FROM THE DIRECTORS DESK

Summer is coming to a close, and our hope is that you found relaxation and joy in the outdoors as we did. We thank all of our volunteers who continued HABIC visits through the summer, since the residents and persons receiving them find them extremely valuable for their quality of life. In this issue you will find articles about our HABIC annual celebration, play in the pasture, and advice about some aspect of working with your dogs.

We hope to encourage you to attend all of our functions during this Fall and Winter seasons. Look for news of our biggest fundraiser - the Diggin’ Doubles tennis tournament, holiday potluck, and our “get-together” times of learning about each other and sharing HABIC experiences. This will also include discussions with our HABIC professionals who work with us in AAT and AAA, and with specialists in the human-animal bond field.

We have new and updated information about HABIC which is a surprise. Instead of touching the lives of over 400 persons each week, we are now reaching out to over 800 each week, according to the response of our members. This is a remarkable increase over the last few years, thanks to all of you committed volunteers. We all can be very proud.

This Fall we have new adventures ahead with old and new schools, as well as requests from new organizations. The requests of HABIC’s involvement at events in our communities have increased as we are becoming more known, and we thank all of you who have participated in these activities. As we have said before – “we couldn’t do it without you.”

We thank each and every one of our members who help change the quality of life for others. We believe that our visits and work sessions mean more than we can imagine.

~Ben & Georgia Granger

HABIC’s Mission: Improving the quality of life for people of all ages through the therapeutic use of companion animals.
HABIC dogs and cats are very proud of what they do during their visits or therapy sessions and feel proud of how they improve the quality of human lives with whom they work. So it is only fair that we provide them with an event in which they can relax, run, and play with their fellow members of HABIC.

This event is provided each Spring at the home of Bill and Elaine Spencer at our “Play in the Pasture”. Two to three acres of well groomed and fenced pasture are available to our dogs to do as they please as we proud owners share our stories of favorite events of our work with humans, get to know each other better, and watch and brag about our dogs as they have a “free time” for two hours.

It is a fun challenge to watch as Jim Digby, photographer, gathers the teams to take a group picture. As soon as all seem to be settled, one or more feel the urge to move. But Jim is always able to get a memorable picture of this event. ALL go away being thankful for the exercise and the pleasure the dogs share with each other as they play “off Lead”. Come and join us next May 2014!!!!
NEW HABIC TEAMS

Welcome to the following new HABIC teams:

**Fort Collins**
- Georgia Granger/Shiloh
- Michele Kane/Isabella
- Sharon Muelken/Tundra
- Misha Sheppard/Levi
- Zach Whitman/Huckleberry
- Amy Mueller/Cambridge
- Tracy Vangeermeersch/Daisy
- Heather Zoebel/Roxy
- Tracy Vangeermeersch/Daisy
- Dayna Hudson/Moshi
- Richard Ostendorf/Jagger
- Emily Boltman/Toby
- Jack Schutz/Twister
- Vanessa Vigil/Bella
- Shannon Conry/Champ
- Alena Bowen/Bridger
- Jacquelyn Guenther/Annie
- Allegra Lyon/Dexter
- Nicole Novak/River
- Becky Thomas/Kea
- Chance Crawford/Tyco
- Susie Radonsky/Max
- Tessa Wieszcholek/Finn
- David Hurt/Wyatt
- Elizabeth Peters/Wesley
- Melissa Garcia/Jagger
- Libby Boesen/Jackson
- Jeanine Neskey/SoBe
- Makena Schutz/Twister
- Vanessa Vigil/Bella
- Virginia O’Hara/Wellie
- Rebecca Limanni/Frank

**Denver**
- Jack Schutz/Twister
- Melissa English/Nittany
- Shannon Conry/Champ
- Alena Bowen/Bridger
- Jacquelyn Guenther/Annie

**HABIC Article accepted for publication!!**

“Becoming relationally effective: High-risk boys in animal-assisted therapy”

Abbey Ann Schneider, Josie Rosenberg, Megan Baker, Nate Melia, Ben Granger, and Zeynep Biringen

Colorado State University

Human-Animal Interaction Bulletin

Rockhampton, QLD, Australia

Contact HABIC office if you would like an email copy of article.

**DOG TIPS from Carrie Bowlus**

What is the most important obedience skill? If you ask five people, you'll get five different answers. In my opinion, if you teach nothing else, or practice nothing else -- the most important obedience skill is the WAIT.

What's the difference between WAIT and STAY? When you ask a dog to STAY, you are signaling to the dog that you are leaving, but will return. A dog who understands STAY, will then hold his position until you return. When you ask a dog to WAIT, you are signaling to the dog -- to hold his current position, that further direction is on its way. In a sense you're saying to the dog "hang on." There is one more part to WAIT that many people overlook. When you teach a dog the WAIT cue, you are buying time. You are giving the dog time to hear your next direction, or to make his own, hopefully correct decision.

How many of you have privately thought -- my dog has some sort of attention disorder? Watching a dog move from one thing to the next, quickly and in a seemingly random pattern, it is easy to believe they are suffering from an attention disorder. For some dogs, maybe. For most dogs, they simple haven't been taught WAIT.

WAIT is actually pretty easy to teach. If it's easy to teach, why don't more dogs excel at this skill? They don't because their people haven't mastered the skill either! Dog training is about mastering small parts of larger behaviors over a period of time. The WAIT cue requires a dog (and person) be able to control their impulses. It requires they tune-out other stimuli in the environment, and wait for the next signal.

How do you teach WAIT? You commit to breaking the training into hundreds of tiny parts. You start in a quiet room, with little that is interesting to the dog. You ask the dog to sit or down, you stand quietly next to him, you take a few breathes then release him with an OK. After awhile, you add the verbal signal -- WAIT. Then you add distraction little by little. Then you start to add distance between yourself and your dog. Then you change rooms, then outside, then away from home...you get the picture.

So now you're motivated to work on WAIT. You map out your training plan, you'll have this handled in a week, maybe two. Nope, WAIT is a skill I work on with my dogs through their working years, all of their working years. WAIT buys you time, take the time to really teach it.
HABIC 20th Anniversary
Annual Celebration of Success

What fun we all had as we greeted thirty-four of our HABIC dogs as they attended our Annual Celebration on April 6th at the Embassy Suites. General Manager, Tom Dwyer, invited HABIC animals to accompany their owners to the hotel for an evening of appreciation to thank members, professionals, and community persons who work to make the organization a successful endeavor.

There were concerns by some as to how the dogs would do, but all were amazed at the well trained dogs and owners throughout the evening as the down-stay command was given. Advanced Certification stories were read and six teams received a human-animal certification plaque in appreciation of their work and commitment to HABIC.

Marian Goodrich received “Volunteer of the Year” Award.

The evening was complete as all owners and the animals heeled up a ramp and were introduced to the audience as they walked down the walkway in the center of the room. The applause for these teams was undoubtedly heard by all others attending events at the hotel. The majority of comments we heard at the end of the evening was “The dogs did so well—it was great to have them”.

Our thanks to Tom, and to those who did not attend, why not put the event on your calendar for next April and start helping your dog understand a proper “down-stay” at your dinner table.

Checkout the website: www.HABIC.org to view the six Advanced Certification stories and view the teams that were awarded.
“Post a message on the wall,” the Facebook screen implores me. I am new to this, but I know of other walls used for writing: The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem full of notes stuck between its stones, The Berlin Wall covered with political messages, and a ‘word wall’ in an elementary school classroom where new readers see the words they will find in books. I take care to use my fingertips as I spell out the words—all in caps. “The handwriting is on the wall” the saying goes, but now my hand is writing on the wall. Not one made from cement or plaster, but a different kind of wall—a wall that is soft, smooth, sensitive to touch, overly sensitive at times. It is what the dictionary tells us is the fourth definition of a wall, the exterior surface of a bodily organ—a cheek to be precise.

This wall is connected to a body that has oxygen continuously flowing into it, has blind eyes, ears that do not hear, and limbs that do not move easily. There is a wall between us and it is as if the wall has ears. I must remember not to use abbreviations, contractions, or numbers. Each letter is carefully formed, sometimes more than once to be understood. I need the gift of time. The person on the other side of the wall does not realize how the world is changing at warp speed, that millions of short, often superfluous messages are being sent instantly from the palm of one’s hand. A tweet, she might think, would be a lovely sound that a bird makes to be enjoyed on warm, sunny days outside on the patio.

She is interested in all things political, the news of the world no matter how lamentable, and learning what new words entering our lexicon mean. A ‘visiting angel’, an oh-so-perfect name for someone who does this job, comes often to ‘read’ her an 800 page book. There is no instant gratification on either side of the wall. “This is probably the most expensive book ever read!”, she gasps—a book being laboriously read on a face. Between the questions I answer (‘What is going on in the world?’ being the most common) and the things I tell her (“Your hair is becoming gray, like mine”), I guide her hand to the soft fur of the dog lying next to her. The body of one warms the other. “I love it”, she says. There is surely no wall between these two.

I post my last message. The dog jumps off the bed and stretches. I do the same, stiff from leaning and reaching. I will return next week if there is no pneumonia or infection that keeps me from entering the room. And I will continue to write on this wall, this face that is like the blank pages of an empty book waiting to be filled.

EPILOGUE

The person on the inside of the wall was Coral Kotliar, a resident of Columbine West Health & Rehab Facility in Fort Collins, CO. She had a bachelor’s degree in Political Science, a law degree, and a master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. She had been blind for 25 years due to an inoperable brain tumor and deaf and mobility impaired for 10 years. She once had a very special golden retriever guide dog named Ellen.

The person writing on the wall was Karen Nystrom, a speech-language therapist specializing in literacy who lives in Fort Collins. The dog who brought them together, Timmy, was a HABIC trained therapy dog who visited nursing home residents for five years until he was 17 years old.

Coral passed away on April 8, 2013 after her heart grew too weak to sustain her never ending will to live—the same date that little Timmy, a white-beige terrier mix, had died two years previously. Karen found Coral lying in bed with her arms wrapped around a white stuffed dog, just after she had taken her last breath.

April 2013
SALE FOR A CAUSE

On August 24th, Macy’s had a sale honoring non-profit organizations by providing this fundraiser. HABIC was invited to participate which meant selling coupons for $5.00 which gave those who purchased coupons a 25% discount on items bought. This was an ideal time for buying “back-to-school” items.

The invitation also asked for HABIC teams to be present inside the North Entrance. Thirteen teams greeted shoppers who enjoyed meeting the HABIC dogs and learning about what HABIC is all about. It is felt that the event was successful since the general public has a better idea of who we are.

If HABIC is invited to participate next year, I am hopeful that more than ten HABIC members will find time to sell/buy the coupons. Even if each member would sell/buy one coupon, it would be of great benefit to HABIC in a variety of ways. Thank you all who participated in this event.

Georgia Granger

HABIC Statistics March 2013

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Upcoming Orientations and Trainings

HABIC orientation for Denver residents interested in training as a human-animal bond team is scheduled for Tuesday, October 15, at St Joseph Hospital.

For Fort Collins residents, orientation will be held the evening of Thursday, Oct 3, 7PM at the Granger’s house. Trainings will begin Saturday, Oct 19, Nov 2,9,16,23, Dec 7,14,21. No class Nov 30. All classes held on CSU Campus, 144 Gifford Building, Fort Collins.

PLEASE CONTACT HABIC OFFICE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

HABIC (Human-Animal Bond in Colorado) was established in 1993, and is presently a Center of the CSU College of Health and Human Sciences, School of Social Work. HABIC uses the powerful human-animal bond to enrich the lives of clients in schools, long-term care facilities, youth corrections, in-home care, the VA, hospitals and Hospice programs. Currently HABIC has 150 teams working in Northern Colorado and Denver communities.

Check out our website for more information: www.habic.org
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