Re-printed from one of our previous RDRP newsletters…

OFF LEASH PARKS

With the spring and summer weather coming upon us, we find ourselves thinking about fun places we can go with our dogs. The first thought of many is "Paw Park" on 17th St. in Sarasota or the several parks in the Bradenton and Venice areas that are similar.

Having been informed of yet another incident at Paw Park between a greyhound and another dog, we feel we must reiterate our non-advocacy of these parks for our greyhounds. In this particular instance, the victim was a Boston Terrier that received multiple skin tears and puncture wounds and is now sporting 9 drains. The vet bill is over $1,000 at this point and will go higher as the dog hopefully continues to improve.

This is not the first incident involving a greyhound and although this time, the greyhound was the aggressor, there have been incidents where greyhounds were the victims. Situations like this have and will continue to give greyhounds a bad name among those who are not familiar with the breed. They will begin to see them as vicious dogs although we all know they are not.

Those of us with multiple greyhounds are aware that we need to muzzle when turning them out into our own yards to run, yet invariably people take their greyhounds to places such as Paw Park where there are many dogs of all breeds, sizes and dispositions. They turn them loose to run and chase while owners use the time as a social event to chat with other dog owners. This is a very dangerous practice, especially with our retired racers who have been trained since babies to "chase" the lure.

Although a wonderful idea in concept and commendable that the various counties have recognized dog owners in a positive way, how much better if they had built places we could exercise with our dogs rather than the off leash parks where bad things can and do happen. How nice it would have been if the counties had turned one of the fitness trails into a dog friendly place by installing cleanup bags, trash receptacles and a few things for our dogs to test their agility skills with while remaining under the control of a leash.

Although we cannot force any of you to not use these off leash parks, you need to be aware of the things that happen there with frequency to make an educated choice about your own individual dogs and the amount of control you have over them when they are in a very large area with a large number of dogs.