



Letter From The President

Hello everyone,

I guess this is sort of a welcome back newsletter. DOC never stopped therapy dog work, but I will say COVID really messed with a lot of what we do. I never imagined that it would be three years before things returned to some semblance of normal for us.

I would first like to thank all of you for continuing to visit despite the changes that occurred due to COVID. UW Madison has been very eager to have us visit again. I think many of our pet partners share that eagerness to see students and staff. The UW certainly has kept Todd very busy with trying to fill all the visits they have requested. See his report in this newsletter.

The hospitals, as one might expect, have been slower to restart visits from our pet partners. Meriter, St. Mary's and the VA recently have loosened restrictions in place due to COVID and been glad to see us return. UW Hospital & Clinics has not yet allowed therapy dog visits. Karen Peckham has been working closely with the hospitals as things have changed. More information below.

We have four Pet Partners classes scheduled for this year, and hopefully some new teams will be joining us soon. Evaluations are held once a month with a couple exceptions. Please schedule your evaluation before you expire if you want to continue without a break in your visiting schedule. The schedule for some months may fill, so feel free to schedule your evaluation well in advance of your expiration date.

I would lastly like to acknowledge all our pet partners who have retired or passed during the last three years. Without them we could not do all that we do, and they are sorely missed. A list is included in this newsletter.

Please feel free to contact DOC officers, board members, and program coordinators with your questions and concerns. COVID has required changes to many of the things that we do and our goal is to make those changes as seamless as possible.

Again, thank you for all that you and your pet partner do.

Karen Smith
DOC Board President

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A Special Request From Arizona

We received an email from Kathy, a person who lives in Arizona, and whose mom is in a Verona nursing home. Mom just turned 95 and loves dogs. Kathy was asking if a team could possibly visit. I put the word out and quickly had two teams. Sherie & Caleb visited on Tuesday, and Monica & Sam visited on Wednesday.

I gave permission to waive our picture policy for this occasion so we could send pictures to Kathy.

Thank you to Sherie & Monica for stepping up to make mom and daughter so happy!

Artie

Hospital News

Medical facilities in the area continue to deal with COVID fallout. Some facilities are cautiously returning to patient visits, while some are allowing visits only with hospital staff.

All facilities are looking for volunteers with the idea that patient visits will return soon. Even UW Hospital & Clinics, which has been closed to all therapy dog visits since the start of COVID, plans to resume a visiting program in late summer or early fall.

If you've considered making therapy dog visits to any of the area hospitals, now's the time to start the volunteer process. I'll be glad to help if you have questions about any of the facilities or need info on how to start the volunteer application process.

Karen & Pete
Facilities Coordinator
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April 30th, National Therapy Animal Day

The day to give your therapy animal an extra hug

All of us should give ourselves a pat on the back for the difference we have made in the lives of so many people with our therapy animals, those we have now and those we have had in the past!

Next year, Dogs On Call will be 25 years old. Can you even begin to imagine the number of people we have touched in those years? Whether you currently have a therapy animal, had one in past years, or joined without an animal, thank you for working at Workshops and Evaluations, serving on the DOC Board, and all those visits!

Your Dogs On Call Board

UW Visits Return to Pre-COVID Levels

While COVID definitely impacted all Dogs On Call activities in countless ways, we are bouncing back and, after lots of hard work, the UW program has finally reached our goal of pre-pandemic visits. Here's a summary of our dedicated teams' accomplishments.

- We participated in 65 events between September 2022-May 2023 requiring 251 team slots.
- 32 faithful teams volunteered to fill those slots, including 12 teams new to DOC in '22-'23.
- While each team participated in multiple event visits, several teams volunteered for 19 or more visits.

A big shout out and sincere thank you to the devoted and dedicated UW volunteers. We enjoyed getting to meet the new members and their wonderful dogs. There's always a need for more help and we invite you to become part of the "UW Family." The excited students are always so happy to meet and greet our pet partners and truly appreciate our visits. It is lots of fun and very rewarding. Get rested up this summer, as emails will begin filling your in-box in August as we prepare for the students' return to campus. In fact, I have already scheduled a dozen visits for 2023-2024.

ON WISCONSIN!

Todd & Millie

toddnbarb@yahoo.com

University of Wisconsin Events Coordinator

A Tribute To Wilson

In May of 2010, I drove to Michigan to pick out an English Springer Spaniel puppy. I had grown up with English Springers and hadn't had one in many years. It was time!

I was planning on retiring from teaching in 2011. My idea was to get a dog and volunteer to do therapy work. Therapy work seemed like the perfect niche for me, but I needed a partner. I drove to Briarton Kennels in Michigan and met the cutest litter of English Springer pups. I spotted the cutest black and white (runt of the litter) and knew this was my choice.



Wilson was a sweet puppy, the perfect addition to our family, and he trained quite easily. I immediately dove into classes through Badger Kennel Club and, when he was two, I decided to have him evaluated by Dogs On Call and hopefully become members of the organization. I believed he was ready to take the evaluation. He passed, and I immediately started thinking about where his work as a therapy dog would be most productive.

Over the years, we visited in many different capacities. We began in several assisted living facilities and dorm visits on the UW campus. We also spent our time at Meriter Hospital and UW Hospital. The UW Rehabilitation Hospital was probably a favorite place of Wilson's. He was very good at giving the patients comfort and affection. After a few years, Wilson became a Read With Me dog. He loved going to the library to listen to children read. Over the years, he participated in many events at different schools for Dogs On Call. He absolutely loved the children.

It's difficult to sum up 12 years of a dog's life in a few paragraphs; a dog who really made a difference in the lives of so many. He did service for so many, but above all he was my companion and best friend. Wilson taught me tolerance and the importance of giving of oneself. He was a strong presence in my life and will be truly missed.

Pat & Claire

Dogs We Lost During COVID

Gandhi - Dan A.
Buddha - Faye A.
Babe - Artie B.
Desmond - Eileen B.
Disney - Staci D.
Samantha - Andrea G.
Max & TJ - Eric & Lydia K.
Kooper & Oliver - Laura K.

Deacon - Mary Beth L.
Scout - Ed L.
Murphy - Marsha L.-C.
Daisy & Flair - Kay L.
Montana - Carol M.
Ike - Ruth O.
Finnegan & Ciara - Marnie P.
Molly - Sue R.

Pierre - Dana S.
Zombie - Karen S.
Logan - Jan S.
Wilson - Pat S.
Lucy - Sue S.
Izzie - Todd & Barb T.
Morgan - Jane & Bill W.
Matilda - Lance W.

When He's Not Doing Therapy Work

Therapy dog Bernie (Poodle/Shepherd mix) and his brother Gunner (German Shorthair Pointer) have been taking trained retrieve classes this spring. They had to learn the fetch command is not just picking up an item, but carrying it, and putting it in my hand. They can drop it when I give the release word. It's been such a fun class and both dogs are doing very well, with daily or twice daily practice sessions.

Els & Bernie



Els and Gunner

DOC Teams Provide Stress Relief For Future Physicians

In April, two DOC teams spent a lovely afternoon outside the UW Medication Foundation Centennial Building, next to the American Family Children's Hospital. Karen & Pete and Ruth & Bennie greeted physician trainees as a wellness activity for them. Bennie looks very serious in these pictures, but she was a happy, waggy girl as each visitor arrived.

Karen & Pete



Bennie

April 30th Proclaimed National Therapy Dog Day In Dane County

On April 20th, seven teams from Dogs On Call were on hand to receive the National Therapy Animal Day proclamation from the Dane County Board of Supervisors. Months earlier, Jeff Rogers had submitted a request via Pet Partners to the city and county to recognize April 30th as National Therapy Animal Day. Dane County Supervisor for District 9, Alex Joers, quickly responded and invited us to the April 20th Dane County Board of Supervisors meeting where the proclamation would be made. At the meeting, Jeff provided comments to the Board of Supervisors, letting them know the importance of therapy animal work, specifically the great work of Dogs On Call and the impact we have on our community. Thanks to the team members who represented Dogs On Call at the event (L to R): Karen & Pete, Pat & Claire, Jeff & Street, Ruth & Bennie, Melody & Joy, Lisa & Olive, Staci & Dalton. Supervisor Alex Joers is on the far left.

Jeff & Street



New Teams Boost DOC Membership

NEW MEMBERS 2022

Els A. & Bernie - Poodle/German Shepherd
Zack and Toni A. & Skip - German Shepherd
Kristen A. & Louie - Cream Golden
Monica D. & Sam - Labrador Retriever
Amelia F. & Jolene - Australian Shepherd Mix
Lisa F. & Olive - Labrador Retriever
Shannon J. & Anny - Golden Retriever
Mary L. & Bear - Wheaten Terrier/Poodle
Deann McA. & Lyra - Golden Retriever
Deanna McK. & Murphy - Mix
Elysia McK. & Murphy - Mix
Molly M. - New Evaluator
Karen P. & April - Goldendoodle
Jeff R. & Street - Labrador Retriever
Tami R. & Darby - Bernedoodle
Andrea T. & Nikki - Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
Adam T. & Zeus - Goldendoodle
Barb T. & Millie - Labrador Retriever
Jackie W. & Daisy - Goldendoodle
Eppi W. & Kirby - Anatolian Shepherd

NEW MEMBERS 2023

Stefanie D. & Chloe - Standard Poodle
Debbie S. & Daisy - Terrier Mix
Shelly W. & Bennie - Havanese

RETURNING MEMBERS

Wendy E. & Willow - Brittany/Corgi
Sheila H. & Betty - Pit Mix

The Old And The New

It is with great sadness and love that I write about the passing of Shelby's spirit into the Universe. Shelby was a kind, loving dog whose motto was that all "people spirits" were here to be loved and to love her. We shared her journey from her adoption in Colorado with the breakup of her family, thru her many adventures including therapy visits, to her transition on December 31, 2022 at 15.5 years. In her gracious way, Shelby made sure that we weren't alone for long and arranged for a new friend and family member to join us. It took a bit of time, but we now share our life with Iris (Quartermoon Rainbow Connection, born March 25, 2023). Iris shares her grandma Kalli's birthday and love of adventure and hunting. She shares her great-grand aunt Shelby's love of people. We are just at the beginning of this journey with Iris and are looking forward to helping her develop into the best dog she can be. Will she be a therapy dog? Only time will tell, but she's already visited Kalli's friends at Capital High School, so maybe ...

Joan & Kalli



Shelby and Kalli



Iris

Read With Me Program

The Pet Partners Read With Me program came to a halt during COVID. The libraries have started scheduling programing again, and this is so good for the children and our Pet Partners that love to work with children. If you are currently on our Read With Me list and have been getting email about programing but no longer wish to, please send me an email and let me know so I can take you off the list. If you are a team that is interested in the Read With Me program, please send me an email so I can help get you started.

Laura
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