

SNAPSHOTS

BY CROCKER STEPHENSON

A little lower, right above the paw . . . ahh, that's perfect

Kathleen Folz has been a massage therapist going on two years now, and she is proud to report that, thus far, none of her clients have seen fit to bite her.

You'd expect as much from her human clients, but Folz massages both people and animals, specifically dogs.

Her clients have included:

Greyhounds, boxers, a Brittany spaniel, Scottish terriers, black Labradors, a dachshund, a bloodhound, a golden retriever and various mutts. During the recent Door County Scotie Rally, Folz rubbed down 15 scoties and one West Highland white terrier.

The adage that people tend to resemble their dogs is certainly not true in Folz's case. Folz, who has thick red hair and hazel eyes, owns an 8-year-old retired greyhound named Bonus. Opposites attract may be the more appropriate adage when it comes to Folz and Bonus.

Folz, who also owns two cats, four guinea pigs, one mouse, a couple of hissing cockroaches and a husband, prefers to visit her clients at their homes. But she does see a few in the living room of her Washington Heights home, and it was there that



BENNY SIEU / BSEIU@JOURNALSENTINEL.COM

2½-year-old mix of this, that and something else named Rusty.

Rusty, a red brindle with patches of white on his chest, neck, nose and toes, lives in Bay View with his human, Trini Torres. Rusty adopted Torres when he was a 4-month-old, and Torres has turned out to be a very well-behaved human. It was his sixth visit to Folz's home, and don't think he didn't appreciate it.

Bonus seemed entirely comfortable with his human giving a visit-

Massage therapist

Kathleen Folz, who's rubbed down more than a pack of dogs in her day, makes life sweeter for Rusty.

Rusty, for example. There were times during his massage, like when Folz was working her fingers down his spine, when his tongue dangled from the left side of his mouth. And there were times, like when Folz was attending to his front legs, when his tongue dangled from the right side of his mouth. And there were times, like when Folz was rubbing his chest, that Rusty kept his tongue in his mouth, displaying instead a toothy grin.

I suppose there are a few sanctimonious people who are reading this story and thinking: "What kind of society is this, that children go hungry while people spend money on massage therapy for their dogs?"

Don't be so cranky. Surely compassion is not so limited a commodity that we must begrudge Rusty a little canine joy.

"A lot of people consider their dogs, and other pets, to be members of their families," Folz said.

"And when other members of the family need relief from stress or pain, they seek out help for them. So, why not their animals?"

ty's massage, which lasted about 20 minutes, Bonus rarely stirred from his spot on the couch. At one point, Rusty discovered one of Bonus' toys — a plush white rabbit — and gave it a thorough chewing. Bonus hardly bothered to lift his head from its spot between his front paws.

Folz said that one of the main differences between giving a dog a massage and giving a human a massage is that humans use words to tell you where they ache. Dogs, on the other hand, use body language, and it can

Contact Crocker Stephenson at (414) 224-2539 or by e-mail at crocker@journal-sentinel.com