



# The Dog Guardian

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## One Door Closes and Another Door Opens by Candice O'Connell

On June 11, 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada announced its decision not to hear the final appeal seeking to quash Ontario's ban on several breeds including Staffordshire Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers, pit bull terriers and all dogs that have characteristics that are substantially similar.

The dismissal, with costs awarded to the Province of Ontario, ends the legal pleadings on behalf of Catherine Cochrane, a Toronto dog owner, and the legal challenge, spear-headed by the Dog Law Coalition of Canada (DLCC), to strike down the breed specific clauses of the Dog Owners Liability Act (DOLA).

The question of whether "pit bulls" should be banned is hotly debated even within the dog-owning community despite the fact that there is no scientific or statistical basis that supports the Province of Ontario's allegation that "pit bulls" are more dangerous than other dogs. Bite statistics most often list the German Shepherd Dog, Labrador Retriever and Husky breeds in the top three breeds responsible for dog bites. It should be noted that the breeds listed at the top of the bite statistic list generally correspond with the popularity of the breeds in any specific time frame. But, regardless of what breeds top the list, all dogs can and will bite if they are provoked; and, even though we may not understand or recognize the provocation, there is nearly always provocation.

Having experience in the field of challenging the government on regulatory matters and provisions concerning dogs and other domestic animals, I can tell you legal challenges regarding legislation are rarely won in the court room. They are won or lost in the public realm and subsequently the political arena. Hence, the most painstaking and lengthy battle to overturn the ban against pit bulls in Ontario will be to convince the public at large that the problem is not dogs or breeds of dogs but whether the dog(s) have a responsible owner.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada believes that education is the key to addressing the issue of irresponsible dog owners and getting the law redrafted to address the real problem. Therefore, it focuses on this aspect of the battle.

That said, the legal battles are not yet over. Clayton Ruby, the lawyer who represented Catherine Cochrane, has taken the R. v. Philip Huggins case, which Terry Green of Green & Vespry won and which the City of Toronto is attempting to appeal.

The leave to appeal will be heard on June 17th. If the court refuses to hear the appeal, the case law will stand and some excellent jurisprudence has been established. If the leave to appeal is accepted, Mr. Ruby will be defending the win.

For more information regarding the Huggins case, see "Saving Ginger: Is she worth it?" on page 3 of this newsletter.

## **Fighting Breed Specific Law – Case-by-Case** by Candice O'Connell

Since the introduction of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (DOLA) 2005 and the infamous "Pit Bull Ban", thousands of mongrel dogs have been seized and euthanized for no reason other than their appearance. In many cases, responsible dog owners have been unfairly caught in the DOLA net and endured both emotional devastation and massive financial expenses in legal battles to save their dogs. Many others could not afford the battle and relinquished their dogs for destruction.

In 2005, Banned Aid, a coalition of several organizations including Dog Law Coalition of Canada, Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of Canada, Golden Horseshoe American Pit Bull Club, American Staffordshire Terrier Club of Canada and Advocates for the Underdog, challenged the breed specific elements of the DOLA. The case, which has been working its way through the court system, was dismissed, with costs, on June 11, 2009, ending the bid to quash the pit bull ban in Ontario.

On another level, perhaps the most important to dog owners who have been personally hurt by an unfair and inefficient law, a few lawyers have been "fighting in the trenches" for individual dog owners and their dogs. One lawyer and his team have saved hundreds of dogs and just recently won two cases that set some very important case law.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is pleased to advise that Terry Green of Green & Vespy Law Offices (Ottawa, ON) recently won two DOLA cases, thereby setting some very important case law that may be used in the Supreme Court challenge.

In Her Majesty the Queen vs. Luisa Ditomas, Nelson Jeronimo and Michael Monteiro, Shai, a lab cross, was alleged to have injured another animal. In this case, Kenji, an American Eskimo dog, owned by a neighbour, Ms. Han-Yin Seow, was running at large and entered Shai's backyard where Mr. Moneiro, Shai and another dog were playing ball. Kenji was then chased out of the backyard by the two dogs. Shai caught Kenji and a fight followed. Kenji was injured and was later euthanized at the owner's request.

Ms. Seow filed a complaint with By-law Services and the Animal Control Officer investigating the complaint declared Shai a pit bull type dog. The Crown sought the destruction of Shai under the DOLA.

In this case, the Judge rejected the destruction sentence sought by prosecution and substituted a muzzle and leash order. This case has not been appealed and subsequently the case law will remain and will assist in other cases. The important case law set is as follows:

- the only person uniquely situated to determine the characteristics of a mixed breed dog is an all breed conformation judge;
- irresponsible dog owners must carry some of the liability for the behaviour of their dogs when incidents happen.

In the case of Her Majesty the Queen vs. Philip Huggins, the owner was charged with allowing his alleged pit bull type dog (Ginger) to run at large, without a leash and a muzzle, and to bite and injure a human and another animal.

In fact, it was Mr. Huggins' mother who was walking Ginger on private property frequently used by dog owners. And the dog was leashed and muzzled!

Another dog owner was playing fetch with her unleashed dog at the same location. The other dog, a shepherd mix, ran up to Ginger and a clash ensued. Ginger's leash broke and her muzzle was ripped off during the skirmish. Both dogs and handlers were injured. Only Philip Huggins was charged despite the fact that the other dog was off leash in violation of leash laws and was the instigator of the skirmish.

The case made its way to the Ontario Court of Justice where Justice of the Peace, Kevin Madigan, ruled Mr. Huggins could not be found guilty on the grounds that his mother was responsible for the dog at the time of the incident. However, he also ruled that Ginger, a mongrel dog, was substantially similar to a pit bull type dog and ordered her destroyed.

The decision was appealed and went before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Madam Justice M.L. Hogan rendered her final decision on April 6, 2009, overturning the destruction order for Ginger and establishing the following case law:

- a court cannot take "judicial notice" on dog behaviour; it is the subject of special knowledge and requires an expert, i.e. a judge cannot hear evidence and just reach conclusions from its own "wisdom";
- culpability is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration when making a decision under Section 4 of the DOLA; (Note: Ginger was deemed not culpable because she was wearing her muzzle and Madam Justice Hogan decided that she did not start the fight);
- even a "pit bull" should not be destroyed under Section 4(3) if the court is not satisfied that the dog is a risk to the safety of the public.

### **Saving Ginger! Is she worth it?**

As mentioned previously, Madam Justice M.L. Hogan rendered her final decision in the Huggins' (Ginger) case on April 6, 2009, overturning the destruction order for Ginger and establishing the following case law:

- a court cannot take "judicial notice" on dog behaviour; it is the subject of special knowledge and requires an expert,
- culpability is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration when making a decision under Section 4 of the DOLA; (Note: Ginger was deemed not culpable because she was wearing her muzzle and Madam Justice Hogan decided that she did not start the fight);
- even a "pit bull" should not be destroyed under Section 4(3) if the court is not satisfied that the dog is a risk to the safety of the public.

The City of Toronto filed for a leave to appeal the decision in the Huggins' (Ginger) case on May 4th and, if the Court accepts to hear the appeal, it could mean a reversal of the decision and death for Ginger.

Terry Green and his team have been fighting for Ginger for more than four years; at least half of that time was provided pro bono. Counsellor Green is committed to every case he takes but he is particularly emotional about the ones where an animal is involved. He and his team wanted to save this poor old girl and send her home to live out her senior years with her loving companion. However, this case extends beyond Philip Huggins and Ginger. The outcome of this case will decide the fate of many other dogs that

have been unfairly targeted by a piece of legislation that, frankly, does nothing to protect the public from dangerous dogs. It means setting case law that will allow a judge to determine if a dog, even a restricted or prohibited dog, is culpable and render a decision with conditions other than death.

Is saving Ginger worth it? You bet it is. She is just a mutt like many of us own and love.

Representation of this case is now in the hands of Clayton Ruby, Ruby and Shiller\* but Terry Green and his team will provide whatever assistance they can to ensure that Ginger will someday be able to go home and that the case law that they worked so very hard for will be defended successfully.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is very proud that Terry Green, a lawyer with integrity and heart, is a member and sits on its Board of Directors. We congratulate Terry Green, his law firm associates and his team on the work they do and the many successes that they have had in representing responsible dog owners. Green & Vespry Law Offices is a general practice law firm, see [www.greenandvespry.ca](http://www.greenandvespry.ca).

## Dog Bite Prevention – It's everyone's responsibility!

The nation's most commonly reported public health problem is dog bites. Half of all children will be bitten by a dog by age 12 and the majority of these bites are by the family dog or other dog known to the child.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada (RDOC), a non-profit organization promoting responsible dog ownership, is a registered presenter for Doggone Safe and will soon offer the "Be a Tree" program to children.

RDOC's Canadian Canine Good Citizen Test™ (CCGCT™) is program that promotes responsible dog ownership and is one more important tool in the prevention of dog bites.



### The 3 most important things to teach your kids

1. **Dogs don't like hugs and kisses** – Teach your kids not to hug or kiss a dog on the face. Hugging the family dog or face-to-face contact are common causes of bites to the face. Instead, teach kids to scratch the dog on the chest or the side of the neck.
2. **Be a tree if a strange dog approaches** – Teach kids to stand still, like a tree. Trees are boring and the dog will eventually go away. This works for strange dogs and anytime the family dog gets too frisky or becomes aggressive.
3. **Never tease a dog** – and never disturb a dog that's sleeping, eating or protecting something.

### The 2 most important things parents can do

1. **Supervise** – Don't assume your dog is good with kids. If a toddler must interact with your dog, you should have your hands on the dog too. Even if your dog is great with kids and has never bitten – why take a chance?

2. **Train the dog** – Take your dog to obedience classes where positive-reinforcement is used. Never pin, shake, choke, hold the dog down or roll the dog over to teach it a lesson. Dogs treated this way are likely to turn their aggression on weaker family members. Involve older children in training the family dog while supervising. Don't allow children to punish the dog. Condition the dog to enjoy the presence and actions of children using positive experiences.

### The 3 most important things dog owners can do

1. **Spay or neuter your dog** – Neutered pets are calmer, healthier and less likely to be aggressive. Neutering prevents unwanted dogs that may end up in shelters or in less than ideal conditions where they may grow up to be poorly socialized or aggressive.
2. **Condition your dog for the world** – Give your puppy lots of new positive experiences. Train using positive methods i.e. clicker training.
3. **Supervise your dog** – Supervise your dog at all times around children. Do not allow children to hug and kiss the dog. If visiting children are bothering your dog, put the dog away or send the children home.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is a registered member of Doggone Safe Inc. and uses the “Be a Tree” Program in its Bite Prevention Program. RDOC is currently working on a program for pre-school children and new Canadians that will include a segment on etiquette for assistance dogs. It is looking for volunteers to work on the Bite Prevention Committee in all capacities, e.g. facilitators, graphic artists, authors, administrative duties, translation, etc.

For more information concerning the RDOC Bite Prevention Program and educational presentation, please contact MariLyse Dumas, Vice Chairperson, Education and French Inquiries at [marilyse@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:marilyse@responsibledogowners.ca).

### Guide to grooming – Spring 2009 by Laureen Osborne

It's that time of year again; muddy paws and overgrown coat on your dog.

You may have let your dog's coat grow over the winter (to keep him warm) and now you are thinking of taking him in to the groomer for a clip down. The only problem is, he sometimes comes back with a pretty short haircut!

Your best solution to the “shortie” haircut is to keep up with your dog's grooming over winter. He should still be trimmed regularly, just not as short as in summer.

Laureen Osborne is a Master Groomer and the author of “The Pet Owner's Guide to Dog Grooming” available at [www.Larkspurpublications.com](http://www.Larkspurpublications.com).

Try to brush your dog before taking him in for grooming. The groomer may then be able to leave a little more coat on him.

You can also ask your groomer to trim your dog's leg and chest furnishings shorter this time of year. She can also clip the inside of his legs and his tummy (where it won't show). This will make it easier to keep him clean.

As for muddy paws, place a basin of warm water beside the entrance door. When he comes back from his walk, dip each paw in the basin and dry with a towel.

It's not necessary or advisable to continually bathe your dog when all he really needs is his feet and undercarriage to be cleaned. A lot of dirt, including mud, will come off without bathing. Simply allow your dog to dry and then brush him.

### Volunteer Corner by Julie More

In this issue we would like to recognize Denise and James Jones of Ottawa, ON for their invaluable help and contributions to Responsible Dog Owners of Canada.

There is an old adage that if you want something done ask a busy person, well Denise and James are those busy people.

Denise and James are our in-house photographers. Their pictures are beautiful. Just ask my 2 pups Nellie and Tyler. They are also on our fundraiser's committee. They helped organize both the Going to the Dogs and the Murder Mystery fundraisers.



Denise was kind enough to offer her photography talents at the Blessing of the Animals event, and she is on the Bite Prevention Program Committee.

Thanks Denise and James for the millions of hours you contributed to RDOC. Don't know what we would do without you guys. "Woofie! Woof!" from Nellie your most faithful aussie fan."



### **Would you know what to do? A certified pet first aid course could mean the difference between life and death!**

You are at home or on vacation and your pet suddenly exhibits signs of illness or injury. An emergency can happen any time or any place. Your veterinarian is not available or hours away. Would you know what to do?

First aid is the primary step in any emergency situation for people and pets alike and having first aid knowledge could mean the difference between life and death.

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada will host an internationally recognized Pet First Aid Course on November 15 & 16, 2009, instructed by Dawn O'Leary, a certified pet first aid instructor with Walks 'N' Wags. The course will be held at Forever Friends Dog Training School, 17 Grenfell Crescent, Unit 6, Ottawa, ON.

The course will cover important topics such as immediate steps to take in an emergency, how to handle bleeding wounds and bone injuries, how to perform Artificial Respiration and CPR, what to do for poisoning and heat/cold injuries. Other subjects in the course include how to recognize signs of numerous illnesses and parasites, with an emphasis on methods of preventing illness and injury for both dogs and cats.

The price per student is \$200, which includes all course materials, beverages and snacks and a hot and cold buffet (meat and vegetarian choices) on Sunday, November 16.

As only 16 students will be accepted for this course, pet owners are encouraged to register early. If you are interested in registering for this comprehensive pet first aid course, please contact Responsible Dog Owners at [info@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:info@responsibledogowners.ca) or call 613.228.7764.

# Rainbow Bridge

We are saddened to announce that Kobe, cherished friend of Donna Rafalski, Ottawa, Ontario and Hugo, beloved companion of Sharon McKeil and Peter Finnie, Ottawa, Ontario passed away.

We extend our sincere sympathies to everyone who has lost a pet and hope that time will replace the pain of their loss with wonderful memories of the love they shared.

## We want to hear from you!

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is a pan-Canada, non-profit organization that promotes responsible dog ownership through support and education. We welcome news items, articles and event notices that interest dog owners and enthusiasts in all areas of Canada.

If you have a news item or article that you would like included in The Dog Guardian or you would like an event posted on the RDOC website, we invite you to submit it to the Editor at Responsible Dog Owners of Canada at [editor@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:editor@responsibledogowners.ca) or by mail c/o 160 Oakridge Blvd., Ontario, ON K2G 2V2.



Please note that all articles are subject to approval by the Editorial Committee and may be revised for grammatical errors or length. The deadline for the next issue of The Dog Guardian is **September 1, 2009**.



## Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Preparation Course

Forever Friends Dog Training School (Ottawa, ON) now has a Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Preparation Course. The next course is scheduled to start Saturday, June 20, 2009. For information regarding the course cost and space availability, please e-mail Forever Friends Dog Training School at [contact@foreverfriendsdogtraining.net](mailto:contact@foreverfriendsdogtraining.net) or call 613.727.4335.

The next Canadian Canine Good Citizen tests will be held Sunday, July 12, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 10, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Forever Friends Dog Training School, 17 Grenfell Crescent, Unit 6 (Ottawa, ON). Test fees are \$30 per dog. Dogs that pass receive a CCGC™ Certificate suitable for framing and a Pet ID Tag inscribed "Canadian Canine Good Citizen".

The CCGC™ Test is open to all dogs, purebred or mixed breed, that are six months of age or older. Please note that because some dogs may continue to mature until 4 years of age and other factors may alter a dog's behaviour patterns, Responsible Dog Owners of Canada recommends that all dogs be retested every three years.

All dogs must have received the necessary immunization, including rabies vaccine, or have current appropriate titer\* test certificates.

The CCGC™ Test is open to dogs that have received formal obedience training or home-trained dogs. Before taking a CCGC Test™, owners and handlers are required to sign a Responsible Dog Owner's Pledge affirming that their dog receives regular veterinary care, wholesome food, sufficient shelter,

appropriate training, socialization, exercise, grooming and loving care. RDOC promotes and supports responsible dog ownership and by signing this pledge, owners agree to provide for their dog's health needs, safety and quality of life. Owners also acknowledge and accept responsibility for their dog's actions and behaviour, respect for the rights of all, and recognition of the contributions dogs make to society.

\* *An antibody titer is a laboratory test that measures the presence and amount of antibodies in the blood. The antibody level in the blood is a reflection of past exposure to an antigen or to something that the body does not recognize as belonging to itself. The body uses antibodies to attack and remove foreign substances (Medline Plus; <http://medlineplus.gov/>)*

## Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Evaluators – We're recruiting

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is recruiting Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Evaluators from coast-to-coast and is looking for responsible, dedicated people with experience with dogs.

The Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Certification Program was launched almost twenty (20) years ago to promote responsible dog ownership and reinforce the acceptance of dogs as good citizens in communities.



The CCGC™ Test is an assessment of a dog's manners and training on the day of the test. It is not a competition and does not require that the handler and the dog perform with precision.

The test is conducted in a realistic setting and relaxed atmosphere to ascertain if a dog owner has trained and conditioned their dog to act mannerly in the home, public places and in the presence of other dogs. The test identifies and rewards owners who have successfully trained their dog to be a respected canine member of the community.

CCGC™ Test Evaluators should be experienced with dog behaviour and vigilant in ensuring that CCGC candidates meet the criteria of the 10-step test. Evaluators **must be** able to fail a dog that has not met the criteria.

The basic qualifications for a CCGC™ Test Evaluator are as follows:

- 1) twenty-one (21) years of age or over;
- 2) a Responsible Dog Owners of Canada member in good standing;
- 3) certified trainer or behaviourist with a recognized institute or actively involved in canine activities for a minimum of three (3) years (600 hours) with at least one recognized training facility, a canine-related club or activity or rescue organization;
- 4) comprehensive knowledge and experience of/in dog behaviour, e.g. breeding, showing, performance events, dog training, canine-related education, obedience, assistance, or therapy animal training, veterinary care, professional canine services, rescue, etc.;
- 5) must provide one (1) character reference and one (1) reference attesting to skills in handling and training dogs.

Once approved, evaluators will be registered and will be eligible to test dogs in CCGC™ Tests. Evaluators usually receive an honorarium for each dog from the organization hosting a CCGC™ Test. RDOC provides a list of CCGC™ Evaluators for every province and will post the contact information (e-mail address) on the RDOC website for CCGC™ Evaluators who wish to have their information posted. Evaluators may choose to accept a test assignment or not. It is completely voluntary.

### Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ Graduates



Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is pleased to announce the following recent Canadian Canine Good Citizen™ graduates in Ottawa (ON):

Lorraine Green and Vanka, a Standard Poodle

Pierre Michaud and Oliver, a Standard Poodle

Carlos Abasta and Bigglesworth (Biggie), an American Pit Bull Terrier; watch Biggie do his CCGC™ Test at <http://www.responsible-dog-owners.ca/ccgct.html>.

*Congratulations to owners and dogs!*

## It's all "Going to the Dogs"

Mark September 18, 2009 on your calendar! The Going to the Dogs Dinner and Race Night is scheduled at the Rideau Carleton Raceway (Ottawa, ON) and it will be another extraordinary evening of great company, good food, and tons of fun.

Tickets are \$40 per person and include a spectacular all-you-can-eat buffet, a \$2 race coupon, a complimentary race program, an amazing silent auction, 50/50 Draw, fabulous door prizes, valet service and coat check.

We also have excellent corporate packages for those who wish to promote their business and support hard-working local and national organizations.



This year's partners are Aussie Rescue Placement Helpline Inc., Therapeutic Paws of Canada and Responsible Dog Owners of Canada.

For more information or to obtain tickets, please e-mail Responsible Dog Owners of Canada at [info@responsibledogowners.ca](mailto:info@responsibledogowners.ca) or call 613.228.7764.

## Cycling with your dog; Properly, Safely and Legally by Thomas Rogan



Cycling with your canine friend(s) can be one of the most fun, relaxing and rewarding experiences for you and your dog. But is it safe and legal? There is a new Canadian company, based in Ottawa, that is dedicated to helping all dog owners understand the how's and why's of biking with their dogs and to bringing tested, approved and safe products, i.e. The Springer, the K-9 Cruiser or the K-9 Bike Jogger\*, that will make cycling with your dog even more enjoyable.

With some very simple, basic background knowledge, almost anyone with almost any dog can enjoy this form of recreation and exercise.

### Things to Consider!

**Preparing Your Dog:** Make sure your dog is ready for roadwork! It is recommended that owners have their veterinarian give an "all clear" to start.

Some dogs don't have the structure for this kind of roadwork. Your dog should be able to at least sustain an easy trot at about 11kph or 7 mph without tiring or getting winded. Your first half to full kilometre runs should seem effortless for your dog. If he/she has trouble keeping an easy gait or appears winded you may wish to consider a different form of exercise. Roadwork is probably not ideal for breeds such as Bull Dogs, Pugs, Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, etc.



Make certain you and your dog are highly visible to traffic. Both my dog and I wear reflective orange vests even in the daytime. The more visible you are the less likely you will be hurt by a car.

**Start slowly!** It is very important to be aware of the condition of your dog's foot pads, especially if he/she will be running on pavement. Their pads will toughen up in time but you need to start gradually and give them a chance to develop.

You will be asking your dog to keep up a sustained trot beside a machine, and he/she should be physically ready for this. You can't just hop on your bike and ask them to keep up. They don't have a lot of choice about distance or pace and you must be aware of and sensitive to how they're doing as you go.

Boots or protective footwear can be used but, if you start with boots, you will need to continue using them. If your dog develops any problem with his/her pad, you should consult your veterinary health care provider.

I started by walking my bike and my dog together. It helps to have someone go with you to assist. I kept the bike between us so she got used to working with its wobbles and tires. Then I had my partner walk the dog as I rode alongside.

When it was clear that she knew how to move with the bike, we went about a half kilometre or a quarter of a mile at a slow trot. After working 3 days a week for about 2 weeks, we went to one kilometre or half a mile. We worked up half a kilometre or a quarter of a mile at a time.

Generally, I try to pedal at a pace that will allow my dog to sustain an easy trot. Occasionally, we have little bursts of galloping but as soon as she shows sign of falling back, even a little, I slow down. You will develop sensitivity to your dog's pace and gait as you go; you can feel them pulling forward, backwards or away from you and whether or not they are trotting or galloping.



## Easy Steps

The following six easy steps will have you whisking down the roads and trails with your furry friends in no time!

**Step 1:** Use a proper bike-leash attachment like The Springer, the K-9 Cruiser or the K-9 Bike Jogger.

**Step 2:** Put the attachment on your bike so that your dog is positioned in the correct place for heeling with a bike. Ideally, this should be to the right of the saddle with the nose parallel to the

pedal. You should use an attachment system that allows the dog to run alongside the bike, without being able to get loose or pull the bike over.

**Step 3:** Ensure you have a bike water bottle clean and filled with fresh water for the ride. Make sure you offer your dog drinks frequently. See below for more on how to watch for heat related problems. Most dogs will drink from their owner's hands so giving him/her drink is as easy as slowly pouring it in your cupped palm as they lap it up. **DO NOT** spray their head/shoulders as you would a person.

**Step 4:** Keep your average pace at a trot. Only use faster paces for short bursts.

Teach commands like "Whoa" and "Gee"/"Haw" for turning so that the dog can anticipate the motions of the bicycle. Refer to resources below for how to do this. The commands you use, i.e. the words themselves, are not as important as being consistent. When selecting words for your turning commands, be careful not to use words that you or others within ear-shot of the dog might inadvertently say. This could cause your dog to turn suddenly when you are not expecting it.

**Step 5:** Practice together in short intervals with lots of praise. Work up to your desired distance slowly over time. Work up to longer distances. Your dog's foot pads are tender and can shred. It takes a little time for them to toughen up. Start with about a kilometre and gradually add distance.

**Step 6:** Keep your energy and attitude calm, positive and confident.

## Warnings

Check with your veterinarian **BEFORE** starting to ensure that your dog is a) old enough and b) healthy enough. Most dogs should be at least a year old and some breeds should probably wait until they are closer to 18 months of age. The key issue here is the bone plates **MUST** close and/or reach maturity **BEFORE** you start.

**NEVER USE** just a leash attached to you or your bike! It is unsafe. Bicycling with dogs can be dangerous if not done carefully. Pay attention to your safety and other bike riders. Be sure your dog is well-trained and responds to voice commands.

There are some dogs that probably should not try this form of exercise, e.g., Bulldog, Pugs, Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, etc.

Keep a close eye on your dog's status as you ride. Watch out for signs of severe fatigue or other problems, e.g. a thick lolling tongue that seems out of control, loss of visual acuity (the dog fails to respond to a simple blink test) and/or loss of stability or coordination

Using anything other than a proper bike leash attachment will cause you to risk accident or injury. You could also be issued a ticket under most highway traffic acts for improper care and control of your bike, a hassle, rightly so, from humane societies for risking your dog's safety and a poor and frustrating experience for both you and your dog.

And remember to review the by-laws and regulations in your area. Some regulations, e.g. National Capital Commission Animal Regulations, prohibit cycling, rollerblading, skiing, skijoring, etc, with a dog.

\* Visit the Bike With My Dog website, at <http://www.bikewithmydog.com/> for more information on these products. You may wish to join the Yahoo Group for dog biking enthusiasts, i.e. BikeWithMyDog. Membership is open and not moderated. You may also wish to check out the Facebook Group, i.e. BikeWithMyDog. Just sign-in to Facebook and enter the group name in the search box at the top-right of your screen. Membership is open and not moderated.

## Animal-Assisted Support Services – Transforming

**Lives One Dream at a Time** by Joanne Moss, Founder/President,  
Canadian Foundation for Animal Assisted Support Services

*I believe everyone has a dream.* Some people dare to dream and act; while others don't even dare to dream. I was once told that dreams are merely hallucinations if they are stagnant or buried deeply within one's soul. Exploring the possibilities takes courage, creativity, diligence, research, perseverance, planning, making adjustments, and the ability delay gratification.



Canadian AASS charities and non-profit organizations are the manifestation of someone's dream. As each sequential task is applied and more and more people become part of the living system to realize the dream, it is likened to the stroke of a brush on a canvas and eventually the masterpiece begins to emerge.

Taking the path of least resistance is a typical human response, nevertheless, successful dreamers learn to delay gratification and challenge the status quo; they are willing to make the necessary investments of time, energy, and resources to make it so.

The social service and health-care sectors are becoming more open to the unique contributions of AASS, because people are literally being transformed from the inside out one dream at a time. Fragmentation and isolation continue to pose a threat to this emerging community. It was for this very reason that the foundation was created. The organization is intended to be complementary by supporting registered charities and those they serve.

A doctor by the name of Henry Cloud had an interesting experience just prior to writing his thesis. He had no idea where to begin so a friend bought him an ant farm. Dreams are much the same, because it is difficult to know where and how to begin. In Dr. Henry Cloud's case his friend's gesture had such a great impact on him that he devoted a chapter called "**Act like an Ant**" in his book called the 9 Things You Simply Must Do to Succeed in Love and Life.

As he watched the ants going about their business each had a tiny grain of sand in their grasp as they went to and fro. Even though the ants knew what they were doing it didn't make much sense to Dr. Cloud at first. He pointed out that the actions of one ant didn't seem to have much of an impact, nor was it apparent how it might contribute to something bigger. Nevertheless, there was an impact and as he continued to observe the significance of their activities the fruit of their labor eventually became clear – working together enabled them to build an ant city.

### RDOC Annual General Meeting



The 2009 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 26, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the Citizen Conference Centre, 1101 Baxter Road (Ottawa, ON).

Guest speaker is Dian McTaggart, President, Therapeutic Paws of Canada. Anyone interested in therapy dog visitations will not want to miss this presentation.

If there are any members who are unable to attend the AGM but would like a subject raised, please let us know and it will be added to the agenda. Minutes of the AGM will be made available to any member requesting same.

### RDOC is on Yahoo and Facebook

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada now has a Yahoo Forum and welcomes dog owners across Canada to exchange anecdotes and information on anything about dogs.

To subscribe to the Yahoo Forum send an e-mail to [ResponsibleDogOwners-subscribe@yahogroups.ca](mailto:ResponsibleDogOwners-subscribe@yahogroups.ca)

The Responsible Dog Owners of Canada Facebook Group can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8184353329>.

### Responsible Dog Owners of Canada (RDOC)

Responsible Dog Owners of Canada is a registered non profit organization that promotes responsible dog ownership through education and support, cultivates respect for the rights and privileges of members of the dog-owning and non dog-owning communities, fosters recognition of the contribution that canines make through companionship, service/assistance and therapy and aspires to assemble a strong network of responsible dog owners to ensure the restoration and preservation of a dog-friendly society.

*Responsibility • Respect • Recognition*

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