

Something For Sara

World Famous Dog, Flat Nose, Performs For KM Girl

By JUNE BALLARD
 Herald Correspondent

On a chilly Saturday afternoon at the Richards' home on Moss Lake, one did not notice the temperatures near as much as the warmth of the guests radiating love and concern for a three and a half year old little girl named Sara who was diagnosed on October 10 as having leukemia.

Jamie and Gail Richards knew something was wrong with their daughter, Sara, when she began to lose her appetite and suddenly ran a high fever. The form of leukemia which Sara had is 90% treatable and after undergoing seven weeks of treatment at Duke Hospital, little Sara's leukemia is now in remission. There will be many more trips to Duke but for the present time Sara was only thinking of Flat Nose.

Barney Odum and his dog, Flat Nose, are world renowned for their show business act which includes Barney's jokes and Flat Nose's tree climbing ability.

Friends and neighbors began pouring in around 3 p.m. and around 3:20, Barney and Flat Nose arrived by van. Flat Nose was dressed in his traveling finery...red shirt, blue pants, straw hat, red sun glasses and a red collar...quite distinguished for a half Pit and half English Bull Dog. Flat Nose came marching up to Sara and Sara presented Barney and Flat Nose a shirt made at Elizabeth Weaving in Grover, and hand painted by Tonya Wilson. Flat Nose presented Sara with a book of children's Bible stories autographed by Flat Nose's paw prints.

As the entertainment got under way, many of Sara's friends and relatives brought drinks and snacks for the event.

A large "Welcome Home Sara" sign proclaimed a sincere we're glad you're home reminder from their neighbors.

The remainder of the afternoon was an entertainment extravaganza. David Godbold, manager of Barney and Flat Nose made possible the musical performances of Richard Phillips, World Talent Association winner, Celeste Shady, who sings backup for Reba McIntyre, and has her own album entitled "Where Do I Belong," and Tracy Curry, who is noted as one of the best musicians to come out of Nashville in a long time.

Jamie and Gail are employed at Elizabeth Weaving, where she is director of styling and he is assistant director. Jamie is from Lincolnton where his parents, James and Dorothy Richards, reside. "Long Shoals to be exact," says Jamie.



Barney Odum And Flat Nose Meet Sara Richards And Mom

Gail is from Elkin, and her parents, Robert and Louise Nicks, reside there.

Jamie, Gail, and Sara moved into their new home near Moss Lake approximately one year ago never dreaming of the trauma that would be facing them. The nearness of family and friends made it evident that they would not have to face this time alone. A relative, Furman Wilson, commented that the afternoon was very enjoyable and he along with everyone there wished little Sara would soon be completely well.

As Richard Phillips began the musical entertainment with "Jailhouse Rock," Barney Odum signaled Flat Nose to climb a pine tree about 25 feet high and with no trouble at all he returned with a pillow which was tied to the tree. The next time, the pillow was placed 30' high and at Barney's command, Flat Nose wasted no time in climbing the tree and retrieving the pillow which was presented to Sara, much to her delight. Barney Odum and Flat Nose reside in Darlington, S.C. along with Barney's wife, Frankie, who accompanied them on this trip.

Barney and Flat Nose recently returned from Toyoko, Japan. Flat Nose was photographed on the phone cards used there. In Japan, one purchases a phone card in much the same way we purchase a Visa or Master Charge card and it's then worth so many phone calls. When used up, it then becomes a collector's item. These are collected just as we collect baseball cards. Celebrities and stars pictures are printed on them and Flat Nose's picture was printed on their phone cards. Flat Nose has been on the Letterman Show, The Today Show, P.M. Magazine, and next Saturday on National TV, at the Clemson/Carolina Football game, Flat Nose will wear a Clemson shirt and climb a tree, returning with a chicken.

Barney takes Flat Nose anywhere he learns of children with diseases such as Sara's. "I'd ride by bike with Flat Nose in the basket to get to Sara because I believe in the Lord and with the Lord's help, I want to help little children feel better," Barney said.

Barney was offered a \$500,000.00 contract to make a beer commercial with Flat Nose retrieving a beer from a tree but Barney turned it down, saying he did not want to imply that it was okay to drink beer since little children would be watching the commercials.

The way Flat Nose started climbing trees was as much of a surprise to Barney as it is for those first viewing this feat. Barney and Frankie would take their dogs for long walks and one day Flat Nose kept looking up in the trees. Before long Flat Nose would run up a tree. Flat Nose kept this up for four or five years before Barney realized this was just too good to keep to himself. Flat Nose will climb any tree Barney commands him to climb. He's been performing about two years and as far as Barney knows, Flat Nose is the only dog in the world that can climb to those heights.

More tree climbers are being trained however, and some of these are Flat Nose's children. Flat Nose's sons, George, Grisby, Target, and Pepper, and his daughter, Little Bit, will all go on to be entertainers delighting many children. Before Barney became famous, he was a farmer in Darlington, S.C. After marrying Frankie and trying to raise four boys, David, Randy, Wayne, and Barney Jr., he decided to go to work at Sunoco Products Company in Hartsville, S.C. Sunoco sponsored Saturday's private showing. Barney claims Frankie named all their boys, naming the youngest one Barney Jr. He says a lot of people ask him why he waited until the fourth one arrived before naming a Barney Jr. and he replied, "I didn't name them, my wife named them and I've been wondering about that myself."

It's hard to tell who the children loved the most, Barney or Flat Nose, but fortunately they didn't have to choose. Everyone enjoyed Barney's jokes and tall tales and all the children enjoyed petting the amazing, tree climbing dog, Flat Nose.

Flat Nose is insured by Loyds of London for one million dollars.

David Godbold is Plant Manager of Elizabeth Weaving in Grover. The show business part of his life is his hobby. He manages Barney and Flat Nose, among others. He was staff writer for the national networks and this is where he found his love of writing and recruiting. He wrote a song appropriately named, "Climbing That Tree" which will be released nationally and performed by Dave Montana.

David looks for acts considered unusual. One act in particular includes two monkeys lip-syncing "Good Hearted Woman" while dressed as Waylon and Willie. He is constantly on the look for unusual

animal acts or novelty acts. David said that he likes to work with people with good morals and those who wouldn't step on others to get ahead.

"I'll be glad to look at any act on weekends if they are unusual enough or really good musical talent as well," proclaimed David.

If you think you have outstanding talent or unusual talent, call Pearl Marketing Assocs. in Darlington, S.C. at (803) 393-1124. Pearl markets the talent David locates, and produces the publicity material mailed out in advance of a show.

Tonya Wilson designed the shirt Sara presented to Barney Odum and Flat Nose. Barney will wear it on the Tonight Show on November 23 (Thanksgiving Eve). David asked Tonya to design a shirt for Barney and, after agreeing to accomplish this task, went to work to design this shirt. She placed a picture of Kings Mountain in

the background and used fall colors to represent this time of the year. Tonya was well qualified for this particular job as she studied art two years in college in Houston, Texas. She's taught classes at Cleveland Tech and is employed with Elizabeth Weaving.

Tonya is married to Jeep Wilson and they reside in Kings Mountain. They have two sons, Michael and Adam. Michael is enrolled in the Jane Campbell Dance Academy I. Young Michael became a crowd pleaser with his dance routine, shaking and twisting to Celeste's version of "The Twist."

Summing up the days activities, Tonya commented, "All the good feelings here are for Sara. We hope Sara will benefit from them and we all hope she will lead a normal and happy life."

Any yes...even though the temperature was a little chilly...no one seemed to notice...



Sara, Sitting On Mother's Lap, Gets Big Laugh Out Of Flat Nose



Sara Gets Flat Nose's 'Autograph'



Flat Nose Does His Thing