



Schenectady Chapter Therapy Dogs Newsletter

MAY 8, 2007

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

Staying in touch with our members

By Ann Kaczowski



"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

--Roger Caras

(2006 Scotia Parade)

Over the past few years, social scientists have documented the importance of clubs and social organizations in shaping Americans' social lives to a remarkable degree. Did you know, for example, that two out of five adults in the United States report involvement in some type of regular small-group meeting or club and that they felt it was important to stay in touch within these clubs and organizations?

American society today is largely an individual-centered one. People in this country report an acute need for community and deep connections within these communities. Community clubs and organizations such as the Schenectady Chapter of Therapy Dogs International address some of these concerns, but we must remain committed in welcoming and including everyone who wishes to join and become a part of a club such as ours. We can achieve this through our new newsletter.

The Schenectady chapter of TDI hopes to make all members feel welcome while giving them the opportunity to get involved in a myriad of ways throughout our community. By contributing to and supporting our new chapter newsletter you can help others get excited about all of the wonderful things you are all doing with your therapy dogs. Your experiences may be just the thing a new member may need to hear/read in order to get involved. You should all be very proud of your service and commitment to others so why not share your knowledge and experiences with those within our club—Reach out to other club members and help make this club the best club it can be. We can't have a club without U.

So please—share your stories, poems, experiences, photos, cartoons, good dog books/articles etc. Share them with other members because just like therapy dogs—you never know who you'll reach and how you might make a difference in their life.

"When its raining cats and dogs, be sure not to step in the poodles."
--Unknown



Cody Reksc

By Patty Reksc

Cody is a sweet black mask gold Shih Tzu. He was born February 18, 2005 to Pee Gee and Gator (Selby Shih Tzu). Cody began taking obedience classes as a puppy at Schenectady Dog Training Club (SDTC) and is currently in the novice level. As a puppy, I would occasionally take him to where I work with developmentally disabled adults

(Liberty/Montgomery County ARC) for a visit as he really seemed to enjoy going out and meeting people. I decided to look into what Cody and I needed to learn so that he could become a therapy dog. Cody passed his Canine Good Citizen test in November 2005 and the TDI test in March 2006 and became a certified therapy dog in April 2006. Cody completed his first official visit on May 5, 2006 at Kingsway Manor. I will never forget that first visit. Cody was very excited and bounced right into the lobby with a smile on his face and met fellow therapy dogs Reno (Kim King), and Willie (Joyce Rose), as well as Ann Kaczowski who gave him his official TDI bandana. Cody brought smiles to the faces of many of the folks in the lobby eagerly waiting to see the dogs that Saturday morning. He went room to room to visit many of the residents who enjoyed petting his soft coat, and commenting on his "smooshed" face, his mustache, and his "smile." Since then, Cody continues to visit Kingsway Manor, Sunnyview, and Hillcrest Spring regularly as well as other special events including Clover Patch, Dressage, Smooch a Pooch, schools, and parades. Cody enjoys seeing all his therapy dog friends, especially Ruby the dachshund. I am so glad that I have Cody. He is such a good boy and a little snuggle bug who has made such a difference in my life and touched the lives of so many people already in the short time I have had him.



Stories from our Human Members

By Beverly Bulson

Hi my name is Beverly Bulson and I have been a member of the Schenectady Chapter of TDI for a number of years. I have 5 dogs, 4 of which are Boston Terriers and 1 Rottweiler which are all TDI dogs. We visit 2 facilities on a regular basis - The

Terrace at Glen Eddy and the Alterra Wynwood. Three of my dogs have become TDIA dogs and the other two are well on their way. Both of my children Tiffany and Joshua can handle my dogs and come with us on the visits. We have done many one time visits to schools, libraries, camps, etc. I am also a certified TDI evaluator and a CGC evaluator. My children participate in the testing as the wheel chair operators, the kids that need to be in the area for testing, even helping with the paperwork. Calvin my Rottweiler was recently awarded the 2006 Service Dog of the Year from Mohawk Valley Kennel Club. He was also honored last year by the Colonial Rottweiler Club as the Seger Volunteer of the Year. Both of these awards were great honors, especially considering they were awarded to a Rottweiler which is a breed marked as dangerous dogs.

We feel it is wonderful to have dogs that are versatile in that they participate in obedience, agility, carting, conformation, therapy and being wonderful family pets. My Bostons are all wonderful mothers, grandmothers and even great grandmothers. They have produced many wonderful babies that are working at therapy dogs as well. We are very proud of all of our dogs and are blessed to have such wonderful animals in our lives. Not only do they love us and care for us no matter what happens, they have also afforded us the opportunity to meet many wonderful people.



Sasha

By Cheryl



My 5 year old Golden Retriever, Sasha, came to me on Thanksgiving Day in 2005. She had to be given up and her owner loved her enough to do just that since he simply couldn't care for her any longer. I had just lost my 2 1/2 year old Golden to cancer, and was needing another Golden

to love. Sasha is the name her first owner gave her and I liked it so we kept it; it is a Russian name meaning "helper of mankind". She is unbeliievably true to her name!! Each week we go to two elementary schools in Schenectady so young children can read to her; their reading abilities have definitely improved in a very short time period. Sasha and I also visit a local nursing home once a week; she is my third Golden and this is my 15th year of visiting nursing home residents with them. I am a volunteer "Ambassador" at the Albany International Airport and Sasha is my "assistant" there on Sunday afternoons. The travelers just adore her; some frequent fliers now know her by name and look for her when they are leaving Albany on business. I just love how some folks rush up to her saying "I need a fur fix!" I think it is fair to say that Sasha is indeed a "helper of mankind". I am so grateful that she has come into my life; and on Thanksgiving Day of all times!



Baka

By Wayne Gannett

Baka and I have been visiting Daughters of Sarah Nursing Home for almost two years. It's a once a month thing for us and our time there rarely exceeds an hour. We walk the corridors, glancing into each room to see if there is someone who might like us to visit. Our practice is to pause at each residents' doorway and ask permission to enter...it's a matter of respect. I've noticed that Baka has learned to wait patiently and listen for that invitation. On more than one occasion, she has also surprised me by refusing to move on from a doorway. Each time that I've gone back to again glance into the room the dozing resident

is now awake and in most instances glad to see us, or should I say, Baka. I didn't teach her these things, they're something she's learned on her own. My dog's perception and sensitivity never fail to amaze me.

Upcoming Events

- WOODLAWN SCHOOL
- SCOTIA PARADE
- SARATOGA DRESSAGE
- CLOVERPATCH

Staff Members:

ANN KACZKOWSKI -
DIRECTOR

Javadog1@hughes.net

JENNIFER PALEY –
SECRETARY

Jen70Mar@aol.com

PEG ROBINSON –
TREASURER

peg37@msn.com

KIM KING –
WEBMASTER

Kimsueking@hotmail.
com

MICHELLE LUTZ –
NEWLETTER

Mlutz29@aol.com

Guinness

By Irene Uejio

Guinness is a typical schipperke: curious, comical, and high energy. One day during his first Christmas season, my son (now 31) left his half-full coffee cup on the dining room chair. Guinness found it and slurped it all up. Now he loves coffee and will beg and dance for a taste. I let him have a sip of my morning coffee (decaffeinated) every day and it's become a ritual that he looks forward to.



The Therapy Dog

By Sarah J. Holden

There's a friendly paw by grandma's side,
With a hairy grin and patient eye.

Gentle, trusting, polite and sweet,
The dog is a friend, a comfort, a treat.

She visits the sad, lonely and sick,
Extending a paw, providing a trick.

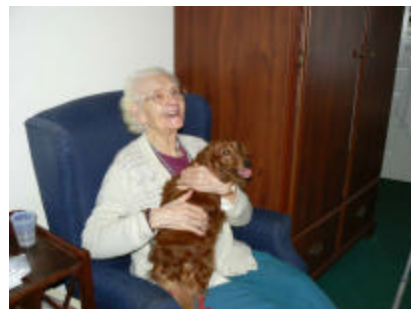
For people in wheelchairs, on crutches or in bed—
All she asks is a stroke on the head.

She is comfortable in a bustling crowd;
She never barks or is very loud.

She is carefully groomed and very clean—
She is the cleanest dog you've ever seen!

Grandma is happy—just look at her smile!

I'm glad the therapy dog could say for a while.



Stories from our Canine Members

By Tail wagging, Daisy

Hello,

My name is Daisy and I am a Therapy Dog. Well, right now, because my Mom wanted to travel when she retired, I am in semi-retirement. I loved being a Therapy Dog. I enjoyed going to nursing homes and rehab centers. (I am a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and we are noted for wanted attention.) I was afraid that when we started traveling in our motor home I wouldn't get to visit with people but I was wrong. We stay at different

campgrounds all across the country and each campground has someone that comes up to talk to me. And I hate to tell you this but some of those people driving those BIG motor homes are VERY old!

Oh, I forgot to tell you, when I was little, my Mom rescued a kitten to keep me company. His name is Dusty. (Mom keeps saying that was a big mistake!) I am a very good girl, guess who isn't a good boy. What reminded me to tell you that was,

Address:

**623 Belldons
Road,
Amsterdam, Ny
12010**

Phone:

(518) 842-0421

We're on the Web!

schenectadytdi.com/

Dusty and I both walk on leashes and sometimes the people in the campground stop us because they never saw a cat walk on a leash.

This is the second winter we traveled in our motor home all the way to Arizona. Well, we were even in California but we didn't camp there.

Every time Mom stops at a new campground Dusty and I can't wait to get out and see what new smells are out there. (We are getting pretty smart by now, when she stops for gas we know we aren't in our new campground and have to wait awhile.)

I'm afraid that I have to admit that when we travel, I don't really care what's along the road as we are driving. I sit in the passenger seat and Dusty sits in the easy chair behind it. Well, maybe "sleep" instead of sit would be more appropriate.

Out in Arizona a full moon seems even brighter than it does back east. At night when Mom takes me out for my last walk before bed, I sometimes see scary things out there! While I am walking, there is this black thing that follows me! When I notice it and jump, it jumps too. (Scares me half to death.) I sometimes try to sneak up on it but it keeps moving. I keep this up for quite a while before Mom makes me go in and go to bed. She keeps mentioning something about "shadow" but I don't understand what that is.

Well, keep turning those frowns into smile and I will do the same while I'm on the road.

Why I Wear Shirts

Submitted by Shady Finnegan Conway, TDI, DSR



Hullo, TDI Schenectady Friends! (Remember me? I'm that handsome, happy yellow Labrador Retriever looking out of the fire truck window on the cover of the new TDI Guide.) Gosh, I've had a hairy winter and have been out of work for months. I miss seeing you all! Thanks for your

cheerful cards and messages.

The next time we meet, I just want you to know why I wear shirts now. It's not really my style to dress up like a human, especially like a little kid. Usually I prefer the more mature and buff look of nothing but a buckle collar. Sometimes wearing a backpack is okay, though, because I can haul along a lot of treats and water. Yup, this is important on long visiting days to keep me going, if you know what I mean! Anyway, I've had to change my attitude about clothing.

I had some real bad luck with my health... to make a long story short, I have one less leg than I used to have. Yup, it's true—I'm a tripod! To all you sweet and sympathetic people who ask, "How do you get along like that?" I'll confide that the most challenging adjustment was learning to pee without making a fool of myself by falling over into the snow. As soon as I figured that balancing act out I learned how to scratch some marks so that my doggy neighbors could tell (uh, smell!) that this is still my turf around here.

My canine pals really don't seem to notice that I am differently-abled. Hmmppph, but people, they are a very strange species! Seems that when I go out wearing nothing but my fur, they hunch up, become dramatic, and say, "**Oh, you poor thing, what happened?!**" Look, I'm a dog, what am I supposed to say? My human noticed that these questions were bothering me. Well, sure, I'm a sympathetic sort of fellow! I felt sorry for these folks who didn't understand that I'm fine now that I'm

done with that darned chemotherapy. So whenever people felt bad for me, I just felt sad for them. Gosh, this isn't how it's supposed to be for a Therapy Dog!

Fortunately my human had a great idea. She reasoned that if we could have something funny to distract our concerned acquaintances, they might not get all tragic-sounding. I suggested that I could carry around a stuffed goose, or even those big old bones that I dug out of the mud. She said, "Nope, that won't work out too well in the hospitals we visit."

Instead, she started sewing some "happy shirts" for me. Sure enough, whenever I arrive in a striped sweater, or a little tie-dyed number, people start laughing! They exclaim, "**What a great shirt!**" "**What a sweet guy!**" "**What a handsome, brave dog!**" And that's just what I want to hear—happiness and a lot of compliments. You know why? A good laugh goes a long way, and it's healing, too! So, enjoy springtime, stay healthy and I hope to see you all this summer.

S.O.C.K.S Needs Your Help

SOCKS is an organization that helps cats in many ways including spay and neutering, feeding and providing much needed medical attention and services to stray cats and kittens. SOCKS came through for us when we were collecting books and craft supplies for the local shelter by donating a whole van load of items. We are hoping we can repay their generosity by collecting the following much needed items:

- Monetary donations
- Towels
- Cleaning supplies (Clorox etc.)
- Cat food
- Cat Litter
- Cat toys

A note of interest: Myra Lampkin, one of our fellow chapter members, is very involved with S.O.C.K.S. Let's help them out. They operate on a shoestring budget and *really* are in need of help. If we all pitch in we can help make a difference.

If you would like to donate please contact Ann Kaczowski, Chapter Director, at (518) 842-0421 or email: javadog1@hughes.net or Jennifer Paley at jen70mar@aol.com by May 4, 2007. Thank you in advance for your donations.

Conclusion

We hope you have enjoyed this first edition of the Schenectady Chapter TDI newsletter. It could not have been possible without all of your wonderful stories and photos.

Please keep them coming in email any newsletter photos or articles to mlutz29@aol.com or javadog1@hughes.net.

We will leave you with this Riddle:

There are two dogs sitting on a porch - one dog is fat and one is thin.

The little dog is the son of the fat dog, but the fat dog is not the father of the thin dog.

Can you explain?

Answer will be in our next issue

Topics in our next issue include:

- **Tail Waggin' Tutors**
- **YMCA Shelter Receives Donations for Kids From TDI-Schenectady and Van Corlaer Elementary**
- **Wags and Brags: Schenectady Chapter TDI in the News**
- **Chapter Cheers**
- ***WELCOME NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS***
- **Kids and Canines Bring Smiles to Local Veterans**