



PET PROJECT QUARTERLY

YOUR NEWS FROM **MARY'S PET PROJECT**

* Help yourself to a copy to read at home or share with another pet parent. *
 New clients save \$5 with this newsletter, holidays excluded.

✦ Highlights ✦

Do These Sound Familiar?
 (If so, you could probably use the help of a professional pet sitter.)

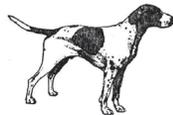
* You haven't taken a trip in years because you can't leave your pets (cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, reptiles, etc.) home alone.

* Your dog is overweight, bored, frustrated, or hyper because time constraints or physical limitations keep you from walking it.

* Your work schedule, or lack of reliable transportation, makes it a challenge to get your pet to vet or groomer appointments.

* You don't have a doggie door at home, and your dog won't make it all day without a potty break.

continued on page 2



LIVING WITH DOGS

Bark! Bark! Bark!

Nonstop barking can drive even the saintly to desperation. Fortunately, there's help to be had. The approach depends on the cause.

Watchdog barking is triggered by visual or auditory stimulation—passersby, slamming car doors, a cat on the lawn. Watchdog barkers were sentries in a previous life.



Boredom barking happens when a dog is left alone often and doesn't get enough exercise or mental stimulation. It's the equivalent of a human being in solitary confinement banging his head against the wall.

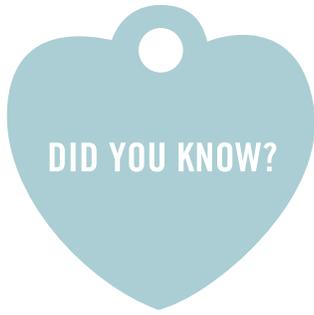
Demand barking occurs in dogs that have learned that barking gets them what they want, like balls thrown, doors opened, dinner, or attention.

Barrier frustration barking typically comes with posturing such as snarling or baring of teeth. The three most common occurrences are: dogs left in a backyard too long, dogs in cars, or dogs on leash who would be perfectly comfortable with whatever they're barking at (most often other dogs) if they were off leash.

Separation anxiety barking is characterized by incessant home-alone barking coupled with for example house soiling, visible anxiety upon departure and arrival, and destruction around doors and windows.

To cut down on any kind of barking, start with giving your dog plenty of exercise. Second, arrange for mental stimulation when he's left alone. Feed him using puzzle toys or stuffed Kongs. Consider hiring a dog walker or, if your dog is social, sending him to a doggie daycare when you're away at work. As for demand barking, immediately stop rewarding the behavior: Ignore your dog or walk away when he barks. Then pick times when he isn't barking, tell him 'nice quiet,' and pet or treat him. In all cases, a trainer can help—and if you suspect separation anxiety, calling one is crucial.

"My little dog—
 a heartbeat at my feet."
 - Edith Wharton



These Doggie Proverbs?

1. A dog with two tails (an overjoyed person)
2. Every dog has his day (even the lowest among us gets a moment of glory)
3. A dog's chance (no chance at all)
4. Three-dog night (a night so cold that two dogs in the bed is not enough)
5. Hair of the dog (a supposed hangover cure: another drink of what got you in trouble in the first place)
6. To see a man about a dog (all-purpose excuse to leave a room)
7. Let sleeping dogs lie (don't add cinders to a potentially explosive situation)
8. A dog's breakfast (a god-awful mess)
9. Dog-eat-dog (a fiercely competitive environment)



A WORLD OF DOGS

.....

How Dogs Learn

Dogs learn in two ways: by association (emotional response) and by consequence (doing things). An example of associative learning is dogs' reaction to the sight of a food bowl: fits of joy. They have learned that this bowl predicts mealtime. We can use dogs' associations to teach them things. For instance, new puppies don't care about leashes. But clip on the leash and take a puppy for a walk, and soon she figures out the leash means fun and... bingo. Puppy loves leashes. The reverse is also true. You can teach a dog to hate or fear leashes by repeatedly using them to give corrections or tie her up outside on her own. *What does this mean?* Everything you do around your dog influences the associations she makes.



As for learning by consequence, imagine luring your dog into a sit with your hand. Then you rummage around for the treat. When you deliver the treat five seconds later, the impact is lost, because your dog has sniffed the ground and looked left. As far as your dog knows, she got the treat for looking left. You may eventually teach your dog to sit, or you might end up with a dog that sits and looks left. *What does this mean?* That we need precision and immediacy to effectively train dogs.

Because of how dogs learn, they see the world in two ways: safe/good-for-me vs. dangerous/bad, and what works vs. what doesn't. The safe vs. dangerous outlook comes from learning by association. When dogs are punished for peeing on the carpet, they don't learn inside/outside—they learn that it isn't safe to pee in front of you. The works vs. doesn't work outlook on life comes from learning by consequence. All dogs try staring at the refrigerator to get it to open and give up when it doesn't work. They also try staring at people at the dinner table—and because it works once in a while, they keep doing it. Dogs do what is safe and what works. Be patient with your dog and careful about what you pay attention to and what you ignore, and you will soon have a relaxed, happy, and well-trained four-legged friend.

(continued from page 1)

* You don't consider a kennel a good option for your cat or dog when you have to leave town because they are used to being at home and sleeping with you.

* You don't know anybody that is reliable and responsible enough that you feel comfortable trusting them with the care of your most important possessions... your pets and your home.



DOGS IN ACTION

Military Dogs

Dogs around the world have followed warriors and soldiers into combat as far back as history records stretch. The Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Romans and many other early civilizations used dogs as sentries or on patrols. Some early armies even brought dogs into battle. Today's active service dogs are highly skilled and valuable. Their primary jobs are to detect bombs, landmines, weapons, and drugs—and their 98% accuracy (on average) makes them priceless companions for modern troops. Many dogs also track enemies (or lost friendlies) and protect assets and personnel.



To qualify for training as a military canine, dogs must have a keen sense of smell and be physically powerful and healthy, easy to excite about the next challenge, and strongly motivated by rewards. Even so, only around half of initial canine recruits—whether at land, air, or sea facilities—make it through training. The breeds and mixes most often used for military work are German Shepherds, Labradors, and Belgian Malinois. Interesting fact: Trainers use a specialized vocabulary of cues to avoid confusing the dog in tense battlefield conditions where people might shout words otherwise common in dog training, like “stay,” “come around,” “no,” etc.



HEALTHY DOG

Allergies in Dogs

There are five types of canine allergies: Bacterial, contact, flea, inhalant, and food. The least common are bacterial and contact. Bacterial allergies result in skin disease and require antibiotic treatment. Contact allergies are reactions to substances in the dog's environment, such as wool or cleaners, and often disappear when the irritant is removed. Flea allergies are very common—treatment entails medication and strict flea control. Inhalant allergies are also common and are similar to those humans suffer from. Instead of sneezing and runny noses, though, dogs most often get skin problems. Treatment ranges from antihistamines to shampoo therapy. Finally, food allergies are becoming widespread. They call for exclusion diets and, if nothing else works, steroid treatments.

Look for scratching, coughing, wheezing, eye or nose discharge, vomiting, or diarrhea: All should prompt a trip to the vet.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Yorkshire Terrier

The terrier ancestry is clearly present in the bold, quick, occasionally aloof Yorkie. Ironically, given today's often pampered, bejeweled dogs, the Yorkie hails from rugged Yorkshire in the North of England and was originally used as a ratter. Silky hair and teeny stature fool some into thinking the Yorkie is more toy than dog. This is not true, of course. Yorkies require exercise, consistency, and size-appropriate dog-dog interactions to be happy and healthy. Somewhat challenging to train—due to that individualistic streak—Yorkies rarely make their mark in dog sports, preferring instead to enter the public sphere appropriately situated on the arms of famous guardians—not all of whom, incidentally, are blond and female. Actors Bruce Willis and Orlando Bloom have Yorkies, as do Simon Cowell and Steven Tyler.

To give a Yorkie a home, search online for the nearest rescue group.

