While we are out of town for awhile, we sent our two Dalmatians, Ashley and Mocha, to “summer camp”. They are staying with friends in Gunnison, who initially rescued Ashley from the animal shelter and contacted us about adopting her. Buffett, our cat, will be at home with our housesitter. What we have found interesting is the individual differences among each of our pets in their reactions to being away from home, each other, and us.

On their first night away from home, we called to check on the dogs. Our friends reported that Ashley was so excited she didn’t even take time to eat her dinner. She spent the afternoon playing with our friends’ dogs, then went with Mocha for a walk in the hills.

Mocha, although he enjoyed his walk, spent some time looking around the house, apparently in search of us. Buffett, who is home by himself with us for a few days before we leave, has also been wandering the house, as though looking for his dogs. He looks around whenever we come in the door, as though he is expecting the dogs to return with us. We’ve noticed he is spending time near us when he used to be with the dogs, napping on the couch.

These different reactions are reflective of our pets’ different personalities. Ashley is immediately at home anywhere, and will have a great time with our friends, because she has many opportunities to play, swim and run to her heart’s content. Mocha, although friendly to everyone, is very attached to us and is not completely content unless he is with one of us. Buffett is such a social butterfly that he has to find a warm body to be with, as he detests being by himself.

The separation is probably hardest, on you guessed it, Mom. We both feel like parents whose kids are away at camp. The house is empty and quiet, there are no boisterous greetings, pestering noses asking us to play rather than work, and no one to take for walks at night.

We miss the “kids” terribly, but we also know that we can’t project our lonesome feelings onto our pets. While some animals seem to have great difficulties adjusting to being away from their owners, ours don’t seem to fall into that category.

Although we know Buffett, Ashley and Mocha will be happy to see us when we return, the dogs will be having so much fun running and playing, and all three of them will have the benefit of being cared for by people who love them almost as much as we do, that we don’t think they are missing us as much as we are missing them.