



animal FOUNDATION of Great Falls

*Fostering a caring
community for animals*

PRESIDENT Robert James	TRUSTEES Sally Cerny Andrea Johnstone
TREASURER John Gilbert	Melanie Lattin Sue Todd Skees

ABOUT OUR BOARD

Sally Cerny is the retired CEO of Northern Rocky Mountain Easter Seals-Goodwill. She and her husband Chuck have a Golden Retriever and a Golden Retriever mix that are both rescued dogs.

John Gilbert is a business appraiser and forensic financial analyst. His dog Beemer goes to work with him each day. His wife Donna is also a CPA and shares an office with John and Beemer.

Bob James is a partner in the law firm of Ugrin, Alexander, Zadick & Higgins and has been a trial lawyer for 28 years. Bob and his wife Cindy have five grown children, three cats, and two dogs.

Andrea Johnstone has been the owner of a decorative plumbing and tile business for 26 years. She and her husband Bill have two sons, two very large dogs, and a new grand-dog recently adopted from the HSCC shelter.

Melanie Lattin works for the City of Great Falls and is a canine and human massage practitioner. She and Matthew Gressard share their home with a cat, a rescued dog, and a young Golden Retriever.

Sue Todd Skees is the owner of Mountain Title Services. She and her husband John live with two rescued pets: a dog from Camp Collie and a cat adopted from the animal shelter 20 years ago.

Sheltering Skies

ANIMAL FOUNDATION OF GREAT FALLS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2005

Fun at the Fur Ball!

Melanie Lattin

OUR FIRST FUR BALL, HELD ON APRIL 23, 2005, WAS A GALA AFFAIR—a night of goodwill, of laughter and friendship, of kindness. The Fur Ball was the first fundraising event of this magnitude for the welfare of homeless animals ever held in Great Falls. Highlights of the evening included special guest Dave Pauli, director of the Northern Rockies Regional Office of the Humane Society of the United States and awarding of the Purple Paw to Dave the therapy dog.

(Related article on page 3).



Much could be written about the event, but, in truth, the event can best be portrayed by one word: *generosity*.

- ❖ *The generosity of the many volunteers* who gave of their time, energy, and creativity to plan the event;
- ❖ *The generosity of the 135 individuals and businesses who donated auction items* of such impressive quality that more than \$28,000 was raised in the live and silent auctions;
- ❖ *The generosity of Big Sky Gold & Diamond*, who donated a diamond necklace as a raffle item, and the generosity of everyone who purchased raffle tickets to raise approximately \$7,000;
- ❖ *The generosity of the people who purchased tickets to attend the event*, bid so liberally on the auction items, and participated so spiritedly in other fundraising activities during the evening;
- ❖ *The generosity of each person who helped during the event itself* in many ways, large and small;
- ❖ *The generosity of Timothy Seery*, the young artist who painted the seven remarkable banners which helped to decorate the room and were sold during the live auction;
- ❖ *The generosity of people who attended to be supportive of those who believe so strongly in the importance of the Animal Foundation's mission*, and the generosity of those people who attended even though they are inundated by a number of similar events for other good causes; and, finally;
- ❖ *The generosity of a community that came together through this event to raise \$45,000 for the animals!*



Claire Baiz visits with fellow jewelers Joe and Terry Fox.



Executive Director Mary Willmarth shares a light moment with Board President Bob James.



Emcee Gordon Johnson and Fur Ball Chair Susan Dell announce a lucky door prize winner.

Story continues on page 2.

Fun at the Fur Ball *Story continued from cover page.*



The Fur Ball was a stellar success in terms of the amount of funds raised, and was also successful in promoting awareness of the Animal Foundation's mission of building a state-of-the-art animal shelter and dog park. In the room that evening at the Heritage Inn was a

tangible sense of shared compassion and concern for animals. As Dave Pauli spoke of so eloquently as he addressed those in attendance, we are working toward a humane society and that includes concern for the welfare of all members of our society, human *and* animal. How nice that the Fur Ball gave us such a fun way to do that.

Mark your calendar for next year's Fur Ball—*April 22, 2006*—but remember, buy your tickets early as we sold out weeks before the event this year!!!



Photos, clockwise from upper left: Speaker Dave Pauli, Humane Society of the United States Regional Director; auctioneer Mark Lacher; diamond winner Marty Andrews with Laura Gustavson, animal lovers Ole and Julie Stimac.

The Fate of the Blue-Eyed Dog *Melanie Lattin*

HIS BLUE EYES PIERCE THROUGH THE CHAIN LINK fence as he stares out of the kennel.

This dog was being held at the HSCC animal shelter last year when photographs were being taken for the Animal Foundation. We chose this striking photograph for the cover of our brochure. I've been asked many times about whatever became of the dog and I finally have an answer.



The now famous blue-eyed dog is named Lefty and he is happily living in Great Falls with his person, Barbie Brumbaugh, and her 11-year-old daughter, Samantha. Lefty is an eight-year-old Australian Shepherd/Blue Heeler mix and Barbie has had him for about a year.

It's obvious in the relatively short time she has had him, Barbie has come to love Lefty dearly and treasures him. She strokes his sleek hair and smiles as she describes his funny habits of gathering all his toys and putting them in his food dish and piling all her socks together to lay on them. "Lefty gives me love, he hugs me," says Barbie, "He's my dog and I have to protect him." She also indulges his preference of being a front-seat passenger in the car and sleeping in her bedroom. On the bed, of course.

And how did Lefty come to be in the animal shelter? It was a long journey for him. Lefty began his life in California where Barbie's relatives bought him as a puppy out of the back of a pick-up at a horse auction. Unfortunately, life was not good for Lefty as he spent his

time alone in a small dirt back yard. Fleas are a notorious problem for dogs in California and Lefty was no exception. Barbie knew she could provide a better home for Lefty. Her brother brought him to Montana for her—a perfect home for this quintessential cow dog mix. Perfect except that the second day he was at Barbie's house, he escaped from the fenced yard. Luckily, a caring person found him wandering the streets and took him to the shelter. Although he spent only two days in the shelter, "he doesn't want anything to do with running away any more," relates Barbie. Now he doesn't even want to leave the yard unless he's on a leash or heading for the vehicle. Apparently he learned his lesson!

Lefty shares his home with Zeus, a six-year-old Cocker Spaniel/Golden Lab mix Barbie adopted as a puppy from the HSCC animal shelter. "Lefty is the boss," says Barbie, "He took right over and keeps Zeus out of trouble." Zeus doesn't seem to mind that Lefty is a bit of a toy hog, probably because they are having so much fun playing soccer with each other.

"Lefty smiles a lot," Barbie says, and she's right. Sitting next to Barbie in her living room, Lefty grins across the room at me. Lefty has found himself a forever home and he is one lucky dog.

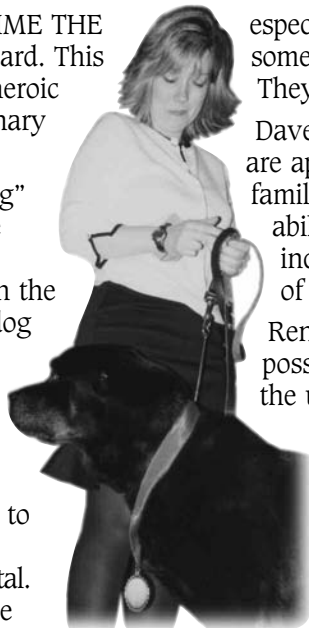
Zeus and Lefty with their favorite human, Barbie Brumbaugh.



First Purple Paw Awarded at Fur Ball *Sally Cerny*

THE FIRST FUR BALL WAS ALSO THE FIRST TIME THE Animal Foundation presented its Purple Paw Award. This award is designed to recognize an animal for a heroic act or for activities which demonstrate extraordinary service to humans.

The 2005 award was presented to “Dave the Dog” who is owned by Renee Weller. Dave and Renee joined the Benefis Healthcare Animal Enhanced Therapy Program five years ago as volunteers on the Physical Rehabilitation Unit. Dave is a therapy dog and he fits this role perfectly. Whether it is his gentle nature, kind face, or big sad eyes, Dave seems to work especially well with clients who have suffered a traumatic brain injury. Many of the patients reach out to Dave prior to doing the same toward another human being. Dave seems to develop a special bond with these folks, a bond which continues throughout their stay in the hospital. His impact upon the brain injured patient is made



especially evident when they return to visit the unit, sometimes long after discharge from the program. They ask if the big dog, Dave, is still around.

Dave’s work, incredible patience, and his antics are appreciated and enjoyed by the patients, their families and the staff of the Rehab Unit. Dave’s ability to make good things happen when an individual is faced with the most traumatic time of their lives is immeasurable.

Renee Weller, Dave’s owner, makes Dave’s work possible. She has willingly accompanied Dave to the unit almost every Friday night for five years, staying until every patient has been given the opportunity to see Dave and her other dogs. Dave, with Renee’s help, truly exemplifies dedicated service and the animal-human bond that the Purple Paw Award recognizes.

Cat Stories Needed!



Do you know a good cat tale? We’d love to hear your stories of rescued cats and kittens. Dogs tend to hog the attention, so we’d like to hear from the feline fanciers! These kittens were abandoned by their owners, but found an indoor home with a kindly farmhand who spoils them. Call Melanie Lattin at 453-8598.

Young Philanthropists

The Animal Foundation is gratified to learn that philanthropy begins at an early age in Great Falls. Examples of animal-loving youngsters who have recently donated to the Animal Foundation include an *eighth-grade class from Paris Gibson Middle School* who donated \$500. Thanks also to their teacher, *Ms. Brenda Hudspeth*, who helped the group.

Molly Harding, a nine-year-old, gave \$18 of her hard-earned babysitting money and *Kelsay Jensen*—at age six who just may be our youngest supporter—raised \$56.

Timothy Seery, a gifted painter who’s only twelve, created seven banners that raised \$1,750 in the Fur Ball auction.

The animals are lucky these young people live here. May their support and compassion be an inspiration to others.



Timothy Seery at the Fur Ball

Did you know...

Benefis Healthcare uses dogs for “Pet Therapy” to help patients in **Rehabilitation**. The friendly dogs are specially trained to help the patients with their care.

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Up to \$99

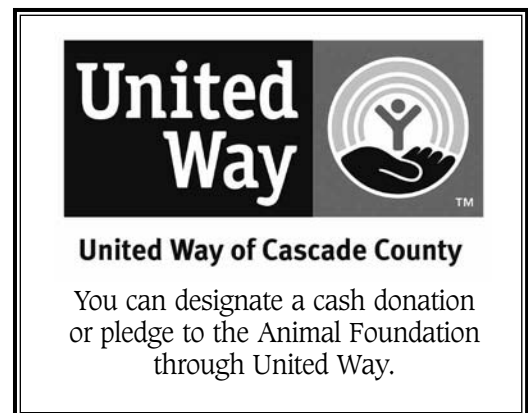
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*SEE ARTICLE BELOW



Grassroots Campaign Helps Fund Grow

The first phase of the Animal Foundation's capital campaign began last fall. The Grassroots Campaign, co-chaired by Cindy James and Joe and Terry Fox, was undertaken by thirty-eight highly motivated volunteers who went out into the community and asked for individual donations.

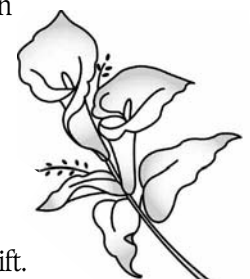
The Grassroots Campaign was even more successful than had been hoped, and raised a whopping \$57,000! The Grassroots Campaign set a strong precedent which was sustained with the tremendous success of the Fur Ball. Let's keep the momentum going!

Dr. Rick Scherr Donates Pet Memorial Funds *Mary Willmarth*

Local veterinarian Dr. Rick Scherr will be donating a memorial gift to the Animal Foundation on behalf of each pet that is put to rest at his clinic, Big Sky Animal Medical Center. This generous gift is an off-shoot of the "Pet Trust" program he has participated in at his alma mater, Kansas State University, for a number of years. Collectively, his annual gifts average over \$1,000 to KSU, so Rick foresees about the same level of giving to the new shelter.

"This program at KSU has been a very meaningful way for me to help memorialize pets on behalf of my clients," Rick says. "So I'm happy to continue doing the same, but I'm now keeping my donations here at home, for a great cause—building a much-needed new shelter in our community."

As part of the program, the Animal Foundation will send a note stating Rick's generosity to the pet's owner. As many of us know all too well, losing a pet can be terribly difficult. But knowing that one's veterinarian also cared enough about the pet to help make a difference in the life of other animals may help ease the heartache. The Animal Foundation sincerely thanks Dr. Scherr for this generous gift.



Why Do We Want a Dog Park? *Melanie Lattin*

THE ANIMAL FOUNDATION HAS A TWO-FOLD MISSION of raising funds to build a state-of-the-art animal shelter and develop a dog park in Great Falls. One brief visit to the current shelter and the reasons why a new shelter is desperately needed are immediately apparent. However, the reasons a dog park is desirable are less obvious as many people don't know the advantage of having a dog park in their community.

Benefits of a Dog Park

- A dog park (also called off-leash area) provides a tool for realistic enforcement of leash laws. The current city ordinance does not allow dogs on park turf or off leash in any city parks or elsewhere in the city. In many cities which already have dog parks, it is found that owners are more likely to comply with existing leash law if they have a place to go where they and their dogs can enjoy themselves. A designated off-leash space reduces the resources animal control officers must spend on enforcing leash laws.

- A dog park promotes public health and safety because a designated space for dogs and their owners reduces the likelihood that dogs will be let loose in recreational areas where they could infringe on other community residents and park users who do not like to interact with dogs.

- A well-exercised dog that has the opportunity to socialize with other dogs is happier, healthier and makes a better neighbor (fewer barking dog complaints!).

- A dog park is an excellent venue to provide people with information related to keeping their dogs safe, healthy, and well-behaved. It's also an ideal central location to distribute information about canine services such as micro chipping, affordable spay and neuter programs, and training.

- A well-run dog park promotes responsible pet ownership. Social peer pressure teaches people to be better dog owners, for example, they learn the importance of cleaning up after their dogs and controlling their dogs' behavior.

- A dog park is a perfect place for owners to meet other people with similar interests. It can bring people together and help build a sense of community.

Recreation for People *and* Pets

Many progressive towns either have or are developing dog parks as part of their park systems and Great Falls could join in the ranks of these cities and offer a contemporary amenity for its dog-owning population.

Many portions of our city parks or entire parks are designated for special uses such as tennis, swimming, golf, picnicking, children's playgrounds, basketball, and skateboarding. Based

on findings from a recent national survey, a conservative estimate would be 22,000 people living in Great Falls have at least one dog.

Obviously, dog owners constitute a large special usage group for parks. A dog park is an outstanding example of how a park can be developed to accommodate the recreational desires of the people who live here.

If you would like to offer your thoughts about a dog park in

Great Falls, learn more about dog parks, or have a speaker come to your group to talk about dog parks, call Melanie Lattin at 453-8598.



Speakers Bureau Ready to Go

Sally Cerny

BOB JAMES, SALLY CERNY AND CHUCK TOURTILLOTT are serving as the Animal Foundation Speakers Bureau. Armed with an informative PowerPoint presentation, either Bob or Sally will accompany Chuck, as the Humane Society representative, to speak to any group that would like to hear more about the Foundation, the plans for the new animal shelter and dog park, and the fundraising campaign. They have already met with the numerous groups in town such as the Electric City Kennel Club, the Lion's Club, the Realtors Group, the Uptown Optimists, and all the Neighborhood Councils.

If you belong to or are aware of a group that would like to know more about the Animal Foundation and the animal shelter, call Executive Director Mary Willmarth at 727-6826 to schedule a presentation.

Help the Environment & the Animals at the Same Time

When you take your recyclable cans to **Steel, Etc.**, 302 3rd Street South, you can donate the proceeds to "**Cans for Critters.**" The money you contribute through recycling your cans will be designated to the Animal Foundation to help with our fundraising campaign.



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The Stories Behind the Contributions

Everyone who donates to the Animal Foundation has their individual reasons why they do so. Although we can't pass along all the often wonderful reasons why people are moved to donate to the Foundation, in each newsletter we would like to share a sampling of their stories with you.

Luckily for the homeless animals in Great Falls, **Bobbie Erickson's** vacation plans never materialized. Bobbie and her sister-in-law were planning a cruise but it didn't work out. She decided she wanted to use the money she would have spent on her vacation to do something good for someone else. When her financial advisor suggested a donation to the Animal Foundation, Bobbie was delighted by the idea.

"I don't have any immediate family alive any longer," says Bobbie, "and my dogs are my family." Bobbie's canine family includes Keeno, a Sheltie she adopted about five years ago, and Gabby, a Collie she adopted from Camp Collie. Both dogs endured dreadful conditions before coming

to live with Bobbie, and not surprisingly, have a number of behavioral problems to resolve as they adjust to her loving home. Bobbie's heart obviously belongs to her two dogs and she's dedicated to doing whatever it takes to make their lives better. And her heart is also obviously open to helping other animals.

"It's really because of Gabby and Keeno."

Bobbie mentions she has two cats which she adopted from the animal shelter and sounds almost surprised when she says, "You know, all the animals I've gotten since college have always been rescued animals." But it's not

just the animals that have benefitted from this situation. "I have never slept so good in my life as I do now that I have my dogs," Bobbie laughs. And then she adds more seriously, "It really perked me up to be able to help animals by donating to the Foundation."

Perhaps when you look in the eyes of the special animals in your life, you too might think about the destiny of animals that are less fortunate ... and help brighten that destiny.

A Soft Spot for Animals

Frances Zipperian loved animals and was concerned they be taken care of and not abused or neglected. "Frances always had a soft spot for animals," said Julie Witham, Frances' cousin. "After her husband died, her dog Bobbi was her best companion. He followed her everywhere."

Although Frances recently died, her lifelong desire to help animals lives on as she left \$20,000 to the Animal Foundation. Her generous bequest will be used to help construct an animal shelter which will be a place of security and comfort for homeless animals, just as Frances would have wanted.

If you're the typical animal lover, you're probably wondering what happened to Bobbi after Frances's death. Not to worry. Although Julie could not take him because he could not handle the many stairs in her house (Bobbi is an elderly dog), he is being well cared for by another cousin of Frances who lives in Billings. Obviously, Frances is not the only member of this family who loves animals.


animal
FOUNDATION
of Great Falls

*Fostering a caring
community for animals*

Be sure to check out our website,
www.theanimalfoundation.org,
for more information about the
Animal Foundation.

The website includes a virtual tour
of the existing animal shelter
which may be of particular interest
to people who have not visited that
facility. And, for your convenience,
you can contribute to the capital
fund drive on-line!

P.O. Box 3426
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