



*Monkton Community Dog Park Newsletter
Issue 3, February 14, 2021*

A Community Dog Park for Monkton -- Newsletter

Welcome to the third issue of our *Monkton Community Dog Park Newsletter*!

You are receiving this newsletter because you have asked to be added to our email list, or have shown interest in receiving news about our progress. To unsubscribe, please write to us at dogpark@monktonvt.com

In this issue, we are celebrating Valentine's Day with a love story (page 7) and some photos of very happy pups enjoying the park and its amenities. We are also excited to include articles contributed by committee members and some of our Friends of the Dog Park.

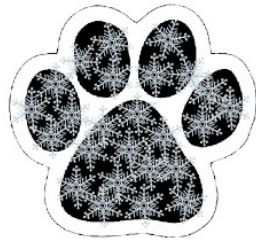


Rufio, Toby, Molly, and JB enjoy one of the new benches! [photo by Mountain Dog Photography]

Thank you to Aubuchon and Scout Troop 525

Thanks to a generous gift from Aubuchon Hardware in Hinesburg, and Scoutmaster George Parker and Scout Troop 525, the Dog Park now has two benches. Assistant Scout Master Jeff Densmore earned a Wood Badge by building two solid benches for the park. The dogs love them, and so do we!

What's Happening at The Monkton Community Dog Park

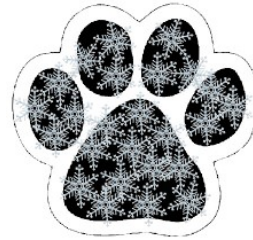


Winter Weather Advisory

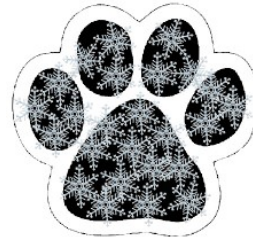
from your friends at the Monkton Community Dog Park

Please help us keep the gates open!

If you come for a visit to the park, but no one has arrived yet to shovel, please take a few minutes and use one of our shovels to remove the snow from the



entry gates before you walk on it and pack it down. This will help us keep the gates in good shape for the rest of the year!



Contributions from Friends of the Monkton Community Dog Park



We are pleased to include the following articles from committee members and friends. We hope you will consider submitting an article for a future newsletter!

Microchipping your pet: What are they? How do they work? Should your pet have one?

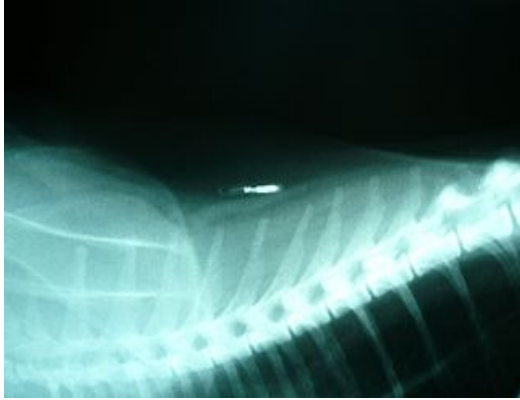
Ian Schulze

If you've adopted a dog from a local shelter, they likely implanted an RFID chip under their skin and gave you information about registering the microchip. But what is it and what should you know about it?

The chip:

If you've seen the inside of your computer or phone, or if you've seen a commercial for Intel or AMD, you probably think of a square piece of metal and plastic. However, the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips that are implanted in dogs and cats are about as big around as an average grain of rice and maybe twice as long. The outer casing is either glass or, more likely now, plastic. Inside, there is the microchip with no battery.

X-ray of a cat with an RFID microchip:



(Image credit: User:JoelMills, Wikipedia)

How they work:

The chip is powered by the scanner with which it is 'read'. The detection and powering of the chip is a bit like a metal detector that you might use to find items in the ground. The scanner is a handheld device not much larger than a cell phone. The scanner is passed over your dog, the chip is powered by the magnetic field, and the number of the chip is read by the scanner.

A handheld RFID scanner:



Where they get implanted:

Most often the chip will be implanted, in a similar way as having a vaccine shot, between the dog's shoulder blades. The procedure is as painless as having a shot, and the chip will be held in place by the connective tissues under the dog's skin. Although some chips have 'fallen' from this location and moved down the dog's chest, this is relatively rare.

Should your pet have one:

The short answer is that it's a good idea. That doesn't come without caveats but overall, it's cheap insurance to get your dog back should they get lost and go astray.

There are different companies that make chips and not all readers will read all chips from different companies. Your veterinarian will have a good idea of the companies that local shelters get their chips from. And they'll know which company's chips can be read by their scanners. This is especially important to note in case your dog was adopted from a shelter in another state since shelters in that area of the country may use a different company's chip.

The chances of having any negative health implications are low. A study in the UK found the rates of serious complications being around one in a million.

And finally, you'll want to make sure you use the paperwork you're given by the shelter or your veterinarian to register the chip with the manufacturer. If they don't have your contact information, and your dog is lost and then found, they won't be able to contact you.



How To Get The Most Out Of Your Curbside Veterinary Visit

Erin Teodosio, Veterinary Technician

In February of 2020, the majority of veterinary clinics across the country drastically changed their protocols and procedures in order to limit the contact between their employees and the

public in order to comply with CDC recommendations in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Veterinary staff, pets and owners have been coping with operating in the curbside service model for almost a year now. This way of doing things has become increasingly routine for staff and many newer employees have never experienced having owners in the building at all. Most owners are understanding about the safety measures veterinary practices have set up to protect their staff, their clients and our community at large but there are still many sources of frustration for owners and veterinary staff, some of which can be avoided. There are obvious downsides to owners not being allowed into their pet's appointment: increased patient stress, opportunity for miscommunication, the inability to have someone point something out on the patient in the moment, less time for owners to ask questions, the lack of doctor to client face-to-face interaction which certainly can lower the "warm and fuzzy" factor and of course, most detrimental to the running of the veterinary practice, the increase in time things take to operate in this new way.

As veterinary practices have been operating with curbside service for a whole year now, they have certainly had the opportunity to improve client, patient and employee experience. Many practices sent communication to their clients in the beginning describing what they could expect when coming for a curbside visit and what would now be expected of them as clients. In a few months, many veterinary practices were sending client communication to make pleas to clients to be a little more patient and understanding with their staff after some client's frustrations and anger about the policy changes and wait time were taken out on front desk staff. As a veterinary technician answering the phone in the curbside service model, I have compiled a few ways that you as an owner can improve your experience at your pet's veterinary appointment, even though you are just sitting in the car.

- 1) The person taking the pet to the veterinary office should be the primary caretaker of the animal. If that primary caretaker is you, and you are not present to answer the technician's questions, it's hard to address many of our primary concerns with your pet and make sure he or she is healthy. Many clients assume because they don't get to go into the building with their pet, they can send anyone to taxi their animal to the vet. Please be assured that you as the primary pet owner are vital to this process as much as you always were! Please send the person who can best answer our questions about your pet's eating habits, exercise routine, behavior, defecation and urination habits and medications.
- 2) Know what kind of medications your pet is on and how often you are giving that medication as well as what kind of food your pet eats, how much you are feeding and how often they are getting fed. It is important for your veterinary team to know if your animal's eating or drinking habits have changed as sometimes these are clues for an underlying disease process. Is your pet drinking dramatically more? Is your cat begging you for food every ten minutes? Is your pet starting to turn his nose up at the diet he's been eating for years? These are very important things to mention during the check in process.
- 3) Have an idea of your pet's urinary and defecation habits. Are your dog's stools consistent? If not, is there a rhyme or reason to the inconsistency? Some folks do not see their secretive outdoor cat or off-leash dog's bowel movements, but if you know you have a vet visit coming up, you may want to seek those out to take a look to make sure everything looks

normal. Owners many times don't realize that picking up larger urine clumps out of the litterbox can signify health changes in the feline patient. Pay attention while you scoop your cat box and mention any significant changes to your veterinary team. Also mention any odd elimination behavior in the house – is your cat suddenly urinating or defecating outside the litterbox? This can mean a few things in the feline patient and should be mentioned as a concern during the check-in process with the front desk staff. Sometimes older patients may become incontinent and these changes should be mentioned as well.

- 4) Behavioral changes are also worth mentioning as they can sometimes signify serious health issues. Aggression towards people or other pets, increased vocalization, excessive grooming or chewing, destructive behavior, odd movements or tics like tremors, head tilt, staring, circling or pacing are worth noting to your vet. Changes in routine, personality, confusion, having accidents in the home or seeming lost can signify discomfort or age-related changes like dementia that your Veterinarian would like to know about. Most often these behaviors do not happen in the veterinary office so it can be helpful to take videos of these occurrences and email them to the practice ahead of your visit.
- 5) If you are concerned about specific lumps or bumps on your pet's body, be prepared to explain exactly where they are by phone or by pointing them out to the veterinary technician when handing your animal over.
- 6) Organize your questions and concerns for your veterinary team ahead of your visit! Write your notes either for your reference while you are on the phone or to be sent in with your animal for your veterinarian to read. If you are sending a note in, be aware of how long it is! Bullet points may be more helpful than long prose!
- 7) **WEAR YOUR MASK AND MAKE AN EFFORT TO REMAIN 6 FT AWAY FROM VETERINARY STAFF!** I cannot stress this one enough! While many folks get to work from home during this pandemic, veterinary employees are risking their safety in order to care for your animals. Please reduce our risk of getting sick by masking up, keeping your distance and using hand sanitizer! It is also helpful to get your pet out of your car for us!
- 8) Be patient, courteous and kind! We are trying our best for you and your pets despite very challenging circumstances!

Your Veterinary team thanks you!



*Molly is pretty sure she can see Spring coming!
[photo by Mountain Dog Photography]*



As the cold days start to give way to the warmth of the spring sun (yes, it really is happening), use of the park is climbing. In addition to the basic rules reprinted below, we thought it would be a good time to review the social niceties of play at the park. Committee member Callie Brynn and associate member Kim Frigault (Vermont Barks & Recreation--Canine Camp) were willing to give their perspectives on what “good behavior” looks like when visiting any dog park.



Korra and Weezie demonstrate seasonal affection, and how to share a toy [photos by Callie Brynn]

Dog Park Etiquette

Callie Brynn

- Know the rules of the Dog Park upon entering
- Unleash your dog in the entrance area before going into the main park
- Keep a leash & poop bags on hand
- Bring water (especially in the warmer months)
- Give other dogs space at the entrance when they are entering the park
- Ask other pet parents before offering treats to their dogs
- Recognize when dogs need space from one another
- Communicate with other dog owners
- Have fun!

Rules of Play

Kim Frigault

- 3's a crowd. Let pairs play together.
- Keep barking at a minimum, no sport barking.
- Keep energy and arousal at a minimum. Over arousal results in bad play.
- Minimize marking (scratching and spreading)
- No Mounting
- 50/50 play - All play should be evenly matched with both participants engaging with equal enthusiasm. Neither dog should feel (nor be) trapped and unable to stop playing. Neither dog should be overwhelming the other with its size or strength, and both dogs should always have the freedom of choice to stay in the game or move away from the interactions.

A Reminder:

MONKTON COMMUNITY DOG PARK

WELCOME!

Please read and understand all dog park rules before using the dog park.

- Dogs must be licensed, vaccinated and healthy
- Dogs must be kept in sight and under voice control at all times
- Limit: 2 dogs per adult
- Minimize excessive barking
- Dogs in heat and dogs under the age of 12 weeks are prohibited
- Pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it properly
- Dogs that display aggression toward people/dogs must be removed immediately
- Children under 12 must be supervised by an adult
- Keep your dog from jumping on other dogs or people
- Owners are legally responsible for their dogs and any injuries caused by them
- No glass, food, alcohol, or smoking - all other Morse Park rules apply

Hours of Operation: The Park will be open from dawn to dusk.

In an emergency, please call 911.

Questions or concerns?

Contact dogpark@monktonvt.com

The Monkton Dog Park Committee and/or Town of Monkton will not be liable for any injury or damage caused by any dog or person in the park. Users of the park do so at their own risk. All dogs and their owners must comply with the Town of Monkton Animal Control Ordinance.



♥♥♥By special request for our celebration of Valentine's Day, the father of committee member Lizzy Woolf shared this story with us. ♥♥♥

The Story of Magnificent Bo

By Burt Woolf

February 2021

I will never forget the day that Bo decided we were to be his new family. On that day, just as we had done for the previous several weeks, my daughter Lizzy and I arrived at Dakin Animal Shelter in western Massachusetts to provide our weekly volunteer dog-walking.

A few weeks earlier, two big strays had been brought into Dakin, both found wandering on a dirt road in the next town over. One of the dogs found a new family immediately, but the other, a 90+ pound tall brown-black hound (Rottweiler/Ridgeback/Shepherd Mix) would not interact

with anyone. He was aloof to all humans, a sad loner, and a scary tough guy on the leash. No one wanted him, and Dakin was worried. The animal evaluator shook his head as he certified this dog as “unadoptable.” As a no-kill shelter, Dakin would have to find a foster family somehow, but no one was interested in a seemingly untrained large dog. But Lizzy and I made it a point to walk this guy every week, letting him drag us wherever he wanted to go. Each succeeding week we became increasingly familiar to him.

Then one day, exhausted from being pulled around, I sat down cross-legged on the grass and let Lizzy take over, but the dog dragged her over to me. He climbed up onto me (yes, all 90+ pounds of him), lay down on my lap, lifted his head, and plaintively looked me straight in the eyes. In that moment I knew that I would not keep my promise to find Lizzy a small breed potty-trained puppy. This huge full grown, “unmanageable” dog had chosen us to be his family, and he was coming home with us no matter what others felt about him. The shelter had named him Bo. Bo would be ours.

At home and away from the stress of the shelter, it wasn’t long before Bo underwent a surprising and incredible transformation without any coaxing from us: that scary aloof animal became a loving, snuggling friend. Turns out he loved people and cats (we had two at the time), and more amazingly, he was completely trained for most commands. Once he settled in, he did not even need to be leashed on walks in the woods. We had found the perfect dog, or should I say he found us!

Magnificent Bo was a member of our family for the rest of his years. He was Lizzy’s constant companion as she came of age. He was by my side as I wrote a late-in-life doctoral dissertation taking long walks in the woods as a break, and his powerful presence and commanding bark guarded our home throughout.

It has been 10 years since Bo left us. When we walk the trails that he walked with us every day, we often call his name, and his spirit runs to us. To this day, his memory is a blessing in our own lives. Bo is our forever dog.



Fundraising Continues

One of the realities of owning dogs is cleaning up after them, and one of the delights of a dog park is the poop bag dispenser and waste can RIGHT THERE! so the clean-up job is easy and doesn't go home with you. But those bags have to be purchased, and this will be a significant and on-going expense. Come summer, we will all want the beautiful grassy field to stay beautiful and grassy, and this involves mowing and trimming along the fenceline. Again, this is a significant expense. Our goal is to never have to burden the Monkton taxpayer with any costs related to the dog park, so we will continue to look to our supporters for funding for these on-going expenses. Here are some ideas on how to help:

- 🐾 Are you looking for that special gift for a dog-lover in your life? Or are you the dog-lover, and someone is asking you what you would love to receive? How about a donation in your (or your pup's name) to the Dog Park? Skip the in-person shopping, or even the on-line stress, and give the gift of helping the Dog Park.
- 🐾 You can now use Amazon Smile to generate funds for the Dog Park! For any holiday or shopping need, if you use Amazon for your shopping, you can select the "Monkton Community Coffeehouse" as a charitable recipient, and 0.5% of the purchase price (for all qualifying purchases) will be donated directly to our bank account. All you have to do is go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-4429225> to start your shopping! It's easy to do, and your purchases will not cost you anything extra.
- 🐾 We are providing an opportunity for dog-lovers to memorialize a beloved pet's life with a small engraved plaque. For \$25, your pet's name and information can be engraved on a dog tag, and your dog can play on in memory at the park.
- 🐾 When public health conditions permit, we hope to sponsor events at the dog park which will raise money through small attendance fees and donations.
- 🐾 We will continue to receive donations at both our PayPal (<http://monktonvt.com/community/monkton-community-dog-park/>) and our GoFundMe (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/monkton-community-dog-park>) links.



It is our goal to make all decision-making for the Monkton Community Dog Park an inclusive and transparent process and anyone interested in joining the workgroup or sharing ideas is welcome. The next meeting of the Dog Park Committee is Wednesday, March 3 at 7:00 pm by Zoom. Please contact us (see below) for meeting login information.

To come to a meeting, join the committee or request additional information contact us at dogpark@monktonvt.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the Dog Park!