

THE HYDRANT

**The Monthly Bulletin
for Intermountain
Therapy Animals
Members**

Volume 21/Number 9

SEPTEMBER 2021



Sandy LeCheminant's Saatchi



Are you current with ITA?

Membership Dues:

Individual \$99

Family \$150

How to Pay:

Call the office with a credit card (801-272-3439), request a PayPal invoice, or send a check to PO Box 17201, SLC, UT 84117.

Update your Contact Information:

If your contact info remains the same, you can just make your payment.
If any of your contact info has changed, please let us know by responding to this email or you can use the membership renewal application on our website in the member's section.

If you are not planning on renewing your membership, please let us know so that we don't send more notices.

ITA Office Hours:

**Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm
(Fridays - CLOSED)**



September Calendar

Monday, September 6 ~ LABOR DAY (Office closed)

Tuesday, September 14 ~ 7 pm - ITA Board of Directors meeting

Wednesday, September 15 ~ 4 pm - ITA Leaders ZOOM meeting

Friday, September 17 ~ Sunset City Mental Health Awareness Fair, 5:30 pm

Saturday, September 18 ~ 9 to 11:30 am, DOG LANGUAGE class with Catherine Cookson

Friday, September 24 ~ Utah CASA Conference, 2 pm

Tuesday, September 30 ~ RAH Services event, 4 pm



Service Opportunities ~

Have you checked out our site ITAVOLUNTEERS.COM yet? Even though we're experiencing some setbacks, there are still lots of things to do!

HINT: Use the "Live Chat" feature while you're on this site to get questions answered.

CONGRATULATIONS to **PRESTON CHIARO** for being the very first to try out our "Live Chat" feature! (He won a valuable prize for doing so!)

Woo-Hoo, Nancy!

ITA's **Nancy Rosen** was celebrated by her community on August 30th in a very special evening sponsored by the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*: the **Prime Awards: 24 Over 64**. The award is for all she has done to bring the benefits of therapy animals to Bozeman, with special focus on the R.E.A.D.® program at the Bozeman library.

Nancy has been a member of ITA since February of 1998, and she begged us to let her take ITA to Bozeman when they moved there in 2001. Thus, our very first ITA chapter! She has been glitteringly successful, with upwards of 80 teams and more than 35 programs in Bozeman and nearby. This photo is part of the whole-page article about Nancy in the special supplement to the paper. She is pictured with Lily, her fourth ITA therapy partner (preceded by Maggie, KC and Eli). Nancy retired recently as chapter leader since she and Larry now live half the year in California, but she leaves a permanent mark on ITA and her community.

Congratulations, Nancy! Well-deserved! ❤️



RETIRING

Dawn Buhlman & Miss Andi

(Salt Lake City) Dawn says, "I want to thank everyone at ITA for giving us this assignment. You gave us a forever family here."

Dawn & Andi have been an ITA team since February 2016.



Thanks for all you have done! We will miss you!

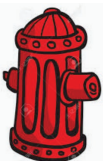
NEW TEAM



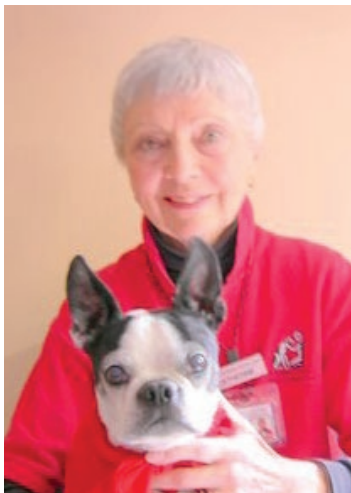
Margaret Mabree & Shiloh

(Ogden) Margaret and her lovely Collie partner Shiloh recently moved to Ogden after many years' experience in another therapy organization. They passed their ITA team screening handily and are all ready to volunteer in the Ogden area!

Welcome to ITA!



LEAVING EARTH



Catherine Chamberlain

(Salt Lake City) We are so sad to report the passing of Catherine, who died on August 3rd after complications from a hip and shoulder fracture that she suffered in April. Catherine and her sweet Boston Terrier, Chato, were a team for 8 years (2000-2007). She also volunteered in the ITA office for three years, and remained a contributing supporting member of ITA for the rest of her life. Above is a shot of Catherine & Chato doing the runway at one of our famous ITA fashion shows.



Bocca, our beloved Great Pyrenees, died on August 17th, 2021. Bocca visited patients for several years at Huntsman Cancer Hospital and as a R.E.A.D. dog at Anderson Foothill Library with my daughter Lauren. We remain proud and amazed by her gentle, intuitive, healing ways, and she so loved her job. We are grateful for the opportunity to share Bocca with others as an ITA therapy team, and will be forever grateful to Bocca for the good work she did on this earth. RIP Bocca Bee. And thank you, ITA.

- Peggy Rosati Allen



Luna, partner of Jim Pehkonen

(Salt Lake City) We are also sad to report the passing of Luna, an amazing little dog who was legendary at the Huntsman Cancer Hospital where she served with Jim for four years. She had a perfect instinct for knowing who needed her most, and spent

countless hours with people while they were going through their chemotherapy infusions.

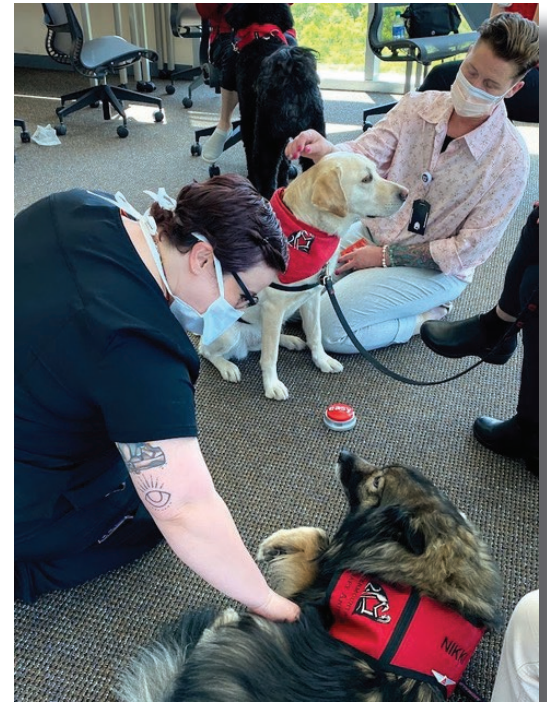


OUT & ABOUT

ITA dogs were, as always, a compelling draw at the University of Utah Hospital Nurses' Week celebration in August. These faces show that the happiness was going both ways!



Macy Miller



Dresden Daynes & Nikki Prince



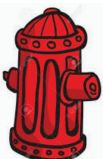
Penelope Briggs



Thena Kehr



Rosie Chiaro





Sumo Butler



Benno Folke



Bear Storey



Cali Bellon



Quincy Feighan



Discovery Gateway put this photo of Jodi Andes & Lili (with Carson Chambers and & Ruger in the background) on their website to highlight their new “Read to a Therapy Dog” activity.



Playing Tug With Dogs Is a Good Thing

Basics of the tug game and how to troubleshoot common problems

By Karen B. London, PhD, June 2021 (in **The Bark** online)

True or False: Tug is a great game to play with your dog. According to our resident canine behavior expert, the answer is a resounding “true,” albeit with some caveats. Dogs who like it—which is most of them—get a lot from it; even some who don’t take to it immediately can learn to enjoy it. Here’s how to play tug with your dog:



Many dogs love to play tug, and one of the beautiful things about this game is that for most dogs, nobody has to teach them how to do it. Even puppies still adorably tripping over their own feet play tug games. It’s that natural for them.

It’s uncommon to meet dogs with a casual interest in the game; dogs tend to either love to play tug or have little interest in it at all. For the the ones who adore it, tug offers a way to engage them in play, exercise them, teach them skills they need to play safely so it’s fun for people and dogs alike, and reinforce them with something valuable.

And for a game you can play in a relatively small space, it’s remarkably tiring for you and your dog! The high-intensity nature of tug relaxes a lot of dogs, improving their emotional state and leaving them calm and contented after a good session.

I also love that I can play tug with dogs indoors—great news when it’s stifling hot, pouring rain or too cold to enjoy being outside for long. (Playing outdoors is wonderful, too, but it’s nice to have an indoor option.) An easy game, it requires no great skills in either our dogs or in us. Simplicity is always a gift, and tug offers it.

Here are some FAQs based on my more than two decades of working with dogs professionally and a life spent playing with them.

How Can I Encourage A Dog Who’s Hesitant To Play?

Though training isn’t necessary for most dogs to enjoy this natural and fun game, some need a little encouragement to join in. Some timid dogs show a bit of hesitancy about pulling on an object when a person picks it up or has it in hand. To get such dogs fully on board with tug, it helps to signal to your dog that you want to play.

Offer a modified play bow by bending your knees and leaning over at the waist, then wave a long toy on the ground to get her attention. (For dogs who aren’t naturals at tug, putting a toy on the ground and then moving it around or waving it back and forth will get the game going. Many dogs who are tug converts learned to play it this way.)

Calmly praise her for approaching the toy and for taking hold of it. Keep that gentle praise coming as she grabs the toy, then pull back gently. For a dog who’s a bit unsure, it’s important that you refrain from pulling hard or waving the toy frantically; keep things nice and easy.

If your dog will grab the toy but won’t pull on it, use only the tiniest bit of pressure when you pull the toy to make it more likely that she will hang on to it. Once she’s regularly and reliably holding on, gradually increase the force you use to



pull. Before long, she's likely to match your effort. And voilà—a game of tug will be in session.

What About Dogs Who Creep Up the Toy?

Tug can be fun, but playing with a dog who gradually moves her mouth up the tug toy toward your hand can suck the joy out of the game really fast. Safety is always the primary goal, so if your dog is a creeper, it's a good idea to make some adjustments to protect your delicate human hand from the armory (teeth and powerful jaws!) of your dog's mouth.

There are two ways to do this. One is to use a really long toy, which requires your dog to move quite a way up the toy before the situation becomes troublesome. A second is to grab the end of the toy she originally had and reset the game; in this case, you'll be holding the end opposite from where you started.

How do you do this? As she approaches your end of the toy, drop it and reach for the end of her side. This takes coordination, speed and practice, but quickly becomes quite natural. (There may be a few collisions during the learning process.)

If neither of those methods are enough to manage the issue, entice her with a second tug toy, then switch between the two as needed. Or, finally, end the game when her mouth starts to travel along the toy toward you. Many dogs are more likely to stick to their end of the toy once they figure out that doing otherwise hastens the end of the game.

How Do I Handle A Dog Who Pesters To Play Tug?

Years ago, many advised against playing tug with dogs. There were concerns about allowing the dogs to use the full force of their mouths around people's hands and about tug leading to overarousal. Many also feared that allowing dogs to "win" by ending up with the toy would lead to trouble in the form of dogs throwing their weight around because they had succeeded in tug.

Knowledge and beliefs are constantly changing, and now, the benefits of tug are more universally recognized.

However, research by Rooney and Bradshaw reported on in 2002 suggests that allowing a certain type of dog to keep the toy after a game of tug can create a different issue. In their study, they observed that the most playful dogs became pushier for attention from their owners if they were allowed to keep the toy after tug games.

This is easy to avoid. If your dog is really persistent and likely to pester you to play, simply put the toy out of reach when the tug game is over.

How Can I Keep My Dog Interested In A Longer Game Of Tug?

Some dogs never tire of tug and are willing to play until their person is ready to stop. Other dogs lose interest quickly even though their people want to keep playing. If your dog is one of the latter, making the game more exciting will help keep her interested.

There are multiple ways to do this.

- Use the toy your dog is most interested in. For many dogs, the top-level toy is a really thick rope, two inches or so in diameter and at least two feet long, sometimes with a knot tied in each end to make it more grippable.
- Play at the time of day during which your dog is the most energetic. For a lot of dogs, the best time to play tug is mid-morning or late afternoon, times when a majority of dogs are filled with energy and likely to be the most playful. If you're not sure when your dog is most revved up, experiment with play at different times of day to figure out if it makes a difference in how long her interest lasts.
- Some dogs find it more exciting to play tug if you pull the toy in a haphazard fashion rather than smoothly, and/or if you pull upward rather than straight and parallel to the ground. (To keep from injuring either yourself or your dog, avoid pulling too jerkily or too high.)

(Continued next page)



Playing Tug (continued)

- If your dog also enjoys fetch, combine tug with a retrieve. Throw the toy, and when your dog brings it back, reinforce her with a game of tug. Don't tug too long, though; before she loses interest (or is about to lose interest), throw the toy again. Vary the fetch/tug ratio: Go from 1:1 to 1:3 or 1:4. Unpredictably mixing the two games keeps many dogs interested and willing to play longer.

How Can I Keep My Dog From Becoming Overexcited And Out Of Control While Playing Tug?

Though it takes effort to get some dogs get excited enough about tug to play, there are also dogs on the opposite end of the spectrum, ones who struggle with emotional control during tug.

These dogs can get nippy, leap up on people or even pull them over. Such out-of-control behavior is generally all about arousal, and that must be addressed in order for tug to be fun for both of you.

Dogs need to develop and practice self-control to be able to play appropriately, and it's easier for them to do that if we work on lowering their arousal level. Generally, the best advice is not to add to the arousal, and to do everything you can to control it.

- Choose the tug toy carefully. Use one that doesn't get the dog too revved up.
- Choose the time of day. Many dogs are naturally calmest in the middle of the day or after a long walk or run, and those might be the best times to play tug with a dog who is easily amped up during the game.
- Take frequent breaks of 5 to 15 seconds to interrupt the upward spiral of enthusiasm.
- When you play, pull the toy in a slow, steady way, low and parallel to the ground rather than upward in a jerky or unpredictable way.

How Do I Help My Dog Accept That The Game Of Tug Must End?

Some dogs are too enthusiastic about tug, and don't take it well when the game ends. One of the best ways to handle this is to teach your dog that when you say "all done," you will only tug for a few seconds more.

Communicating intent to end the game helps many dogs cope because they are not caught off guard. It's tough for dogs who want to play tug endlessly to have it end without any warning.

Another way to ease the pain of ending the game is to follow it with something else your dog likes—a training session, a walk, a massage—so that she associates the end of a tug game with feeling happy.

Here's the takeaway: Tug is fun and makes many dogs so happy. Let the games begin!



We are great enthusiasts of The Bark! While it no longer comes in a print edition, you can GET THE BARK NEWSLETTER IN YOUR INBOX!



The Lighter Side

I finally remember what Zoom meetings remind me of.



A dog exhibiting great patience and wisdom ...



ITA Memories

Scenes from another ITA Dinner Out with the Dogs, in Ogden in August 2011. Someday we hope to be able to do such things again!

