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MARKETPLACE

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Volume 2 Edition 41

South Somerset • Hillsborough

Thursday, Oct. 9, 2008

Dog heaven

Whenever man's best friend needs to be left behind, owners don't have to feel guilty... maybe a little jealous

By Michelle Walbaum

Two years ago Robin Blair left the corporate world behind and never looked back. Although working in an office building all day provided her with a good salary, she said it wasn't what she wanted.

So instead of sitting at a desk all day, she opted to romp with

the dogs all day.

And Dog Days Daycare was born, a dog-sitting and boarding business aimed at creating a friendly, non-stressful environment for pets, run by Ms. Blair and her husband Jim.

"Dogs are part of our family now," she said.

See **DOG** on page 4



Photos by Michelle Walbaum
 • (Above) Excited "family members" gather around Robin Blair, owner of Dog Days Daycare as she sits down on the porch. (Right) Two of Dog Days clients meet us face to face with big smiles.

You're Invited...

Howl-oween Party!!

Prizes!

Sunday, October 26th

1:00 to 5:00pm for dogs & children

Music!

Costume Contest for Dogs • Soda, Water and Snacks Provided

281-283 Roycefield Rd., Hillsborough • (908) 431-0100

Visit our website for a virtual tour... www.dogdaysdaycare.org



Marketplace

DOG from cover

"We don't want them to stay confined to a run."

Ms. Blair allows dogs to wander through the Dog Days facilities and socialize with other dogs, much like a daycare for children.

We want it to be a homelike environment, it's not their home but they have the run of the house like they do at home," Ms. Blair said.

On the Dog Days Day Care premises, dogs can be found everywhere. Inside they can be seen, playing with squeaky toys and each other.

"The dogs like watching animal planet most of the time, but on Sundays they watch football," Ms. Blair said.

The dogs can also play outside in the backyard on playground and agility equipment such as ramps, slide and hoops. There is even a little doggie pool for extra hot days.

On any day of the week, they can be found down at the "Ruff House," a separate facility with a large open rubber floor.

Staff members keep highly-energetic dogs entertained in the Ruff House with games

of soccer, football, and "ice hockey" — when staffers empty bags of ice cubes, and dogs catch the ice cubes in their mouths and chase them on the floor.

The staff also has finger painting nights, when dogs create masterpieces by stepping over paper parchment with their paws. Their artistic creations are displayed on Ruff House walls.

After a romp in the Ruff House, Ms. Blair said, the dogs are worn-out, and their "parents" won't have to put up with a high-strung dog when they take them home.

"Tired dogs are good dogs," Ms. Blair said.

Ms. Blair said that, at Dog Days Daycare, dogs who are very active and dogs who have separation anxiety benefit greatly from her programs — active dogs get a chance to play and burn off their excess energy, and dogs who fear losing contact with their owners have other dogs and staff members to keep them company.

Owners can leave their dog at Dog Days Daycare for any duration from six hours to a stretch of five days, Ms. Blair said. Owners who work — and therefore can't spend as much time as they would like to

with their pets — can bring their dogs to the center to keep them entertained, healthy and socialized, Ms. Blair said. This keeps dogs from becoming lonely and destructive. Owners can also bring their dogs to stay overnight.

Dog Days Daycare is eons away from a corporate job, and Ms. Blair said she doesn't regret leaving — to illustrate, she pointed to the dogs running across the back porch.

"Look at those faces," she said.

The concept of having a daycare for dogs has caught on in places like California and Florida, Ms. Blair said, but on the East Coast it's still a new idea.

"Here on the East Coast it's taken longer to catch on," Ms. Blair said.

Kennels usually place pets in enclosed runs and crates, which can increase their stress level and isolate them, Blair said. Her daycare business, on the other hand, is very different.

The dogs that stay here play together," she said. "They're never confined like in a traditional kennel — They're never left alone."

Ms. Blair said her facility

is cage-free, unless an owner specifically asks for their pet to be crated.

Dog Days Daycare Center is located at 281-283 Roycefield

Road in Hillsborough.

For more information, contact Robin Blair at (908) 431-0100, or visit their Web site at dogdaysdaycare.org.

MAGIC MAZE ● BORN IN THE 17th CENTURY

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Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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| Cassini | Milton | Rembrandt | Voltaire |
| Handel | Newton | Riebeeck | W. Penn |
| J. Swift | Pascal | Vermeer | Wren |
| Locke | Perrault | Vivaldi | |

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HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

