

Latchkey service helps ease a dog's life

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

ANYONE WHO has one knows how it feels. You're walking toward the door to leave, you turn for a last glance and you're greeted by big, sad eyes — and a whimper.

"It's very hard on dogs, especially those who are used to being around people. Those pitiful looks . . . when you leave them alone," said Farmington Hills resident Elizabeth Sloan.

But Sloan and another Farmington Hills resident, Linda O'Brien — both of whom work — have found a way to help their dogs through the long days: latchkey. That's right, latchkey.

"A dog who doesn't get attention and exercise is a naughty dog," said Farmington Hills resident Beverly Cornell. "They're more content when they are not home all alone all week."

Cornell, who is known throughout the community for taking in orphaned wildlife, came to Sloan and O'Brien's aid. She babysits their dogs a couple of days a week while they work.

"I think he became calmer," said O'Brien of her 5-year-old Beagle named D.O.G. "Normally, D.O.G. is home alone. Now, he's in dog heaven. He has other dogs to play with and has attention."

SLOAN BELIEVES latchkey has done wonders for her 17-month-old Samoyed, Star. "She really just enjoys being out and playing. She gets attention and exercise."

It's no joke. Like children, dogs need attention and don't like being left home all alone. "There are so many people working and they want animals. Having an animal is a loving experience. But they are being left alone at home all day," said Cornell, who is licensed through

the state Department of Natural Resources to take in orphaned baby wildlife, raise them and set them free in the wild.

Cornell's goal is to encourage others to offer and use latchkey for dogs belonging to people who work. She's hoping interested people will contact her and she'll group them together.

The Farmington Hills resident came up with the idea of latchkey for dogs when the oldest of her two dogs — Kiska — died earlier this summer, leaving the younger one, Bristol, a collie-huskie mix, alone.

"He's an only child now. And he seemed so droopy. He went to all her (Kiska's) favorite spots and just laid there," Cornell said of Bristol.

With Star and D.O.G., Bristol, who is facing hip surgery next summer, is getting over his grief. "He can be socialized with other dogs. But it's not for 24 hours with the wear and tear on his hips. When the dogs leave, Bristol is out for the rest of the evening."

LATCHKEY is not boarding for dogs. At Cornell's house the dogs play outside with each other, and get exercise and attention from the other dogs as well as Cornell.

"It is good for their total well-being and their psyche," she added. "And the dogs seem to love it. Take D.O.G., for example, who lives a door or two away from Cornell. "Do you want to go to Bristol's?" O'Brien asks her pooch.

"That dog makes a beeline for my front door. And he comes all by himself," Cornell said.

Star, on the other hand, loves a good game of tug-of-war with Bristol, who willingly shares his couch in the Cornell garage with the young Samoyed. "They exercise each other beautifully. If dogs are neglected, they're just like children. They need attention," Cornell said.



photos by SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

A little love and attention from Beverly Cornell makes the day for 5-year-old D.O.G., a beagle who belongs to a neighbor who works.



Seventeen-month-old Star, a Samoyed, and Beverly Cornell's collie-huskie mix, Bristol, continue tug of war game with a small branch.

Council ponders ethics code

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

From beneath the heap of dirty laundry and true confessions Monday, the Farmington Hills City Council edged toward tightening its ethics code after January.

Mayor Jean Fox's unsuccessful proposed mission statement for a reactivated ethics committee cracked the door for a majority of the council to take Fox and mayor pro tem Aldo Vagnozzi to task for events of the past year that council members believe contradict ethical behavior.

But it was Monday's announcement that the city and Boys Republic — embroiled in a year-long lawsuit — had finally reached agreement that opened the door for council members to freely tell the public what they've been waiting for months to tell.

"If we have to drop some bombs to save the city a great deal of suffering in the year ahead, I would participate in that process," councilman Larry Lichtman said.

And the bombs dropped. Council members described in detail how Fox and Vagnozzi violated resolutions adopted in executive session prohibiting members from discussing Boys Republic, a boys' detention center.

FOX AND VAGNOZZI nonetheless contacted representatives in

Gov. James Blanchard's office and the governor himself to help the city in its woes with the social service agency.

Fox and Vagnozzi admitted to the complaints, though Vagnozzi said the details "were their (other members') version of it."

"I'm the one who did the dirty deed and I'll let you know why I did it," Fox said. "I have learned you do not violate an edict of the city council. But I do not think it did any permanent damage to this city council."

Vagnozzi explained that rubbing elbows with state officials is how things get accomplished and that he divulged nothing he's not supposed to.

Fox defended her actions by saying she did what she did because for months there was no action on the Boys Republic conflict.

Is there ever a reason to violate the council's directives? Councilwoman Nancy Bates asked. "What I think is at stake is integrity and honor."

Bates described taking public scorn — over the public treatment of Fox and Vagnozzi — when council members were prohibited from publicly discussing the interference in Boys Republic litigation. She added that she is "terribly disappointed."

"Ethics means not just public trust in elected officials, but that elected officials can trust each other," said Lichtman, who chal-

lenged the media to "get a straight answer."

Terry Sever, who suggested the "conceptual" acceptance of revisiting the ethics issue, also wants any discussion to include the type of behavior attributed to Fox and Vagnozzi.

SEVER ALSO made it clear that the two council members' actions "compromised the financial well-being of the city," as well as that of individual members.

"When you start messing with my family, with the taxpayers of this community, we have to set up a procedure," Sever said. "How ethical can you be when you vote for something and turn around and violate it?"

Each of the council members made it clear that Fox's demand for stricter ethical behavior is ironic in light of the Boys Republic events.

Fox wants to tighten the city's year-old ethics code in light of a six-part Detroit News series that included councilman Ben Marks's reported financial associations with developers and builders.

"I can't support any ethics statement written by her," councilman Jonathan Grant said. "I just wouldn't feel comfortable doing that."

Marks, who defended himself in the wake of ethical questioning, criticized Fox and Vagnozzi for violating their oaths. "The idea is pure and basic. Ethics have been played with and the charter has been violated."

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Farmington Hills man dies of injuries suffered in crash

By Joe Bauman
staff writer

An 82-year-old Farmington Hills man died Nov. 13 from injuries sustained in a traffic accident that occurred six weeks earlier in Livonia.

Arvo Kivi became the sixth person to die as a result of an automobile accident this year in Livonia.

Kivi had been hospitalized at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills with massive internal injuries from the Sept. 30 two-car accident on Eight Mile.

The driver of the second vehicle, a 36-year-old Garden City man, also was hospitalized with serious injuries but has since recovered, Livonia police traffic Sgt. Tom Green said.

"Based on our investigation and witness statements, it appears the deceased was at fault in the accident," Green said.

Green said Kivi was attempting to exit from a parking lot onto Eight Mile, east of Gill Road, when he was struck on the driver's side by the second car, which was heading east on Eight Mile.

"Mr. Kivi was on the south side of Eight Mile and tried to make a left turn into the westbound lanes," Green said. "Several witnesses noted that he (Kivi) was making a very slow turn and apparently misjudged how far away the second car was."

"He just pulled in front of the second car, and the driver didn't have time to stop or swerve away before the two vehicles collided."

Green said drugs or alcohol were not a contributing factor to the 3:30 p.m. accident.

Green said the police department will request a warrant from the Wayne County prosecutor's office against the second driver but that he doubted any charges will be filed since Kivi appeared at fault in the accident.

"We ask the prosecutor's office to review every fatal accident as part of the formal investigation. We don't want to be in a position where our department has the sole authority to decide whether any criminal charges should be pursued."

With six fatalities so far this year, the city is faring better than in 1989 when 11 people lost their lives in traffic accidents.