

LOCAL

ME ABOUT IT
al man's
a birthday
y to be
l in Colo.

Week ago Saturday,
members sat at one
tables in the club-
house of
the Reche
Club, talk-
ing to
friends
gathered
for the
monthly
potluck
dinner
about
plans for
his 90th
birthday.
His lis-
d they found those
erty impressive.
it's celebrating at



Painting Pekingese has flair for the artistic

Some proceeds from Ziggy's work go to dog rescue shelter

TOM PFINGSTEN
STAFF WRITER

FALLBROOK — No one would suspect Ziggy of having an artistic side.

At 8 pounds and less than a foot off the ground, the 3-year-old dog of the Pekingese variety would be perfectly happy to lounge around his owner's music studio... or sleep... or do just anything but brush colors onto canvas.

But despite what others may expect, this pooch paints — and

his work already has been featured in two art shows.

"This one painting in particular, after he finished it, he was just sitting there, staring at his painting and wagging his tail, like he was admiring his work," said Elizabeth Monacelli, a professional violinist and Fallbrook resident who has owned Ziggy for two years.

The method is simple: Monacelli places a small canvas over a piece of wood propped up against a wall — "It goes all the way down to the ground, because he's really short," she said — then tapes an

empty paper towel roll to a paint brush.

Ziggy grabs the paper towel roll in his mouth.

She puts the paint on the palette.

Ziggy does the rest — slapping the brush across the canvas.

"Some days he refuses to paint at all," Monacelli said. "And some days I ask him if he wants to paint and he comes running over."

Ziggy has completed six paintings since launching his

► **PEKINGESE, B-9**



DON BOOMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Ziggy, an 8-pound Pekingese, sits near a painting he produced recently.

LIFTING SOME HEAVY METAL



Students learn the High Tech High way



DON BOOMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elizabeth Monacelli, Ziggy's human companion, observes as the Pekingese works on his most recent painting at her Fallbrook home.

► PEKINGESE

Continued from B-1

career last September.

Monacelli said she sells the paintings for \$20 to \$25.

She said she also sells postcard prints. A portion of the proceeds goes to Forget Me Not, a Pekingese rescue shelter in Palm Springs.

While it sounds like keen marketing and the makings of a good business, Monacelli pointed out last week that getting each painting requires painstaking work with a temperamental animal.

"I can only get one painting out of him at a time, that's it," she said. "When he does strokes, he focuses for 15 or 20 seconds at a time, then he'll put the paintbrush down. So it may take up to an hour to create one work."

"He will be very adamant sometimes about what color he wants to use. It surprises me."

Ziggy's stubbornness is no mistake — it's a trait common to his breed, she said.

In China, hundreds of years ago, Pekingese dogs were reserved for royalty, and commoners weren't allowed to own them.

These days, they still act

"He will be very adamant sometimes about what color he wants to use. It surprises me."

— ELIZABETH MONACELLI
Ziggy's owner

like royalty, and Ziggy's no exception, Monacelli said.

Gabriella Rollins, director of the Yorba Linda Arts Alliance, said last week that her organization had never featured any artwork done by animals until Ziggy's paintings were displayed in its ninth annual "Celebration of the Arts" on June 1.

"He's like this little stuffed animal — just very calm and charming," Rollins said. "He is so adorable."

Rollins said Ziggy wasn't the first artistic animal she'd ever heard of — there's the horse that paints with a brush jammed into its halter, and the elephant that paints self-portraits with its trunk.

But Ziggy was a hit with those who attended the arts celebration earlier this month, she said.

"Obviously, they aren't any particular shape," Rollins said. "I would call it more modernistic — just blobs of

color and lines on paper, depending on how he moves his little head around.

"Honestly, it's not so much the art as it is the concept. People will contribute to a worthy cause, and if they get something back, it'll be a reminder and a unique conversation piece."

Monacelli said she plans to continue facilitating Ziggy's artistic side.

"He's a very, very special dog to me — one of the most special I've owned," the longtime Pekingese aficionado said. "He's unique for the Pekingese breed because he's so tiny — only 8 pounds, and typically a Pekingese male would weigh up to 14 pounds. But he has a very large personality."

"I'm so proud to be his owner."

Contact staff writer Tom Pflingsten at (760) 740-3516 or tpflingsten@nctimes.com.