

October, 2004

Issue



K-9 KORRAL'S ROUND UP

Grrrravel Arrives

With the introduction of gravel to the dog run earlier this month, the beautification of the K-9 Korral is in the final stages to be completed before the Halloween Costume Party and a visit from the new Queens Commissioner of Parks, Dorothy Lewandowski.

The costume party is slated for Saturday, October 30 at 2:00 p.m. sharp. If the weather cooperates, as it did last year, we should have a smashing time. The rain date is Sunday, October 31st.

We have prizes and give-aways galore, and we will have some local merchants, who advertise in The Round Up, staffing tables and showing

their wares. We've also scheduled a demonstration by a local dog trainer.

A Middle Village resident who grew up in Glendale, Lewandowski, the former Bronx Parks Commissioner, has accepted our invitation to attend the costume party. We're hoping to interview her for next month's newsletter.

In preparation for the event, we've launched a beautification drive. The main component of that effort was the introduction of gravel to the dog run. Gravel is something we've been talking about since the beginning of the summer. Unfortunately, we didn't have the money to pay for it at that time.

Boy, do things change.

The summer was very productive for us as our fundraising efforts proved fruitful. We pressed our members to pay their dues, we ran a paw printing event that raised \$200, and then we conducted a raffle that raised another \$500. We also sold advertising to the Round Up.

Earlier this month, we finally had enough money to purchase gravel and the wood we needed to complete the project. The gravel was viewed as the best way to tame the mud at the dog run. It's also more sanitary than some other alternatives such as wood chips or hay, which we've had.

Urine and rainwater will pass through and between the small stones and pass out of the dog run. Any feces dropped on the gravel can easily be seen and picked up.

The wood is designed to prevent or thwart



Do you know who this is? See story and more pictures on page 3.

erosion as soil from the top of the hill runs downhill after rainstorms. The idea for an erosion break came from Parks Department engineers and is being installed by our president Ronnie Niles, who also had the inspiration for the gravel, which has been tried with great success at other dog runs as well.

The cost for the gravel and wood is around \$700. Niles is also making arrangements to get a second load of gravel dumped. And he is planning to give our benches a second coat of paint.

We're also going to be hanging our banner, the one that led us in the American Day Parade on October 3rd.



K-9 KORRAL MEMBERS MARCH IN THE AMERICAN DAY PARADE



Ronnie Niles and Katie



Story and more pictures on page 2. Parade Pictures courtesy of Marie Fusco.

DOGS CELEBRATE AMERICA AT GLENDALE PARADE



It was a grand day as members of the K-9 Korral and their dogs marched in the American Day Parade earlier this month.

Dressed in patriotic garb, the dogs and their owners left Forest Park for the parade at about 11 a.m. in a van provided by our vice president Fernando Paraja.

When we arrived at the parade assembly point, just off Myrtle Avenue and 66th Street in Glendale, we were assigned to bring up the rear, behind an assortment of marching bands, Scouts, school and other youth groups, as well as a host of other community, police and fire organizations.

Several family members of 9-11 tragedy victims also marched in the parade and

addressed the crowd at parade's end at Victory Field in Forest Park.

When the parade finally got launched, our well-behaved dogs quickly got into the spirit of things, walking in step to the beat of a marching band. They walked behind our lovely banner created specifically for the parade and which will hang from our dog run fence for all to see.

Without a doubt, we were the best thing about that parade judging by the gleeful response by parade viewers who lined Myrtle Avenue as we passed by.

The children especially got a kick out of seeing dogs marching in a parade. The costumes on the dogs made them all look

quite sharp.

Children waved and laughed and all in all were delighted in seeing our dogs. Everyone who participated had a great time.

After it was all over, we took the dogs home and those who marched went out to dinner at a Polish restaurant in Ridgewood later in the day. We enjoyed each other's company and had a wonderful time. We're all looking forward to next year's parade.



K-9 Korral Members gather at parade end at Victory Field for closing ceremony.



Carlos Cortez and Dulce

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K-9 KORRAL and ROUND UP
are solely not-for-profit and supported by volunteers

Parks Department Stalls Stairway To Dog Run

It was supposed to have been finished by summer's end, but the stairway leading from Park Lane South to the dog run seems stuck in Neverland.

It's a pretty steep hill for many of our members to traverse if they want to come to the dog run. They either come up that hill or take a long, circuitous route around to Baby Carriage Lane near the park house and then double back across a field that is roughly 100 yards long.

The Parks Department had recognized the necessity of creating a stairway and undertook an effort to put wooden planks across the hill to simulate a staircase. However, too few planks were laid down and the hill seemed more hazardous than ever.

One of our members hurt themselves climbing up the staircase. And when it rains, the hill becomes like a sliding pond as people have to hold on to trees so as not to slide across mud.

Then, mysteriously, the Parks Department put up some orange, plastic fencing as a way to deter people from walking up the hill or using the so-called staircase.



Then, THE PARKS DEPARTMENT JUST WALKED AWAY.

The staircase is not finished, nor is it safe, because people, despite the fencing, are still using it. (What else are they supposed to do?) Parks Department officials have not said when or if they intend to continue the project to the end. That is, whether they are going to finish what they started.

Initially, the thought was that the Parks Department was going to build a classy, concrete stairway with a railing. But, it was not to be. It wanted a quick and dirty (and cheap) solution to the problem. (After all, we're just dog owners, right?)

OK, all sarcasm aside. Let's hope the Parks Department will come to its collective senses and get this job done before the winter creeps up on us. Having snow on that hill is just going to turn it into a deadly place to tread. The sad part is: it doesn't have to be that way.

Webmaster Bruce: Bringing People Together

Call him The Webmaster or Webmaster Bruce, if you will. No, he's not some evil villain out of a Spiderman comic, although he'd like to be one. He's Bruce Robinson, a superhero of sorts and a nice guy who loves dogs and people.

But Bruce goes by other names as well. He's also Doctor Bruce, an alter ego he uses when he puts on magic shows for children. He's also called "husband" of Sahra and "owner" of Victory, a lovely lab/doberman mix.

However, for the purposes of this story, we will stick to Webmaster Bruce, because he is the creator of the K-9 Korral website: www.geocities.com/k9korralfp.

The website has been running for a little more than a year and, since then, has had hundreds of "hits" or people who've actually logged onto it from their computers at home. While Bruce says it's still a "work in progress," the website has come a long way, expanding every month with new links and things to ponder.

Anyone who logs onto it will find a cheerful looking home page with a crazy cartoon dog circling the screen and be treated to a happy, circus-like theme song.

Today, the website boasts a weather report, important upcoming events at the dog run, a guestbook that users can leave a message for other guests to read and 12 links to other websites that should be of interest to any dog owner and particularly to the K-9 Korral member. Bruce refers to these as "Cool Links." All you have to do to enter them is point the arrow and click.

Some of these links come from the city's Parks Department, various animal rescue sites, and other sites taken from the internet with topics pertaining to dogs such as health and training.

You'll find a site warning dog owners about fake medications, how to feed hungry animals, the

Muffins Pet Connection for discount neutering and spaying, a city guide to blooming flowers, stuff about Forest Park events, and information about Bobby and the Strays, an animal rescue group located at Kennedy Airport. You can also find a link to get a dog license and



Bruce Robinson and Victory

adopt a pet.

But Bruce also wanted the website to have additional relevance for K-9 Korral members. So, he's got a link "in memory of Annie," a dog who died at the run earlier this year and her owner's heartfelt thank you to the members who expressed sympathy; a link to the dog run's monthly newsletters; a dog game show network that challenges members to identify dogs and their owners from a photo; a photo gallery where members can send in pictures of their dogs; and a touching Ten Commandments from a member about the meaning of being a dog owner.

Bruce knows people are logging on to the site, but he wishes people would be more active on it. He

encourages people to play his game show network, send him a photo or just sign the guest book. He's always seeking new ideas for improvements.

He recounts one "victory" (although he's not talking about his dog) the website has achieved. He tells how he was contacted through the website by a woman who just got a young She Tzu and was afraid to take her tiny dog to the K-9 Korral because her dog might be trampled by the bigger dogs.

Upon learning of the woman's concern, Bruce contacted the dog run president Ronnie Niles, who set about sectioning off a portion of the dog run for dogs under 25 pounds.

"After she contacted me, a few days later a small dog section was born," Bruce said proudly. "The point of having a website allows us to service all our members and potential members. Once we hear from someone, their needs won't be neglected."

Having a website is like having a big marketplace where dog owners can get to know one another, talk about their dogs, share health tips and even make dates to go to dinner or a movie. "I'm all about bringing people together in unity," he says.

It's one reason Bruce loves coming to the dog run. "It's a place where people are working together to make it better," he said. "It's people helping each other."

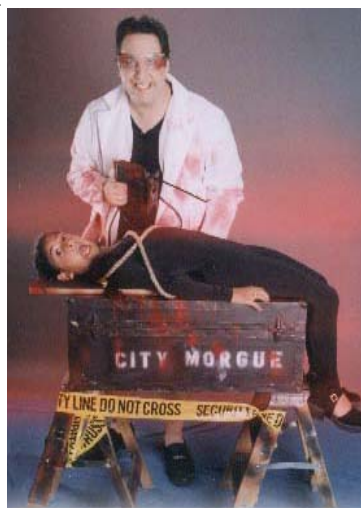
Bruce was born in the Bronx and had a dog as a child, Toby, a smaller version of Victory. He went to Israel at age 13 to live on a Kibbutz. After a stint in the tank corps including a year in Lebanon, Bruce came back to the United States 11 years later, settling in Brooklyn in 1990.

He sold luggage and leather goods while looking for a wife and living with a roommate who had a dog, a Collie named Romeo. Bruce was

shocked at how many people in America seemed to fear dogs.

While he didn't give details about how he met his wife Sahra, the couple moved to Florida where Bruce worked for IBM, taking classes in computers and developing a "passion" for them. It was in Florida that the Robinsons rescued Victory, named such because those seemed like "victorious" times. They immediately fell in love with her and so began "the adventures of Victory," he joked.

They returned to New York two years ago and now live in Forest Hills.



Growing up in the Bronx, Bruce also developed a passion for magic, which he brought with him to Israel where he fine tuned his act. "I was learning to get people to smile," he said. "It's all about entertaining people."

Today, Bruce performs his act dressed like a mad scientist to children in schools, synagogues and churches; anywhere he can find an audience. He also teaches computers to students and helps them build their own websites.

He now works for the city of New York and, in his spare time, is an "independent business operator" specializing in energy drinks and vitamins.



K-9 Korral Gets Federal Recognition



The K-9 Korral has received notification that it has been approved for Federal tax-exempt status and is a bona fide not-for-profit organization.

A letter dated Sept. 30 informing us of our status arrived from Lois G. Lerner, director of the Internal Revenue Service's Exempt Organizations department. The effective date of the exemption is November 14.

Under IRS rules, the K-9 Korral is considered a 501 c4 organization, which means we do not have to pay federal income taxes.

Having an official employer identification number will be helpful in securing future grants from local politicians or private organizations as part of our fundraising efforts.

The only stipulation is that if we take in more than \$25,000 in a given year, then we would have to file an informational tax return (form 990), but we would still be exempt from any tax obligation.

Persons who donate to the Korral should also be made aware that donations to organizations in our category are "not deductible as charitable contributions on the donor's federal income tax return." The only group that the federal government allows to deduct contributions to is volunteer fire organizations.

We want to thank Frank Toomey for his efforts in contacting the IRS, filling out the extensive paperwork, putting out the \$150 filing fee, and following up through all the tedious stages of the approval process.

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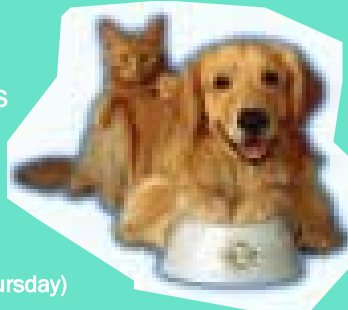
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