

# • THERAPY DOGS - JULIA SOUKUP

By Tana Rugg



*Cowboy Decker  
& Starlett, the Lioness*

*Thank you, Julia Soukup, for sharing the experiences of the JLS Dalmatians that are working as therapy and assistance dogs.*

*Tana Rugg*

## **DALMATIANS CAN DO IT ALL... THERAPY, SERVICE, ASSISTANCE & GUIDE DOGS**

Dalmatians make excellent Therapy Dogs as they are naturally very loving and personable. They crave attention and really enjoy making others laugh with their cute spots and clownish antics. They are sensitive dogs that are happy when their person or others are happy or comforted. JLS would like to share some of our therapy dogs and special service dogs with you.

## **THERAPY SPOTS**

I first started making therapy visits in 1994 but really pursued it in 1996 with STARLET ~ Ch Givens Dalivered Star CGC HIC (L). We would visit the local Bethany Nursing Home and were met with great glee by the staff and residents. Starlet tolerated being dressed in a Lion costume for Halloween although she didn't quite see the point as she knew her spotted coat was much more beautiful.

A particularly memorable visit was when a resident pointed out that NEWT ~ MBISS Ch JLS Just A Fig Newton ROM (L), wasn't a 'real' Dalmatian because he was BROWN! She had a Dalmatian as a child and she passionately lectured about "real" Black Dalmatians. Newt was the # 1 Dalmatian at that time so it was pretty funny. The staff was thrilled that Newt had inspired her to talk to us. She was very grouchy and I wasn't exactly thrilled, but it sure did get her all fired up! I really hoped that her ticker was good.

"Thank God I'm A Country Boy, and darn proud of it", Decker, seemed to say garbed out in a straw hat, flannel shirt and overalls that were too long and made him walk funny. DECKER ~ JLS All Decked Out, now owned by Fred Coulter in VA, was a true natural and really enjoyed Therapy work and Public Education appearances. He was very patient and never tired even after waiting at our education booth for several hours. He truly delighted in dressing up and showing off. He would lie on the floor and crawl over to people and lick their toes through their sandals making them giggle. No kisses after that!

## **ANOTHER KIND OF THERAPY ~ READING DAL'S**

JAMES BROWN ~ Ch JLS I Feel Good CD RN CGC (L), owned by Shirley May, is a registered Delta Therapy Pet Partner & Intermountain Therapy READ dog (Reading Education Assistance Dog). He resides in the Kansas City, KS area. He visits Brookridge & Arbor Creek Elementary Schools and encourages reluctant readers in the 1st and 2nd grade to read. James gives his paw to say good morning. He listens with his ears perked and waits patiently while the students read their book to him. James' favorite book for them to read to him is his Cheerio book. The pages have indentations in which Cheerios will fit. James also knows how to count. The children will say a number and hold up the same number of fingers and James will raise his paw that many times. They really enjoy this trick. James also visits the libraries in Johnson County year round.

Jane Neely and D'LEO ~ UAG2 ASCA CD JLS Roaring To Go CD RE TDI TF-3 (L) make therapy visits to nursing homes and schools around Oklahoma City, OK. They also visit the Nicoma Park Library to participate in a "Tail Wagging Tutor" Children's Reading program. The children really enjoy reading to a dog and the sign up sheet fills up fast. D'Leo enjoys listening to the stories and getting love from the kids. They especially like his bark on command when reading Clack Clack Moo as he imitates a cow, duck and chicken. They get a real thrill and don't realize he is getting cued. Jane always asks the kids he meets if they know why he likes kids. She says, "Nooo? - because they taste good!"