

Thursday, January 30, 2020

A supplement of the

Cortland Standard

Cute Companions

From paws and claws to scales and tails!

A special section celebrating our favorite pets

Brought to you by



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- Lots of local love for pets Pages 6-7

YOUR PET'S BRAND NEW HOME AWAY FROM HOME! See their ad on the back cover of this special section.



See our ad on the back cover

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Signs of heartworm disease in dogs

Heartworms are parasites that are transmitted to dogs by mosquitoes. If left untreated, they can cause severely debilitating symptoms or even death. Here are some signs of heartworm disease to look out for.

- Persistent cough and difficulty breathing. Heartworms can make their way to Fido's lungs and surrounding veins, making your dog work harder to get the necessary oxygen.

- Lethargy and sleeping more than usual. Animals with heartworm disease are weakened and often have a hard time finding the energy for their regular activities.

- Decreased appetite and weight loss. As heartworms mature and make their way to the heart and lungs, your dog may lose interest in eating and lose weight as a result. This may cause their ribs and chest to protrude.

- Caval syndrome. Heartworm disease can cause blockages of blood to the heart, resulting in sudden collapse or death. The warning signs of caval syndrome are laboured breathing, pale gums and either dark and bloody or coffee-coloured urine.

Your pooch may not show any signs of having heartworms until the infestation is severe. Prevention is therefore of the utmost importance. Veterinarians recommend getting your dog tested for heartworms once a year and administering preventive medication once a month.



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Why do cats rub their faces on everything?

Have you ever wondered why cats rub their faces on seemingly everything they cross paths with? This behaviour is called bunting, and it's actually a form of feline communication. However, depending on what they rub themselves on, it can have different meanings.

Cats have scent glands located in their feet, below their chin, on their lips, near their temples, along their tails and in their ears. These glands release pheromones, which cats use to mark their territory. If a cat rubs itself all over your furniture and walls, it's saying that those things are the property of kitty.

Bunting may be a show of dominance over other felines in the house, or it may be a way for the cat to feel more comfortable at home.

If your kitty doesn't like to show their face when you have visitors, they may rub their scent around the house once the strangers have gone. Bunting allows them to reclaim the house and feel calmer.

But what about when a cat rubs itself on you? Do they consider you their property as well? The answer depends on your relationship with the kitty in question.

Cats often rub themselves on newcomers to their home. If they do this, it's to gather the intruder's scent and find out more about them. However, if they bunt against their human companions, it's a sign of affection and that they consider you a part of their family.



Should I walk on the left or the right?

By **JOAN MORRIS**

The Mercury News (TNS)

Dear Joan: My dog, Wanda, is taking chemo for lymphoma and fortunately, she's doing great. I'm trying to get her on nice trail walks several times a week, and this raises a question.

My habit is to walk on the left side of the trail, with Wanda on leash to my left. This way I'm between Wanda and other oncom-

ing dogs and their people as we pass.

I thought it was customary to walk on the left side, but more often than not, oncoming walkers and joggers position themselves to pass on Wanda's side. Is there trail etiquette of which I'm unaware?

— Sue

See **RIGHT**, page 3

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How to find a vet for your exotic pet

It's easy to find a vet for a cat or dog, but what if you have another type of pet entirely? Animals like reptiles, fish, birds, ferrets and rodents need a vet with special training to give them the medical attention they need.

The best way to find a reliable veterinarian for your exotic pet is by word of mouth. Talk to others with the same type of animal as you or seek the advice of breeders and rescue organizations. You can also search online.

When you find a practice or clinic that seems promising, ask for a tour of the facility. It should be clean and modern, and the animals should look comfortable.

If your dog or cat's veterinarian tells you they're comfortable taking care of your exotic pet, ask

how many exotics they currently provide care for. A vet who sees a single parrot once a month, for example, will not be as knowledgeable about birds as one who sees multiple avian patients a week.

Don't wait until there's an emergency to find a veterinarian for your exotic pet. If your companion gets sick or injured, knowing where to turn can make all the difference.



Can I change my rescue dog's name?

Do you adore your new rescue dog but dislike their name? If so, don't feel like you're stuck calling your pooch something you wouldn't choose yourself. In fact, in some cases changing a dog's name can be beneficial, especially if they were mistreated in the past. A new moniker can help your dog make a fresh start in a happier, more loving home.

It may take a few weeks to get your dog used to responding to the new name, but it's not hard to do. Be consistent about using it and always say it in a happy, enthusiastic manner. Keep treats in your pocket during the adjustment period. Every time your pup responds to the new name, give them a treat. The idea is to get your dog to associate the new name with rewards.

If you prefer to make the change gradually, try using both names. For example, if you want to change Charlie's name to Max, call him Charlie-Max for a week or two. Once he gets used to responding to the combined name, drop the old one.

While you shouldn't do it often, don't feel bad about changing your pup's name. Dogs don't identify with them the way we do. If they respond happily when you call them, it's due to their eagerness to please you and not because of the name itself.



RIGHT

continued from page 2

Dear Sue: The general rule for walking on trails is to stay to the right and pass on the left. As to which side the dog goes on, show and hunting dogs are trained to stay on their human's left side, but for most dogs, it doesn't matter. Experts, however, suggest you pick a side — left or right — and keep to it so that the dog doesn't accidentally trip you going back and forth.

When encountering another dog, especially one you and your dog don't know, it is wiser to put yourself between your dog




and the passing one. Whether you do that or not, it's important to pull your dog into your side and keep it on a short leash.

There are five basic rules of etiquette when it comes to walking your dog. Don't go onto a neighbor's yard, lawn, garden or property unless invited; scoop the poop and take it with you; don't assume everyone likes your dog as much as you do — some people don't like dogs and some are terrified of them; don't assume the dog or person you are passing is interested in being friends; and keep your dog on a leash.

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I just adopted a dog, now what?

Adopting a dog is a life changing event. Here are some steps to take when you bring your new canine companion home.

- Take them to the vet. Your dog should be examined to ensure that they don't have a disease or other issue that requires attention. In most cases, they'll also make a recommendation for when the dog should be spayed or neutered.
- Schedule their vaccinations. Many animal shelters vaccinate dogs before they're adopted. Nevertheless, you'll need to make sure your pup's up to date with their shots. Vaccines should be administered annually for the rest of their life.
- Get identification. If your municipality requires it, get your dog licensed right away. Also, make sure they can be identified, either with a tag on their collar or a microchip embedded under their skin.
- Start training. It's a good idea to train your dog to come when you call and follow basic commands like sit, stay and down. Not only are these commands useful, but training sessions serve as a great way for you and your pet to bond.

If your new pet seems shy or nervous around you at first, don't get frustrated. A period of adjustment is to be expected. With consistent love and attention, they'll quickly become more comfortable around you.



7 fun facts about pets



Did you know that cat and dog noses are as unique as human fingerprints? Here are seven more interesting facts about pets.

1. Dog remains were found alongside human ones in a 14,000-year-old German burial site. Dogs are thus believed to be the first type of animal that humans domesticated.
2. Despite how often cats are represented as happily sipping milk from a saucer, most are lactose intolerant and can't digest dairy products of any kind.
3. Cats only meow to communicate with humans. In fact, past infancy, felines rarely meow at each other.
4. Dogs' noses are wet because they're covered with mucus that helps them to absorb scents from the air. They also use their tongues to sample smells with their mouths.
5. Despite having a reputation for being a short-lived pet, the oldest goldfish on record died 43 years after his owner won him at a fair.
6. Just like humans, pet rats can be ticklish. Studies have found that when tickled, rats giggle and laugh, albeit at a frequency inaudible to human ears.
7. Cats spend 70 per cent of their life sleeping, and 30 per cent of their waking hours grooming themselves.

Not only do pets provide unconditional love and endless entertainment, they're also good for your health. Studies have shown that a few minutes of playing with an animal can lower your heart rate and decrease your level of stress.

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"Hector"

How to care for your aquarium while you're on vacation

Are you heading out of town for a few days and wondering how to keep your fish healthy and your aquarium clean while you're gone? If so, here's how.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Examine your fish to make sure they appear healthy and alert before you leave. If they don't, contact your local fish store or aquatic veterinarian for advice.

If your fish require special lighting, get a timer to make sure the lights turn on and off at the right times.

The day before you leave, change the water in the tank, check all your equipment and feed the fish.

WHILE YOU'RE GONE

If you have friends or family members who live nearby, ask them to pop in every few days to check on the fish and feed them. Be sure to portion out the food, though, because people tend to overfeed fish when they don't know what they're doing.

Some adult fish can survive for up to two weeks without eating. So, depending on how long you'll be gone, you may not need to worry about feeding them at all.

WHEN YOU GET HOME

Be sure to check that the tank and all its parts are working well, change the water as soon as possible and of course, feed the fish.



5 things you should know before adopting a mouse



Domestic mice are fun and interesting pets. Some can even be taught to do tricks. However, here are some things to consider before bringing one of these adorable rodents into your home.

1. They have short lifespans. Mice live for one to three years. To enjoy your pet as long as possible, adopt a pup — a baby mouse.
2. They're social animals. Companionship is essential for mice to thrive. Females live well with other females, and males will get along with other males if they've been castrated. Unless you want to breed mice, get males neutered before placing them with females.
3. They mark their territory. Male mice mark their territory with their urine, which has a strong smell. Neutering will diminish this instinct. It's important to regularly clean their cage and replace their bedding.

4. They have specific habitat needs. Make sure their enclosure is secure, as mice can squeeze themselves through very small openings. Glass tanks and wire cages are good options, but make sure the wires are spaced closely together.
5. They love to play. Give your mice a cage full of places to hide and play, including a hamster wheel to burn off some energy. They also need to chew a lot, a requirement that can be fulfilled by providing cardboard and wooden toys.

If you decide to adopt a mouse or two, make sure to choose the healthiest animals available. Their eyes should be bright and their fur shiny and smooth.

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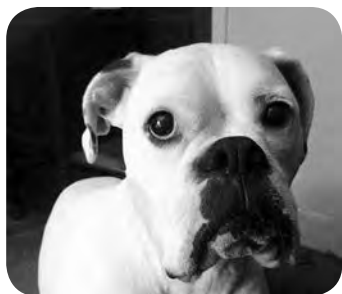
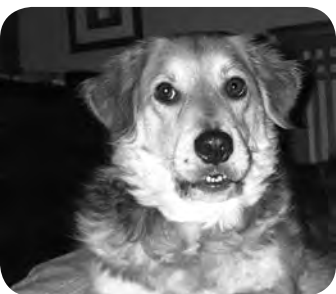
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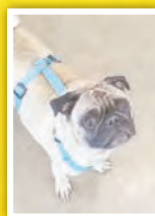
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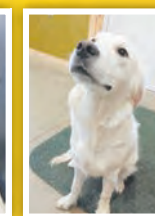
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