



## Membership Guidelines

CAPPS is a group of professional pet sitters. All businesses must be 'legitimate' to join. Businesses must carry the necessary liability insurance and abide by New York State, County and Federal laws.

New members are required to be in business a minimum of six months before they are eligible to join. You are more than welcome to start coming to meetings as soon as you start your business to get to know people, ask questions and network but cannot be a paid member with a listing on the website until you've reached six months in business.

### **Benefits:**

- Listing on website
- Referrals
- Camaraderie with fellow pet sitters
- Monthly dinner meetings
- Advertising opportunities
- E-group for referrals, event planning & questions

### **Dues:**

First year's membership dues are \$100 which includes a CAPPS t-shirt. After the first year they are \$90 per year, renewable on March 1st.

Dues are pro-rated for the first year. If you join March-May it is \$100, June-August is \$75, September-November is \$50 and December-February is \$25.

### **Attendance and Meetings:**

New members are required to attend 3 meetings within a 6 month period before they are eligible to join the Capital Area Professional Pet Sitters (CAPPS) and will then submit an application and payment for dues. After this, each March 1st dues are again due for \$90 for the year. Once you have attended your first 3 meetings, been in business a minimum of 6 months, and paid your dues you will be able to get a listing on the CAPPS website: <http://www.localpetsitters.com>

After attending their first meeting potential members will be added to the CAPPS for Newbies yahoo e-group. After becoming a paid member you will be transferred to the official CAPPS e-group. Both groups are the method of communication for sending out meeting dates; discuss upcoming business, events, referrals, etc.

After becoming an official member there are no attendance requirements, although it is strongly recommended members attend as many meetings as possible. *The more effort you put into your membership by attending functions, volunteering at a booth and/or taking an active role, the more your membership will benefit you.*

Our meetings are monthly and rotate between Tuesday and Wednesdays. We also rotate the location of the meetings by the 4 counties that CAPPs includes. i.e.; Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga and Rensselaer. Most meetings are from 4-6 pm, however once per quarter a meeting is 6-8 pm to accommodate our members who work other jobs.

**2008 Meeting Dates:**

January 15, 2008, Tuesday, 4-6 pm - Albany County - Xmas grab bag - all members are welcome you don't have to bring a gift if you don't want to. Only those who bring a gift will participate in the Chinese Auction, which is hysterical!

February 13, 2008, Wednesday, 4-6 pm - Saratoga - BUSINESS MEETING!  
All members are encouraged to attend. Please send any topics you'd like to see covered at this meeting to Wendy to add to the agenda. We will also be going over the proposed budget for '08 and voting.

March 18, 2008, Tuesday, 6-8 pm - Schenectady County

April 24, 2008, Thursday, 4-6 pm - Rensselaer County - Jody Diehl of Dog's Best Friend will be our speaker. Please forward any topics you'd like to have Jody cover to Jen Wilhelm.

May 13, 2008, Tuesday, 4-6 pm - Albany County - Mara Swankey of Cherished Companions will be our speaker. She will be doing a presentation on website design. What to include, how photos affect load time, keywords, search engine ranking, links, etc. If you have any specific questions you'd like answered, please post them to the list or send them to Wendy or Mara.

June 18, 2008, Wednesday, 6-8 pm - Saratoga County

July 15, 2008, Tuesday, 4-6 pm - Schenectady County

August 13, 2008, Wednesday, 4-6 pm - Rensselaer County

September 16, 2008, Tuesday, 6-8 pm - Albany County

October 15, 2008, Wednesday, 4-6 pm - Saratoga County - BUSINESS MEETING

November 11, 2008, Tuesday, 4-6 pm - Schenectady County

December - No meeting

**Shelter Donations:**

Members are encouraged (but not required) to bring a pet item (food, litter, toys, etc.) to each monthly meeting. Each month a member volunteers to take all items collected during that meeting to the animal shelter or rescue group of their choice.

### **Voting:**

Each paid member is allowed one vote per membership. Should a member be unable to make it to the meeting where a vote is being taken a deadline for voting will be set. Votes can be emailed to Wendy Nigro at purrfectpetsitting(at)hotmail.com.

### **2008 Advertising (included with membership):**

Each year the group decides what advertising will be included in the dues for upcoming year. Included this year are:

- Sponsoring APF (Animal Protective Foundation) Fireplug 500 booth (September/Schenectady)
- Paws For a Cause booth (April/Albany)
- Brochures, business cards and pens for give aways at booths
- Pride Parade booth (June/Albany)
- Three, 1/12<sup>th</sup> page ads in Capital Region Living Magazine (March, April & May)
- Great Northeast Home Show booth (February/Albany/2009)
- CAPPS website
- Others to be determined as they come up

### **Optional Advertising (not included with membership):**

Occasionally the group will go in on an advertising venture that has not been included in the dues. It's a great way to reach a much larger audience at a cost that wouldn't be feasible for a single business. Participation in this type of advertising is voluntary and is not included in the cost of CAPPS membership.

Examples of past optional advertising ventures have been:

- Print Ad in AAA Magazine
- Radio Advertising
- Movie Theatre Advertising
- Display ads in local "Pennysaver" papers
- Verizon Yellow Pages advertisement

### **New Client Etiquette:**

We can't please everyone all the time and there will be the occasional times that a client will look for another pet sitter. Should you get a new client who has used another pet sitter please be courteous and contact that sitter and let them know that the client has called you (if you can find out who the other sitter was). This way there are no hard feelings between sitters and no one will feel like another sitter has 'stolen' their client. This isn't a hard set 'rule', merely a good will suggestion.

### **Booth Etiquette:**

CAPPS has booths at many events throughout the year and we rely on our members to volunteer their time to represent the group at these booths. Our primary interest is to promote pet sitting as an industry and to promote CAPPS. Our general rule of thumb for booth etiquette is we primarily hand out CAPPS information to interested parties, however, if you happen to strike up a conversation with someone in your service area and they ASK for your personal business card you may give it to them. We do not solely promote our own businesses. Members are encouraged to wear their CAPPS apparel while working at a booth.

### **Other Businesses:**

Many of our members have other businesses that we support and encourage. Members are welcome to introduce their business to the group by either posting a message on the e-group or giving a brief description in person at a meeting. We kindly ask that once a member has made the group aware of their other business that it not be advertised again, unless someone asks. Our main focus as a group is pet sitting.

### **Get Involved!:**

We realize the importance of knowing the person we are referring to from the CAPPS list to a prospective pet-sitting client. It is much more comforting to refer a member with whom most of us have had the chance to form a relationship. It is very difficult to have a professional, working relationship with each member of the group if we do not also have a degree of personal interaction, which can most readily be achieved through attending some of our monthly meetings. ***The more effort you put into your membership by attending functions, volunteering at a booth and/or taking an active role, the more your membership will benefit you.***

CAPPS maintains a website; [localpetsitters.com](http://localpetsitters.com). All members in good standing will be listed on the website. The website has reciprocal links with vets, groomers, shelters & rescue groups.

Contact for information:

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