

# Ex-CFLer enjoys his 'dog days'

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he's training for the Iditarod dog-sled race in Alaska, mushing his way through town?

Turns out that Malinosky is somewhat of a celebrity, and it's not for the canine company he keeps. He played on the offensive line of the Toronto Argonauts' 1983 team that won the city's first Grey Cup title in 31 years and the 1984 all-star selection went on to capture another Grey Cup with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats in 1986.

After his playing days were over, he passed on a career in policing to spend more time with his family, moving here in 1988.

Malinosky became a partner in the Georgetown Tim Hortons until the opportunity arose to start up his own store in Acton, which is now run by sons Noah and Josh.

The family has always owned dogs, from Yorkies to Labrador retrievers to German shepherds.

Between recent pickups from animal shelters in Erin and Welland, as well as getting another pooch (with allergies) from California owned by

daughter Faith, Malinosky soon had plenty of exercise partners, consisting of three bull mastiff rotweiller mixes, a purebred Lab, a Lab-collie cross and a husky.

"We started with four dogs and then some things happened where we got a couple of others and somebody had to walk them every day," said the Michigan State graduate, who had knee replacement surgery two years ago, but otherwise has no football-related ailments.

"I thought I could only take three or four at a time, and then it just got to a point where I'd take three for an hour, come back and take the other three. But I was getting exhausted, so I tried them all at once. It took us a week or so just to get sorted out who steps where and how, but it all worked out and away we went."

Not all of the dogs are registered to Malinosky, as Town of Halton Hills bylaws state that there is a maximum of three dogs per household. Three of them belong to Noah. John usually drops by the restaurant each morning to check on things for

a bit and returns home for the walk.

"I find different routes that we take, depending on how much time I have. The dogs enjoy it. They have a lot of fun," adds Malinosky, who is often asked if he's a professional dog-walker, and no, he's not taking on any new clients.

"I really can't miss a day. Sometimes if we need to, Noah will walk them, or if we get in a pinch, a guy called the 'Wolf Man' from Norval will take them. He and his wife have a dog farm in Dundalk and if we go away, the dogs can go up there for a few days."

John's wife Sarah said during family gatherings, their living room is a tangled mess of dogs and grandchildren. But other than terrifying one of the courier drivers, who is reluctant to approach the front door of the residence because of the reaction he'll get, the dogs are extremely friendly and welcome visiting hounds to their group.

Scoobie, one of the rescue dogs, had been with three previous owners. Diesel had to have both knees replaced soon after



Local resident John Malinosky rounds up his crew as they get ready to depart for their daily walk around town. At forefront is Tobias the husky, and from left are: Scoobie, Mikey, Duffy, Madison and Diesel.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

being adopted. Another, Duffy, had cigarette burns and was so emaciated that he's still skittish and doesn't like to be separated from his mates.

"It's a passion for animals, to give a dog a good home," explains Noah, who purchases bulk dog food in 700-pound bags.

"People like purebreds and everybody forgets the mutts. If they're not puppies, no one wants them. Rescue dogs are some of the best dogs you can find—that's just my feeling. Great temperament and well behaved. They're

just starving for love."

Before heading out for their daily walk, the dogs make a pit stop in the Malinoskys' backyard because once they hit the road, there's little time for sniffing around or socializing with others. John said he has no plans to enter the team in a sled-dog race, although he's had some other ideas.

"Toby would be the perfect lead dog," Malinosky chuckled.

"Seriously though, this summer I think I'm going to try rollerblading with them."

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