

A walk in the park

Check it out: Hundreds of dogs think Point Pleasant is pure heaven

By JAN NAPIER
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Amalfi, an Italian Greyhound, enjoys an outing at Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. (TRENT BOSWICK)



Longhaired Weimaraner Asha has striking blue eyes. (TRENT BOSWICK)



Point Pleasant Park dog blogger Trent Boswick poses with Dexter. (JAN NAPIER)

HUNDREDS OF DOGS cavort through Halifax's Point Pleasant Park on a regular basis and you can see their antics on the web. Visit Trent Boswick's blog, [Dogs 4 Point Pleasant Park](#).

Boswick has combined his interests in dogs, the park and photography into a great forum, especially for dog owners who visit the park. They see their sidekicks in a new way — as stars of their very own website.

Boswick, a 38-year-old financial adviser with Banco Management Inc., was raised to appreciate the joys of canine companionship, growing up in a Halifax household that almost always included a golden retriever.

Armed with a camera, a great sense of humour and tech savvy, Boswick, on his daily park outings, captures the best moments as the dogs romp and show the incredible off-leash joy they get from chasing balls, sticks, Frisbees and, of course, their playmates.

"I love dogs, technology, and have always had a strong passion for photography. . . . This gives me the opportunity to express this side of who I am in a fun way that others can enjoy as well," he said in an interview at the park.

He's always on the lookout for new subjects, and although he's photographed hundreds of dogs (over 800 at last count), this dog whisperer runs into new dogs regularly. It would be hard to imagine anyone who knows as many dogs by name as he does.

Weekend mornings before 10 a.m. are popular times for dogs and owners to congregate on one of the harbour waterfront sections of the park and usually Boswick is there.

"Now people are looking for me," he says, noting that people love having their dogs photographed. His site has grown in popularity, with daily traffic averaging over 400 hits and totalling over 43,000 since its inception about a year and a half ago.

And the subjects are varied: petite cairn terriers like Duffy, giant Bouviers like Salvatore, Maggie, the weeks-old puppy and older animals like park matriarch Dinah, a gentle, 14-year-old mixed breed.

With an eye for the comedic, Boswick enjoys adding cartoon-style captions to his pictures and gets great feedback from dog owners who enjoy their daily dose of doggie humour and the photography.

Boswick would be the first to admit that he is biased — his best four-legged companion Dexter, a springer spaniel, is featured regularly.

Then there's Daisy, Dexter's preferred young lady friend, who can't resist luring Dexter into the heather for a playful tumble.

Boswick jokes that when it comes to his handsome brown and white spaniel, "I'm the director of recreation and Bobi (his wife) is director of health and beauty."

She also enjoys outings in the park. "It wasn't until I started going to the park with Dexter that I gained a true appreciation for all the wonderful blessings and moments that (Point Pleasant Park) has to offer.

"Where else can you expose your dog to acres of freedom, squirrel chasing, berry eating, ball catching, butterfly flushing, swimming, and freshly fallen snow (just to name a few)?"

Dexter loves to compete for his brother Bronson's ball. Owner Don White says, "I don't know what we'd do without the park. . . . It has been such a big part of our lives for so long." He is also a regular commenter to the blog site.

Park regulars understand the importance of following the rules concerning canines and Boswick makes it a point through his blog to help educate and advocate, so the park continues to be enjoyable for everyone.

Recently he posted information on his Upcoming Events page about a half marathon, including the route, so dog walkers could avoid disrupting the event. His site also includes pages on health and wellness, product reviews, some fun and useful links (including his retirement planning blog). And dog owners can join in with comments and thoughts.

Boswick knows first-hand the sorrow that accompanies the death of a beloved pet and his In Memoriam page features park regulars honouring their deceased dogs with photos and fond recollections.

Amalfi, a fast Italian greyhound, is often featured because he's just so doggone fashionable! Search his name on the site and you'll see why he turns heads in his swanky wardrobe collection and provides Boswick with irresistible photo opportunities.

With a turned-up collar and high-stepping gait, he's quite the gorgeous guy and he knows it. Owner Laurie Richardson comments, "Thanks to Amalfi, the park and the wonderful people in it, I leave Point Pleasant refreshed and happy as a clam, ready to start the day!"

And like so many others, is grateful to Boswick for the memories and laughs that the dog blog provides.

Jan Napier is a freelance writer, photographer and regular Point Pleasant Park dog walker.