"Highlights for All Havanese Fanciers"

HCA Horizons

Fall 2011

Havanese Club of America
established 1979

A Seasonal Newsletter of helpful information and fun photos brought to you by the Public Relations Committee of the Havanese Club of America. Please feel free to print and share.

Feature Article

Do Our Pets Love Us Back?

Sources:
PawNation.com February 10, 2011

According to PawNation.com:

"There's no doubt we love our pets -- but do our cats and dogs love us back? The answer is yes."

Some of the ways pets show they care are easy for us human-types to understand. For example, a wildly wagging tail when your dog greets you at the door is a type of 'sign language' that's easy to understand.

But your cat or dog also shows affection in ways you might not expect. In fact, in ways that might even annoy or offend you!

Your kitty shows she loves you by:

Scratching your belongings
Sticking her rear end in your face
Rubbing up against your legs
Kneading your thighs or stomach
Chewing on your belongings
Purring
Grooming you

Examples of canine devotion:

Leaning and shoving against you
Jumping on you
Rolling over on his back
Chewing on your belongings
Crotch sniffing
Tail wagging

Photos Submitted By Cindy Lisai

Feature Article

Dogs Probably Feel Sorry for Us

Sources:
Discovery.com February 18, 2011
DobermanPinscher.org
Etologia – Publications of the Family Dog Project

If your canine companion seems to sense your every mood, it's probably more than your imagination or wishful thinking.

According to a paper recently published in Biology Letters, dogs have the capacity to empathize with us to such an extent that therapy dogs appear to exhibit similar emotions to their sick or upset human companions.

And it's not that dogs simply copy human responses, according to study authors Karine Silva and Liliana Sousa:

"Indeed, a study showing that pets, namely dogs, behave as 'upset' as children when exposed to familiar people faking distress, strongly suggests 'sympathetic concern."

"Also it has been reported that untrained dogs may be sensitive to human emergencies and may act appropriately to summon help, which, if true, suggests empathic perspective taking."

Interestingly, in experiments where dog owners only pretended to have an accident or a heart attack, the dogs seemed confused and didn't really react. This leads scientists to theorize dogs need to also smell and hear certain aspects of actual stress before they have an instinctive response.

Another experiment concluded that therapy dogs are affected on both an emotional and physical level by their jobs, and benefit from massages and other calming measures after a work session.

The study authors think there are three primary reasons why dogs have the ability to empathize with humans:

Like wolves, dogs are highly social animals that engage in cooperative activities and are believed to have some ability to empathize with their fellow wolves.

Biological changes produced during the domestication of dogs may have allowed them to synchronize their wolf-inherited empathic capacities with those of humans.

Breed diversification and selection for canine intelligence may have increased the dog ability to empathize.

Living with Humans Has Changed the Nature of Dogs

Scientists in Hungary have concluded dogs bond with their owners in the same way children bond with their parents. According to Adam Miklosi of the Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest:

"What we found is that just as babies display a variety of levels of attachment towards their parents, dogs also show different levels of attachment to their owner."

Miklosi believes thousands of years of co-existence with human companions have caused dogs to become dependent on us. And the stronger the attachment between owner and canine, the more likely it is the dog will look to his human for certain cues rather than relying on his own thoughts and actions.

According to Miklosi, when you add selective breeding to co-existence with people, the result are dogs that form strong bonds and are genetically wired to learn and obey human rules.

Vilmos Cysani, the head of the Budapest research team, says "The dog's natural environment is the human family or other human social settings."

Feature Article continued

Researchers in the U.S. have used DNA science to estimate that dogs may have been domesticated tens of thousands of years earlier than previously thought. Prolonged exposure to people seems to have made dogs more responsive to human gestures than animals considered more intelligent than canines – for example, chimpanzees.

Looking to Their Humans for Cues

Miklosi and his colleagues in Budapest were interested in discerning how much of what dogs sense about their owners' emotions is instinctive.

The assumption has been that as canines evolved to be companion animals, they became 'dumbed down' because humans provided for all their needs. But according to Miklosi:

"They acquired skills that make them adaptive to the human environment. They interact with humans. They learn from humans."

Miklosi conducted an experiment, published in the December 2005 issue of Animal Behaviour, comparing dogs with their closest relatives, wolves. He and his fellow researchers began caring for 13 wolf pups when they were just a few days old, raising them in homes with humans just as if they were family dogs.

As the wolves grew, they were in constant physical contact with their humans and went virtually everywhere with them. In fact, the wolves received more human interaction than pet dogs normally get from their owners.

The next part of the experiment involved training the wolves and several different breeds of ordinary dogs to get a piece of meat by pulling on a string. After all the wolves and dogs figured out how to get the meat, the researchers attached the string in such a way that they couldn't get the meat no matter how hard they pulled.

At this point, the contrast in the behavior of the wolves and dogs was remarkable. The wolves just continued to pull on the string, but the dogs stopped pulling as soon as they realized something was different, and turned to look at the faces of the researchers. According to Miklosi:

"The dogs gave up much earlier. They were, very quickly, looking at the humans, the owners, looking at their faces. That is what is interesting. That never happened with the wolves. They just kept pulling. But the dogs, what they did was basically look at the owners. If you observe this as a human, you would describe it as an asking-for-help gesture."

Dogs Really Are Family

The researchers concluded from this experiment that dogs, through extensive co-existence with humans, have developed an instinctive capacity to communicate with us to some degree.

Since both the wolves and dogs in the study were raised in the same manner, the dogs' desire to 'talk' with humans to solve problems appears to be innate – an evolutionary byproduct of domestication.

Miklosi said:

"The dogs have learned our language, to some extent. So we don't need to learn dog language. They can use our channels of communication, like vision … You can point for a dog and communicate with it. You can point for a wolf, but it won't understand what you are doing."

Marc Bekoff, a dog behavior researcher at the University of Colorado in Boulder, is a believer. He says Adam Miklosi's experiment shows that 'dogs aren't just dumbed-down wolves.'

Feature Article continued

"A lot of people think that domesticated animals, when compared to wilder animals, aren't as smart," Bekoff said. "It shows that species adapt to the social niche in which they live. And the social niche for a dog would be its human companions."
"I think part of the reason there is this strong bond between dogs and humans is because we are empathetic to them and they show empathy to us," Bekoff said.

"We can never know for sure. But I've done a lot of work on animals' emotions. Animals and humans share a lot of the same neurological structures and the same neurochemistry. I think it's really dog empathy."
So if your favorite canine companion seems to know when you're feeling anxious or sad, there's a good chance he's instinctively sensing your mood. Our uniquely sensitive dogs provide a tremendous measure of comfort to us. But it's also important to realize our responsibility as their guardians.

Just as we try our best to shelter children from upsetting circumstances and undue stress, we should do the same for the devoted four-legged members of our family unit.

Photo Submitted By Cindy Lisai

Dr. Becker's Comments:

Research in the last decade indicates thousands of years of living, working and playing with people has given dogs the innate ability to perceive human emotions and communicate with their human families through gestures and glances.

Dr. Becker is the resident proactive and integrative wellness veterinarian of HealthyPets.Mercola.com. You can learn holistic ways of preventing illness in your pets by subscribing to MercolaHealthyPets.com, an online resource for animal lovers. For more pet care tips, subscribe for FREE to Mercola Healthy Pet Newsletter.

POSTED BY:
Dr. Becker
on April 26 2011

Dr. Becker

http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2011/04/26/pet-dogs-probably-feel-sorry-for-us.aspx

Photo Submitted By Cindy Lisai

Roundtable Topic

Q. We're vacationing near the Shore this Summer with my dog and I'm worried that he may drown if he falls into the water. What water safety product is best to prevent drowning?

Written by Lu Wyland and Paula Perlmutter

A. Time is of the essence when a dog or child falls into the water. I recommend a good life vest so your dog will float if s/he falls into the water. Life vests for pets are easy to find now in most pet stores and are quite affordable and even fashionable. Another new device, the Safety Turtle, will notify you instantly if your pet falls in the drink and may help save his life.

What is the Safety Turtle? It's an alarm system that alerts you when each individual pet or child falls in the water. Pets wear a little turtle-shaped sensor on their collar (light enough for even tiny dogs and cats). Should the sensor be submerged, it rings (really, really loudly) at a base station.

It's amazing how much peace of mind this device buys.

So why go one step further and also use a life preserver? Several reasons: The Safety Turtle works with radio waves, which can be intermittently impeded by the ions in salt water. As I understand it, the sensor needs to stay near the surface of the water. In case of salinity, such as the ocean or the new "ionized" swimming pools, the product only works reliably if a) your dog can swim a little, and/or b) s/he's wearing life vest.

Another safety feature to consider for swimming pools, docks and even boats, is a Scamper Ramp, recognized by numerous business groups and trade organizations as an important pet safety tool. Made in the US, this safety feature provides a way for pets to safely exit the pool on their own if they fall in. Teaching your dogs to use the steps in a pool isn't enough to protect them. Dogs are unable to see the steps of a pool under water. They learn to go to the steps by landmarks outside the pool but in the dark or if they're panicked, they may not remember or see the landmarks and locate those steps. The Scamper Ramp is white, a color that all animals can see. When taught to use the Scamper Ramp, your dog has a way to safely exit the pool should the unthinkable happen.

These three products, a canine life vest, the Safety Turtle and the Scamper Ramp are three important safety features for your dog so all of you can enjoy your time near the water.

Written by Jan Smith

A. For pools some people use balloons at the stairs so the dog knows where to go to get out. They're high enough to be seen and the dog is taught right away that the balloons are where they go instead of trying to fight getting up the side and wearing out.

Photo Submitted By
Linda van Kampen

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Seasonal Tip

Written by Jan Smith

Planning a vacation over the winter holidays?

Now is the time to check out pet lodging and get a reservation before all spots are taken.

Photo Submitted By Anna Faust

Tid Bit

Written by Jan Smith

If you have a phone that is able to do applications, there is one called Pet First Aid that you can download. A review of it can be read here: http://the-gadgeteer.com/2009/10/03/pet-first-aid-application-for-iphone-by-jive-media-llc-review/

Roundtable Topic

Photo Submitted By Claudia DeVita

Written By Claudia DeVita

Q. I have found a breeder I feel comfortable with and I'm looking forward to a new puppy in the near future. My problem is my family and I are really struggling with the long wait for the litter to be born. Do you have any suggestions for reading material about Havanese we can read while we wait so we're more prepared when our new puppy finally comes home?

A. It is definitely hard to wait for your puppy but along with the Dorothy Goodale, "Havanese, A Complete and Reliable Handbook" and Zolia Portuando, “Bichon Havanese” books as well as the HCA website, look at this interesting website that shows what the different stages the pregnant mom is going thru and the development of the litter.Good luck with your new pup.

http://www.debbiejensen.com/date.html
Canine pregnancy calendar

Photo Submitted By Claudia DeVita

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President's Column

HCA President, Joan Ambrose

What is a National Specialty?

AKC breed clubs hold Specialties where dogs of a single breed compete and their owners meet, learn, and have fun. The annual Havanese Club of America National Specialty was held in Durham North Carolina July 19-23rd. It was a wonderful celebration. It brought together dogs and people from all over the country.

There were many events for dogs: Conformation, Agility, Rally, Obedience, and Parades of Havanese: Rescue, Champions, Therapy and Obedience and other title holders. There were also seminars and parties for people. There were useful and beautiful items available for sale at Silent Auctions and many vendors. Experienced breeders and owners as well as those new to the breed or considering a Havanese all had many opportunities to learn, many events to attend, and many friends old and new with whom to share Havanese stories.

The next Annual Havanese National Specialty will be at the Minneapolis Minnesota Hilton at the Mall of America July 9th – 15th 2012.

Won't you and your Havanese come and join the fun?

Photos submitted by Cindy Lisai

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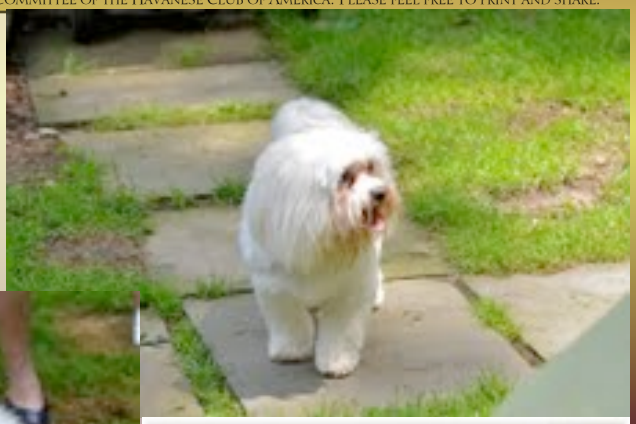
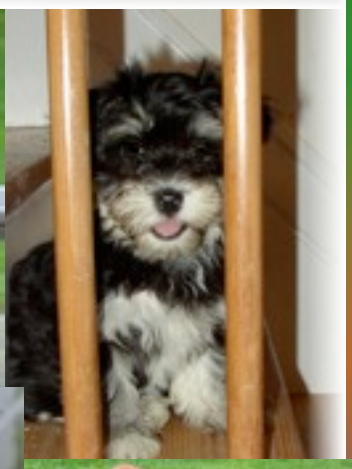
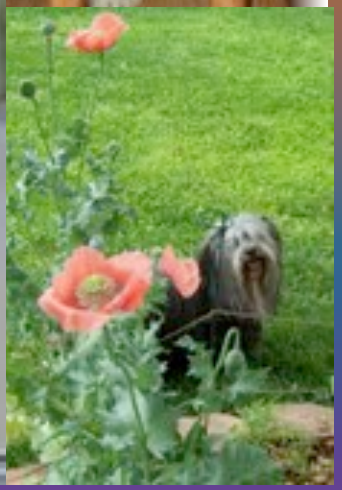
Fun Fotos

Photos Submitted By Anna Haust, Claudia DeVita, Cindy Lisai