



Obichaff

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Capital Dog Training Club of Washington, D.C., Inc.



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"A dog has one aim in life...to bestow his heart."

- J.R. Ackerley

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Happy April! Around here, that means we just got out of a beautiful week of weather in the

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70s with constant sunshine and went right into a week with freezing temps, hail, and even some snow. It makes those DMV weather swings seem much more tame.

Here's Hadley enjoying the ever-present springtime winds in the Garden of the Gods. I love when the wind catches her ears just right and they float around - the best part of living with a hound dog!

Canine Fire Safety: An Expert Weighs In



My dad, a retired arson detective, has seen a lot in his nearly 30 year career—some tragedies, some close calls, and, thankfully, he's learned some important lessons. He's told me that one of the best feelings in his job was reuniting people with their pets after a fire and helping educate pet owners on additional fire safety measures.

Preventing Fires:

Dogs don't mean to start fires, but accidents happen. House fires can be caused by pets knocking over candles, chewing electrical cords, or

jumping up onto stoves. Here's how to prevent your dog from being the cause of a fire:

- **Secure Stove Knobs:** Dogs can accidentally turn on burners by brushing against them or stepping on them while counter-surfing. Remove knobs or use covers. Better yet - prevent your dog from gaining access with a crate or boundary training!
- **Use Flameless Candles:** Traditional candles can be easily knocked over. Battery-operated candles are a safer alternative.
- **Tidy Up Electrical Cords:** Some dogs love to chew, which can lead to electrical fires. Keep cords out of reach or use cord protectors.
- **Be Mindful of Space Heaters:** A playful dog can easily knock over a space heater. Always supervise when in use and turn them off before leaving the room

Emergency Preparedness: Protecting Your Dog

Even with the best prevention, fires can still happen. Being prepared ensures the best chance of getting your dog out safely.

- **Have an Escape Plan That Includes Your Dog:** Know how you'll get your dog out quickly in case of fire. Practice with them so they're familiar with the plan and the sounds of a smoke alarm.
- **Keep a Leash Near Exits:** In an emergency, a panicked dog might try to run. Having a leash handy makes it easier to guide them to safety.
- **Use Pet Alert Stickers:** Placing these on windows lets first responders know there are pets inside. This can be crucial in the event of a fire where your pets are home but you are not.
- **Crate your dog:** Fires are stressful and panic-inducing. In a high stress moment, knowing where your dog is can provide the few extra moments you, or first responders, need to save your dog's life.
- **Microchip & ID Your Dog:** If you get separated during an evacuation, proper identification helps ensure you're reunited.
- **Consider Using a GPS Tracker:** While this is an investment not everyone is up for, having a tracker on your dog's collar can be incredibly helpful if they bolt during an emergency. Fires are chaotic, and a frightened dog may run far and fast in search of safety. A tracker can help locate them quickly.
- **Train a Reliable Recall Command:** In an emergency, you need your dog to come when called—no matter what. Practicing recall regularly can make a life-or-death difference in a fire or other crisis situation.

What to Do After a Fire

If your dog is exposed to smoke, get them checked by a vet—even if they seem fine. Smoke inhalation can cause delayed health issues. Keep them leashed or contained when outside to prevent them from running off in a panic. Before returning home, confirm with investigators that it's safe and free of lingering hazards.

One story that always stuck with him was about a family who thought they had lost everything—including their beloved black lab, Jeter. The fire had spread quickly while the family slept and while the family managed to escape in time, Jeter was nowhere to be found. By the time firefighters arrived, the house was already engulfed. The family was devastated and panicked, assuming the worst, though first responders could not allow them to enter the home to search. After the fire was under control, my dad and his team went inside to investigate and there, in the basement bathroom, was Jeter. He had taken refuge in the one place that offered some protection from the smoke and heat. The moment he was carried outside, and his family realized that he had made it, was one my dad said made the tough parts of the job feel worth it.

While stories like Jeter's have happy endings, not all are as lucky. The best way to keep our pets safe is through fire prevention and emergency preparedness.

Fires are unpredictable, but prevention and preparation give our dogs the best chance of staying safe. My dad has seen both heartbreaking losses and incredible rescues. At the end of the day, our dogs trust us to keep them safe. Let's make sure we do everything we can to live up to that responsibility.

New places and hard days

Submitted by: Shannon Hall



I've been working with Michael towards a really big AKC agility title called the Agility Grand Championship. It requires 100 qualifying runs in the Standard and Jumpers classes, 75 in Fast and Time 2 Beat, and 50 in premier Standard and premier Jumpers. Michael is a very steady dog and has everything he needs for the title except for those 50 premier runs. We don't tend to see that class offered often in Maryland, so I decided it was time to go further afield. Well, tough times ahead!

Michael might be steady, but he is also a soft dog and worries in new places. We went up to Dream Park in Frederica NJ for a three-day trial and he was a total wreck. New place, no familiar faces and some hard courses and we had by far the worst trial of our career. I was seriously concerned that I had "broken" my dog.

Our next trial was the very next weekend at a local trial site with local friends in abundance. I was determined that my only goal for the weekend was to ensure Michael had fun running agility. To my relief and delight, he was happy almost right off the start line for his first run, with only a bit of initial caution. That caution quickly turned to glee when he realized he could do no wrong this weekend. While I honestly would have taken naughtiness and rule-breaking as long as he was having fun, he instead gave me two new big titles (his 6th NADAC Agility Champion and Versatility Champion titles) and he went high in trial as well.

Dog sports can be a roller-coaster for sure, and sometimes we aim high and need to reel our expectations back in. First rule of dog sports: make sure if anyone is having fun, it is the dog!



DOGGIE DOWN-SIZING

Submitted by: Eileen Freedman

Going from a 90-pound German Shepherd to a 9-pound Havanese is a huge transition on many levels. Below are my experiences and observations:

- Food consumption - this dog eats 1/4 cup of kibble two times a day totaling 1/2 cup daily. My GSD ate 1/4 cup with her first swallow of dry kibble. She ate one cup 3 times a day.

- No longer use raised food/water bowls.

- Going “potty” is an adventure...first, he can’t decide which leg to lift. He paces back and forth at a bush/tree then finally lifts a leg... then falls over.

- No longer need to set up a ramp to get a dog into the car.

- No longer need to set up a ramp to get a dog out of the car.

- Never afraid of accidentally stepping on GSD. This dog is so small, I watch my footing instead of where I’m going.

- Doesn’t bark when company comes. My GSD didn’t either...so much for guard dog reputation.

- People want to come up to us to pet this little dog. People crossed the street when seeing me with my GSD. I’m ok with both scenarios.

- GSD seemed to be a mind reader, knowing what behaviors I wanted from her. This dog hasn’t learned to read yet.

- Talking to my little dog includes phrases such as “whoooo’s a good boy?” and “where’s the little boy?” in a falsetto voice. Yes, I fell into that trap of baby.

- Fun to watch this dog run ahead of me going up and down the stairs as he does a go-out. It’s not really a go-out yet but I am capturing the behavior and putting it on verbal cue. He is fast...very fast.

- Polite leash walking is quite different. When GSD pulled (rarely), it wasn’t gentle at all. Leash walking the little dog involves occasional pulling but barely noticeable.

- GSD could run free in the back yard without fear of escape. This dog fits through the fence pickets.

- Neighborhood fox and hawk stayed away from GSD. Now they hang around for what might be a meal. No worries, this dog will never be left in the yard unattended.

After living with GSD since 1996 and enjoying almost every moment, I look forward to enjoying time with a little Havanese.

P.S. this dog snores

Traveling with a Puppy on an Airplane Ensuring a Safe and Comfortable Journey

Submitted by: Shannon Hall



Hey all, for fun and learning, I generated the base article with the built-in Microsoft AI. Not bad! Then I have added my specific experience in each section.

For those of you who had not heard – I came home with a Border Collie puppy at the end of March. He is out of Excel; a performance BC kennel in California. I've flown with cats before, and had a 6 month-old puppy flown cargo one (I will never do that again!) but

had not flown in-cabin with a puppy and was quite nervous about getting it right. I spoke to a few people who have done so and did my own research. One thing I heard that is not captured below was that each airline has its own rules and you need to reserve your puppy's spot with the airline once you make your own reservation as there are very limited numbers of dogs allowed on board. I made a non-stop red-eye reservation and then promptly called the airline to reserve puppy's spot. No problem!

Preparation Before the Flight:

Check Airline Policies

Before booking your flight, it's essential to research and understand the specific policies each airline has regarding pets. Some airlines have strict guidelines on the size and breed of the puppy, while others may require health certificates or vaccination records. Ensure that you comply with all regulations to avoid any last-minute issues. Shannon note: the breeder provided me with a health certificate from the vet showing puppy's age and what vaccinations he had, as well as having his microchip number on the form. I had it with me in my carry-on; no one asked for it.

Visit the Veterinarian

A visit to the veterinarian is crucial prior to traveling. Your vet will provide a health check to ensure your puppy is fit to fly and can provide necessary documentation required by the airline.

Additionally, discuss potential motion sickness or anxiety with your vet, who may prescribe medication to help your puppy remain calm during the journey.

Shannon note: motion sickness did occur, but during the car ride to the airport. Poor little guy and poor me, who got to clean out a carry-on crate in an airport lavatory with those stupid automated sinks. I'd advise traveling with wet wipes as those would have helped tremendously.

Select the Right Carrier

Investing in a well-ventilated, comfortable pet carrier is vital for your puppy's comfort and safety. The carrier should be spacious enough for your puppy to stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably.

Ensure the carrier meets airline standards, as some airlines have specific dimensions and construction requirements.

Shannon note: I brought two! One loaner Sherpa, which I ended up using as my carry-on in case I needed a second crate, and one PetAmi backpack carrier, which is what I did use. It was useful to have puppy on my back until I could get my luggage checked in and such.

Planning the Day of Travel

Feeding and Hydration

Feed your puppy a light meal a few hours before departure to prevent

motion sickness. Avoid feeding immediately before the flight, but ensure your puppy stays hydrated. Many carriers have water dispensers, which can be handy during the flight. Shannon note: great advice on the meals. Puppies were free-fed so I did not have a chance to limit food. I ended up not giving water.

Exercise and Comfort

Give your puppy ample opportunity to exercise before leaving for the airport. A tired puppy is likely to be calmer and more relaxed during the flight. Also, bring along comforting items like a favorite toy or blanket to help soothe your puppy throughout the journey.

Shannon note: yay for littermates! Plus I took a red-eye. He was tired that late already.

Arriving at the Airport

Arrive at the airport early to allow sufficient time for check-in and security procedures. Be prepared for security personnel to inspect the pet carrier. Cooperate with airport staff to ensure a smooth process.

Shannon note: everything was easy in the check-in and security process. Puppy does have to come out of the carrier so that the carrier can go through the screening machine. I was very early so I camped out at an airport bus with him and let everyone who wanted to pet him to do so to tire him out further.

During the Flight

Settling In

Once on the plane, place the carrier under the seat in front of you as required by most airlines. Speak to your puppy gently and reassuringly to help them adjust to the new environment.

Shannon note: I was flying Southwest so I paid for early bird check-in for a good seat selection. I saw a teenage girl who had petted puppy at the airport and waved her down to be my seatmate. Happy seatmate, happy puppy!

Managing Anxiety

Keep an eye on your puppy for signs of distress or anxiety. If your puppy seems anxious, speaking to them softly and using calming techniques can help. If allowed, you might be able to reach into the carrier and comfort your puppy with gentle strokes.

Shannon note: He was pretty darned conked out before I boarded. Red-eye for the win!

Post-Flight Considerations

Arrival and Settling Down

Upon arrival at your destination, find a quiet spot to release your puppy from the carrier. Allow them to stretch, exercise, and relieve themselves. Offer water and a light snack if necessary.

Shannon note: remind stupid spouse to drive the car with the dog crates in it to pick you up. Sigh.

Acclimatization

Help your puppy acclimate to the new environment gradually. Stick to their routine as much as possible and provide familiar items to ease the transition. Monitor your puppy for any signs of distress or discomfort.

Shannon: crates and ex-pens!

General Tips for a Smooth Journey

- Book direct flights to minimize travel time and stress.
- Keep a copy of your puppy's health records and identification tags handy.
- Ensure your puppy is microchipped for added safety.
- Bring extra supplies like food, water, and cleaning materials.

Traveling with a puppy on an airplane requires careful planning and consideration. By preparing thoroughly and attending to your puppy's needs, you can ensure a safe and comfortable journey for both you and your furry companion.

Shannon note: I was quite anxious, which in my case just makes me prepare better. All went well and puppy is adorable. Now I am reminding myself, after almost 8 years, how to manage a baby puppy at home! He is having an over-excited, over-tired puppy time-out / nap in an ex-pen right now.

Brag

Susan Carle shares:

Summer and I are happy to announce that we recently completed our CD title, with one red and two yellow ribbons. This was possible due to the wonderful guidance of all of our CDTC instructors, Payton Murphy, Elieen Freedman, Marney McCown, Natasha Curry, Sandi Atkinson, Shannon Hall, Shirley Blakely, and Barbara Glass. Thank you CDTC!

Shannon Hall shares:

Connor just earned his 9th NADAC agility championship. Good Boy Connor!



Submit yours to CDTCObichaff@gmail.com

Delegate's Corner

By: Joyce Dandridge

In the Companion Events Committee Meeting:

- Rally and Obedience Nationals will be July 3-7, 2025 at Purina Farms. The RNC will be held over the course of three days, July 3-5, and the NOC will be held July 6 and 7. Entries open April 2 for Rally and April 9 for NOC.
- The AKC Obedience Judges Educational Program- All current judges have until Sept. 30, 2025 to complete the required educational program. To date, 119 individuals have completed the program and 158 are active learners. The Companion Events staff is continuing to work with Canine College on development of the Rally Judges' Educational Program.
- 84% of Obedience Judges have completed the Darkness to Light training and 86% of the Rally judges have completed the training. Judges not completing the training will not be allowed to accept contracts to judge.
- The Board has approved a recommendation to establish a process where a dog that an Event Committee determines has attacked a person or dog on three occasions, even without injury, shall be administratively disqualified by the AKC. It will

apply to all AKC sports. The current rule states it must be an injury so this will change.

- The Board approved a recommendation to require a displaceable connecting strap that secures the tire to the frame in Agility. The cost for the strap is \$25. Effective July 1, 2025.
- The Board approved a recommendation to allow individuals to transfer points and QQs acquired toward their dog's MACH title to the earning of a PACH title through a one-time application process. Effective July 2, 2025.
- Staff is considering a recommendation to reduce the dogs per hour that a Rally judge can judge from 20 to 18. It is believed 18 is closer to reality and will improve scheduling of events.
- The increase of the event fee has been suspended for the time being.

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In the General Meeting:

- Dennis Sprung spoke and will be President until April 1. He presented the accomplishments and obstacles during his tenure which included 9-11 and COVID. He thanked everyone in the sport for their efforts in making the sport exciting.
- Tom Davies, chair of the AKC Board, thanked Dennis for his years of service. He introduced, Gina DiNardo, the new AKC President and CEO as of April 1. He mentioned Shiela Goeff will replace Gina as Executive Secretary but will also remain as head of Government Legislation Department in AKC.
- During the meeting, breaks were taken for the Delegates to vote on four members of the AKC Board. This process took us through five secret ballots because it had to be 2/3 of those present to win. In the first ballot no one received the required number. I emailed the winners to CDTC members. Only one member contacted me and suggested a name for my vote. That member suggested Robin Stansell and he did win on the third ballot.

Finally, April 15 is the deadline for receiving a nomination for the CDTC AKC Outstanding Sportsmanship Award. If anyone has question, please contact me.

Available Classes

[Class List and Registration](#)

Upcoming Classes/Tests/Trials

Classes

Register for all classes [here](#).

Permission is required to register for Beginner Novice, Novice, Open, and Utility Obedience classes
Contact [Training Secretary](#)

Fill out the [Agility Waitlist Questionnaire](#) to get on the wait list for the next available classes.
Email the [Agility Director](#) with all agility related questions.

Email [Training Secretary](#) with all other questions.

Training Groups

Rally Training Group

meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month 1 - 2:30 pm.

Obedience Training Group

meets the 1st Saturday of the month

Conformation Group

More information to come.

Thursday Open/Utility Training Group

(Goldstein @ 12:30pm). Contact [Burton](#).

Friday Utility Training Group (Cleverdon @ 1:00pm). Contact [Donna](#).

For information about **Freestyle Training Group**

Contact [Training Secretary](#)

Thinking of joining CDTC as a Member?

Active membership in the Capital Dog Training Club (CDTC) is available to an individual who:

- has completed no less than three (3) months as a training member paying the prescribed fees/dues, and
- whose dog has passed a Proficiency Test as prescribed by the Club with a dog that she or he has trained **or** has obtained a qualifying score toward an AKC title in any “dog companion sport” trial (Obedience, Agility, or Rally).

Active membership includes the right to attend meetings, vote,

access to the Members Only section of CDTC's website, access to seminars, events, announcements of the Club, the right to hold an elective office in the Club, and all other privileges and benefits of the Club (including 2 free classes per quarter). Visit cdtc.org/membership.

Email [Training Secretary](#) with questions.

Next Membership Meeting: April 8th at 8:00pm

Do you have an idea for an article? Perhaps a message for dog-people is taking up space in your brain and you need to put pen to paper? Submit your articles for the Obichaff [here](#)!



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