



Dog Sense

Canine Seizure Assist Society of North Carolina News

From The President

As recently elected president of the Canine Seizure Assist Society, I would like to commend Sharon Hermansen, founder of this organization, Executive Director and Head Trainer, for her unselfish dedication to those with epilepsy by securing and training dogs to aid them. She has been providing this service for eight years and during this time received no compensation for the hours of travel, training, and fund raising she has given to this cause. She has spent uncountable hours at yard sales, dog washes, writing newsletters, training dogs, training owners, training others to train, advocating for legislation, advocating for standardization of state certification of trainers, the list goes on.



We are indeed fortunate to have her in our area. As an indication of the respect held for her nationally, the Epilepsy Foundation funded her travel to New Zealand to teach their trainers her methods for training seizure-assist dogs. She is a renowned authority on the training of dogs for this service, receiving calls from all over the world.

She has trained dogs for celebrities as well as poverty-stricken victims of epilepsy, a condition that knows no social boundaries – all without compensation. Her latest project is writing an instructional book on training the seizure-assist dog, sharing the knowledge she has gained with those who do not have access to a professional trainer.

Thank you, Sharon, for all you have done and do for the Canine Seizure Assist Society and the victims of epilepsy. Your skills have truly changed their lives and without you this could not have happened.

We are very pleased to announce the receipt of a \$3000 grant from Novartis for educational purposes. Board member Dr. William Bell was instrumental in obtaining this grant along with Sharon Hermansen and Shelly Uhlott. Thank you.

It is an honor for me to serve on the Board and I look forward to working for the continued success of this fine organization.

Barbara Williams



Dog Fun Day 2003

Dog Fun Day is our annual summer fundraising event. We strive to educate the public on the use of service dogs while having fun.. Guests enjoyed the opportunity to enter their special dog in one of our dog contests, complete with trophies and ribbons.

We'd like to thank Harris Teeter and UCB Pharma for sponsoring our event; Eastfield Christian Church for hosting our event; and all the guests and volunteers without whose participation this event would not be possible.



From The Executive Director

CSAS has definitely been through our share of growing pains in 2003. We have been plagued with financial troubles. Yesterday it was reported that the country is now in a stage of economic growth and prosperity. That is encouraging for all non-profit organizations. Through these problems, we have managed to become stronger than ever. We have been blessed with a wonderful new trainer; we have a great Board of Directors; and our goal has always been to be working with five dogs at one time, we are now working with six seizure-assist dogs. Our fund raising efforts in 2003 have not been very successful. We have, however, raised enough money to keep going. I want to thank all of our friends who have contributed and made this possible.

When I began training these dogs in 1995, the scientific community did not recognize the dogs as being a help to people with epilepsy. As Barbara told you in her article, CSAS has received a grant from Novartis Pharmaceuticals and Dr. William Bell was instrumental in this achievement. I find it quite interesting that our first grant was received with the help of a neurologist and from a human health care company. This, to me, means that these wonderful, furry, little creatures have proven what they do to enrich the lives of mankind.

Rick Teague has been our treasurer since the very beginning. He has found it necessary, because of time constraints, to resign from the Board. Thank you Rick for everything you have done to get us going and to keep us going.

Welcome to the Board Michelle Uhlott. Shelly moved from Ohio, where she worked for a non-profit organization, to Rock Hill this summer. She has joined the Board as Secretary and has, already, done a great deal to help CSAS. She is an artist who has designed everything we have done since we incorporated and helped tremendously in our fund raising projects this summer and fall and with our grant applications. So, Shelly, Michael, Mac, Snoopy (2 dogs), and Harley (a HUGE CAT), we welcome you and are very happy that you are here.



All of us at the Canine Seizure Assist Society of North Carolina wish you and your loved ones, human and not, a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthful 2004.

Sharon

A Lab, A Shepherd, A Border Collie

Your child has asked for a puppy for Christmas. "I promise I will feed it. I promise I will take it out. I promise I will play with it." Consider yourself warned, it is very, very rare that those promises are kept. When I had my private training business, it never ceased to amaze me how many parents truly thought a child (of almost any age) would or could fulfill those promises.



A puppy is not just a cute, warm, furry, little bundle. They wet, poop, and vomit anyplace they happen to be. There is rarely a Barbie doll with a head left on in any home with a young dog or puppy. And, you can totally forget having any clean baby toys. If you have an infant or a toddler in disposable diapers, you really need to consider having a diaper disposal pail in every room in the house, and PLEASE don't forget the permanently attached lid.



No, your baby does not need a puppy to be raised with him! The books all talk about what a wonderful companion "Larry Lab" is. Yes, after he is four years old. Parents have this wonderful image of their little girl running and playing in the backyard with the beautiful Golden Retriever puppy. Yeah right! Trust me when I say this is very, very rare. The actual picture will be their sweet little girl running, screaming, and crying while being knocked down and chewed upon by a 55 or 60 lb. muddy, slobbering bundle of energy! This, by the way, is coming from the "Dog Lady".

Hopefully, I have your attention. The point in all of this is to ask anyone thinking of purchasing a "puppy" for a child or children, to consider very carefully whether this is a good choice. There are many, many shelters and rescue organizations, over crowded with "Larry Labs" and warm, furry, little bundles that a child was going to feed. If you have young children who want a dog or if you would like to have a dog but not have to go through the "puppy stage", I would like to recommend that you go to one of those shelters or rescue agencies and adopt a more mature dog. The Humane Society, and many other organizations, are very familiar with the dogs in their care and can help direct you toward a dog that will fit into your family.

Dr. David Says. . .



The Truth About West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is classified as an arbovirus (an arthropod-borne virus) which was originally identified in the West Nile district of Uganda, Africa in 1937. Since then, it has been detected in other parts of Africa, Western Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the United States. WNV was first detected in the United States in 1999. Reports from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed 149 human cases from 1999 to 2001. Epidemic proportions hit in 2002 with a total of 3,389 infected humans (69% had West Nile meningoencephalitis, 21% West Nile fever and 1% unspecified).



Blood-feeding insects, especially the mosquito, transmit WNV. The virus is predominately spread by wild birds, though it can also infect domestic birds, domestic rabbits, horses, dogs, cats, bats, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels and humans. It is picked up by

mosquitoes from infected birds and transmitted to animals and humans via the bloodstream from a bite. The virus replicates in the bloodstream and multiplies and then crosses the blood-brain barrier and causes encephalitis (specifically inflammation of the meninges of the brain). Because the mosquito is the direct vector of the disease it is not transmitted via other routes of infection, namely, person to person, animal to person, person to animal, or animal to animal. Another common vector of many diseases, the tick, is not known to spread the virus at our current level of understanding the disease.

The probability of humans becoming ill from a single mosquito bite is extremely low due to the fact that less than 1% of people bitten and infected by the infected mosquito become noticeably ill. In addition, in areas where mosquitoes carry the virus, less than one-percent are actually infected with the virus. Infected humans show mild symptoms of fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands.

Severe infections demonstrate signs of high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, convulsions and paralysis. Fatal reactions are unusual and are highest among the elderly.

The CDC has confirmed over 14,500 equine cases in 40 states, along with approximately 14,000 cases in birds, 3 canine and 8 squirrel cases. Most often horses infected with WNV reveal clinical signs of fever, depression, and weakness, usually in the hindquarters. Other clinical signs include a widened stance, toe dragging, stumbling, and leaning to one side. During the 1999 outbreak in equines, nearly 40% of the reported cases lead to death. According to volunteer bird counters, WNV in wild birds, namely crows and chickadees, usually results in death. A few canine deaths have been reported from the infection. It appears that most other animals usually do not develop clinical signs of the disease even after exposure from an infected mosquito and laboratory confirmed positive titers.

Because WNV is a viral disease, clinical treatment includes hospitalization, respiratory support, intravenous fluids, antibiotics to treat secondary infections and good nursing care. An animal with a viable functioning immune system can usually successfully fight the disease provided they receive adequate support. Diagnosis of West Nile viral encephalitis is based on history, clinical signs, and laboratory blood tests. Prevention is the key to success to stave off the disease from ever becoming a profound epidemic. A vaccine is currently available for horses to ward off clinical signs of the disease. For other animal species, limiting exposure to mosquitoes is the most effective prevention. Common mosquito repellent sprays such as permethrin or 35% DEET and other routine mosquito control measures will prevent further outbreaks of West Nile Virus.



What does your dog want for Christmas?

If you're wondering what to put in your dog's stocking this year, sit and stay before you trot toward the nearest pet store. Despite the amazing array of toys, treats, and accessories on the market today, most dogs are still remarkably unmaterialistic. And while you know your four-legged companion would probably never turn down a new squeaky toy or stuffed animal, here's what dogs say they really want:

Ten minutes of lovin' and rubbin'
Nine trips in one week to the drive-through window
Eight extra minutes of play time in the evening
Seven nights at your feet in front of the fire
Six "play dates" with the dog next door
Five wholesome, homemade treats
Four holes to dig (with parental permission)
Three mud puddles to splash in
Two squirrels to chase
And a one-hour off-leash romp in the woods

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT CSAS

If you or someone you know could benefit from the help of a seizure assist dog and you are interested in obtaining an application or more information, please contact us at:

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