

Fidos Speaks

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An information exchange serving volunteers, clients and supporters of Fidos For Freedom, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 3

May/June 2002

Golfers Best the Storm

By Marilyn Hummer

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
A ray of sunshine on a cloudy day

On May 13th, 80 golfers braved the threat of severe thunderstorms and played in Fidos' 3rd Annual Spring Golf Tournament at Patuxent Greens Country Club in Laurel.

— Brian Spurgeon, Jeff Wong, Mike Massarelli and Paul Galotta; they came in at an impressive 10 under par. We hope to see everybody again—next year!

As luck would have it, the storm held off just long enough for every team to finish their round.

Many thanks to Diane Bernier, Don Amann and the golf committee members for planning such a successful event ... the Fidos volunteers that dodged incoming balls at select holes and registered the players ... Kelly Glorioso, the reigning Miss Maryland, who handed out awards and hugs ... the event sponsors ... special thanks to Dave Cogott of Oliver's Old Towne Tavern in Laurel for hosting a great buffet and post tournament party.

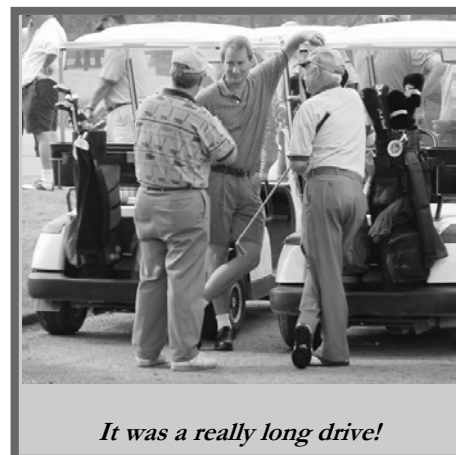
Congratulations to this year's winning team



Bear Hummer waits for the putt



Kelly Glorioso and Dave Cogott



It was a really long drive!



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Fidos For Freedom, Inc. (Fidos) is a nonprofit organization engaged in the training of Service Dogs and Hearing Dogs to assist persons with disabilities, and providing Therapy Dog visits to area healthcare facilities. Fidos also participates in public education demonstrations and government programs to aid persons with disabilities. For more information, contact:

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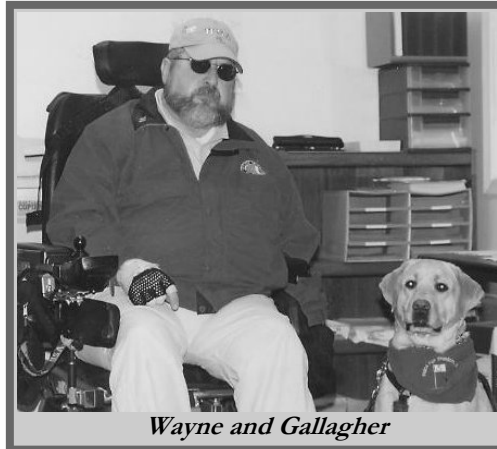
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Please submit material for the next newsletter by June 19, 2002

Board News

Top Dog On Campus

By Jill Dufresne and Michael Surgalla



Wayne and Gallagher

Watching Gallagher as he sits quietly and attentively by his master's side, it's hard to picture him gallumphing down university hallways (without his harness, of course). However, every Service Dog needs a little down time, and that's how Gallagher, a four-year-old yellow Lab, likes to relax when he's not assisting Wayne Rutschke in the classroom.

Wayne and Gallagher have been a team since October 2001. The two are fixtures at Strayer University, where Wayne teaches undergraduate and graduate level business courses, specializing in human resource management. Gallagher keeps a low profile while Wayne teaches, but rarely sleeps in class. In fact, he stays alert and ready to assist his master whenever called upon.

It wasn't always that way. The first time that Wayne tried to work with Gallagher, the dog refused to do anything for him. As Wayne explains, "Gallagher is a high alpha dog." Soon, however, a strong bond developed between the pair. Their mutual love and trust is readily evident to

anyone who sees them work together. Lest one conclude that Gallagher has completely abandoned his alpha role, however, one need only speak with Chun Kum, Wayne's wife of thirty-five years. She's the person who has to engage in a daily contest of wills with Gallagher when it comes to putting his toys away!

Wayne says that Gallagher assists him in many ways. In addition to performing tasks such as retrieving objects, Gallagher helps to put strangers at ease. When Wayne is shopping at the mall, people who might otherwise feel awkward around someone in a wheelchair do not hesitate to approach him to ask about Gallagher, or to talk about their own dogs.

Wayne has been associated with Fidos since 1999, when he attended a Fidos Fun Fest in Laurel, Maryland. He is now a member of the Fidos For Freedom, Inc. Board of Directors. Wayne's dedication to Fidos is much appreciated. We wish Wayne continued success in his teaching career, and are confident that Gallagher will remain "top dog on campus."

Fidos volunteers Jill Dufresne and Michael Surgalla are the newest members of the newsletter staff. This husband and wife team bring their interviewing and writing talents to Fidos Speaks beginning in this issue. Welcome Jill and Mike!

If you would like to be a part of the newsletter staff, please e-mail Michelle McGrath at mmcgrath4@hotmail.com.

Training Corner

Training Trends

By Pat Jarvis, Director of Training

As the Director of Training, I want to wish everyone a fun-filled summer. However, I want to remind everyone that summer in the mid-Atlantic states can be a very dangerous time for your dogs - both pets and Assistance Dogs. As the temperature rises, so do the dangers. Antifreeze can be fatal in very small amounts. Watch that your dog does not lick anything in parking lots. Be aware that newer antifreeze materials may not be green. Ingestion of antifreeze is life-threatening, but can be treated successfully with prompt veterinary treatment. Get the dog to a veterinarian immediately.

Summer heat should always be in the back of your mind. The temperature in a closed car can rise to a fatal level in just a few minutes. Dogs are equipped with a fur coat and no perspiration. Heat stroke is a possibility on hot summer days. Keep cool water and cool compresses for your dog on hot summer days. Schedule exercise or long walks after the sun is down or early in the morning when temperatures are cooler.

Remember to protect your dogs from fleas, ticks and heartworm. There are many new heartworm options now, so it is a good idea to check with your vet to determine which one is best for your dog.

Stay safe and have fun this summer.

Updated and reprinted with permission from May/June 2000 Fidos Speaks, from Pat Jarvis.

Red Harness Dogs

By Pat Jarvis, Director of Training

Fidos welcomes Danny Boy to the ranks of the Red Harness Dogs. Danny is a precocious yellow Lab, who, at less than a year of age, has gone on to advanced training. He was donated by Debbie Whitehead of Sundaze Kennels. Debbie has donated many of the working Labs to Fidos over the years.

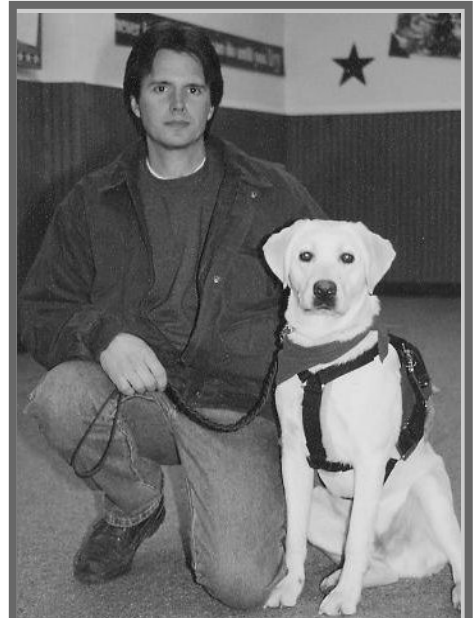
Danny's puppy raisers, and now trainers, are Robert and Robin Shives, who have been active in Fidos for years as Therapy Dog handlers. They keep their own Labs busy with training and field work.

Danny is now retrieving; learning to open doors; removing clothing; and working beside wheelchairs, walkers and scooters. He will not go to work with a client until he is two. Like all of the dogs at Fidos, this allows him to grow up, enjoy his play and puppyhood and pass some more health checks before placement.

More Training News

Link began a new chapter in his training over the weekend by teaming up with his new trainer, Ann Dunn, for the balance of his retrieve work and red harness training. Please join my family and I in wishing Ann and Link much success in the coming months.

- John Kennedy and Family



*Danny Boy and his trainer
Robert Shives.*



Link

If you are interested in learning more about training opportunities with Fidos, or if you are interested in helping to support a dog in training by becoming a sponsor, please contact Fidos at www.fidosforfreedom.org.

Krista Johnson, Apprentice Trainer

By Frank DiTraglia

It's a long way from Chapel Hill, North Carolina to Laurel Maryland, but despite geographic separation, good fortune brought Fidos its new apprentice trainer, Krista Johnson.

One day, Krista visited Fidos' Web site while searching dog-related Internet links. It didn't take long for her to decide to volunteer.

"The whole concept of Assistance Dogs is phenomenal. I knew immediately that it was something I wanted to do," she said. But how could the North Carolina native make the weekly trip from her home? Fortunately, Krista was enrolled at the University of Maryland, College Park, only a few miles from the Fidos Training Center.

Now a sophomore, Krista is

studying criminology and psychology. After graduation, she hopes to attend the Maryland FBI Academy, and eventually to work with a drug dog for the district attorney. Clearly, Fidos fits in nicely with Krista's career choice.



Krista with Sonny

When she first came to the Fidos Training Center, Krista felt right at home. Having grown up on a farm, she has been around animals all her life, and especially loves dogs. Admittedly, moving to College Park, a place devoid of wildlife, took some getting used to. However, Krista says that being around the dogs at Fidos has given her an outlet for her love of animals, in addition to giving her the chance to help others: "What's most appealing to me is that I've been given the opportunity to do something I love and

help make a difference."

When it comes to her new-found dog-training skills, Krista credits Fidos' Director of Training, Pat Jarvis, whose patience and understanding helped her become an able handler. Krista admits that she was a bit green at first. "On the second day, Pat handed me Linus and told me to work him. I didn't even know what that meant!" Now, however, you certainly wouldn't suspect that the adept young handler had only begun training five months ago!

Krista enjoys interacting with all the dogs and other volunteers, but most of all she values the importance of the work Fidos is doing: "What we're doing here matters; it's not arbitrary. It makes a difference in the lives of many people."

A chance happening brought us a great volunteer, and we hope Krista will volunteer with Fidos for many years to come.

Braggs and Congratulations

Colleen Doman's newest Aussie, Digger has successfully passed her temperament test and is on her way to becoming a Therapy Dog!

Jana Lashmit successfully tested Bunny (Bonnie's mother) into the Therapy Dog program.

Sherri Sirotkin successfully completed Raven's obedience tests. Raven is now a full-fledged Therapy Dog at only 6 months of age!

On Saturday May 4, Robert Shives handled Timbre to the completion of the 2nd leg of her Senior

Hunter title. Timbre is currently a Junior Hunter and must pass four Senior Hunt tests in order to get her SH title so she's halfway there!

Congratulations to John and Debby Kennedy on the birth of their newest daughter, Claire Elizabeth on April 5, 2002. They now have two boys and two girls.

Therapy Dog handler, Amy Hanks, announces the arrival of Lakota, her new King Shepherd pup. Lakota joins Therapy Dog Lobo in the Hanks family.

Therapy Dog Winnie Brocht

made her first visit to Laurel Regional Hospital in March and Teddi, Judy Johnson's new puppy, made her first visit to Holy Cross Rehabilitation Center in April.

Volunteers on the Move

JoAnn Amann has accepted the new position of Director of Client Services.

Anne McKay is the new Assistant Volunteer Coordinator.

Bryan Sirotkin is the Staff Photographer for *Fidos Speaks*.

Paws and Reflect: Why I Volunteer...

By Debbie Taylor

I think that the greatest joy in working with Therapy Dogs and visiting people in hospitals is the knowledge that the beautiful smiles that light up their faces is because of your very best friend. A visit to Holy Cross Hospital reaffirmed this belief.

We visit from room to room. When we got to this specific room, we knocked, and asked if they would like a visit. A young woman said her mother was in the bathroom and probably would not, as she was not feeling well. When she saw Tasha, she got really excited and said that her mother adored collies. She asked if we would return. When we returned to the room, her mother was in bed, very, very ill. She saw Tasha and her face lit up. She became very happy and was anxious to pet Tasha. I asked if she would like a bed visit and it became Christmas for her! Tasha got right in bed and snuggled right up to her

and gave her many kisses. It was very difficult to leave. The look of utter contentment on this



Debbie with Alex and Tasha

woman's face was beautiful.

As I was leaving the room, the daughter stopped me and thanked me profusely. She told me about her mother's condition and said that nothing before had been able to get any signs of life out of her. She just kept thanking

me for making her mother so happy. She was crying and just kept hugging me.

There are no words to describe the intense feeling I experienced. To bring that much joy into someone's life is the greatest gift that Tasha and I could ever receive.

Tasha was a rescue dog that had been severely abused. She has so much love to give. I am grateful that she can bring so much happiness into someone's life, just as she has brought much into mine.

The Therapy Dog program has positive effects on all ages; children and older people.

It is a pleasure to be able to bring sunshine and laughter into someone's life. That is why I volunteer.

Debbie Taylor is a Therapy dog handler. Along with her collies Tasha, Alex and Justin, she made 43 health care facility visits last year. They are also active participants in the DEAR program.



Susie Marucci

Susie's Q's

In her new column, Susie Marucci will help us get to know our volunteers a bit better.

In each issue, I will pose a question which a Fidos volunteer will answer. For the first column, I will demonstrate.

Question: How did you find Fidos?

Answer: I live in Laurel. One Saturday morning, I was driving home from Weight Watchers. I passed Fidos in the Laurel Lakes Shopping Center. The next week, on my way home, I went in. I met Annette Deitrich and Don Gavelek. They answered tons of questions for me. I stayed for an hour or so watching the dogs. Well, I kept coming back. Fidos stuck. Unfortunately, Weight Watchers didn't!

Susie Marucci is a staff writer for Fidos Speaks. She was Andy's puppy raiser and assists at special events.

Therapy Dog News

Fidos For Freedom, Inc. volunteer Rebecca Kendrick will be moving to Ohio the beginning of June.

Rebecca and her dog, Sara Mae, have been a Therapy Dog Team since 1999, when they began visiting at Golden Oaks. Since that time, they have volunteered at Laurel Regional Hospital and have participated in special events, most recently a carnival at Bond Mill Elementary School. We will miss them and wish them all the best.

Fidos' First Successor Dog Team Graduates

By Susie Marucci

The night of the 2002 Fidos Annual Banquet became a historic night for both Barbara Karpman and Fidos for Freedom, Inc. It was on this night that Barbara became the first client to graduate with a successor dog. Barbara and her first dog, Thyme, have been together since 1991. Her successor dog, Libby, is the new kid on the block.

Getting a Service Dog takes an unimaginable amount of work. Clients spend hundreds of hours working with dogs, learning how to command a dog's respect and obedience, learning how to become a team. Quite literally, a client is putting her life into the skilled paws of the dog. The rewards are tremendous, but the work is hard. That is why graduation is such an important time at Fidos. The Annual Banquet is when teams of clients and their Service Dogs, who have worked through their probationary year, graduate. At that time, the dog is legally turned over to the client and the partnership becomes permanent. It is a major event for clients and their dogs, their family and friends, and everyone at Fidos who contributed. Barbara has done it not just once, but twice.

Barbara came to Fidos when it was in its infancy. She had been in a rehabilitation hospital after losing her legs. Her family kept trying to get her interested in a Service Dog, but Barbara did not become interested until she lost her pet Schnauzer. Her family brought Assistance Dogs to visit her each week until she figured, "If I'm go-

ing to get another dog, I might as well get one that can do things for me." Before she got out of the hospital in 1991, she received special permission to work with the dogs at Fidos and that is where she and Thyme found each other.



Barbara and Libby

For almost ten years, Thyme was Barbara's partner. She leaned on Thyme for help of all kinds, and Thyme would do whatever Barbara asked. Several years ago, Thyme had an accident while working for Barbara. She was injured and had to have a disc removed. Thyme mostly recovered, and the team went on, but Barbara knew that it wouldn't be forever: "I knew someday I would have to retire Thyme. Doctor Bob told me I would know when it was the right time, and I did." Barbara says she put off making the decision until she couldn't avoid it. At first, she just wasn't ready.

When she knew that Thyme

would have to retire, she started talking to people in other organizations who had retired a dog and had gotten a successor dog. Barbara said the majority of people she talked to had gotten a new home for their first dog, but there were some people who kept their first dog. That was what Barbara wanted to do. However, she had some concerns about the new dog getting along with Thyme and adjusting to a toddler in her home. Thyme would have to find a new home if the dogs could not get along. Even as Barbara speaks, it is clear how much she loves both dogs, and how much she wanted both of them in her house. Fortunately, after some initial "who's the alpha dog?" games, both dogs adjusted.

Barbara met Libby as a young pup. Libby should have been trained and placed with another candidate before Barbara was ready for a dog, but it didn't work out that way. Libby was a late bloomer. She didn't progress as quickly as some of the other dogs her age. As Barbara says with a laugh, "She flunked kindergarten." When Barbara was ready for her successor dog, Libby was also ready.

Barbara is quick to say that the transition was hardest on Libby, who never had a chance to be top dog. Thyme sits next to Barbara whenever she is home. Libby is the beta dog. When Libby first arrived, Thyme was torn between doing the work and retiring, the way her body needed to. "In the beginning, when I needed some-

thing, it was always, who got it first?" said Barbara. Thyme learned to trust Libby, and to let the younger dog take over.

Barbara is quick to state that despite the early days, everyone has adjusted - the dogs and the people. This successor dog "experiment," according to Barbara, is definitely a success. Thyme has turned over her duties to Libby. She has adjusted to Libby and to being the "pet"; but she is the alpha "pet." Despite it all, Thyme, at almost 13, still has days when she feels great, when she feels like a pup. Today, the two dogs are best friends.

Barbara has always been very involved in Fidos. She has been Treasurer of the Board almost since

the day she brought Thyme home. But her main job, through all this, has been taking care of her grandkids. They are now 11, 8 and 2 ½. Her son and daughter-in-law run an antique store that is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. This is when Barbara goes to work, spending time with the two dogs and three kids - and keeping them all in line. Her 11-year-old grandson was just a baby when Barbara came home from the hospital and got Thyme. If it weren't for the dog and her grandson, she says, "I wouldn't have recovered. I would have had no reason to get out of bed. But my family knew it was my job to take care of Thyme. I had someone depending on me. It was

my job."

Today, Barbara still comes to Fidos on Wednesday nights as she has for almost a decade. She works the two dogs together at home on the back porch. At the banquet in March, Barbara spoke tearfully of the changes that had happened in her life and in the lives of the dogs. She made the right decision in keeping both of them, and she knows it.

Graduating as the first successor dog team was a historic moment for Fidos, but you better believe it was a historic one for Barbara, too.

Therapy Dog Awards

Therapy Dog awards were given out at this year's Graduation and Volunteer Appreciation Banquet.

Health facility coordinators were recognized, as were the two Therapy Dog Teams who participated in the most - 43 - therapy visits. This year's honors went to Hedwige Mercier with Quartz and Saphir and Debbie Taylor with Alex, Tasha and Justin.



Donna Brocht and Hedwige Mercier

The five-year Golden Paws service awards went to Spy and Barbara Livieratos and Maddie and Ann Dunn

Other award winners:

Most Talented: Nick

Class Clown: Nordic

Most Photogenic: Angel & Ruarc

Most Spirit: Atlas

Best Tricks: Chester & Quartz

Most Friendly: Dakota

Best Kisser: Hanna

Best Dressed: Liesl

Sassiest Walk: Grete & Gwenis

Cutest Tush: Jerry

Best All-Around: Abby

Congratulations to all of our Therapy Dog Teams for a great year!

Beautification Committee Now



Do you have a green thumb or a penchant for potted plants? Then join the Fidos Beautification

Committee and help us spruce up the outside of our building. We will need help making flower boxes and planting. So, if you enjoy gardening and working outside, or have hidden carpentry talents, now is the time to become a part of this committee.

For those who have allergies or are unable to work outside - share your ideas - or join us for a clean-up day in the back room. Dates for these activities will be announced. To join us: e-mail Wendy at wditraglia@yahoo.com.

Juniors Take Vacation

By Fred Sirotkin



On May 15th the Fidos For Freedom, Inc. Junior Volunteer Program completed a successful 2001-2002 year with an end-of-year party and celebration. The work, fun, and education culminated with the Juniors receiving certificates for their year-long dedication to the organization, and for having passed a “final exam” game.

Throughout the year, ten Juniors consistently participated in the program: Kara Boatman, Samantha Bowman, Michael DiTraglia, Chris Flores, Ryan Griffin, Brett Isaacoff, Lizzy Kuttas, Sara Sirotkin, Gina Stern, and Kim Taylor. They have all been responsible for helping out on many of our Fidos events, as the sphere of

activities that the Juniors participated in this year has greatly expanded and will expand even more next year. A new program is being designed for returning Juniors, which will open up new responsibilities for our experienced Juniors and will work in synchrony with the program for next year’s new Juniors.

The Juniors are traditionally responsible for participation in fundraisers, holiday decorations, and craft items made for therapy visits. This year the Juniors were asked to attend at least one of the many Fidos’ demonstrations as well as one nursing home visit. Junior participation has broken new ground by helping out in some of our certifications, our Annual Banquet, and even one night of construction in the new

puppy/agility room. Next year will bring even more opportunities to the Juniors to be involved in the program.

The Junior Program is greatly indebted to the many volunteers who have taken the time to educate us during the year. Our many lectures on diverse topics would not have been possible without the help of those who have shared their knowledge and experience with us. We especially appreciate the client volunteers who have shared their deeply personal experiences in an attempt to broaden our knowledge and increase our sensitivity to the problems of others. The Junior Program is richer for this help.

Although the Junior Program is formally on hiatus, don’t be surprised to see many of us around the center during the summer months.

Junior Applications Due Now



The Junior Volunteer Program is for young men and ladies between the ages of 12-17 and takes place during the school year from September to May. Although applications are taken throughout the year, the Junior participants are chosen over the summer and not during any other time of the year. Commitment to the Junior Program is a commitment to the year’s program.

If someone is of Junior age but wishes to do a brief period of public service, then the appropriate person to contact is the Volunteer Coordinator, Wendy DiTraglia, not the Junior Program Coordinator.

Now is the time to pursue application to the Junior Program for the 2002-2003 year. In order to have formally applied to the program an individual must complete all of the following: a formal written application, a visit to the Fidos center and a personal inter-

view with Junior Coordinator, Fred Sirotkin or Assistant Coordinator, Wendy DiTraglia.

Until all three parts of this process are completed, a formal application has not taken place. The decisions on next year’s Junior participants will occur at the end of the summer. Interested parties are encouraged to complete the application process as soon as possible. Any questions can be directed to the Junior Coordinator, through the Fidos For Freedom, Inc. Website.

Students Receive DEAR[®] Certificates

By Marilyn Hummer

On April 20th, 11 elated students from the Dasher Green and Fulton Elementary Schools in Columbia, MD, received Certificates of Completion from the DEAR[®] Program held at the East Columbia Library in March and April. Proud parents and enthusiastic library associates looked on in a supportive, amazed way. The children clearly developed a positive attitude toward reading and established a special bond with the dogs that listen to them read out loud every week in a non-judgmental, relaxed atmosphere.

Third grader Nicholas said, "Reading to a dog is better than schoolwork and it's more fun ... I learn a lot of new words every week." His mother, Sarah, wholeheartedly supports the program: "It's great to see Nicholas' excitement every week ... it's wonderful to see his reading skills improving and he's no longer



Elizabeth with her DEAR teams: Barbara & Riley, Patti & Jazz and Elizabeth & Riley

afraid of dogs."

The DEAR[®] Program (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers) is Fidos newest adjunct to the Therapy Dog program. This unique literacy program offers individualized tutoring to children who are reading below their grade level in a fun and interactive environment. The children quickly forget their limitations and enhance their self-confidence and reading skills.

The program's successful pilot and one follow-up session were held at the Cesar Chavez Elementary School in Hyattsville, MD. To

expand the program to a larger facility and enlist the help of professional librarians, Fidos relocated the program to Columbia. Library Associate Cynthia Jobling said "it's marvelous to hear happy little voices reading to attentive dogs ... the students in this fantastic environment have blossomed into eager readers."

One mother wrote, "My daughter Elizabeth has decided that Saturday mornings are her favorite times of the week ... we tell everybody about this great group of people and animals who bring such joy to reading."

Based on the overwhelming feedback, Fidos Therapy Dog teams plan to return to the East Columbia Library for late spring, summer and fall sessions.

Lion Shop and Share: Food Lion Helps Fidos

Please remember to sign up for this program at 1-800-210-9569 or go to foodlion.com and click on the Lion Shop and Share 2002 program. Click on New Customer Sign-Up. Select Laurel, MD, scroll the list and select Fidos. In step two you will need to type in your MVP card number.. If you do not have an MVP card, you can sign up right there. Don't forget, every time you use your MVP card at Food Lion a portion of your purchase will be donated to Fidos For Freedom, Inc. It's an easy way to help support Fidos. Please encourage your friends and family members to designate Fidos and participate in this program. Thank you.



Fred Sirotkin, Junior Volunteer Coordinator with Hedwige Mercier, Therapy Dogs Quartz and Saphir and the 2001-2002 Junior Volunteers: Brett Isaacoff, Ryan Griffin, Gina Stern, Kara Boatman, Kim Taylor, Samantha Bowman, Sara Sirotkin, Lizzy Kutas, Michael DiTraglia and Katie Elliot.

Howls and Growls: An Aggressive Dog Training Seminar

By Laurie Hardy

I think that having more than one dog is sort of like the old adage about children. If your first dog is perfect, all the rest will be terrors. I know. I now have four dogs! Elsa (Borzoï) has always been perfect in my eyes - we have had a connection since the first day I saw her. Spinner (Border Collie) is wonderful and friendly to all dogs and humans. So, now we come to the newest additions to the household: Natasha and Guinness (Borzois). Both can be a little snappy toward other dogs and neither seems to tolerate neighboring dogs at any of my fences. Natasha is small and light to handle. Guinness, at 80 pounds, can be a real handful - so much so that, realizing my training limitations, I took him out of Fidos Therapy Dog program. I tried many techniques with him and the behavior has become progressively worse. My corrections and overall frustration level began to escalate along with Guinness' so-called "aggressiveness."

I had just about resigned myself to keeping him as my "house dog" when I heard about and registered for the "Howls and Growls" seminar taught by Suzanne Clothier. She teaches that behavior that we consider "aggressive" is often just simple posturing and normal communication among dogs. Most dog-to-dog aggression is actually caused by rude behavior on the part of another dog. While many dogs shrug it off, some dogs who are either not as confident or easy going will object with snarls, snaps and lunges.

Handlers compound the problem in a number of ways: tightening up on the leash (got to control the dog, right?), holding their breath (oh, he's going to kill that dog!), punishing the dog, failing to recognize signs of stress in their dogs, or failing to protect their dogs from other rude dogs. One big key to determining if a handler is creating much of the problem: the dog is great off leash and only aggressive on leash.

OK, so in my case, I was definitely a part of the problem, although Guinness can be too rambunctious off leash as well as aggressive while on leash. Clothier believes that the one behavior that contributes the most to aggressive behavior is pulling on lead. By allowing a dog to pull while on lead and making constant negative corrections, we teach the dog attack training! Definitely not what we have in mind, but this is the message that the dog receives. Pulling on lead is a sure sign that our dogs do not respect us. This does not mean that they do not love us, just that they do not feel that we are adequate as leaders.

So, how do we stop the behavior? We go on strike! We do not let the dog pull. Believe me, this is hard. Praise for nice walking on lead. If the dog starts to pull, stop. And do not move until the dog turns around to find out why you are not moving. You can help the dog by making a different noise or tickling its hindquarters or any other attention getter. When it looks back and "connects" with you, give the dog a "yes" or "good dog" and start walking backwards, give it a treat, and then start walk-

ing forward again. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Does it make for some very LONG walks? Yes. Does it work? YES! The Monday after the seminar, I took Guinness and Spinner for separate walks around the block. It took me over 20 minutes to make it past the first three houses! However, by the time we turned the second corner (another 20 minutes later) and the third corner (only 10 minutes later), each dog understood! This whole exercise around a very short block took about two hours, but it did prove a point!

Another tip that I have been using from Clothier's class: pay attention to what your dog is watching. The dog may be making faces at another dog across the aisle. On the other hand, the dog across the aisle may be making faces at your dog and making him angry! Sound silly? Try it. You'll be amazed. When I see that Guinness is looking at another dog, I now know to step directly in front of him and let him know that I see the other dog and I will take care of it. Taking care of the problem may be as simple as stepping in between them or turning around and going back the way you came, thus making your dog comfortable.

I have high hopes that Guinness and I can work through his aggression problems ... he's more relaxed and happy now, and I actually enjoy walks and outings with him. Hopefully, he will be back in Fidos Therapy Dog program soon. If you ever have a chance to attend one of Suzanne Clothier's seminars, I highly recommend it. For more in-depth information, visit her Web site at www.flyingdogpress.com.

Birthday



Wishes

May

Volunteers: Donna Brocht, Robert Shives, Candace Carlisle

Therapy Dogs: Keely, Gemini, Mayday, Tucker, Maddie, Onyx, Jerry and Molly

Hearing Dog: Radar

FFF in Training: Victory

June

Volunteers: Susie Marucci, Lynley Kees, Ryan Kees, Becky Shaw, Sara Sirotkin

Therapy Dogs: Tasha, Alyeska, Dakota, Sadie, Odin, Lucky

Our apologies to JoAnn Amann whose birthday was inadvertently omitted from our last newsletter. Happy Belated Birthday, JoAnn!

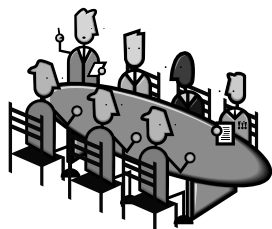
Correction

In the last issue, Sherri Sirotkin was mistakenly referred to as Fidos' newest board member. Joe Comastro is the newest member, Sherri has been the Secretary of the Board of Directors since June 2001.

Special Thanks ...

to Fred Sirotkin, Junior Volunteer Coordinator and the Junior Volunteers for their service and contributions to Fidos during the 2001-2002 school year.

Did You Know?



Fidos has a conference room available for lease to groups for meetings, parties, etc. Please call 410-880-4178 for details.

Job Openings

- Puppy raisers
- Inventory coordinator
- Grant writers
- Apprentice trainers
- Volunteers for new Beautification Committee
- Greeters for Wednesday nights

Fidos For Freedom, Inc,



P.O. Box 5508

Laurel, MD 20726

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Fidos For Freedom, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

All donations are tax deductible. Funds go toward training Assistance Dogs, Therapy Dogs, and supporting other programs.

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Thank you to the sponsors of the Fidos For Freedom, Inc. 2002 Spring Golf Tournament. Fidos clients and volunteers appreciate your generous support.

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Many thanks to all of our volunteers who helped make the Annual Golf Tournament such a success.