

# DOT to DOT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DALMATIAN CLUB OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Volume I Number 4

October 1991

### Meeting Notice

Join us for the  
**"Dog Daze of October"**

**Saturday, October 19, 1991**

at Kennan Riding Center

Games begin at 4:00 pm  
(please arrive at 3:30 to set up your dogs)

11332 Moreno Avenue  
Lakeside  
(619) 390-7421

*please RSVP by October 17*

### Meetings for 1991 Mark Your Calenders

November 23  
at the Goddard's

Christmas Party  
December 21  
at the Petit's

### The President's Spot

I hope you are all planning to come to our October meeting. Nan and Cindy have been working hard on this month's 'Dog Daze' and it will be a lot of fun for both dogs and owners. Incriminating photos will be taken ... See you there!

The following article appeared in the July 28, 1991 LA Times and was submitted by Chuck Davis. Thanks Chuck!

### TRANSPORTING PETS BY AIR IS SOMETIMES HAZARDOUS TO THEIR HEALTH

By Peter S. Greenberg

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1990 was the worst year on record for animals traveling on airplanes within the United States. The agency estimates that 71 animals died in aircraft baggage compartments last year, mainly from suffocation or heatstroke.

And, according to the U.S. Humane Society, dozens of other animals were crushed on airport conveyor belts and injured or killed in airport ramp baggage accidents. Or the animals later died from the effects of their air journey.

Exact figures regarding animal deaths are difficult to come by because there are no current regulations requiring airlines to report animal deaths. (the 71 deaths that the USDA reported are a result of passenger complaints to the agency.)

Also, passengers don't always report injuries and deaths. Although most pets do travel safely and arrive on time, airline personnel, humane society officials and veterinarians generally agree that the potential for serious - and sometimes fatal - mishandling is too high for real consumer comfort.

The most common problems seem to be pressure extremes, which contribute directly to animal deaths in the air, and temperature extremes, which kill animals in the air and on the ground. Animals often get ignored by airline personnel and baggage handlers, especially at large hub airports where many passengers - and pets - have to make connecting flights. Other causes of pet trauma are faulty luggage handling (dropped kennels) and dehydration (pets not being given water for long periods of time).

Airlines are governed by certain rules regarding the transportation of pets. Officially, dogs, cats and other warmblooded animals are protected by the federal Animal Welfare act whenever they are shipped by air. And pet

continued on page 2

### OFFICERS

Lisa Means, President pro tem  
Sharon Thomsen, Secretary pro tem

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# TRANSPORTING PETS BY AIR IS SOMETIMES HAZARDOUS TO THEIR HEALTH

continued from page 1.

transport is under the jurisdiction of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

According to the USDA, virtually every major airline has been cited and fined repeatedly for mishandling animals. Within the past year, according to USDA reports, a cat was run over by a baggage truck at LAX, four German shepherds died on a flight to Texas after a 40-minute delay on the ground (the temperature was 93 degrees), and another dog died when its kennel was mistakenly placed too close to a jet engine during baggage loading (the cage melted).

Last year, United Airlines was assessed a \$7,500 civil penalty for numerous violations in transporting dogs between Tampa, Fla., and Portland, Ore. Northwest was hit with a \$1,500 fine after the USDA charged the airline with accepting and transporting 12 dogs in six shipping containers that were too small for the animals. And Delta agreed to a cease-and-desist order and a \$10,000 civil penalty to settle multiple charges of violating federal transportation standards. The USDA charged Delta with transporting - on 16 occasions between 1987 and 1988 - animals in cages that did not conform to size or labeling requirements, and for failing to provide the animals with appropriate food and water.

Under current rules, dogs and cats that are at least eight weeks old may fly on U.S. airlines in three ways: 1) as excess baggage in the cargo compartment of a flight when their owners are aboard; 2) as air freight, also in the cargo compartment, when their owners aren't on the flight, and 3) in certain cases, in the passenger cabin of the plane. FAA regulations allow for one pet per cabin if the pet is small enough to fit - with its container - under the seat in front of its owner.

A few cautions about pets in passenger cabins: Some airlines interpret the rule to mean one animal per plane. Others will allow up to three animals per plane - one each in the first-class, business class and coach cabins. You must reserve in advance. And, even if your pet is approved to fly with you in the cabin, this does not necessarily mean that you will be allowed to take it out during the flight. Most airlines forbid this, although some flight attendants will permit it.

If you have no choice but to put your pet in the cargo hold when you fly, what protection do you have that your dog or cat will arrive in good shape - and at the same time you do?

Remember, the safe and healthy transportation of pets is not just the airline's responsibility - it's yours.

Make sure the kennel you buy is big enough for your pet to freely stand, turn around and lie down. The kennel must also close securely. Be sure to display a "LIVE ANIMAL" label with large letters on the outside of the kennel. Include an empty water dish and specify any individual feeding instructions. Get to the airport early enough to make sure there's enough time to properly handle your pet. And finally, if possible, try to select a flight time when the outside temperatures will not be unbearable for your pet.

Then, once you and your pet have checked in for your flight (airlines charge an average additional fee of \$50 each way for each kennel within the United States), never take *yes* for an answer. When traveling with your pet, assumption is the mother of disaster.

"You should physically see your pet board the aircraft" says

Kurt Lapham, an investigator for the U.S. Humane Society. "Too frequently they get left behind. I have seen pets arrive dead because the airline improperly loaded the animal, or in many cases never loaded the pet at all."

If you can't witness your pet's boarding, then always ask for confirmation that your pet has been boarded on your flight. Many gate agents will not be pleased with such requests, but be persistent. Try not to book your pet on a routing that includes connecting flights, but if you must, then find a gate agent or airline service representative as soon as you land and explain your concern that your pet is being properly cared for during the layover period.

And again, ask him or her to check to see that the pet has been properly off-loaded and is waiting in an area that will not be too hot or cold. You can't always expect cooperation from the airline representatives, who are usually overworked and may seem more concerned with making sure that passengers rather than pets make their connections. But not always. Remember, many airline staffers are pet owners themselves and understand all too well your anxiety.

Recently, a passenger flying between St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Dover, New Hampshire, arrived on his Continental Airlines flight only to discover that his dog didn't make the flight. It seems that baggage handlers had forgotten the dog at the St. Croix airport. Regine Baldwin, Continental's station manager in St. Croix, called the man to let him know that all was well. She then took the dog home with her, walked him, fed him and put the animal on the Continental flight to the United States the next morning. Three cheers for Ms. Baldwin.

And major kudos also go to a woman named Bea Fetler, a ticket agent at Northwest Airlines in Minneapolis. Fetler has led an employee-driven effort to get Northwest to recognize the problems of transporting pets, and is trying to do something about it.

Fetler, who is now project manager of a new Northwest program called Priority Pet, proposed the idea a few months ago and senior airline management agreed to the program. "there is major trepidation among our customers when it comes to traveling with their pets," Fetler said. "And we acknowledge that air travel for animals is not as safe as it could be."

Northwest now has teams of animal care coordinators at each of its destination cities. Depending on the size of the airport, the teams range from two to 20 people - regular Northwest employees (ground service personnel) trained in correct animal care and transportation procedures. According to Fetler, "Our biggest concern is the amount of time spent by an animal at the ramp waiting for transfer to aircraft."

Now, Northwest will not transport any animal if the outside temperature is higher than 85 degrees. Under terms of the program, which begins Aug. 15, passengers traveling with their pets will receive a customer notification tag telling them that their pet has been boarded safely on their flight. Aircraft baggage compartments that are not pressurized will now be labeled "No Live Animals." Kennels will be strapped down in cargo holds to prevent injury or death during takeoff and landing when kennels could easily tip over or become airborne within the cargo compartments. With luck, the Priority Pet program will be a success and, as has happened with air-fare competition, other airlines will soon try to match Northwest.

For pet owners interested in obtaining a booklet detailing guidelines for flying with pets, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782. Or call (301) 436-7799.

## AGILITY--EXCITING FOR BOTH COMPETITOR AND SPECTATOR

by Cindy Lyford

Agility is exciting not only for the dog/handler team but also for the spectator. It is easy for the spectators to get very involved as they cheer the dogs around the course.

Agility started in Great Britain in the late 1970's. My first exposure to agility was at Crufts in 1986. My girlfriend and I wandered down to the Group judging early to get good seats and found ourselves in the middle of hundreds of people cheering dogs around an obstacle course. I was hooked immediately and vowed to find out more about this exciting sport when I got back to the States.

I was disappointed when I could find very little information on agility. I did find a club in Texas that was doing agility and wrote to them for any information they could give me. Now clubs are forming all over the country and agility demonstrations are starting to be held at AKC shows.

An agility course is a complex arrangement of challenges for the dog. It combines elements from equestrian jumping events and obstacles derived from the military K9 Corps program. The objective of agility is for the dog/handler team to complete the obstacle course without faults within the standard course time as set by the judge. Penalty points are assessed for the time faults and/or performance faults. Handlers may use verbal and/or hand signals to direct the dog through the course.

Agility is a big canine confidence booster as the dog is meeting and overcoming obstacles and challenges that it may never have encountered before. The dog learns to trust his owner's directions for a strong working partnership. Control and cooperation are demonstrated as the dog negotiates the see-saw where he must walk to the balance point and lower the board to the ground before leaving the obstacle. The two "C"s are also demonstrated on the pause table where the dog must hold the down position for 5 seconds before moving on to the next obstacle. The dog's agility is tested as it jumps over hurdles, runs through tunnels, scales an A-frame and more. Agility training is also great physical exercise for both dog and handler.

Dals are well suited for agility due to their jumping ability and their natural curiosity. You do not need a "super" obedience dog for agility. You should have voice control over your dog. The dog should know at least the following commands: sit, down, wait, stay and come. You should **NOT** attempt to start agility training on your own. If any of you are interested in this very new and exciting sport, please contact me for information on training classes. Wouldn't it be fun to have a Dalmatian agility team made up of members from DCSDC!

## DALMATIAN CLUB OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

### MINUTES OF MEETING 9/14/91

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pro-tem, Sharon Thomsen at 7:05 PM at the home of Carol McAndrew. Lisa Means was absent due to illness.

Attendance: Chuck & Elaine Davis, Boyd & Debbie Godddard, Deborah Jones, Cindy Lyford, Carol McAndrew, Ed & Carol Petit, Randy & Sharon Thomsen, Annelle Wilterding.

Carol McAndrew was thanked for having the dinner meeting at her home and for the great dinner.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed in the bulletin.

### REPORTS

Secretary - Sharon Thomsen

1. DCSC Newsletter
2. Dal Fun Day October 5, 1991 at Cypress College
3. Secretary has received \$10 from each member to cover cost of mailings

Standing Rule Committee - discussion on the standing rules as presented. It was decided to amend the standing rule number one to reflect meeting 8 times yearly at a place and time to be determined by the Board. Motion was made to approve the Standing Rules as ammended. Motion was seconded and passed.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Randy Thomsen reported that there doesn't seem to be any news yet on the California Federation of Dog Owners. Meeting will be in San Francisco on 9/16/91. Report will follow next meeting.

Randy Thomsen reported on the cost of insurance (liability).

### NEW BUSINESS

Nominating committee was selected: Randy Thomsen, Chair  
Cindy Lyford  
Ed Petit

### MEETING DATES

October 19th at 4:00 PM - Nan Phipps

November 23rd at 5:00 PM - Debbie Goddard

December 21st at 6:00 PM - Ed & Carol Petit

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Sharon Thomsen  
Recording Secretary