



Dog Owners Welcome in Eastham!

Eastham Dog Owners Association

by Kathleen Mueller

"Eastham is a great place to own a dog," says Eastham Dog Owners Association President, Ed Daniels. "Our dogs can be our recreation, exercise, companions, even servants and sometimes confidants. They are family."

He goes on to say, "Dog ownership, like so many good things, can also create problems. The police department gets hundreds of calls about dogs a year, so, the chief's job would probably be easier without dogs – not to mention the callers."

And then there are the people who just don't like dogs for a variety of personal reasons. While dog owners should not be asked to take responsibility for another's anxieties, they do bear the responsibility to have proper control, training and care of their pet."

The Eastham Dog Owners Association (EDOA) is a non-profit 501(3)c organization whose mission is to educate, support, and serve dog owners living in Eastham. The organization's objectives are to enhance the health and welfare of dog owners and the public in Eastham, as well as provide educational opportunities where possible.

EDOA also supports a safety program and a disaster plan for Eastham dogs, and they work in cooperation with town officials to deal with dog-related issues.

EDOA was created when a poorly-worded bylaw sparked concerned citizens into action, to rewrite the wording in order to address the specific meaning and intent of the bylaw that described euthanizing of so-called "problem dogs."

A panel was created to work in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen in order to more properly address animal-related issues in town. Members of the Animal Advisory Committee are knowledgeable about pet training and behavior, and can help the selectmen make more informed decisions when it comes to problem pets; dogs in particular.

There's no doubt that Eastham is a dog-friendly place. With its wide-open spaces, conservation lands, dirt fire roads, National Seashore beaches (and town beaches off-season), and even the winding, paved roads that meander through this delightful Cape Cod town, it's a veritable paradise for dog owners.

It's estimated that more than half of the households in Eastham include at least one canine pal, if not more. Some suggest there may even be more dogs in Eastham than school children!



Summer vacationers often bring their pets with them, and many of the rental properties in town are designated pet-friendly. Eastham is a great place for dogs!

The EDOA has made it a priority to educate the public, mainly by word-of-mouth (and the actions of its own members), about the privileges and responsibilities that come along with dog ownership.

For example, the EDOA stocks and maintains "Mutt Mitt" dispensers in various areas of town where dog

traffic is particularly heavy. The organization also holds frequent "Poop Pickup Parties" to help clean up after the not-as responsible dog owners – both townspeople and visitors alike.

The organization also hosts two annual events: the Bow Wow Bash and EDOA's annual meeting, with educational demonstrations, raffle prizes and more. EDOA also participates in Windmill Weekend's annual parade and has a booth on display at the event.

One of the things EDOA is most proud of is its Lost Dog Network. Over 100 members strong, the EDOA can easily be mobilized to help search for missing dogs in Eastham and sometimes in surrounding towns.

It's a sad fact that many dogs go missing while in town on vacation, and with the aforementioned "wide-open spaces" as well as high traffic and unfamiliar wildlife defending their habitat, this can be a recipe for disaster.

EDOA jumps into action throughout the year to help find lost dogs. Announcements are posted on EDOA's Facebook page, and the Eastham Police Animal Control division is also contacted immediately.

Word goes out so fast these days that dogs are found very quickly. This is an all-volunteer network, and they really get the job done. In fact, in 2012, the Lost Dog Network responded to 16 lost dog alerts.

Another great creation by the EDOA is the Buddy Scholarship. Originally created in memory of a board member's beloved dog, Buddy, the donation-based scholarship is awarded to a deserving Eastham resident or student of Eastham Schools for education in the field of pet care and services.



Finally, the EDOA is working diligently with Cape Cod Disaster Animal Response Team (CCDART) towards something we all hope will never be used: a pet-friendly section of the Nauset Regional Emergency Shelter.

EDOA has supported this effort for quite some time, and nine EDOA members are also members of the CCDART team. We hope soon to be able finalize the plans for a pet section of the emergency shelter.

EDOA currently has 144 active members. Eastham residents and part-time residents can join the EDOA "pack" by filling out the on-line application on EDOA's web site, www.easthamdog.org.

Membership costs just \$20 per year, and benefits include a membership card that can be used for discounts at a number of local and pet-friendly businesses, including The Cape Cod Dog, Nauset Pet Services, the Eastham Box Lunch, Ben & Jerry's and others.

All those interested in the issues the EDOA devotes itself to are welcome, and active participation in the organization is encouraged.



K.S. Mueller writes short stories about dogs, cats and other topics during her spare time from her "real job" as a travel executive.

Mueller lives part-time in North Eastham and the rest of the time in the farm country of central Massachusetts, with her significant other, Gil, their three dogs, Hobie, Charlie Brown and 3-legged Cooper; and three cats: Cali, Tux and Newman.

Mueller has shared her life with dozens of dogs and cats since childhood, and volunteers for several animal-related non-profit organizations, including the Eastham Dog Owners Association, where she is a member of their board of directors.

In 2010, she discovered a box of letters written by her late parents during WWII, and is currently publishing those letters in a three-volume biography of the Mueller family.

Visit her web sites at:

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