

# THE CONNECTION

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## PET CONNECTION

# For Dogs, Warm Day Walks... & Ice Rinks??

## Chasing the warmth in February.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**T**easingly spring-like warm days have popped up amid seasonal and unusually cold ones this February. Many residents are ready to leave the area's coldest month, January, behind to enjoy February's warmer averages of 31 to 52 degrees Fahrenheit. Instead, dog walkers were surprised to find some February days dipping near zero with wind chills after slipping on leashes to head outdoors in past weeks. Those chills helped many, including our dogs, appreciate the unusually warm February days all the more. On those sunny days, we found area dogs out walking jauntily with smiling owners, all in good spirits, brought on by the enjoyment of easy weather and discarding winter coats. Some owners took time to tell stories of the mischief that can come of too much time inside escaping the cold and memories of past fun.

In one last grasp at winter sport, and picking up on the theme of warm love in February, NOVA Parks and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) asked animal lovers to extend the warm spirit of Valentine's Day with their "Share the Love" event on Feb 19. By donating needed pet supplies, participants received a discounted entry ticket to ice skating at Cameron Run Regional Park. As temperatures on that day shouted Spring not Winter, it was a reminder that the

While less well appointed dogs walk, some are able to roll in their own special conveyance, complete with a ramped rear entrance. Although there's no sauna or mini-bar in their limo, yet, Titan and Roscoe, two senior Dachshunds, need chauffeuring these days regardless of weather to enjoy the same trails they once walked with ease. Caring owner Sarah Chey, of Springfield, makes sure they get their beloved outside time, and a chance to do their old men grumbling at passers-by. They know they have a good ride, and they will brook no possible carjackers getting too close.

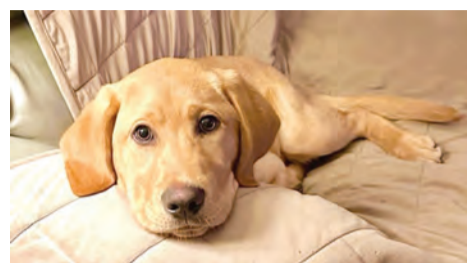


PHOTO COURTESY B. BELETSKY

He's an advocate of long walks on any day and needs only short rests between. Here practicing a look of innocence only young pups can achieve before his next round of mischief, is 5-months-old Bogey. He was recently accused of stealing two steaks being prepped for the grill in the kitchen at his Springfield home by owner Bill Beletsky. Bogey's advocates pointed out that there was no evidence to support that beef, his short legs, and that this country has a doctrine of innocence until proven guilty. What could have made his owners think HE did it?

skating park is marking its last days until its end of February closure. Soon it will transition into its Spring and Summer role of waterpark, mini golf, batting cage practice and picnic area with the chill of winter left behind. And while dogs were not invited to ice skate, they are welcome in the park to join their people in celebrating the warm days of spring and summer.

Cameron Run Regional Park is located at 4001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria; see <https://www.novaparks.com/parks/cameron-run-regional-park> for more information and reservations.



Homeless dog at AWLA returns the warmth of a caring volunteer during enjoyment of a break from the kennel for an outside walk in the sunshine.

PHOTO COURTESY NOVA PARKS



Enjoying the sun and shared breed friendships, are (back row) Laura Chipkin, of Arlington, Terri Everett, of Alexandria, Danny Reighard, of Alexandria, James Dickey, of Arlington, Evelyn Novins, of Falls Church, and (front row), Mango, Bowen, Tia, and Haley. Though the dog friends have some medical challenges among them, they still insist on nice day outings and the comrade of walks together.

Out enjoying the Spring-like temperatures, the Coopers, once a family of three, expanded with the addition of Cooper, now 13 months old. First "son" Charlie, an 8-year-old-terrier mix, a big cuddler in a small body, has had to give up some lap time to Cooper, but still loves his new brother, say parents Amy and David Merkel, of Springfield.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Lexi, 15 months, is the color of white sand. Turns out she loves everything beach. She's a sand digger, specializing in destroying the precarious foundations of beach chair legs. Being something of a food gourmet, always ready for a treat, and continuing in her beach theme, she scored a counter surfed swordfish. She hangs ten, or would that be 20, with Steve and Tia Noff, of Lorton.



PHOTO COURTESY NOVA PARKS

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