

**Dukes**

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of the work, Dukes said. It's more than just simple visitation.

Different patients may be learning special skills in a session, holding a leash, learning to give commands by asking a dog to jump through a hoop, learning basic concepts of "up," "down" or "through" or improving their speaking skills.

The patients are encouraged to call the dogs to them, ask them to do tricks (shaking hands, jumping, fetching or speaking) and reward them with toys or small treats.

"These are happy working dogs," Dukes said. "I use motivational training - lots of praise and love. While working in therapy, the dogs do fun things, like playing with and fetching toys and balls."

All of Dukes' dogs' training is based on her conviction that there are no dumb dogs. There are only dogs who haven't been given the opportunity to show how smart they really are.

A recent addition to her staff, Toby came on board to replace the late Woodstock, who now plays with angels instead of patients.

"Actually, Toby picked us out," she said. "We had originally selected another pup, but Toby kept coming over to us. He brought us a toy, explored the house and kept returning to us. He was supposed to be the pick of the litter and trained for shows. It took me two hours to convince the breeder that this was the dog that we needed."

Toby came from breeder Connie Rodgers in Mount Airy, MD, the same breeder who had owned Sable's father.

Dukes immediately began Toby's training - housebreaking, staying in a crate and becoming accustomed to the different noises, smells and situations which he would encounter in his work.

Since dogs' senses are much keener than humans', even hospital smells and sounds require great adjustment.

"Wheelchairs confuse dogs," Dukes said. "Something about the noise and motion of the wheels makes dogs want to chase them. Shiny linoleum floors are also disconcerting. A dog sees them as slippery ice. And rugs generate huge amounts of static electricity which can deliver painful shocks to tender noses."

A recent race at Watkins Glen was another educational field trip for Toby, who learned how to react to crowds, flapping flags, movement, excitement, loudspeakers and extremely loud noises.

"The dogs must be as adaptable as possible," Dukes said.

Both Sable and Libra have completed at least one obedience title with the American Kennel Club (AKC). Libra is a first-level companion dog, while Sable has earned a CDX, or second-level companion dog excellence.

Dukes' dogs wear a distinctive yellow collar and tag identifying them as members of Therapy Dogs International, affectionately called



**DOGS WITH A SPECIAL MISSION** - Harveys Lake resident Nancy Dukes relaxes with her registered therapy dogs, purebred Standard poodles, Libra, left, Sable, right and Toby, lying down.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

"the K-9 candy strippers." Dogs must pass several strict criteria in order to earn TDI's distinctive yellow collar and tag, including training club graduation or an AKC obedience title.

Getting along with other dogs and children, obeying commands under distracting conditions and following directions while off the leash are also necessary qualities.

Dukes said that until a recent camp for disabled children, her husband, Alan, had never realized the importance of the dogs' work.

After watching the dogs navigate over jumps and through tunnels, fetch balls and work with the children, Alan Dukes turned to his wife with tears in his eyes.

"These dogs are wonderful and so is their mother," he said.

**Awards ceremony September 22**

Allied Services, a local not-for-profit health care system serving the needs of the physically and mentally challenged, is the local and national sponsor of National Rehabilitation Week, September 18-24.

Allied will hold a special luncheon September 22 in Scranton to present awards to local individuals and organizations who have worked on behalf of people with disabilities or those who have made significant steps in overcoming them.

Honorees are selected through nominations from the community, according to assistant vice-president in charge of corporate programs Alexandra Yantorn.

Back Mountain residents Nancy Dukes of Harveys Lake and Heidi Jo Allen of Sweet Valley will receive plaques at the luncheon.

National award honorees include actress Annette Funicello and *Life Goes On* star Chris Burke, honored in 1990, who will be this year's featured speaker.

Allied Services operates seven satellite centers in the area, two hospitals (John Heinz Institute in Wilkes-Barre and Allied Services in Scranton), a home health care network, a medical equipment store and housing for the physically challenged in 11 Northeastern Pennsylvania counties.

It also provides vocational training for the physically and mentally challenged, some of whom eventually are able to bring the skills they have learned to jobs outside the Allied system.

The Allied system has 2,000 employees and services 3,000 clients a day.

**Tammy gets busted..again**

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

A former Back Mountain merchant who was the subject of complaints by five dissatisfied Back Mountain customers now faces charges in Lackawanna County, where she has been accused of swindling three brides and bridesmaids.

Dallas resident Tammy Slater, also known as Tamara Rowlands and trading as The Wedding Shoppe on North Main Ave. on Scranton's West Side, was arraigned September 4 before District Magistrate Carmen Minora on three criminal counts each of theft by deception and deceptive business practices amounting to more than \$700, according to court documents on file at District Magistrate Terry Gallagher's office.

She allegedly accepted deposits on gowns and didn't deliver them.

Her preliminary hearing has been continued from September 12 to September 28.

The investigating officer was Scranton patrolman Patrick Tobin.

A hearing on a special court injunction to prevent Slater from doing business, at least until her civil and criminal cases in both counties have been decided, has been continued for three weeks, according to deputy attorney general J. P. McGowan of the Bureau of Consumer Protection in Scranton. It was originally scheduled for September 16.

"After the civil cases were initiated last year, she attempted to file bankruptcy," McGowan said.

Slater had operated Tammy's Bridal and Veil Works, first on Main Street in Shavertown, then on West Eighth Street in Wyoming, before opening the Scranton store.

Last summer Slater was sued by Lisa Higgins, her sister-in-law Diane Higgins, Angela Estes Allabaugh, Susanne Stash O'Donnell and Pamela Pascoe, who had filed civil complaints with District Magistrate Earl Gregory regarding problems with gowns which they had ordered from Slater and on which they paid deposits.

Diane and Lisa Higgins said their gowns weren't the quality of the manufacturer, Alfred Angelo, while Allabaugh and Pascoe never received their bridesmaids' gowns.

Diane Higgins also said that she had experienced problems with the Alfred Angelo bridal gown which she had ordered and paid Slater for.

O'Donnell said that her bridesmaids' gowns arrived in the wrong style and color and her bridal gown didn't arrive at all.

Lisa Higgins' civil trial against Slater has been postponed until October.

"I don't understand why they didn't shut her down after the first rash of complaints," she said. "Why did the Bureau of Consumer Protection let her set up in Wyoming and Scranton? My complaint was out and out fraud - I gave them the dresses and the letter from the manufacturer stating that these weren't Alfred Angelo gowns. My wedding gown doesn't have a tag at all - I don't know if it's a real Alfred Angelo."

No telephone number is listed in the Scranton directory for The Wedding Shoppe, Tamara Rowlands or Tammy Slater.

A woman who answered the telephone at Slater's Dallas home said that it was the wrong number.

"I want her closed down. I want her in jail," Higgins said. "You try to be an honest citizen and report her and nobody wants to do their job. They don't want to help you at all."

**SPCA to hold "Walk for the Animals" Oct. 1**

In conjunction with National Adopt-A-Dog Month, October 1 has been designated for the SPCA of Luzerne County Annual Walk for the Animals. The walk is a fundraising event for the SPCA shelter, held at Frances Slocum State Park.

For information or a pledge sheet stop at the SPCA office in Plains Twp. at 524 E. Main Street.

T-shirts will be given to the first 100 registrants and refreshments and gifts will be given to all who participate.

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