

# Capital Pet

newsletter  
of the

Mohawk & Hudson River  
HUMANE SOCIETY



🐾 3 Oakland Avenue Menands, NY 12204 🐾 [www.mohawkhumane.org](http://www.mohawkhumane.org) 🐾 (518) 434-8128

## AROUND THE WORLD FOR 80 STRAYS

The second annual *Around the World for 80 Strays* gala was a huge success! Animal lovers from across the Capital Region gathered together at Wolfert's Roost Country Club on April 24th to celebrate a successful year for the Humane Society. Our Honorary Committee was led by Bocker the Labradoodle, a famous dog model who spends much of his time raising money for animal protection groups and providing animal-assisted therapy.

Anya Tucker from News Channel 10 (WTEN) kept the night going as our Master of Ceremonies and handed out our 2009 Humane Awards to:

🐾 Standard Commercial Interiors: Humane Business of the Year for their support of the remodeling at the Society.

🐾 Leanne Robinson-Maine, Justin Maine and Buster the pug: Best Happy Tail award for their film 'Buster's Big Day Out.'

🐾 Tara Estra, DVM: William O. Stillman Humane Veterinarian Award for her compassion and support of shelter animals in need of medical care.

Congratulations to all of our award recipients.

Finally the night came to a close with Jamie Roberts, host of 810 WGY's Pet Talk, auctioning off fabulous items to the highest bidder. Our last item, the cover of the 2010 Cutest Pet Calendar, was purchased for \$3,000!

Everyone had a fabulous evening and raised over \$50,000 for the Society's orphaned animals. Thank you to all of our attendees, Honorary Committee members, sponsors and supporters for a wonderful evening.

See Page 3 for Thank Yous and Sponsors.

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## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

518.434.8128

518.434.0217 (fax)

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



Executive Director  
Brad Shear and  
Bastian, his cat

As you will see in this issue of Capital Pet, there are men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds who give of themselves to help animals. We are featuring stories about the many ways animals affect our lives and the ways people help animals and the Humane Society. All of the people you will read about work with the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society to help animals and people. They are people of all ages and backgrounds who want to help because they understand the important role that animals play in our lives.

You will read about a young boy meeting with a State Senator to ask for legislation that will protect animals, a young woman who uses her natural leadership ability to bring other young people to the aid of the Society, and a bank president who rolls up his sleeves and gets dirty for the comfort of the animals. You will read about a dog from the Society who gives comfort to the elderly and ill, raising their spirits with his spirit. You will also read about the role animals play as our protectors and how they are honored for their service.

All of these stories speak of the importance of the human/animal bond. This is a relationship that is mutually beneficial and central to many of our lives. For thousands of years people and animals have lived together, helping each other to live better. We provide food, water, shelter and care for animals, but what do they provide for us? For most of our history with animals, we used them to perform specific functions like protection, pest control, or rescue. Now, most animals in our homes are companions and we are just learning how important that companionship is.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels, and feelings of loneliness. Living with pets can increase opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities and opportunities for socialization. Pets have tremendous benefits for children. One study of animals' effects on children showed that children who had a pet during childhood were more empathetic, more prone to enter a helping profession, and were more oriented toward social values than those without a pet (Vizek-Vidovic 2001).

These recent scientific studies have confirmed what many of us who share our lives with animals have always known: living with animals enriches our lives, makes us happier, and makes us healthier. That is why this issue will focus on all of the people who give back to the animals that have done so much for them.

*Brad Shear*

# AROUND THE WORLD FOR 80 STRAYS

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for wine

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for desserts

**Sidney Frank Importing**  
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for event program and signage

**Samantha Morris**  
for votives, candles and rose petals

**Picture People**  
for pet portraits and portrait coupons

**Wolferts Roost**  
for their continued support and generosity

## THERAPY DOG TEAM

by Colleen Farnan



It was love at first sight for Carol when she first met Sandy, a dog she adopted six years ago from the Mohawk & Hudson River Humane Society. Sandy, a mutt from the hound dog family who was a year old at the time, scooted down and curled up in Carol's lap. Sandy became a beloved pet and joined Carol's family with her other dog, Jade. At the time, Carol never realized she would be part of a therapy dog team someday.

With childhood dreams of becoming a veterinarian, Carol always had an interest in dogs. Since Carol's career choice turned to criminal justice, her thoughts turned to combining her love of animals with an activity in her retirement. She had read about the Tail Waggin' Tutors program where kids having problems reading would read to a dog. She learned the program was beneficial to students

as they were more comfortable reading to a dog; apparently, the unconditional love of an animal was magical for these students.

Since Carol adopted Sandy from the Society, she frequently checked the MHRHS web site. One day, she ran across an article about a therapy dog class. Carol realized this might be a perfect match for Sandy's talents. Once when Carol took Sandy to PetSmart, a mentally challenged boy was very excited about petting Sandy. From Sandy's gentle response and demeanor towards the boy, Carol felt that this was a sign that her pet was "meant to do this." So she thought, "Why wait until retirement?" and decided to try the class.

So began the therapy dog team of Carol and Sandy. They participated in the society's six-week Therapy Dog class. At the end of the class, Carol and Sandy underwent a Therapy Dog Certification test. As part of the certification, the team was required to pass eleven tests that demonstrated Sandy's confidence and Carol's control of her pet. Carol felt the most difficult part of the Therapy Dog test was called "Accepting a Friendly Stranger," which shows the dog will allow a non-threatening person with another dog to approach and speak to Carol without breaking position.

When the night of the certification test arrived, Carol was very nervous. However, Sandy passed all of the tests with flying colors and was given a round of applause from the crowd who were there as part of the test.

The next step for Carol was to contact the Therapy Dogs International organization in

New Jersey. After receiving her certificate, Carol was given information about local agencies that accepted therapy dogs.

Carol selected the Schuyler Ridge Nursing Home in Clifton Park. She met with the Program Coordinator, who also needed to meet Sandy. Sandy was a nervous wreck on her first visit to the nursing home, sniffing all the garbage cans and being hard to control. However, after a few times, Sandy adjusted well and now knows how she needs to behave.

The team of Carol and Sandy visits every Sunday with residents who are eagerly awaiting them. Carol hears a lot about residents' dogs in their earlier lives and how much they miss having a pet. These visits are both sad and humorous at the same time. On one outing to the nursing home, a resident told Carol that all three or four dogs she owned during her life had the same name, but this resident couldn't remember exactly what the name was.

The joy of Sandy's visits with the elderly makes their involvement in the program worthwhile. Carol's participation in the therapy dog program has been time well-spent. Her involvement in the program has been rewarding and the residents are grateful for the therapy dog visits.

Chris Danker, CPDT continues to teach basic obedience and therapy dog classes and more at the Humane Society. For more information about the Society's training programs please call (518) 434-8128 ext 207.

# MOHAWK & HUDSON RIVER HUMANE SOCIETY TRIBUTES

Tributes listed here were received 3/26/09 - 7/15/09. More recent tributes will appear in future editions.

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Tributes listed here were received 3/26/09 - 7/15/09. More recent tributes will appear in future editions.

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# TRAINER'S CORNER

## Walk Without Worries

By Christine Danker, CPDT  
(518) 439-2992  
Hemlock Hollow LLC  
[www.hemlockhollowdogtraining.com](http://www.hemlockhollowdogtraining.com)



Without a doubt, one of the most challenging skills to teach our dogs is to walk on a loose leash. (The next most challenging skill seems to be coming when called, which I will discuss in the next newsletter.)

So, why the challenge? Think of it from the dog's point of view. He is excited from the instant you pick up his leash. The leash means good times, different smells, different sights...right up a dog's alley. Before you even leave the house your dog is excited!

Out on the road you go. He pulls, probably has to relieve himself and you follow behind – sometimes walking fast, sometimes nearly in a run to keep up. Your arm and shoulder get tired and you begin to slow down. But not your dog...he keeps on moving, taking you for a walk.

So far, pulling on the leash has worked for your dog. When he pulls, he gets to go where he wants to go: to sniff, to greet a person, to greet another dog or to chase a squirrel. Pulling on the lead is not because your dog is “alpha” or trying to be dominant over you. Based on scientific evidence and research, all animals will continue to do what is rewarding for them. Simply put, pulling gets the dog to where he wants to go. If you weren't attached to the leash, he still would head right on over to that patch of grass with the good smells.

I'll be honest: walking your dog on a loose leash is not going to happen overnight, and it's not going to happen in a week. But with consistency and some training, you

can make walks more enjoyable. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

**1) Use the correct equipment:** Not only to save your arms and shoulders, but to keep your dog's neck from sustaining injury. All that pulling will take its toll on your dog's cervical discs as he ages. The old-fashioned choke collars do choke. No easy way to say it...they keep tightening, and they're uncomfortable. These are our dogs, living and breathing members of our family. We should be kind and gentle to them; there is no need to cause harm. And they really don't seem to work – dogs still pull on choke collars.

The Easy Walk harness made by Premier is my first choice. Hooking the leash to the front clip harness and a Martingale or flat-buckle collar is safe and protects your dog's neck from injury. The harness will make things manageable while you are teaching your dog the new skill of walking on a loose leash.

The Gentle Leader, also made by Premier, fits around the dog's neck and their muzzle. As with the Easy Walk harness, attach the lead to both the Gentle Leader and to a collar.

Do NOT use flexi-leads. These only encourage you dog to pull more. Think about what is happening: your dog sees something, he goes to the end of the flexi and you let out more line...and the dog goes further. Pulling has just been reinforced!

Ideally a six-foot lead is best.

**2) Be consistent.** Everyone who walks the dog has to follow the same “rules.” It is only fair to your dog if he knows what is expected of him.

**3) Shorten your leash and reward** the dog generously for being at your side. Give a cue word, such as “Go sniff,” to go to the end of the leash as you let the leash out full length. This is now his time to be a dog by sniffing, rolling, etc.

**4) If your dog sees another dog or person he wants to visit, do not let him pull you.** Stop. Take a few steps back if he is still fixated on greeting someone. The instant he slackens up on the lead, reward him by allowing him to go greet. This will take many repetitions and consistency, but believe me, it does work. With more training your dog will begin to check in with you and you will be able to ask him to sit before you release him to go greet.

**5) Dogs are athletes; they are built to run.** A walk around the block is not going to suffice as exercise. If you are lucky to have a fenced yard, allow your dog to run loose in the yard to tire himself out a bit before heading out on a walk. This will burn off some of his energy before you go for a walk. If you do not have a fenced yard, ask a friend to borrow their fenced yard. Your dog will enjoy the opportunity to run.

**6) Enroll in a training class** that teaches humane ways of handling your dog. You will learn how to develop a trusting relationship and open the lines of communication between you and your dog. Not only will you enjoy your best buddy while out on a walk, but in other areas as well.

*Chris Danker, CPDT, has over four decades of showing and handling her own dogs as well as dogs for clients. Participating in many venues, Chris has handled dogs to multiple National and Regional Specialty wins, and over 70 titles in obedience, agility and conformation. She is active in pet therapy with her own dogs. Chris is a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) and Therapy Dog International (TDI) evaluator.*

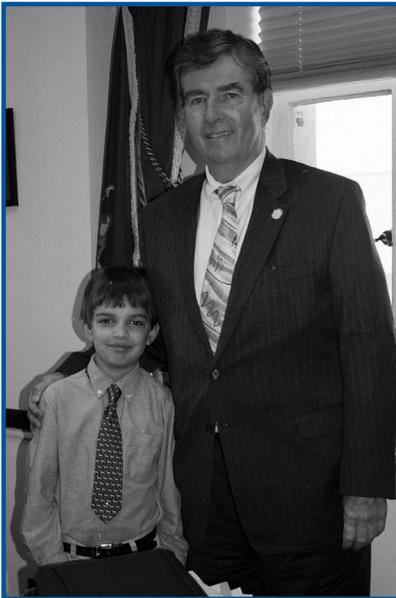
*Chris is now teaching classes and workshops at the Humane Society. Check our website [www.mohawkhumanesociety.org](http://www.mohawkhumanesociety.org) for the latest dates and times.*

## S.O.A.R. SUPPORTS THE SOCIETY



For many years, the Students for Animal Respect club (SOAR) from The Emma Willard School has been coming to the Society every week to volunteer their time caring for the Society's animals. Their year of service always culminates in a spaghetti dinner fundraiser that benefits the Society. This year's dinner, held May 22nd, raised \$1,323! Two of these humane students are seen here presenting a check to the Society. Thank you to all of the SOAR students at the Emma Willard School for your ongoing support.

## OUR FUTURE HUMANE LEADER



Society volunteer Kyle Patterson of Glenmont recently met with New York State Senator Neil Breslin at the Capitol to discuss animal welfare laws. Kyle asked the Senator to protect animals by supporting several pieces of legislation to crack down on dog fighting and puppy mills; require sick or injured cattle to either be put down or treated by a veterinarian; and outlaw canned shoots in which exotic animals are shot for sport

in a fenced-in area. The Senator committed to voting YES on each of these bills, should they come to the Senate floor during this legislative session.

Kyle is a fourth grader at St. Thomas the Apostle School in Delmar, where his grade's year-long community service project focuses on protecting animals. It goes to show you can make a difference no matter what your age.

## NEIGHBORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Every year, Key Bank employees leave their suits and their offices behind, roll up their sleeves, and go to work for the community on Neighbors Make a Difference Day.

For the second year in a row Key Bank President Jeff Stone came to the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society to make a difference. We decided that Jeff should get hands on with the animals and put him to work in our grooming room. A clean, well groomed dog is more likely to find a home. Getting a little damp when a wet Husky shakes can't dampen the spirits of this bank president. Thanks to all of the Key Bank employees who made a difference for the animals again this year.



## K-9'S REMEMBERED

On September 11th, 1999 the Capital Region K-9 Training Group and the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society dedicated the Law Enforcement K-9 Memorial on the grounds of the Humane Society. The site is available for the recognition of any K-9 that has served in a law enforcement capacity with any recognized public entity. Many of the dogs memorialized here were trained as Tracking or Detection Specialists, while others were trained as Multi-Purpose K-9's. These dogs are considered officers in their departments. Each K-9 is remembered with a stone marker which includes his/her name, employing agency, and years of service. This year's honorees were K-9 Kai from the Pittsfield, MA police, K-9 Burke from the Albany Police, and K-9 Thor from the Amsterdam Police.



# YOUTH VOLUNTEER HONORED

By Jessica Sherry



Volunteer Jessica Sherry receives her award from Albany County Supervisor Michael Breslin.

I had been frantically looking for an appropriate project to fulfill my Girl Scout Gold Award requirements when I stumbled across an article in the local paper about the Mohawk Hudson River Humane Society about two years ago. The article detailed the troubled financial status of the shelter, but after reading the article, I kept looking for the focus of my intended project. But when I saw the second article in the very same paper, only a few weeks later I knew that I had to help. The only problem was - How??

I have been a Girl Scout for 12 years now, and my troop and I have done a number of service projects throughout the years, but I knew that a bake sale or planting flowers simply wouldn't be enough. I decided to call the shelter itself for inspiration and was directed to Deidre Bruce. Together we set up a meeting and I had the opportunity to ask her how I could help. Eventually she began to explain the ongoing can and bottle drive from which the shelter benefitted. She mentioned that the women who had started the fundraiser and were in charge of sorting the donated bottles and cans had been carrying out their herculean task for a long time. I knew then it was the perfect arena for my Gold Award, and it was a project that had the potential to help the shelter in a way that was desperately needed. I was going to rework the entire system, bring in both publicity and volunteers, and draw attention to this worthy cause.

I worked hard with different organizations throughout my school, such as the Key Club and the National Honors Society. I drew up schedules for each weekend of every month, and I "commissioned" a Boy Scout friend to help me design and build a more permanent system for sorting the donated bottles and cans. The old PVC pipe baskets definitely didn't cut it when the wind blew! (He received his Eagle Scout for the project.)

Another large focus for my project was to raise awareness about the benefits that shelters such as MHRHS provide. Over the course of about a year I put in over 300

hours. In fact, I still have a pair of jeans that smell like old soda no matter how many times I wash them! I was there whenever possible, sorting bottles, cleaning the area, and publicizing both the shelter and the bottle drive. Perhaps I publicized too much, for one Sunday morning when a group of Key Clubbers and I went to sort cans we discovered that the shed where we store the sorted bottles and cans had been broken into.

But in this case the cloud had a definite silver lining. As news of the break-in went public, hundreds of people pitched in and brought cans and bottles to The Crossings to help out in the shelter's time of need. And Price Chopper agreed to double the money that we earned sorting the donations following the break-in. It was fantastic to see the community rally around such a great cause, and I was honored to be a part of it. I loved that this became more than just a project to me. As the days went by, it became a personal investment. Even though I have handed off

the baton to a few trustworthy volunteers, I still go down to the shed, see the donations, and smile when I realize that everyone is still doing their parts.

I can't speak highly enough of the people I have worked with and the amazing times I have had as a result of this incredible experience. It's definitely something special when you see all of your hard work come to fruition, and people recognize the effort you have put in. I hope that people continue to carry on this important fundraiser and can draw from it the positivity that I have.

Volunteering has helped me become the strong, caring and intelligent person that I'm so proud of today, and helping those around you can only make your own world a better place. So go out and lend a hand and see where it takes you!

5th Annual

# Art SAVES ANIMALS

Albany Institute of History & Art  
5:30-8:30pm

**THURSDAY  
OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

*A benefit for the Mohawk & Hudson River Humane Society*

For information or ticket orders:  
[www.mohawkhumane.org](http://www.mohawkhumane.org)  
(518) 434-8128 ext. 204