

TERRIER GROUP



Norfolk Terrier

Our sweepstakes judge at Montgomery is Norfolk breeder, talented photographer, and graphic designer of some of the best dog ads ever, Derek Glas. Our judge for the regular classes is one of the stalwarts in our breed, Elizabeth “Beth” Sweigart. The NTC annual meeting and the club’s dinner will be held at our host hotel, the Holiday

Inn in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. (This is the same hotel we used last year.)

If you’ve never had the chance to attend the events of “Montgomery Week” it should be a bucket-list item. If by chance you are coming to Montgomery for the first time, be sure to stop in at the NTC reception tent on the grounds of the park to say hello and to

ask questions.

But what about those who can’t travel to Pennsylvania in October, or who have dogs who specialize in watching TV from the comfort of the couch? It’s perfectly OK if your Norfolk is just your best gardening buddy or a foolproof alarm system when the FedEx truck pulls up. On the other hand, I’ve counted at least a baker’s dozen of different companion/performance activities that Norfolks have competed in throughout the land—from scent work and agility, to obedience and rally and other things such as trick training and Farm Dog certification. These events are generally within driving distance or, with a little planning, make good weekend getaways.

While some people seek titles such as OTCH (Obedience Champion) or MACH (Agility Champion), you do not have to aspire to these lofty heights in companion and performance events in order to have fun with your dog. It has been my experience for decades that a trained dog is a happy dog, and when you participate in organized activities with your Norfolk, you build a bond that becomes something special.

And age is no excuse for either you or your dog. There are activities that require speed and dexterity, but there are also less physically taxing sports where you can basically putter along at your own speed.

So, we hope to see you at Montgomery! But if not, get out in your own neighborhood and have fun with your best Norfolk friend. Both of you will be happier for it.

—Sheila Foran,
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Norfolk Terrier Club

Norwich Terriers

SEEKING HEALTH CARE ADVICE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: PROBABLY NOT A GOOD IDEA

Social media has changed how people communicate and is increasingly used by dog owners seeking information about health conditions and treatment options for their dogs. Online communities of people who own the same breed or whose dogs share a common health problem are very popular. The interactive nature of social media gives dog owners not only a way to access information, but also the opportunity to provide it. And while these platforms have some advantages, there are lots of disadvantages.

Symptoms of disease are a common topic. There are daily examples in the Facebook groups for people who own Norwich Terriers. Recently a pet owner posted that her dog had not been eating for several days; she’d been to the vet already, and some diagnostics were done, but there was no improvement.

COURTESY SHEILA FORAN

TERRIER GROUP



A feline is entranced by the image of a Norwich Terrier pup.

Facebook group members had lots to say, including “Feed sardines or salmon,” “Feed calves’ liver,” “Might be pancreatitis,” and “Sending positive thoughts.”

Questions about the health care of your dog are best directed to your vet. Period. In the example mentioned, decreased appetite

could mean a lot of different things. It’s one of the initial signs that owners should recognize that a dog is unwell; in some dogs, anorexia for longer than three days may warrant rapid nutritional intervention by the vet. Force-feeding (delivering food with a syringe or spoon—yes, I’ve seen this suggested on

Facebook) risks serious complications such as aspiration pneumonia. Unless your Facebook friends are vets, you risk getting bad advice. It’s inappropriate, and sometimes illegal, for medical professionals to give medical advice in an online public forum.

Social media is a convenient platform for health-related discussions. It’s convenient, easy to use, free, and provides social and emotional support. For some topics, shared experiences may be beneficial, such as in giving and receiving support with other owners who are managing a chronic disease. However, there are lots of disadvantages. In addition to information credibility, time spent on social media could delay getting needed health care for your dog.

While Facebook provides community-building among people with shared interests, other online media are primarily positioned as information sources (e.g., Wikipedia, blogs, and YouTube channels). Blogs are at the bottom of my list as far as information credibility. Usually the “expert” advice comes from a “blogger” who is not a medical professional. These are opinion pieces, typically reflecting the blogger’s own life experiences. Bloggers write about themselves, in contrast to medical writers who have credentials, conduct research, and cite sources. Information published in books and journal articles has been

through several review and editing stages, while blog authors can publish anything—there’s no review or fact-checking. Even health blogs written by medical professionals tend to be highly opinionated. As with any source, check the author’s credentials. Because there is no bar for entry and no quality control, blogs are not a reliable source.

Pet owners are likely to reach out to social media for good reason. For one thing, accessing veterinary care is more difficult these days; many vet offices have reduced their hours and become more corporate, with added protocols. Some practices are adding telemedicine to their service offerings, although the uptake for this has been slower in veterinary medicine than in human medicine. Vet care is more hands-on because animals are nonverbal. For practices with telemedicine, there are limitations. With exception for advice given in an emergency until that patient can be seen by a veterinarian, the [American Veterinary Medical Association’s telemedicine policy](#) advises that veterinarians use remote consultations only with existing clients. Under the AVMA Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship, vets are supposed to have physically examined the pet (within the past year) and take responsibility for diagnosing ailments, prescribing medication, or treating. These guidelines are often mirrored in state

COURTESY JANE SCHUBART

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and federal laws.

Our need for timely, accessible and trusted guidance is growing. So, what can we do?

Here are some strategies:

- Establish a relationship with a veterinarian or practice that you trust. Stay current with annual examinations so that you are eligible for telehealth services if offered. Remote consultations may be useful for mild concerns.

- Keep your emergency vet and a pet poison hotline phone number handy. If your dog eats something that might be poisonous, you can call either the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (1-888-426-4435) or the Pet Poison Helpline (1-855-764-7661) for 24/7 emergency assistance. (Note: there is a fee.)

- Stay in touch with your dog's breeder. Reputable breeders will help guide you to the care your dog needs, such as a specialist to diagnose and treat a disorder more common to your breed.

- Third-party consultant services are another option. These are remote veterinary services that offer 24/7 consults limited to general advice. They can't write prescriptions but may be helpful for mild conditions (such as a mild reaction to vaccines after hours) and may save a trip to the emergency vet clinic and provide helpful home-care advice until you can see your regular vet.

The bottom line: Establish veterinary care

with a trusted provider, and have a plan for emergencies. Maintain a relationship with your breeder.

Seeking veterinary care for your Norwich Terrier on social media is probably not a good idea. Be careful.

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[Norwich Terrier Club of America](#)

Parson Russell Terriers

THE VERSATILE PARSON

The Parson is not only a handsome and fun-loving companion, he is all good things wrapped into one breed. Originally bred for hunting with foxhounds, something for which the breed is still widely used in the U.K., the Parson is also excellent at agility, obedience, barn hunt, go to ground, dock diving, competing in the show ring, therapy dog, or just the best companion ever.

This is a breed that loves to do everything from accompanying his people on a hike, riding in the car or just hanging out, whether on a farm or in an apartment. He is particularly smart and quick to learn. The Parson is fun-loving no matter what's going on. He is portable, clean, easily trained, and can fit in



Parson Russell Terrier

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