

Welcome New Members!

Sarah Beers & Birdie
 Patricia Coe & Derek
 Kathy McGrath & Wanda
 Julie Noyes & Tank
 Jill Badolato & Moose
 Jackie Enzor & Tink
 Amy Woodruff & Harley Davidson
 Deborah Wright & Xander
Julie Noyes & Tank
 Jamie Balch & Levi
 Serena Chang & Frosty
 Colleen Bartlett & Posy

J. Gale & D. Boardman & Tully
 Hollie Shaner-McRae & Sophie
 Lynn Goulding & Cosar
 Robyn Comstock & Bubba
 Fran Kinghorn & Otis
 Lisa Yordy & Gracie
 Maria Stadlmayer & Luna
 Wendy Rieger & Jiggs
 Jan Lawson & Zumi
 Devon Canastra & Eitan
 Julie Wojtkowski & Lucy
 Kasandra Fleury & Maggie-Mae

Joy Karnes & Brinkley
 J. Toce & J. Belding & Ozzie
 Maryjean Hochberg & Bella
 Catherine Bergeron-Radoux & Djobi
 Janet Auman & Kanika
 Lance Metayer & Angel
 Meghan Bartlett & Liberty
 Merle Siiro & Patch
 Nancy/David Babbott & Jackson
 Corey Mack & Chula
 Julia Gregory & Koko
 Dorise Kowalewski & Django

Robert/Claire McLeish & Novak
 Kathleen McGuire & Dewey
 Wendy Mackenzie & Hershey
 Devin Lumbra & Dakota
 Karen Fiebig & Renee
 Susan Wolf & Yoshie
 Tim Pollack & Jubal
 Chelsea Beauregard & Maggie
 Linda Harmon & Bella
 Mary Lou Ziter & Deali
 Diane Forsey & Chico
 Kim Lambertson & Lilly
 Dorothy VanGerbig & Mocha

Greetings from BigDog

By Steve Reiman

I believe TDV to be a special organization, a group of members and friends proud of their past and excited about their future. Above all, it is a non-profit defined by the character and integrity of its members. As we volunteer to unleash smiles in our communities, we bring hope, laughter, and happiness that might not otherwise be there.

What I started nearly 20 years ago, has grown beyond 200 active members throughout Vermont, neighboring states, and Canada. The stories of member visitations abound. There are stories about children and adults in hospitals and other health-related facilities. There are stories about residents in retirement communities and nursing homes. There are stories about patients in rehabilitation facilities, treatment centers, inmates in correctional facilities, and residents in shelters and crisis centers. There are stories about students, faculty, and staff in schools, libraries, and youth centers. Some stories are mentioned in passing, some are in the press, others are on radio and TV. All are heart-warming and proof that what we do is a true blessing to our communities.

To all TDV members, I want to say that you make me proud. To all officers and support people, you make me even more proud because without you, none of this could be happening. I am deeply grateful to all of you.





Ask Isa

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

Dear Isa:

What do I do if I meet people who are allergic to me?

—Micro, Maltese

Dear Micro:

You may encounter people who would LOVE to pat you, but simply can't due to allergy. Dogs can also trigger an asthma attack in people who have asthma that is aggravated by extrinsic factors.

Dog allergies are common, but each person's reactions may vary widely. Don't be fooled into thinking a typical allergy attack is simply a benign case of the sniffles and some watery eyes which quickly are alleviated once the pet has left the room. Sure, for many people, an allergy attack is merely an annoying inconvenience. However, for some, allergy attacks can be much more severe, causing unconsciousness, closing of the throat or swelling of the tongue, and hives. Also, pet dander can remain in an uncleaned or unventilated room long after the pet leaves, so once you go, the allergy attack doesn't go with you!

Also, the notion that some breeds are "hypo-allergenic" is a myth. While some people may react to some breeds more than others, many allergic people have been subject to horrific attacks because someone plopped a dog on their bed and said "It's okay, he's hypo-allergenic!" Please respect allergies even if you've been told your dog is a hypo-allergenic breed.

What can you do to respect the health of allergy patients?

•Once someone alerts you to allergy, leave that person's space right away!

•If you must visit a patient who shares a room with someone with allergy, ask the person first if it is safe for you to visit; if so, make your visit as brief as possible.

•Since allergies aren't necessarily posted on a room door as an "isolation" warning is, it can be a good idea to ask the head nurse to make you aware of any allergy patients on the floor so you can avoid those rooms.

Thanks to Dr. Michael Ricci for his advice and review on this article!

If you have any questions related to making safe visits, please do not hesitate to e-mail Deb or Isa at admin@therapydogs.org or Christy and Andy, your member support officers, at membersupport@therapydogs.org

The Soul of Your Dog

By Fr. Al. Murphy

In the year 2000, in the small town of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Stephen Huneck opened the doors of a chapel of his creation, dedicated to dogs. At the entrance to the chapel on "Dog Mountain" a sign reads:

**WELCOME- ALL CREEDS - ALL BREEDS
NO DOGMAS ALLOWED**

The chapel is a gesture of thanks from Stephen Huneck, a folk artist, to his three dogs who helped him recuperate from a serious virus illness which held him in a coma for two months. Stephen's faith filled wife, Gwen, and their dogs were continuously present supporting him throughout his recovery. When I visited Dog Mountain for the second time in August 2009, I saw literally hundreds of notes posted on the walls of the chapel. Each message expressed the pain of loss dog-lovers felt after the death of their pets. Written sentiments included a reflection of hope, that one day there will be a reunion. A word of "thanks" for the spiritual bond that exists between companions and their canines was a paramount theme read by visitors to the chapel where dogs are most welcome. Whispering and silent guests spontaneously admitted an atmosphere of sacredness to the nonsectarian prayer space. Why? Why would Stephen erect a chapel and focus his art toward the realization that dogs play an important role in connecting us to nature? Why were local clergymen willing to participate in the blessing ceremonies that gave special meaning to this unique memorial?

The answers lie in the soul of the dog. A soul is not an object with dimensions that we can measure. A soul cannot be seen, but its presence is known by what it does. A soul indicates the presence of life. Much like electricity poised at the switch of a lamp. When the switch is turned on the "life" of electricity flows and light fills the room. The presence of this invisible electricity is known by what it does.

Soul and life are generally accepted as identical. For centuries philosophers, theologians, psychologists and biologists agree that "soul is the principle of life in a being." Plants, animals, humans (who are part of the animal kingdom) have souls. Different thinkers make a distinction between the human soul and that of other animals. Even though the human is

more gifted in the way of intelligence, decision making than say, your dog, does not change the fact that your dog has a soul. The point is that each created living being was given certain qualities; for example, love, compassion, patience, beauty. How those gifts are used or not used is significant. "Brute" animals live out their lives by following their instincts, responding to emotions, and thinking. We, on the other hand, often misuse our gifts and talents. Once we let go of our prejudices against animals, it will follow that we will become aware of their uniqueness. Further, when we look in the eyes of an animal, the mirror of their souls, we will be willing to accept that there is a spiritual quality in all life. Loren Eiseley wrote, "One does not meet oneself until one catches the reflection from an eye other than human."

When you turn on the lamp's light switch electrical energy flows. When you look into the eyes of your dog and "get into his head" and try to understand why he does what he does, awareness energy flows. When your sleeping dog cries or wags his tail while dreaming, when she barks warning you of an intruder, when he reacts to learned conditioning, when he looks at you for permission to accept a stranger, when she studies your daily routine and responds accordingly, when he seeks and gives affection, when he displays such emotions as fear, anxiety, happiness, sadness, when she searches for quiet time, especially toward the end of her life on earth, when a dog daily returns to the burial place of its master, when your dog (fill in your observations) you know that his/her soul is at work. Thinkers go beyond the thought of a person's immortal soul and argue that dogs may go to heaven. No one can prove otherwise. Why would the Supreme Being or Higher Power fail to recognize the loyal and healing powers the dog gives to our lives? Since all visible and invisible beings are created from the same Divine power, would there not be some share of an eternal life, a heaven, for all of God's creatures?

C.S. Lewis, a novelist, lay theologian, essayist and academic, remarked that canine loyalty and affection oftentimes put human fidelity and friendship to shame. Because of this he thought that maybe dogs would be allowed to join their masters in heaven.

Significant readings:

McElroy, Susan C. Animals as Teachers & Healers. Balentine Books, NY 1997

Fox, Michael W. The Boundless Circle. Theosophical House. Il. 1996.

Folk artist Stephen Huneck, whose whimsical paintings, sculptures and woodcut prints of dogs celebrated his love of animals and won him a worldwide fan base, has died. He was 60.

Khese, 1995—2009

By Deb Helfrich



We remember Khese as a remarkable, intuitive therapy dog who gravitated to terminally ill children, befriending them and making them her special little people.

In her years as a therapy dog at FAHC Pediatrics, she comforted and said goodbye to many such children. Those who knew her also joked about her tendency to seek out those people most others avoided—the homeless, the mentally ill, and those in trouble with the law; she loved anyone in handcuffs and could win over even the most hardened, tattooed, angry individual.

Her intelligence, personality, and spirit enriched our lives in so many ways, every day of her life. Though there is a hole in our hearts because of her passing, we are comforted that she has been freed from a body that could no longer contain her tremendous spirit.

Liza, 1996—2009

By Lonni Rodgers



She will be remembered by her family, canine and human, as a loving, sensitive, caring soul both at home and at 'work' (classrooms, libraries, senior centers) and be especially missed by Brooky who hopes soon to become active as a TDV.

Maggie, 1996—2009

By Carol & Howard Ball



We rescued Maggie in the spring of 1999. She comforted Max, our first therapy dog, through his last few months. We knew at that time she was special. In the fall Maggie began her journey as certified as a therapy dog.

Maggie worked regularly at FAHC where she spread joy to the nurses, doctors, staff, volunteers and the patients on the various floors. On McClure 5, she snuggled up to the patients, listened to their own pet stories and enjoyed the love they gave her. When she finished her work, the nurses would always have an ice cream cup waiting for her. She will be remembered.

When ICU was available for the dogs, Maggie was a regular there. She helped two coma patients: a man who was in a coma for 3 months from a hunting accident and a 19 yr. old young man who was in a coma for a week from a car accident. Both were awakened by her nuzzling nose on their fingers. She will be remembered.

Maggie enjoyed her work on the pediatric floor, sitting with the children on their beds or walking with those who could go with her for walks in the halls. She was a ham when she did a commercial with Dr. First. She will be remembered.

Maggie was Vermont's first Reading Dog, introducing the program at Barnes Elementary School in Burlington. Every Friday she looked forward to greeting the children, faculty and staff. She would sit on the floor with the children, listen to their books with sincere interest, and enjoy the treats they would give her when they finished reading. She will be remembered.

In June, 2004, Maggie was honored by the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association where she received the "Professional Dog of the Year Award." She will be remembered.

Maggie last task was this November where she gave all her love to the students at Marshall Hall at UVM. She will be remembered.

One Year Later: TDV's Training Programs

By Deb Helfrich

Over the years, TDV had often received requests from the public to offer training classes for aspiring therapy dog teams. Last year, I had the pleasure of developing and launching TDV's first training programs and the first of those were offered in June of 2008. Currently, there are two offerings in TDV's training program:

•**Puppy Prep School** is a six- or seven-week class for puppies eight weeks to five months of age; it focuses on social skills with people and dogs, exposure to new experiences, and relationship-building obedience and manners. It involves the community by bringing in a wide variety of guests for each class to socialize the puppies, and has included local celebrities such as WOKO DJ CK Coin, President of the Vermont Police Canine Association, and Rusty Dewey. The graduation ceremony takes place at a nursing home, where the pups and their handlers demonstrate their skills in an actual visitation environment.

Since June 2008, TDV has graduated over 40 puppies from these classes!

•**Therapy Dog Preparatory Clinics:** These two-hour clinics let handlers and their dogs experience the complete Therapy Dogs of Vermont certification test—along with explanations and tips related to each component of the test. The clinic includes assessing each team's needs in the first part of the clinic and designing a training plan for the second hour—often dealing with a wide range of issues related to obedience and handling skills and dog behavior.

Since October 2008, TDV has had nearly 50 teams participate these clinics!

These training programs would not be possible without the help of many important people: Christy Hollstein and Andy Hollstein who assist at all the puppy classes and clinics; other assistants have included Connie Barrett and Steve Reiman; the Mallet's Bay Fire Department which has been immensely generous with allowing us to use their space on an ongoing basis; the recreation departments of Milton and Essex who have teamed with us to offer classes; the Milton Grange Hall and St. Albans VFW who have also donated space; Starr Farm Nursing Home for hosting our Puppy Prep School graduations; and ICF Macro for the printing and copying for course materials.

100% of the class fees from the puppy classes and the clinics go to supporting TDV. I am proud to report that the TDV training program has earned \$7,450.00 for TDV since June, 2008.



The Management of TDV

By Steve Reiman

TDV is completely run and managed by a handful of volunteers who have stepped up to take tremendous responsibility for seeing to all parts of the organization, its members, and all the people we serve out there our many communities. This involves everything from the wide range of member support our therapy dog teams receive, to maintaining our substantial membership files/database, to keeping our books, to answering countless emails from the public, to managing relationships with the facilities our teams visit and forging new therapy dog programs, attending dog-related events and giving presentations in the community, to fundraising, to daily operations, to testing and training potential therapy dog teams, and so much more.

The TDV Officer Team

Steve Reiman began volunteering in Fletcher Allen Health Care's pediatric ward with his German Shepherds on Good Friday, 1990. In 1992, Steve founded TDV and remains the President handling the day-to-day operations management and administration of the organization. Steve is the contact for community relations, TDV presentations, newsletters, and maintains TDV web content.

Linda Samter joined TDV in 1992, volunteering with her Border Collie, Cheyenne, and soon began taking over all of the duties of the Treasurer including handling all of the bookkeeping, insurance, IRS, and financial related matters.

Christy & Andy Hollstein have been involved with TDV since 2005 and have been the Member Support and Facilities Officers for more than two years. They provide support such as connecting new and existing members with teams and facilities, addressing member's questions and concerns, and providing a full range of facility-related support. They have been active volunteers at Northwestern Medical Center with their Bullmastiff Tyson, English Mastiff Emma, and Pug, Mr. Wrinkles; they are actively involved with TDV Testing, Puppy Classes, and Clinics.

TDV Officer Changes & Additions

Deb Helfrich was formerly both our VP and Officer in charge of Testing & Training. After serving as VP for nearly 9 years, she is now devoting her TDV time as Testing & Training Officer and focusing on the many aspects, documents, processes, and management of our testers, evaluators and training assistants related to TDV Puppy

Classes, Clinics, TD Testing, and Evaluations. Last year she launched TDV's first training programs, which earned TDV nearly \$7,000 in its first year.

Sherri Bushee has been successful as the TDV Secretary and is moving on in the newly-created position of Events Coordinator. She will be in charge of TDV's appearance at events around the state. She has already proved her effectiveness at this by organizing TDV's presence at Petco in December. Sherri also played a critical role in organizing TDV's appearance at last September's Shelburne Museum Goes to the Dogs.

Please welcome **Macaela Ann Brier** as TDV's Secretary. Among many other things, she will maintain TDV's many organizational files, track assets and inventory, manage the online officer forum, and handle all aspects of the monthly officer meetings.

Please welcome **Teresa Watson** as TDV's Volunteer Coordinator. This is a new position and entails working with the officer team to determine the organization's needs for help and then determine the best way to get volunteers into those areas to support the organization's needs and growth. Teresa will also be in charge of organizing the annual membership meeting.

TDV Officers

Steve Reiman *President/Founder*

Linda Samter, *Treasurer*

Macaela Ann Brier, *Secretary*

Deb Helfrich, *Testing & Training*

Sherri Bushee, *Events Coordinator*

Christy & Andy Hollstein, *Member & Facility Support*

TDV Support Team

Thomas Oliver, *Liaison to UVM*

Cathy Jones, *FAHC Coordinator*

Kristin Jones, *Communications Advisor*

Dr. Lisa Nelson, *Veterinary Behavior Consultant*

Dr. Michael Ricci, *Health Advisor*

Amanda Blaszyk, *Editor*

Starr Jewell Marketing Services, *Design & Image*

Chad Bonanno, *Legal Advisor*

Jenn Knauer, *Facilitator/Team Dynamics Advisor*

Jan Marinelli, *Strategic Advisor*