



# The Barker

## NOR'WESTER READERS THERAPY DOGS

Canine Assisted Learning Program

... all the news that's fit to bark!

### NEWSLETTER

#### EDITOR:

Deborah Glessner

#### Issue Highlights:

- JON KATZ PROGRAM
- FAMILY DOG WALK 2015
- STRESS AND YOUR DOG
- CREATIVE HANDLERS
- CREATIVE TEACHERS
- FEATURE: DOLORES ESPOSITO AND DAISY ROSE

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  
Mastery Charter  
Stetson Middle School

“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 1

Winter 2015

## JON KATZ SUPPORTS NOR'WESTER READERS!

*Nor'wester Readers Canine Assisted Learning Program* is thrilled to announce that Jon Katz, *New York Times* best-selling author, has kindly offered to present a program to help raise funds for the Nor'wester Readers organization.



Jon with his cat Flo

Jon will be speaking on the relationship between animals and humans, and his talk is titled **WHAT ANIMALS MEAN TO US**. The program will take place at Richboro Middle School at 98 Upper Holland Road in Richboro, PA. on Sunday, March 15, 2015 at 2pm. We will be offering some of Jon's books for sale, and he has agreed to autograph your copies.

Jon has written twenty-seven books including: Saving Simon, Soul of a Dog, Izzy & Lenore, Dog Days, A Good Dog, The Dogs of Bedlam Farm, and The Second Chance Dog. Katz is also a photographer and the author of two children's books, Meet the Dogs of Bedlam Farm and Lenore Finds a

Friend. He has written for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Slate*, *Rolling Stone*, and the *AKC Gazette*. He has worked for CBS News, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. His popular Bedlam Farm Journal at [www.bedlamfarm.com](http://www.bedlamfarm.com) is followed by more than 23,000 readers internationally.

Katz lives on Bedlam Farm in upstate New York with his wife, the artist Maria Wulf.

No one brings to life the remarkable bond between humans and their dogs like Jon Katz. He has warmed our spirits with enchanting tales and keen observations of his animal menagerie—the dogs, cats, donkeys, and other residents of Bedlam Farm.

We are also offering **DINNER WITH THE AUTHOR** on Sunday at the Yardley Inn for 12 lucky individuals by advance reservation only. It will be a wonderful opportunity for some fascinating conversation in a relaxed atmosphere along with a delicious gourmet meal.

Mark your calendars NOW! You will not want to miss this opportunity to hear Jon's fascinating, insightful, and humorous talk.

Ordering information for tickets and additional information regarding **DINNER WITH THE AUTHOR** is on page 8 of this newsletter. Tickets will sell for \$10 per person by advance registration and \$15 per person at the door.



# **SAVE THE DATE !!**

## **NOR'WESTER READERS FAMILY DOG WALK**

**SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2015**

**RAIN OR SHINE**

**REGISTRATION OPENS: 9:30 AM**

### **TYLER STATE PARK**



#### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

- Registration committee
- Volunteer Coordinator and committee
- Set Up and Clean Up committee
- Publicity Committee
- Activities Coordinator
- ...and lots more !



**TO VOLUNTEER CONTACT: Wendi Huttner 215-815-5700**

**Email: [Lab324@aol.com](mailto:Lab324@aol.com)**

**WATCH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

The December 2014 issue of **WHOLE DOG JOURNAL** presented an excellent and very perceptive article on recognizing and interpreting the facial expressions and body language of fearful or stressed dogs. We received permission from the author, Linda Case, and **WHOLE DOG JOURNAL** to share excerpts of the article with our readers since recognizing the signs of canine stress are an important part of the therapy dog handler's work.

## Excerpt taken from the article titled "FEAR ITSELF"

### Stress and your dog

While the first study provided a general test of how people perceive fear in unfamiliar dogs, the second examined the ability of dog owners to recognize signs of stress in their own dogs<sup>2</sup>. This Italian study was conducted by researchers at the University of Pisa, with a group of almost 1,200 dog owners recruited through veterinary clinics. Participants first completed a questionnaire in which they were asked about stress in dogs and its potential health and behavioral consequences. They then identified what they believed to be signs of stress in dogs and estimated the level of stress in their own dog.

More than half of the owners (60 percent) were found to have a clear understanding of what stress is and how it can affect a dog's emotional state and health. However, about 20 percent of owners (one in five) believed that experiencing stress had no negative physical or emotional consequences on dogs. (In other words, while they agreed that it occurred, they thought it was no big deal.)

The behaviors that owners most frequently identified as reflecting stress in their dogs included trembling, whining/crying, excessive barking, and panting. In contrast, very few owners identified more subtle behaviors, such as avoiding eye contact, turning away, nose licking, or yawning as signs of canine stress.

Those owners who self-reported as being highly concerned with their dog's stress level were more likely to identify these less obvious signs as important. Overall though, owners tended to miss many of the facial expressions (squinty eyes, avoiding eye contact, changes to ear set, retracted commissures) that most trainers look for when assessing a dog's stress level.

Like the first study, this suggests that it is these more subtle facial cues of stress and fear that may be missed if a person is only paying attention to the more obvious body posture signs.

Accurately recognizing fear and stress in dogs is an important skill set to possess. Understanding our own dog's emotional state allows us to respond by helping him out of situations that cause fear and reducing or eliminating triggers of stress when they are under our control.

For trainers and behaviorists, working with owners who are sensitive to their dog's stress response promotes the development of a more effective training and management plan. On a societal level we all benefit from a universal understanding of the behaviors, body postures, and facial expressions that convey happiness versus fear or stress in dogs. Correctly interpreting a dog's behavior is always enhanced by attending to both body posture and facial expressions.

However, interpretation of dogs' facial expressions may not come naturally to many people. This knowledge emphasizes the importance of teaching the subtleties of canine facial expressions in training classes, behavior-education courses, and bite-prevention programs.

Moreover, the statistic suggesting that one in five owners do not consider the effects of stress in their dogs to be of negative consequence tells us that education is also needed regarding the health and welfare impacts of stress and fear on our dogs' well-being and quality of life.



*Linda P. Case, MS, is the owner of AutumnGold Consulting and Dog Training Center in Mahomet, Illinois, where she lives with her four dogs and husband Mike. She is the author of a new book, Dog Food Logic, and many other books and numerous publications on nutrition for dogs and cats. Her blog can be read at [thesciencedog.wordpress.com](http://thesciencedog.wordpress.com).*

**PAST PARTNERS**

The Nor'wester Readers Organization honors the memory of our therapy dogs who have crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

Denise Gurwood's Jackson

Christina Minsky's Harry

**OUR CREATIVE HANDLERS**

Two of our handlers shared with us the holiday gifts they created to give to the children in the classes they visit.

**Leslie Zak** visits the Chester County Intermediate Unit Child and Career Development Center with her black Lab, Avery. She put Avery to work and the two of them made paw print ornaments for each student. Leslie kindly shared the process should other handlers like to try

making these delightful mementos out of air clay. Commercial air clay can be found in craft stores like Michael's or A.C. Moore. Leslie found a recipe on Pinterest for "make at home" air clay. Ingredients are: 2 cups baking soda, 1 cup corn starch, and 1 1/4 cups cool water.

Mix the dry ingredients in a pot. Stir in water until it becomes a runny mixture. Over medium heat stir constantly. You'll know it's done once it thickens and turns into a ball. Remove from pot and put in a bowl covered with a damp paper towel. Let cool for at least 20 minutes. When cool, knead the dough until smooth. Roll out with a rolling pin and use the top of a drinking glass to cut out the circles. Circle size needs to be determined by the size of the dog's paw.

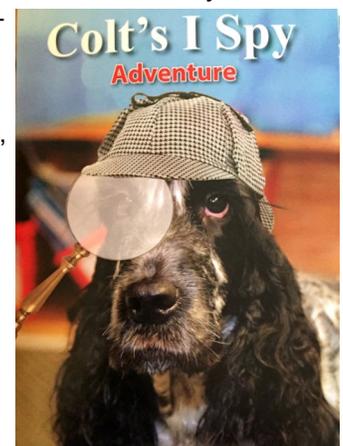
Then Avery stepped in, literally! I gently pressed his paw into each circle to capture an impression of his paw print. Then I placed them on a cookie sheet to dry. Next I took a straw to pierce a hole for yarn or ribbon to hang the ornament. I let them dry overnight and flipped them in the morning. You'll know when they're dry! Some may crack slightly, but I decided to seal mine with glossy Mod Podge to harden them since they will be going to children. Then I tied in ribbon to hang them. The final step was adding a picture of Avery on the back.



Nor'wester Readers volunteer **Anna LeGoff** delivered a copy of *Colt's I Spy Adventure* to each student in Mrs. Kurek and Mrs. Adam's first-grade classes at Newtown Elementary School after reading the book to the students and teachers during a preholiday celebration in December. Anna carefully unveiled each page—to screams of laughter and delight.

Designed as a holiday gift, the book features photos of the children with their favorite books, along with hidden items that their therapy dog, Colt, looks to find through his *I Spy* adventure and the riddles provided. The book's objective was to encompass a variety of opportunities that would engage the students in the joys of reading.

Once the books were distributed, it was fascinating to see how engaged the children became in reading their copies, looking at the pictures, and asking about the riddles. *Colt's I Spy Adventure* indeed served to bring each child a step closer to forming a lifelong appreciation of reading.



Maria Alden, third grade teacher at Maureen M. Welch Elementary in Council Rock School District, hosts a black Lab therapy dog. She created a therapy dog related activity which helps motivate children throughout the week and continually emphasizes the impact of the therapy dog. Maria purchased an inexpensive black Lab statue at the Dollar Store and introduced it to her class at the beginning of the year. The class then voted on a name for the dog, and **Hershey** was the winning name.

Maria explained that **Hershey** would accompany a student home each weekend, and she would base her selection on each child's social and academic performance that week. In some cases, the privilege was used as motivation for children with specific challenges. The lucky student was required to keep and submit a journal of the dog's weekend with the child's family which was also shared with the class. Most students hand write their journal and include photographs. Katya chose to put her newly learned Power Point skills to use, and submitted this account of Hershey's weekend with her. As you can see, it was a full and exciting one! (Reprinted with permission from Katya and her parents. Only 4 frames from her Power Point have been included.)

### HERSHEY'S DIARY My Weekend With Katya

This weekend I went to Katya's house. I was very excited because I like to go to my friends' houses.

Katya mentioned that there will be a surprise. I can't wait to see what it is. Katya's family decorated the tree already. I found a decoration that looks like a gingerbread letter K.

I also got to ride a Christmas train.



On Saturday, I went to gymnastics practice with Katya and really liked it. All the girls were such hard workers.

I loved their sparkly competition leotards. So I was thinking... Maybe I can get one too if I practice as hard!

I also helped Katya to wrap holiday gifts... and met her friends.

I had tea with Barbie and her friends in their doll house... And played dress up with them...

On Sunday, I finally got to figure out what the surprise was - we were going to see the Nutcracker Ballet!!! The theater was like a palace and I got my own **Playbill**.



Katya mentioned that there was a seven headed Mouse King in the performance, and I was a bit scared, but I promised not to bark.

During intermission Katya and I went to see the orchestra pit. Katya pointed out several instruments to me.

The second part was not scary at all. Can you guess my favorite dance? Maybe you think it was the Sugarplum Fairy? She is very pretty but not my favorite... Maybe you think it was the Candy Cane? He was very cool, but it is still not it.

My favorite dance was **HOT CHOCOLATE!!!** Yummy!!! So I was thinking... Maybe I can also become a ballerina? They can surely use a Hershey for their Hot Chocolate dance!!! I can't wait to tell all my friends at school about my weekend with Katya. We had a lot of fun!



**Editor's Note:** Our host teachers are always thinking outside the box and using our therapy dogs in many wonderful ways to challenge, motivate, and make learning fun for their students.

## FEATURING NWR HANDLER DOLORES ESPOSITO AND DAISY ROSE

Recently Dolores Esposito and her therapy dog Daisy Rose were featured in the Holy Redeemer Hospital newsletter. Not only are Dolores and Daisy hospice workers, they also visit Kim Rinella's resource room class at Hillcrest Elementary School in the Council Rock School District. They have been working with Kim's students for the past three years.



Many of our therapy dog teams do independent therapy dog work in nursing homes and hospitals. It's a warm testament to the generosity of the handlers who give time to share their wonderful dogs with school students and other needy individuals.

When I asked Dolores if I could reprint the article that appeared in the hospital newsletter, she and the hospice director of HRH both gave permission to share the amazing work that Daisy does for Nor'wester Readers and in her hospice visits.

Kim shared a story about a boy who was very afraid of dogs. His fear was starting to affect his family because it interfered with visiting friends who owned dogs. Dolores and Daisy worked with him to overcome his fear. First they started by having him sit in a chair facing Daisy while reading and holding his book "like a teacher." Dolores would stand behind him and gave Daisy signals to keep her attention on the book. As the weeks passed Dolores began to give Daisy signals to move closer to the boy while he was reading, but always stopping in front of him. Eventually she sat Daisy next to him while he was still in the chair, but touching him. By the end of the year she laid Daisy's leash across his lap while he was reading. I'm not sure we completely cured his fear of dogs, but we definitely increased his comfort level: he was able to take Daisy's leash and lead her at the end of the year. Dolores says, "That little boy left quite an impression on me too. He referred to Daisy as his 'best friend' in his year end story."

Last year Dolores got hurt and couldn't come to class for several months. The kids were so sad. They missed having their weekly time with her and Daisy. Kim says, "I came up with the idea of doing FaceTime on the iPad, and they were so excited. They started debating each week whose turn it was to "answer the phone." They even started reading to Dolores's other dog, Joey, who would come into the room to find out what was going on. They liked being able to see where Daisy and Dolores lived through the iPad. As much fun as that was they were even more excited when Dolores was able to return to school for reading and to give hugs in person.

Dolores says that Daisy eats like a pig to get to school on time. "It makes her burp, and the kids think it's hysterical. In fact, some write about it in their end of year stories. That was Daisy's hello the first day of school three years ago, sooooo loud it was heard in the hallway! What an ice breaker!"



Dolores says that Daisy's tail starts wagging as soon as they pull into the parking lot at Hillcrest. Time to see her kids, but first she stops to say hello to the girls in the office and to buy a soft pretzel for the ride home. Kim meets us, and off she goes for another fun filled session of being a floppy eared body pillow. The kids love to hold her paw or ear while they are reading and make sure she can see the pages of their book. I often ask the kids if they go home and read to their own dogs at night, and some say they do.

The kids are so wonderful, and Daisy and I love visiting Kim's class each week!

Dolores also shares that Daisy works as a therapy dog in Holy Redeemer's Hospice unit, and she does her job well. I can't tell you how often I hear, "Seeing Daisy just made my day!" or "I was in a bad mood until I saw Daisy." While the majority of our time is spent in the Hospice unit with patients and families, often miraculous experiences happen while we are just traveling through the hospital. People gravitate to her warm, friendly face and wagging tail. She makes people smile, but sometimes also helps people to release grief.

Here are a few stories of hearts that Daisy has touched while making our rounds at Holy Redeemer Hospital.

One day, we encountered two small children and their mother in the hospital coffee shop. I invited them to pet Daisy. The little girl tightly hugged her neck, asking if Daisy was here to get blood tests. Her mom explained that Daisy was here to put smiles on patients' faces. The little girl said Daisy made her happy too. As we rode down the elevator together, the mother told me the child is an oncology patient at St. Christopher's and comes to Holy Redeemer to get her labs.

Another day, Daisy poked her head into an office to say hello. Unbeknownst to me, the employee's father had died the previous evening in hospice, and she had stopped in briefly to tie up loose ends. Seeing Daisy brought her to tears. She explained that her Dad was a policeman, and his K9 partner lived with them until it died. She couldn't believe Daisy showed up at that moment. She said her father would have loved Daisy!

Still another day, Daisy and I rode in the elevator with a woman whose deceased sister's birthday happened to be that day. When I told the woman Daisy's name, she began to cry. She told me she had asked God that morning to send a sign that her sister was ok. Her sister had always sent her 'daisies' on her birthday!

In addition to her regular hospice visits, Daisy sits with nervous patients waiting for lab work, spends time with families in the snack or family rooms, and gives love to everyone whose life she touches. I never know when Daisy's magic will make someone smile or help heal a heart. Yes, Daisy does her job well, but to her it's not a job. She's just enjoying herself.



## NOR'WESTER READERS APPRECIATES YOUR DONATIONS!

Your contribution can:

- ~ Make a great teacher gift
- ~ Celebrate a graduation or learning milestone
- ~ Honor a person, pet, or favorite volunteer
- ~ Honor an anniversary or birthday



Your generosity and thoughtfulness will enable *Nor'wester Readers Canine Assisted Learning Program* to grow and to improve our services to the children and classrooms visited by our therapy dog teams.

Please use our PayPal button on our website or mail your tax-deductible donation to:

Nor'wester Readers  
485 Worthington Mill Rd.  
Richboro, PA 18954



**Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."**

~Roger Caras





# JON KATZ PROGRAM

## “WHAT ANIMALS MEAN TO US”

Sunday, March 15, 2015 • 2pm • Richboro Middle School

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

ADVANCE REGISTRATION: Online ticket sales are available on the EVENTS (Jon Katz) link at [www.norwesterreaders.org](http://www.norwesterreaders.org) OR by mail to the address below.

\$10.00 per person (\$15 at the door)

**Ticket purchases are non-refundable.**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 each

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to make a donation to NWR.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to Nor'wester Readers.

MAIL TO:

Nor'wester Readers  
234 New Rd.  
Churchville, PA 18966



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## DINNER WITH THE AUTHOR

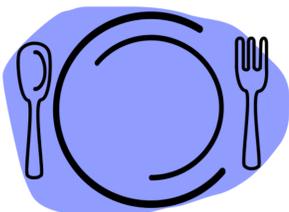
Sunday, March 15, 2015 • 6pm • Yardley Inn, Yardley PA.

A one-time opportunity to sit down in a small group with Jon Katz for conversation about Bedlam Farm, creativity, and animals.

Only 12 openings are available for this dinner fundraiser.

Make your reservations NOW! Openings will fill quickly!

\$75.00 per person



Reservations should be made through Deborah Glessner

CONTACT: [dglessner2@comcast.net](mailto:dglessner2@comcast.net)



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:

The goal of the **Nor'wester Readers** Canine Assisted Learning Program is to utilize registered therapy dog teams who will work cooperatively with public school teachers to support and build student motivation, enhance focus, and increase task persistence. The presence of our therapy dog teams will offer a stress free learning environment which will increase 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](http://www.norwesterreaders.org)**



## THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTORS:

Greetings!

Happy New Year and warm wishes for an exciting 2015!

You may have noticed that our website has a new look! Janine Monico of Monico Media was the web architect and search engine optimization expert. She was assisted by Erica Franzo, graphic artist, and Matt and Joe of Inverse Paradox who provided the server for the test environment and handled the launch. We are most grateful to all of them for generously donating their time and talents to give us a more professional online appearance.

We are excited to announce two upcoming fundraising events. Our popular Family Dog Walk is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2015 at Tyler State Park. We desperately need volunteers to assist with various jobs. If you are interested in helping, please contact Wendi Huttner at 215-815-5700. Please watch our website for further information about the Family Dog Walk.

Sunday, March 15, 2015, we will be hosting NYTimes best selling author, Jon Katz of Bedlam Farm fame, who has published 27 books and is currently working on his next book which is about communication between animals and humans. .Pre-registration is now open for the program which will be held at Richboro Middle School at 2 pm and can be done by mail or online via our website. We are also thrilled to offer DINNER WITH THE AUTHOR to 12 individuals; it is a wonderful opportunity for small group conversation. We expect this to fill quickly, so if you are interested please contact Debbie Glessner by email immediately.

We are also excited about offering an in-service workshop on February 13 at Council Rock High School South. It is called THERE'S A DOG IN MY CLASSROOM! and it is geared to assist teachers in ways to successfully use therapy dog magic to enhance their educational environment. Special thanks to Lyn Bauer and Lynn Lenz, both retired teachers, who will be the main facilitators of the workshop.

Thank you to everyone who helps make Nor'wester Readers the beloved organization it is — from our dogs and their handlers to our volunteers and supporters who understand the power of animal assisted therapy in education.

*Debbie Glessner and Wendi Huttner*

