



**NEWSLETTER**  
**Volume 9, Number 3**

**February, 2011**

*From our President Stephanie Fischer ([ilovtrav@aol.com](mailto:ilovtrav@aol.com))*

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! Our holiday party this year was quite a success, with the largest turnout I can remember in past years. As usual, the hit of the party was the Chinese auction, and in my opinion the choice gifts were the handmade quilted placemats made by Cathy Jones. At least this year I wasn't the only person to take someone else's gift.

If your dogs are anything like mine, the snow has made them all stir crazy. They still need to run and I don't like walking in the snow and ice. If I only had a sled, I would hook them all up. We are counting the days until spring.

Our fiscal year is coming to a close this spring, so with that come the elections to fill empty board positions. If anyone would like to join us and become a board member, please give Chris Cheeseman a shout [cpachristophergc@yahoo.com](mailto:cpachristophergc@yahoo.com). He is chairing the nominating committee this year. We have meetings every odd month and they last for about an hour. We have even started phone conference meetings to make getting together easier for everyone. This will culminate with an annual meeting in April to announce the elections. Save the first week in April, please. Specific date to follow.

Membership renewal is also coming up. Please continue to support the club, and its rescue efforts. With the change in the economy, we are getting more dogs into the program that need more medical attention. I will also be adding a special section for rescue on to the renewal application in the hope that I can get more volunteer help. Please don't be shy. Even making phone calls for us is a big help!

We have been talking about having an instructor meet with us for Canine Good Citizenship. Started in 1989, the CGC Program is designed to reward dogs that have good manners at home and in the community. The Canine Good Citizen Program is a two-part program that stresses responsible pet ownership for owners and basic good manners for dogs. All dogs that pass the 10-step CGC test may receive a certificate from the American Kennel Club. We will have the instruction over the winter, and the test will be given at our fun day this summer. A lot of people use this as a start toward their therapy dog certification. More info can be found on the AKC website <http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/program.cfm>. Once we settle on a date, you will receive an email.

It has been my policy this past year to listen to all the great suggestions people have thrown our way. We continue to make this club a place to gather with our dogs and learn a little something along the way. Please keep your suggestions and comments coming.

Thank you for your continued support,

*Stephanie*



### **MEMBER PROFILE: Judy and Mike Tanur**

*By Judy Tanur*

This is a strangely ironic time to find ourselves writing about our family and Vizslas. In October we learned that our younger dog, Junior, has a cancer of the anal sac that is very aggressive. He's had surgery and is on chemo, but we know it's only palliative. At the moment the disease is not showing at all in his behavior, and he's the same happy dog we've known for over eight years. But by the time this piece appears in the newsletter we may well have lost him.

But for now at least we are still in the throes of Multiple Vizsla Disorder. We acquired Junior as a puppy from Betty Anderson in Florida in 2002, and at that time we had another male of Bud McGivern's breeding, Kiddo, who had been our only Vizsla for several years.

We lost Kiddo to lymphosarcoma about 5 years ago (after he did quite well for over two years after his diagnosis). Shortly



### **Judy with Jr. and Sonali**

afterwards we adopted Sonali (a Hindu word that means "Golden Girl"), who had been owned by a family who was moving from a house in Vancouver, WA to an apartment in NYC. They have two teenage children who are very attached to Sonali, so the family preferred to have her on the East Coast so that the children could visit her. So we have gained not only a wonderful dog who loves to chase birds on the Montauk beach, but

also a new family of friends who also love to visit Montauk. Sonali is a bossy girl who keeps watch out the window and warns us about approaching deer (and neighbors, and cars, and anything else that moves). Junior is much more mellow and loves nothing better than to bring us our shoes when we're walking around barefoot in the morning, complete with his patented butt wiggle and pride over his captured prey.

We were first introduced to Vizslas in the 1960s when Mike was in training with Bud McGivern and we got to meet his foundation bitch, Carry. We fell in love with her (especially when she stayed with us while the McGiverns were on vacation and we taught her that all self-respecting Vizslas

sleep with their humans in bed), and determined that our next dog (we had a wonderful dachshund named Chutney at that time) would be a Vizsla. In 1972 we acquired our own first Vizsla, Murray. Since then we have always had at least one Vizsla living with us--now for a total of seven.

We neither show nor hunt our dogs. But since we live in Montauk year round, they are all wonderful beach dogs. Every morning, unless it is pouring rain, we go for a run on the beach. That is, Mike or Judy drives the jeep along the beach and the dogs run behind. We are actually a tourist attraction in Montauk—we often see people taking pictures or videos of our traveling circus.

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## Selected Upcoming Events on Long Island & Vizsla Specialties\*

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April 9-10 Brookhaven KC, Agility,  
Yaphank

May 8 CT Valley Vizsla Club Spring  
Field Trial, East Windsor, CT

May 20-21 Ladies Kennel Assn.,  
Oyster Bay

May 22 Long Island KC, Bethpage

June 10 Vizsla Club of Greater NY,  
Yorktown Heights

June 11 CT Valley Vizsla Club Summer  
Specialty, Greenwich KC, E.  
Norwalk, CT

July 15 Riverhead KC, Riverhead

\* If no specific activity is named, it means that the event is an all-breed conformation show, with obedience and rally sometimes included. For more information, go to:

<http://www.lipdc.com/>

<http://www.akc.org/events/search/>

<http://www.vcnnj.com/>

<http://www.ctvalleyVizslaclub.org/CalendarofEvents.htm>:

<http://www.thevcgny.com/Events.html>

<http://www.vccne.net/events.html>

<http://www.infodog.com/showinfo/state.htm>

*Donna Owczarek, the newsletter's editorial assistant and aspiring dog writer, has a blog, <http://www.donnaandthedogsblog.com> which is well worth reading and can also be subscribed to by email and/or as an RSS feed.*

## **Brag, Brags, Brags**



**BISS Am/Can GCH Brittonia's Taylor Made for Two JH TDI CGC became a Grand Champion on November 20, 2010 at the Kennel Club of Philadelphia show in Oaks, PA. Owned by Eddie and Jackie Macauliffe; bred by Britt Jung; handled by Carissa Shimpeno.**



**CH Kizmet Hi Time Magic (aka Maggie) finished her championship at the LeHigh Valley shows in Allentown, Pennsylvania on December 18. Owned by Pam and Bert Rowley; bred by Stephanie Reeder; handled by Hal Burton.**

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## **Focus On The Field**

*by Rich Mayer ([bytheseaVizslas@optonline.net](mailto:bytheseaVizslas@optonline.net))*

It's certainly an old cliché, but it applies to our club, our dogs and our events as much as anything else it can be used to describe. I'm sure you've heard it many times. "The future of \_\_\_\_\_ is our children." You can fill in the blank with anything from "the world" to "our breed", "hunting", "agility", "field

trials", etc. etc. The important theme is that to create growth it's vital that we never lose site of the need to cultivate more interest for tomorrow than there is today. To that end we link the tomorrow piece of the equation to our children.

Over the years, without fail, members repeatedly ask me if it's OK to bring their children to a field event. For some reason, participation in field events often seems to be viewed as a "you must be over 21 to participate" aspect of the dog world. My immediate response to this question has always been a resounding, "Yes—they're always welcome". There's nothing more heart warming than watching children interact with their dog and it happening in a field or in the woods is no exception. As is the case with any dog event, the bond between handler and dog is a key ingredient in the team's ability to be successful. The stronger the bond, the easier it is for the team to work as a unit. In the field the dog has to recognize that they're hunting for you and at the same time remain independent and bold. The handler is the team leader, but must never forget that it's their canine partner that has the god given ability to find game. Together they use intelligence, instinct and the bond they've built, to be productive, have fun and stay safe. Kids are perfect for this role, always up to the challenge and I've never met a Vizsla that didn't love kids. Well, maybe one.

The key to introducing kids to any activity is making it enjoyable. Today, parents and other mentors compete with many things that interest our kids. Their age and interest level will determine the lengths we have to go to to have them join us in the field. I don't believe any kid is too young to participate. Like anything else, their level of participation will be driven by their ability to understand the things they need to learn and their physical ability to be in a field environment which largely means they can walk through tall grass and get over/around fallen trees in the woods. Most kids between 5 and 7 are more than capable.

The following are a few suggestions to help get you thinking about how you can have your son or daughter join you in the field. Please remember that I'm using the terms son and daughter in a very general sense. Nieces, nephews, neighbors and classmates

are all kids that we may be close to. They're all the future of our breed.

**Your Role:** Knowing the child you're mentoring means knowing their interests, attention span, likes and dislikes. Make them feel like the role they're playing is important because they have a responsibility to the team! Most of all, be patient and make your time together fun.

**Their Role:** As I've highlighted before, all successes in the field begin with yard work. Yard work is the perfect opportunity for our kids to help us train. Fortunately many drills need a second set of hands and with some coaching our kids fill that gap perfectly. Here are just a few ideas for how our kids can be involved.

- Give them a compass, binoculars, a dog whistle, or a camera.
- Let them outfit the dog in their field collar, bell, etc.
- Let them plant birds, flush birds and fire the starter pistol.
- Help them ID trees, songbirds, & animal tracks. Look for sheds (dropped antlers)
- Let them give commands, praise and appropriate corrections.
- Stop and throw rocks in the pond. The dog will appreciate the break too!
- After you're done training, have them go over the dog for ticks, and scratches that may need tending to.

**Their Clothes:** It's tough to outfit kids with all the gear they'll need to be in the field but depending on their level of participation they may not need much. As is the case with any outdoor sport, it's tough to enjoy it if you're not dressed properly. For a field kid that means sturdy, waterproof footwear and clothes to stay warm. I like something on them that's orange so they're safe and easy to see. If they're comfortable, they're happy.

**A few Other Thoughts:**

- Don't make the outing a marathon. Spend a few hours but remember

that little legs get tired sooner than yours.

- Bring beverages and snacks. Nothing better than a food break out in the woods.
- Don't correct mistakes they make that don't make much difference anyway.
- Share your Pointing Dog Journal and training videos.
- Bring them to training days and seminars.
- Walk a brace or two together so they see what it's all about.
- Let them handle your dog in a hunt test or field trial.
- Have the AKC send them a junior handler number so they can be recognized! The program is not just for conformation handlers.
- Leave Game Boys, iPods and their cell phones home or in the truck. The time afield is about togetherness and enjoying the outdoors.

The future of our breed and their opportunities to be field dogs depends on our ability to attract new participants. Please never hesitate to bring kids to our events. They truly energize our events, meet new friends their age and hopefully develop a passion for being in the field with their Vizsla.

### **Point It Out**

Cabelas <http://www.cabelas.com> and Sportsmansguide <http://www.sportsmansguide.com> are two excellent companies that provide kids' apparel at reasonable prices.



### ***In Memory of Some Very Special Dogs***

*I found a penny today, just laying on the ground, but it is not just a penny, this little coin I found.*

*Found pennies come from heaven, that's what my Grandpa told me. He said Dog Angels toss them down. Oh how I loved that story.*

*He said that when a Dog Angel misses you, they toss a penny down. Sometimes just to cheer you up, to make a smile out of your frown.*

*So don't pass by that penny when you're feeling blue. It may be a penny from heaven that your dog has tossed to you.*

*Author Unknown*

**To laugh:** <http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.com/2010/11/dogs-dont-understand-basic-concepts.html>

## Photo of the Month



**Grace and Rescue Sister Dora adopted by Barbara and Ron Schade who spend winters in Florida.**

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### RESOURCES

**Pet loss helpline:**

<http://vetmed.illinois.edu/CARE/index.html>

**Estate planning for non-human family members:**

[http://www.professorbeyer.com/Articles/Pet\\_Trusts\\_1-20-2011.pdf](http://www.professorbeyer.com/Articles/Pet_Trusts_1-20-2011.pdf)

**Imagine This Car Magnets:**

<http://www.imagnethiscompany.com/Car-Magnets.html>

**Long Island Dog Directory:**

<http://www.lidogdirectory.com>

### Dogs Welcome

A man wrote a letter to a small hotel in a Midwest town he planned to visit on his vacation, "I would very much like to bring my dog with me. He is well groomed and very well behaved. Would you be willing to permit me to keep him in my room with me at night?" An immediate reply came from the hotel owner, who wrote: "I've been operating this hotel for many years. In all that time, I've never had a dog steal towels, bedclothes, silverware or pictures off the walls. I've never had to evict a dog in the middle of the night for being drunk and disorderly. And I've never had a dog run out on a hotel bill. Yes, indeed, your dog is welcome at my hotel, and, if your dog will vouch for you, you're welcome to stay here, too."



Our Wine-Tasting Hosts at Ackerly Pond

## Dog Training Book Reviews The Three P's

By Donna Owczarek

Pat Miller is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT) and a Certified Dog Behavioral Consultant (CDBC) who has been training dogs for over thirty years. She is considered a crossover trainer because she started out using correction based methods, but then switched to purely positive training after a regretful experience working with her own dog, Josie. She speaks freely about the incident in her first book, *The Power of Positive Dog Training*, after which she wrote two additional training guidebooks: *Positive Perspectives* and *Positive Perspectives 2*.

If you are exploring positive dog training for the first time, *The Power of Positive Dog Training* lays forth the foundations to get you started, and addresses specific

problems you might encounter when switching from one training method to another. After describing some of the tools that you might wish to purchase and how to use them properly, Pat Miller details a six-week training program to assist you in teaching your dog basic obedience. At the back of the book you will find helpful charts to track your progress. This book briefly touches on some of the different behavioral problems you might encounter, including fearfulness, chewing, digging, and separation anxiety.

If you are already familiar with the ins and outs of positive training, or have a specific behavioral issue that you are trying to resolve, you might wish to pick up *Positive Perspectives* instead. Along with exploring puppy socialization, general training, and healthcare concerns, this book includes a detailed section about preventing and resolving problem behaviors. As a Vizsla owner, you might want to open directly to Chapter 21: "S.O.S.! Save Our Shoes: Appropriate Chewing" or chapter 28 "Bouncing off the Walls: The High-Energy Dog." These and other challenging issues are addressed in this comprehensive guide.

If you are interested in the 'why' behind your dog's behavior, including the possibility that you yourself might be the very cause of your dog's misbehavior, *Positive Perspectives 2* is the book for you. It covers everything from how to read your dog's body language to how to cope with serious problems such as aggression. With this book you can take positive training to another level by learning how to fade your lures, sharpen your recalls, and discovering the newest methods of gaining your dog's attention



- and keeping it. Throughout its pages you will also find various games and exercises that are meant not only to be fun for you and your dog, but also help strengthen the bond between you and your best bud.

Check your local library or bookstore for copies of these recommended training guides. You can also purchase any of the three at either [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

## Rescue Committee Report

Since our last newsletter, I have been officially named Northeast Regional Coordinator for the Vizsla Club of America. This now means I oversee eight states, and work with the local coordinators to help place dogs. I think the common problem we all have is finding help among our club members. Please reach out and give rescue a try, whether it be fostering, phone calls or emails. We can certainly use the help!

We currently have three dogs in our program looking for forever homes. Happy in particular would be great in a family setting with kids over 9. Copper would be great with a playmate and Phoebe would be good with a single person or an older couple. Put on your thinking caps!

Enjoy the following four stories; they will warm your heart!

Stephanie

## Rescue Stories

### Kobör's Story

"He is the best present ever..." which is how we always describe him. Sadly, we just lost our previous 12-year-old Vizsla to cancer, and were determined to find a Vizsla in need of rescue to help fill our empty hearts when Kobör came into our lives. Previously named Carter by his foster family, he was found running around in North Jersey and was described as a two-year-old male, bearing a few scars but otherwise a happy, healthy Vizsla.

We were blessed with an incredibly easy transition. We met him at the foster family's home, and the minute he saw my husband he leaped into his arms, licking his face like a long-time buddy.

From that moment we knew he was the one for us.



We decided he needed a Hungarian name, so selected Kobör, which means wanderer. Kobör is on the small side (he was just under 40 lbs. when we adopted him), and happily for us, the vet

confirmed that he is only about 9 to 10 months old. He has the sweetest temperament, and has to be the fastest tail-wagger I've ever seen. He has full run of the house, but has never touched a shoe or a pillow or played with anything other than his toys

Kobör minds his manners, never steals food from the kitchen counter, and rarely barks. He loves car rides and is always ready to jump in for a trip, whether it's across town or across the state. Of course, he does sleep on a human bed, and is constantly being petted, as none of us can resist him!



Kobör has just experienced his first romp in the snow, chasing the tips of my husband's cross-country skis on the trails near our home. He tears about the backyard, chasing squirrels and chipmunks, and loves to play with our teenaged children, as well as his "dog friends" when they come to visit. It has been almost three months since Kobör came into our lives. Every day I look at him and think how lucky we are that we found him—Kobör is truly our perfect dog.

Laraine, Mark, Cayla and  
Conor Francisco

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## Cooper's Story

My name is Scott Miller and I have been a Foster/rescue volunteer for two and a half years. I mostly fostered for Diane Shearer who serves as the Eastern Pennsylvania rescue coordinator. Diane gave my number to Stephanie Fischer of the VCLI.

In mid November I received a call from Stephanie about a boy who was being kept in a cage in a garage in Reading, PA. I was in Florida at the time. I volunteered to pick him up and foster him as soon as I could get home to New Jersey. He was alleged to have house training problems and also to have snapped or bitten the owner's eight-year-old son. The preliminary information was that he had possession issues and was treated with a heavy hand. After Stephanie arranged a vet checkup and some medication by the owner who was giving him up, I arrived in Reading and took possession of Cooper. He was a skinny, shy, playful dog that was extremely submissive and hand shy. He also would only relieve himself in the woods, not on grass or any other surface. This was not all bad as he has not had an accident in the house.

Cooper turned out to be a dog who loves all people and other dogs. He also has a face that can soften the coldest people. I am still amazed anyone could mistreat such a gentle loving companion. I have seen many Vizslas come and go, but four days after picking up Cooper I approached Stephanie about the possibility of keeping Cooper. Stephanie had already approved a

family in New York City as the potential family for Cooper. It soon became



peeing, light food and toy guarding, and of course his strange requirement of only relieving himself in the presence of wooded areas. After three weeks of dog parks, leash training and learning the basic commands Stephanie told me I could keep him. I was so happy. Since then, Cooper has decided he doesn't like guns or fishing rods but loves bird hunting, boating and fishing, and the beach. He is now spending the winter in Florida where the temperature is more to his liking and the outdoor activities are endless. Cooper has made great improvement with his issues. He has been to South Beach, the Keys, and many dog parks in the first two weeks. He was also fishing with me the day we caught four sailfish in two hours. I think he likes it here.

apparent that a dog from the country who loved to chase deer and pee in the woods was not going to make it in the big city. At the same time Cooper was charming all in his path. In his first two weeks with me he traveled to Ocean City, NJ and Chestertown, MD. He was awesome!

Many people offered to adopt him, though it was not up to me to decide where he goes.

Stephanie called almost every day those first two weeks to make sure Cooper was well and I was OK with him. I connected with Cooper instantly and started re-training him for his next family. His issues were: submissive



My many thanks go out to Stephanie for introducing me to Cooper and ultimately for letting me adopt him. Fostering has introduced me to many

Vizslas. It is a good feeling to see a dog go from a bad situation to a loving family. The best part is that I met an awesome dog in a bad situation who is now having the time of his life.

Scott Miller

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## **Rocky's Story**

As Rocky lies curled up on our feet, it's hard to believe we've only had him for six weeks. Our journey began five months ago, and Rocky was certainly worth the wait. Neil and I had been together for almost two and a half years and decided it was time to expand our family. While both of us had grown up with Labs, neither of us had ever owned a Vizsla. We were familiar with the breed through various family and friends, and it took little convincing for both of us to decide that Vizslas were the perfect complement to our home.

After filling out a detailed adoption application, and after Stephanie's (our Fairy Dogmother) twenty-five minute inquisition over the telephone, we had passed the first test. Everything that Stephanie said to try and dissuade us only made us want a Vizsla that much more: relentlessly energetic? Perfect—Neil and I both love the outdoors and long-distance running; velcro dog? Perfect—we would be disappointed if our dog wasn't utterly devoted. But, rightly so, Stephanie was reluctant to adopt a high-energy Vizsla to two city boys whom she had never met. After all, city life can be unnerving even for people, let alone a sensitive puppy.

Undaunted and certain of purpose, we agreed to trek out to the eastern tip of Long Island to persuade not only Stephanie, but also a coterie of Vizsla owners, that we were ready and fit to raise a young Vizsla. This second test turned out to be anything but a test. For hours, we played with Vizslas at the VCLI Wine Tasting Event. As we were about to head back to the city, Stephanie pulled us aside and let us know she would begin trying to place a dog in our home. Neil and I were grinning ear-to-ear the entire ride home.

Over the next five months, Stephanie had two potential rescues come through the program that she thought could be good matches. But because we live in NYC, there were several personality traits in those dogs that turned out weren't well suited for our home. As soon as we began to feel star-crossed, fate intervened. The same day that we learned we wouldn't be getting one of the other rescues, Stephanie called and said there was a family in western Pennsylvania that had decided to place their dog in the rescue program. He was a six-month old Vizsla puppy named Rocky who had already received ten weeks of obedience and was a very well mannered, handsome boy. The sooner we could pick him up, the better, as the family had come to terms with their decision and wanted to rip the band-aid off, so to speak. The only hitch was that, because of the distance to Erie, Pa., we would have to drive out there and pick him up ourselves. Almost as soon as we hung up the phone, we had reserved a rental car to bring Rocky home that same weekend.



When we arrived in Erie, after a seven hour drive, everyone was anxious, including us. Stephanie had warned that meeting Rocky and the family would be an emotional one, but no words can describe how bittersweet it truly was. Rocky was the sixth member of the Berger household, and they could not have been a sweeter, more loving family. Unbeknownst to them, when they got Rocky, their nine-year-old daughter had a severe dog allergy. After raising and training Rocky for over four months, they decided together that it was best for their daughter and the entire family to find a new home for Rocky.

In their living room, we sat and chatted for a half hour or so. They demonstrated all of the many commands and tricks that Rocky follows (Rocky even obeyed their four year old daughter!) and tried to fill us in on every detail of his personality and routine. After one last walk around their living room and after loading our car with all

his toys and crate, we let them have a moment alone with Rocky. When they came out, they were all misty eyed.

During the drive home, we talked to his former family twice and also let Stephanie know how he was doing. For most of the ride, he sat in his crate, eyes wide open, knowing his life was about to change forever. When he jumped out when we arrived at our building, he was greeted with so many new sounds, smells, dogs, and people he didn't know what to make of it all.

Since Rocky's great adventure coming to New York City, he has been doing so well. Slowly, but surely, Rocky is adapting to his new home and city and experiencing so many new and exciting things. Just the other night, he sat intently and quizzically as he listened to a live violinist! He has met many new friends, explored all over lower



Manhattan, and even made a trip up Central Park for a play date with another Vizsla, Tawny. Rocky has definitely changed our lives for the better. He is such an amazing dog and we couldn't love him more. Basically, we have become Velcro owners,

hopelessly devoted and constantly showering him with kisses and love.

Michael Read and Neil Pirie

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### Aja's Story

From Princess Aja:

*"I sleep on a pink satin sheet in my master's fluffy bed until noon. Every Vizsla should have this life. After all I was awakened at 6:30 a.m. to tend to my toilet needs, run in my yard with my older brother, Dion, eat breakfast, be groomed and given my "treat" (fish oil). Now I need my beauty rest. I know my master's mother will call me down at noon to sit with her. I love to rest my head on her soft shoulder and snuggle close to her warm body. My brother Dion is old and sleeps a lot but we do chase each other when he's feeling like it.*

*As if a clock is in my belly, it must be 5 o'clock because my master's mother is getting my dinner ready. In a short time, my master will be home and we will play and snuggle until bedtime. I love the long walks with my new canine friends on weekends and I try very hard not to pull my master down on her butt. She is very understanding and has taught me a new word—'heel.'*

*Ah-h-h the life of a Hungarian princess!"*

Aja's life here has certainly had its ups and downs. She is my first rescue. When she first arrived there was a lot of growling as she claimed her space and we all needed to understand her and she, us. She has settled in, slimmed

down and finally claimed this as her home. She is still bossy and wants to be the first out the door, first to get attention, etc. but Dion doesn't seem to mind. He is such a gentleman! My two children who live locally have rescues too; two boxers, one ridgeback and one mix. There is now a lot less growling when her cousins come to visit and yard time is a hoot.



Carol Biros

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### **Membership Report:**

We currently have 81 families as members of our club. Renewal applications will be sent out with the newsletter. Please continue to support us and don't be shy about coming out to our events.

## **Talking with a Long Island Dog Trainer:**

Ritsa Galitsis, CPDT--Owner of: Happy Hounds  
Positive Reinforcement Dog Training and Behavior Modification  
Member of: Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)  
[www.happyhoundstraining.com](http://www.happyhoundstraining.com)  
(631) 716-1242

Specializing in “working with families and teaching them how to communicate with their dogs and teach them manners,” Ritsa Galitsis “will work with any dogs or any issues,” and can prepare you and your dog to take the American Kennel Club’s Canine Good Citizen exam. Currently, she teaches Basic Obedience and CGC classes in Middle Island and is a strong supporter of positive dog training methods. Diligently furthering her education through seminars, books, and videos, her continuous schooling is what allows Ritsa to keep her Certified Professional Dog Trainer title, one that is not easily attained. Her skills have also qualified her to become an evaluator for the AKC Canine Good Citizen exam as well as for Therapy Dogs, Incorporated.

Ritsa’s tool of choice in creating a well-mannered dog is socialization, especially for puppies. “Their first three months are so important; many people don’t realize just how important they are.” As for training tools, she often recommends the Sensation Harness, the Gentle Leader head collar, and the martingale. Ritsa has experience with a vast array of breeds, including the Hungarian Vizsla. When I asked what she thought of our beloved redheads, she replied, “They are a nice breed; a smart breed. They can be energetic, and you absolutely have to work with them to establish a relationship and always keep it positive. They are less likely to respond to any type of punishment.” Ritsa feels the best way to train a Vizsla is by “building a relationship and giving them the opportunity to use their brains.”

Rather than settling on one particular breed for herself, Ritsa prefers to rescue those in need. She currently shares her Selden home with Kensi, an Old English Sheepdog who has dabbled in agility, Angus a Flat Coated Retriever mix who shares his love as a therapy dog, Baron, a sweet Hound Mix, and her newest rescue, Bea--a Pit Bull who is having fun learning both agility and weight pulling.

When deciding which activities to do with your own dog, Ritsa suggests, “Think about the breed and what they were bred for, but only to some extent.” She says it is important to consider other factors like “the activity level of the dog and of the person. Think about the commitment involved, and ask yourself what do you think will be fun to do?” Ritsa cautions, “If it’s not fun for the person or dog, it’s not a good idea. I’ve seen people who are really stressed when competing. So stressed they are yelling, and then the dog is stressed. This is just not a good thing. There is so much pressure, it is just work, and the dog feels it too.”

How to know if you are putting too much pressure on your own dog? “The dog will start shutting down. You will see displacement behaviors.” According to Ritsa, these “can look a lot like disobedience, but the dog often offers them or resorts to them when he or

she is stressed, confused, uncomfortable, etcetera. Some examples are ground sniffing, scratching, shaking off, and yawning.”



**Ritsa's pit bull Bea (hereby dubbed an “honorary Vizsla.”)**

If you are searching for a trainer, Ritsa advises you to “Ask questions. What are their methods? Ask about experience. Ask if they are certified. How big are the classes?” In Ritsa’s opinion, “Fifteen dogs to one trainer is a little impossible.” No matter who you choose, she feels training is invaluable. “Anyone getting a dog, or that has a dog already, should respect them enough to want to learn how to best communicate with them. Even a little bit of training can go a long way to make the whole experience of having a dog more enjoyable. It makes for a more harmonious household.” She also asks that you “Always consider positive reinforcement. It’s a lot more fun, and science and experience tells us it works.”

An advocate of rescue and adoption, Ritsa has always donated some of her own time to caring for canines in need, which is what originally led her to use positive training methods. Eleven years ago, while volunteering at an animal shelter in Queens, Ritsa was asked to teach a group of teenagers how to train dogs. Although she had previously used traditional methods, she “didn’t want to tell them to pop the leash” and decided to go the positive route instead. “I figured the worse that would happen was the dogs would get fed a lot of treats.” Since changing from traditional methods, Ritsa has “never looked back.” Currently, she offers her services to a local shelter and gives discounted lessons for rescues. Ritsa invites you to contact her for more information if you have adopted a Vizsla.

- Donna Owczarek





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Articles written or submitted by individual correspondents may not necessarily be in accordance with present VCLI policies.

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Cover—\$22.00

1 page w/1 photo \$17.00

1 page w/ 2 photos \$22.00

1 page w/out photo \$12.00

1/2 page w/ 1 photo \$15.00

1/2 page w/out photo \$10.00

1/4 page w/out photo \$5.00

When placing ads, the OFA# is required for the subject Vizsla. If under 2 years of age, the OFA#s of the parents are required. Spayed/neutered and deceased Vizslas need no OFA number.

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