



The Barker

Nor'wester Readers Therapy Dogs
Canine Partners In Education
... all the news that's fit to bark!

NEWSLETTER

EDITOR:

Deborah Glessner

Issue Highlights:

- 2015 DDOG WALK & FAMILY FAIR
- RETIREMENT PARTIES
- BUBBA
- MEET NAN AND BOB MUSKA
- GO FUND ME DRIVE
- ... AND MORE!

Nor'wester Readers teams are currently visiting classrooms in:

♦ School Districts of:
Bensalem Township
Council Rock
New Hope Solebury
Pennsbury

♦ Chester County IU Child & Career Development Center
Coatesville, PA

♦ MCC Warwick House (BCIU)

♦ Private Schools:
The Center School
Abington, PA
Olney Charter High School
Philadelphia, PA

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."

~Groucho Marx

Volume 5, issue 2

Summer 2015

NOR'WESTER READERS 2015 DOG WALK AND FAMILY FAIR

Nor'wester Readers Canine Partners in Education hosted its third Dog Walk and Family Fair at Tyler State Park on Saturday, May 2, 2015. Families, friends, and supporters of our organization came out to walk and enjoy the many fun activities. Along with 25 wonderful themed raffle baskets for both children and adults, we also had exhibitors, a great variety of games and activities, and food.

Carol Wagner's Dancing Dogs performed an entertaining dog dance, and Officer Tim Reeves, with his dog Kendo, did an exciting Police K-9 demonstration.



A-Sharp's DJs provided music and announcements, and Kathy Gardosh, Cheryl Metzel, and Terri Weiss were busy all day with Canine Good Citizen and therapy dog testing.

A fun Dog Contest gave the participants the opportunity to enter the ring to show off the talents and costumes of their dogs. Ribbons were awarded to everyone who participated.

We wish to thank the planning committee who so ably assisted Wendi Huttner, the event coordinator: Karen McAllister, Lyn Bauer, Sarah McGinnis, Bonnie Pelberg, Dee Wilson, and Debbie Glessner. A special thank you to Hillary Shemin, photographer, and Sherri Jokic, RN, who was on stand by to provide first-aid..

We also extend our deepest gratitude to all the wonderful volunteers who came out to help — too many to list. We couldn't have done it without you!!

thank
you!



DOG WALK AND FAMILY FAIR- PHOTO ALBUM



All photos by Hillary Yasmer Shemin





RICHBORO ELEMENTARY HONORS "WES"

Champion Balrion Weathertop Nor'wester, better known as Wes, has retired from therapy dog work after eight years of supporting students with reading and learning challenges. After piloting the Nor'wester Readers program (2007-2008) at Hillcrest Elementary in Kim Rinella's second grade resource room, Wes then worked a year at Goodnoe Elementary before migrating to Richboro Elementary and Carla Foy's class. This is where he teamed with Wendi's son, Blake, who volunteered during his junior and senior years in high school.

When Blake went off to college, Wendi took over the other end of the leash and has worked with hundreds of Richboro Elementary children. When Wendi announced that this was the last school year Wes would be visiting, the staff and students of Richboro Elementary planned a fundraiser for the week of April 20-24 which culminated in a PUP-Rally and a Retirement Paw-ty for Wes on Friday afternoon.

The entire student body, along with therapy dog teams from NWR, many who were Wes sons and daughters, gathered in the auditorium for several slide shows, speeches, and the presentation of a check for \$535, the amount raised by the school during the week. All the students then walked outside to the school playground where Wes was presented with a farewell basket of goodies.

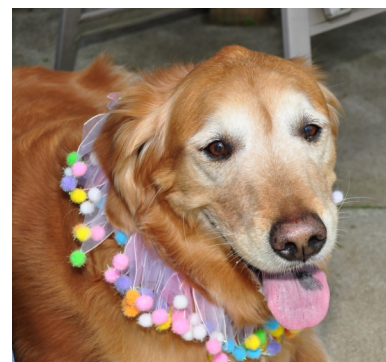


*Don't cry because it's over.
Smile because it happened!*

DARCIE RETIRES

Michelle Rothstein's Golden Retriever, Darcie, had a retirement party at Lower Elementary School (New Hope Solebury School District) where she has been visiting for three years. Darcie worked with the Roxy Reading organization before coming on board with Nor'wester Readers. At age 13, Darcie has shared her sweet and gentle demeanor with hundreds of children over the past six years of therapy dog work.

Michelle will be continuing to visit her Lower Elementary classes with her other Golden Retriever, Juliet.





BUBBA COMPLETES ANOTHER YEAR OF READING THERAPY!

Bubba is a 7 year old Golden Retriever who helps with reading programs for 3rd graders. His primary job is to listen intently to the students when they read their books or compositions.

Teachers find creative ways to use Bubba to build their students' skills. In September, I was asked to photograph Bubba in various poses and situations such as Bubba:

Wearing a baseball cap
Opening a present
At the beach

Sitting next to posters that read:

Study with me
Reading
Writing
Spelling
Math



The photos were used in two ways. First, the pictures were loaded into a computer-driven Smart Board that was used for student lessons. Bubba would appear in the corner of the board. The Bubba picture would correspond to the type of lesson being given-e.g. math, spelling, etc. Bubba would only visit the students one hour a week. However, the students were reminded of Bubba throughout the week via the Smart Board.

The photos were also used by the teacher to encourage the students to write adventure stories about Bubba--- Bubba goes to the beach. Bubba attends a baseball game.

At the end of the school year, Bubba was given adventure books written by the students, thank you cards and a special leash signed by all the students.

Bubba provided to some of the students a miniature version of a Golden Retriever with the message "Study with Me" inscribed on the dog tag. Bubba hopes this remembrance will urge them to study over the summer and prepare them for the upcoming school year.

Bubba looks forward to returning this fall to continue helping 3rd graders build their reading and writing skills.

Submitted by Mike Nelson - Bubba's handler, Churchville PA. June 2015

FIVE YEAR HONOREES

On May 27, 2015, the Nor'wester Readers organization hosted an *End Of The Year Celebration* breakfast meeting at the Corner Bakery Café in Newtown, PA. Certificates were presented to each volunteer for their service during the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, volunteers with five or more years of participation in Nor'wester Readers were honored with a special recognition certificate and a rhinestone paw pin. This year's five year honorees were Elsie Vickery who visits with her Westie, Nigel, and Bob Muska who visits with Jillian and Sadie. Thank you to all our volunteers for another wonderful year, and special congratulations to Elsie and Bob.



MEET NAN AND BOB MUSKA

Nor'wester Readers husband and wife team of Nan and Bob Muska have worked a combined total of eleven years in Council Rock classrooms with their dogs Jillian and Sadie.

Both Nan and Bob are natives of Northeast Philadelphia and moved to Southampton in 1966 where they raised their four children.

Bob worked for various engineering companies throughout Philadelphia as a designer of mechanical systems for numerous buildings and structures in the area. He was employed for 18 years by the engineering company Bennett Levin and Associates and served as their Vice President. Thereafter he worked with several mechanical contractors as a project manager. Bob reminisces about the days when there were no computers and all mechanical systems designs were drafted by hand. He retired in 2008 after 45 years in the business.

Nan pursued her education degree at West Chester State College. After several years of teaching she became a stay-at home mom. Later she pursued her Masters in Education degree at Temple University. She worked as a reading specialist and branched out into training as a therapeutic bodyworker. Nan continues, today, to work as a bodyworker in several modalities: foot and face reflexology and Watsu, aquatic bodywork which incorporates shiatsu.



Nan and Bob with Jillian in front, Sadie left rear, and Penny.

Nan always had dogs growing up, but Bob didn't until he married Nan. Their current dogs are Jillian, Sadie, and Penny. Jillian and Penny both came to them via The Seeing Eye, and Sadie came from a Labrador Retriever breeder. All three dogs are registered therapy dogs. Jillian and Sadie have been working with multiple disabilities classes and special needs students. Penny, at age 2, has just recently passed her tests and is working at the Free Library of Northampton Township in this summer's "Read To The Dogs" program. All three dogs also work on Saturdays at the Barrett Paradise Friendly Library in Cresco, PA in their "Tales to Tails" program.

Nan always knew she wanted to do therapy dog work. She and Jillian began working with Roxy Reading in the Central Bucks School District as well as piloting the canine hospice program at Holy Redeemer Hospital for two years. She transitioned to Nor'wester Readers because our program was situated in schools much closer to their home. Bob had no plans to do therapy dog work and certified with Jillian "just for the fun of it." But when Nan needed bi-lateral knee replacements, Bob was finally convinced to serve as Nan's substitute in Tara Handfinger's third grade class at Churchville Elementary in Council Rock School District. Bob finished the year and loved it so much he decided to come on board with Nor'wester Readers as a full time volunteer.

Nan then transitioned into volunteering with Multiple Disabilities classes, both on the elementary and high school level as well as in a Life Skills class at Richboro Middle School. In addition to his regular education class, Bob has regularly volunteered during the summer at the Free Library of Northampton Township and two years at Camp Expressions, a camp for children who are on the autism spectrum.

When asked why he continues to do therapy dog work in the schools Bob said, "I love the kids, and I love seeing the progress they make by the side of a therapy dog. It is gratifying to feel like I am helping to make a difference." Nan shared, "I started my journey with therapy dog work because Jillian had been born to be of service to humans as a Seeing Eye Dog. When she came to me after waiting so long to get her (3 years), I felt with my experiences in hospice work that we could be a good team. I had no idea what would be in store for us. The journey has offered hard work, joy and sadness, new experiences, new friendships, new challenges, and, of course, the addition of two more wonderful dogs, Sadie (every one just LOVES her) and Penny (a work in progress). I look forward to each class and the unexpected joy it will bring to my heart."

THERE'S A DOG IN MY CLASSROOM!

On Friday, February 13, 2015, Nor'wester Readers presented a three hour workshop "***There's A Dog in My Classroom!***" as part of the district-wide "Deep Smarts" in-service day held at Council Rock High School - South. Facilitators of the workshop were Lyn Bauer (retired reading specialist), Lynn Lenz (retired special education teacher), Debbie Glessner (NWR Director and retired library-media coordinator), Wendi Huttner (NWR Director and Labrador Retriever breeder), Carol Wagner (NWR therapy dog handler), and Hannah, our canine ambassador.



The workshop addressed the role of therapy dogs in the educational environment and how they can be used effectively to improve the power of creative teaching strategies to develop a child's confidence, motivation, and success as a learner. In addition, teachers had the opportunity to dialog with experienced therapy dog host teachers and brainstorm teaching strategies with their colleagues as they worked together to develop exciting and motivational activities centered around their therapy dog team.

Twenty-eight teachers were in attendance. Ten were currently hosting therapy dogs and the remainder were teachers who someday hope to have a canine partner in their classroom. Discussion was lively, and many questions were answered by the facilitators. It was a delightful workshop, and everyone agreed that it was fun "going to the dogs!"

RAVE REVIEWS FOR JON KATZ!

On Sunday, March 15th, Nor'wester Readers proudly hosted NY Times best selling author, **Jon Katz**, who presented a program titled "*What Animals Mean to Us*" at Council Rock's Richboro Middle School auditorium. Over 225 people enjoyed an inspiring, thought-provoking, and humorous talk about the role animals play in our lives today. Jon, who authors the well known [Bedlam Farm.com](http://BedlamFarm.com) blog, spoke about the human-animal bond and challenged the audience to be more open minded in developing a healthy perspective on pet ownership and our connection with animals. He also touched upon the plight of elephants and the NY City carriage horse controversy. After his talk, Jon took non-stop questions from the audience for nearly an hour before heading to the foyer to autograph books.

Kathy Morrison, of the Newtown Bookshop, had a beautiful display of Jon's books, and sales were brisk. A special thank you to Kathy and her husband for their support and for donating 20% of their sales to our organization.

That evening, 15 lucky individuals enjoyed a delightful ***Dinner With the Author*** at the Yardley Inn. After enjoying a delicious meal, a lively and stimulating conversation ensued. Both Jon and his wife, Maria, answered more questions, and everyone shared personal experiences with animals. Probably the most humorous story was shared by Wendi Huttner. One special occasion Wendi's husband gave her a gift of expensive jewelry, and Wendi's face showed her disappointment. When her husband asked what was wrong, she blurted out, "But, I wanted a goat!"



Jon shepherding with his two border collies Red and Fate

The Nor'wester Readers organization is very grateful to Jon for making the trip to Bucks County to support our organization.



HELP WANTED!

The Nor'wester Readers organization needs some talented individuals with experience in:

Public Relations

Fundraising / Event Planning

Please contact Debbie Glessner for an application form.

dglessner2@comcast.net

DONATION NEEDED: Two 6 ft lightweight collapsible tables

AN EVENING AT FAMILY PET CLINIC

Nor'wester Readers was invited by Dr. Jacqueline Menninger, VMD and veterinary technician, Heather Underwood, to present a program at Family Pet Clinic in Southampton, PA on Friday evening, April 24, 2015. Prior to the event, the clinic displayed a large poster of Nor'wester Readers therapy dogs at work and made our literature available to their clients.

The evening of the event there was a wonderful assortment of food and beverages. Chances were sold for several raffle baskets donated by the clinic and Lick Your Chops of Richboro. The program was presented by Wendi Huttner and Debbie Glessner, co-founders and co-directors of NWR. Wendi and Debbie were accompanied by their Labrador Retrievers Bode and Hannah.

The clinic raised about \$250 for our organization, and we were so grateful for the opportunity to come and share stories about the magic our therapy dogs bring to the classrooms they visit.

INTRODUCING VICKIE O'CONNELL

A wonderful bonus of our Family Pet Clinic event was meeting Vickie O'Connell who immediately expressed a desire to come on board and work with us in an administrative capacity. Vickie says: "I am happy to join Nor'wester Readers and have looked forward to being a part of this organization. I live in Churchville, PA with my husband, my son who is currently in college, and my daughter who is entering Council Rock South. We have an Australian Shepherd mix and a Catahoula Leopard dog who were both rescued from down South. I am a paralegal in a local law firm and hope to bring my knowledge and skills to Nor'wester Readers to assist in any way I can." Welcome Aboard Vickie!





Janine Monico
Vice President

3190 Tremont Ave.
Feasterville-Treose, PA 19053

p 215.675.8200
c 267.984.3273
janine@seominteractive.com
www.SEOMinteractive.com

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising
Website Development

Nor'wester Readers wishes to thank **Janine Monico** for serving as our webmaster. She is supporting us with her technical expertise in optimizing our website and setting us up with Google AdWords to extend our reach into the digital community.

Our website continues to be a work in progress, and we are very grateful for Janine's guidance.

BEHIND THE SCENES

LYNN LENZ became involved with the Nor'wester Readers organization in the fall of 2014. She was introduced to us by Bonnie Pelberg who has visited classes with her Standard Poodle Sasha the past three years. Lynn was an elementary school teacher in the Philadelphia School District for 35 years. She taught both regular education and special education classes. While Lynn is not a dog owner, she loves being around them as much as she loves children. As Lynn says, "Nor'wester Readers is the perfect fit for me! Dogs and kids learning — what could be better!"

Lynn also served on the organizing committee and as one of the facilitators to plan our teacher in-service workshop offered as part of Council Rock's district wide in-service day.

Currently, Lynn is coordinating the summer "Read To The Dogs" program being offered at the Northampton Township Free Library in Richboro. She will continue to work with the children's librarian to facilitate the "Read To The Dogs" program throughout the school year. NWR thanks Lynn for all her wonderful support and help.



MAXIM BAKALEYNIKOV heard about Nor'wester Readers from his little sister Katya who was in Maria Alden's third grade class at Maureen Welch Elementary in Council Rock School District. He wrote to us and expressed his desire to become involved with our organization. Not only has he volunteered, he was also a wonderful recruiter of high school volunteers for both our Jon Katz event and our Dog Walk and Family Fair. In addition he has done research for us, created spreadsheets, and took photographs of our therapy dog teams working with children at the library.

Max thanks Nor'wester Readers for a chance to express his love of photography by inviting him to take photos at their library event. He is a rising senior at Council Rock South where he is the president of the International Cuisine Club and vice-president of the National Honor Society. His favorite subjects are history and biology, and he enjoys playing tennis and watching movies in his free time.

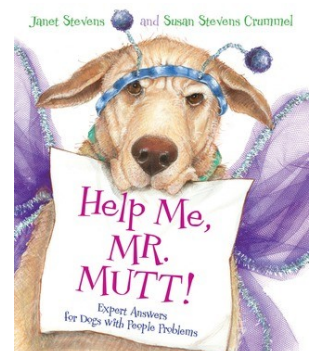
Everyone who meets Max loves him! He is such a delightful and talented young man, and we are so fortunate to have him as part of our team.



A GOOD BOOK FOR YOUNG CHILDREN!

HELP ME, MR. MUTT!

Responding to disgruntled dogs nationwide, Mr. Mutt, Canine Counselor, has solutions to the most sticky dilemmas. But Mr. Mutt has his *own* problem to solve, the cat (aka The Queen), who has her own idea of who's in charge. Now Mr. Mutt is the one who needs help--quick! Through letters and newspaper clippings--and with plenty of their trademark humor--Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel give voice to despairing dogs everywhere.



TEACHERS ARE TALKING!

****** *"Mr. Nelson and Bubba are an amazing team. Mr. Nelson really took the time to get to know each and every child. They were sensitive to my students' emotional and learning needs. He was always willing to ask for suggestions and if he should be doing anything different. Bubba got really comfortable with my students and by the end would snuggle up next to each of them. My students were more eager to write when I asked Mr. Nelson to take pictures of Bubba doing various different things around the house. The students also were motivated to learn their sight words because they wanted to work their way up to reading a book to Bubba. The amount of social skills they practiced with Bubba and Mr. Nelson was also very helpful. The interactions and taking turns is very important. My classroom is not easy because their functional academic levels range from pre-primer (not even on Kindergarten level) to some of my students reading at a 6th grade level. I cannot say enough good things about how Mr. Nelson and Bubba were with my students. I can tell each of my students will always remember their time spent with Mr. Nelson and Bubba."* (KZ – Warwick House, BCIU)

****** *"I have a very wide range of learners in my 5th grade classroom. The students who struggle in reading felt extremely comfortable reading to Obie and Miss Lynne. Having a therapy dog really helped boost their confidence when it came to oral fluency. However, I felt that ALL students benefitted from Obie and Miss Lynne's weekly visits.*

I was able to connect different reading skills to Obie and Miss Lynne, such as creating Obie Idioms and A Day in the Life of Obie focusing on first person point of view. The students really gained a better understanding of each skill by connecting their writing assignments to Obie and Miss Lynne.

The class also did some research on Bassett Hounds so they had a better understanding of Obie and his characteristics. Then the students had to compare and contrast a Basset Hound to another breed of dog. This was a very informative lesson. The students were able to connect what they learned and turn it into a writing assignment." (JW – Quarry Hill Elementary, Pennsbury)

****** *"Students have become very confident reading orally. Their personal gains are a direct result from the relationship shared with Darcie and Juliet. The students are so excited to read when Darcie and Juliet come to class that I can barely contain them! Michelle is very encouraging and kind, providing reading support in a non-instructive way. The love and relaxed feeling they have with Darcie and Juliet allows learning barriers to fade and the fluent reading to prevail."* (NR – Lower Elementary, New Hope Solebury School District)

****** *"Nan and her dogs have had such a positive impact on my students. One of my students has a very difficult time with speech. Nan encourages him to speak to the dogs to give commands or greetings. Because of this, I have seen an increase in his verbalization. This year I invited a group of students who were having behavior issues in their regular education classes to join us for our therapy dog sessions. Using Jillian as an example, we had a great lesson on non-verbal cues to help them understand when they were frustrating others around them. We all look forward to our therapy dog days!"* (BC – Richboro Middle School, Council Rock)

****** *"The inclusion of the Nor'wester Readers program has helped my students relax and enjoy school. The students are in a residential program, diagnosed with emotional problems. Students have had opportunities to practice reading fluency, conversation, and social skills when interacting with Judy and Casey. The students can identify with Casey's handicap and realize they can be successful also. Judy is patient, kind, and very generous with the students."* (NC – Warwick House, BCIU)

WE NEED THERAPY DOG TEAMS!!

***Please help us recruit teams to visit school classrooms.
More information and application forms are on our website.***

'GO FUND ME' CAMPAIGN

Nor'wester Readers Therapy Dogs Canine Partners in Education

Fundraising for non-profit organizations like Nor'wester Readers has become extremely challenging.

Because fundraising is critical to the continued success of the Nor'wester Readers organization, we have decided to move into the 21st century method of online fundraising called crowdfunding. After investigating several crowdfunding sites, we decided to move forward with **GO FUND ME**.

We extend our gratitude to author Jon Katz for his encouragement and help with fine tuning our narrative.

We hope that all our readers and supporters will log into our **GO FUND ME** site and contribute. In addition, please "share" on your social media sites and forward our link to your family and friends. With insurance and expenses continually rising, we deeply appreciate your donations for this very important campaign.



URL: <http://www.gofundme.com/pmc6l4>



FREE LIBRARY OF NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP "EVERY DOG LOVES A STORY"

This summer, our wonderful dogs and their handlers have been part of the Free Library of Northampton Township's summer reading program for children. Coordinated by NWR liaison Lynn Lenz and librarian Christy Lazzarino, the program, called "Every Dog Loves a Story!" is offered weekly for 6 weeks during July and August.

Each Monday, for an hour, five Nor'wester Readers teams come to the library to meet and listen to approximately twenty children ranging from pre-school through 5th grade. The children read a wide variety of books on different topics and reading levels to their canine buddies. All, including parents, are enjoying this summer's "read to the dogs" program.

Special thanks to the therapy dog teams who made this summer's program possible:

Judy Eckenrode and Casey
Lynne Weiser and Teddy
Nancy Jorczak and Secret
Bob Muska and Penny
Lisa Conicella and Annie
Bonnie Pelberg and Sasha
Rhona Katz and Zoey
Debbie Glessner and Heidi



Bob and Nan Muska's Golden Retriever Penny listens to a story.
Photo by Maxim Bakaleynikov



NOR'WESTER READERS
485 Worthington Mill Rd.
Richboro, PA 18954

215-504-0154
Lab324@aol.com
Dglessner2@comcast.net

Directors:
Wendi Huttner
Deborah Glessner

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Nor'wester Readers Canine Partners in Education provides registered therapy dog teams who will work cooperatively with teachers to support and build student motivation, enhance focus, and increase task persistence. The presence of our therapy dog teams will also offer emotional support and a stress free learning environment to improve academic achievement, student self-esteem and confidence.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Nor'wester Readers therapy dog teams will enhance the educational environment in ways which will prompt students to fully realize their learning potential.

www.norwesterreaders.org



THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Greetings!

Our dogs know how to make the best of R&R time. As I type this, my dog Heidi is lying under my desk with her head on my feet. She's always willing to put her therapy talents to work, especially as I work feverishly to meet summer deadlines. Wendi and I meet frequently throughout the summer to review the past year and revise our vision for moving Nor'wester Readers forward. As a result of our many meetings we recognize that fundraising is never-ending and critical for continuing to keep Nor'wester Readers a viable organization. Because of this we posted a narrative and request for support with **GO FUND ME**. Information and the link about this campaign is included on page 10. As of today we have received 312 "shares." If everyone who shared our link had donated just \$5, we would already be a quarter of the way to our goal.



August finds us looking ahead to initiating mid-month communications for our 2015-2016 therapy dog placements. A grateful thank you to Anna LeGoff for all her help with scheduling over the past year. Anna will not be serving in this capacity any longer due to her work demands. Vickie O'Connell will be coming onboard to assist with scheduling.

This spring we sadly bid our founding therapy dog, Wes, a happy retirement. Richboro Elementary celebrated Wes's many years of service and paid tribute to the impact he made upon hundreds of children. Reflecting back on the last eight years of Wes's therapy dog work, Wendi commented on how moved she was by the outpouring of love and affection. It's just additional proof how much a therapy dog contributes to fostering a positive learning environment.

So, if you have a therapy dog or a dog that would be a good therapy dog candidate, we'd love to have you become part of the Nor'wester Readers team. . . . and so would the teachers and children who are on our long waiting list!

Debbie Glessner