is meant to calm a situation. When dogs feel stressed, they will pointedly look away and avoid eye contact. People often interpret this as their dog ignoring them or being stubborn, but the dog is expressing discomfort.

The whites of the eyes are another key indicator. Known as "whale eye", when a dog shows the whites of the eyes, it's a signal they are feeling anxious or stressed in a situation. You might see them when you make your dog uncomfortable, like when you pat your dog on the head, or when they're afraid someone will steal a bone or toy.

Deciphering Dog Body Language

None of these dog body language signals act alone. They are all part of a package. So, when you read a dog's communication, look at every signal the dog is using from the tail height to the eye shape. Your dog is "talking" to you all the time. If you learn what your dog is saying, you will develop a deeper bond of trust and respect. Plus, your newfound understanding of your dog's emotional state will help you predict your dog's behavior and prevent problems. 🐾



Dog Days of Summer

by Kristine Nymoen

The phrase “Dog Days” conjures up the hottest, most sultry days of summer.

The “Dog Days” are based in astronomy. *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* lists the traditional timing of the Dog Days: the 40 days beginning July 3 and ending August 11, coinciding with the heliacal (at sunrise) rising of the Dog Star, Sirius. The rising of Sirius does not actually affect the weather (some of our hottest and most humid days occur after August 11), but for the ancient Egyptians, Sirius appeared just before the season of the Nile’s flooding, so they used the star as a “watchdog” for that event. Since its rising also coincided with a time of extreme heat, the connection with hot, sultry weather was made for all time.

With this in mind, during a heat wave, when a dog is exposed to high temperatures, heat stroke or heat exhaustion can result. Heat stroke is a very serious condition that requires immediate medical attention. Heat stroke doesn’t only occur on the hottest days of the summer. Often problems can be seen during the first moderately hot days of the summer in active dogs that just go on being really active before they have a chance to get used to the heat. People also assume that if a dog is playing in and out of a body of water that the dog won’t overheat. This isn’t true, when the water temperature gets near 75 degrees or if the dog is working hard in the water, they can experience heat stroke.

Symptoms: Heat stroke begins with heavy panting and difficulty breathing. The tongue and mucous membranes appear bright red. The saliva is thick and the dog may vomit. Normal body temperature for dogs is between 100.5° F and 102.5° F.

Treatment: Emergency measures to cool the dog must begin at the first sign that heat stroke may be occurring. Move the dog out of the source of heat, preferably into an air-conditioned building. Mild cases may be resolved by moving the dog into a cool environment. If the dog’s temperature is above 104°F, begin cooling by spraying the dog with a garden hose or immersing him in a tub of cool water (not ice cold water) for up to two minutes. Cool packs (not icy cold) applied to the groin area may be helpful, as well as wiping his paws off with cool water. Monitor his/her temperature and continue the cooling process. Take your dog to a veterinarian as soon as possible.



Working Like a Dog

by April Mason

The Beatles told us “It’s been a hard day’s night, and I’ve been working like a dog,” but what can dogs do? As it turns out, a lot! Due to the faithful, loyal, patient, and gentle attributes of our canine companions, many of them are ideally suited for specific jobs. Dogs are so intelligent that most of them can comprehend up to 165-250 words including commands and hand signals.

The dog job we are most familiar with is therapy dog. Therapy dogs are trained to provide comfort and affection to the elderly, children, and those affected by trauma or disaster just to give an example.. As we know, our dogs must be friendly yet calm, know basic commands, and pass an evaluation to be certified. The most common therapy dog breeds are Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers.

Labs, Goldens, and German Shepherds are also frequently trained as service animals. These are working dogs trained to perform specific tasks for owners with disabilities. These tasks can include everything from carrying and retrieving objects, to pushing or pulling doors, or turning on light switches. These dogs undergo intense training before being matched with an owner. Some examples of the various types of service dogs are guide dogs who assist the blind in avoiding obstacles and locating objects; hearing dogs who alert their deaf owners to sounds and people; mobility assistance dogs who attend to people in wheelchairs; seizure response dogs who can detect oncoming seizures in their owners, diabetes assistance dogs who can sense when someone’s blood sugar is high or low; and mental health dogs who are matched with owners dealing with post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), anxiety, panic, or autism for instance.

Many dogs have much more dangerous jobs and put their lives on the line for their country every day. Dogs in the military can be trained for search and rescue efforts, as cadaver dogs, bomb detection dogs, and enemy attack dogs. These dogs are considered non commissioned officers (NCO’s) and have served in every major conflict since World War I. In 2000, President Bill Clinton passed an order making these dogs adoptable once they retired. Prior to that, the military often euthanized them as “surplus”.

Police canines also put themselves at risk for their community. They train to be K-9 officers who can attack and apprehend a suspect; detect bombs, drugs, or explosives; or they can join a search and rescue team. These dogs are frequently adopted by their handlers upon retirement. The most common breeds of police and military dogs are German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, and Dutch Shepherds. These dogs also train extremely hard for at least six months.

It is quite amazing when you look at all of the things that our loyal companions are able to do. We are blessed to have these incredible creatures protecting us, caring for us, and standing by our sides for their lifetime. 🐾

BARC Highlights

by Kathy Prendergast



Lend A Heart's BARC (Boarding Area Relaxation Corps) teams are getting ready to return to the airport visits. Refresher trainings have been held to explain the new procedures. Caution is an important aspect of our returning to the airport.

We have 24 teams that are ready to return: Carol Abelson with 9 yr old Woody, Jennifer Baer-Riedhart with 9 yr old Logan, Jill Ballard with 4 yr old Bunny, Sheila Bose with 6 yr old Nanami, Jody Bryan with 13-1/2 yr old Humi, Susan Drummond with 10 yr old Rocky, Joanne Faist with 11 yr old Talullah, Carla Goughnour with 12 yr old Teena, Patt Hull with 10 yr old Ringo, Laura Langman with 10-12 yr old (rescue) Brodie, Patti Mandaro with 10 yr old Misty, Laura Maxwell with 12 yr old Libby, Sandy McKaig with 12 yr old Gage and 10 yr old Proctor, Cathy Morse with 3-1/2 yr old Ranger, Stephanie Plucker with 11 yr old Willow, Kathy Prendergast with 13-1/2 yr old Kira, Debbie Smith with 10 yr old Rosie, Terrie Tatosian with 9 yr old Bentley, Carolyn Unger with 10 yr old Bear and 9-1/2 yr old Luke. Also on the BARC team is Sue Berli, Ralph Jacks and Cindy Towne who will be assisting as Greeters.

The visits are going to look different as we return. As our dogs age we are looking at ways of making the visit with less walking and more visiting. Instead of wandering the airport, we will be in a designated area in Terminal A and B. This will benefit our aging dogs. People will be coming to us and our dogs will be lounging on a blanket/pad while people greet and pet them.

We're excited and waiting the word from the airport when the visits will start, hoping for a July 1st date. When we return we will be showing off our new BARC vests, both dog and handler. They are Royal Blue and have both the airport info on them, but also the LAH logo on both. We can't wait for the airport people to see our new look. 🐾



BARC team dogs show their 4th of July colors as they get ready to return to the airport. A few of the dogs that are excited about returning ... Colbert and Jenni-ene Cheng, Hank and Sandy Moon, Nanami and Sheila Bose, Ranger and Cathy Morse, Rocky and Susan Drummond, Rosie and Debbie Smith, Sophie and Rose Margolis, Woody and Carol Abelson.



LAH Highlights

by Sandy McKaig

Lend A Heart had its first "new normal" evaluation (including masks and hand sanitizer) on Saturday, June 26, 9a to 3p. We had 19 volunteers who helped make this event happen, enabling 5 new teams to pass evaluation. In fact, this was an all day affair for 9 of those volunteers. The new teams consisted of an experienced LAH volunteer with a new dog. Please welcome 5 new teams who passed....Isaiah (w/Jenni-ene), Sophie (coming back from a medical w/Rose), Murray (w/Debby), China (w/Laura), and Gabby (w/Cindy).

Thanks goes to Guide Dogs (request from Kathy and Sheila)! We were able to borrow their Training Room (behind Madison Market Place) for our evaluation location. Unfortunately, our regular facility is not open for groups, yet. And finally, a very special recognition goes to our 4 neutral dogs (from small to large) - Sully (small), Kira & Nanami (medium), and Logan (huge) - who spent the entire day being an integral part of our role-play activities. Saturday was a good day for all who participated - volunteers and new teams, alike! 🐾



To Supplement or Not

by Stephanie Plucker, DVM

There are many supplements on the market for people and pets. If you read labels, which you should, most have not been evaluated by the FDA.

I would like to address some of the more popular ones.

Omega 3 fatty acids are a yes.

There have been numerous studies done to show that they can help with skin problems in particular and arthritis. But it needs to be given daily to help

Glucosamine/ Chondroitin supplements

This one is a little controversial. There are oral supplements everywhere and on injectable called Adequan. The injectable has studies to back up it's effectiveness. The oral has studies to show little effect up to yes it helps. On a personal note I believe it helps. I have had 3 dogs with arthritis including Willow and they seem to so better on it. It also needs to be given daily

Doggie Vitamins

If your dog is eating a balanced commercial diet they shouldn't need these. If your dog is having health issues, discuss this with your veterinarian.

CBD

This one is definitely up in the air. No significant studies have been done to really shows this helps. This is a case of companies seeing a way to make money off people who are looking for something for the pet. According to claims it can help everything from seizures to arthritis to skin issues and beyond. I don't believe it is harmful unless owners decline other medical treatment due to the false belief that CBD is a cure all.

Probiotics

There are more and more studies to support that using probiotics do provide help for not only the digestive system but also might help the immune system. I wouldn't hesitate to use them. Fortiflora is a product that has some scientific studies to support its use. 🐾

Please submit stories, news articles, and/or photos for publication to: knym2018@yahoo.com

Big Day of Giving Recap

by Sandy McKaig

How did LAH do at Big Day of Giving? Lend A Heart raised a total of \$1581.38 (19 Donors gave \$1475 at our BDOG site, while 4 Donors gave \$106.38 at our PayPal site). Out of our 23 donors who participated, 17 belonged to Lend A Heart. A "big" thank you to the donors who donated on Big Day of Giving!

Our goal was to raise \$5000 and this was our first time mingling with 687 other non-profits - LAH did just fine. As a take-away, LAH needs to maintain and expand our Facebook presence, as well as pursue new active media options, i.e. Instagram.



How will the donations be used? Our needs statement in BDOG...A major goal of LAH will be to recruit new teams and offer additional re-socializing and educational events for current teams. To do this, we need to increase and enhance our communication and education resources with our members, clients (programs), and public. LAH recognizes its lack of video support and realizes the benefits of video support. Our next project - professional-produced videos (first up, Evaluation) will be posted on our website and Facebook pages - available to public, potential teams, new teams, current teams, and clients. We are looking for a professional or semi-professional videographer. Does anyone know of someone they could recommend? If so, please send the information to Sandy McKaig at mckaigsl@comcast.net.

On the lighter side.....



***Lend a Heart Animal Assisted
Therapy Dogs, Inc.***
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Gold River, CA 95670



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