



Phone: (269) 226-8570

KAR Friends ~ September 2019

Dear Reader;

It's back-to-school time! I live on the flight path to our neighborhood elementary school, and it's such a pleasure to watch children and parents heading enthusiastically off for the day and later coming home a bit weary but still excited. Remember, though, school isn't just for kids. Life-long learning is important, and I'm trying to convince the other members of my household that we should all participate. I think the dog is pretty enthusiastic (treats, after all) but I'm not sure about the cat. So **this issue of *KAR Friends* is devoted to encouraging ourselves and our pets to learn new skills and behaviors.** Keeps us young, you know!

Please feel free to share this issue with friends and family. We appreciate your continued support of KAR's mission to help homeless, stray, and abandoned cats and dogs. Together we make a difference!

Sincerely,

Pat Hollahan
KAR Friends Editor

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**Pets of the Month**Read [Buffy's](#) Story**Doggie Den***(Re)Training For The Older Dog*

By Pat Hollahan

It's autumn and the walking is easy: no ice, no snow, not even a lot of soggy leaves creating hazards on the streets and sidewalks. But (you knew that was coming, right?) ... Soon enough we'll have slippery sidewalks, icy streets, and back yards full of snow, all the challenges of dog walking, plus convincing your pooch that she really wants to come back in the house rather than making doggy snow angels while you shiver at the door. So **now's the time to review all of those dog-behavior (and owner-behavior) resolutions you made somewhere in the middle of last winter and get your canine friend's obedience training back on track.**



The best place to start, of course, is figuring out where the problem areas are and then taking steps to deal with them. For me and my dog, that's those twice-a-day walks which we both need, pretty much no matter what the weather. I'm a reasonably senior person walking a reasonably senior dog, but one who's a real power walker, with a low center of gravity. We use a head collar, per our vet's recommendation, but good walking etiquette is still important, especially when the footing is bad for those of us who don't have handy built-in pitons. So I'm finding [articles on leash-training for older dogs](#) particularly helpful; especially those that [address how to deal with a dog that pulls](#). I've also appreciated this article on



Read [Jett's](#) Story

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 28, **MVPets** Westnedge Ave.
- Sept. 28, **Oak Ridge Feed and Pet Salon** Stadium Dr.
- Oct. 5, **Petco** Westnedge Ave.
- Oct. 12, **Chow Hound** Stadium Dr.
- Oct. 12, **Chow Hound** Westnedge Ave.
- Oct. 19, **PetSmart** W. Main St.

For details on these and other upcoming events, please [see our Events page](#) on the KAR website.

KAR Links

- [VOLUNTEER](#)
- [Become a Foster Family](#)
- [Adoptable Dogs](#)
- [Adoptable Cats](#)
- [Adoptable Kittens](#)
- [Special Needs Pets](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- [KAR Website](#)
- [Donate Today!](#)

Newsletter Team

- Pat Hollahan, Editor
- Lynn Bolhuis
- Kim Bourner
- Kara Harmsen
- Karren Jensen

[Email us](#) with any newsletter suggestions or questions!

Contact Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue
P.O. Box 3295
Kalamazoo, MI 49003
(269) 226-8570



[how to train a "stubborn" dog](#) (my dog likes the scare quotes).

Treats are a big part of the training program, and I'm pretty sure my dog knows it's a good sign that the cookie jar is significantly more full than it used to be and that I've gotten a portable treats container for our walks. Another major factor, of course, is reasonable expectations, conveyed consistently, on the part of the trainer. I think I'll carry a little bag of semisweet chocolate bits to reinforce my behavior here.

You may also want to work on reminding your snow-angel maker to come when you call (treats are good here too) and do a refresher course on not jumping on furniture—or people—with the muddy paws that come with rain and snow.

You'll also want to **consult your vet about any physical issues** that your canine pal may have as he or she gets older, and you may find that it's a good idea to work with a professional dog-trainer (who, after all, will be training you as well as training your dog).

Here's to four seasons of happy walking and good manners!

Additional Resources:

- [Training your senior dog](#)
- [How to train your older dog to do new tricks](#)
- [The benefits of continued training](#)

Cat's Corner

How To Train Your Cat



By Karren Jensen

Cat training: is that even possible? Despite the widely held belief that cats are uncooperative, **your cat is very trainable if you take the right approach.**

Here are a few tips for turning your cat into a great housemate and companion.



- **Be consistent:** cats are creatures of habit and value consistency and stability in their lives. Attempting to establish a desirable behavior by reinforcing it sometimes and ignoring it at other times will confuse and frustrate your cat. If you want your feline to stay off a particular chair, go to bed at a specific time, or develop any other approved habit, be absolutely consistent in reinforcing that behavior. My own three cats are expected to go to their room for the night at 9:00 PM, when they will receive treats and some dry food for their overnight needs. They become anxious if I don't take them down to their room at the expected time because they have adapted to this schedule. This is a good example of cat training with the pets themselves expecting and reinforcing a long-established habit.
- **Claws/scratching issues:** most cat owners have concerns and opinions about a cat's natural clawing and scratching behavior. Training your cat to never scratch is about as feasible as training yourself never to yawn or sneeze! A more sensible solution is to train your feline to limit his/her scratching to appropriate places, using a combination of positive reinforcement and avoidance. Purchase at least one scratching post and introduce your kitty to it by

gently rubbing his/her paws on the post to add his/her scent. Make any undesirable scratching location (furniture/carpet) unattractive by covering it or using a repellent scent. Praise your pet for correct scratching behavior and gently discourage scratching inappropriately. Nail caps or nail trimming will make claws less sharp and can help the training process. Do not yell at, physically punish, or declaw your cat, because such so-called solutions are all likely to result in unexpected problems. [Click here](#) for a good overview of clawing issues and solutions.

- **Hygiene:** make sure that you have provided adequate litter boxes for the number of cats you have in your home. Cats prefer having one litter box for each animal and don't enjoy sharing these items. Providing a personal litter box for each cat/kitten avoids creating friction among multiple cats in one household.
- **Attention/Affection:** a neglected cat will become bored and unhappy, leading to behavioral problems. Your cat/kitten needs to know that you are there and involved in his/her life, not just a disinterested caregiver who provides food and a home. Take time to play with your cat to provide bonding and exercise. You might just find your own health benefits, too.

Cats are wonderful and generally undemanding companions who can easily adapt to your expectations when you give them the love and consistency that they crave. Assume your feline friend wants to please you, spend some time reinforcing good behavior, and you'll soon have the well-behaved kitty you desire.

Additional Resources

- [How to train a cat](#)
- [Best and worst ways to train a cat](#)
- [Overview of cat training](#)

Cats As Trainers



By Joy, Merry, Willow, and Poppy Bourner

Speaking of the need for training, here are some things we've accomplished with our human.



- **Joy:** I've trained her to feed me snacks every time she puts a book away when she's ready for bed. After all, I need something to get me through the night.
- **Merry:** I've taught her to cradle me in one arm, like a baby. She knows that as long as she exhibits this behavior, I will not walk all over her, or head-butt her, or lick her face. It's a win-win, right?
- **Willow:** I'm teaching my human to respond to patience. When I want something, I'll just sit tall and stoic approximately three feet in front of her. Just sitting there, waiting. Once she's done my bidding, I reward her by playing with my tower of balls and doing that cat slow blink that means "I love you." Good human!
- **Poppy:** I've undertaken to teach the all-important Petting Etiquette. This means that I am to have the top of my head scratched and one or two pets straight down my back to the tip of my tail. No more than twice! Etiquette is so important, don't you think!

Kitties, take heart! Even adult humans are educable, with the right incentives.

About Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) charitable organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through donations from the public.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Kalamazoo and the surrounding communities.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent, committed and life-long homes.

Visit our website [here](#) for more KAR information!



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