



Pet-Friendly Facilities Can Be a Treat

By Mark Wright

Two mutts are chatting about the obedience class one of them is taking: “They’ve started us off with the basics—sit, stay, come,” says the dog in the class, “but I hope by the end we’ll be doing some Web design.” This encounter in a cartoon from Hilary Price’s book, *Reigning Cats And Dogs*, illustrates a surprising truth: Some pets can make excellent self storage employees.

Not sure your own critter has career potential? Well, the American Pet Products Association (APPA) did a survey last year about pets in the workplace and discovered that 70 million Americans believe having pets at work reduces stress, 41 million believe it helps co-workers get along better, 37 million believe it decreases absenteeism, and 34 million people who bring their pets to the workplace work longer hours. This is not news to the owners of four-legged self storage pros like Mooshu, Casey, Skipper, Kayla, Everest and Katahdin.

Kathy and Carson Block rescued Mooshu from the mean streets of Los Angeles, California, more than seven years ago. When the couple relocated to China and opened Love Box Self Storage in Shanghai, Mooshu became the chief tail wagger. Turns out many mainland Chinese aren’t used to pets, notes Carson, so Mooshu keeps a low profile. After hours, however, the little guy searches out new smells and “especially enjoys running laps up and down the long aisles of the facility,” says Kathy.

Around the globe in Maine, County Road Self Storage in Milford is operated by onsite managers Barak and Laura Gurney—along with Casey (a Bichon Frise), Skipper (a Poochon) and Kayla (a Maine Coon cat). The dogs are “built-in security,” says Laura. “They greet everybody when people come up to the house to pay.” Kayla helps supervise the rambunctious canines. Casey also posts self storage tips at countyroadselfstorage.com.

A couple hours south in Rockport, the LaFlamme family runs its 300-unit facility with the help of Everest and Katahdin. Dawn LaFlamme—whose father, Ed LaFlamme, started Swift Storage more than 22 years ago—knew her pair of Newfoundland/St. Bernard mix puppies would grow up to be mountain-sized, hence their names: Everest is the male; Katahdin is the female, named after the biggest peak in Maine. They work weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. “Saturday customers are always disappointed that they don’t work weekends,” says Dawn. “They’re like ambassadors. Even people who are no longer renting a unit stop in to visit them.”

Wondering if you have a potential self storage überpet—or at least a mascot-in-the-making? Try entering Pet Sitters International’s annual “Take Your Dog to Work Day” photo contest (takeyourdog.com) on June 25. Don’t worry—your dog can show you how to work the camera. ❖