

[Back](#) [Home](#)Share: [ShareThis](#) [Print](#) [Comment](#)

Fetching funds for TAPS

About 150 dogs and their owners gather at Tailwaggers Classic to raise money for shelter

By **STEPHANIE GOMES**
of the Journal Star

Posted Sep 27, 2009 @ 10:15 PM

Last update Sep 27, 2009 @ 10:48 PM

PEKIN — After he was named king, Spunky, a 4-year-old Ihasapoo mix, paraded around the other pooches, showing off his gold crown and cape.

"Spunky is king," boasted his owner, Brogan Gresham, 7, of Pekin. "Every time he runs the fence all the dogs chase him. He's proud to be king of dogs."

Along with Spunky, nearly 150 canines attended the 2009 Tailwaggers Classic on Sunday at Mineral Springs Park. The event was a fundraiser for the Tazewell Animal Protective Society's no-kill shelter.

"It gives people a chance to do something fun with their dogs," said Angela Blackman, executive director of TAPS. "And it gives dogs a chance to socialize with other dogs."

The event's proceeds go toward the operations of the shelter and making sure the animals receive proper health care before they are adopted, Blackman said. Each year about 1,000 dogs are adopted from TAPS.

Different types of skilled dogs also provided entertainment and education. Stunts were performed by Flydogs Training of Aurora, and Pekin police dogs performed a mock drug retrieval from a vehicle for the crowd.

Therapy dogs from Paws Giving Independence gave demonstrations on how they assist owners with disabilities. Many of the pooches that became therapy dogs were adopted from the shelter. "(Therapy dogs) are shelter dogs doing great things," Blackman said. "It shows there are a lot of productive ways that dogs can be a part of society."

About an hour in, dogs and their owners gathered around for the contest portion of the festivities, which included smallest dog, largest dog, best costume and best talent.

Eli, a Newfoundland, won over the crowd with his portrayal of a cow. His costume included horns and attachable udders.

And weighing in at only 2 1/2 pounds, Izzy the teacup chihuahua took home the title of smallest dog.

"Yes, she does fit into a teacup," said her owner, Kristi Riley-Casper of Pekin. "She's bossy, playful and she knows that she's the princess."

Most importantly, Riley-Casper said she was excited to support a great cause.

"I think there's a lot of dogs out there that don't have homes," she said. "It's really important they get a home and they get love."

Other canines passed on the competition and spent the afternoon relaxing with their owners. Garry Syfert, 69, of Pekin sat under a tree with Rusty, his 4-year-old pit bull.

A lot of pit bulls have a bad reputation, said Syfert, adding that Rusty was well behaved around the other dogs at the event.

"A lot of people take them the wrong way," Syfert said. "He likes to get out and meet people."

Stephanie Gomes can be reached at 686-3194 or sgomes@pjstar.com

Copyright © 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted.