

New York 'Pupnic' for Dogs and Dog Owners

A Brooklyn dog club holds its annual potluck dinner for dogs and their people.

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FIDO, the self-organized dog club of Prospect Park in Brooklyn, N.Y., held its annual Pupnic potluck dinner for its members and their dogs June 29, 2007, from 5 p.m. until dusk. Nearly 100 people and dogs of all breeds and sizes attended the event, which featured sandwiches, salads and dog biscuits, among other potluck favorites.

Attendees gave their dogs some off-leash socializing time in Prospect Park's Nethermead meadow while they chatted about the ups and downs of dog ownership in the city – finding dog-friendly housing on a budget, and sidewalk etiquette.

Local magazine New York Tails' editor and FIDO member, Diane West, distributed donated Frosty Paws frozen treats to any dog willing to take a break from the action, and another member set up a series of agility courses.

Each first Saturday morning of the month, FIDO members meet for Coffee Bark between 7 and 9 a.m. in Prospect Park's Long Meadow to enjoy a light breakfast while their dogs play during off-leash hours at the park popular with runners, bikers, birdwatchers. Dogs are expected to be well-socialized, as well as vaccinated and licensed, says Mary McInerney, president and a co-founder of FIDO, which stands for the Fellowship in the Interests of Dogs and their Owners.

FIDO's birth was due in part to another community group trying to block dogs from the park nearly a decade earlier, says Bob Ipcar, a group leader and dog owner. Instead, FIDO's organizers worked with park officials to develop rules for dog owners, such as set off-leash times and areas.

FIDO strives to educate its members and other dog owners about adhering to these guidelines in order to keep the peace between the varying interest groups present in Prospect, but it also advocates for dog owners' rights to use the park, he says.

August 4, 2007, the group will celebrate its 100th Coffee Bark with special treats for dogs and people.

For more information, visit www.fidobrooklyn.org.