



# The Dog Scout Scoop

(little bits of news we've picked up)

September/October 2010

Volume 14, Issue 5

PUBLISHED FOR DSA'S RESPONSIBLE, DOG-LOVING MEMBERS AND FOR THE FRIENDS OF DOGS EVERYWHERE Dog Scouts of America PO Box 158, Harrison, OH 45030

## *President's Message - Then, Now and Beyond*

When Lonnie Olson started DSA, she envisioned a time when DSA would be as popular and common as the scouting organizations for kids. DSA sanctioned events/trials where any dog, no matter its heritage, could participate. DSA Camps where people could learn about training and responsibility and develop a bond and communication system with their dogs. DSA Troops in every city, in every state, that would provide a place for people to train, learn and socialize. DSA hosted dog parks that would be safe places for people educated about proper dog to dog interactions and being responsible could take their dogs to socialize. Community programs to help rescues and shelters and other non-profit organizations provide needed care and help for dogs. And most importantly, DSA would have a huge impact on a reduction in the numbers of dogs in shelters because people would better understand their dogs, bond with them, see them as a member of the family and only breed responsibly.

In the past 15 years, we have made great strides toward those goals! Dog Scouts of America is becoming more and more well known. We are mentioned in books and articles, have been on major television shows, are often invited to attend events both large and small and have many members spreading the word about DSA through print, blogs, radio, in-person and many other outlets. As you will see in another article in this newsletter, we are proud to announce the start of DSA sanctioned trials! We'll be starting with IMPROV, but hope to soon add events like carting, go to ground, water rescue, lure coursing and others - all open to any dog, no matter their size or heritage!

We have camps and mini-camps each year that introduce people to the joys of reward-based training, the bond they can develop with their dog and being able to communicate with their dog, both what the human desires as well as learning to "speak dog" to hear what the dog is trying to tell them through behavior and body language. The number of troops is growing every month! With the information about how to start a troop available on the website, more and more people are making the commitment to helping DSA and their own communities by providing a troop. The members of the troops not only help each other, but they often help their communities and the dogs in those communities as well. Thousands of dollars have been raised for numerous organizations and causes that help make life better and safer for dogs. The public has been educated through many means simply by meeting or listening to a DSA member who is willing to share what they have learned. The dog park idea has not yet taken off, but I do think the day will come. DSA does strive to educate people about the importance of socialization, safe and proper dog to dog interactions and how to read your dog's body language so you know if your dog wants to meet and greet or not.

As I mentioned, Dog Scouts of America and its members participate in and create many ways to help in their communities. In addition to the ways already mentioned, this also includes reading to dogs programs that help kids learn to read, fundraising for spay/neuter vouchers for the pets of low-income dog owners, providing pet oxygen masks to fire fighters so they will be better equipped to save pets suffering from smoke inhalation, protecting police K-9's by providing bullet proof vests, raising funds for the Salvation Army by bell ringing with dogs, and many other wonderful programs. Many of the activities already mentioned work toward the major goal of reducing the number of pets that end up in shelters. DSA also has a wonderful resource of information available for free on the website. We love to hear about how this information has helped you and your dog or how it is used as a resource and reference for others. Because of the things mentioned above, there have been dogs lives saved, better relationships built and dogs rescued from shelters that might not have otherwise happened.

The board members of Dog Scouts of America are currently doing a review and creating a plan for the future. We are looking for ways to help DSA grow while remaining true to our original missions. This cannot happen without the help of all of you. If you can tell a few people about DSA, encourage others to join, make sure your own membership is current, direct people to the website or camps for training and other information, all of those little things add up to help us toward our goals. You never know how the little bit of information you share will change a life. Without Beth Duman being in public with her dog in uniform and being willing to tell me a bit about DSA, I might not be here as DSA President today! Who knows, it might be you that introduces the next DSA President or troop leader or board member to the organization.

YOU ARE DSA. This is an organization of people and dogs with a common mission. Without you, DSA would not exist. So I want to take a moment to thank-you for all the help you have provided. I know this organization will meet and exceed Lonnie Olson's expectations because of wonderful and motivated people- people like YOU!

**Chris Puls, President**

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***Deadlines, Deadlines, Deadlines!!!***

**Newsletter Submission** - October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 for November/December 2010 Issue

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**IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED?**

If you don't know your DSA membership expiration date, please check item #5 on this page:  
<http://www.dogscouts.org/Membership.html>

**Welcome to the newest troops!**

Troop 206, Paradise, Magalia and Butte counties in CA  
 Leaders: Kristy Copp [SvenskaKristy@yahoo.com](mailto:SvenskaKristy@yahoo.com) and Shelly Keel [MashL@comcast.net](mailto:MashL@comcast.net)

Troop 207, Columbus OH  
 Leaders: Jacqueline Johnson [JJohnsonVet@yahoo.com](mailto:JJohnsonVet@yahoo.com) and Andrea Mykrantz [AmyKrantz@sbcglobal.net](mailto:AmyKrantz@sbcglobal.net)

Troop 208, Western Chicago (Kane, DuPage, Will and McHenry Counties)  
 Troop Leader: Karen Reeves [Kreeves1956@gmail.com](mailto:Kreeves1956@gmail.com)

**Chris Puls, President**

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***"Proud Parent of a Dog Scout" T-shirts***

I am going to be reordering some "Proud Parent of a Dog Scout" Tee shirts. The store was out of the multi-X sizes in particular, but don't want to keep too many on hand, because they are the slowest movers. If anyone would like to put a word in for me to order them a Proud Parent shirt in a 2X or 3X (or any other size for that matter), in either Navy or Red, please tell me the size and color, and I'll get it in on this order. Don't delay in contacting me at [dogscoutcamp@gmail.com](mailto:dogscoutcamp@gmail.com), because I'll be ordering very soon! Thanks very much.

**Lonnie Olson, Camp Store Manager**

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***Don't Forget Our On-Line Store – Go To Our Website and Just "Click" to Order!!!!***

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***Greetings From your new Recording Secretary!***

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the change of address for Membership processing and Merit Badge processing. They are both now handled through one office, and you can address the envelope as:

**DSA Recording Secretary  
 5040 Nestel Road East  
 Saint Helen, MI 48656**

Please make checks payable to DSA, as always.

Chris Puls has changed all of the forms on the web site to reflect the new address, but if you still have some of the old forms in your possession, you might want to print out new forms, or cross out the address, so you don't accidentally send it to the wrong address and delay your paperwork.

If you are sending in DSA certifications, please email your digital photos for your dog's DSA photo ID card to:  
[dogscoutcamp@gmail.com](mailto:dogscoutcamp@gmail.com).

Direct all questions regarding membership or merit badge processing to the same email address.

Thanks,  
**Lonnie Olson, Recording Secretary**

## **DSA-Sanctioned IMPROV Trials to Begin in 2011!**

**We're happy to announce that everything is in order to proceed with our first "DSA Competition & Titling" venue – IMPROV!** In IMPROV, dog/handler teams are given new and different challenges, and they work as a team to use their skills to accomplish each exercise in often very unique ways. There are two levels – Novice and Standard. Both levels have six exercises which challenge the dog/handler team in different ways; while the exercise categories stay the same, each fun match or trial will vary greatly, making it new and interesting every time. In the fun matches we've held recently, both dogs and people had an awesome time, and many people have commented that they can't wait to do more. It's exciting that we'll be bringing such a fun sport to more people, and encouraging people to positively train their dogs to be more useful, versatile, and creative. As an added bonus, competition sanctioning will also help provide a long-term source of funds imperative to sustain DSA's worthwhile programs and future growth.

**The official IMPROV Rulebook will be posted on the DSA website in a new Competition & Titling section no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>.** The Rulebook will be "one-stop-shopping" for learning about the sport, how to hold a fun match or trial, how to become an IMPROV judge, scoring, rules, etc.

**We encourage everyone to hold fun matches or even just try out some of the exercises as a game with your troops, other organizations you belong to, or even just a group of friends.** We think you and your group will get hooked too. Due to the unique nature of IMPROV, it can be held in all kind of places, and doesn't require "standard" equipment – just some creativity! A small fun match could easily be done in someone's back yard with stuff you might find around the house. DSA members will get discounts on competition registration, but everyone is allowed to participate, and all kinds of groups will be able to hold fun matches and trials (as long as they notify and credit DSA and follow the sanctioning process for trials) – this will help spread the Dog Scout Way even beyond our membership.

**To participate in DSA Competition & Titling points-bearing events (trials), each dog will need a DSA Competition Registration Number (CRN.)** This registration number is how points and titles will be tracked, and is good for the lifetime of the dog. The fee to obtain a DSA CRN is \$35, but with applicable discounts for spay/neuter and current DSA membership, the fee comes down to \$20 with further discounts for 3 or more dogs registered in the same household. This same CRN will be used for all of the competition sports/activities that DSA is planning on sanctioning in the future – you will only need to register each dog once. Forms to request a CRN will be available in the Rulebook and as a separate file online, and one is included below.

**We hope that several groups will plan to hold IMPROV trials in 2011 to help us get a great start** – you can begin to coordinate with DSA for 2011 trials after September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. After looking through the IMPROV Rulebook (which should answer most questions,) further inquiries about IMPROV in general can be directed to the DSA Talklist Yahoo group, and specific questions and requests to hold trials and fun matches can be directed to Ann Withun at [ann@withun.com](mailto:ann@withun.com). If you're unsure about holding a fun match or trial, or would like to become an IMPROV judge, I'd be happy to offer some assistance to get you started. You can start with as small or large an event as you like, and the IMPROV Rulebook outlines some good ways to organize the roles and responsibilities to help you be successful.

**Future plans still in development for DSA Competition & Titling include:** DraftDog (carting), revitalizing the PackDog titling program, WaterDog (water rescue), LureDog (lure coursing,) EarthDog, RallyDog, and AgilityDog. DraftDog and enhanced PackDog may also be ready for release as soon as January 2011. All sports and activities will be ALL-BREED of course. We plan to offer versatility titles for accomplishments across multiple venues. And *of course* there will be venue and title patches to adorn your Dog Scout uniform cape or tote bag. Our vision is for DSA to be the place "where everybody plays" – where all breeds and mixes are welcome to try even non-traditional sports, and where the emphasis is on enjoying time with your dog.

Ann Withun



**DSA Competition & Titling – *Where everybody plays!***



## DSA Competition Registration Number (CRN) Request Form

Complete a separate registration form for each dog you are registering. Each dog needs only one CRN to compete in any and all DSA competitions. **Please print clearly or type** – this information will appear on all DSA Competition & Titling records. Registration confirmation will be emailed to you. If you do not have email, it will be sent via US mail. Please allow 2-4 weeks for processing.

Handler Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dog Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Altered: \_\_\_\_\_

Height at Shoulder: \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fees:**

DSA CRN Registration .....	\$35.00	
Less Spay/Neuter Discount (enclose proof) .....	-\$5.00	
If this is the 3rd (or greater) dog being registered in this household .....	-\$5.00	
Less DSA Member Discount .....	-\$10.00	
(Member Number/ Exp Date _____)		
Printed copy of IMPROV Rulebook (optional) .....	+ \$10.00	
<i>* Rulebook is available <u>free</u> online at DSA website</i>		
Total .....		

**Payment Information: Check / money order payable to DSA**

(in US funds drawn on U.S. Banking institutions.)

**Mail to: Dog Scouts of America, Attn: Ann  
161 Beetem Hollow Road, Newville, PA 17241**

**\*\*\*\*\* DSA Competition & Titling: Where everybody plays! \*\*\*\*\***

## **Photos Wanted for the DSA 2011 Calendar!**

It's not too late (but it will be very soon) to get photos submitted for the DSA calendar! We want to get them done early this year (won't that be great?), so we're counting on you to get your stuff in by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

We're looking for photos of your dog or your troop doing dog scoutly things. Send us your CLEAR, Colorful, Meaningful photos and maybe it will appear on one of our monthly pages. You must be a member of DSA to submit photos. Please do not submit more than 3 photos per family or 6 per troop. We love to see our members in action, doing things in the community or learning/doing new things together. We're not so thrilled about photos of cute dogs on couches, unless for some reason the photo is National Geographic quality. The more colorful, the better. Please get permission from the people in the shot, and let us know who is featured in the photo. Please give credit to the photographer. You can submit photos that were taken at Dog Scout Camps (that's where we look, if we're not getting enough great shots from the members).

There is no guarantee that any photos you send will be used in the calendar. That is, unless you purchase a "Dog Day" for \$5.00, and your dog will be featured, along with his birth date, or other special occasion that you are commemorating. Monthly calendar shots or collages will be chosen/composed by the calendar editors, and no promises will be made to include any particular photo in the publication.

Early bird orders (prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>), will receive a special discount on the calendar. Instead of \$16.95 plus shipping (\$2.00), you will get \$2.00 off by pre-ordering your calendar(s). So, you'll pay \$14.95 plus shipping. If you'd like to pre-order a calendar, please let us know ASAP. You can send a check for \$16.95 to:

DSA Calendar  
5040 Nestel Road East  
Saint Helen, MI 48656

If you want a dog day, please send your digital photo, and your dog's name and birthday (or special day) to [dogscoutcamp@gmail.com](mailto:dogscoutcamp@gmail.com). Send all digital photos to this address.

Thanks, **Lonnie Olson**

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## **Come to the DSA Fall Outing October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010!**

The fall outing will be lots of fun, and it is during a prime color change weekend in beautiful Saint Helen, Michigan. For more information about what goes on at the outings, go to: [http://www.dogscouts.org/MI\\_Camp\\_Outings.html](http://www.dogscouts.org/MI_Camp_Outings.html). Basically, it is an opportunity to have fun with your dog, hiking letterboxing, enjoying campfires (in the non-buggy season), taking in the beautiful fall colors, partaking of costume contests, a silent auction, games, letterboxing, geocaching, or just plain relaxing with your dog(s). This will take place at the Dog Scout Camp in St. Helen, Michigan. If you would like to attend, every person in your party must be a member of DSA, of course (go to <http://www.dogscouts.org/Membership.html> if you need to renew your membership). All of the same rules apply as for the camps, so if you've not attended an outing before, be sure to [http://www.dogscouts.org/Camp\\_Info.html](http://www.dogscouts.org/Camp_Info.html) and read about proof of vaccinations, what to pack, what the camp is like, etc.

Then, be sure to contact camp manager, Lonnie Olson ([dogscoutcamp@gmail.com](mailto:dogscoutcamp@gmail.com)) to let me know you're coming. I'll need to know what type of accommodations you will require, how many in your group, etc. Then, I will send out emails to the group of reserved guests to let you know of anything special we will be doing that would mean you'd have to pack something additional (like a pumpkin for a pumpkin carving contest, or something). I hope to see lots of folks attending the outing. I already have spaces reserved for 12 people, so this will be a fun outing!

Thanks, **Lonnie Olson**

## **DSA will have a new Treasurer in October!**

Currently, Lonnie Olson is sitting in as the DSA Treasurer. If you have donations of any kind to send to DSA (memorial donations, defibulator donations, fundraising donations, auction donations, matching donations, or other donations), please mail those to:

Lonnie Olson  
5040 Nestel Road East  
Saint Helen, MI 48656

As always, make checks payable to Dog Scouts of America. Mid-October, our new Treasurer, Barbara Whiting, will be taking over. More information about Barbara will be in our November/December newsletter.



## **DSA post camp 2 Dock Diving Event**

After camp 2, several people had planned to go into town for the River Festival, and enter or watch the dock diving competition held in Roscommon, Michigan 20 minutes north of camp. On the morning of the event, thunderstorms were forecast, and it was looking a little gloomy. Everyone decided to skip it, except for Kat Vogtman with Indi, Allison Holloway with Tango, and Lonnie Olson with Panda. It's just a little small town event, but we had fun. Panda had tied for first place last year, but was beaten by an inch in the jump-off, and I was determined to give her a chance to vindicate herself. Second place got a big fat nothing, so we felt robbed... This year, I was pleased to see that second place had a nice rosette (to soften the blow for any more close finishers that lose the tie breaker). However, I was surprised to see that after the first round, the huge, animated crowd almost instantly dispersed (like rats off a sinking ship). We couldn't hear the announcer, so Allison went to check, and it appeared that they cancelled the second round, due to impending thunderstorms, and they declared the top jumping dog from the first round the winner. Good news for Panda! We took home a beautiful trophy for her effort.

Photos of all of last year's competitors (Dazzle, Tango, Indi, Panda, Nike) are on this website:

<http://ausablerivercenter.org/riverfestival.asp>

Hopefully, they will soon have this year's photos up.

I have included a shot of Tango, Panda, and Indi, enjoying a complimentary ice cream cone after their dock diving. Also, a photo of Panda with her trophy. The event is free to enter, and we all received nice goodie bags just for showing up. I'm glad we didn't let the rain keep us away!

**Lonnie Olson**



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### **Do you have a dog?**

While attending a seminar, I heard the speaker say "If you don't get something from the dog, then he or she is just an expensive, useless animal." This got me thinking. I think this may be the difference between those who feel a connection and/or love for their dogs and those who see them as disposable property that can be dumped at the shelter or traded-in for a "better dog" or that say things like "It's just a dog." I do my very best to provide the best care, the best food and the most humane training that I can for my dogs, but I could never re-pay them for what they give me in return.

- They are my reason for getting up every morning. It brings a smile to my face to see them looking at me expectantly, even before I open my eyes, with the question I know is burning in their brain "Are you up yet?- It's breakfast time you know!" And when I do stretch and start to get up, their joy is infectious.
- It is because of my dogs that I have met some of my closest friends. I have many on-line friends as well as people I know well because of my interest in my dogs. I join talk lists about dogs and training. I go to dog shows because of my dogs. I go to the park to throw the ball or walk the trail. I go to pet fairs and expos and training seminars. My calendar weekends are almost all filled with dog activities. And these activities let me socialize with other like-minded people who become new friends.
- I am involved in Dog Scouts of America because of my dogs. My first Cattle Dog in particular. Because of his behavior issues, I travelled to Chicago to attend a seminar where I met a Dog Scout for the first time. After hearing about the organization, then going home and looking it up on-line, I fell in love! It was exactly what I had been looking for and needed. Now I'm President of the organization, I have attended every Dog Scout camp since 2001 and I have met countless wonderful people because of my involvement with DSA.
- My dogs have allowed me to help hundreds of other people and dogs. My dogs teach me new things about canines and behavior all the time! In learning how to better communicate my needs to my dogs, and learning to listen to what they say with their own body language, I have become a better trainer. It has given me valuable knowledge that I can pass along to others so that they may help their own dogs.
- My dogs have helped me physically and mentally in their role as a service dog. Not having to take as much pain medication, not having to experience the pain of bending over to pick-up something I dropped, and having them by my side when I'm hurting are just a few of the ways they help me.
- I take great joy in seeing my dogs run and play and do the things they love. From dock diving to lure coursing to wrestling with a playmate to just digging deep holes in the sand, their pleasure and joy for life warms my heart. Watching them invent

their own games, use their intelligence to figure out a problem, or just enjoy a sunbeam are moments that are beyond value and that I wouldn't want to be without.

How can I re-pay them for all they give me? I know I'm not alone! I have met many, many people who feel the same way about their own dogs. However, I have also met people who "own dogs" that don't experience the same joy. Sometimes their dogs are just lawn ornaments they have to remember to feed and clean-up after and occasionally yell at to shut them up. Others haven't yet experienced the joy because they are new to having a dog and haven't yet learned the skills they need to develop a communication system for dealing with behavior problems the other species brings them. They will get to the joy part if they are willing to learn. Others see their dogs as objects they compete with and keep in a kennel out back. If the dog doesn't fit the standards they need, it gets replaced with one that does. Still others have never given a dog a chance, they have never had a dog in their lives, or maybe they only have memories of the farm dog that lived outside, not as a member of the family. It is these folks that are really missing out!

If you open your heart and home to a dog (or dogs) and take the time to learn how to communicate with them, using pain-free and threat-free methods, you will get SO much more in return! When you learn to listen to and respond to their needs, they will do the same for you. By having the communication of needs go both ways along the leash, you'll have a partnership. The more training you do with your dog, the more you both learn about each other and the better your communication skills will be. You do not need to be a dictator or dominatrix to get respect and attention from your dog! Instead, think of your role as that of a teacher or parent to a young, impressionable child. Take the time to teach them and they, in turn, will teach you things too. Dogs don't naturally arrive with the behaviors and manners we would like. Just the opposite! What is natural for them is often the opposite of what we would like. So recognize that your dog is perfect- at being a dog.

In order to really experience the joys of having a dog, you need to take some time to learn from one another, develop a communication system so you can let the dog know what you want him or her to do. But also be willing to listen when your dog tries to tell you of his needs. When you have that, **THEN** you have a dog.

Contributed by **Chris Puls, President**

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### **Two New Badges**

DSA is proud to announce we have 2 new badges that were introduced at the camps this past summer! They are both advanced badges, but great for dogs that are looking for fun stuff to do after getting some of the other badges. There is training info, check-off sheets and badge forms on-line.

**Messenger Dog** - This has it's basis in military dogs that would go on patrol with the advanced scouts and sometimes be asked to quickly carry a message for reinforcements or other help back to base camp. Once the message was delivered, the dog would lead the reinforcements back to the scouts. If the scouts had to move from their location, the dog would use tracking skills to find the new location. These dogs would often need to travel several miles. But for the badge, the dog needs to return to base from 200 yards out (out of sight of the outpost location and base camp), find "help" (a second handler known to the dog), and lead that handler back the 200 yards to the outpost. But that handler has moved out of sight 100 yards away and the dog needs to use his nose to find the new location. **Tango and Allison Holloway** were the first to get this badge at camp 1.

**Animal Actor** - This badge is intended to be an introduction to getting your dog ready for stage, TV, or silver screen work. There are many components for the handler to know so they can keep themselves and their dogs safe and out of trouble on the set. There are specific skills the dog needs to learn that should be useful in several different endeavors. For the final test, the dog needs to perform a skit that can be videotaped without the handler being in the picture and without the handler using voice cues (silent cues only). **Magic and Jennifer Riess** were the first to earn this badge at camp 2.

Both of these, as with any of the other badges, can be earned long-distance by using a video camera to capture the dog's portion and either video or written testing of the handler's knowledge. Stay tuned for an additional badge "in the works" regarding canine fitness.

**Chris Puls, Certification Program Director**

**Troop News**  
**Troop #119 Texas**

Troop 119 has had a lot going on this summer!

In June we had a Dog Scout Class for those who were new to DSA. For the existing Dog Scouts, we had some troop members do a couple of great presentations. Vicki Carter and Mark Bober presented "Do You Want To Be A Therapy Dog?" They had a special guest with them - the activities director from one of the facilities where their dogs, Martini and Phizz, visit. They talked about the rewards of therapy dog work and encouraged members to consider this wonderful way to share their pets. Another troop member, Mary Weigandt, presented "Dances With Scouts" and introduced Musical Canine Freestyle. She and her dancing dog, Duncan, did a presentation then Mary gave everyone some ideas for trying out different moves with their own dogs to allow members to find out if this was an activity they may want to pursue with their dogs.



In July, troop member Traci Betts presented "Training Can Be Fun – Learning Games To Play With Your Dog" based on the book by Kay Laurence. Traci introduced several games and all the dogs and humans were then able to split up into groups and go from station to station learning the games. The dogs had a good time and the humans learned some new games and learning activities to do with their dogs. Left photo – Quinn targets the lid. Right photo – Ting Ting targets the lid. Below left photo – Tanner on the hunt for the fox.



Several of our troop members were part of an exciting event this month! The Mustang Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organization that works with the Bureau of Land Management to place wild horses in new homes. In 2007, the foundation started the Extreme Mustang Makeover, which pairs 100 trainers with mustangs for 100 days, with a goal of getting the wild horses ready for adoption. It has been a big success, with nearly 2,000 mustangs adopted. Last year, the mustang group paired with the Humane Society of North Texas to create Extreme Mutt Makeover to raise awareness about shelter dogs.

Left photo – Extreme Mutts and their trainers taken by Denise Ollman



This year, 15 shelter dogs were chosen to be paired up with 15 professional dog trainers to compete in Extreme Mutt Makeover. The trainers have the dogs for 8 weeks to train and prepare for the competition. The dogs then compete over two days and three dogs advance to final competition, which concludes at the end of the Extreme Mustang Makeover. During the weekend, applications are accepted from potential adopters, and other shelter dogs are available for adoption as well.

Troop members, Bob and Karen Deeds were the organizers of this year's event. Last year, Bob and Karen were both trainers for dogs in the competition and Karen's shelter makeover dog took First Place! The troop was also represented by Victoria Severns, who was one of the four judges for the event, and Traci Betts, who was one of the selected 15 trainers. Several troop members also volunteered, along with a lot of shelter volunteers, to help run the event. The event has grown since its start last year and is expected to be even bigger next year. Maybe an Extreme Mutt Makeover will be coming to many of your cities soon!

**Mart & Cindy Ratliff, Troop 119 - North Texas**

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**Downeast Dog Scouts Troop #159- Mount Desert Island, Maine**

**Pam Bourque - Therapy Dogs Incorporated Magazine**

Downeast Dog Scout member, Pam Bourque, and her dogs, Timber and Rissa, were featured in the Therapy Dogs Incorporated Spring/Summer 2010 Newsletter recognizing their 2009 Volunteer of the Year Award at Mount Desert Island Hospital in Bar Harbor, Maine.

**Children Reading to Dogs and Therapy Visits**

Troop members and their dogs have continued therapy visits to hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living centers this summer. In addition, Dog Scout dogs participated in library summer reading programs. Photo right - NEH Library - Children Reading To Cirra Summer Reading Program, Northeast Harbor Library, Maine



**University of Tennessee's Canine Rehab Program**

Troop member Denise Houseknecht, PT attended the Canine Fast Track I-IV courses at the University of Tennessee's Canine Rehab Program. She hopes to become a Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner in the coming year.

Photo left - Cirra On Ball - Denise Houseknecht and Cirra - Core and Hip Strengthening

**Community Donations from May Yard Sale**

Following another successful yard sale fundraiser headed up by Pier Carros and Pam Bourque, Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159 contributed \$200.00 to DSA for the DSA Camp AED. Troop 159 also donated funds to Maine Search and Rescue Dogs to cover the cost of nine lithium batteries for communications radios, one for each MESARD member in Hancock County, Maine.

**Carriage Road Walking**

Pier Carros has begun organizing weekly walks of the Carriage Roads of Acadia National Park for members that would like to work toward their Carriage Road Hiking Certificate.

Photo right - Acadia National Park - Ship Harbor Trail



**Acadia National Park August Walk and Picnic**

Troop members and their dogs enjoyed a walk on the Ship Harbor Trail in Acadia National Park followed by a pot luck picnic by the ocean.

Photo right - Acadia National Park - Ship Harbor Trail

Photo left - Denise Houseknecht and Cirra - Acadia National Park - Ship Harbor Trail



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**Troop 171 – Harrisburg, PA**

Summer may be drawing to a close, but that isn't encouraging Troop 171 to slow down. In fact, the Redfern Ramblers of Harrisburg, PA are continuing to keep busy with a full slate of activities. Before we share what we've been up to, though, we have news of a new Cadet Scout who has joined our ranks. Back in June, DSA Dora had her first litter of puppies. Though all the little Labbies have now gone to their new families, one puppy did stay with our troop leader Betsy Howell and her husband, John. She is a beautiful yellow girl named Maggie. We are sure she will continue her canine family's tradition of Dog Scouting excellence!

Speaking of which, we have a few badge brags. DSA Dale Evans, owned by Eleanor Parker, recently completed the requirements for four badges: Obstacle 1, 2, and 3, and Agility 1. All these accomplishments are surely going to test Eleanor's sewing skills. Dale either needs some layers added to her current uniform, or a new uniform altogether! Congratulations, Dale and Eleanor! We would also like to recognize DSA Julie and Betsy Howell. They recently earned the Puppy Paddler and

**Letterboxing 3 badges.** With the completion of Letterboxing 3, Julie has earned the trifecta in this area. This isn't surprising, though, given Betsy's self-professed addiction to letterboxing. Then again, we have several other troop members who would willingly admit to being bitten by the same bug. Maybe geocaching will be the next frontier to conquer!

Not to be left out, we also have several Cadet Scouts who are making steady progress on the Dog Scout badge. We hope to be able to put the DSA designation in front of a few more names when it's time to publish the next newsletter! In keeping with our badge-earning streak, we have scheduled **Travel Safety checkouts** for August, as well as a swimming party that could result in a few more pups and people becoming Puppy Paddlers. We also have one or two human and dog teams perfecting their Retrieve skills before doing checkouts for that badge. Hopefully, that can also happen before we turn the calendar page to September.

With the beginning of a new season will come some more community service opportunities for our troop. The first one coming up is the opportunity to have two tables at a Tractor Supply store in Harrisburg. One table will focus on Dog Scouts of America; the other will be a Rally Obedience demonstration. Next, we look forward to participating in **the Annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk on September 12**, to benefit the Art Association of Harrisburg. Several Pupcassos showed off their painting talents at this event last year to help raise awareness about Dog Scouts of America, while contributing to a great cause. The dogs were such a hit that we have been invited back! We're sure it will be a fun day, and we'll definitely share pictures of our masterpieces! To close out our community service schedule for the month, **on September 25**, some of us will be participating in a **Pamper Your Pooch Day** at a community dog park to benefit a local animal shelter called Castaway Critters. We also will likely take part in a pet walk in October to benefit the Helen Krause Animal Foundation.

It may be tough for us to top the activity level we have planned for the next month or so, but we're sure we'll be up to that challenge. We look forward to hearing what other troops have been doing lately. Hopefully you've been having just as much fun! ~ **Paula Marinak**

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***Troop 177- Indianapolis, IN***



We have had a great HOT summer and looking forward to our fall events. For happenings: 9 of our dog scouts attended Camp I. Five 5 successfully completed their Drill Team Badge and performed it for the campers and staff. All our Scouts had a great time and earned several badges, met and made great friends with other Scouts and their parents.

Then several troop members attended festivals and dog walks through out the summer. Several took part in the sit /down stays,

leave it and tricks competitions, (several won!). We were thrilled when some of the on lookers inquired about joining our group. Photo at right is from the Mansfield Dog Festival Dog Walk. Walkers Shelly & Cash, Sophie, Saige and Bailey, Charlie, Hallie, Casey.



Several of our Scouts are certified through Delta Society for Pet partners/Therapy Dogs. Multiple visits were made at 3 different camps to welcome campers throughout June and July. One was a Burn Camp for children suffering from fire and trauma.

Cash, Saba, Charlie at the Burn camp

Bailey DSA and Shelly (our cadet scout) Attend visit at 2 other camps.



August was filled with a play day and honoring all our scouts' birthdays. AKA: Birthday Bash! The day was once again HOT! But the hardy group went kayaking/canoeing, cookout, letterboxing, and Pup cakes and a gift exchange. Tired pups (and parents) at the day's end.

Our fall is shaping up for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Troop 2 night camp out in September. We have night hike, river trip, campfires, great food and plenty of time to get to relax and enjoy the scouts and parents! Regular meeting we will have a presentation for Biking Safety. **Gayle Sprinkle**

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**Troop 196 – Rockford, MI**  
**The Rogue River Dog Scouts - Summer Fun 2010**



Above – DSA Keebler

Above – DSA Zeep

Wow-this summer is FLYING by for all of us. We have so much news to share that I am not sure where to start. First, we are awaiting word back as to if Portugese Water Dogs Zeep and Keebler have passed their Dog Scouts of America evaluation and if Zeep and Gabriel Rakow have earned Zeep's Junior DSA together. Karma Rakow also video taped with Keebler for her Junior. DSA and her puppy paddler's patch. Karma also video taped with Fin for Puppy Paddler's while Gabriel worked with Zeep and Lego. We attempted to video over a one month period of time to get the dogs in a variety of real life situations and even managed the "Leave it" with a fuzzy critter with a real baby muskrat and a real squirrel on a trash can. Jilian and Gabriel Rakow handled Zeep for the video while Jilian, Karma Rakow, and Wendy Redding handled Keebler. Photo left - Wendy working Keebler for PWDCA Working Water Dog title. With Jilian's hand out of commission, it is no more fun and games for Wendy and she and Jon got put to work. Photo right – Eric with Violet at the Rakow's.



Wendy Redding has been doing a lot of Therapy work with Keebler at Clark Retirement Community, Jennifer Hecker has been off doing Conformation, and the Mc Phee family has been having summer fun. The Boersma's are also having summer fun and ventured to their first PWDCA water trial with the Rakow's. Bella Wolf, the Lab, was accepted at Leader dogs for the Blind to become a Guide Dog at the end of July. Though Vicki will miss her terribly, Bella will be brining independence to someone who is visually impaired. Jennifer Hecker rescued a little Dandy Dinmont Terrier/ Llasa mix that was a puppy mill rescue and The Rakow's and Wendy Redding went to Woof Stock in Kalamazoo. Gabriel Rakow won the "look like your dog" contest with a matching Mohawk with Zeep and they were featured in the Kalamazoo Gazette on-line. Keebler earned her Apprentice Water Title from the PWDCA and Zeep earned his Working Water Title.



Our troop did a visit to the Rockford Fire house with their dogs. We focused on socializing the puppies. The fireman who talked with us did a great job exposing the puppies to all of the sights and sounds of the fire equipment. He also talked with the children about NOT hiding in closets or under beds during a fire. The parents and adults all had as much fun as the kids, especially Bill Boersma. Deb Ensing was an enormous help and her older, more experienced dogs were used to help the puppies see that all of the smells and sounds were safe and okay. Lego was completely unphased by the entire event and was licking the fireman through his oga-mask.

Jilian Rakow had reconstructive surgery done on her hand after it was slammed in a truck door that automatically locked. Many of the Dog Scouts came over to help clean the yard, exercise dogs, and socialize with Jilian. The entire Troop did the "puppy exchange" this month too. Jennifer's Violet spent time with the Rakow's and the Redding family. The puppy Lego, who is co-owned by the Rakow's and the Redding's, went to visit with the Mc Phee family and puppy Calli who is owned by the Boersma's went home with the Redding's and came to stay with the Rakow's. Maize' Mc Phee came to visit her brother and father at the

Rakow's house and also spent the weekend with the Redding's. In "passing the puppies", we are able to socialize them and help them be secure dogs by preventing separation anxiety. Besides, it's just plain fun!! Photo right – Jilian after surgery.



**Note from Wendy Redding to Jilian Rakow about Keebler:**

You should have seen Keeb this morning. We were sitting in the garden with a few of the residents and a family came out with the mom, who has Parkinson's really bad. But she was staring and smiling at me and finally she winked at me so I asked her if she wanted to pet Keebler (she can't talk anymore, but you can still ask right?) I brought Keeb over to her "good side" but she still couldn't reach her and then Keeb hopped her front legs right up onto her lap as gentle as can be without me doing anything, so (the client) could touch her. I could have cried. You have done something so right in allowing me to have her to do this! Her husband said, "I bet this made her day!" it was very cool :)

**Note from Craig McPhee to Jilian Rakow about Maize': The Maize Days of summer**



Maize McPhee has made her mark on the McPhee family in very short order. She is growing like a weed and tipped the scales at 26.7 pounds on her last vet visit. As with a puppy her age, she is fully of energy and enjoys chewing on anything she can get her mouth around (kids legs, arms and hands included). Maize finds herself on the go most of the time and has had lots of opportunities to explore the world of Rockford and socialize with other dogs. She particularly enjoys play dates with her Dad Zeep and brother Lego. She always returns exhausted and content. Photo left – Maize and Lego at the Rakow's.

Most recently Maize has had the opportunity to spend a couple weekends on Hess Lake at a friend's cottage with two other dogs. Her second favorite activity was playing with Bailey (a 10 year old black lab that out-weighed her by about 85 pounds and was more than willing to let Maize know when he was done playing). We should check Maize's blood line, I think she may

have a little Boxer in her with the way she uses her paws to jab the other dogs while wrestling around. Maybe it is something she learned from watching the McPhee kids at karate.

Her favorite activity was the pontoon rides around the lake and specifically when we would anchor on the sand bar. While tentative at first to make the leap into the water, she couldn't control her excitement to get in the water. Maize's swimming ability was increasing with each venture into the water. The kids enjoyed when I would hold her up just above the water line and she would continue her doggy paddle. Each time she was put back on the boat it would take about 10 seconds before she splashed in again. The other big event going on with Maize is the loss of teeth. Seems like she is losing one every other day. Ironically, we have seen the amount of biting decrease over the last month as the tooth loss has increased.

Overall, Maize has settled into to be the 6<sup>th</sup> member of the family. She is the perfect mix of excitable when appropriate and mellow when she needs to be. The McPhee family is very blessed to have Maize in the fold.

**Note from Jennifer Hecker and an up-date about her summer:**



Fivel is number three in the country in the AKC All-Breed standings and #1 in UKC DDT standings. He looks gorgeous. He won a Terrier Group 1 at the Detroit Kennel Club and a Terrier Group 1 and 4 at the UKC Premier this past weekend. We are planning to go the DDTCA National in St Louis in September. Violet is in training for Earth dog and perhaps Terrier Racing. Clive is one of the mascots for Whitman Sharpening at the dog shows enjoying himself immensely. Baxter will be in training for agility and Dock Diving and hopes to title in the future. She also got her CGC.

We hope that all of our fellow Dog Scouts have had as productive a summer as we have.

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**Cool dogs at hot fest: misters, hoses and pools help canines beat the heat at Woofstock**

Published: Sunday, July 18, 2010, 6:00 AM



Zaria Plunkett, 7 of Kalamazoo takes her dog "Blue" through the mister during the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's second annual "Woofstock Fest" Saturday at the Arcadia Festival Site.

By William R. Wood and Margaret DeRitter | KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

KALAMAZOO — Extremely hot weather may keep some people inside, but Saturday's 89-degree weather didn't dissuade thousands of dog owners and dog lovers from coming to the **second annual Woofstock Fest**. Most people had one dog. Some had two and three. Constant barking filled the air. "This really shows what a dog community we have here," said Liz Baker about the dogs and owners at the festival as her dog stood in a pool. "It is a huge representation." Yet, the number of human attendees was down by about half compared to last year, organizers said. The festival drew about 4,000 people to the Arcadia Creek Festival Place in downtown Kalamazoo, said Cathy Cottrell, a volunteer with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Southwest Michigan who helped count the number of

admission tickets sold. Cottrell, in "a total guess," estimated that about 1,500 to 2,000 dogs were brought to the event throughout the day, as the festival ran from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Last year, when no admission fee was charged, Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 people attended the inaugural Woofstock, Cottrell said. Cottrell attributed the attendance decline to the heat. "People are being responsible with their pets and keeping them safe," she said. "We're happy with the turnout. To combat the heat at the event, the SPCA this year set up dog pools, spray misters and water hoses for owners to cool their dogs down.



Gabe Rakow, 5 of Rockford won the "Dress Up Like Your Dog" contest with his uniquely groomed Portugese Water Dog "Zeep" during the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's second annual "Woofstock Fest" Saturday at the Arcadia Festival Site.

Woofstock's major attraction for the second year was the "Ultimate Air Dogs" show, in which dogs leaped from a running platform into a tank of water and were measured for the distance of their jump. Some dogs leaped as far as 27 feet and caught a toy mid-air. Others came to the edge of the platform, hesitated, then turned tail and headed back to their owners. Yet others overcame their initial fear and took the plunge, heading straight for the water without trying to compete for distance with the long jumpers. Also at the festival, vendor sold select dog foods and craft items for dogs like carrying cases, and they advertised dog day care. The Treat Street ice cream parlor sold cones with a scoop

of vanilla ice cream topped with a milk bone-shaped dog treat for dogs. "My dog Odie just had a dog cone, and I thought he might get a brain freeze the way he gobbled that up so fast," said Terry Henderson, who was selling meals from his restaurant Fire Bowl Cafe. "He sure sucked that down." In many cases, dog owners came to Woofstock Fest to be with other dog owners. "It is a chance to get your dog out of the house and meet other people with dogs," said Rob Burus, whose dog, a pit bull and boxer mix, sat next to two Great Danes and a small Lhasa Apso and with all of their owners in a tented area. "There's a lot of different dogs," Burus said as his eyes surveyed the festival scene. "You don't realize it until you see something like this." Contact William R. Wood at [bwood@kalamazoo gazette.com](mailto:bwood@kalamazoo gazette.com) or at 269-388-8549.

Woof Stock photos. Jilian Rakow, Eric Rakow, Karma and Gabriel Rakow, Wendy Redding, Fin, Lego, Zeep, and Keebler PWDs went to Woof Stock. Wow what fun. Karma placed in the look like your dog contest and had her picture taken with the Court Princesses at the event. Gabe and Zeep won first place with their Mowhawks and were in the Kalamazoo Gazette.



It was a really fun event with a lot of great socialization opportunities and the dock diving was awesome!!!





## **Troop 207 – Columbus, OH**

Columbus Dog Scouts is a newly-formed troop based in Columbus, OH and serving Franklin and Delaware counties. The troop was founded by veterinarian Troop Leader Dr. Jacqueline Johnson and veterinary technician Assistant Troop Leader Andrea Mykrantz. Joining them as lead trainer is Kym Jarvis, experienced DSA member and instructor.



The troop is growing quickly and we are finding there is a lot of community interest. Between August and October, the troop is holding a series of 4 training sessions designed to teach the Dog Scouts Badge behaviors to a class of 20 dogs! At the last session, all dogs will be tested for their Dog

Scouts badge. Here are two pictures from our first class.

We also recently hosted a booth at Woofstock, an annual event held by local rescue group Columbus Dog Connection. We are hoping to attend Fido Fest in October to benefit the local Worthington dog park. More upcoming events-in-the-works include a meet-and-greet for all our new members and fundraiser planning.

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## **Troop 208, Western Chicago (Kane, DuPage, Will and McHenry Counties)**

I am starting a new troop in the Western Suburbs of Chicago. My contact info is [kreeves1956@gmail.com](mailto:kreeves1956@gmail.com). I have two members already and four more that I am waiting for them to get their membership.

**Karen Reeves, Troop Leader**

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## **Rainbow Bridge**

**BJ Ratliff, 5/23/1998 - 7/14/2010**



This last month has been difficult for the Ratliff household . BJ was the one that helped us get through the grieving process when we lost Radar, and then Zeke. Now our personal therapy dog is gone. As bad as we are hurting, we have been reminded by several people that we have so many things to be thankful for. BJ had overcome so very many obstacles in her life. When we took her, at just 7 months old, to have her first hip surgery due to severe hip dysplasia, Mart made the comment that he was so glad we ended up with this puppy because not just anybody would have done what was needed for her. That included two major hip surgeries, dealing with her food allergies, numerous infections, diabetes, etc. Still, in our eyes, there could not have been a more perfect dog.



BJ had a special gift for therapy work. She seemed to have a sixth sense for knowing who needed her golden touch. She made bi-weekly visits to the Ronald McDonald House for 6 years. There were many times we would be sitting there in a room with a dozen people or more and she would just get up and walk across the room and sit calmly by someone to be hugged or petted. Each time we were told by the person she

sat by that "she somehow knew I needed her therapy" and many times that comment was followed by a few tears. She certainly had a gift to give love and she shared herself with hundreds of families over the years, both at RMH and many nursing home and assisted living facilities in town. There were so many people who loved her, but no one could have loved this dog more than we did. We are thankful that when God decided it was her time to go, she left this earth doing the one thing she enjoyed



more than anything else - swimming. She was happy, she was not alone and she went quickly and did not suffer. Although for us, it was much too soon, she actually could not have left this earth any better. We don't know what was in the future for our girl. She had been having problems again from arthritis. While she still wanted to go for walks, she wasn't walking very far at all before she would turn around and go back to the car. We had just started her swimming a couple of times a week so she could continue to exercise without putting pressure on her joints. We had started acupuncture treatments for her and she was scheduled later that very week to see her orthopedic to find out what other options were available short of having another total hip replacement done on the side of her repair. She likely was either facing another major surgery or dealing with managing her pain as best we could. God, knowing what her future held, may have decided that she didn't need to go through anymore pain and recovery and took her before we faced that.

Many people have told us that BJ was lucky to have us as parents, but we were the lucky ones. We were more blessed by her than she ever could have been by us. We will feel this pain for a long time but we wouldn't trade it for any of the joy she provided us over the last 12 years. We know there will be many difficult days ahead but we are thankful everyday that we were allowed to share our lives with these wonderful furry creatures. One of these days, we'll open our home and hearts to a new little creature to love but whoever she is, she'll sure have a tough act to follow.

**Mart & Cindy Ratliff, blessed to be parents of one incredible golden soul**

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**Casei Hutchinson**



Mohavi and Casei somehow got out of our fenced backyard, the gate appeared to be just slightly ajar when we checked it which doesn't explain how Casei got out. Our latest theory is that someone set off a loud booming firecracker in front of the house (we found remnants of a large fire cracker laying in our side yard) and they all panicked. Gypsi did her usual and ran into the house through the doggy door and into the basement (or she was already down there and never left so she was totally oblivious to the events taking place outside). The other two made a break for it and tried to run from noise causing Casei to possibly jump the fence and Mohavi to slip through a narrow opening in the gate and race towards Mound Road. It turns out that animal control was notified of Mohavi being loose in the middle of Mound and they were looking for her but never succeeded in catching her. They didn't know about Casei.

This all took place while we were both still at work. Mohavi made it back not too long after Rick got home around 3:30 p.m. all soaking wet (the storm went through while he was driving home). Rick saw the animal control van on our street but they were on their way home. We didn't realize at that time that we were missing anyone. We hunted for Casei all evening but truly thought that animal control had her. They were closed when I called them that day a little after 4:00 p.m., so we could not get confirmation. I called every agency I could think of the next morning to let them know she was missing and to find out if they had her but they said that they didn't have a dog matching her description.

We searched all day Friday, calling all the shelters and local animal control agencies every hour or two. No one had found her and no one in the neighborhood had seen her either. Around 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Warren Animal Control called to tell us the sad news. A dog fitting Casei's description was found on Mound road a 1/2 mile south of us at 7:00 a.m. Friday morning. She had been hit by a car. She did not survive. We went to the police station this morning to confirm and it was her. It looked like she had been killed by the impact and was not "run over". The animal control officer said that she probably died at impact. On our walk to remove fliers, we ran into a guy who had seen Casei running full speed down Mound Road on his way home from work on Thursday. We're thinking that she did not even live to see night fall. Mohavi is now terrified of going outside and has had her tail down flat against her butt ever since she got back. She appears to be moping a bit. When we went towards Mound this morning to remove the flyer we had posted, she put on the brakes and refused to go with us. I'm guessing that she has a new respect for Mound Road/fast moving cars. Suffering a gut-wrenching hole in our family,

She was a very skittish dog but fun loving and we thought she was getting less fearful of things. She would romp with our 14 lb. Rat terrier, Mohavi, often and with great relish. She had the strange skill of greeting people by jumping straight up in the air like a jack-in-the-box. We blame Mohavi for having taught her that kind of leaping since she basically raised her. It was very weird to watch but I got it on command with the positive reinforcement techniques I learned at camp.

**We miss her very much. Linda and Rick Hutchinson**

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**IN MEMORY**  
**UAGII, UCD Lynnlea's Tara Toonie Peerie CD, NAJ**



**Tara**  
May 12, 1998 – August 5, 2010  
Loved and trained by **Joyce and Anna Rosenberger**

I have many special memories but they could fill a book. Briefly, with Tara, I was introduced to the world of dog training. Tara taught me much about patience and positive feedback as we worked together in obedience and agility. Tara retired from competition in 2002 when a little girl came to our home, and Tara assumed the job of being special companion to a 3 year old. She succeeded well as that little girl, now almost 12, has her own Sheltie to love and train.

Shelties came from the Shetland Islands where the hamlets were called "toonies." The dogs kept the sheep from straying from the "toons" or farmer's piece of land. They were sometimes called Toonie dogs. Peerie means "fairy." Shelties were sometimes called "peerie dogs or "fairy dogs." Tara is my fairy dog!

**Joyce Rosenberger**

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**Nikki a/k/a "The Little Dog That Could"**  
**October 15, 1996 to July 15, 2010**

We saw her for the first time in a crate at PetsMart on a weekend in March 1998. It was adoption day and a number of local shelters had dogs and puppies there. Friends of Strays, a non-kill shelter from Princeton, IL brought a bunch of puppies and one adult dog. Marty, my husband, and I were half looking for another dog to keep our Yellow Lab, Copper, company while we were at work. Copper had been moping around the house since we lost our Shepherd mix, Raton, on Christmas Day, 1997, but that's another story.

Marty had been going through chemotherapy for almost a year but he and I fell in love with the little yellow dog with white markings including a white wishbone on her forehead. We did our pet shopping, grocery shopping and went to the local bookstore before returning to Petsmart at the end of the day. All the puppies were gone but the little yellow dog was still there. She had a quiet elegance about her, like she was just observing life as it went by. I asked the woman from Friends of Strays about her. They had found her in a field wandering about 6 months prior and as most people wanted puppies, still had her. Tell me a story about a dog being not wanted and that just makes me want them more. I only asked one question, "Is she house trained." And got the answer, "She is crate trained." With that, we took her home.

She had no name. My Arab horse, Isis, had twins the previous year and the colt that we named Nikki, only lived 4 days. We figured the name Nikki was not used up yet, so that became her name. She was very shy in the beginning, wanting to just lay in a corner and not interact with Copper. It took a lot of coaxing to get her to come out. One day, I brought home a stuffed squeaky toy which I presented just to her. She took it back to her corner, like a prize. One day, she came in the house and picked up the toy and I heard for the first time her "roo, roo" bark muffled by the toy in her mouth with her plumed fox tail wagging, she proudly marched around the house. I said, "roo, roo" back to her and Marty said, "Don't encourage her." I said, "But look, she's happy, she looks really happy!" I knew then that Nikki knew she was safe with us. Unfortunately, she did not get to know Marty very well, as he lost his battle with cancer October 15, 1998.

A couple of weeks later, a friend of mine said, "You aren't sitting around here anymore, your going to my dog club to watch my puppy graduate." Thus, I was introduced to the Peoria Obedience Training Club or POTC. I took a Beginner Obedience class in 1998 and joined in 1999, taking both Beginner and Intermediate Obedience with Copper and Nikki. Later that year, I tried a new class, call "Agility" with Nikki. In the beginning, I was told she would never be an agility dog and I needed to get another dog. I believed in her and so she believed in herself. She seemed to like most of the obstacles but was afraid of the teeter



totter. She would get to the fulcrum, put one foot forward and when the teeter moved, would pull it back. If I tipped it for her, she would go over it, but you couldn't do that in competition. I found a wonderful trainer, who got Nikki over the teeter with a square plastic plate taped to the end and cheese spread sprayed on top of it. Once Nikki lost her fear of the teeter, she seemed to come out of her shell. Her joy in performing agility became evident as she wagged her tail all through the course. Although, she never wanted to leave my side and become a distance dog (being sent ahead), she became very good at doing everything correctly, earning many perfect 200 scores in UKC (United Kennel Club). When she made the Top 50 dogs in UKC agility and was posted on the website, I printed it off and framed it. She was one of only four mixed breeds on the list, a tribute to those dogs of unknown heritage.

When Nikki was 5 and Copper was 12, my vet told me that Copper's spinal stenosis was so advanced that he would not make it through another winter. So, back to PetsMart I went to acquire another dog, so Nikki would not be alone when I lost Copper. At the front door, I saw a little girl holding a Lab puppy and asked her where she got it (as there were no puppies inside). Her mother wrote down the phone number which I contacted. The result was an 8 week old rusty red Yellow Lab puppy which I named, Charly, and he trapped around the yard following Nikki and played tug with Copper. Copper was rejuvenated and Nikki mothered him. Now, I was at the club almost every night, feeling like a soccer mom, with agility classes with Nikki and puppy, manners, obedience and agility with Charly as he grew into the family. Once Charly was a year old, I started showing both Nikki and him in agility, mostly UKC as AKC did not register mixed breeds. When Charly was 2 years old and Nikki was 7, I lost my Copper dog. Now, I was back to two dogs and very busy on weekends, as I also discovered North American Dog Agility Council (NADAC). I was always away somewhere and my dogs were great travelers.

In 2004, I discovered Dog Scouts of America, which had a camp near St. Helen, MI for a week near a lake with a variety of skills offered that a dogs could learn. In July of 2004, we attended our first camp. There was lots of trainers and full schedules. The dogs earned badges for the skills they learned. We did agility, backpacking, swimming, lure coursing, and both dogs learned to play a musical instrument. It truly was a little bit of heaven on earth and the dogs were truly happy there. Both Nikki and Charly went through CGC (Canine Good Citizen) and TDI (Therapy Dogs International) testing at camp and were certified to be therapy dogs.

Nikki was a true therapy dog. When we went to nursing homes and the residents would form a ring of wheel chairs, Nikki would make sure that she went to everyone, plumed tail waving, smiling as she was petted. When she and Charly were in the reading program with kindergarten and first graders, Nikki would put her head on the knees of the child and look up watching him/her read, tail wagging. When the child would go to get another book to read to Nikki, she would whine and I would get asked, "Why is she sad?" I said, "Because she wants to help you choose a book". So, very often, the little girl or boy would come back and get Nikki and take her with them to choose another book. It was as if she knew that each child needed attention to improve their self-confidence. I don't know how she learned it but she was very good at making the child believe that she was listening to every word. Sometimes, I thought that she truly understood her role and knew she was making a difference.

When Charly was 5, I brought home another Labrador Retriever puppy and named her Cate. As Cate was only 6 weeks old, Nikki, now 10 years old, willingly played "Mom" again with the puppy following along after her as she traveled the yard.



There is so much I could say about Nikki. She went from shy dog to outgoing. She enjoyed the sport of agility, especially when her audience made a fuss over her. She loved just visiting with new people, was gentle with everyone. We were at our 7<sup>th</sup> Dog Scout Camp when the aggressive cancer, hemangiosarcoma, took her on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The Director of the camp placed the flag at half mast in her honor. I will miss her forever.

UAGI, UAGII, UACH, UACHX, URO1 Nikki DSA, CGC, TDI, NAC, NCC, RL1, CL1-H a/k/a The Little Dog That Could

Thanks so much to Friends of Strays for taking her in and keeping her safe, so I could adopt her into my family. She lived a full and happy life and used up the name "Nikki".

For no reason what so ever, the other day I asked Charly, "Where's Nikki?" He disappeared for a few minutes, traveling the house, in search of something. He reappeared next to my

chair in the living room with Nikki's squeaky bunny, and dropped it in my lap. I know he got it from her bed. As he never played with it when she was alive, I looked at him, he looked at me, sat and thumped his tail. I felt my eyes watering as I hugged him. I think he misses her too.

Photo right – Charly, Nikki and Cate, DSA camp July, 2009



DSA Nikki



Nikki and Charly with Deloris (1<sup>st</sup> grader) during reading program, "Barc and Friends" at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Learning Center, Peoria, IL

**Peggy Zweber, Editor, Dog Scout Scoop**

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As Nikki died during Camp 2 July 2010, I was in a place where everyone knew how I felt. So, I sat down on Friday morning July 16<sup>th</sup> and wrote my thanks to the Camp 2 campers and put it in the container for the **Mark G. Echterling Spirit of the Dog Scout Way Award**. Here again is that submission:

Although I know that this award is supposed to be for an individual, I think a certificate to Camp 2 July 2010 Campers to remain here at the camp would be wonderful, as without all of the campers, I would not have gotten through the loss of my dog, Nikki, at camp.

\*To those who gave solice and suggestions, especially Martha Thierry, who lost her dog, Murphy, to the same cancer, hermangiosarcoma.

\* To Bill Kloski, who picked Nikki up and placed her in my car when she was too weak to walk, saying, "It's okay Nikki" all the way.

\*To all the campers who offered comfort and hugs when I returned from the vet. I felt bad that I brought sadness to a happy place but you all made me feel that it was okay and Nikki should be in a place she loved. You provided a wonderful committed support system.

\*To Joanne Weber for the awesome picture of Nikki in her DSA uniform on the stairway to that rainbow above the clouds and all the campers who signed it. Martha, you stunned me with the presentation which brought bitter-sweet tears.

A couple of years ago, I put a red power tie on Charly for the camp costume show and announced him as "the debonair, man-about-town". I put makeshift wings and a halo on Nikki, both went askew as I announced her as "Charly's Angel". She looked appropriately miserable in the role as if saying, "Mom, this stuff doesn't fit". Now, I know it fits and she has gone from DSA Scout to DSA Angel.

Thanks Camp 2 July 2010 for softening a harsh memory and actually making me believe she'll be running down the trails for years to come, maybe Dazzle will see her chasing a squirrel or a bird. Special thanks for putting the flag at half-mast. Thanks so much to **Lonnie Olson** for creating a place for me and my dogs that is just a little bit of heaven on earth.

**Peggy Zweber**

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There is one more dog that we lost since the last newsletter, **Mattie Tomasik**. I don't want to leave her out. All our dog keep us going and enrich our lives. I am hoping that her best friend and owner, **Debbie Tomasik**, will share some memories with us in our next issue.



**Attitude of Gratitude**

**Joanne Weber** made a memorial donation in memory of Murphy Thierry, BJ Ratliff, Zeke Ratliff, and Mattie Tomasik.

**Fay Reid** made a memorial donation in memory of Murphy Thierry.

**Lonnie Olson** made a memorial donation in memory of all of the Dog Scouts that recently went to the rainbow bridge, especially her friends, Murphy Thierry, Chelsea Vogtmann, BJ and Zeke Ratliff, Nikki Zweber, Mattie Tomasik, and Casei Hutchinson.

**De Weber** of Bay City, Michigan made a generous donation to Dog Scouts.

**Robyn Douglas and the Maine Downeast Dog Scout Troop** made a generous donation to DSA to go toward the purchase of the AED defibrillator.

On behalf of **Troop 161, Carlisle Pennsylvania, Lisa Basial** bid \$1,000.00 on an auction item to give to her troop leader, **Ann Withun**, as a gift (and as a huge donation to DSA).

**Peggy Zweber** made a very generous donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 in memory of her beloved Nikki, who passed away in July. Thanks so much for the donation, Peggy!

Thanks to all for your kind donations. **Lonnie Olson**

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**In Closing .... An Animal's prayer**

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE**

I will never know the loneliness that I hear in the cries of the other animals 'out there.'  
I can sleep soundly, assured that when I wake my world will not have changed.  
I will never know hunger, or the fear of not knowing if I will eat.  
I will not shiver in the cold, or grow weary from the heat, but rather, I will nap in the sun's warmth, and play in the rain's coolness, and be allowed to smell all that can reach my nose. My fur will shine, and never be dirty or matted.

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE...**

There will be an effort to communicate with me on my level.  
I will be talked to and, even if I don't understand,  
I can enjoy the warmth of the words spoken to me in kindness.  
I will be given a name so that I may know who I am among many.  
My name will be used in love and joy, and I will relish the sound of it!

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE...**

I will never be a substitute for anything I am not.  
I will never be used to improve peoples' images of themselves.  
I will be loved because I am who I am, not someone's idea of who I should be.  
I will never suffer for someone's anger, impatience, or stupidity.  
I will be taught all the things I need to know to be loved by all.  
I will be praised for my successes, instead of punished too harshly for my mistakes.  
If I do not learn my lessons well, they will look to my teacher for blame.

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE...**

I can trust arms that hold, hands that touch ... knowing that, no matter what they do, they do it for the good of me.  
If I am injured or ill, I will be doctored.  
If I am scared, I will be calmed.  
If I am sad, I will be cheered.

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE...**

No matter what I look like, I will be considered beautiful and known to be of value.  
I will never be cast out because I am too old, too ill, too unruly, or not cute enough.  
I will not be left behind because my humans moved - I will move with them.  
If a new human baby joins my family, it will not 'replace' me, but instead will be one more human for me to love, and to love me. I will not be treated as disposable. My life is a responsibility, and not an afterthought.  
I will learn that humans can almost, sometimes, be as kind and as fair as other animals.

**HERE IN THIS HOUSE...**

I was BROUGHT, because I was WANTED!  
I will BELONG!  
I will be home - FOREVER!  
AND I WILL BE LOVED!

Contributed by **Peggy Zweber**