

A whole lotta' dog

Giant Newfies of Midwest gather here — owners in tow



Pebbles, after partying at Put-in-Bay, at the first Newfoundland Island Hop, 2002. photo provided

• "Are those St. Bernards?"

No, they're Newfoundlands — Newfies or Newfs to those that know and love them.

If you're at Kelleys Island or Put-in-Bay this weekend, you're going to see a lot of these gentle giants as Newfies from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and even Iowa and Minnesota come together for their second annual island hop. The invitation to this party for the pups reads, "Newfs just wanna have fun. And so does the family they own."

Newfoundland dogs are one of the oldest breeds in existence today, known for their unique gentleness, even temper and devotion.

Clearly, the families they own are equally devoted to them. Newf Neighborhood is an organization of about 75 people from Northeast Ohio who gather once a month at a park or similar area with their Newfs to enjoy a day together and exchange information about events or venues that are pet friendly.

Last year's island hop had 12 of the bear-like dogs in attendance, and Gina Destro, founder of Newf Neigh-

borhood, expects at least twice that many this year, with out-of-state Newfies flying in to Toledo, Cleveland and Detroit.

If you are out by the docked Goodtime I Saturday morning, expect to see a whole lotta dog waiting to board — these big bundles of fur typically reach a height of 26-28 inches and can weigh up to 150 pounds. Newfies come in several colors. It's the landseer that is commonly mistaken for a St. Bernard. A landseer has a white base coat with black markings.

This year's group departs the mainland from the Jackson Street Pier at 9:30 a.m. on the Goodtime I, spends a little time on Kelleys Island, then boards the boat again for an afternoon at Put-in-Bay. They're certain to be at the Boardwalk at some point — last summer bartenders provided buckets of water for the thirsty Newfs.

The dogs are natural swimmers, so you may see them playing in the water at the public beach too. And it's a safe bet by late afternoon, they'll be found napping in the park, along

with the people they own.

For information about the breed or details about the outing, visit www.NewfNeighborhood.com.