



Don LaVoie of Sewickley and Sue Hostler of Bradford Woods make friends with two of the five dogs Hostler transported by air Monday from Zanesville, Ohio, to Olean, N.Y. Hostler belongs to the Condor Aero Club at the Zelenople Airport, where several members volunteer with the Pilots N Paws program, which helps transport homeless animals to no-kill shelters that agree to find them homes.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

# Sheltering Wings

## Volunteers fly pets to no-kill facilities

By **SANDY MARWICK**  
Eagle Focus Editor

Sue Hostler spent more than five hours Monday flying to Ohio and New York from her home airport in Zelenople. It's a good thing Hostler took a human companion while piloting the single-engine Cessna, since her canine passengers slept through the flight.

"Maybe it was knowing they were going to good homes," laughed Hostler, a pilot for 11 years.

Realistically, Hostler speculated the aircraft's motion lulled the five dogs to sleep. She will rest easier knowing their lives have been spared.

Hostler is among a group of pilots who volunteer with Pilots N Paws, a program in which shelter animals scheduled to be euthanized are transported to regions where no-kill shelters can take them in.

The dogs on Monday were taken from an overcrowded shelter in Zanesville, Ohio, to the Joyful Rescues shelter in Olean, N.Y.

According to Joye Turock, who runs Joyful Rescues, states like Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia are among those labeled as high-kill areas.

"They just have a massive popu-

lation problem," she said.

Shelters in those areas often coordinate with facilities along the East Coast, where longstanding spay-neuter programs have reduced the numbers of homeless pets.

With placement agreements secured, the shelters post transportation requests on the Pilots N Paws website, where aviators like Hostler can sign up to do transports.

For many aviators, the flights are a way of combining purpose with pleasure.

"It's a good way to use the airplanes for something constructive instead of just getting in the plane for the sake of flying around and enjoying yourself," said Keith McPherson of Allison Park, who along with Hostler belongs to the Condor Aero Club, a flying group based at the Zelenople Airport.

As members of the group, pilots can rent out club aircraft for volunteering or personal use.

"These planes that we usually rent are close to a hundred bucks an hour — and lot of these places you go are a few hours away," said Larry Teal of Evans City, a club member who also does Pilots N Paws flights.

"Usually you find another pilot who wants to do it and split the



Babar Suleman hands off a Pomeranian and eight other dogs in March to fellow Pilots N Paws volunteer Darcy Gilson at the Zelenople Airport.

cost," he added.

"Flying is a wonderful thing, but when you can do it for a reason like that, it makes it so much better," he said of the Pilots N Paws program.

"It combines two of my passions in life: flying and my love of animals," agreed Hostler, who worked as a veterinary technician before a current position in sales.

Babar Suleman told a similar story, explaining how a busy com-

muting schedule can double as volunteer service. A consultant for Westinghouse in Cranberry Township, Suleman commutes each weekend to his home in Indianapolis.

Having done multiple transports, Suleman said the shelters often contact him directly, knowing his regular flight schedule in the twin-engine plane.

"I'm always available on Sundays to transport dogs," Suleman said,

noting his services are sought because fewer volunteers are available along his route.

"When they are transporting a dog from the West Coast to the East Coast, typically they can get them as far as Missouri or Iowa," he said, describing a gap from there to Ohio and Pittsburgh, where more volunteers are available to travel east.

Suleman formerly volunteered for Angel Flight, a volunteer group that provides free flights for patients who need medical treatment. But his schedule is more compatible with the Pilots N Paws flights.

"This is the best way I can volunteer," Suleman said. "There will be no human thanking me, but those dogs ... we save them from being euthanized."

"I've gotten to know some really, really nice people," Suleman added, explaining how non-pilots do much of the transport work, which also can occur via road travel.

"They set us up, and if there's a need for fostering overnight, they take care of that."

"The pilots in this program are the ones who are getting much of the publicity," agreed Hostler. "But there are many wonderful volunteers ... who not only provide shelter to these animals, but also give hours of their time."

For more information about Pilots N Paws, visit the website <http://pilotsnpaws.org>. For information on the Condor Aero Club, visit <http://www.condoraero.com>.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### TONIGHT

**WOMEN'S BUSINESS NETWORK, ZELIENOPLE-HARMONY CHAPTER** meeting, 8:30 a.m., Kaufman House, 105 S. Main Street, Zelenople.

**FREE HOT MEAL**, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Salvation Army Open Door Feeding Program, 313 W. Cunningham St., Butler.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**, 4 to 7 p.m., Thorn Creek United Methodist Church, 142 Rockdale Road, Jefferson Township. Takeouts available. Call 724-352-4890 after 4 p.m.

**FREE COMMUNITY MEAL**, 5 to 6 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 200 E. North St., Butler.

**ARC OF BUTLER COUNTY** pizza party, 6:30 p.m., shelter workshop, West Jefferson and Washington Streets. Sponsored by the Penn Township Woman's Club.

### SATURDAY

**PORK CHOP DINNER**, 4 to 6 p.m., Moose Lodge, 225 W. Jefferson St.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**, 4 to 6 p.m., East Butler Presbyterian Church, 9th and Randolph Streets. Takeout available.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., St. Peter's Reformed Church, 320 E. Grandview Ave., Zelenople. Benefits Leanne's Legacy Walking Team in support of the American Society for Suicide Prevention.

**FREE COMMUNITY MEAL**, 5 to 6 p.m., North Street Christian Church, 220 W. North St.

**FREE COMMUNITY MEAL**, 5 to 5:30 p.m., Chicora Alliance Church, 310 E. Slippery Rock St., Chicora. No takeouts.

**PUBLIC CARD PARTY**, 7:30 p.m., Jefferson Grange, 211 Bull Creek Road, Jefferson Township.

**OLDIES DANCE**, 8:30 to 11:30 p.m., Meridian Vets Club, Veterans Club Road, Butler Township.

### SUNDAY

**ALL YOU CAN EAT BREAKFAST**, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Oneida Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Route 38, Butler.

**PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST**, 8 a.m. to noon, St. Fidelis Church social hall, 125 Buttercup Road, Meridian.

**CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER**, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Hilliards United Methodist Church, Hilliards.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Portersville Fire Hall. Eat in or takeout; donation only. Proceeds benefit Portersville Volunteer Fire Department.

**CAR WASH**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Route 19 and Rowan Road, Cranberry Township. Donations accepted. Benefits Leanne's Legacy Walking Team in support of the American Society for Suicide Prevention.

**STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST DINNER**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Eau Claire Fire Hall, 143 N. Washington St. Takeout available.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, North Oakland. Takeouts available. Benefits Autism Speaks.

**TOWEL BINGO**, 2 p.m., St. John Roman Catholic Church, Coyleville.

### MONDAY

**FREE HOT MEAL**, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Salvation Army Open Door Feeding Program, 313 W. Cunningham St., Butler.

**FREE COMMUNITY MEAL**, 5 to 6 p.m. at First English Lutheran Church, 241 N. Main St., Butler. Hosted jointly with Grace Lutheran, Jefferson Center Presbyterian and Christ Community Methodist churches.

**TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY MEETING**, 5:30 p.m. following weigh-in at 5 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, 120 Sunset Drive. For information, call Darlene at 724-865-3283 or Peggy at 724-283-9621.

**GFWC INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE OF BUTLER** closing dinner, 6 p.m. followed by social at 5:30 p.m., Aubrey's Golf Course. Program: Past officer recognition, new officers inducted, new member initiation.

**FLOWER DANCE** meditation group meeting, 6 to 7 p.m. at a member home. Non-denominational. Instruction available. Call Celia at 724-282-1093.

**Notices of local club meetings, card parties and dinners should be received by the Focus Department one week in advance of the event. Entries should include the name and phone number of the person providing the information and be sent to: Focus, Butler Eagle, P.O. Box 271, Butler, PA 16003, or [focus@butlereagle.com](mailto:focus@butlereagle.com).**

## Little known about food allergies

By **MCT NEWS SERVICE**

Food allergies are a problem, especially if you want answers. Just ask often-confused consumers — or the researchers who recently tried to put a finer point on the topic.

In their noble attempt to establish the prevalence, diagnosis, management and prevention of food allergies, researchers at Stanford University, Rand Corp. and the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Healthcare System searched databases, analyzed reviews, assessed controlled trials and compared sample sizes. Their conclusion largely seems to be: What a mess.

Or in their words: "There is voluminous literature related to food allergy, but high-quality studies are few. Prime needs for advancement of the field are uniformity in the criteria for what constitutes a food allergy and a set of evidence-based guidelines on which to make this diagnosis."

Their review of food allergy research was published in the May 12 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

For starters, the researchers found, there is no agreed-upon definition of food allergies. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which funded their work, endorses this definition: "an adverse immune response that occurs reproducibly on exposure to a given food and is distinct from

other adverse responses to food, such as food intolerance, pharmacologic reactions, and toxin-mediated reactions."

However, such a definition wasn't used in all the research on the matter.

The researchers did establish that food allergies affect more than 1 percent or 2 percent of the population (but less than 10 percent). They couldn't confirm, as many believe, that such allergies are actually increasing; nor could they prove that

elimination diets will work, even for non-life-threatening reactions.

Immunotherapy? It seems promising, but again, no one can say (yet, at least) that it will offer long-term, or safe, relief.

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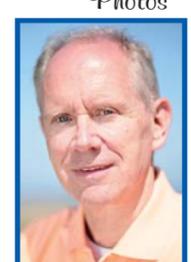
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