

THE HYDRANT

The Monthly Bulletin



for Intermountain
Therapy Animals Members

Volume 21/Number 4

April 2021



The Visiting Status ~

Very hopeful progress!

Salt Lake County:

Canyon Rim Care Center
Collective Recovery
Copper Hills Youth Center
Huntsman Mental Health Institute (UNI)
Neighborhood House
Redwood Elementary [R.E.A.D. Program]
Salt Lake Behavioral Health
Salt Lake International Airport
St. Mark's Hospital
University of Utah Hospital and Rehabilitation
Utah School for the Deaf and Blind

Utah County:

Center for Change

Northern Utah Counties:

Ogden Regional Hospital
Our House Assisted Living of Ogden

ITA teams needed (call the office if you're interested):

Several of the facilities above would love to have more teams, so call to inquire about those if any sound like a great place for you and your partner. These listed below have **no teams** yet!

Salt Lake County:

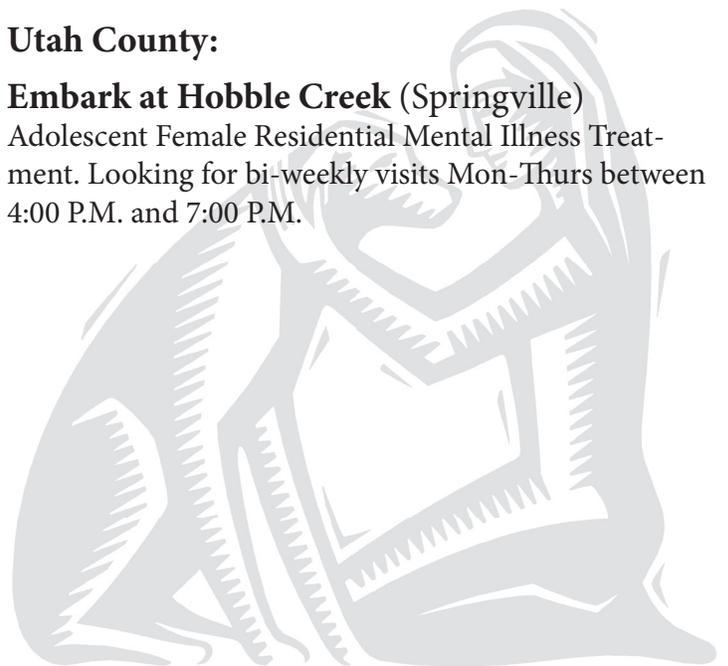
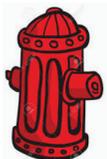
The Work Activity Center (West Valley City)
Occupational Health Services. Looking for bi-weekly visits Mon-Fri between 9:30 am and 2 pm.

Odyssey Elementary would like a R.E.A.D. Zoom session on April 23rd.

ITA's Paws Around the Maypole on April 30th, 5-8 pm. We will need a gang of volunteers to help us with our drive-through event to celebrate spring!

Utah County:

Embark at Hobble Creek (Springville)
Adolescent Female Residential Mental Illness Treatment. Looking for bi-weekly visits Mon- Thurs between 4:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M.



RETIRING



Abby, partner of Diane Bracey

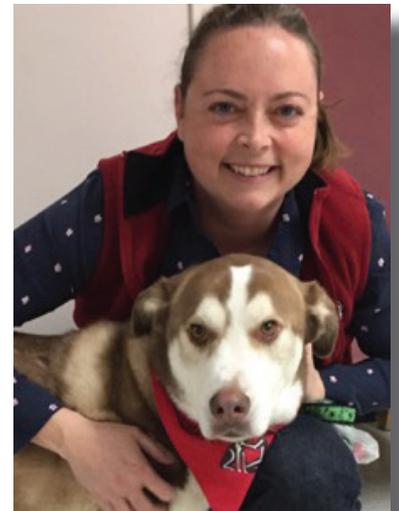
(Salt Lake) Diane has been an ITA member since 2001, and her most recent partner, Abby, has reached age 12 and decided it's time to retire. Diane has been an amazingly consistent team and supporter in these almost-20 years, and we hope to see her back again soon if fortune dictates. She and her Golden partners have always shined especially at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind and other settings for people with disabilities.

Kelsi Weaver Martin & Toby

(Bozeman) Kelsi says they found their niche in de-stress visits at MSU and with the staff and clients in the pre-release program at the jail.

Toby is now 9 years old and suffered a bout with cancer this past year. Kelsi feels that with those two considerations and a year of not visiting, it's in Toby's best interests to retire.

She said that they both truly enjoyed visiting, she appreciates ITA's professionalism and hopes to be back in the future.



LOSS OF A PARTNER



Luna (partner of Noreen Kittrick)

(Salt Lake City) Noreen lost her sweet Luna on March 18th because someone laced food with antifreeze and threw it over the fence into the family's backyard. Luna consumed it and died of the poisoning. This is such a heartbreaker. There has been no way to determine who did this criminal act.



SOME GOOD NEWS

In case you missed our happy announcement...



On March 16th we welcomed a new addition to our ITA staff team!

Her name is **Lilly Beaman**, and here she is with her dogs Louie, an Aussie Doodle, and Odie, a Rottie-mix.

Lilly is a lifelong Utahn and comes to us after earning her Bachelors degree in Animal Science from Utah State in December. She is our new National/International Coordinator for our Affiliate Groups and R.E.A.D.® Program.

Stop in any time and get acquainted in person!

- Kathy, Karen, Melissa & Cindy

ITA Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm

Fridays - CLOSED



April Calendar

Monday, April 12 - SLCC Occupational Therapy Students presentation, 11 am

Tuesday, April 13 - Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday/Sunday, April 17-18 - Photo Box fundraiser, 10 am to 4 pm

Friday, April 23 - University Hospital Caregiver Stress Relief, 1:30 – 6 pm

Friday, April 30 - Paws Around the Maypole ITA Fundraiser, 5-8 pm



OUT AND ABOUT

Five ITA Teams Get Oriented Today (4/1) to our New Program at Collective Recovery!



OUT AND ABOUT

[RIGHT:] Salt Lake City International Airport broadcast this tweet about ITA teams!

[BELOW:] A doctor in Tennessee and a nurse at University of Utah Hospital just recently ... more evidence that staff are missing our animals just as much as patients.



Discount Offer for ITA Members!



INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS
PETS HELPING PEOPLE

Use the coupon code on reverse side for 10% off any Strapworks order and 10% will be donated to Intermountain Therapy Animals.

3900 W. 1st Ave, Eugene, OR 97402 4050 S 2700 E, SLC, UT 84124
541-741-0658 : strapworks.com 801-272-3439 : therapyanimals.org

10% of your discounted purchase will be donated to Intermountain Therapy Animals.



10% off code, eligible at the entire Strapworks family of companies : **ITA2020**







Celebrate Spring! (DOGS invited too!)
Gourmet Curbside Service for You and Your Best Friends

Paws around the (virtual)
MAYPOLE

Tra-La ~ it's almost May (the hopeful month of May)!

Time for a Spring TAKEOUT PICNIC

Friday Evening, April 30th

5 to 8 pm

in ITA's parking lot at

4050 South 2700 East

in Holladay



\$100 for 2 • \$175 for 4

More info and registration at

www.therapyanimals.org

or call 801.272.3439

Benefiting Intermountain Therapy Animals



Since we still don't know when "normal" will return—or even a "new normal"—the future remains both foggy and optimistic.

But we'd like to celebrate spring anyway!

Our virtual Halloween drive-through was such a fun success that we are going to do another on May Day Eve (April 30th), and you are invited!

You can go straight to the registration page by scanning the code below with your phone. We hope to see you there!



Research on Dogs

“What Do All These Dog Studies Really Mean?”

By Marc Bekoff, March 2021

[ED NOTE: Marc Bekoff is one of the most renowned scientists in the world of animal studies. You have likely read some of his books. Here are excerpts from an even longer piece originally published in psychologytoday.com. It's long, but worth reading if you've ever been confused or unsettled by some study's conclusion that just felt “off” to you, based on your own experience.]

Dogs and studies of these amazing canids seem to be “in.” Clearly we’re learning a good deal about the cognitive, emotional, and moral lives of homed and free-ranging dogs from a wide variety of sources, some more credible than others.

Along with all sorts of media I encounter, I also receive queries about what all of these studies actually mean. The question in the title—“What Do All These Dog Studies Really Mean?”—came via email from Felicity, a graduate student in canine studies. She went on to ask if I could make sense of a series of research essays published in the past 5-10 years, especially those that were concerned with studying “similar phenomena” but reporting different results.

She had recently read “The New Science of Our Ancient Bond With Dogs” and told me this piece got her to finally write to me.



I’m very familiar with countless dog studies on captive and free-ranging dogs, I had pondered these questions. My simple answer was, “There’s a lot of good science, but we need to be very careful about sweeping generalizations.”

I want to explain why I’ve come to this conclusion after studying the behavior of domestic dogs and their wild relatives for many years. I also want to stress that my views do not mean that the science is bad or necessarily questionable—in general canine science isn’t “soft,” but

“We must be careful about making sweeping generalizations.”

some studies are more rigorous than others—but rather, there really is no “universal dog”—no “the dog” or single canine mind—and there are some very good reasons why the results from similar studies often vary from one another, even those conducted

on free-ranging dogs.

Felicity, and I also discussed the fact that different studies appeal to people who are interested in dogs for different reasons, including those who choose to live with them or are simply interested in them, researchers who study them, and those who try to use what we know to teach dogs to adapt to a human-dominated world.

So, why do results often differ when it seems they should agree? I often feel that researchers should consider a disclaimer of the sort, “These results apply to the conditions under which these dogs were studied, so differences among different studies are not surprising.”

As I explained to Felicity, comparisons among

Research on Dogs ... continued

different studies can be complicated because different dogs are being studied in different conditions in different laboratories or at different dog parks or in different field conditions.

Also, dogs who typically are studied in labs constitute only a small percentage of the billion or so dogs who inhabit earth. Some studies also suffer from small sample sizes and the breeds or mixes who are involved need to be given close attention. Once again, these aren't "fatal criticisms," as one of my colleagues puts it, but rather these limitations simply need to be acknowledged.

Dogs differ, humans differ, dog-human relationships differ, and so too do the conditions under which they're studied.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to partake in a number of dog studies in labs, in dog parks, and in free-ranging dogs who aren't constrained, but some of whom might "go home" from time-to-time, especially at night.

Here are a few stories that help to explain not only why results may differ from one study site to another, but also why the same dog might behave differently from time to time. These variables are also important to consider when trying to train dogs to act "appropriately."*

1) In one study I sat in the hall with some of the dogs and their humans who were waiting to be tested, and a woman, Lois, asked me why I was there. I told her I was visiting the researchers and giving a talk and she went on

to tell me that her dog Riley was an old-hand at these sorts of studies but on that particular day was "wired" and "stressed" because they hadn't had their daily 3-mile run. Lois also was out of sorts and we know that dogs can mirror our stress. As it turned out, Riley was "off" that day and didn't perform as well on the tests with which she was familiar and then showed no interest at all in staying in the lab. She just wanted her run.

2) In another situation, Curtis, who "loved coming to be tested and cuddled," was downright gnarly. His human, Emanuel, told me Curtis had had a bad night, tossing and turning here and there because he had had a minor skirmish with his friend Erma. Curtis, who typically walked right into the lab to be tested, was hesitant to partake in the experiment with which he was familiar and was coaxed to partake. Curtis failed some tests on which "he had rivaled Einstein" according to Emanuel, and when he mentioned this to the researchers they said

they'd take into account Curtis' state of mind when they looked at the data. I hope they did.

3) One more example is important to consider. As I was watching a study being done, Marvin mentioned to me that he'd had a busy day and had just fed his dog William III around three hours later than usual. Marvin wondered if that would affect how William III would respond in the experiment in which he had been participating, in which food

(Continued next page)

*Dogs differ,
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was used as a reward. I cautioned him that it might; he told the researchers, and they decided not to test William III that day.

4) Finally, once when I was “secretly” watching researchers collecting data on dogs at a dog park, they were a bit too “intrusive” for my liking, trying to get dogs to play when they clearly didn’t want to and stopping rough play. For whatever reasons, on that day the dogs preferred to sniff here and there or simply hang out with other dogs. When the reluctant dogs were coaxed to get up and play, I was told by their humans that their interactions were different when compared to when they chose to play—shorter and consisting of more solo “zoomies”—and they didn’t follow the “golden rules of fair play” as they usually did.

A few days later someone told me that the dogs were more edgy because a new dog had come on the scene. I hope the researchers noted these differences because they’re useful data on how play may differ when dogs want to play versus when they’re forced to play.

Variation isn’t noise, but rather important information

All of this is not to say that these and many other studies aren’t useful and can’t be used to learn more about dogs and to improve their lives, but rather to highlight that there are some very good reasons why the “same” dog might behave differently in the “same” conditions and that we need to be careful when serving up grand conclusions about what dogs can or cannot do, what dogs know or don’t know, or what dogs can learn or cannot learn. I also feel pretty sure that most people

who partake in these sorts of projects follow protocols as closely as they can. In a nutshell, variation should be expected and shouldn’t be ignored. When consistencies arise even when different dogs are studied in different contexts, these data are very useful and may offer robust explanations about dog behavior, cognition, or emotions.

Practical uses of the data

It’s also important to know how data from different studies are put to use. The dog trainers with whom I’m most familiar know how the behavior of the same dog can vary from time to time and also know that they need to be careful when putting research results into practice. This is why people who are trying to teach dogs to live among humans need to be fluent in dog—dog literate—and know how to assess available data.

Unfortunately, being “certified” is not required for people to call themselves a “dog trainer,” and because dog training is an unregulated industry, this, I’m told, is why many dogs don’t adequately learn the skills that will make them friendlier and adaptable to different situations in which they encounter other dogs, other nonhumans, and humans other than their own human, and in the end, if anyone suffers, it’s usually the dog.

There are many good reasons why I often say, “The more I know, the more I say I don’t know.” Dogs far too often are victims of partial knowledge, misinformation, meme-like myths, and “quick” answers and it’s important to respect their individuality, appreciate the large amount of diversity among these wonderful beings, and pay close attention to how research is conducted and what the results really mean.



The lack of detail about some common dog behaviors and individual variability is what makes studying them so exciting. Stay tuned for further discussions of ongoing research on dogs and dog-human relationships. There's still a lot to learn.

This article was originally published by psychologytoday.com.

*There also are some other variables that need to be considered in studies of dog behavior. Some are also important when training dogs to behave “appropriately”, which usually translates into “human-appropriate” rather than “dog appropriate.” For example, it’s entirely “dog appropriate” for dogs to want to sniff a lot, including butts and groins. I often say that if dogs used Facebook, it would be called Buttbook. Not allowing them to use their awesome and highly evolved sniffers could be frustrating to them. When she is working with dogs, force-free dog trainer Mary Angilly wants to know such things as: Is there a medical issue going on? Is the dog in pain or uncomfortable? Are there emotions “getting in the way?”—is the dog stressed or has the dog gone through recent stressful events? Is the dog getting adequate enrichment? Is the dog seasoned at laboratory testing? Are there treats/some sort of reinforcement involved in the testing? If food is being used as reinforcement, has the dog already eaten that day? Has the dog eaten a lot of the type of that’s being used as reinforcement, so they are saturated? How distracting is the environment? What cues are being given to the dog? Are the cues clear? Are the cues distracting or leading the dog to make a choice that they might not if they were on their own? These important questions need to be considered in research protocols. Recall the story of William III.

*"Folks will know
how large
your soul is
by the
way you
treat a dog."*

– Charles F. Duran

**"We are healthy
only to the extent
that our ideas are
humane."**

– Kurt Vonnegut

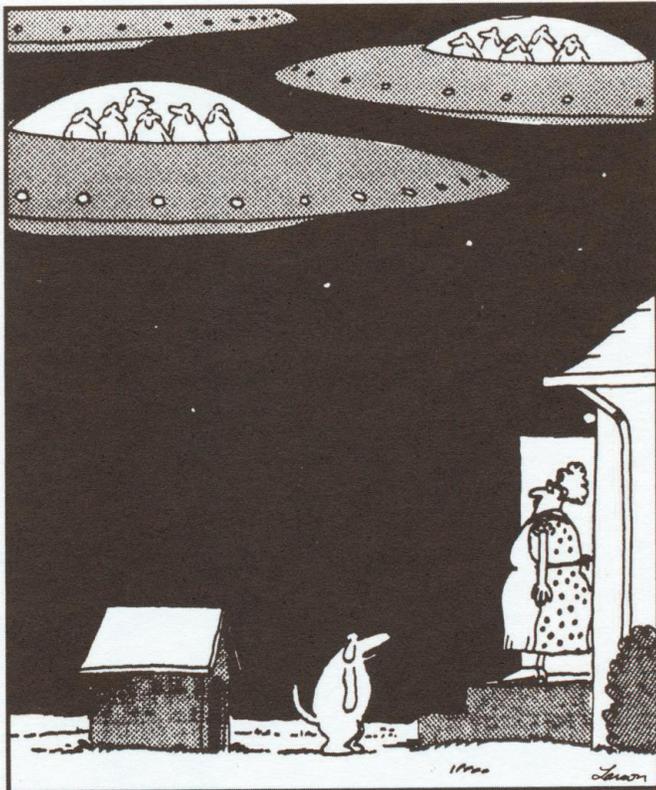
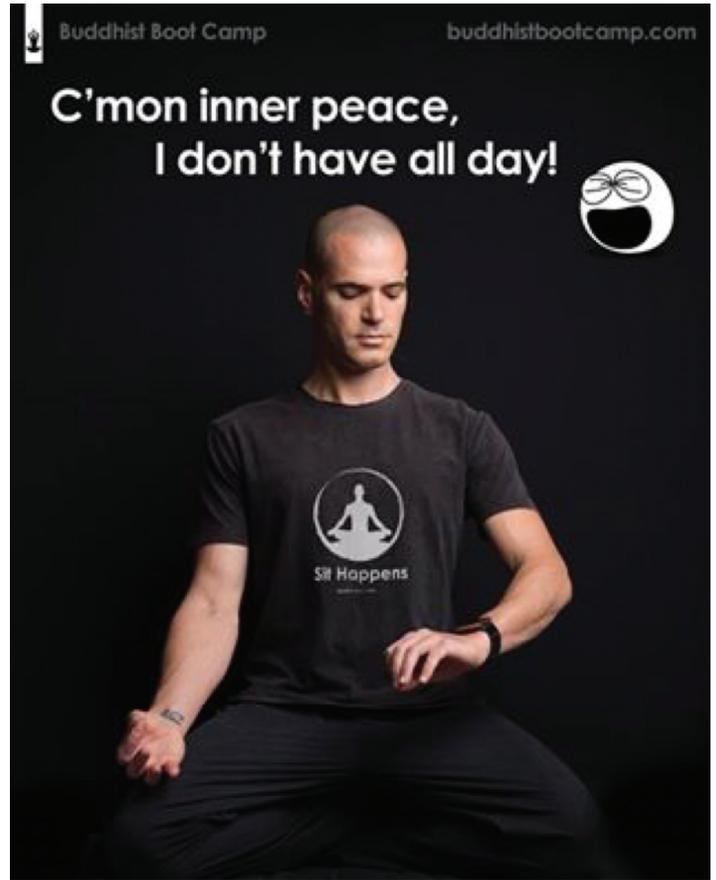


The Lighter Side

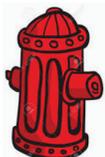
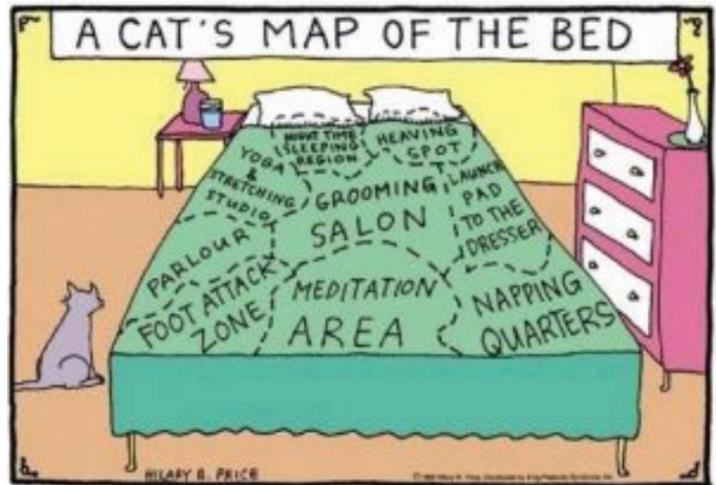


C. Barretti

"SO YOU'RE LITTLE BOBBIE: WELL, REX HERE HAS BEEN GOING ON AND ON ABOUT YOU FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS."



"Well, they finally came. ... But before I go, let's see you roll over a couple times."



The Far Side®