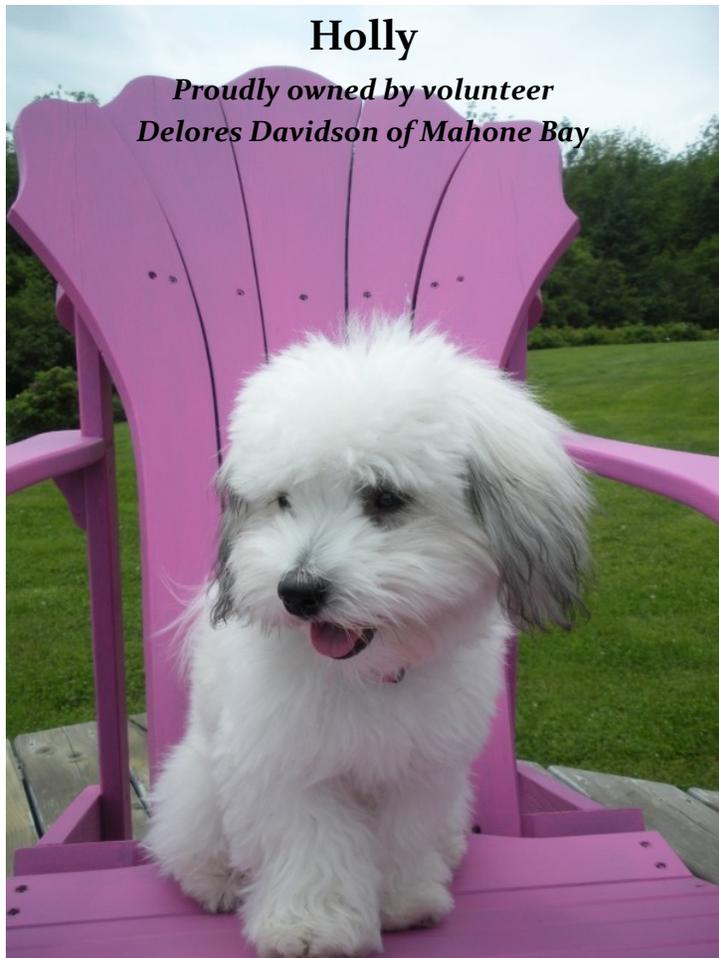


the BARKER



A Therapy Dog Publication of St. John Ambulance NS/PEI Council

SUMMER 2012



Holly

*Proudly owned by volunteer
Delores Davidson of Mahone Bay*

Letter From the Editor

Hello everyone! Welcome to summer. Spring was a very busy time for the Therapy Dog Program, which is great! I spent much of my time out of the office travelling to different parts of the Program for Evaluations, promotional events, and meetings. I'd like to thank everyone for their patience in contacting me over these last few months.

Now is the time of year when everyone tends to get busy and be away on vacations. Don't forget to let your Health Care Facility know of any changes in your visiting schedule over the next few months due to any summer vacations you plan to take.

Health Care Facilities tend to be quite warm this time of year and some dogs find it very difficult to visit on a hot, muggy day. Please keep an eye on your Therapy Dog while visiting in a warm facility as you may need to cut the amount of visiting time back. Don't forget to let staff know if you do need to end your visit early or if you aren't able to make it in because of the heat. Take as many fresh air and water breaks as you and your Therapy Dog need during your visits, especially on those hot days!

On August 25th, St. John Ambulance will be moving from our current location on 88 Slayter Street to 101 Main Street, Dartmouth until our new building is complete. Any mail sent to Slayter street will be forwarded to us at our new office location but when I have our new mailing address I will make sure to send a note so you will all be aware.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy summer! Enjoy this issue of the Barker Newsletter.



Jaime Wolfe

Therapy Dog Program Coordinator

Ten Tips for Photographing Pets

Elizabeth West

1. Be patient

Pets don't often pose. Sometimes they sniff your camera or your sleeve. At other times they decide to crawl under a table or fly on top of a dresser. Just wait quietly until they settle down.

2. Try to capture a characteristic action or activity

If you're shooting your pet, you know its personality. Before you start photographing your pet, ask yourself 'what sets it apart from other animals?' Try to take a picture that reflects some characteristic, such as curiosity, goofiness, adoration, or self-possession. You do not have to include every inch of your pet, only the parts needed to express what you're trying to capture.

3. Get on the same level.

Standing above an animal and shooting down will seldom produce a captivating image unless your pet looks up at that moment with a winsome expression. Usually you will be more successful if you get close on the floor or ground. If you have a very small pet, such as a hamster, you might try placing it on a table.



4. Get in Close

Pets come in all shapes and sizes but in most cases they are smaller than a human and as a result they tend to end up getting a little lost in photos unless you make an effort to get up close to them. Of course getting close is not always easy, especially if you have a pet that likes to move around, but it's worth making the effort as the detail that can be gained and the personality that can be captured by an up close and personal photo shoot with a pet can really lift a photo to a new level.

5. Don't ignore the background

One problem with being on a floor is that you may be surrounded by table legs, sofa skirts, and lamp bases. Eliminate such distracting background items either by composing to avoid them or by shifting your position so

that the background becomes less busy. If your outdoors, for example, and you notice a tricycle, basketball, and trashcan behind your pet, move. Use a distant shrub or plain grass instead. Ultimately you don't want your backgrounds to be distracting from your photo – sometimes the best locations are the plainest ones – a large patch of green grass, a well lit room with white walls and plain carpet etc can be ideal. Of course this can also be too plain and sterile.



6. Try for natural light

Avoid flash if at all possible. It often upsets an animal. Natural light is a much better option than using a flash and so where possible outside photo shoots tend to work best (or at least in a well lit window inside). The only exception for using a flash is when your pet has very dark (or black) fur as it tends to absorb light and a flash can add detail

7. Use a fast shutter speed

Animals wiggle, twitch, lick themselves, or just look around. Unless you are trying to indicate speed, set your shutter speed around 250. Use the sports or action mode on manual cameras.

8. Aim for the eyes

Just as most human portraits focus on the subject's eyes, so do most animal portraits. Eyes are expressive, so they should be sharp unless you are deliberately trying to emphasize another body part.

9. Catch them Unaware

Posed shots can be fun and effective but try photographing them candidly paparazzi style. Take shots while he digs up flowers, as he buries a bone, as they chase a bee around and or as he sits contentedly with his head sticking out of his dog house. They will barely be aware of your presence so the shots will be very natural without distracting the dog from his 'business'

10. Include people in some shots

Don't be afraid to show a family member holding a pet or interacting in some way. If your son talks to the parakeet, try to capture the moment. If your daughter reads while the cat sleeps in her lap, show them both.

Thank you to Arlene Travis from Arlene's Enchanting Portraits and Trish from Lab Rescue for a successful Therapy Dog Pet Portrait Day which was held on May 12th!

Tasty Treats

Salmon Stick Dog Treats

- 1 (6 ounce) can salmon, in water, drained
- 3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup canola oil

Mix all ingredients in a bowl until dough is uniform. Knead dough until firm. Roll dough out to 1/2 inch thickness. Cut into 2 inch sticks Put cookies on cookie sheet leaving some spaces in between. Bake at 350°F for about 30 to 35 minutes. Cool cookies for about 1 hour, until hard.

Therapy Dog Team of the Year

Congratulations to Laura Hurry and Tessa, of PEI for being named this years Therapy Dog Team of the Year.



Whose commitment and dedication to the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program has made a difference in Prince Edward Island

What's Going On?

Read on to see what the Program has been up to and where we are headed!

Promotional Events

Over the spring the Therapy Dog Program attended the Safety Services Trade Show, the St. John Ambulance Fundraiser Luncheon, 50+ Expo, the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association Conference, and the Scotian Gold Pet Day. We also had a volunteer and their dog be filmed for a segment on CTV's Live at Five for Pet First Aid demonstrations. As you can see the program has been very busy these last few months! I'd like to thank all of the volunteers who took time out of their day to come help out at all these events, your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Program Growth

Since the last issue of the Barker we have held five evaluations, which were held in Yarmouth, South Shore, Metro and Antigonish. In total, we welcomed 25 new Teams to the Therapy Dog Program!

We are trying very hard to grow the Program all over Nova Scotia and PEI and we are looking for some help from our volunteers to do this! If you are interested in helping us take around posters and/or brochures to different veterinary clinics, shopping malls, pet stores, or any place that might gain awareness of the Program, please let me know and I will mail some out to you to do this. If each volunteer were to take 1 poster to a "doggy" spot or grocery store that they visit from time to time, that would be over 270 different organizations/stores promoting the Therapy Dog Program!

Don't forget to 'Like us' on Facebook!
St. John Ambulance NS/PEI

Volunteer Spotlight

written and submitted by Zonia Clancy of Halifax



Scout has been a blessing in my life as well as numerous others. We started volunteering in 2009 and from our first day working as a Therapy Dog team we have made a regular and passionate commitment to the program. I adopted Scout from the local SPCA in 2007. We went looking for a companion for our other dog Bauj, we wanted a

dog of similar age and that had some training. Scout was the guy to come out and it was love at first sight. Scout was probably one of the fattest dogs I had ever seen, but he was so calm and loving. Once we got him home he settled into the family perfectly, and with controlled feeding and regular walks he lost a huge amount of the weight. That being said he was already an older guy and a stocky dog from the get go so he would never manage to get a lovely waist line back, but that has never stopped him.

After having him with us for two years I learned about the Therapy Dog program through a class at Dalhousie, I went home that afternoon and sent in an application. I was so excited to get started in the program that I drove all the way out to Berwick for our evaluation so I wouldn't have to wait! Scout and I started our placement at the Transitional Care Unit at the Victoria General, a ward for seniors waiting for placement in permanent care facilities. Scout loved his weekly visits. We never got to know those we visited well due to the constant movement of patients in and out of the ward, but Scout was never bothered by that, he loved everyone equally and was happy to visit everyone who was willing to say hello to him. Scout charmed the patients he visited by performing tricks like "waving goodbye", "whispering" so as not to scare anyone with his big booming bark, or just flopping onto his side for a good tummy rub. Scout helped many patients become active again by taking them for walks around the ward.

In 2010 we moved over to the IWK, Scout not only loves kids but it gave him a chance to relax more during his visits as aging was starting to creep up on him. We visited several play rooms at the IWK and Scout would come in with tail wagging, flop over on the floor and wait to be swarmed by giggling kids for tummy rubs. Scout also helped kids to get physically active with walks and just gave them the comfort that only a pet can as most of the kids were missing their own dogs at home. Scout even got his own T-Shirt for the IWK (no one likes fur balls rolling down sterile wards, yet another sign of his aging). Scout cheered kids up on various holidays like Halloween by visiting as "super dog" or the "Easter dog". Scout was only at the IWK for a year before I decided it was time to let Scout retire, he worked hard for two years in the program and I wish we had had longer, but as Scout gets older the more tired he got during his visits.



Scout and I still frequent numerous promotional events during the year. The minute I pull out his "uniform" his tail goes crazy, he knows what he's doing and he can't wait to do it. Therapy Dog work is Scouts job, he loves meeting people and putting a smile on their faces. We will continue to attend events for as long as he's able. In the past year I adopted another dog from the SPCA, a puppy named Kobi, it is still my hope that one day he will be able to step into Scout's paws, but for now he's still a rambunctious puppy, but at least he's got a great role model to learn from.



Extra! Extra!

We are always looking for material for the Barker. Please send us your favorite dog quotes and jokes, photos for our cover dog, stories about your furry friend and notes on special visits!