

Opening of JD Kennels in Cedarville Is Dream Come True for Owner Jane Doty

By Paul Gingras

In retirement, JD Kennels owner Jane Doty has discovered a new life by building a business around her lifelong love of dogs. Launched as an experiment, her doggie daycare and kenneling operation quickly produced results that brought joy to her family and service for residents in need of a facility for their pets. Dozens of dogs ranging from gentle giants to antsy terriers have discovered a second home at M-129 in Cedarville.

Most of the pets take up a heated residence in the Dotys' barn, which includes five-by-five-foot kennels with six-foot ceilings, where they sleep on raised beds.

A certified dog trainer with a strong interest in dog behavior, Mrs. Doty is fascinated by the diversity of breeds, temperament, and behavior she sees.

"What I like most is trying to understand their language," she told *The St. Ignace News*. "They're always trying to tell you something."

Dogs respond more to body language than the spoken word, she said. She watches the dogs, and pays careful attention to how they watch her.

"They don't care what you say," she said. "They always watch to see what I'm doing."

With up to 10 dogs in residence at a time, she has plenty of opportunity to find out the answers to her favorite canine questions: What makes them work? And what do they need?

Their ancestors all had jobs in their packs, she explained, and now, having been domesticated, all pet

dogs seem to have the same question: What do I do?

The clockwork daycare system provides them with an answer by offering a reliable daily structure.

When Mrs. Doty meets a new dog, she spends time with it individually before introducing it to the kennel setting, or the inside doghouses reserved for canines that need extra care. By doing this, each dog has someone familiar at hand when introduced to new roommates.

When everyone is on the same routine, "we all get along," she says.

Mrs. Doty grew up with dogs, and she took a dog-training program in 2012 offered by the CATCH Canine Trainers Academy.

An online course prepared her for all manner of dog temperaments. It also paired her with local mentor Nancy Bailey, a self-taught animal behaviorist known for her skill with animals, animal artwork, and publications like "Clifford of Drummond Island."

Ms. Bailey is Mrs. Doty's go-to person when she needs advice.

Mrs. Doty's trade is dog care, not dog training, but while at her facility she works on correcting behavior problems if their owners ask for it, like canines that obsessively guard food or toys. They also receive basic obedience training by learning the ground rules she sets, she said.

All dogs are kenneled separately, but Mrs. Doty gauges their behavior to see which can associate. Those that get along can spend guided time playing on her 13-acre property that includes a large

Jane Doty poses at J.D. Kennels with her English springer spaniel, Lucy, Thursday, April 3, in Cedarville. Filling her post-retirement time with many breeds of dogs and the diverse challenges that go with them, the new business is a dream come true for Mrs. Doty. Owing to positive feedback and strong support since June 2013, Mrs. Doty plans to expand her 10-dog kennel and doggie daycare operation this spring. Lucy is expecting her second litter of puppies in May. Several of her first litter are kenneled on site when their owners leave town.

fenced-in area, a wilderness trail for dog walking, and nearby fields offered for use by a neighbor.

No matter what she offers, however, the dogs miss their families, and vice versa. To ease the longing, Mrs. Doty snaps photographs of the animals and sends them out digitally, providing peace of mind for the owners. Meanwhile, she does her best to keep life fun for the pets.

"These dogs are like children to their owners," she explained.

Although the whole affair is plenty of fun, it's also a serious responsibility. The canines' medications and feeding regiments are strictly followed.

The venture began when Mrs. Doty's English Springer spaniel had puppies. She was able to sell them but maintains contact with all through their new owners. Some have even come back under her care when their owners were away.



Life at JD Kennels continually feeds Mrs. Doty's desire to learn more about dogs. It's one thing to read about certain breeds, she said, but it's even better to have an example delivered to your door.