



A non-profit organization dedicated to a special kind of volunteerism involving canine companionship.

WINTER 2008

An all-volunteer non-profit, 501(C)(3), organization of therapy dogs and their handlers who have worked to improve the emotional health of Vermonters since 1992

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New TDV Officers

Facilities Officer

Beth Alpert recently joined our team, promoting TDV to new facilities and acting as a liaison between our members and the facilities. She joined our organization in 2001 and volunteers at assisted living facilities in the Shelburne area with Pandora, her standard French poodle. She became an evaluator in the fall of 2006. Her e-mail address is: getavisit@therapydogs.org.

Secretary

Please welcome Katie MacDonald as the new TDV secretary. Katie is senior project lead at GE Healthcare Integrated IT Solutions (formerly IDX Systems Corp.). She comes to TDV with loads of experience and eagerly attacks the variety of challenges that come with the secretarial position including maintaining organizational files and handling communications. Katie's canine partner is Maddie, a golden retriever.

TDV Member Support Team

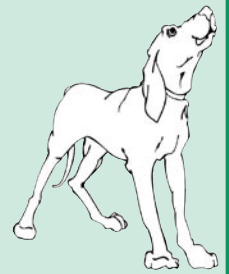
Need help forming or joining a team? Is there anything else you need as a TDV member? Christy and Andrew Hollstein are the new member support team to help TDV members with problems or questions. You might know them as the handlers of Emma the English Mastiff and Tyson the Bullmastiff – two of our biggest and sweetest therapy dogs.



To contact the Member Support Team, you can e-mail membersupport@therapydogs.org.

Welcome New Members!

- Christine Brokaw and Sammi (Golden retriever)
- Samara Coble and Sadie (Cockapoo)
- Crystal Flutur and James Young, and Max (Rottweiler)
- Kristine Owens and Jake (Newfoundland)
- Marian Mumford and Arlo (Yellow lab)
- Marian Mumford and Rory (Black lab)
- Shelley Plankey and Angel (Miniature poodle)
- Betsy McCready and Bonny (Golden retriever)
- May Affleck and Reggie (Sheltie)
- Dorothy Woodrum and Monty (Pekingese)
- Beverly Pratley and Daisy (Golden retriever)
- Raymond Belanger and Fanny (Beagle)
- Jennifer Vaughan and Daisy (Golden retriever)



TDV Membership Renewals

It is that time again. Membership renewals were mailed out on Jan 1. This year, if your dog's rabies certificate is on file and current, you will not need to send us a copy. Your renewal form will specify if we need an updated rabies certificate. With your renewal form will be a notice of our latest policies for your review. Please update the renewal form with any new information and return it with the indicated fees. On the form you will also be able to order a replacement tag, photo ID, bandanna, personalized certificate to honor your dog, and/or support TDV with a donation.

If you did not receive your renewal or if you have any questions, please contact Andy and Christy at membersupport@therapydogs.org

Bringing Visitors On Visits

Isa and Deb Helfrich



If you have a question for me, please e-mail it to: admin@therapydogs.org. I can use your name or you can remain anonymous! Looking forward to your questions! –Isa

We've had several questions for this issue's column...so, enjoy the double feature!

My mom's got family coming from out of town and mom would like them to come with us on a visit to see us do our therapy dog thing. Is that OK?

–Grace (handled by John and Melinda Micheletto)

Dear Grace,

Thank you for asking this question! It is so nice that you would want to have additional family members go with you and your mom and I think it is a terrific idea which will bring even more joy to the people you visit. While TDV policy says TDV dogs can only be handled on duty by the person(s) they were testing and evaluated with, there is no specific policy on bringing along visitors when making therapy dog visits to a facility.

However, here's what I'd advise:

- Always check beforehand with the facility you visit—they will advise you on their policy for having visitors come with you. Some of the places I have been welcome visitors, while others must be more restrictive due to security, patient confidentiality, health concerns, etc.
- If you do have people with you, be mindful that patients may not want extra visitors and that visitors with you must also adhere to facility and TDV policies (especially those referring to safety and infection control).

Isa has received several e-mails in the last few months from members asking about how dogs should behave when working on teams together—especially at events. Isa has asked that we summarize an article she wrote in 2006 and tell you where you can get the full article.

Golden Rules for Working Together:

Visiting on teams and attending events with other teams is a great way to have fun while volunteering. When dogs are working around each other, remember to be safe, give space, and be professional!

- **There is a distinction between work and play**—this distinction helps therapy dogs know what is expected of them when they are working.

- **A “we’re working now” attitude.** This helps teams (both human and canine partners) concentrate on the therapy dog visit.
- **Consider public perception.** What sort of impression would it make to see a team of certified therapy dogs romping and hooting like a pack of hyenas?
- **Safety and politeness.** Even though therapy dogs have been tested for aggression towards other dogs, it is important to keep space from other dogs when working. Handlers should be aware of where their dogs are, or if they are encroaching on another team's space. For example, dogs can't say politely, “ahem, would you please remove your proboscis from my posterior?” Instead, they may feel that they have to growl or raise a lip to warn a rude teammate to give some space. Likewise, be aware if your dog is becoming uncomfortable with another dog in its space—and intercede to get your dog out of the situation.

To read the complete version of this article, “Doggie Etiquette While on Duty,” go to our Web site at www.therapydogs.org/tips.html.

Quick Tips For Health Care

Deb Glottmann, CVT, BS

Whiddling & Wagging

Take a large Miller Forge Nail Trimmer (Orange Handles) and do your initial trimming. Once you have taken off what you feel comfortable clipping, start whiddling. Take each sharp corner of the nail off and before you know it the nail is much shorter. This will take a while but once you are comfortable and your dog knows you are not going to kwik them you will have a much shorter nail and a much happier therapy dog.

My second suggestion is sure to give me an eye roll: Any of you have a Dremmel tool? Use a rough sand paper attachment and file those nails down in a jiffy. Once the dog is used to the noise almost none of them care about the vibration. This does take two people but it works great. With a Dremmel—if you kwik them it almost instantly cauterizes it. I find I can be more careful with the Dremmel and as long as the dog is ok with the noise they really do not care about the vibration. A couple words of caution—if your dog has long hair make sure to keep the tool away from hair—I will sometimes damp wrap a rag around the foot to make sure no hair comes into contact with the tool—hair will wrap around the spinning shaft and stop it. Just go slow and be aware of this.

CANINE BOOK REVIEWS BY FATHER AL

To Breathe Or Not To Breathe, That Is The Question.



About ten years ago I was in a restaurant where a family was celebrating their grandfather's birthday. As an elderly gentleman was passing their table I overheard the following exchange.

"Happy Birthday. How old are you?"

"85."

"I'm 90. Do you know how to live a long life?"

"How?"

"Keep breathing."

Your canine companion has the capacity to read your body language, your emotional state, your mental attitude and your focused energy. It all begins with your breathing. Three important results from your healthy breathing pattern include a heightened energy level, a healthy sense of well-being, and your canine is able to read "where you are" at any given moment.

Your dog observes your every move, and interprets your emotional state. From these vibrations he adjusts his thinking before he responds to a given situation.

When Austin, my golden retriever, and I leave the back door he immediately and intently stares into my eyes looking for a command. Will it be to chase a tennis ball or to just roam the grounds? He reads the sound of my voice or a hand gesture, having been conditioned to recognize who I am or "where I am at."

Although breathing does not depend upon our will to breathe, the way we breathe determines whether or not

a sufficient amount of oxygen, essential to all forms of life, reaches our bloodstream and brain. Oxygen in the air we breathe travels to our lungs, then is absorbed by the bloodstream and finally carried to our brain and other organs. We know that our brain, the most sensitive organ, is permanently damaged if its oxygen supply is cut off for more than about three minutes. On the other hand, if we breathe properly, we maximize the amount of oxygen supplied to our cell tissues. Thus, we become more relaxed, more alert, more in control of our emotions and more focused.

To develop breathing techniques it is necessary that we use our imaginations while we fine-tune our focus. Writing about controlled breathing, Paul Owens contrasts, analogously, the diffused energy of a streetlight to a focused laser beam. The diffused light from a streetlight resembles our normal breathing. A laser beam is concentrated. Our breathing is focused. Using our imagination we focus our attention on our breathing. It is from this controlled laser-like breathing that we are energized.

Before exercising controlled breathing it is advised that you first relax. For example, tighten the muscles in your face and then relax. The whole idea is to tighten and then relax the entire muscle system in your body, thus releasing or letting go of tension (real or imagined).

One controlled breathing exercise is this. Close your eyes. Breathe very slowly and deeply through your nose (mouth closed). Visualize your breath as a clear or white light gradually moving from your nose down into your lungs allowing your stomach to expand, *not your upper body*. Hold your breath for several seconds and then very slowly exhale through your mouth. One result is that you clean out your lungs from accumulated "dead air."

Dr. Allen M. Schoen recommends that we allow our animal friends to sleep near us and that we breathe with them. In his *Kindred Spirits*, Dr. Schoen described an incident that reinforced his connection with animals. One time, while in a tent, he realized that a horse was lying outside breathing heavily. He joined the horse's breathing pace and fell asleep. When he woke at sunrise he saw not one but many horses, still fast asleep, their slow breathing creating clouds of vapor as they inhaled and exhaled.

Owens, Paul, Dog Whisperer, Adams Media Corp., Avon, MA. 1999.

Schoen, Allen M. Kindred Spirits, Random House, NY, 2001.

TDV Officers:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Steve Reiman | <i>President, Founder</i> |
| Deb Helfrich | <i>Vice President</i> |
| Katie MacDonald | <i>Secretary</i> |
| Linda Samter | <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Lori Canney | <i>Development Officer & Fundraising</i> |
| Beth Alpert | <i>Facilities Officer</i> |

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|----------------|----------------------------|
| Amanda Blaszyk | <i>Newsletter Editor</i> |
| Debbie Safran | <i>Newsletter Designer</i> |

TDV Support Team:

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|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Michael Clapp | <i>TDV Legal Advisor</i> |
| Thomas Oliver | <i>Liaison to UVM</i> |
| Cathy Jones | <i>FAHC Coordinator</i> |
| Kristin Jones | <i>Communications Advisor</i> |
| Dr. Michael Ricci | <i>Health Advisor</i> |
| Dr. Lisa Nelson | <i>Veterinary Behavior Consultant</i> |

FEATURE ARTICLE

Breast Cancer Conference a Success

by Catherine Cooper-Ellis

South Burlington's 10th annual breast cancer conference on Nov. 3 was once again heavily attended by cancer patients, cancer survivors, family members, caregivers, medical professionals and therapy dogs. The increase in attendance may be a result of higher survival rates from breast cancer, up 30 percent since 1990, as well as increased awareness of the disease.

Although the conference is largely educational in focus, for many survivors it provides a day for celebrating the gift of another year. It has become an annual reunion and sharing of joy, a time to thank caregivers, and to join with others who are just starting the road to recovery. It is a conference focused on current research, new treatment modalities, and new understanding about prevention. The main message is one of hope for the future.

Therapy dogs are perfectly suited to carry a message of hope. Dogs excel at enjoying every precious day. The presence of doggy smiles and wagging tails invite us all to live in the moment with them. Once again, teams from Therapy Dogs of Vermont brought joy and hope to attendees. The expert organizational skills and energy of Tom Hussey ensured that canine participation ran smoothly. Tom put in a full day overseeing the booth and deserves many thanks.

The laughter generated by encounters with dogs and handlers was an outstanding feature of the therapy dog

Positively Thankful

Pamela Boutin-Adams

Clayton and I had a meaningful time at the Breast Cancer Conference at the Sheraton this year. We had been involved in this last year and it meant so much to me that I couldn't wait to go again. For all that these people have gone through, to see the smiles and hear the laughing when they came to our booth was truly special. They enjoyed the dogs and you could just feel the positive energy. I know this is why Clayton and I make visits – to brighten someone's day. Clayton and I have been visiting Pillsbury Manor North on Williston Road for five years. He gets as much out of it as I do. We have made and sadly lost many friends, but to know how much they enjoy seeing us each week and what happiness it brings them, makes it all worth while. To all the volunteers, good work!

presence. Laughter, smiles and wags filled the therapy dog area. The healing power of our teams was clearly visible.

Thanks to the dedicated handlers who participated: Roberta Haskin, Pamela Boutin-Adams, Christy and Andy Holstein, Allison Ciolino, Marc Monheimer, Kathy Brown, Pat Perry, Krissy Senkier, and Tom Hussey.

Therapy dogs and their handlers meet and greet people at the Breast Cancer Conference



FEATURE ARTICLE

St. Mike's Students Go To The (Therapy) Dogs...

Danielle Graham

Q. What do you get when you introduce a St. Michael's College marketing professor and TDV handler to a TDV board member who is starting a puppy class for aspiring therapy dogs?

A. Canines Company, Pup Lovin' and the Love Puppies.

Let me explain. Melinda Micheletto, who teaches in the business and accounting department at St. Mike's, assigned her marketing class to work with TDV to develop a name and logo for the puppy class that board member Deb Helfrich is organizing. Called the "Apprentice Challenge," Melinda styled the project after Donald Trump's show, *The Apprentice*.

In late October, three teams of about 10 students presented their suggestions for names and logos, using original artwork, to a panel of judges, consisting of Melinda, Deb, Molly Jones (a therapy dog), and myself. The winning name, created by the Love Puppies, was Puppy Prep School. The competition was very stiff with all four judges highly impressed by the final products, as well as

the students' enthusiastic grasp of the spirit of the therapy dog program.

I should say that the three human judges were impressed with the students' efforts. Molly mostly enjoyed the love and pets she received from the students. Maybe it was no accident that the dog on the winning logo highly resembled Molly as a wee pup.

In addition to TDV procuring a name and logo for the puppy course and the students receiving real life experience, as well as a visit from a therapy dog, it appears that TDV will be given an invitation from St. Mike's to come for a stress release session with students during final exams. This models the wildly successful program ongoing at UVM.

Danielle Graham is the handler of Molly Jones, a Golden Retriever who visits Fanny Allen's Long Term Rehab Center on Monday mornings. Melinda Micheletto belongs to Grace, a rescued Lab who spends her free time visiting patients in at The Respite House in Williston.



The new logo for TDV's puppy class



The winning team, the Love Puppies: Jed Ladd, Martina Gajdosova, Kevin Richard, Eric Mitchell, John McLean, Al Assefa, Matt Whitney, Nick Romano, and Kelly Boulter (not pictured).

FEATURE ARTICLE

Lacey Says Goodbye

by Lea Terhune

Lacey was a therapy dog at Converse Home for many years. Every Saturday she visited, and when one of her friends there was in hospital or rehab, she visited them there, too. Recently, it was her turn to need comfort. She had emergency surgery on a Thursday, and went to the vet for a check-up the following Saturday. We asked the vet if she thought it would be OK for Lacey to visit Converse Home, as usual, and she said it would be ok. When we arrived, Lacey stayed in the van and her friends came out to see her. Gail spent some quiet time with her, and Connie climbed right in the van beside Lacey and gave her the special back and tummy rub. Everyone fought back tears, wished Lacey courage, and told her how loved she is, and that she is in everyone's prayers. They reminded Lacey that she is their Hometown Hero, now and forever! The next three Saturdays, Lacey joined her friends in the parlor before lunch. We told funny stories about Lacey, and gave her lots of hugs. Lacey died at home with the help of wonderful Dr. McMillan, with her beloved Granddad by her side. Being a therapy dog was her proudest achievement and she wore her bandanna proudly.



To read more about Lacey, visit <http://laceysurgery.blogspot.com/>

Halloween Helpers

Andy and Christy Hollstein

Northwestern Medical Center hosted a Halloween party for the kids. We always dress Emma & Ty up for Halloween anyway when we bring them in to visit. The kids loved them and of course the patients and the nursing staff did, too!

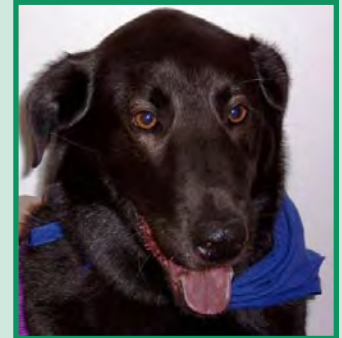
Emma and Tyson bring dog therapy to staff and patients alike



Nursing Students Learn About TDV

Margo Dana

Jacques and I gave our third presentation to the third-year nursing students at UVM in October. We told them about what we do with TDV and experiences that folks have encountered. We also showed a disc on a big screen about how the organization began, how it's growing in our community and the good that has come out of these visits with our dogs. Jacques goes off leash and works the crowd as I am talking, which engages the students. As we were leaving, the professor said, "Well I saw some smiles on two of my students for the first time since school started!"



Jacques

"Cancer and Your Greyhound" Still Available

Too many people have already learned that cancer affects pets as well as people. Appropriate for all breeds of dog, this collection of articles and essays has technical information as well as personal stories about different types of canine cancers and treatments—and how to decide if treatment is not appropriate for your dog. Profits are donated to canine cancer research; to date, over \$700 has been raised! To order, please contact Debbie Safran at 802-989-2410 or e-mail: debbie@downdogystudio.com.