

Lucy



Kubash

I spoke recently with Linda Shannon-Chaillet about her work with the Best Friends 4-H Club. Linda is co-coordinator, along with Vicki Williams, of the canine therapy club that benefits individuals ages 5-26 with a wide range of disabilities. Linda told me the club provides the opportunity for youths, who might otherwise not have the chance, to participate and be involved in dog training and handling. Best Friends pairs club members with a 4-H Team Instructor and dogs that have been Coordinator approved. During their canine training season, beginning in June, they prepare for the Berrien County Youth Fair dog competitions in August, but they are active throughout the year. The club is recognized by the American Kennel Club and is the only 4-H dog club that combines canine studies with physical and mental therapy for the 4-H'ers. Linda describes it as a win-win-win activity for adults, kids and dogs. The 4-H kids learn social skills, coordination, and positive reactions to situations, adults share the skills they have learned, and the dogs benefit from doing a job and receiving attention. Sounds like a great combination!

The Pet Corner

The Best Friends club was founded in 1988 and will celebrate its Silver Jubilee Celebration on Sunday, May 19th, 2013 at Muttlerly Love, 200 Kerth, St. Joseph, from 2:00-5:00 pm. Refreshments will be served and music provided, and it will be a great time to learn more about this very valuable 4-H group. There will also be a community service drawing benefiting the Berrien County Food Bank. Anyone who brings a non-perishable food item to donate will receive a ticket and a chance to win some very nice prizes including gift cards. One food item donated equals one ticket, two items two tickets, etc. For more information on the 25th Anniversary celebration and the club, please visit www.bf4hclub.com

Please remember to mark your calendar for May 17-18th for the Animal Aid spring rummage sale at the Howard Ice Arena in St. Joseph. Hours are Friday 9-6 and Saturday 8-12. Items for donation will be accepted on Thursday the 16th but they are asking for no clothing.

Spring is well and truly here even if it has been a chilly one this year. The reason I know is that we've been visited by the resident opossum in the neighborhood. Of course being nocturnal, he likes to visit the bird feeders at night and lately provided a few minutes of excitement for the dogs and more than a little exasperation for mom. Luckily, Mr. Possum climbed the fence in

time to escape the wrath of Zeke and Foo Foo and managed a very fine balancing act atop the fence before I encouraged him to leave with the help of my broom. It would have made a hilarious You Tube video, I'm sure, and as popular as pet videos are would probably have gone viral. Thank goodness no one else was there to see the escapade. We now try to be a little more cautious before letting dogs out after dark, but since it is the time of year when critters come out of winter hibernation, it's a good idea to be aware they're around. Coyotes, skunks, opossums, raccoons and woodchucks never have good encounters with pets, and the farther we can keep them apart, the better. I'm hoping that leaving the backyard light on will discourage anymore night-time visitors, but there are no guarantees.