

By Judy Green
Special to the Press

MYSTIC – Every Sunday morning a group of local women and their dogs meet at a home in Mystic. They began meeting to begin obedience training but their interest and effort has expanded far beyond that task.

They call themselves the “Laissez-faire Dog Training Group,” and they concern themselves with the welfare of yet to be claimed pets at the two local dog pounds.

The group was organized by Gleanna Doyle a veteran dog trainer who trains animals to perform in movies and commercials. This Stonington resident is beginning work on a new movie called *Underdog*, which begins shooting in Rhode Island in April.

Her background, which includes working for a local vet for three years and obtaining an animal behavior degree from Mitchell College has enabled her to advise and counsel this group as it goes about helping sick and elderly stray dogs and trying to place them in new homes.

Doyle describes the group as “watchdogs of the pounds” saying “We visit the pounds and see which will need what care. We also keep an eye on what dogs are up for adoption and try to facilitate placements.”

Genna Holt, an animal control officer at the Groton pound called the group “wonderful ladies.”

They come by and check on our animals and try to get them adopted and they have raised money to pay for treatment and surgery on some of our sick dogs, according to Holt.

“There is no money budgeted for the care of sick animals and no list of veterinarians who will provide free services,” she said.

Stonington Animal Control Officer Mary Shulda agrees, saying there is no money in their budget for these services.

“I know Gleanna,” she said. “She has brought us a couple of strays.”

Doyle said the cost of these services had become more difficult to manage, citing the removal of tumors from one dog that cost \$750.

“We can't pay these prices out of our own pockets anymore so we decided to have some fundraisers,” she said.

The group held a tag sale last month and raised several hundred dollars.

“We put it in a separate bank account and we expect to have another sale soon. We are also looking at other ways to raise money,” Doyle said. “The dog that had the tumors removed was adopted and is doing very well.”

Other members of the group include Dorothy Luckraft, Lisa Otto, Mary Ellen Marcotte, Sandy Voogd and Terry Roper..

But these activities are not the only ones that Gleanna is involved in. Most of us can remember the tragic sights of animals abandoned and saved after Hurricane Katrina. Gleanna is the State Coordinator for the Emergency Animal Rescue Services, or EARS.

EARS is the organization that goes into disasters to save animals. Gleanna is trying to set up a Crisis Response Team in this area. Anyone interested in helping in any of these services can call her at 860-213-0260.