

DOGS' DAY OUT

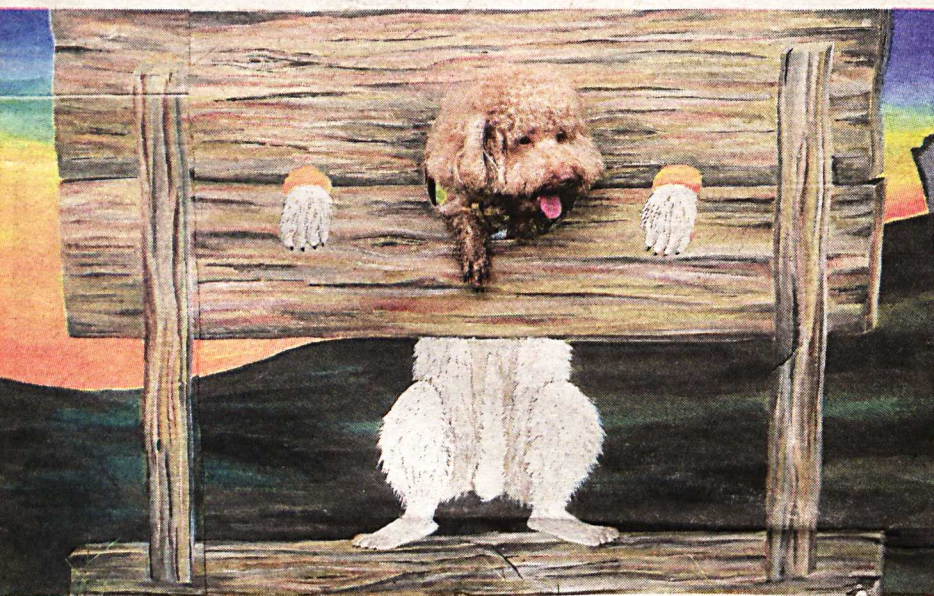
Owners and pets
take full
advantage of
**Universiti Putra
Malaysia's 16th
annual Dogathon
event**

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A dog's fitness and intelligence were tested on the obstacle course.



A poodle posing at a fun photo booth.



While some dogs were busy working out, some just wanted to enjoy a relaxing Saturday morning.

Pooches have 'howl-o-ween' good time

CANINE CARNIVAL: Dogs and their owners had fun socialising and participating in contests at UPM's annual Dogathon

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It was a dogs' day out recently at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)'s 16th annual Dogathon event.

German Shepherds, Beagles, Bulldogs, Miniature Schnauzers and Siberian Huskies were among the many breeds that came beautifully groomed for the Halloween-themed carnival called Howl-o-ween. Some were even in costumes.

The wet weather and muddy field did not dampen the spirits of the dogs and their masters. UPM's Bukit Ekspo was decorated with cardboard coffins, pumpkins and other Halloween paraphernalia to create a ghastly but fun atmosphere.

Organised by UPM's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine student association (Veternak) and Zoologico Club, the objective of Dogathon was to raise funds for Pro-Kasih, a project aimed at controlling the population of strays in a humane way.

"We are expecting 1,000 dogs today. In 2010, we had 1,111 dogs and made it into the *Malaysia Book of Records*," said Dogathon 2012 director Joanna Ng Sze Yi, 21.

"With 300 students involved in the organising team, it took us a year to prepare for this event and right after this we have to start planning for next year," said Ng's co-director, Lim Zhi Jian, 22.

In 16 years, Dogathon has managed to attract many sponsors and supporters among non-governmental organisations and private sectors.

They had booths around the field to promote animal right causes, introduce new pet products and provide information on pet medication. Among them were Petworld, Vetstar, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Eukanuba, Paws and Pet Positive.

Pet Positive president Anthony Thanasayan said he was happy to support the event and had done so since it was initiated.

"We are pleased to be invited again and this year the event has become more disabled-friendly with special parking spaces and toilets.

"There are volunteers to push us in our wheelchairs to ensure that we do not miss any of the activities," he said.

Anthony added that animals, especially dogs, play an important role for the disabled and dismissed the general public's perception that dogs are aggressive.

On the question of what breed of dog is the best to care for the disabled, Anthony said that it depends on how the dog and master can care for each other.

"All dogs can be trained to jump on a bed and help a disabled person up depending on the size, disability and so on," he said.

A newcomer to the supporters' list was the Malaysian Independent Animal Rescue (MIAR).

MIAR ambassador, 2009/2010 Miss World Malaysia Thanuja Ananthan, said that Dogathon was a great event to bring the community together where both owners and dogs can socialise with others.

MIAR, as an animal rescue organisation, comes across countless cases of animal abuse and abandonment.

"What we can do is get together and try to do something about it, because one NGO cannot fight the battle alone," Thanuja said.



"We ask the owners about their medical histories and if the dogs are prone to heatstrokes, we remind the owners to keep them hydrated."

Nur Syuhada Adnan,
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine final year student

ma dogs have among them," he said.

Stephen said there was a positive change in the trend of adopting dogs, as more pet owners are opting to adopt stray animals rather than buy from pet stores.

Jenny Chang, 30, and Shaun Lai, 32, both of whom were also at last year's Dogathon, came with their dogs, a Jack Russell Terrier and a Beagle.

"It is better this year, with more participants and booths where we can learn about the latest products for dog care," Chang said.

Lai said that events such as Dogathon are important for the wellbeing of dogs as they need to socialise, just like people.



Dogs came in all shapes and sizes.



Dogs and their owners making a dash for the finish line in the 'Race in the Valley of the Undead'.



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Jenny Chang, dog owner

Siberian Huskies attract attention at the Dogathon Div bu Cuarafin Abd Camar