

A Dog Walks Into A Park

Dog parks seemed like such a great idea, offering the ability for your dog to get out and play and socialize. Dogs need mental stimulation, exercise and friends therefore, why not go to the dog park?

Unfortunately, I can think of many reasons to avoid the dog park. Socialization for dogs is important but only if that dog actually wants to socialize. Imagine walking into a local establishment hoping to meet some cool people with similar interests and have some fun. As you walk through the door there are five or six people in your face blocking your entrance, touching you and insisting that you sit at their table. When you try to avoid those pushy types, perhaps they start to bully you. You have no escape because your date is on his cell phone and you no longer exist. You are giving many social cues to the bully who ignores you and his partner tells you to work it out without offering to redirect his bullying partner.



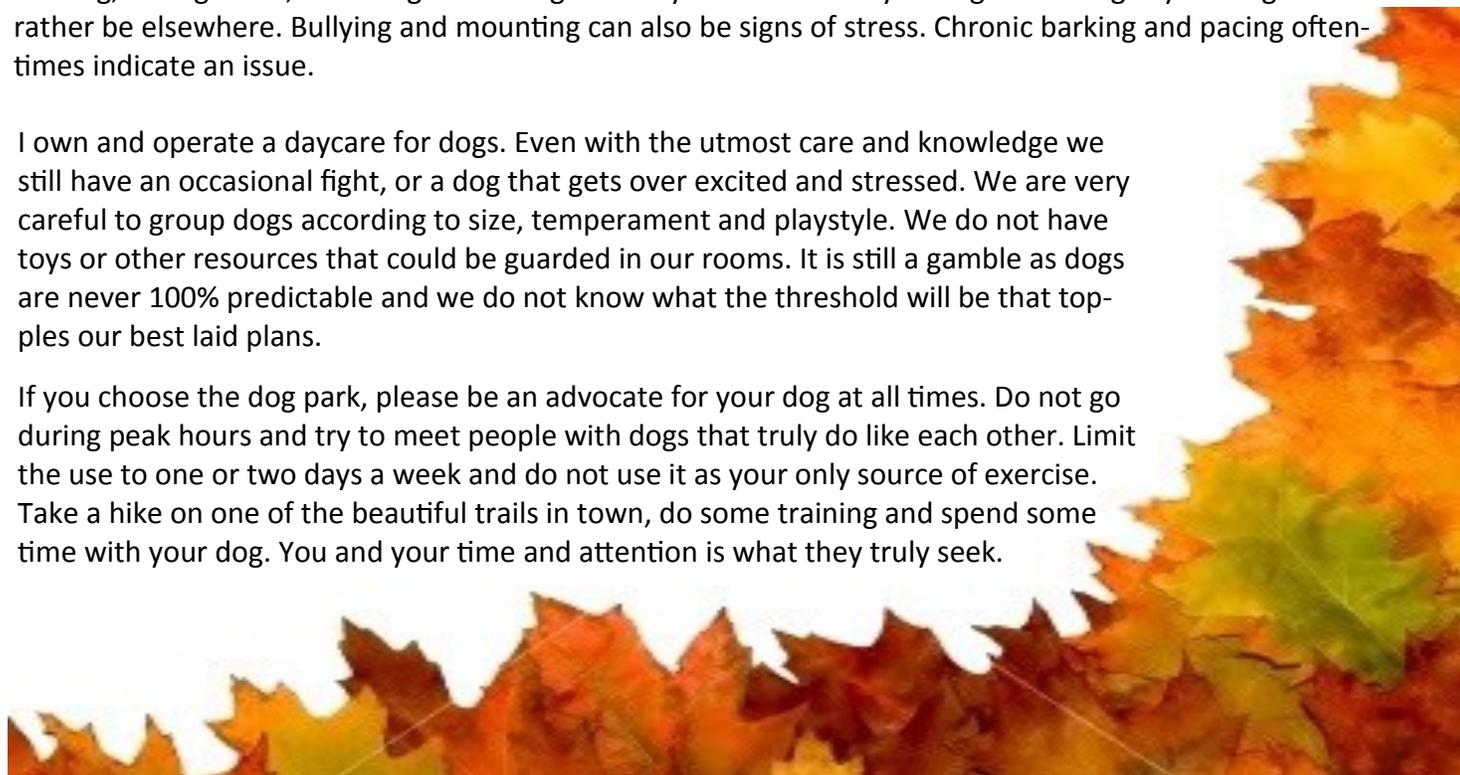
Okay this may sound silly but now you might have a small perspective of what your dog may be experiencing. We have no idea how the dogs in a dog park will behave in any given moment. Perhaps one is quite friendly until another dog tries to catch his ball and he goes ballistic (pun intended). Or perhaps your little white fluffy is running and bouncing only to grab the attention of a large dog who is prone to predatory drift (meaning the dog has gone into kill mode when he sees the fluffy bunny). I would never bring a small dog to a large dog park, the risk is great that your dog will get hurt.

Dogs need to feel safe at all times. When we cannot control the environment your dog is at risk. As humans we rarely see the signs of stress, avoidance and desire to be elsewhere in our dog. The signals are there and if you do choose to go to the dog park it is up to you to know the signs and keep your dog safe.

Panting, baring teeth, salivating and hiding behind you or between your legs are all signs your dog would rather be elsewhere. Bullying and mounting can also be signs of stress. Chronic barking and pacing often-times indicate an issue.

I own and operate a daycare for dogs. Even with the utmost care and knowledge we still have an occasional fight, or a dog that gets over excited and stressed. We are very careful to group dogs according to size, temperament and playstyle. We do not have toys or other resources that could be guarded in our rooms. It is still a gamble as dogs are never 100% predictable and we do not know what the threshold will be that topples our best laid plans.

If you choose the dog park, please be an advocate for your dog at all times. Do not go during peak hours and try to meet people with dogs that truly do like each other. Limit the use to one or two days a week and do not use it as your only source of exercise. Take a hike on one of the beautiful trails in town, do some training and spend some time with your dog. You and your time and attention is what they truly seek.



Howloween Happenings



Creepy (or Cute) Critter Contest

Post a picture of your pet dressed up in their creepiest or cutest costume on Crate & Marrow's Facebook page or join us on the Green at the Shops @ Stonefield on October 31st from 10:30am-12:00pm. There will be two winners. The pet with the most likes online and the creepiest or cutest the day of will win a free bag of food (owner's choice!)



Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt @ Stonefield

After entering the Creepy (or Cute) Critter Contest hop on the family broom and join us for a Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt around the Shops @ Stonefield. There will be tricks and treats for both you and your dog. October 31st from 10:30am - 12:00pm.

CRATE & MARROW
Cordially Invites You to Our

STOCKING STUFFER OPEN HOUSE

Shhh! Don't tell your dog!

Light Refreshments

Sunday, December 6th
12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Stockings will be available for purchase and personalization and there will be plenty of toys and treats to buy for stuffing the stockings.

2035 Bond Street, Charlottesville, VA
in the Shops @ Stonefield

Introduction to Wag It Games Seminar

Saturday, October 24th Noon - 2pm

This is your opportunity to learn more about Wag It Games, training fun that brings smiles and wags to dogs and their owners. There is an emphasis throughout Wag It Games on relationship and teamwork between the dogs and their handlers. Space is limited to 6 teams and you must preregister to attend the seminar. The cost for the seminar is \$45.

Would you like your dog to be well-behaved during the holidays? Make sure you sign up for the November obedience classes as we will not be holding classes in December.