

## Lansing Unleashed eNews: April 29, 2006

Hello, Friends of Greater Lansing Dog Parks:

Welcome to our April 2006 eNewsletter issue. In this eNewsletter:

1. **Dog Paddle Friday, May 5 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Hawk Island County Park, Lansing**
2. **Pooch Precision Team Steps Out at Victorian Days Parade at Noon on Saturday, May 6**
3. **Be Kind to Animals Adopt-a-thon and Pet Show on Saturday May 6. from 10 a.m. to 4p.m.**
4. **Happy Tails Dog Walk on Saturday, May 13 Starting 1-2 p.m.**
5. **City of Lansing Draft Budget Includes Millage Loan for Dog Park**
6. **Getting Ready for the Dog Park**

1. **Dog Paddle Friday, May 5 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Hawk Island County Park, Lansing:** Celebrate the Year of the Dogs at a wet and wonderful venue! The Friends of Greater Lansing Dog Parks (FGLDP) is holding its bi-annual Dog Paddle on Friday, May 5 from 5:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m. at Hawk Island County Park! This is the only event dogs are allowed at Hawk Island to swim and frolic on the beach. Join the canine convention at 1601 E. Cavanaugh Road, between Pennsylvania Avenue and Aurelius Road, in south Lansing.

Admission is \$5 per dog for members and \$10 per dog for non-members. Humans are free. Join as a member at the event and your admission cost will be included in the membership fee. Individual membership is \$15 and Household or Pack is \$25. Standard dog park rules apply, with a few additions. Dogs must be leashed when not in the water. Dogs are allowed in the beach area only (see signs for designated area). Dogs must wear current licenses. An adult must accompany kids and dogs. Owners must be prepared to enter the water to assist their dog. No more than two dogs per adult handler. Bring the camera!

All proceeds from the event will go toward establishing the first leash-free dog park in the Lansing area. The event is co-sponsored by FGLDP and the Lansing Parks & Recreation Department.

2. **Pooch Precision Team Steps Out at Victorian Days Parade at Noon on Saturday, May 6:** The award winning Pooch Precision Team makes its 2006 debut appearance at the Victorian Days Parade starting at noon on Saturday, May 6 in Grand Ledge. Each year, celebrating the start of the summer season, Grand Ledge holds its Victorian Days event on the first full weekend in May including a parade through historic downtown Grand Ledge. The PPT will join others in marching in this fun-filled pageant. Not sure about the PPT? You are invited to walk with your dog behind the PPT in the Victorian Days Parade. For further parade details or questions contact Sue Yancey at [crested@sbcglobal.net](mailto:crested@sbcglobal.net).

There is still time to join the PPT. Their next training session will be held on Sunday, April 30 at 5 p.m. at the Obedience Training Club (OTC) of Greater Lansing, 2227 Spikes Lane, in north Lansing. Spikes Lane is about ½ mile east of the intersection of Martin Luther King and Grand River Avenue. Directions to the Obedience Training Club are also on the club's web site: [www.otcgl.org](http://www.otcgl.org). Future training sessions are set for 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 21, June 11 and June 25, 2006. All training session will be at the OTC. For any PPT training questions contact Sue Yancey at the email already noted.

3. **Be Kind to Animals Adopt-a-thon and Family Pet Show on Saturday May 6. from 10a.m. to 4p.m. at the Ingham County Animal Control Shelter, Mason:** The Adopt-a-Thon highlights the need for homes for thousands of animals as well as celebrates animals and the homes they have found. The shelter will have over 100 pets to adopt. Special adoption packages, rates and giveaways will be in effect. For a small entry fee, you can enter your canine companion into one of the categories of the Pet Show including: Best Tail Wag; Best Dog Trick; and Biggest and Smallest Dogs. There will also be a race for dogs 20 pounds or less. FGLDP will have a booth at the event along with other pet organizations and vendors. For more information about the event including fees please call the Ingham County Animal Shelter, 600 Curtis Street, Mason at 676-8370.

**4. Happy Tails Dog Walk on Saturday, May 13 Starting 1-2 p.m. at Elm Park, Lansing:** Plans are moving ahead for the annual Happy Tails Dog Walk, sponsored by Lansing Parks and Recreation Department on behalf of the future dog park. A wonderful group of Parks and Rec staff takes the lead and our Friends group pitches in with volunteer help. All dog lovers are invited to come and walk with their favorite canine companions on-leash. The 2006 Walk is set for Saturday, May 13 starting at 1 p.m. Meet and register at Elm Park (on Elm Street between Cedar and Washington) between 1 and 2 p.m., walk the River Trail at your own pace to Moores Park, with a stop for water along the way. Your trip back on the trail will end at River Point Park, where there will be information on dog care, health, grooming and other related products. Charge is \$3 per dog or \$5 for two dogs. Your registration fee and any donations will go toward the construction of the park. We can still use a few more volunteers to help with the event so contact Ellen Sullivan at [info@lansingdogparks.com](mailto:info@lansingdogparks.com) or call 484-7417 if you can help.

**5. City of Lansing Draft Budget Includes \$45,000 Millage Loan for Dog Park:** On Tuesday, April 25 a group of loyal FGLDP members joined approximately 200 others who attended the City of Lansing second public hearing. The meeting was to hear what local citizens want in (or out) of the 2006-2007 budget proposed by Mayor Bernero. President Ellen Sullivan asked the council members and mayoral representatives to keep the \$45,000 allocation from park millage funds IN the budget for two unique reasons: It is a long-term loan rather than an outright donation; and it provides the final piece of funding needed to open the off-leash dog park in 2006.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO OPEN THE DOG PARK THIS YEAR!** If you are a City of Lansing resident you can do your part to help by contacting your own Ward council member or any of the council members to voice your support for the dog park AND for their votes in favor of the \$45,000 allocation in the budget. You may contact council members through their office at 517-483-4177, or email them at [council@ci.lansing.mi.us](mailto:council@ci.lansing.mi.us) (this email address will contact ALL Council members at once) or fax your message of support to 517-483-7630.

**6. Getting Ready for the Dog Park, A Continuing Series:** At our April 24 general membership meeting, Linda Nichols of Canine Coaches LLC was our guest presenter. Linda gave us some very helpful insights into how dogs learn and how to strengthen recall behavior. With thanks to Linda, we will start with how dogs learn and follow up on recall in our next issue.

The most important thing to realize when training dogs is that consequences drive behavior. Often, people mistakenly believe commands and cues drive behavior. If we say sit, the dog plants his rear on the floor. It is easy to think, therefore, that the cue sit caused the behavior to happen. In reality, the act of sitting is a result of its consequences. The dog has been given rewards for sitting and thus he repeats the behavior. Reinforced behaviors will be repeated. Unreinforced behaviors will be extinguished.

The danger in thinking our words cause behaviors is that we believe our dogs should know what to do, especially if they did it once before. What often happens is we get the behavior a couple of times and then stop rewarding it. Unrewarded behaviors become weak and eventually can extinguish. Our cues become something to ignore, because they are not properly taught.

When teaching behaviors that are very important such as stay or come when called, it is even more important the dog learns the behavior well before attaching the cue. This way the cue always means the same thing. By getting the behavior in a number of circumstances, rewarding frequently, and only using the cue when we can guarantee the behavior, we create a behavior that is resistant to extinction. (Source: Linda Nichols, Canine Coaches LLC, [www.caninecoaches.com](http://www.caninecoaches.com) )

As we have emphasized previously in this column, recall is one of the most important behaviors that your dog will need to know to be successful at the dog park. In our next issue we will offer some tips from Linda about how to strengthen recall behavior in your dog.

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That is all for now. Woof! Stay in touch through our web site at: [www.lansingunleashed.com](http://www.lansingunleashed.com)

The Friends of Greater Lansing Dog Parks (FGLDP) does most of its direct mail communication via email to save on postage costs. Email addresses are used for information on dog parks and dog related events and are not shared with third parties. Paid members without email access will receive mailings through the U.S. Postal Service.

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