

Yak *The Dog*

Clever Dolphin-Hunting Canine

Dog lovers from all over come to Hilton Head Island to meet Yak, the dolphin-hunting dog. He works with his owner, Pete Anderson, aboard the SS Pelican and Island Queen giving dolphin tours.

When Yak senses a dolphin is near, which his owners suspect he can do by hearing the high-pitched noises they make, he runs back and forth on the boat barking to let the passengers know.

Yak, who was named for yakking at an otter, has been out of work since June after being run over by a car. After thousands of dollars of doctors' visits, surgery to remove a herniated disc and physical therapy, Yak is doing much better and will be returning to work in the spring.

When people ask Anderson what kind of dog Yak is, he says he's a South Carolina Dolphin Pointer. He's actually a 4-year-old mixed breed dog that showed up one day on Anderson's houseboat at Broad Creek Marina.

"He's very unique, very smart, got a personality like a person," Anderson said. "He's a very unique dog, and he's got a following from all over. He has return fans who will come back here and bring him presents."

Anderson and wife Marsha found out through strangers and friends that their dog had been on Animal Planet's "K-9 to 5" after one of the passengers on a dolphin tour videotaped him spotting dolphins and sent the tape in to the show. They still haven't seen the show and are having a hard time finding a copy of it.

The accident that almost left Yak paralyzed happened on a hot day in June when Yak crawled under a van to cool down. The owners of the van pulled off without realizing he was underneath.

Yak was taken to a veterinarian, who thought his spinal cord had been severed.

The Andersons began to look for dog wheelchairs, assuming that Yak was paralyzed. After they noticed some movement in Yak's paws, they were directed to Dr. Paul Shealy in Savannah who said Yak needed a myelogram and possibly surgery. The cost of the treatment would be \$3,000, which the Andersons didn't have, but a good friend offered to pay.

The surgery was successful. Yak spent a week at the animal hospital and three weeks doing physical therapy. Shealy did the physical therapy, which would normally cost \$1,000, for no charge. Prior to the surgery, a local paper wrote an article in about Yak, and as a result, the Andersons received numerous donations from the community. If you'd like to see Yak in action next spring, call Sonny C Charters and ask when Captain Pete and Yak are on duty. — Amy Coyne Bredeson



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