

Behavior News

The Newsletter from the Animal Behavior Program

Welcome to the eighteenth edition of *Behavior News*, the newsletter designed to keep veterinary staff and other animal handlers up to date on current behavior recommendations for companion animals.

In this issue we will provide an update on our service's future and provide a few book and product reviews.

For additional resources on animal behavior at The Ohio State University, please visit:

vet.osu.edu/Behavior.



Editor's Note

Dr. Meghan Herron started the Behavior Newsletter a decade ago to build a connection with our local animal care clinicians and staff. Despite pandemic limitations, we continue to receive patients and provide colleague consultations, maintaining and building our relationships in the area. Thank you for your continued support of our service and our shared patients.

We will be expanding back to a two-resident service in July. While that will likely involve some growing pains as we launch two residents at the same

time, it will ultimately help us to better meet the demands of behavioral medicine in the area in the short term (three years), as well as in the country long term. Our goal is to grow into a multi-faculty, multi-resident service that can meet the needs of our area referral base.

Thank you so much for continuing to work with us as we provide students, practitioners and clients support for safer, healthier, happier pet lives!



Moving up and on!

Dr. Bohland will be completing his residency in July 2022.

What the future holds for him is as of yet undetermined, but we are sure he will go on to do great things!



Animal Behavior in Social Media

Social media is rapidly becoming the frontrunner for information and knowledge. For those of you with an interest, consider checking out the following links:



The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists on Facebook: facebook.com/dacvb/

Psychology Today's Decoding your Pet Section: psychologytoday.com/us/blog/decoding-your-pet

DACVB nearly monthly webinars facebook.com/FLVETBEHAVIOR

In the News

Nov 11, 2021 *"11 Reasons why your Cat's Tongue might be Sticking out."*

Rover Blog Author Janelle Leeson

rover.com/blog/why-do-cats-stick-out-their-tongues

Nov 11, 2021 *"Is your Cat SAD?"* Print Interview for The Wildest.

Author Jodi Helmer

thewildest.com/cat-behavior/seasonal-affective-disorder-in-cats

Aug 20 2021 *8 Stylish Litter Boxes That Can Effortlessly Be Incorporated Into Your Home"*

Print Interview. Architectural Digest.

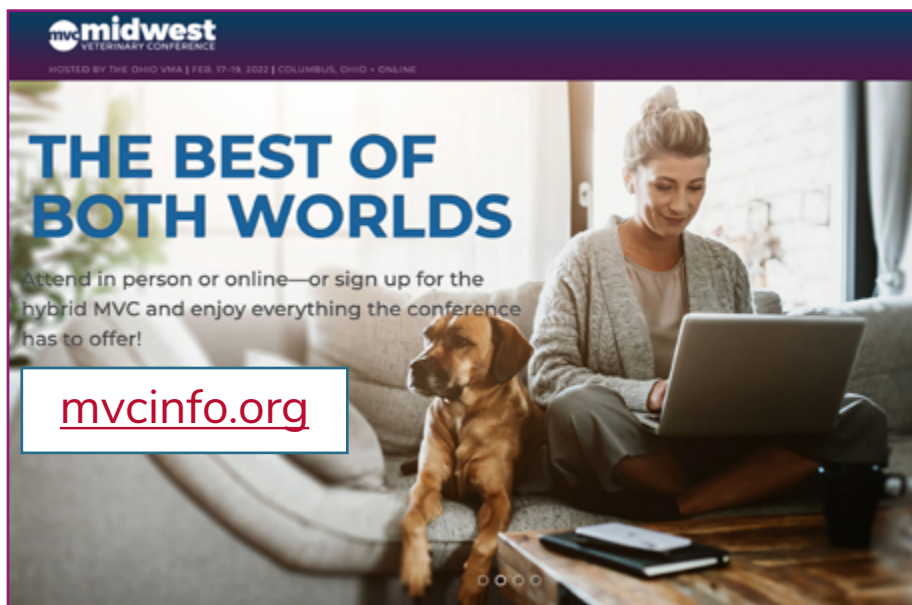
Author Katherine McLaughlin

architecturaldigest.com/story/best-cat-litter-box-designs

Picked up by Yahoo.com:

yahoo.com/now/8-stylish-litter-boxes-effortlessly-150550200.html

2022 Midwest Veterinary Conference



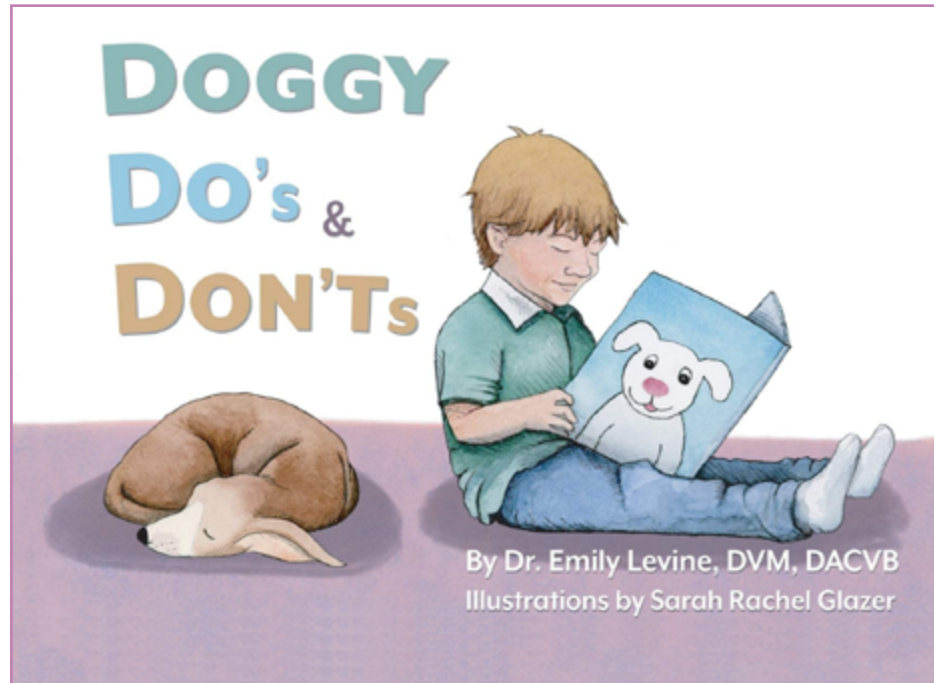
Featuring DACVBs Drs. Carlo Siracusa, Elizabeth Feltes and Meghan Herron, as well as Wouter Stellaard, the Animal Programs Training Director at the Columbus Zoo!

Book Review

Doggy Do's & Don'ts

by Dr. Emily Levine, DVM, DACVB, illustrations by Sarah Rachel Glazer

Review by Dr. M. Leanne Lilly



Since the highest risk population for dog bites is ages 3 to 5, and the majority of those bites are dogs who are familiar to the children, an illustrated children's book to educate toddlers should be a critical component of canine-child safety. *Doggy Dos & Don'ts* is a quick, large font, large illustration, 23-page book for toddlers by certified behavioral veterinarian Dr. Emily Levine that is much needed.

The language and illustrations are simple enough for small children to grasp major differences and the wording is as well. It walks children through some body language of canine emotional states, and while some in behavior will quibble about the use of the word "angry" for a dog, it is the word most likely to be comprehended as one of the six universal emotions.

Some of the internal slant rhymes (chat/not; happy/angry) may pique the dedicated linguists among us, but it keeps the cadence easy for

young ears. The book also covers good ways to play with dogs, e.g. asking adults first, leaving dogs alone while resting or eating, and other key areas with which children struggle.

While the book begins with the premise of being a good friend to a dog, Dr. Levine includes an important section that teaches children that some dogs do not want to make friends, or may sometimes want to be left alone. Canine agency is so often overlooked that if we can teach toddlers to understand it, we will not only keep them safer through their high risk years, but potentially improve canine-human interactions through human adulthood.

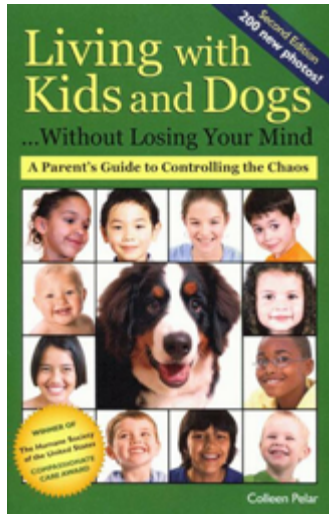
Complete with a happy ending for the children and a note to parents including additional resources, *Doggy Do's and Don'ts* is the toddler book for canine behavior we have long been awaiting.

Book Review

Living with Kids with Dogs without Losing Your Mind

by Coleen Pelar CCFP (certified compassion fatigue professional), CDBC (certified dog behavior consultant), CPDT-KA (certified professional dog trainer-knowledge assessed)

Review by Dr. M. Leanne Lilly



The book index may seem a little daunting, despite the otherwise unintimidating size of the book, until the reader realizes that the chapters range in length from 10-20 pages; readily digestible chunks.

One of the most inviting parts of the book is the opening chapter, which sympathizes with the

reader's previous experience with both sides of the kids-dog enterprise: "Dog-training books say 'control your kid'" while parenting books make the opposite recommendation. These types of broad, sweeping comments are somewhat true, but they ignore the fact that both dogs and children are their own beings with their own agency and motivations. They do little to help either the parent or trainer understand how to do either of those things, let alone both at the same time. Pelar continues with an introduction into the pitfalls of "good intentions, poor results" and the discrepancy between human and dog normal body language and expectations. Including 'Words for the Weary', a section at the end of each chapter highlighting the most important themes.

While most people who purchase this book are likely to already have a dog and are seeking it as a source of insight to dispel the chaos, Pelar's chapter on whether or not to get a dog, what kind or breed it should be, and what to look for in a dog. There is also a nice boxed section on why *NOT* to get a dog, as well as a considerate comparison between dog or cat goals and needs.

I particularly like Pelar's recommendation for 'extroverts only'. A family dog not only needs to be able to thrive with the nuclear family, but having kids means other kids and their adults will be traipsing in and out of your house or yard; an ideal family dog is not one who can just cope with this but thrives on it.

A dog who enjoys a massive endorphin release from the mere presence of a person will be more likely to yelp and use avoidance behaviors if a child steps on its tail or accidentally falls on him, as opposed to a dog who is already concerned that people and kids are not inherently safe, who may react with fear-driven defensive behavior, such as a snap or bite. Her discussion on the risks of dogs smaller than 20 pounds for households with children is very insightful.

While the section on bite prevention should be required reading for all parents, even without dogs in the household, the behavior savvy practitioner may not find anything revolutionary in it for their toolkit. Conversely, chapter 5 is full of great ideas about helpful equipment for dogs and children to succeed (diaper pails with locking lids, storm doors, tip proof bowls) and some equipment that may be problematic, like swing sets and wading pools.

Included in a few chapters, there is the great suggestion of having children practice on stuffed animals before granting them access to certain behaviors with dogs (or instead of), such as dressing up a stuffed animal instead of a dog and practicing petting a stuffed dog before petting the family dog.

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Book Review

Living with Kids with Dogs without Losing Your Mind - continued

Chapter four is replete with approaches to things that will often end up being deal breakers for families: resource guarding, body handling, fear of strangers, and house training issues. Some caution is advised for the section on resource guarding; hand feeding can inadvertently increase some dog's concerns about resources, and it is a high risk activity a child should not attempt.

There is some inaccurate, outdated information regarding dietary contributions to hyperactive behavior, so if you recommend this book to a client, be sure to tell them to discuss any dietary concerns with their veterinarian.

Top this off with a chapter on getting ready for a new born, toddlers' transition to mobile behavior, and phrasing for best success with preschoolers, the book is already well worth its 20 dollars for paperback or 10 dollars for Kindle. For those with

older children who may be looking to integrate the family dog as part of growing responsibilities, the parent will find chapters 8 and 9 on elementary and teenage children particularly useful. The chapters also include an additional reading list.

Pelar also recognizes that, particularly for a family dog, saying goodbye may be fraught with more challenging conversations and questions than a solo adult dog - not that it's easy or simple in that situation either. The last chapter presents some tips and insights into those conversations if you need to rehome a family dog or the family dog passes away, especially through euthanasia.

This book is a great addition to any reading list for clients



Product Review: Likit™ Toys & Treats

by Taylor J. Williams, Class of 2023, Vice President, Animal Behavior & Welfare Club

Your horse is physically and mentally stimulated when you ride, groom, and spend time with them. However, what happens when you're not there? Horses that do not get to express a full repertoire of normal behaviors on a normal time budget can develop behavior problems such as cribbing, weaving, head-tossing, and pawing, though that is not the only factor for those behaviors. These undesirable behaviors can lead to tooth destruction, weight loss and poor performance, and are welfare problems as well.

So, what's the solution? There are many companies that manufacture toys and treats to bust boredom and Likit™ is a company that offers some great products! Likit™ offers affordable treats and toys that can be found in many different stores and online shopping sites, including Chewy, Stateline Tack, Dover Saddlery, and Amazon.

One of the most common Likit™ products is the Likit™ Starter Kit. The Starter Kit comes with a treat holder, three 650 gram treat refills, and two 100 gram bags of their Snaks (one in Apple and Cinnamon flavor and one in Mint and Eucalyptus flavor). The treat refills come in a wide variety of flavors, including apple, banana, carrot, mint, and molasses! Likit™ even offers the holder in a variety of colors, including blue, red, glitter pink, green, and lilac.

Some other Likit™ products include the Tongue Twister toy, which can be fixed to the stall or stable wall, as well as the Snak-a-Ball that dispenses small treats or pelleted food while stimulating natural grazing behavior.



Is your horse prone to laminitis? Are they on a restricted diet? You can still use Likit™ products! There are salt-based treat refills available, including Likit™ Sport (Electrolytes) and Likit™ Ice (Himalayan Rocksalt). In addition, the Snak-a-Ball can dispense any small, low-sugar snack that you usually feed your horse. Likit™ provides affordable fun toys and yummy treats for any horse. Their wide variety of products will surely make both you and your horse happy!



Likit™ Website: likit.co.uk



Product Review: KONG® Gyro

by Shannon Kelley, President, Animal Behavior & Welfare Club

Looking for a new interactive toy to spice up your dog's collection? The KONG® Gyro dog toy is an orbiting ball-shaped product that is designed to gradually dispense food or treats as your dog rolls the toy along the floor. While the Gyro itself contains some unique features compared to other treat dispensing balls, the product may not be recommended for dogs with certain chewing tendencies. With this in mind, the distinct function of the toy can provide your furry friend with a new challenge and engaging play.



As mentioned, the Gyro operates by a rolling action to release kibble or treats out of a single hole in the top of the see-through plastic ball in the center. The ball rolls on a single axis with a circular balancing barrier surrounding the ball, requiring the ball be rolled in a single direction and making access to the ball itself more challenging. When first introducing the Gyro to your pup, you can also put treats along the balancing ring to promote pushing action and to show them the toy contains something good inside. Also, the treat/food dispensing opening contains raised barriers along the edge projecting to the inside of the ball, making it so treats do not fall out as readily. This feature promotes longer lasting fun and puzzle-solving activity. The unique function of the toy supports independent play that can exercise your dog both physically and mentally.

The toy itself can be tailored to support your dog's health and play style. The Gyro dog toy comes in two sizes, small and large, with differently sized treat dispensing openings to release the treat or kibble sizes you'd like to offer your pup. Giving your dog meals or in-between snacks in the Gyro can allow for fast eaters to slow down and work a bit for their food, too. The toy is also relatively easy to clean when compared to other interactive or puzzle toys. An easy-to-remove top allows for washing the entire plastic portion that would contain food. This feature may allow the Gyro to act as a sanitary alternative to something like a Busy Buddy® Tug-A-Jug™ that is not as easy to clean with its rope component.

In spite of the excellent features of the toy, the Gyro does not prove to be as durable as other, more common KONG® products. The toy is made of a thin plastic material, not the traditional rubber that some buyers may be seeking. Consequently, the Gyro is not recommended for those dogs that are known to be tough or power chewers, and reviews of the toy bring this issue to light. If you are looking to purchase an interactive toy for your enthusiastic chewer, the KONG® Extreme lineup or other durable toy brands may have something for your pup!

Overall, the KONG® Gyro dog toy puts a different twist on traditional treat-dispensing balls and food puzzle toys. The engaging rolling and flipping function of the toy, with features that stimulate your dog's mind and body, allows your pup to get kibble or treats in a new, fun way. However, this product may not be the one for your tough chewer at home. Nonetheless, when introducing your dog to a new toy, especially a toy containing treats or food, you should always keep an eye on them during playtime to monitor their safety and fun along the way.

