

Northwoods Humane Society – Bob the Dog (aka Nancy Douglas)

So, last night after our final trip outside, Dad smiled and said we were going to the Bark Park tomorrow. He went off to bed.

Bubba and I looked at each other and muttered back and forth a bit. “Bark is always good,” Bubba said. “And Dad sounded like it was going to be a happy thing,” I replied. “And ‘going’ is mostly good, too “I curled up with Bubba and we slept.

Mom was up first, as usual, let us out into the back yard, and then let us back in while she fixed the coffee and our breakfasts. While she sat with her coffee, she petted us and said, “We are going to have so much fun today, puppies !”

Dad came in and they had breakfast (with little tidbits for us) as they discussed the day’s plans. Then they got dressed and it wasn’t office clothes, which was a good sign.

Mom finally said, “OK boys, let’s head to the Bark Park!” and put us on our leashes and we all headed for the car. Dad put us in the backseat. We always love to go in the car, so we were kind of panting and leaping around til we each got settled by a window. Dad got in the driver’s seat and Mom lowered the windows a bit for us, so we could get all the smells.

The ride didn’t seem long enough, but they never do. Dad turned down a small road then into a long driveway. Mom read aloud a sign she saw, “All dogs must be on leashes when not inside the park!” Finally Dad turned into a gravel parking lot and said, “Here we are, kiddos!”

We had been smelling the scents of other dogs for several minutes and were feeling really excited! Mom opened Bubba’s door and took him out on his leash, while Dad did the same for me. They closed the doors and we all walked down a wood-bark path toward a chain link fence and gate. Bubba and I both peed on trees along the way, as many dogs had clearly done before.

When we got to the gate and Mom opened it, we were in a small gated enclosure. We could see wide open spaces in front of us, but Mom and Dad looked around really well. There was also a big sign that Mom read aloud about not being aggressive or in heat.

Dad said, “It looks OK,” then he opened the gate and we all walked through, and then they let us off our leashes! I ran like crazy, with Bubba right behind me!

There were big trees, lots of grass, a couple of shelters with chairs, benches here and there, and sniffy evidence of many visiting dogs. It looked like moms and dads had picked up most of the dog poo; I have never understood why they treasure it so. I looked back to check on Mom and Dad and saw them walking on a long trail that seemed to go all around the inside of the park, so we could keep an eye on them all the time.

We heard a rattling from the gate! Bubba and I looked at each other then raced to see what was going on. Were our parents in danger?

We were there in two seconds! And there was a man with two beagle dogs. We love beagles - and apparently they love us! We all did some thorough sniffing, then the race around and through the park started again, this time with the beagle baying blending in with our barking.

As we all rounded the corner close to the gate - with me in the lead, of course - I saw more dogs and a woman in the enclosure. We all sniffed them through the fence. A German shepherd and a yellow lab with a friendly looking mom. She spoke to us and asked us to settle down a little, and we really tried, but as soon as her dogs came through the gate, the race was on again.

This time there were enough of us for some good mini races and tumbling around. We found some big water bowls for a drink; this kind of play and running can make you thirsty. The beagle dad starting throwing tennis balls, too! What fun!

We ran over to check on Mom and Dad. They hugged us and said how proud they were of how we were playing. Bubba and I grinned and licked them, then headed after the lab.

After Mom and Dad had gone around the edge of the park a couple of times, they sat on a bench and visited with the other moms and dads. They called us to them, and being very good dogs and maybe a tiny bit tired, we ran right to them. They clipped on our leashes and said it was time to go. We gave goodbye barks to the other dogs and went out through the gates.

When we got to the car, they let us back into our seats, and as they did so, Dad said, "Well what did you think boys, did you like the Bark Park?" Our sloppy kisses and wagging tails clearly expressed our enthusiasm, making both Dad and Mom laugh.

Dad drove and Mom rolled the windows down a bit again, but we just grinned, sighed, and slept all the way home.

The Northwoods Humane Society dog par 'Bark Park' is open to the public from sunrise to sunset. All dogs must be on a leash coming and going to the park, must play well with others and be vaccinated. There is a park for larger dogs and one for smaller dogs. Both have pavilions for shade. Because of a gift from Charles Nejdal, both parks now have running water. Let your dogs have fun and meet other 'dog' people.