

RoadTrip

In Frederick, It's a Dog-Meet-Dog World

Walker's route

Start here

The 44-acre **Baker Park** is the perfect spot for a little Frisbee, ball-fetching or a catnap.

Owner Murray Friedman's English setter, Khali, guards the goods at **Hunting Creek Outfitters**, an Orvis dealer that stocks dog life jackets, boots, toys and treats.

People may have trouble smelling **CineGraphic Studios'** scratch 'n' sniff book for dogs, but hey, that's why it's for canines. Bacon gift wrap, cat-butt magnets and stickers are more human-friendly.

Frederick Coffee Co. & Cafe welcomes Rover indoors, where the hardwood floors, ceiling fans and comfy chairs may remind him of home (except the coffee's better here).

The cast-iron dog outside the **home of John Tyler**, considered the first American-born ophthalmologist (no relation to the president), was stolen by Confederate troops in 1862 with the intention of remolding the iron into bullets. It was found later near the Antietam battlefield and returned to his house on Church Street.

Dancing Bear Toys and Gifts carries such classics as the bark-free Slinky Dog.

Most likely your dog isn't out herding sheep, but you can still play the part of wrangler with Justin boots, Stetson hats and other Western wear from **Cowboy Stuff**. Plus, free treats for your shopping companion.

You can almost smell the great outdoors inside the **Trail House**, which sells hiking, camping and backpacking gear for man and beast.

The **Diehl Memorial Fountain** is dedicated to Marie Diehl, a founder of what is now the Frederick County Humane Society. An inscription says it's for a "refreshing drink to the citizens of Frederick and their beloved animal friends."

Order a margarita for yourself and a bowl of agua for your pet on the patio of **La Paz Mexican Restaurant**.

Stretch your six legs along the **Carroll Creek Promenade**, a new development with benches, flowers and Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

For pooches with gourmet tastes, pick up K-9 Kool Kups (nonfat fro-yo) or a 12-inch Bully Stick (dehydrated bull muscle) at **Two Paws Up**.

WHERE: Historic downtown Frederick.

WHY: Free doggie treats behind the counter, scratch 'n' sniff books for Spot and playing catch with your best friend.

HOW FAR: Just under two miles, or about an hour walking, if you don't stop too long to sniff.

Downtown Frederick has gone to the dogs. Really. More than 70 businesses in the Maryland town's historic district are pet-friendly, and many promote their fondness for our four-legged friends with a bone-shaped "My Dog Digs Downtown Frederick" sticker on their doors.

Allison Levitt, the 34-year-old owner of Two Paws Up, started the movement after she opened her pet shop in 2004. "It's a family town, and dogs are definitely part of the family," she says. Levitt, who owns a black Lab named Oliver, supplies participating merchants with stickers, free dog treats and stainless-steel water bowls for thirsty pooches.

She is also co-sponsoring the fourth annual Dog Days of Summer event Saturday, part of downtown Frederick's First Saturday Gallery Walk. The event will include a Doggywood photo booth, doggy day spa, costume contest (categories include Hot Dog, Cool Dog and Dog-Owner Look-Alike; prizes are donations from merchants) and a "yappy hour" for those with and without fur. All competitors receive a gift bag. Levitt says Dog Days not only gets people out on the town in the dead of summer, it also helps build a sense of community for owners and their pets.

But Frederick's dirty little secret is that some merchants prefer dogs. "I hate to say it, but some of the dogs are friendlier than the people," says Eric Krasner, 46, owner of white German shepherd Puck and CineGraphic Studios, a PG-13 shop of wacky novelty items. He says there has been only one dog accident in his store in three years: when a pooch threw up and the owner apologized profusely and promptly cleaned up the mess.

"But customers have accidents all the time," he says. "Last week, I had a woman spill a whole can of 7-Up on a table of merchandise, and she snuck out without saying a thing." Doggone it!

— **Melanie D.G. Kaplan**

Dog Days of Summer: Saturday, 5-9 p.m. Various downtown Frederick locations, 301-698-8118, www.downtownfrederick.org. Costume contest registration at Two Paws Up, 15 S. Carroll St. \$10 for first dog, \$5 for second, others free.