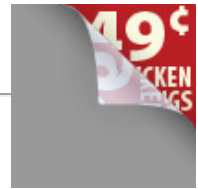


Rockin' for TAPS a howling success



By

Joni Andrews / Times staff Joe Bella of Peoria gets a kiss from Princess Isabella during the Rockin' for TAPS fundraiser Saturday at the Pekin Boat Club.

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By Pam Keyes
Pekin Daily Times
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PEKIN, Ill. -

Pooches dressed like rock stars were among the large crowd that gathered at the Pekin Boat Club Saturday evening for the fourth annual Rockin' for TAPS fundraiser.

TAPS, a no-kill shelter, brought along nine dogs up for adoption, all of them dressed in costumes.

One of the dogs, a boxer mix named Sweetie, was dressed as Beyonce. Other dogs portrayed musical favorites like Cyndi Lauper, Madonna and Jimmy Buffet. Each dog was paraded onstage and introduced to the audience with its name, age and breed.

During the costume contest, community members' dogs wore a variety of costumes, including Taylor Swift, Ginger Spice, Eminem, Steppenwolf and Willie Nelson, complete with a bandana and cowboy hat that would not stay on his head properly. The prize was a large bag filled with doggie treats and toys.

Sue Boyd of Glasford brought her 8-month-old Chinese Crested and Yorkie mix, Macie, who was dressed as a hula girl. The 7-pound dog, in a hula skirt made from raffia and a multicolored lei, easily won the competition.

"Macie is great dog and a lot of company," Boyd said. "I just love her. She will love this bag of goodies."

Seven-year-old Brogan Gresham and her 5-year-old sister, Tatum, didn't bring their dog for the costume contest, but they did bring something they knew TAPS would be able to use — money.

With a little help from their parents, the girls had set up a lemonade stand at the Monge Best Ball golf tournament earlier in the day.

"We made \$74 dollars to give to TAPS," Brogan said with a smile. "We got our dog, Spunky, there. It wasn't easy, either. We picked out our dog. He is a half Lhasa Apso, half poodle and is black and white with just a little gray. We couldn't bring him right home though, because both of our parents had to sign a paper and my dad was out of town. We had to wait.

"We go and volunteer sometimes. We walk the dogs."

Pam Scott is another volunteer at TAPS. "I love the animals and have already adopted two of them," she said. "We average 50 dogs and 110 cats.

"We have so many great people that volunteer. I don't think we could do without our foster families. They take care of our special-needs animals — the animals that are too small to be at the shelter. They have to be at least 2 pounds or 2 months old."

TAPS, the Tazewell Animal Protective Society, is a nonprofit organization that operates mainly from private donations and fundraisers.

"We have a great volunteer base," said Executive Director Angela Blackman. "Our goal is to find homes for our animals within six months or less. It is the events like this that helps us achieve our goals. This has been annual event for many years, and it seems to grow every year.

"We have added the Pre-Rockin' Ride for TAPS this year, and we are very happy with the results."

The motorcycles sat side by side after an afternoon of steady rain. The Pre-Rockin' Ride route began at McDuff's in Pekin and continued to Havana, Banner, Canton and Peoria before returning to the Pekin Boat Club.

Harley-Davidson rider Charlie Engebretson was one of the riders. "We love to do these rides," he said. "It doesn't matter if it rains like it did today — we just keep going. We just need an excuse to spend the day riding, and TAPS gave us the reason today. They need help, and we are happy to help."

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They should have made the humans dress up like dogs. That, I would pay to see.

lildoubt

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ha! good point! please check out the animals though...my heart goes out to them.

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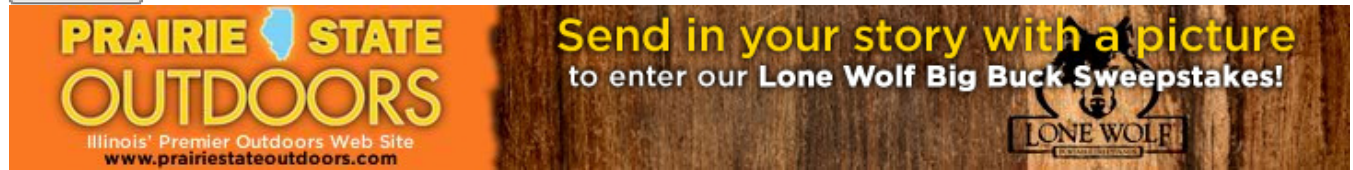
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