



Seward County Kennel Club

A CLUB FOR PERSONS INTERESTED IN DOGS AND THE SPORT OF DOGS.

OFFICERS

President

Tabitha Dvorak (402) 641-2521
tnttfts@gmail.com

Vice President

Cindy Hill (206) 715-9995
cnolte2@yahoo.com

Secretary

Morgan Ehlers (402) 366-2783
mcrowd08@gmail.com

Treasurer

Mary Bristol (402) 366-2659
mbristol618@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Chris Corum (402) 643-5864
corumc@live.com

Kathy Jackson (402) 560-6066
kj60028@windstream.net

Linda Soukup (402) 545-2186
waynels@yahoo.com

Tanya Williams (402) 761-3598
tanyaleewms@hotmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

Linda Soukup (402) 545-2186
waynels@yahoo.com

BREEDER REFERRAL

Tabitha Dvorak (402) 641-2521
tnttfts@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Cindy Hill (206) 715-9995
cnolte2@yahoo.com

Information for the newsletter, including brags, needs to be submitted by the first week of the month to be included in the next newsletter. Please email submissions to the editor.



“Who pours the kibble?” And other answers about daily life for dogs in the White House

After a four-year vacancy, the position of DOTUS was filled this week by Major and Champ Biden. When the two German shepherds entered the White House, they brought a great opportunity to dig into the day-to-day doggie logistics in one of the busiest and most powerful households in the world. For instance, who fills the water dish, rubs the bellies and scoops the poop? Can the pups just pop into the Oval Office? And what if one ruins a rug or bites an ambassador? Here are the answers along with a peek into the lives of first dogs.

Who actually lets the dogs out?

Many first families care for their dogs themselves, longtime White House chief usher Gary J. Walters said in an email. Walters oversaw the residence portion of the house through a slew of first canines, from Lucky Reagan in the 1980s through Barney and Miss Beazley Bush in the 2000s. However, every family is different, and members of the residence staff are ready to step in to help out with as much or as little as the family would like.

Barbara and George H.W. Bush were do-it-yourselfers, and the president even bathed the dogs in the residence shower, said historian Jennifer Pickens, author of “Pets at the White

NEXT MEETING February 18, 2021

Seward Civic Center 616 Bradford St, Seward, NE 68434

No Special Program - General Meeting 7:30pm

House.” The Fords were similar.

Betty Ford told Pickens about a wee-hours potty run that went awry. The couple’s golden retriever, Liberty, was days from giving birth to nine puppies and needed to go outside, so she woke up the president at 3 a.m. by licking his face. He dutifully pulled on his bathrobe and slippers and took her out to the South Lawn to do her business. When the pair returned to the house, the elevators to the residence floors had been shut down for the night. They schlepped up the stairs to the second and then the third floors, only to find the doors bolted. They were locked out. “And there they were,” recalled Betty Ford in a 1978 memoir, “a President and his dog, wandering around in a stairwell in the wee small hours of the morning, not able to get back to bed. Finally they came all the way down again, and by that time the Secret Service had been alerted, and somebody got the elevator started.”

It’s hard to tell how involved the Bidens will be, as the family is just getting settled. But Mark Tobin, a Delaware police dog trainer who worked with them, told Washington Post reporter Maura Judkis that President Biden wants to walk the dogs himself, a plan with plenty of precedent.

The Kennedys used to stroll down Pennsylvania Avenue with their dogs at night, when they were less likely to be recognized. Michelle Obama took Bo and Sunny, their Portuguese water dogs, on trails near the White House. Reagan decided to take Lucky, his large Bouvier des Flandres, for a walk with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1985, and photographers captured Thatcher laughing as the leashed Lucky practically dragged the president across the grass.

Some things that are simple for most people, though, such as a trip to the vet, could be a huge, disruptive production for the first family. A perk of the office is that vets will often make house calls to the White House, or a staff member will chauffeur the dogs.

Vacations are a different story, and the dogs usually go along. They sometimes fly on Air Force One, but that doesn’t exempt them from jurisdictional animal regulations, such as those the Obamas had to navigate to take their dogs to Hawaii.

When the dogs stay home, there’s no need to hire a dog-sitter - the residence staff cares for them.

Since the 1970s, chief groundskeeper and dog whisperer extraordinaire Dale Haney has always volunteered to help wrangle and even train the family dogs, and his devotion to generations of presidential pets is legendary.



Walters said that when the White House was quickly evacuated amid the commotion of 9/11, Haney gathered up the Bush pets from the residence and kept them safe until they could be reunited with first lady Laura Bush.

Haney has already been photographed with Champ and Major on the White House lawn.

What do the dogs do at the White House all day?

It depends on the dog — and their humans.

Warren G. Harding took his Airedale, Laddie Boy, on golf outings. Bo and Sunny Obama often accompanied the first lady to official duties, especially when she visited children’s groups.

Many dogs have been allowed to roam the White House, including the staff offices in the East and West wings. Ranger, one of George H.W. Bush’s dogs, became such an accomplished moocher that he developed a weight problem, which prompted the president to issue a funny but pointed 1992 memo telling the staff to quit feeding him.

George W. Bush’s dogs were often around — especially Barney, said Eric Draper, then the chief White House photographer. The gregarious Scottish terrier had become a celebrity with his “Barney Cam” dog’s-eye-views of the White House Christmas decorations in 2001. He even had his own publicity portraits, signed with an autopen version of his paw print.

Barney walked the president from the residence to the Oval Office every morning, Draper said, then made his rounds through the house. “There would be a few occasions where Barney would show up at the Oval Office door outside and look through the window, and the president would stop everything — whatever type of meeting it was — and walk

over to the door and let him in,” Draper said. “And if he wanted to leave, then he would get up and let him out. So Barney had a full-access pass.”

Barney had toys, treats and a water bowl in the outer Oval, where the president’s personal secretary sits, so he hung out there a lot, but Draper said the dog had a whole other life in the East Wing, where the first lady’s office is located.

That was also Bo Obama’s prime turf. Hannah August, who was Michelle Obama’s press secretary, said Bo showed up at her job interview. “I remember sitting in her office super, super nervous,” she said. “You know, this is the biggest interview of my life for the most important position. And the first thing that happened was Bo came running into the office before the first lady. And I just remember petting him, and my anxiety level just went down several notches.”



August called Bo “a natural born star” who showed a superhuman tolerance for silly ideas dreamed up by his humans, such as wearing bunny ears during the filming of a promo spot for the 2012 White House Easter Egg Roll. He and Sunny received a surprising number of interview requests from the media. “I don’t know if they thought we would just write something in their voice in a silly way,” August said, but she always refused ... er, Bo and Sunny always declined to comment.

In addition to his PR and East Wing duties, Bo checked on the White House garden every day with Haney, and he took his plant-inspecting job very seriously, Michelle Obama wrote in her garden book, “American Grown.” But after a long work day, Bo would try to boot first daughters Sasha and Malia out of their mother’s lap so he could have a cuddle. And at night, when the president was away, Bo sometimes got to sleep in

the bed.

Have dogs ever wrecked anything - or anyone - in the White House?

Yes and yes.

C-SPAN has already recorded a Biden dog voicing his opinion outside the Oval Office, but that’s a small, charming faux pas compared with some of his predecessors.

The most notorious breach of diplomacy was perpetrated by Pete, Teddy Roosevelt’s bull terrier mix, who reportedly pantsed the visiting French ambassador and chased him up a tree on the White House grounds in 1906, according to the White House Historical Association. After a similar situation the next year involving a Navy Department clerk, Pete was exiled to the Roosevelt’s family farm.

Since then, first pets have treed no diplomats (as far as we know), but an occasional nip or chomp has occurred. Barney bit the finger of Reuters White House correspondent Jonathan Decker on camera in 2008 and once attacked a police dog, Draper said. Fortunately for Barney, the well-trained police dog didn’t retaliate, and President George W. Bush smoothed over the situation by inviting the canine and human officers into the Oval Office for photos.

Millie Bush, one of George H. W. Bush’s English springer spaniels, was impeccably behaved around people, Pickens said, but she was a known squirrel hunter from her days living at the Naval Observatory. Ronald Reagan feared for his beloved White House squirrels, whom he fed with nuts he brought from Camp David. So just before the elder Bushes moved to the White House, Reagan playfully put up a custom “Beware of Dog” sign next to the Oval Office. Apparently most lawn critters couldn’t read, because in just a few months, Millie’s body count totaled four squirrels, three rats and a pigeon.

Walters said Jimmy Carter’s son Chip had “a rather aggressive black dog” that bit a number of the housekeeping staff and ushers, including himself. “No major injury,” Walters said, “but I always carried a rolled up newspaper with me when I went to their rooms on the third floor.”

As for wrecking things, Walters said that during his tenure, dogs chewed some furniture now and then, but it was mostly minor damage to casual pieces in the family’s living area — nothing serious or historic.

At least once though, disaster was narrowly avoided. In 1998, Bill Clinton grabbed his chocolate lab, Buddy, at the last second

as he barreled toward an elaborate White House holiday dessert display in the Grand Foyer. Pickens said Buddy spent the rest of the holiday season under 24-hour surveillance.

And of course generations of White House dogs have peed and pooped in unsavory places. Often the staff cleaned up, but not always. Ford's former press secretary Ron Nessen recounted in a 2006 op-ed that one day Liberty made a mess on the rug in the Oval Office. As a Navy steward rushed to clean it up, Ford stopped him and said, "I'll do that. No man should have to clean up after another man's dog."

Many first families hired trainers for their dogs in hopes of heading off those sorts of situations. Jackie Kennedy and her children even accompanied their dog Clipper to obedience school.

Have any puppies been born in the White House?

Plenty of them, including Liberty's brood, and another by John F. Kennedy's mixed-breed dog Pushinka, a gift from Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Before the Kennedys could take her home, Pickens said, national security officials demanded that she go to Walter Reed to be tested for bombs, germs, microphones and hidden listening devices. The president called her four offspring with his Welsh terrier Charlie the "pupniks." (The puppies raised the Kennedy dog tally to nine, according to a 1964 interview with White House electrician Traphes Bryant, who had his hands full as their de facto dog-sitter.)



When George H.W. Bush's Millie gave birth in the second-floor hair salon, Barbara Bush sat up through the night caring for the newborns. Among those newborns was Ranger, who eventually would live full-time with the elder Bushes, and Spot Fetcher, who became George W. Bush's dog and the only one to live in the White House during two non-consecutive administrations. After the six pups were born, the normally punctual president couldn't get enough of them, said Tim McBride, a Raytheon executive who was then the president's

personal aide. "One of my principal duties as his aide was to keep him on schedule for his appointments throughout the day," McBride said in an email. "That became increasingly difficult as the President would race over to the South Lawn in between his meetings in the Oval Office to roll around in the grass with the puppies."



As we learn more about the current first dogs' daily lives, we will feel like we know a bit more about President Biden as well. After all, few of us have held the nuclear codes, but many of us have cleaned dog piddle out of a rug. "It's those everyday stories that allow us to relate to our presidents," Pickens said. "I do think sometimes the way a president interacts with his pet will tell you a lot about their character."

Bonnie Berkowitz, Jan 30, 2021, washingtonpost.com

Seward County Kennel Club

Cindy Hill
1477 Thorne St
Syracuse, NE 68446