



The Dog Scout Scoop

(little bits of news we've picked up)

May/June 2012

Volume 16, Issue 3

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

2012 Spring Clean-up Work Week

It's time for the annual Spring Outing and Work week! As usual, we're scheduling it near the time of the Leadership Retreat, so that if you want to come up to camp and stay for all three, or for one or two of these events, you have more options. With gas prices so high, we felt that lumping the activities was a good way to save everyone some money.

This spring, we have quite a few projects and jobs that need to be done before we open up the camp to this season's campers. If you need some time away in the great north woods, bring your work gloves and join us for a fun few fun days of hard work, and relaxing by the campfire, in the season with no mosquitos! All meals will be provided by DSA to workers who come up and help clean up camp! Lodging for workers will also be comped. Lodging reservations are on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED basis.

Contact Lonnie Olson, Camp Manager, if you would like to be a part of this year's clean-up (dogscoutcamp@gmail.com). It is scheduled for May 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, right after the Leader Retreat.

2012 Annual Spring Outing

The Spring outing will be the weekend of the 25th – 28th immediately following the camp cleanup. Why not come up for both? Or all three (include the Leader Retreat)? There will be hiking and campfires and crafts, and potlucks, and all of the usual spring outing activities (probably a spring egg hunt).

The usual lodging fees will apply for this weekend. Get your reservations in early. Bring whatever you'd like, to help make your weekend enjoyable, some snacks, the beverages of your choice, and a dish to pass.

Contact Lonnie Olson (dogscoutcamp@gmail.com) if you'd like to attend.

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Please Respect Newsletter Deadlines!!!

Newsletter Submission - June 15th, 2012 for July/August 2012 Issue. Articles received after that date will go into the September/October 2012 issue. Please respect the deadlines. **Peggy Zweber, Editor**

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>

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

DSA goes viral!!

At the beginning of April I was contacted by Sue Manning, an AP reporter in California. She wanted to do a story about DSA. This is something that happens from time to time and I'm always happy to help spread the word. We often get a link to the story and website hits from the area where it is published increase. Sue also interviewed DSA founder Lonnie Olson and a DSA member Robert Verdahl. At the time we had no idea where this would lead!

The day she sent me the link where it was first published, I also heard from a few others (in other states) that said they saw it too! And it snowballed from there. Lonnie and I were (and still are) getting call after call and email after email from people who had seen the article in their paper or on a website. And it wasn't limited to only U.S. audiences. I got a link to Canadian and UK papers too! I even got a call from a radio station in Australia to do a live interview on their morning program! As I was talking to them, I was thinking two things: 1) I LOVE their accent! And 2) I'm being heard in AUSTRALIA!! How cool is THAT?! LOL I also wondered how many people there heard me and thought my Midwest American accent was funny :-). I was once told by a person from Belgium that I sounded like "people on American TV programs".

I don't know how many places that article has appeared but it is a LOT of places and continues to spread! These include Yahoo News, Huffington Post, Vetstreet.com, The Bob and Tom show and other big media outlets. It's being talked about all over social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and a newspaper in FL interviewed me for a two page spread on page 2 and 3 of their paper.

All this attention has had a very positive effect on DSA!

A radio host told me today: "I was prepared to make fun of this idea, but it sounds like you're really doing good things!" The hits on the website have gone up by nearly 80% in all categories and the number of emails regarding how to get a troop started have skyrocketed. I haven't seen the membership numbers yet, but I KNOW we have a lot of new members. And camp registrations are filling fast as well. The Yahoo group has added many new people and the number of Facebook fans has nearly doubled! It's at 2,243 as I write this, but that number is rising steadily.

So I just want to take a moment to welcome all the new members and offer encouragement to all the future troop leaders that this publicity has generated. If you haven't found us yet on Yahoo Groups and Facebook, we're easy to find! I find myself smiling often when thinking about how DSA is being recognized as the valid and worthwhile organization I and all it's members know it to be. And as more people learn about DSA, they share that with others, who then share it with others and DSA grows!

Chris Puls, DSA President

DSA's Second Annual HIKE-A-THON!



When: Month of May

You can pick a certain date to do a hike or count the miles hiked during the entire month.

Where: Anywhere!

The locations are chosen by the participants. So plan to visit your favorite walking/hiking locations and get hiking!

Who: Anyone can participate

Anyone in the world can participate in this fundraiser by getting pledges/donations and walking, rolling, riding, etc.! You can choose to do the miles on foot, in a wheelchair, on a bike or any other way that gets you and your dog out enjoying nature and

getting fit! We are assuming people will complete the miles with their dogs, but if you don't have a dog or your dog is too old, you can still participate. You can participate in memory of a favorite dog as well.

What: A fundraiser that supports DSA

This is Dog Scouts of America's big annual fundraiser.

Why: Because it's fun! (And you could get a patch and T-shirt!)



And because it supports DSA and helps you! It helps encourage people and their dogs to get out and be active together, which increases their bond and their fitness level. People that raise at least \$50 will be sent an Official DSA hike-a-thon patch and a small, matching "2012" patch. People who raise over \$100 will also be sent a very nice, heather grey T-shirt (in your size) that says "Take a hike! And support Dog Scouts of America" on the back including the patch design with the DSA logo on the front. Donations to the hike-a-thon are tax deductible.



The hike-a-thon proceeds also help support DSA in its efforts to support its members, troops and the general public. Some of the things the hike-a-thon funds are used for include:

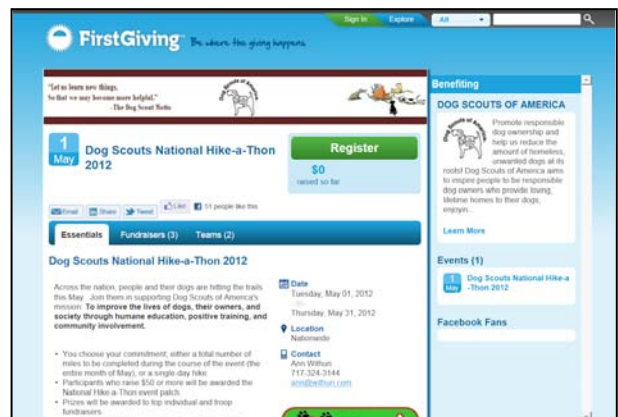
- Paying the website and printing fees so DSA can continue to make the extensive educational information and outreach programs free for public use
- Creating new merit badges
- Defending our organization against copyright infringement
- Marketing - including our upcoming print and social media campaign in a major dog culture magazine
- Saving for the future (e.g., better website, expansion of offerings)
- (coming soon) Funding a small grant program to help assist troops and individuals in promoting DSA and its mission (helping to pay booth fees, providing banners, providing brochures, etc.)
- (future plans) Creating an ambassador program to give back to the troops and support them in order for them to better represent the organization

How: Use the pledge form or website

DSA is partnered with 'FirstGiving' so you can collect donations through that website from your friends and family all over the world in a secure and easy way!

You can even create your own, individualized fundraising page for free with your own photos and web link that you can send to friends and family so they can help you meet and exceed your personal fundraising goals. That website also keeps track of how much you have raised so you can see how close you are to your goal (if you set one) and it shows how much has been raised by all the participants so far.


<http://www.firstgiving.com/DogScouts/dog-scouts-national-hike-a-thon-2012>



A pledge form you can print is available on the website at: <http://dogscouts.org/Hike-a-thon.html> For any in-person fundraising you want to do. (You can add these donations to your firstgiving page too!)

So what are you waiting for? Print that pledge form or get your fundraising page set-up, let all your friends know about it and hit the trails!

**Dog Scouts of America
Hike-a-Thon Pledge Form**



Name: _____ Canine Companion(s): _____


My Commitment: _____ Total Miles When - _____

Dear sponsor, Dog Scouts of America is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, and your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please make all checks payable to "DSA" - Thank You!


Name of Sponsor	phone/e-mail	Amount	Collected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Total Collected via FirstGiving: _____
Grand Total Funds Collected: _____

* Patches can be awarded for every \$50 raised—Please specify the number of patches you would like based on your eligibility _____. If not specified, you will be awarded one patch if you raise \$50 or more. If eligible, my T-shirt size is: _____ (if not already filled out during FirstGiving registration.)



2nd Annual
**Dog Scouts of America
National
Hike-a-Thon**



People and dogs across the nation will hit the trails in May 2012 to help Dog Scouts of America inspire and assist people to be responsible dog owners who provide lifetime, loving homes to well-mannered dogs.

Mikey Diaries

I've been periodically trying the equipment on Mikey. Each time, I make this adjustment, or that one, to get it fine-tuned to fit his body. Some of the training is very challenging without a helper. Just when I get him suited up, the phone rings and I must immediately go somewhere else. I can't tie him there, with his equipment on, and leave him, and there's no one to hand the lead rope to, and ask them to watch him until I get back. Frustrating...

I added the bit to the bridle with blinders, and had him trot beside the golf cart. He doesn't like his limited range of vision with this on, but he trusts me and the golf cart, and he came along without fuss. He did fuss a little with the new bit. I think I may change bits. But, so far, the stuff I've gotten for him fits him okay.

I have been adding "yes" as a reward marker, in case I don't have a clicker handy. But, there's nothing like a clicker to get the point across, so when we have dedicated sessions to actually learning something, I use the clicker. He is to the point where he knows something good is going to happen when he hears the click. Now that he has the bridging started, I applied it to a behavior. I chose "back," because most horses have heard that, and know what it means, though I have seen relatively few that will do it on the verbal cue, without some body language, pushing, or backward pressure on the lead rope or reins. So, I began by saying "back," and then adding some body language to indicate to him that I wanted him to back up. Sometimes, I would have to apply slight pressure to the halter rope, but he caught on pretty fast, and I didn't have to do that very many times.

Then, I noticed that he would start offering the behavior before I asked for it, which showed me he understood what I was wanting him to do. So, we progressed to me standing still (not looking particularly intimidating, and giving no cues on the halter), and just saying "back." He did it. First a few steps, and then several more. I didn't want to push it too much, as I could see he was concerned that he might back into something or step on something in the barn. A few times, he tried to get direct access to the treats that were behind me. He needs to learn a leave it! But, I felt that the act of backing away from the food was pretty good in itself, for a food monger of a horse. That may be as good of a leave it as I can get!

For the treats, I just used pelleted hay. Not much of a treat, but I varied the reward with some butterscotch horse treats, and some mint candies, so he wouldn't know which treat he was getting each time. The reinforcement schedule is still 1:1 while he is learning. He's doing the stuff, but I'm not sure his brain realizes what he is doing yet.

In April, Patti Drier came up to help with Mikey. Oh, My Gosh! She made a lot of progress with him. She sold me her round pen, which she delivered, and set up, and she worked Mikey in it. It was amazing to watch. Then, we hooked him up with the harness and I led him around the pen while Patti held the reins, as a prelude to ground driving. Then, I unsnapped the lead rope, and Patti was able to drive him all around the pen, making turns and stops and starts, and he did everything just like he had been doing it all his life. It was so amazing to watch the progress. She was finally able to drive him right through the gate, and up to the barn to take his tack off. He was wonderful for her.

Next step, after some review, is to attach the cart. In the mean time, I will be "suiting him up," and having him trot beside the golf cart. I'll also see if he can pull some tires. We're getting to the dangerous parts, so I won't be able to progress much on my own, other than jogging him with the golf cart. If anyone wants to help in the training of Mikey, come on up!

Goal:	Begun	Acceptance	W/Movement	Bit	New Locations	Distractions	Completed
Bridge the click	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺		☺
Desensitize to ropes/reins	☺	☺	☺	Without With ☺	☺		☺
Unwrap (spinout)	☺ to rt & lft	☺		Without With ☺			☺
Meet the tack	☺	☺	☺	Without With ☺	☺		☺
Wear the tack	☺	☺	☺	Without With ☺	☺	☺	☺
Ground Drive w/loose reins	☺	☺	w/helper ☺ w/o helper ☺	Without With ☺	☺	☺ me in pen	☺
Ground Drive reins through harness	☺	☺	w/helper ☺ w/o helper ☺		☺	☺ through gate	☺
Drag a tire			w/helper w/o helper				
Poling	☺	☺		Without With			
Poling w/sack							
Me drag pole	☺	☺	On far side ☺ On near side	Without With		bumping	
Pole attached to harness	☺		On inside On outside	Without With			
Meet the cart	☺			Without With			
Touching cart				Without With			
Helper pulls cart near Mike			On left On right	Without With			
Cart bumping				Without With			
Hitched with lead rope							
Hitched; Drive from behind							
Hitched; driver in cart; helper leads							
Hitched; drives w/o help							
Distraction desensitization	Umbrella ☺	Sacking ☺	Through water ☺				



Ground driving Mikey



Ground Driving



Left: Patti leading Mikey; Right: Mikey in his gear.

Testimonials

Has DSA helped you and your dog? Let us know! I would love to put some testimonials on the DSA website about how the info on the website, earning badges or a DSA camp has helped people and their dogs be more successful in dog sports/activities or in life in general. If you would like to send it to me, a testimonial is a short (1 reasonable sized paragraph) article about how DSA has helped you and your dog.

If you'd like to include ONE photo, you may. Please choose only 1 photo. You can do a separate testimonial/photo for each dog if you have more than one.

Please "sign" your name at the end of the testimonial the way you'd like it to appear on-line. Some people might only want their initials, others a first name and last initial and some are fine with their full name. Please also include your full name below that so I know who you are. Include your city/state (or at least your state) and if you are willing to be interviewed by a reporter, note that in your email to me. I'm often contacted by reporters wanting to talk to someone in their area or someone involved in a particular activity or just a general member of DSA. So I can create a private file of folks reporters can contact for a quote in an article about DSA. I would only share your email address with a reporter unless you say it's okay to also share your phone number. You can send this to me privately at dogscouts@hotmail.com.

Chris Puls, President

K9 Zombie Detection Team Training Academy in St. Helen, MI
(Second annual All Troop Retreat)

Dog Scouts of America Troop 217 will be hosting the second annual ALL Troop retreat at the Dog Scout camp in St. Helen, MI October 27-28th, 2012, with an optional craft night and bonfire on October 26th. This year's theme is "k9 zombie detection team training academy".

We will have a variety of games and informational sections around the following areas:

- Zombie Detection (nosework)
- In Search Communication (recalls)
- Zombie Avoidance (basic obedience)
- Physical Agility (agility)
- K9 Care
- First Aid
- Zombie Containment (letterboxing, geocaching)

Participants will also have the option of earning 3 merit badges: K-9 Fitness, Pet Care, and First aid. The weekend will end with a simulated zombie hunt in which participants will have a chance to use what they have learned to earn a K9-ZDT title. Three levels of title will be offered and top ranking teams will earn additional recognition.

Details

What: Zombie Detection Dog Training Academy

Where: Dog Scout Camp, St. Helen, MI

When: 8AM October 27th through 2PM October 28th 2012 (optional craft night/bonfire on October 26th)

Why: have fun with your dog, learn new things, make new friends, have fun with your troop

Cost: There is a \$25 deposit to register, which will be applied to your camp tab at checkout from the retreat. Retreat deposits should be made out to DSA and can be mailed to Julie Benson at 30911 Jasper Ridge, Novi MI 48377. Please include with your deposit your full name, dog's name(s), troop #, lodging preference, and most importantly your email address. Note that badges/t-shirts/store items incur an additional cost.

More information:

For up to date event information, please point your browser to:

<http://zombiedetectiondogs.blogspot.com/>

Or scan the QR code on your right



Questions: Contact Julie Benson (bensonjulie@earthlink.net) geocaching)

A Tribute to Grace Stevens at Michigan Camp

This year, with the departure of Ed and his dogs, we were able to take on a new project. We took the money that Grace Stevens left to DSA in her will, and cleaned up the old sled dog compound. The center fence was removed, the holes and bumps filled and leveled, the dog houses removed, and everything graded flat. It is now a nice fenced area, that we can re-purpose for lure coursing, tracking, or any number of activities. We decided to name the field for Grace, and it will be called Grace Field. This name has double meaning, as I have always felt bad for the sled dogs out there, and I've told Panda, Gala, and Saikou many times, "There, but for the Grace of God, could be YOU!" Each of them had siblings on the dog lot, who were never pampered indoor dogs who could sleep on beds with their humans.

So, we're taking a disgusting eyesore, and turning it into a beautiful place, along with the area immediately surrounding the fenced area. Gone is Ed's junk, and the huge piles of sand and deep holes that were a danger as well as an eyesore. You wouldn't recognize the place.

So, thanks, Grace... We'll honor your memory and think of you whenever we use Grace Field.

Lonnie Olson



Looking east outside of Grace Field



Looking SW towards the entrance of Grace Field



Looking west outside of Grace Field



Looking East



Looking NE



Looking NW

Living Light Out Loud
Adventures Training a Blind/Deaf Dog to be a Future Dog Scout
Part I By Allison Holloway

January 2012

When a good friend called to tell me she was fostering a blind and deaf Australian shepherd puppy for a local rescue organization, my first thought was, "Geez, poor puppy just needs to be euthanized. What kind of life can she have?" But when I met this puppy, I immediately changed my mind. Dahlia is one of the happiest, gregarious and confident dogs I've met. Amazing. Dahlia is a double merle aussie, which means both parents were merle. When this pairing happens, 25% of the puppies will be blind and/or deaf. But unscrupulous breeders continue to do this, knowing the results, because 75% of the puppies are normal, and all are beautiful. People want them, so too bad for the 25% who can't see/hear. Most are euthanized.

I was asked to help train Dahlia, so I started thinking, and researching, and experimenting. I couldn't use hand signals, she is blind. I couldn't use a clicker, she is deaf. I had to try and put myself in her world, imagine what it must be like, and figure out how to communicate and motivate her. I found it fascinating. I also found it frustrating because I only saw her once a week and I had so many ideas I wanted to try, I wanted to observe her more, I wanted to understand her better. So I decided to look on Petfinder and see if there were others like her out there there were lots. So I adopted Lottie Moon.

February 2012

Lottie Moon was 9 months old when I got her. She was found when she was 6 months old living under a mobile home, and the shelter was called. The staff fell in love with her, and called a local rescue, and she was placed in foster care. Her foster mom had other aussies, and was planning on keeping her, but after 3 months, decided that training a blind/deaf dog was more than she could manage, and Lottie was then scheduled to be placed in a rescue in New York who had lots of other double merles. I saw her on Petfinder and called about her, and she was exactly what I was looking for: young, outgoing, friendly and confident, and blind and deaf. So Lottie and I met, and I fell in love. She is amazing, and now we begin our training adventure together.

Lottie's foster mom hadn't worked on training her at all. She didn't know Sit, or No, or even Go Potty. Her foster mom told me, "we've just been co-existing." So, like Helen Keller when Anne Sullivan first met her, Lottie Moon was a blank slate. I feel that all dogs love a schedule; they want to know what to expect. This is an important component to a happy and calm dog. Training gives them a framework, an expectation and satisfying results. I felt that a blind/deaf dog would be even more desirous of knowing what to expect to keep her world under her control.

Lottie is very outgoing, but also very gentle. However, she also gets very excited when she is restrained, so one of the first things I did with her was to practice Brenda Aloff's puppy restraint exercise. I held her sandwiched between my knees as I squatted on the floor, and held her chest and face with my hands. When she relaxed, I relaxed my hold, and when she squirmed, I held her close. At first Lottie fought me a lot, but now she is much better, although we still have work to do on this. As she learns "Stay," I will expand on this exercise and combine it with the signal for "Stay."

Next I had to come up with a marker, a bridge to use in place of a clicker. I had read several suggestions online to use a flashlight. Lottie is able to see light, so this was a possibility with her, but I was reluctant for several reasons. I realized I wouldn't always have a light source with me to use. Of course, I don't always have a clicker with me, either, but I use "yes" as a marker when I am clickerless. The option of my voice as a backup to the flashlight wasn't feasible with Lottie, and I wanted to be able to mark her behavior at any time. I also read one comment online from a woman who has a rescue for deaf dogs, and she was adamant that training a deaf dog with a flashlight could contribute to obsessive-compulsive behavior (OCD), which deaf dogs are prone to exhibit. I had noticed some OCD behavior in both Lottie and Dahlia, so I tended to agree with her – no flashlight for Lottie Moon. I decided to use a touch to mark Lottie's behavior. A tap on the chest would be her "click". I loaded the clicker by touching her chest and treating, touching her chest and treating, touching her chest and treating-- just as I would normally load a clicker, or the word "yes". Once she seemed to have the concept down that a chest touch meant a treat was coming, I started the "sit". I lured her into a sit, touched her chest, and gave her a treat. I did this until she was offering the sit without the lure, and then I added the "word" for sit, which for Lottie would be a double tap on her rump. So it looked like this:

--double tap on the rump
--lure to sit
--tap the chest
--treat

Lottie picked up on this within just a couple of repetitions, and now offers a sit for food. She isn't yet offering a sit for the double tap on the rump without food present, but it is really too early to expect that habit to be formed. They tell us it takes 21 days to form a habit, if you are trying to quit smoking or diet, you have to get past the 21 day hurdle, so I can't expect my puppy to form a habit of sitting when asked in less than 21 days. And ultimately, we are using treats to establish a habit. Once the habit is formed, I will offer treats only randomly to fade the lure.

Next we worked on "Down." Same process. From the Sit, I lured to a down, tapped the chest, then treat. She loves "down", and started plopping down very quickly, because Lottie is really all about the treats! Next I added the signal, a double tap to the shoulder blades:

--sit
--double tap shoulder blades

- lure to down
- tap the chest
- treat

Very quickly the “down” is becoming her default behavior, the behavior she exhibits when she wants something and is trying to figure out what will work for her.

March 2012

I've been taking Lottie to work with me, along with the border collies, and we go to the dog park every day at lunchtime. Lottie Moon loves the dog park, and gets crazy excited when we start driving down the tree-lined approach. I don't know if she can recognize the smell of the lane, or can see and recognize the patterns of shadow that the trees throw on the car, or if she simply picks up on the energy of the border collies, but she definitely knows when we turn into the dog park's drive. She runs FULL SPEED to the far end of the park when she enters, and then turns to come back and follow the border collies. However, if there are others in the park, she will leave us and go visit every dog and every person in the park. She seems to be somewhat of a favorite. “she's so sweet”, “such a nice puppy”, and “so beautiful” are comments I hear daily. Many are surprised to hear that she is blind, because she maneuvers so well through the park and with the other dogs. Only I remember the first day, when she went too far from me and the other dogs, and got lost. She ran and became more and more panicky as she realized she didn't know where I was, didn't know where SHE was. She also tends to run smack into things when she is in a yard or location that is unfamiliar. But only once – her second visit to a place is always flawlessly memorized.

Lottie's OCD behavior has come out even more. Whenever there is excitement, such as zooming border collies, or barking, she looks at the ground, cocks her head like she hears something, and starts barking and pouncing and digging furiously at the ground. At first I thought she had some sort of extra sensory perception that allowed her to “feel” moles or bugs under the ground, but when she started doing it in my kitchen, I decided it was not some amazing sense, but just plain crazy. I'm pretty sure I don't have moles under my kitchen floor. I always tell my obedience class, “don't let your dog practice bad behavior,” so I'm trying to stop Lottie from playing with her invisible friends when she is on leash, or in the house. It is tough to do, because she tends to drift into the crazy-realm whenever she isn't occupied with something else. But luckily, Lottie is all about the food, so treats can be used to distract her if nothing else works. I just show her a treat, and then distract her brain with sits or downs.

I've also been working this month on “no” and “leave it”, which for Lottie is the same command: a light touch to the top of her nose. Like her touch commands for Sit and Down, she has picked up the meaning of this touch very quickly, and immediately stops whatever she is doing when I touch her nose. Almost always. . ! She really is a very smart, very good girl.

Note: If you would like to follow Lottie Moon's progress in between newsletters, you can follow her blog at <http://www.lottie-seeingintodarkness.blogspot.com>



 Far left: Lottie Moon
 Near left: Big yard

Troop News
Troop 119, North Texas

Troop 119 has had a spring full of activity! In February, we did a 5-mile hike at one of our great area parks. We had really great weather and the dogs enjoyed naps the rest of the day. Before the hike, the dogs all got to enjoy birthday cake in celebration of Emerson's third birthday. Her mom, Amy Bowman, also brought goody bags for all the dogs which they enjoyed long after the hike was over! Photos right: Emerson waits for his cake and his cake pictured. Below: Quinn waits for cake.



In March, we enjoyed another beautiful day at the park! We did a group hike then assembled for a presentation on the K-9 Fitness merit badge. We had several dogs demonstrate various portions of the stretches and exercises and troop member, Mary Weigandt, brought out lots of equipment for the dogs to practice with including exercise balls, wobble boards, jumps and cavalettis. Troop members and dogs alike were all encouraged to start working on healthier futures.

Below left: Maddy gets a lift; Below right: The last hike survivors.



In April, we had a troop Easter egg hunt! We had a great turnout for another beautiful day! We were able to use the YMCA Camp Carter campgrounds (where we have the Texas Mini-Camp) for the event. 720 plastic eggs with freeze-dried liver inside were hid over many acres on the camp grounds. Dogs and humans started from a shotgun start and had 45 minutes to collect as many eggs as they could. First, second and

third place prizes were given for most eggs collected, as well as prizes for finding the special prize eggs, the most festive dog/human team and most festive egg-collection-receptacle. We handed out additional prizes in honor of our troop's 10 year anniversary (whoo-hoo!!) and all the dogs went home with baggies of home-made anniversary dog cookies!!



Texas Mini-Camp has broken its own record for the third year in a row for filling up! Last year's record of filling up in 2 weeks was shattered this year when we had to close registrations in less than 2 ½ days from announcing this year's fall camp due to being full! We are accepting waiting list requests and are anticipating the best camp yet!

Photo left: Betty and Tessa return with their finds.



Above left: Major searches for eggs.
 Above right: Maureen and Lacey find an egg.
 Photo left: Picking up more than just eggs.

Mart & Cindy Ratliff. Troop 119, North Texas

Troop 147 – Alabama

Dog Scout Troop 147/Alabama had a great time participating in the Millbrook Mardi Gras Parade February 11th. We all enjoyed the many things that went along with the parade such as the live entertainment, good food, and vendors. We walked for one mile surrounded by music and just had a delightful time. Sage, Apollo, and Bear seemed to enjoy the outing as well. We got to speak to several people about Dog Scouts and hopefully will hear from them in the future with an interest to join us.



Photo left: In the foreground is Jamie with Apollo. Bear, Karen's puppy, is in the background.



Left: Boy Scouts, Adrian and his friend, carried our banner for us.



Photo left:
 Left to right, Sage with leader Barbara Ferry, Apollo with co-leader Jamie Nance, and Bear with troop member Karen Richards.

Photo right: Sage and leader Barbara Ferry entertaining the youngsters.



Barbara Ferry

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



Presented by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to
Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159

*In recognition and appreciation of your commitment to strengthening our
Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service.*

2011



Downeast Dog Scouts Recognized by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation and the Dog Scouts of America

Once again the Downeast Dog Scouts have earned the Silver President's Volunteer Service Award for the year 2011! The Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159 is a 501c3 non-profit subgroup of the Dog Scouts of America that was established in September 2007 as an all-volunteer affiliate of the Dog Scouts of America. It is the first and only Dog Scouts of America troop in Maine, serving Hancock County. **As a group, troop members gave 646 hours of service to their communities. Troop members Pamela Bourque and Pier Carros earned individual Bronze President's Volunteer Service Awards for completion of more than 100 hours of volunteer service. Troop leader, Robyn Douglas, also was awarded the Silver President's Volunteer Service Award for completion of 314 hours of volunteer service.**

Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159 members and their dogs provided a total of 646 hours of service in activities such as: therapy dog visits, children reading to dogs programs, school visits, community educational activities, walkathons, and clean up days. Troop members visited as representatives of their respective therapy organizations at Mount Desert Island Hospital, Birch Bay Retirement Village, Tremont School, Northeast Harbor Library, Blue Hill Library, Brooksville Public Library and Swans Island Library. Children Reading to Dogs Programs increase literacy skills and boost the self esteem of young readers. Imagine how relaxing and fun it is to cozy up to a warm and welcoming dog that loves to hear stories! Visiting Therapy Dogs also help to relieve stress, improve health and recovery from illness. Young and old alike have benefitted from the dogs' endeavors!

Community service is a fundamental part of the Downeast Dog Scouts mission. In 2011, the Dog Scouts raised funds with a community supported yard sale. The Downeast Dog Scouts donated full sets of Take a Bow Wow Dog Training DVDs to libraries in Bar Harbor, Blue Hill, Ellsworth, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor and Swan's Island to promote positive reinforcement training methods in their communities. The Downeast Dog Scouts and the Dog Scouts of America advocate positive reinforcement training and encourage people to help their dogs be all they can be. The more a dog learns the more welcome that dog becomes in more places. Downeast Dog Scout, Jillian, and her owner Pamela Bourque were the top individual fundraisers for the American Cancer Society's Bark For Life event held at Hadley Point Campground in Bar Harbor. This was the first and only Bark For Life event held in Maine in 2011. The event provided education about dogs and raised awareness regarding Canine Caregivers. The Downeast Dog Scouts participated in the event and raised \$460 as a troop. During the 2011 holidays, the Downeast Dog Scouts assembled bags of treats for distribution at local banks as a festive thank you to all local dog owners that include their dogs in their daily lives. The Downeast Dog Scouts continued participation in two annual clean ups during the Friends of Acadia Earth Day Clean Up and Take Pride in Acadia Day. Troop members clean up after less responsible dog owners at Little Long Pond in Seal Harbor, Maine

For the fourth year, the Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159 has been recognized as a "Top Dog Troop" for 2011 by the Dog Scouts of America. The Dog Scouts of America Troop Recognition Program rewards troops for being active and helping in their community. The Dog Scouts of America is a national 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about responsible dog ownership, the important role of the human/canine bond and to challenge people and dogs to learn how to better serve each other. All troops work toward the goals and missions of the Dog Scouts of America while focusing on the needs and interests of each local community. Information about the Dog Scouts of America is available at www.dogscouts.org

The Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159 offers a local membership program for people who advocate responsible dog ownership and enjoy participating in dog centered activities. Troop members and their dogs learn new skills working toward the Dog Scouts of America merit badges. The Downeast Dog Scouts Troop promotes the positive treatment of animals, advocating only the most modern behavioral approaches to training. Promotion of responsible dog ownership and involvement in the community lies at the heart of this group. Maine is fortunate to have a thriving dog community in which dogs are largely involved in the lives of their people. The troop dogs are fine examples of the value that pets can have for families and the community at large.



Children Reading to Dogs Community Program



In February, the Downeast Dog Scouts offered a program regarding Children Reading to Dogs Programs. A few neighborhood children stopped by to read to the troop dogs during the presentation. Three experienced therapy dog and handler teams were available to answer questions. The discussion included: Children Reading to Dogs Programs objectives, benefits, successes and training. The volunteer therapy dog and handler teams go to schools and libraries as reading companions for children. The dogs have been trained and tested for

health, safety, appropriate skills and temperament. It is an excellent venue for teaching children about the wonderful relationships children can have with dogs. Many children choose to read and learn more about dogs as a result of the reading programs!



Downeast Dog Scouts Visit the Swan's Island Library

Pam Bourque, Pier Carros, Robyn Douglas, Denise Houseknecht boarded the Swan's Island Ferry during winter vacation week with their dogs Jillian, Gracie and Cirra to visit the Swan's Island Library. A very young group of readers were there for fun reading with the dogs.

2012 Idita-Walk

Bruno with Michelle Knowlton, and Cirra with Robyn Douglas and Denise Houseknecht, completed the 2012 Idita-Walk representing the Downeast Dog Scouts. From February 1st to March 31st, Bruno reached 3000 minutes while Cirra completed 2835 minutes.

Mount Desert Elementary School Book Fair

Pier Carros, Robyn Douglas, Gracie and Cirra were available for readers at the Mount Desert Elementary School Book Fair. The Book Fair was held at the Northeast Harbor Library in conjunction with Scholastic Book Fairs and was a tremendous success.



Mount Desert Elementary School Kindergarten Class Visits Cirra at the Northeast Harbor Library



Ms. Alley's kindergarten class visited Cirra at the Northeast Harbor Library. All fourteen students and Cirra brought their teddy bears to listen to Children's Librarian, Eileen MacLean read "Three Stories You Can Read to Your Teddy Bear". The children were very excited about Cirra's visit and treated her as though she was a famous celebrity. Cirra met a six year old "canine specialist" along with many other very interesting kindergarteners. Cirra gave the children books, paw print stickers and paw print pencils.

Idita-Read Project



The Idita-Read reading incentive project for school age readers is in progress. Children from the Blue Hill Library and Tremont School have been logging their reading minutes working toward their individual goal of 1,112 minutes correlating to the Iditarod mileage on the Northern Route.



The Downeast Dog Scouts joined all of the students at the Tremont School for their kick off assembly in the school gymnasium. Six dogs attended as team mascots encouraging the Crazy Canines, Turbo Dogs, MDI Musers and Rocking Readers to read the most minutes for their teams. A few weeks after the Idita-Read project began, the Dog Scouts surprised the readers with notes of encouragement featuring colorful paw prints and photos of their team mascots. Rissa, Timber, Jillian and Cirra have visited the Tremont School to read with the top six readers of each team as inspiration to keep up the good reading! As of April 10th, 111 students have read over 122,000 minutes! Dog Scouts Bri and Gracie, are the team mascots for the Blue Hill Extreme Readers of the Blue Hill Library. Fourteen children have been reading along the trail for the Extreme Reader team. Small stuffed huskies have been available at the library for the Idita-Readers to take home as reading companions. Gracie and Pier Carros are at the Blue Hill Library each week for readers during the school year. Blue Hill Map above left.

Pier Carros are at the Blue Hill Library each week for readers during the school year. Blue Hill Map above left.

Brooksville Elementary School teacher, Nada Lepper, gave fantastic presentations about the Iditarod at the Blue hill Library and Tremont School. She shared her experiences from visiting the famous sled dog race with students from the Brooksville Elementary School. For years Lepper has used the Iditarod as a unit of study in her classes. The idea for the Iditarod class trip came when a visiting Alaskan woman heard about the class' study of the race and invited the class to go to Alaska.

Robyn Douglas, Downeast Dog Scouts Troop 159

Troop 177 – Indianapolis, Indiana

Troop #177 members participated in a hike at Ft. Harrison State Park on Saturday, March 10. The hike on this beautiful sunny day was very different from the overcast skies and icy trails experienced last time! Peggy Kraus and Casey, Anita Dudley and Sophie, Gail Wiseman and Zipper were joined by Gail's husband! Michelle Goldner brought multiple dogs, joined by Robyn Porter with Hallie along with Indianapolis area dog owner guests. On April 14, the troop was planning to visit another park in the Indianapolis area for a hike. After weeks of beautiful clear skies and warm temperatures, the meeting had to move indoors due to severe weather warnings. Michelle Goldner and Banjo, Gail Wiseman and Zipper joined Robyn Porter and Hallie for fun and games at Best Friends Kennel. Submitted by **Robyn Porter, Troop #177, Indianapolis IN**



Far left: Anita Dudley describes upcoming events

Near left: Beautiful Ft Harrison

Below left: Banjo seeks hidden treats
Center: Hallie looks for treats

Below right: Gail & Zipper work on "Back" command



Peggy Kraus and Casey attended Advanced Dance Camp lead by Gloria Voss in St. Helen, MI on April 14 and 15. Peggy and Casey learned a lot from Gloria, worked on improving their individual routine and had fun! Peggy reported dance games designed to test skills, an individual lesson with Gloria and fun!

Troop 188 - Connecticut and Rhode Island

While our area enjoyed a very mild winter where Troop 188 was able to spend many hours outdoors with our dogs, we are ready to enjoy a wonderful Spring and Summer. We had a great winter with many of us enjoying the trails and learning new things with our dogs. Zora DSA and I took up letterboxing this winter and explored many new trails in the completion of her first two letterbox badges. Pirate and Zora DSA are exploring their artistic sides in a Freestyle class. Ares and Pirate are working on a drill team performance to debut this summer

Badges Earned

Ella DSA earned her Dog Scout Badge!
Congratulations Ella!

Zora DSA completed her Letterboxing 2 badge!

Photos Right: Ella DSA relaxing in her garden; Zora DSA finding her first letterbox



Legally Blond

Pirate debuted in East Lyme High School's musical rendition of Legally Blond. Pirate played Bruiser in his first supporting role on stage. We are all very proud of our first thespian. Pirate was in three scenes in the musical and was a hit with all of the kids.

Photos Left: Pirates Fan Club; Pirate waiting backstage

Military War Dog Donations

We collected donations of dog toys, treats, boots, bowls and chilly vests to send to the Military War Dogs in Afghanistan. We also collected items for their handlers, such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, popcorn, EasyMac, shampoo, and much more. We collected a total of 4.5 pounds of toothpaste! Thanks to all of the generous donations, we were able to fill nine boxes to send to the Military War Dogs in Afghanistan.

Three teams at two posts in Afghanistan were the recipients of the 9 packages.

Photos Below: Our packing team: Tartan DSA modeling a chilly vest; Michelle Lake, Millie Burke, Donna Morrissette, Julianne Grove, Kelly Ford, Sheri Throop, Tartan DSA & Carl.



IMPROV



Over the past several months, we have been working on the various IMPROV exercises. Our Troop parents are enjoying learning about this new sport and the scouts are really relishing learning new skills that will help them earn the IMPROV badge and titles as well as badges like Retrieve, Fundraising 1 & 2, Water Retrieve, Water Rescue, Water Racing, and Scent Hurdles A different IMPROV exercise has been featured at our recent meetings.

Photos Right: Pirate and Diesel practicing their retrieves.

Pet Easter Bonnet Contest

The Saint Bernard Rescue of Connecticut and Rhode Island held its annual Pet Easter Bonnet Contest in Mystic Village on Saturday April 7th. The annual fundraiser was blessed with sunny weather that brought out an amazing number of dogs in their Easter finery and a wonderful audience. Lucy DSA and Sheri helped judge the contestants that included a pair of llamas and dogs from CT and RI all there to help the St. Bernard Rescue.

Community Service

In March a group of Troop 188 members went to White Hall Park in Ledyard and cleaned the trails while planting a letterbox at the Throne. In addition to cleaning Troop members worked on their Messenger badge skills. Later in April several members of Troop 188 spent part of their Easter Sunday participating in a special "egg hunt" cleaning up Highland Lake Park in Ledyard CT. The group cleaned up lots of trash and dog poop. The recent AP article on Dog Scouts of America made our local paper that Monday. Folks who saw the troop in action commented on line how wonderful it was to see responsible dog owners in action! Almost 40 bags of poop were collected in addition to 6 bag of trash.

Photos Below: Zora DSA in her Easter Finery; The Highland Lake Clean Up Crew; Lucy DSA and Libby on the Throne at White Hall.



Kelly Ford, Co-Leader Dog Scout Troop 188

Troop 199 (Positive Pups), Western New York

Troop 199 continues to grow, and we are pleased to welcome several new members. Sadly, we said goodbye to our beloved scout Yukon (Evrard) in November. He was one of our charter members, and the second official Dog Scout of our troop. See the "Rainbow Bridge" section of this newsletter to read about his accomplishments and how he touched so many of our lives.

So far we have six dogs who have earned their Dog Scout merit badges, and several who are very close to doing so. Nicole Shiro (Troop leader) generously shares her time, skills and education during our weekly classes where she covers the requirements for the Dog Scout test and other badges, techniques for focus/attention, communication skills, and general knowledge regarding dogs.

In March we had a "felting party" which included pizza, good conversation and the creation of felted toys for dogs currently in foster care through Black Dog Second Chance rescue.

In our February meeting we made plans for community service projects, a canoe trip, monthly hikes and several learning opportunities. The meeting concluded with games which required teamwork and the application of skills acquired during classes and Dog Scout activities.

Cathryn Mckelvey

Troop 213/Colorado

Although we are a new troop in Colorado and just getting started, we are proud to report that three of our members have already earned their Dog Scout Badge. Congratulations to:



Photos from left to right: Ace Montilla Goad, Misha Pescador and Hailey Suzuki
A Big Shout out to Misha that has also earned her Scent Discrimination Badge!

For our March meeting we met for some Fun and Frolic at the Zoom Room. Marnie Johnson was our gracious host and a potential new troop member. We were very excited to learn that a lot of our badges could be earned in classes offered by the Zoom Room which offers Treibballing, Agility, Therapy and other fun opportunities. She introduced us to the Table, the A-Frame, the Dog Walk, the Weave Poles, and the Tunnel. Fun was had by all! Many thanks to Marnie, we'll be seeing a lot of her I'm sure.



Pictures: Ace in the tunnel, Ace on the dogwalk with Mom

Usually CRCG (Canine Rehab & Conditioning Group) donates their facility for our monthly meeting, and in February we even got the special treat of the use of their rehab pool! In the beginning all the dogs were nervous nellies, but with some expert advice from Jerrod Fassler (seen in his sweet waders) and some calm urging from their moms soon all the dogs were taking to the water like fish to the sea. Well maybe not so much, but with some more lessons from Jerrod,

all of them will be Dock Dogs for sure! Thanks for showing us such a good time Jerrod, I'm sure we will all be back to work on our Puppy Paddler badges real soon.



Pictures from left to right: Margo, Hailey & Buffy Suzuki, Jerrod Fessler, Bain and Jerrod, Misha Pescador



Photos from left to right: Paula and Doc Longo with Jerrod, Ace Montilla-Goad, Julie Montilla-Goad, Jerrod Fessler and Seven Montilla-Goad

Submitted by: **Troop 213/Julie Montilla-Goad**
Photos by **Margo Suzuki and Julie Montilla-Goad**

Troop #216, Lake Havasu City AZ "HappyFeet"

Dog Scout Members of Lake Havasu have been taking advantage of the good weather! Many participated in "new-to-us" scenic Walks/Hikes & Easter Pet Parade. Elizabeth Antos, Sandy Walters & Vicki did "Scouting Trips" for a variety of Activities for next Fall & Water for Summer. Among these are a boat trip across the Lake to a whole new set of Trails & Lunch at The Landing; more Trails on our side; float trip down The River & the Canoe Trail at Bill Williams Reserve. Pot Luck PicNic & "Awards" (oh, my, submit fun ideas for awards!) planned soon at Island Park.

Agility at Dani Banks' fine Field, with volunteer Instructors Dawn Horsager & Elizabeth, completed and equipment packed away for the "Heat Season". Obstacle work & Activities at beautiful Prestige is winding down (Thank you's to Marcia Turner & Molly!); equipment is available for loan for practice in shade or indoors thru Summer. DVD's are available for loan, including one Leo Labarbera put together of the Dog Scout Program various fun activities, plus video Chris Puls did on the Dog Scout Test. Plans are to "Go to Water" soon! Kneeboards, paddleboard and Dock are coming out in May! Those who have kayaks/canoes get ready for some doggie trips! We'll be looking forward to our Seasonal members return next Fall!

Congratulations Iditawalk 2012 Results of Members: "Black Bart" & Vicki; "Lucky" & Dani; "Chloe" & Rose Kopecky; with our Red Lantern Tie going to "Dakota" & Sandy W. and "Shadow" & Dani! See all the finishers, including many other Dog Scouts: <http://www.idita-walk.com/idw/index.asp> See you On the Trail next year!

Dorothy (Rose's Mom) & "Lucy", Won the Best Dressed Award, girl's division, at the Pet Parade! "Dakota" (Sandy) & "Black Bart" (Vicki) completed the Pack Dog Title requirements for 50 Miles under Pack. "Isis" Antos placed 1st in Novice Jumpers at AKC Agility Trial in Vegas!

Member's photo op and Thank You note made the newspaper! Thank You notes taken to Western Arizona Humane Society, LHC Parks & Rec & LHC High School "Day of Service" for the BEAUTIFUL new Drinking Fountain on the Island Pathway! (If you haven't seen it, check it out, across from Site Six.)

Easter Bunny & Scented Egg Hunt had beautiful weather with "Bring a Friend" including 1 returning & 2 new visitors: Tina & "Hogan", Paula & "Chico" & Maryann. Thanks Lucy Vinsik & Randy & Gloria Hudnall for the invites :) Big Hugs to Bo Williams for her fun & friendly sharing Bunny Waves and Photo Ops in Pooch Party's new Bunny costume.

We're off to "Catch a Wave"! ...OK.. maybe just a little "Lake Swell" :) See you at the water!

Submitted by **Vicki Warner, Troop #216 Lake Havasu City, AZ**



In Photo Clockwise around outside:
Upper left: Gloria,"Molly" & Lucy;
Dawn, Elizabeth, Laura, Vicki,
Dani; "Roscoe" & Sylvia; "Lucy" &
Dorothy & BunnyBo; "Shaka Zu" &
Bo; "Fountain": "Bart" & Vicki,
"Katie" & Leo, "Penny" & Joe,
"Sadie" & Matt, "Chico" & Lucy, &
visiting "friend". "BillytheKid" in Egg
Basket; " Penny & Katie" with
BunnyBo; "Shaka Zu & Ms Molly" &
Marcia; "Sadie" & Matt. Center
Back: "Katie" & Joe, "Ms Daisy" &
Randy, "Rio" & Terry, " Chloe" &
Rose, "Molly" & Lucy, "Shaka Zu" &
BunnyBo, Matt. Center Front:
"Chico" & Paula, "Hogan" & Tina,
Leo. I forgot 1 photo credit for the
collage: mid center: "Josephine" &
London Bridge

Troop 217 – Southeast Michigan

As we move into spring, our troop remained busy with a variety of different activities. On February 25, we held an Art of Shaping training day where members could work on earning the badge, or just make some works of art with their dogs who already had the badge. Julie led the training with an orientation and safety introduction, and Melissa Perez helped in signing dogs off on the badge. Michelle and Sassy, Julie and Shelby, Vickie and Duncan, and Melissa and Drizzle all practiced their painting skills, while Angela and Lowell attended to video-tape and photograph, handle dogs, and otherwise help out. The event was a success with several masterpieces completed, and with Duncan earning the Art of Shaping badge. Julie also used the opportunity to work on becoming certified as an evaluator for the badge, so we will likely have more painting events in the future for those who were unable to attend.



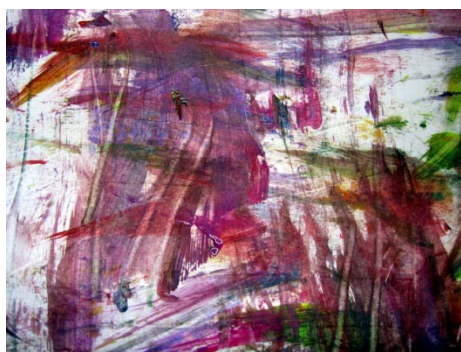
L to R: Matt, Vickie, Duncan, Julie, Sassy, and Michelle working on the Art of Shaping.

Melissa and Drizzle working on painting.

Vickie and Duncan working on the badge.



A finished masterpiece.



On March 11, the second Drill Team practice was held at "My Hero Dog Training" in Commerce Township. Elizabeth & Emma, Michelle & Sassy, Martha & Maia, and Julie & Shelby worked on fine tuning the choreography of the routine and continued to get the dogs comfortable with working so closely together. The routine is coming along very nicely and it is still our goal to perform for everyone at July camp in order to earn our Drill Team badge. We are currently working hard on our own at home and will practice again as a group April 29th.

On March 16, several troop members met for our first dog training video night. Julie, Angela, Lowell, Melissa, Roberta, Elizabeth, and Samantha got together for pizza, and a viewing and discussion of Susan Garrett's "Crate Games" DVD. Afterwards, Shelby performed her skit for everyone, allowing her to earn the Tricks badge.

Our troop met for their monthly hike on March 25 at Huron Meadows Metropark. We enjoyed a beautiful 2-mile hike around Maltby Lake on an unseasonably warm and sunny day. The hike was well attended by troop members. Lowell and Tristan, Angela and Cadence, Elizabeth and Emma, Samantha and Ella and Pecas, Melissa and Drizzle, Catherine and Liberty, and Bob and Leela all joined the trip, and set a nice example on the trail when passed by other park users. We answered a couple questions about Dog Scouts for interested passers-by, who inquired about the patches on the dogs' packs.



Tristan getting ready to hike.



Our group of hikers.

Far right: Samantha, Ella, and Pecas (Elizabeth and Emma in background).



On March 31, we met at Rotary Park for a Geocaching Day. Despite the knee-deep mud and a nip in the air, we had a good time finding two geocaches and hiding one for Shelby's badge 2 requirements. Samantha, Ella, and Pecas joined Julie & Shelby along with Samantha's friend and potential new recruit.



Shelby finds a cache.

Several members have also been participating in a bottle and can drive over the past few months to raise money to buy pet oxygen masks for local fire departments. To date, we have raised \$337.40, with our goal being \$500.

We have lots in store for the upcoming months as well. We are hosting a "Day in the Life of a Dog Scout" event where we will encourage people interested in learning about DSA to come and see what we are all about. We have also planned an agility training day, our regular hikes, and are participating in the American Cancer Society Bark for Life Fun Run/Walk fundraiser. As of this writing, we have the largest team registered for the event, and are in second place for overall fundraising, with still almost a month

to go. Also, we continue to work on planning for the second annual DSA Troop Retreat this October at Dog Scout Camp in St. Helen, Michigan. The theme this year is "Zombie Detection Dog Training Academy", and everyone is welcome. For more information, see: <http://zombiedetectiondogs.blogspot.com>

Congratulations to scouts who earned the following badges:

Vickie and Duncan: Art of Shaping

Julie and Shelby: Tricks

Visit the Troop 217 website at: <http://dsatrop217.com/>

--Submitted by **Julie Benson, Troop Leader**

Rainbow Bridge **DSA Buddy Banys - October 1995 to April 2012**



Thank goodness God created dogs. If not for dogs, I would of stayed in bed on weekends, eaten a lot and would of become very antisocial. A very good friend had recommended that I get a dog so I would get out of bed. So when I went to my local animal shelter I had two dogs that I could choose from, a dalmation or a beagle basset (Bagle) mix. I chose Buddy, the bagel. When I brought him home I realized that he had absolutely no obedience skills! He was about a year old and had a lot of issues, hence that's where my "special needs dog" came from. He had a lot of anxieties and didn't know how to let me know what he needed. So, my intro into the dog world began.

I took several obedience classes and asked for advice from everyone I knew that owned a dog. I learned that he had separation anxiety and had destroyed a few of my things in the process. I learned that crating was a good thing to protect my belongings and to keep him safe. Eventually I was able to wean

him off that and he was able to have the run of the house with no problems. Then someone told me about a dog park in my area and I went to check it out. Oh my gosh, it's like I put Buddy in scent heaven! He had his nose down and took it all in. It took him a half hour of "sniffing" before even going into the park. Made me think of the expression of "smelling the flowers". His favorite activity was chasing dogs in the field and swimming in the ponds. We would spend 2-3 hours some days. Amazingly, when we finally would go home all his worries and mine were gone. One day I met a Dog Scout person and she told me about how much fun DSA camp was and how it was a learning experience with badges. I was very interested, but had to wait a whole year before

I could go.



At Dog Scouts of America I began to work on Buddy's issues and his confidence and mine grew. I was just simply amazed at what he could accomplish. Only dog people could understand how I felt, cause the rest of my family thought I was crazy! Who in their sane mind would teach their dog how to paint? Or wear a loaded backpack or play the piano? Well, it all seemed cool to me, and Buddy went along with it all and did seem to enjoy the challenges just like I did, with a little growling, in between.

When I got my second dog, Binker, DSA, who is also at the Rainbow Bridge as of June 2010, I officially became a busy dog owner. My hands were full. I brought both dogs to camp and they earned their multiple badges. I started to take Buddy to agility classes and eventually we did compete. Because he was so fearful of the unknown, we took baby steps in teaching him to climb

the ladder, run through the tunnel and walk the plank. But, because of what I learned in camp about clicker training, we accomplished miracles!

What I miss most about Buddy, is his love for life. His bark at times would annoy me, but his voice was saying, "Look at me!", "Hey you dog, let's play tag!", "Mom, Binker is blocking my way to get to my bed.", or "What unknown inanimate object did you bring into this house this time?" He definitely knew how to get my attention, he was one of a kind.

During the past couple of years, he slowed down a bit, but still loved going to the park and did his multiple times around the perimeter of the park. When I would try to get ready for work, I could never close the door, because Buddy wanted to be in there to get his morning rub around his floppy ears. I am so missing his loving. I had an animal communicator tell me a few years back that Buddy looked out for me, and worried about me. He would pick up my feelings and would carry them. I truly believed that, cause Buddy was very sensitive to his environment, which made me more aware of mine. Buddy, my "baby boy". You had an awesome life and made mine so much more colorful, may you be at peace and run those fields with Binker at your side.

Felicia Banys

DSA Lance Reiss - February 6, 2003 - March 6, 2012

Here is something from Gary and Jennifer Riess in Missouri, regarding the loss of Lance, DSA

We lost Lance on March 6 so not sure what all you need - Lance (Riess):

U-WP, U-CD, U-AG2, U-CH, PAM, Majestic's Knight V Dellhaven, CGC, CD, RE, TD, VCD1, PT, OA, OAJ, AXP, NJP, NF, DSA, TT, TD-ASCA, CD-ASCA, RS-N, JS-N, AD, BH, TC, CHIC, VCC – "Lance" German Shepherd Dog

DSA Stuart Romano – March 6, 2000 – April 13, 2012



Twelve years ago this week, Mike and I walked into the home of a couple that had two Westies and a little ball of fur, known as a Westie puppy. I immediately was drawn to him and picked him up. He had the most beautiful captivating eyes that absolutely stole my heart right then and there. I knew he was destined to be a part of the Romano family. Little did I know how he would touch our family so deeply and my life so profoundly. We named him Stuart. It sounded like such a regal and majestic name for this little guy. But as every wonderful year passed he earned that big name. It was always those eyes that talked to me and listened to me and heard everything I asked him to do. We knew what each other were thinking. I really believe he was my soul mate, for I could see his soul through his eyes. Oh, the life he gave me. I shall be ever grateful to him. For eight years he was a Dog Scout and quite a scout he was. Yes, he was a little dog, but he had that little westitude that made him stand out. He made me proud countless times. And those that knew him well, did recognize that he was quite the Mama's boy. When we worked on backpacking, he would decide to sit down in the middle of the trail and look at me, "I'm done, let's go back." Thanks to Aunt Cindy, we took turns walking with him and as she gently encouraged him to go with her, he just kept looking back at me with those big longing eyes. He wanted to be with his Mama. My little Velcro boy was stuck to me where ever I was. Guarding, protecting, I guess. Stuart loved to ride in the car, play soccer, go to earthdog events, chase squirrels and paint. I took videos of him just two weeks ago playing soccer. How could he be so sick and we not see it coming?

I was out of town visiting my grandson and daughter last week. I returned home yesterday afternoon about 2:30. He came to me but not with the excitement that I usually saw. I lay with him on the floor and he looked into my eyes and said, "Mama, I'm sick." I could feel something wasn't right. I called his vet and described what I thought may have been depression since I was gone. His breathing wasn't right and he started trembling. He wouldn't let me pick him up. When the vet called back, she said to take him to the ER. By 4:30 we were there. At 5:00 I'm told he may have pancreatitis because he was in pain and tender in that area. They gave him a pain shot. Then another 30 minutes passed and the doctor came in with concerns about his blood. They did more tests, x-rays and ultrasound. Then, the devastating news. Stuart had hemangiosarcoma cancer on his spleen, in his liver and on his heart. It is aggressive and it was everywhere. He was bleeding into his cavities from the burst tumors and he was not going to survive but for only hours. The bleeding most likely started earlier in the day. The horror that I had just heard didn't sink in very well right away, but I called Andrew and Mike. They both rushed to be with me and my baby boy. There was no decision to make, we had to let him go. We loved on him and I held him till the very moment he passed. He looked about, at his daddy and at his human brother but only around me. He never looked into my eyes. I so wanted to see those eyes one more time. At the moment I couldn't understand, but now I do. He wanted me to remember his beautiful eyes of love and life. That was his last gesture of his love for me. Parts of our hearts have been torn away, but we have so many wonderful, funny and proud memories of this dog of dogs. So few people in this world have enjoyed the special relationship that we had with this dear sweet life.



I told him he was greatly loved and that we knew that he loved us greatly in return, and he would always be with me until he sees me at the Rainbow Bridge. He knew that he was surrounded by love and that gave me comfort also. It was then that we let him be at peace. We are broken and devastated as this was so unexpected. No words can describe our grief. We just thank God that he didn't suffer long and that he waited for me to be with him. We will miss him terribly.

Connie and Mike Romano

Stuart (3/6/00-4/13/12) AKC, DSA, CGC, TT, JE, VCCX and Macie, AKC, DSA

DSA Tiponi Paxson - 10/15/2003 - 4/19/12

I lost a part of my heart & soul today as I helped Tiponi travel to the Bridge. She was calm and brave, I think she knew her pain would soon be gone forever. Tiponi is with her brothers and many friends that have gone before her. She led a wonderful life full of adventure and challenges as a Dog Scout, taking me along for the ride. Tiponi will be missed so much but will forever remain embedded in my heart.

Where do I begin? Tiponi was one of 8 puppies born to a mom picked up by the Houston Animal Control and fostered by Bridgett Miller with Southern States Rottweiler Rescue.

She was born about a week before I lost my 12 ½ year old Rottweiler Porsche. Little did I know several coordinators and board members had decided I needed to have one of those puppies and I was to have pick of the litter. Bridgett already had 2 picked out for me, Red Girl and Peach Girl and I was constantly drawn to Peach.



I wanted a name that signified the spirit in which this pup was given to me and I have a passion for American Indian names (due to Cherokee heritage) so this little girls name became Tiponi, meaning "Child of Importance". I will say now that the name couldn't have fit her better.

It was early 2004 when Tiponi, my grandson and I attended an Arlington dog event and we met Cindy Ratliff & BJ at the Dog Scout booth. Tiponi had sailed through obedience classes and her CGC before she was 9 months old and I was looking for other things to do with her, I knew she would need it. We became members of Dog Scouts shortly after that event.

Tiponi was my ambassador for both SSRR and Dog Scouts in her early years, doing dual roles at dog events. She was videoed by the local Denton TV station playing her keyboard, her artwork was the cover for the Arlington Animal Services calendar in 2008. She was the first dog in Troop 119 to receive the sign language badge and attended many events to promote Dog Scouts and responsible dog ownership. She wasn't perfect by any means and began to exhibit reactivity; thanks to her amazing trainer and friend, Karen Deeds, I learned how to manage that. I believe the knee that became the chronic problem may have contributed to that, the constant pain that she suffered but pushed through for me at times. It was this knee that the cancer invaded.

Tiponi, for me, was a very special girl and one of the most intelligent and personable Rotties or any dog I've ever had. I had a friend ask me today what made her special and I find it hard to explain but yet can give so many reasons.

Since her first badge in Dog Scouts she constantly amazed me at how quickly she learned things and did them without complaint. It could be the way she would go through Bob's directional training and do everything perfectly, but when it was time to test out he would go to home plate and refuse to do more. She was telling me "I showed you I know how to do it, I really do not enjoy it". I know she learned it all for me but drew the line at the final test...not important to her.

Maybe it was the way she loved the grandkids, or any child for that matter. Tiponi always slept with me unless the grandkids were spending the night, then she was right in the middle of them and refused to leave their room. At the Burleson PetsMart, we were doing a tour for pre-school kids and I had brought Tiponi in to paint them a picture and do her tricks. I introduced myself and said "...and this is Tiponi..." Whoa! When I started to introduce her she pulled me towards the kids, greeted each one of them and then sat by a group of 4 with a big smile on her face.

That smile, that Rottie smile! I have never seen a dog smile as much as she did and to have her greet me every time I walked in the door with it, made me smile and feel so good. Even with her limited mobility with the cancer in her rear leg she greeted me every time and with a smile. Every time she met a friend she smiled and let them know how happy she was to see them. Maybe it was the way she would watch me teach Songaa how to shut the door, she would always run over to shut it for him. There was one time where I was telling Songaa to shut the door and Tiponi was on her bed watching. She looked at Songaa,

and then looked at the door waiting for him to go and do it. He knew how but decided not to do it that one particular day. Finally after several attempts to get Songaa to shut the door on his own Tiponi looked at the door, looked at Songaa, looked at me and ran over and shut the door. She then turned that big smile on me like "I showed him mom".

It was the pure joy in her eyes when she was learning new things, loving her kids, seeing friends or just laying her head on my lap for her one on one with me. It was as if she truly enjoyed life and all it gave to her so she needed to make sure I got it too. With all she went through with knee surgeries, she still trusted me 100% and never gave me a growl, a warning, nothing. She let me do what I had to do. Trust.

I could go on & on, but I know that each one of you knows what I am trying to say and know that each of you also has had or have that "special one". I thank Lonnie, who was chosen by a higher power, for having the vision of Dog Scouts of America. I know it is through Dog Scouts that Tiponi and I were able to share a unique bond far different than any dog before her. I know DSA allowed me to give Tiponi a life of adventure, challenges, experiences, purpose, and for her to know just how much I loved her.



With Tiponi I gained a lot of new, wonderful friends. She made me a better trainer because I was able to really see what she could do and encourage clients to find what their dogs have a passion for and watch them grow and be happy doing it. She was an inspiration, a joy, my heart and soul, my shining star and my awesome (always done with a sign to her) girl. What made her special? It was everything that she was, everything that she did, everyone that she loved.

On April 19th, 2012 I brought Tiponi to the vet for her final journey to the Rainbow Bridge. She had a horrible day the day before and her eyes spoke volumes to me. I had 4 wonderful weeks with her, letting her know I would not let her suffer, to tell me when it was time because I was afraid I wouldn't

know. Her vet thought she was special too; she limped her way into the room and was peaceful and calm. I think she knew what was happening and was ready to be free of the pain. She was the ultimate lady, leaving with grace so she could ease the pain of her mom.

You were special Tiponi and I know you are running free with your brothers and the friends that have gone before you. I love you and will miss you but know that you will always be in my heart. Each dog I help will be because of you, each child that is loved will be done with your smile in my head, each time I miss you I will hold my hand over my heart because I know that is where you live now.

Becky Paxson, Troop 119, Ft. Worth, TX

Yukon Jack, DSA TT RA 5/19/08—11/26/11



When I bought this little fluff of a pup, I was grieving the loss of my last dog. I was also under the illusion that I knew what I was doing. After going through basic obedience when Yukon was 4 months, starting competitive obedience classes at 6 months and all the challenges that an adolescent Rottweiler with a novice handler can encounter, a chain of events brought us to Dog Scouts of America. It was during this process that I learned I had no idea what I was doing, had been doing pretty much everything wrong, and my dog was amazing in spite of me.

With this wonderful resource at my fingertips, we set about correcting my mistakes. Yukon was a handful—115 lbs of uncontrolled impulses and the mistaken notion that everyone wanted to touch & love him. We worked hard on learning the Dog Scout behaviors. In May of last year, we found a lump under his left ear. The surgery was scheduled just before the leadership retreat and we attended without having the results. Yukon tested for the Dog Scout title at the retreat, but needed more work on the "leave it". When we got home, we hit the books and Yukon passed his Dog Scout test in June. We also received the news that he had a grade III mast cell tumor.

The lump returned in August and another, more invasive surgery was scheduled. Before the surgery and after his recovery, we worked on earning badges. It was a productive activity to focus on during this gut-wrenching time. Yukon earned the Retrieve badge, Temperment Test, Manners badge & Naked Dog obedience badge, as well as his Rally

Advanced title. All this in 4 months! His ability to learn and desire to work astonished me. During this time, the cancer spread and we said goodbye after Thanksgiving--he was only 3 ½ yrs old.

Yukon was so much more than just my dog. He was my best friend, the one that is there no matter what, the one that you can rely on even when you're being an idiot, the one that forgave everything. He is sadly missed & greatly loved... **The Evrards**

Attitude of Gratitude

We've received some memorial gifts in Mary Schuenemann's Nike's name since our last newsletter from:
Lonnie Olson, Dianne Schuler, and Peggy Zweber

Goodbye Nike, we love you. Thanks to Joanne Weber for the photos of Nike.



Also, Patti Drier donated a combination microwave/convection oven and a stand for it to the camp.

In Closing . . . A Mother's Day Perspective

I am finishing up the newsletter, sitting in my livingroom and realize it is Mother's Day. My mind floods with memories. My mother died in January of 1998, just 9 months before my husband succumbed to colon cancer. One of my best memories of Mom was her love of animals. She put up with the droves of animals I brought home. However, one cold spring night, when she went to a PTA meeting at a local country school, a little dog greeted all the parents as they filed in. The principal announced that he wished someone would adopt it as it was begging the children for their lunches. Guess who picked up the dog? The next morning, she told us to look in the back yard and there was this squirming, wagging, joyous little dog, jumping into my arms. We named her Smokey and she was with us for 14 years. Mom never got to see the current Peggy, showing dogs all over in Agility, Dock Diving and Flyball, with occasional forays into Rally and Obedience. I know she would have been there, right at the sidelines, cheering them on.

My husband, Marty, also got in the Mother's Day mode. He made sure the pets went shopping for me with awesome gifts and funny cards, signing them with their paw prints. My cats one year got me a Latte coffee maker, how did they know? However, Suzy, my Calico, disappeared with the foaming spritzer attachment, I never did find it, had to special order a second one. Guess Suzy liked her coffee black, or spritzer attachments are really fun.

As I hug my pets, I know Mother's Day is special, no matter whether your kids are two or four legged. Cherish the memories!!
Happy Mother's Day to all!! **Peggy Zweber, Editor**