

Four-on-the-Floor

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Dogs at Work

Many TherapyPets volunteers bring their dogs with them to work. In this issue of *Four-on-the-Floor* we hear from two volunteers whose TherapyPets help out in the field of education.

In her column on page two, chapter founder Gail Green shares her insights from a recent dog show. The common theme is that dogs by their nature are supportive of and beneficial to people.

Four-on-the-Floor would like to thank all the writers who contributed to this newsletter. We encourage other readers to submit their own stories for publication.

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Rescue Squared

By Connie Woulff

"Rescue" can have many meanings. Yes, I rescued Sally from the Berkeley Animal Shelter, but she rescued me from the effects of my husband's illness and death. As a bonus, she also provides reassurance to the children who attend my learning center and companionship to the residents of a retirement home.

When my husband of 37 years died in early April

2002, after a difficult six months, I was in pretty bad shape both physically and mentally. Sally was my guide back to a stable life. She needed a routine of daily care, including walks. At first, I could manage only a slow and shaky trip around the block, but worked my way up to longer expeditions. More importantly, this 8-year-old Springer spaniel is a constant companion.

Sally comes to work with me, and the children at the learning center respond to her immediately. Fortunately, she's a tolerant dog, who doesn't mind having children hug her, kiss her,

and lay their heads on her tummy. She's made what might be a stressful experience (an hour of one-on-one tutoring) more comfortable, and the children instinctively recognize this. More than once, a mother has reminded her child at the end of a lesson to "say goodbye" and the child responds, "Goodbye, Sally."

Because Sally is such a gentle, loving dog, my 93-year-old mother-in-law looks forward to her visits. That gave me an idea: Why not have Sally provide companionship to others? Through TherapyPets, Sally now drops in every Monday to a retirement home and is welcomed by the residents.

She's made a real difference in my life, and continues to bring joy and comfort to both children and older people. She's a "rescue dog" in every sense of the word.



DOUG MURDOCK PHOTO

Sally and Kelsey read a book during a break from Kelsey's tutoring session.

Yours Truly, Jasper

By Margery Eriksson

My dog, Jasper, a Therapy Pet for the past 3 years, is so clever! He writes my third graders several times per year, on the computer, reminding them to behave and do their best work so that he can come visit them. He especially likes to write to kids who are just learning English, using a controlled, basic vocabulary so that they will respond to him in writing, either in their primary language, or in limited English. They are so pleased to get these letters that often their first piece of writing is a note responding to HIS letter.

Jasper uses the font called Sand and loves to ask the students appropriate Science and Mathematics ques-

tions to which they always respond. He has been known to take a very depressed 8 year old and make him laugh for the first time in memory. Behavior problems always respond to his pleas for getting along. The days he visits are also memorable for the children. They work harder than usual so that he'll be sure to visit. And kids from previous years still write him and visit when he comes to school. I can't imagine teaching without Jasper!

Jasper leads Margery and more Dorothys in a Halloween parade at school.



BONNIE NELSON PHOTO

Facilities Update

by Carol Crane

Updated Facilities Roster

Keeping TherapyPet teams matched with facilities for visits is a never-ending ever-changing task. As an all-volunteer group regularly interacting with activity directors who frequently change positions, we have little hope of maintaining accurate information. We're trying to improve the situation and we need help!

There's a campaign underway to contact the many facilities that have appeared in our files over the past ten years. We're calling each location, updating the name of the activity director, seeing who is visiting them now, and telling them that we will send out current TherapyPets information as well as a new facility visitation form for them to sign and return. Each call takes about 4 minutes to complete and another person handles all paper work.

We Need Help

If you can volunteer for as little as two hours during March or April to make some of these calls it would help greatly. Please contact Carol Crane at carolkrane@earthlink.net. Special thanks to Peg Darby (Higgins) one our newest volunteers, for an extraordinary amount of help on this campaign!

Facilities Seeking Visits

Here are some facilities we recently contacted who said they'd like to add TherapyPets teams to their activities. This list includes locations where no one currently visits as well as those who regularly have visits and want more.

In Berkeley:

- Berkeley Pines (Aaron Harvey) (510) 649-6670
- Chaparral House (Chizuko Lampman) (510) 848-8774
- Elmwood Guardian (Sharon Pinkofh) (510) 848-3760

In Castro Valley

- Baywood Court (Terry Tury) (510) 733-2419
- Eden Villa (Ken Schmidt) (510) 582-2765
- Laurel Grove (Jocelyn Pagsolangan) (510) 727-2755

In Concord

- Guardian of Concord (Suzi Gilles) (510) 825-1300
- Mount Diablo Medical Pavilion (925) 674-4117

In Elk Grove

- Crestwood/Elk Grove Convalescent (Veronica Meek) (916) 685-9525

In Fremont

- Sunrise Village (Linda Sobieski) (510) 525-0910

In Greenbrae

- Greenbrae Convalescent (Jean Morgan) (415) 461-9700

In Hayward

- St. Rose Hospital (Sister Rose) (510) 264-4058

In Los Gatos

- Terrano Gardens (Carl DiLeonardo) (408)356-8136

In Martinez

- Center for Rehabilitation and Extended Care (Coralee Cellini) (925) 370-4794

In Oakland

- Garfield Behavior Center (Susan LeBlanc) (510) 231-9191
- High Street Convalescent (Manji Dillon) (510) 533-9970
- Lakeshore Convalescent Hospital (Gaffar Syed) (510) 834-9880

In Richmond

- Shields Richmond (Zenaiba Pacheco) (510) 233-8513
- West County Adult Day Care (Dianne Keller) (510) 235-6277

In San Pablo

- St. Thomas Anthony (Margaret Soto) (510) 232-7203

Rocco Retires

Rocco retires from Matilda Brown Retirement Home. Rocco and Jean Lieber have been visiting at Matilda Brown Retirement Home, on 42nd Street in Oakland, for several years. Due to foot cancer and resulting surgery, Rocco is no longer able to make TherapyPet visits.

TherapyPets

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Lyme Disease a Cause For Concern

Ticks that carry the disease are hard to detect and symptoms vary widely. Regular self-examination and avoiding high-risk areas are the best protection.

THEY'RE TINY. It's easy to miss the little suckers. A nymph is the size of a poppy seed and an adult about as big as a sesame seed. But they can certainly pack a wallop if they bite you.

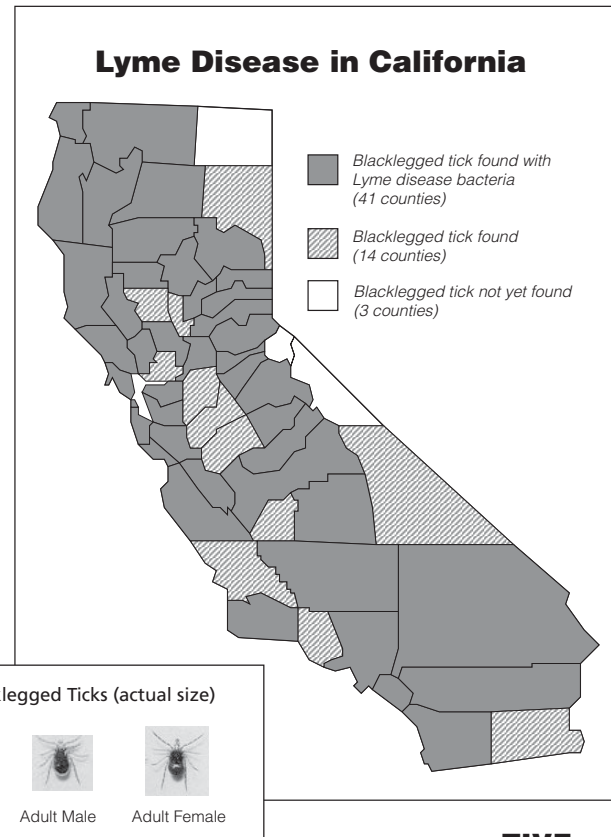
The nymph and adult female western Blacklegged tick transmit *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the spirochete bacteria that causes Lyme disease. This insect (also known as the deer tick) has been found in most of California including the Bay Area.

Active from spring to mid summer, nymph ticks are most likely to carry the bacteria. They live in oak leaf litter which is abundant throughout parklands in the East Bay. Adults are most active from fall through early spring.

In a 1999 study by UC Berkeley researcher Dr. Bob Lane, 5.7% of blacklegged tick nymphs tested in Tilden Park carried the infectious disease agent, and about 1% of the adults.

EARLY SYMPTOMS of the disease, evidenced within days or weeks of contact, include muscle aches, pain in joints, headache, fever, chills, flu-like symptoms, paralysis of facial muscles and palpitations.

Later symptoms (occurring weeks, months or years after infection) may be the first indication of Lyme disease for some people. They include numbness, burning or tingling in the arms or legs, twitching of muscles in the



face, arms or legs, pain and swelling of one or a few joints (typically the knees), and difficulty concentrating, learning, remembering or speaking.

A TherapyPets volunteer who contracted the disease three years ago in Tilden or Chabot park first noticed a black dot on her ankle, flicked it off in the shower and after three days noticed a bull's-eye rash around the area. Later she broke out in a poison oak-like rash on her back. Her doc-

tor prescribed an antibiotic which proved ineffective and she's since developed the chronic form of the illness.

FOLLOWING INFECTION, prompt treatment with the proper antibiotic is best. The Lyme disease sufferer I interviewed recommends insisting on Doxycycline if symptoms of the illness are evident.

Screening tests can be unreliable, yielding false negatives. The Igenex lab reportedly administers a more accurate screening test than most others.

Production of a human vaccine was discontinued a year ago, allegedly due to its low effectiveness rate, adverse reactions of some test subjects and possible legal actions.

Although dogs may also be at risk, the East Bay veterinarians I spoke with reported treating very few cases. The canine vaccine is said to be about 85% effective.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE protection is to avoid mixed deciduous hardwood forests from spring till mid summer, says Dr. Lane. In areas where blacklegged ticks are known to occur, preventative measures include wearing light-colored clothing to more easily spot ticks, tucking shirt into pants and pants into boots, staying on trails and regular self examination.

A California Bureau of Health Services brochure may be downloaded from online at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/disb/disbindex.htm>.

Founder's Column

I attended the Golden Gate Kennel Club dog show this past weekend as a spectator. There were dogs of all sizes and shapes, from the diminutive Chihuahuas (a personal favorite) to the masterful Great Danes. There were people of all sizes, shapes and ages, too.

We were there on Sunday, day two of the proceedings, and saw the tail end (pun intended) of the showing and benching.

There was a theme this year that I noticed perhaps more than in previous years. I noticed that there were a lot of therapy dogs there, showing off their talents and their beauty.

In one corner, I saw an elderly woman with her prized Cavalier King Charles Spaniel asleep in her lap, while her own eyes drooped and closed. In another corner, I saw a young man asleep on the bench with his Bullmastiff's wrinkled face resting across his back. In one niche, a young girl was parading her Labrador Retriever in front of ogling onlookers, and in another niche was a gentleman primping and shaping his Standard Poodle's hair.

Each one providing a therapy of some sort, whether it be comforting them in their time of exhaustion, or providing them an opportunity to socialize with others, they were all doing just what dogs do.

Every dog is just a registered dog in the rough! Add a little training and socializing and there you have a prospective therapy dog. I got so much pleasure knowing that these people had their companions, and felt much pride in the fact that we as TherapyPets members are only helping these animals do what they do naturally.

Keep up the great work.

**Gail S. Green, Founder
TherapyPets**

Making Valentines Event A TherapyPets First

February first found members of 13 different TherapyPets teams demonstrating their artistic talents. This year special valentines were made picturing the heart of each TherapyPets volunteer team, the significant canine. Each team was provided with a master sheet of valentines in the mail. Those wanting additional valentines to decorate and distribute came to Claremont House in Oakland. With stickers, colored pencils, markers, oil pastels and treats, all had a great time decorating their valentines.

This gathering was an event only for two-footed volunteers since it was held in the special private dining room at the Claremont House. Even better

was the fun to follow up distributing valentines in visits during the month.

At Sierra Nevada Hospital Franklin made the rounds. Even those patients not sure about having an up close visit with a dog enjoyed getting a special valentine. Some said these would probably be the only valentines they would be receiving this year, and were very grateful to get them.

Please contact *Four-on-the-Floor* with any interesting experiences you had distributing valentines. With such a positive response to this year's program, it's anticipated we'll hold the event again in 2004.

— Terry Mitchell



Amanda and Inga creating cards.

LEAL CHARRONET PHOTO

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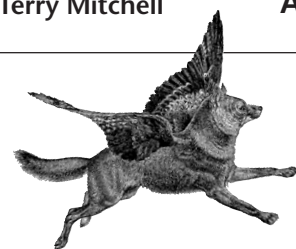


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Mission Statement

TherapyPets is an organization of volunteers and their pets who visit various facilities in order to enrich the lives of children and adults. Through this experience, we all become aware of the rewards of TherapyPets and encourage others to actively participate. Guidelines, training, and education for the owners and their pets are provided to ensure proper etiquette during visits. Our volunteer teams share the love that comes from the human-animal bond.

Welcome New Volunteer Teams

- Peg Darby & Higgins
- Fred Branaman & Cody
- Brenda Haworth & Pee Wee
- Mary Miller & Cody

Thanks To Our Donors

- Vivien Williamson
- James & Teryl Dintaman
- Mary Jane Laufenberg
- Amy Villasenor on behalf of G. & R. Mosely

TRANSITIONS

Carol Griffin's dog Max passed away. Max will be remembered fondly.

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