



ruff DRAFTS

Fall 2017

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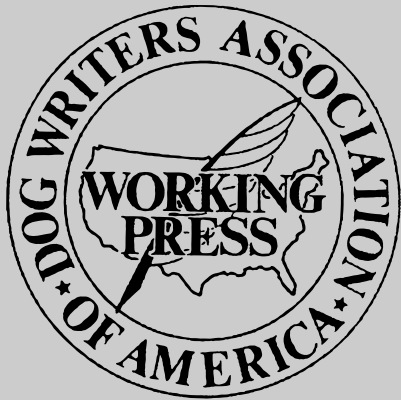
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The Doctor Is In: Pets as Therapy and Therapy for Pets

DWAA members share their experiences

Photo courtesy of Gail Parker



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President's

COLUMN

By Jen Reeder

One of the things I love about DWAA is the diversity of our members – and subject matter. Since eight editors and publishers founded the organization in 1935 at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, we've grown to nearly 600 members, including journalists, authors, bloggers, publicists, photographers, illustrators and media personalities. While we all work under the umbrella of the human-canine bond, it's a big umbrella: we cover dog competitions, nutrition, training, rescue, pet fashion, veterinary research, working dog organizations, animal welfare legislation, fundraisers and many other topics.

The variety of categories in our annual writing contest reflects that diversity. It's a wonderful opportunity to reward top-notch work with Maxwell Medallions for regular categories as well as cash grants for special awards. We're so grateful to the individuals, companies and nonprofit organizations that sponsored \$14,000 in special awards this year! We were thrilled to have 11 new special awards that added \$7,900 in prize money:

THE FEAR FREE PETS AWARD - \$2,000

Sponsored by Fear Free, LLC

FEAR FREE DOG ENRICHMENT AWARD -

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THE CANINE SCRIBBLES AWARD - \$350

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Jen Reeder, President of the DWAA

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PET FASHION PROFESSIONALS PET FASHION

AWARD - \$350 Sponsored by the International Association of Pet Fashion Professionals (whose founder is **Lauren Darr**, our wonderful Secretary)

THE MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION CANINE

HEALTH AWARD - \$300 Sponsored by Morris Animal Foundation

See *PRESIDENT'S COLUMN* pg 4

By **Merrie Meyers**

DEAR COLLEAGUES;

When we selected the health bond between animals and people as the theme for this issue, little did I know how important that connection would become. As I write this, my dogs and I are sitting in North Carolina, Florida evacuees from Hurricane Irma. Despite the 18-hour trip to get ahead of the storm, normally a 12-hour drive, Irma's presence can still be felt. A day after the storm submerged parts of my home state, winds, water and fog whip around us, a constant reminder of nature's power. My dogs, sensing my heightened stress, lie close, and reassure me that everything will be all right. Parallel sagas are playing out in Houston and communities across the nation where empathy has trumped adversity.

In this issue we look at several of the roles that animals and humans serve for each other. Whether you are a caregiver or cared for with the assistance of a therapy animal, the end result is that together we have greater strength.

According to field reports from neighbors, my home in Florida is without power but hopefully intact. I will head home in a day or two (or three if things are worse than imagined), but regardless of the challenges I find when I get there, I know it will be OK because Sunny & Simone will be there, making me laugh and helping me retain a sense of humor even in the darkest moments.



Merrie Meyers, Editor of Ruff Drafts

EDITORS' UPDATE:

I arrived home six days after I wrote this column, about 10 days after I left. This was the first time I'd ever left my home because of a storm. I wasn't sure what I'd come back to. As a native Floridian, I've experienced EVERY major and minor storm since the mid-twentieth century. Names like Betsy, Donna, Cleo and Andrew are familiar to me, as are their 21st century sisters; Katrina, Wilma and Irma.

All in all, I can't complain. I feel lucky that my roof is intact, with no leaks or flooding. I know others who are scratching their heads and trying to figure out what to do first. My yard is trashed, and I am soaked in sweat from trying to put things right. It will take many weeks to find a new normal, but the dogs are en-

See EDITOR'S LETTER pg 9

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ISSUE DEADLINES

Spring, March 1
Summer, June 1
Fall, September 1
Winter, December 1

The editor reserves the right to refuse and/or edit material, and is not responsible for errors in difficult to read copy. Every attempt will be made to publish information accurately. Submission implies right to publish all or in part. Unsigned or misleading material is not accepted. Material published is the opinion of the author and does not imply endorsement by the editor or DWAA. Neither editor nor DWAA assumes liability for information contained herein or typographical errors. Reproduction of photos and editorial is forbidden without permission.

President's Column

Continued from pg 2

THE PSI PROFESSIONAL PET CARE AWARD

- \$300 Sponsored by Pet Sitters International

THE TAKE YOUR DOG AWARD - \$300

Sponsored by Take Your Dog To Work Day creator Pet Sitters International

THE WALTER R. FLETCHER MEMORIAL AWARD - SEAT OF HONOR AT THE 2018 WESTMINSTER KENNEL CLUB DOG SHOW

Sponsored by The Westminster Kennel Club

THE HARRISON STEPHENS INSPIRATIONAL FEATURE AWARD - \$300

Sponsored by **Tom and Sally Reeder** (in honor of my late grandpa – thanks Mom and Dad!)

I'm happy to tell you that **Dr. Marty Becker**, a.k.a. "America's Veterinarian," will personally present the two Fear Free awards and give a keynote speech at our awards banquet on February 10, 2018 at the iconic New Yorker Hotel. So exciting!

We're also incredibly thankful for the support of the returning sponsors who continue to support the dog writing community with these special awards:

AKC CLUB PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE AWARD - \$500

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club

AKC MICROCHIPPING AWARENESS AWARD - \$1,500

Sponsored by The AKC Reunite Program

DOGWISE BEST BOOK AWARD - \$500

Sponsored by Dogwise Publishing

DWAA JUNIOR WRITER AWARD - \$400

Sponsored by **Karen Petitt**, an author of children's books

"I'm happy to tell you that Dr. Marty Becker, a.k.a. 'America's Veterinarian,' will personally present the two Fear Free awards and give a keynote speech at our awards banquet on February 10, 2018 at the iconic New Yorker Hotel."

—**Jen Reeder**, DWAA President

DWAA ROBERT H. MCKOWEN MEMORIAL FRIENDS OF RESCUE AWARD - \$300

Sponsored by his friends and family

JAMES COLASANTI, JR. POETRY AWARD - \$200

Sponsored by **James Colasanti, Jr.**

THE CAPTAIN WILLIAM LEWIS JUDY AWARD - \$350

Sponsored by American Legion Post #348, Brick Township, N.J. and **Lisa Begin-Kruysman** (one of our Facebook gurus!)

AKC RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD - \$500

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club

AKC S.T.A.R. PUPPY AND CANINE GOOD CITIZEN AWARD - \$500

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club

THE CAPTAIN HAGGERTY AWARD FOR BEST TRAINING BOOK OR ARTICLE - \$200

Sponsored by **Babette Haggerty** of Haggerty Dog Training in memory of her father, **Captain Arthur Haggerty**

DWAA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD - \$1,000

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club

As usual, I could write an entire column thanking people...so why stop

now? Thank you to **Lea-Ann Germinder** and the team at Germinder and Associates for publicizing the contest far and wide. Thank you to our contest chair, **Su Ewing**, for taking this on, and to everyone who is volunteering to judge the contest. You make this signature event possible!

We're trying something new this year: we'll be announcing the contest finalists on our Facebook and Twitter pages on Wednesday, Dec. 6 so you can share the news on social media – in this competition, it really is an honor to be nominated! We'll announce the winners in a similar reveal the following Wednesday, Dec. 13 so in case winners would like to bring a date to the awards banquet, you'll have a terrific holiday gift idea! There will only be 100 seats at the banquet, so be sure to buy your ticket when they go on sale in December...

I also want to say a special thank you to **Merrie Meyers** for editing this issue of Ruff Drafts despite having to evacuate during Hurricane Irma! Our Twitter moderator **Dawn Taylor** also had a harrowing experience in Florida. Thank you both for going above and beyond the call of duty!

Good luck and thanks again to all of our wonderful members! Happy writing!



Canines on Campus

By **Morgan Humphries**

ASSISTANT EDITOR & STUDENT,
FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

Dogs have been used to provide emotional and physical support to people for years, whether it be through service animals individually aiding those with medical conditions or through therapy dogs visiting hospitals. Recently, there has also been an increase in programs at universities regarding the use of animals to decrease stress. American university students have shown anxiety levels higher than those of a 1950s mental patient, according to the American Psychological Association in 2000. Diagnosed mental illnesses like depression and anxiety are increasing in frequency across the country, but some colleges and universities, like Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) are proposing solutions.

One of these solutions is allowing the presence of Emotional Service Animals (ESAs) in On-Campus Housing. Alexis Stansfield, a sophomore at FGCU, said, "The process to get an ESA is fairly simple. I went to the Adaptive Services Office on campus and stated that I was interested in getting an ESA. They gave me some forms to fill out, including one to be filled out by my doctor stating that he prescribes an ESA as my treatment for my anxiety and bipolar disorders. I had to have [Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)] fax my records to my doctor to confirm my diagnoses and the treatment I had last semester by going to CAPS therapy...Having an ESA will greatly benefit me by relieving much of my loneliness, anxiety and stress because I will always have a companion animal to help me cope."

The shift to allowing animals in dorms is highly controversial. While the

animals can make a significant difference in the lives of students who need them, many are worried that the right may be abused, and the ESAs will be viewed only as pets. There can also be conflicts with roommates regarding allergies or fears. This kind of situation can be troubling for students like Stansfield, who would benefit from the presence of an ESA. Due to the debates surrounding this issue, many schools instead turn to bringing in dogs for people to interact with during high stress times. FGCU has two programs that are developed to decrease stress in their students. One day a week, two Great Pyrenees stand outside of an on-campus marketplace, and students can visit and pet them between classes.

Puppy Palooza is a similar event that occurs during finals week. Gulf Coast Humane Society brings groups of puppies that students can play with for a few minutes before or after stressful finals.

While these are great options for all schools and universities to incorporate, there are definitely disadvantages. Due to the popularity of the puppies during finals, Cassandra Bayes says, "For me, the Great Pyrenees are more helpful in lowering my stress levels than Puppy Palooza. They come every Wednesday and I can hug and cuddle these fluffy giants as long as I need to. Puppy Palooza, on the other hand, only meets up once a semester, and are only interested in seeing how many people they can squeeze in." However, many students also worry about the health of the dogs, who are outside, albeit in shade, in the Florida heat for several hours. Animal related programs can be revolutionary ways to help today's students, but there is still much development to be done. 🐾

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See MEMBER CHANGES pg 9

Meet Our

NEW MEMBERS



Laura Reeves

Laura Reeves

The host of PureDogTalk podcast, Laura is an AKC Breeder of Merit and a member of the Professional Handlers Association. Laura is a second generation breeder of German Wirehaired Pointers. As a professional journalist, Laura's weekly column "As the Wheels Turn" ran in Best in Show Daily for three years. Laura brings her professional dog

handling experience to the podcast as well as her passion for all breeds. A former newspaper reporter and script writer for self-guided audio driving tours, PureDogTalk has become something of the "perfect storm" for Laura's varied career.

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Kim Butler

Kim Butler

Kim Butler is a serial entrepreneur who started her first company, Kim's Khocolate, at the age of eleven. Her most recent enterprise, Good Dog in a Box, was founded with her sister, Jenn Merritt, CPDT-KA. Together, they wrote and published the "Reach and Teach Humane Education Program." Kim also wrote the "Doggone Good Dog Treat Cookbook," numerous e-books, and more blog articles than she can count on dogs, online marketing, and small business. She also owns The URL Dr., a boutique online marketing and web design firm, specializing in e-commerce and WordPress. Kim speaks internationally on small business subjects.

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Fostering the Dogs of Houston

By **Merrie Meyers**

Teri Wilson didn't start out as a foster failure, but that's what happened. When a San Antonio animal shelter announced the need for foster homes, Teri's friend, Beth Morgan, announced that she was taking 11 of the dogs to her house. One of the lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma is that rescued animals need to be kept close to their rescue site to increase the potential for owner-pet reunions. With space needed to hold animals rescued after Hurricane Harvey, current shelter pets had to be moved. If no foster homes could be found, some of the animals would be euthanized to make room for the rescued pets.

Teri felt compelled to help. After looking at pictures of the dogs under Beth's care, Teri selected "Princess," a young mix, about 11 months old. It was clear to Teri that Princess had anything but a regal beginning.

"She was terrified," Teri said. "It was clear that she knew nothing about living in a home."

As the days progressed, Teri and Princess bonded. Finally, Teri decided the princess had found her kingdom in the Wilson home. Another successful Foster Failure!

A successful romance novelist with titles that were adapted into Hallmark Movies, Teri and her love of dogs propelled her into a writing career when, as a young girl, she took third place in an AKC short fiction contest. She often features her dogs, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, or other breeds relevant to the plot, in her novels.

Now that Princess has established her "court," Teri says that Princess may pop up in a future saga. But this story already has a happy ending. Princess is living happily ever after in the Wilson home.



Teri Wilson and Princess
Photo by Beth Morgan

Editor's Note: Many national, regional and local organizations partnered to relocate homeless dogs and cats already populating Texas shelters to facilities in other parts of the country. Those animals were offered for adoption in their new areas while Texas shelters made room for pets lost or abandoned during the hurricane and floods. 🐾

Observances Breed Awareness:

Autumnal Inspiration - The "Sirius" Dog Days are over, but Serious Matters Prevail

By **Lisa Begin-Kruysman**

With the slow-paced sultry Dog Days of Summer behind us, our thoughts, plans and actions get a refreshing boost with cooler temperatures, autumnal hues and longer strolls with our dogs, and some meaningful daily, weekly and monthly celebrations and observances of all things canine.

September brings AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Month, a time that reminds dog lovers that being a dog guardian isn't a privilege, it's an important responsibility; we are their providers of food and shelter as well as the caretakers of their emotional needs. During September, especially, those who care for dogs are asked to assess if they're doing everything possible to be the best dog parent. Responsible Dog Ownership includes a thoughtful commitment to dogs that includes a readiness to be a competent caregiver with a plan to keep

your dog healthy, safe and well trained; and to always be a dog's best friend.

Originally known as National Guide Dog Month, National Service Dog Month was first observed in 2008, established by actor, animal advocate and Natural Balance Pet Foods founder, the late Dick Van Patten. After Van Patten had experienced a life-changing visit to the Guide Dogs of the Desert facility in Palm Springs, California, he was inspired to help raise awareness and money for guide dog schools.

In 2010, the observance was renamed National Service Dog Month and moved to September, and now has expanded to include service and assistance animals of all kinds, from service pot-bellied pigs to therapy rabbits and autism assistance felines. During National Service Dog Month the public is encouraged to consider donating time or money to a local service animal train-

ing and advocacy organization.

Rounding out September, the last full week of September brings the venerable National Dog Week, a seven-day celebration of the American dog. Founded in 1928 by *Dog World* Publisher Captain Wm. Lewis Judy, National Dog Week was established not to necessarily bring more dogs into the world, but to make us better caretakers of those that are already here. In its Post WWII popularity, this week encouraged dog owners to embrace dog obedience training and asked humans to see dogs as sentient beings with emotional needs and to be aware of issues affecting them. Big celebrations took place in towns and cities across America, including elaborately orchestrated "Canine Cavalcades" where dogs and their humans took over Rockefeller Center in New York City with great fanfare! Judy, a co-founder of the

Continued on next page

Help us start a webinar program!



DWAA would love to find a few volunteers to help start a webinar program to bring educational content to our members - and help members share their expertise with one another. The team will schedule speakers and handle logistics in conjunction with the webinar company.

Please help us launch this initiative by emailing your interest to Jen Reeder:
jen@jenreeder.com

Continued from previous page

DWAA, is credited for "Taking America to the Dogs" and enlightened and educated a new generation of dog "owners." Next year the occasion reaches its 90th Year Milestone.

In October, the leaves change color, and some dogs must change homes. That's why Adopt-a-Dog Month is so important. Established by American Humane in October 1981, this is an annual observance to encourage people to save lives and enhance their own by adopting a dog from a shelter or rescue group. Today, that message is as important as ever, as millions of shelter dogs await adoption every year. This observance encourages intelligent adoption choices, spaying and neutering, micro-chipping, as well as volunteering and donating items to your local shelter.

The month of November brings observances that encourage pet owners to be mindful of health and medical-related issues that affect our dogs, and other pets; it's Adopt a Senior Pet Month, National Pet Cancer Awareness Month, Pet Diabetes Awareness Month and National Go Cook for Your Pets Day. National Canine Lymphoma Awareness Day is observed on November 7, a day established to increase awareness and understanding of canine lymphoma through clinical research, that promotes prevention and promising programs for treatment of this devastating disease.

Many of us have kept Houston and other areas affected by Hurricane Harvey in our hearts and minds. As writers, bloggers and authors, these devastating events, paired with these meaningful observances, present opportunities to enlighten, inspire and educate readers, and make a difference in the lives of animals, and the humans that love them.

Wishing everyone a productive and healthy fall writing season. 🐾

Many thanks

TO OUR CONTEST JUDGES FOR VOLUNTEERING THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE FOR THIS YEAR'S WRITING CONTEST!

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Michele Wojciechowski
Deborah Wood
Ted Wood

Editor's Letter

Continued from pg 3

thrilled with all of the new smells and the mounds of trash, foliage and miscellaneous storm debris that line the streets like some crazy landscape from another planet. At the end of the day, we are safe and will give our time to help others.

Wishing warm fall greetings to you and yours! 🐾

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When Good Dogs Go Bad

Living with Canine Anxiety

By **Laura Greaves**

Once upon a time, I quietly judged “those people” whose dogs displayed aggressive behavior. There are no bad dogs, the saying goes – only bad owners. Any dog that hurts a person or another animal, I told myself, had clearly been failed by a human somewhere along the line.

I’ve had dogs all my life. I adore them. I’ve proudly called myself a “crazy dog lady” for years. I write books about how incredible dogs are, and I’ve been the editor of a magazine for dog lovers. I consider myself to be a responsible dog owner – I even pick up *other* dogs’ poop when I’m out walking. I’m not one of “those people,” I thought smugly. My dogs are exemplary canine citizens.

Oh yes, I judged. I judged and judged and judged – right up until the moment my dog bit my daughter.

Tex is a Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever about to celebrate his tenth birthday. Almost from day one, he was a little crabby. He could be dominant and bossy. He’d displayed resource guarding behavior since before I even knew what resource guarding was. He frequently bullied his canine little sister, Delilah, also a Toller. Sometimes he would snap at other dogs in the park or on the street, especially exuberant puppies that liked to invade his personal space.

Of course, I knew immediately that Tex’s behavior was not acceptable. And so I took him to puppy school and obedience training. I walked him twice a day, every day, hoping the physical and mental stimulation would keep a lid on his peccadilloes. I found possibly the world’s most thorough veterinarian. She diagnosed Tex with arthritis and hy-



Laura and Tex

pothyroidism, and I was relieved to learn that either condition might have contributed to his behavioral problems. (Both are now diligently managed with medication and regular check-ups.)

But as it turned out, Tex had a bigger problem than anybody realized.

When I fell pregnant back in 2013, my number one concern was how my dogs would cope with the arrival of the baby. This is not an exaggeration. I literally worried more about this than anything else during my pregnancy. I was determined to get it right. So I read all the books and sought advice from our vet. My husband and I hired an expensive trainer to spend a day with us, assessing Tex and Delilah and giving us strategies to prepare them for the baby’s arrival. We implemented those strategies to the letter.

Not long after my daughter was born, Tex, who was six at the time,

nipped the lawn guy. Then he nipped a man who had come to look at a sofa we were selling. *Hmmm*, we thought. *Not acceptable, but perhaps understandable.* These were strangers on his “turf.” *He probably feels extra protective toward the baby.* We doubled down on our training techniques.

And then he bit the baby.

It’s not overstating it to say it was one of the worst days of my life. Along with my family, my dogs are the loves of my life. I felt Tex had betrayed me. I also felt tremendously guilty. Any parent would. My daughter suffered only bruising, but she had been terrified and that broke my heart.

My husband and I took Tex to the vet immediately, perversely wishing she would diagnose some new ailment that would neatly explain his brain snap. But, aside from his existing health con-

Continued on next page

ditions, he was perfectly healthy. He was, it seemed, just a 'bad dog' – and I guess that made us bad owners.

The vet outlined our options. We could rehome him – send him to live somewhere with no children. We could seek the advice of a veterinary behavior specialist. She might be able to “do something with him,” but she was booked up for weeks.

Or we could have Tex put to sleep.

Close family members were adamant that euthanasia was the only option. The pressure we felt was intense. I never, ever imagined being in a position that would see me weighing up surrendering my dog, much less genuinely considering euthanasia for a healthy animal. But at the same time, how could I risk my child's safety?

To say we agonized over the decision is a crashing understatement. Ultimately, we decided we simply did not believe that Tex was beyond help. We knew this dog, and we knew he wasn't “bad.” So we made the appointment with the veterinary behavior specialist and made sure Tex was never in the same room as our daughter – and then we waited.

Dr. Kersti Seksel of the Sydney Animal Behavioural Service is one of the world's leading veterinary behavior specialists. I had spoken with her in my previous life as editor of *Dogs Life* magazine, for which Kersti is a regular columnist. She is in demand all over Australia and internationally for her research and expertise in changing the lives of problem pets.

Happily for me, she is also based in Sydney, Australia – the SABS office is literally three blocks from my house. It seemed like fate.

In the lead-up to Tex's appointment with Kersti, she had me complete a thirty-page questionnaire about every aspect of his life from the day he was

born. She wanted details about his parents and littermates, his early socialisation and training, his diet, habits and temperament. “Comprehensive” doesn't even begin to cover it.

Then we had a three-hour appointment at Kersti's office with both Tex and Delilah. She observed Tex while we talked through the questionnaire. Then she asked me a simple question: “What's the outcome you're hoping for today?”

“I'm hoping you'll tell me my dog doesn't have to die,” I replied.

Kersti smiled. “Your dog doesn't have to die.”

I will never forget those words.

“The pressure we felt was intense. I never, ever imagined being in a position that would see me weighing up surrendering my dog, much less genuinely considering euthanasia for a healthy animal. But at the same time, how could I risk my child's safety?”

Kersti diagnosed Tex with a generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). This diagnosis was clear to her virtually the moment he entered her office, she said. While my younger dog, Delilah, gave the space a cursory sniff and then flopped down to nap, Tex continued to pace, whine and whimper throughout our appointment. Any time somebody entered or left the room, Tex would be at the door, straining to get out. He panted and puffed out his cheeks, licked his lips and yawned. None of these behaviors would be out of the ordinary if he was tired from a long walk, for example, or had just eaten his dinner – but in the context of a calm office environment, they were textbook signs of anxiety.

It is estimated that around one in five humans suffers from anxiety, and according to Kersti the numbers are sim-

ilar in dogs. But while the research canon grows exponentially every year, not many non-veterinarians understand what a canine anxiety disorder *really* is. It's not being afraid of the vacuum cleaner or trembling during thunderstorms. Well, it's not *just* those things, although they can certainly be symptoms of GAD.

A true anxiety disorder is a physiological illness, just like, for example, diabetes. In a dog with diabetes, the pancreas cannot produce or properly process insulin. Similarly, in a dog with GAD, the brain cannot properly process information.

Tex isn't bad – he's wired wrong. Because of the way the neural pathways in his brain are built, he is unable to predict the outcomes of events. He perceives everything as a potential threat – and acts accordingly. Even something as apparently trivial as meeting another dog on the street, or encountering the guy who's mowed the lawn every week for five years, is a new, overwhelming and – so his brain tells him – possibly dangerous situation for Tex.

Kersti uses the analogy of traffic lights: green, amber and red. A neurotypical dog is mostly in the green zone – generally relaxed and calm. When he finds himself in an unfamiliar scenario, he might go into the amber zone, in which he'll be more alert and watchful. Only when he perceives a genuine

Continued on next page

threat will he enter the red zone. An owner who's tuned in to their dog's behavior should be able to spot the distinct behaviors of the green and amber zones, and act to diffuse a situation before it "turns red."

Tex, however, is permanently in the amber zone. His GAD means he's never *not* on high alert – he never knows where the next threat may come from. And because he never completely relaxes – he sleeps with one eye open, sometimes literally – it's a much shorter journey from amber to red. It can happen in seconds, which means any warning behavior he may display can be easily missed.

Kersti's explanation and Tex's GAD diagnosis made *so much* sense to my husband and me. It cast his previous behavior – indeed, his personality in general – in an entirely new light. We realized this anxiety had been present from the day we brought Tex home. We *had* been bad owners because we hadn't identified it – but we hadn't identified it because we didn't have the tools to do so.

Now we do.

October will mark three years since Tex's GAD diagnosis and I'm pleased to report he is a different dog. The change in him has been nothing short of remarkable – as is often the case, we

didn't realize how unwell he had been until he got better. Tex had been trying to show us that he wasn't coping – his relief when we finally saw it was every bit as huge as ours. These days, he's like a puppy again: playful, friendly and affectionate.

We manage Tex's anxiety disorder in three ways. The first is consistent, patient training. We have taught Tex to focus on us on command – this means we can wrest his attention away from whatever his anxiety is forcing him to zero in on.

Secondly, we manage his environment to avoid known triggers. We cross the street when we're walking and see a puppy or small dog approaching. We don't allow unfamiliar children to approach him, ever. I used to feel guilty about asking sweet, eager kids not to pet him and would offer babbling explanations. Now I simply say, kindly but firmly, "Please don't touch him. He doesn't like it."

The third strategy has been the real winner: medication. Tex takes a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) called Lovan. It is the same antidepressant that many humans take, but we know it by the brand name Prozac. You should see the looks I get when I tell people my dog is on Prozac and has his own shrink.

And I *do* tell people. I tell anyone who will listen that dogs like Tex aren't bad dogs, that they may have an underlying anxiety disorder, that rehoming or euthanasia are not the only options. Tex and I even appeared on page three of Sydney's largest daily newspaper in an article dispelling the myths around canine anxiety. He also has his own Instagram account ([@thedogthatworries](https://www.instagram.com/thedogthatworries)), where we work to raise awareness of the condition and offer support to other owners of anxious dogs.

Today, Tex and my now almost four-year-old daughter are great friends. We are ever vigilant and will never stop closely supervising their interactions, but she is very gentle with him and he is comfortable with her attention. I thank the universe every day that we gave Tex another chance; because it has not only kept our beautiful boy with us and given him back his quality of life, it has also allowed me to work to help others understand that a diagnosis of canine anxiety is not the end of the world. In fact, it can open up a brand new, much happier world for your four-legged friend.. 🐾

Laura Greaves is an award-winning Australian journalist and the author of the bestselling *Incredible Dog Journeys* (Penguin Random House). Her new book, *Dogs with Jobs*, will be published on November 27. Visit www.lauragreaves.com to find out more.



Attention DWAA Authors!

With the holidays approaching, we'd like to offer all published DWAA members an opportunity to promote their dog books. Everything's fair game: traditional or self-published, and all genres ... as long as the topic involves dogs, please feel free to post on the [DWAA Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/DWAA) and/or [@Twitter \(@DWAA_US\)](https://twitter.com/DWAA_US).

Please make sure you provide a link to your site or a retail outlet. Thanks!

A Thousand Tears . . . Song For A Magical-Dawg

by **Amy Shojai**

A thousand tears I shed each night
Since Magic left that bitter day,
He took away a special light
And turned my world to gray.

We knew a gift that shined so bright
Would burn too fast and go away
More quickly than is ever right
Yet still we loved, and now we pay.

Swift sweet joy, condensed delight,
Great love is magnified that way.
The years sped by, we couldn't fight
The deal we made, we had no say.

If we could, you know we'd fight
To keep him here just one more day.
Because we loved with all our might
We let him go, his wish obey.

In time the tears I shed each night
Will shimmer bright, I pray.
For all who mourn love out of sight
Sweet memory holds sway.

A thousand tears I shed each night
Since Magic left that bitter day.
But in each tear, his special light
Shines rainbows, washing grief away.

*(music to come. . . for a Very Good-Dog
who touched the world)*



Magic von Fernheim: 7/24/06–9/19/17

SAVE the DATE!

DWAA's annual meeting
and awards banquet has a

NEW DATE & LOCATION

We're hosting an
evening event on

**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 10TH
2018**

*That's right -
Saturday night!*

This way, members can
spend the day enjoying
MEET THE BREEDS, then
dress up for a delicious
DINNER, networking and
AWARDS CEREMONY at the
NEW YORKER HOTEL
in Manhattan - with a
keynote address by
DR. MARTY BECKER,
"America's Veterinarian."

**Tickets will go on sale
December 6, 2017.
We hope to see you there!**

Therapy Dogs Take Off at LAX



Photos courtesy of the Author (Brian Valente).

By **Brian Valente**

It was the day after a tragedy – a man had come to the airport with a gun and rampaged through Terminal 3, killing one TSA agent and shutting down the airport before being apprehended. As part of the LAX PUP (Pets Unstressing Passengers) program, my dog Finn and I traveled to be with the passengers and employees in the aftermath. We entered the terminal to a chaotic scene: security and TV cameras were everywhere, people lining up to retrieve items left behind, a mountain of luggage sat behind

ropes as they called people up. Tensions were high and we didn't quite know where to be.

Then some kids spotted Finn and his friendly "Pet Me" red vest. They approached, unsure at first, and then as they started petting him, we talked about Finn and answered questions about wolfhounds, and they talked about their dogs back home. They giggled and smiled with wide eyes when Finn sniffed them and licked them, and stood up to tower over their heads. And just for a moment things were... well, just normal. Their parents retrieved their belongings and called to them, so we handed them our therapy dog trading card, and they were on their way, comparing notes. It is

a rather dramatic, but a great example of a day in our life as a therapy dog team at Los Angeles International Airport.

The PUP program was founded April 2013.

Today we have over 35 dogs at LAX that roam the terminals bringing happiness and comfort to thousands of travelers. The program serves as a template for other airports, and now over 27 national and international airports have adopted therapy dog programs. 🐾

More info on therapy dogs can be found at therapydogs.com. You can follow Finn's therapy dog adventures at <https://www.facebook.com/finnthewolfhound>.

Photos and Story reprinted courtesy of *Harp & Hound*

Lizzy Talk

Please Take Care of Me When I Get Old

By **Ted Slupik**

AUTHOR OF "SOPHIE...BEST FRIENDS ARE FOREVER"

There is a lot that a pet owner can do to help their senior dog prepare for their "golden years." Anticipating your older dog's changing needs and abilities will do much to help them adapt and enjoy their life. Some changes to work on are:

HEARING:

I am not ignoring you if I don't respond to your voice like I used to. Not responding may be the beginning of hearing loss. I tend to sleep a lot more as normal everyday sounds I used to hear are simply no longer heard. By teaching me hand signals, you may help me stay connected to you.

SIGHT:

It can be scary for a dog to begin losing its sight even if it is a gradual process. Dogs get cataracts just as humans do. I may startle easily as I am no longer able to notice movement around me as well. Keep my surroundings constant. Leave in place items such as furniture or the location of my bed, food, and toys. Dogs lose their vision from the bottom up so early signs of sight loss can be a reluctance to go down stairs.

NERVOUSNESS:

As I get older, I worry more, just like humans do. Stress not only can make me anxious or agitated but can affect my overall health as well. Please keep my routine consistent.

WEIGHT ISSUES:

Again, just like humans, we pets can pack on a few pounds during our senior

years. This can be due to less activity either due to less strength or less exercise, arthritis, or possibly even my metabolism slowing down. Take a look at my food; some gradual change to a lower fat or senior dog variety might be in order. By lessening my weight there will be less strain on those achy joints as well.

GROOMING:

I may need some extra care for my coat, teeth and pads. More frequent tooth brushing will help prevent infections, but do not replace dental cleanings. Coconut oil is a great moisturizer for my foot pads and is not harmful to me when I lick my feet after it is applied. Supplementing my food with some salmon oil may help keep my skin supple and avoid it drying out. Pay special attention to my nails as well. Since I am probably less active, I may need a pedicure more often.

CONFUSION/DOGGY DEMENTIA:

A sad part of life can be confusion, I may have difficulty remembering routine tasks or locations. Routine is the best way to help me cope with aging and make them more comfortable.

Remember, a little effort on your part will ensure that I, your senior dog, enjoy the years that I have left and you will be rewarded with more of my continued love, companionship and friendship.

Take a moment to enjoy your pet. Every day with them is a gift. 🐾

Lizzy was a long haired Chihuahua who lived a rich 16-1/2 years after getting a second chance at age 9. Lizzy's Fund provides all veterinary, grooming, dental, and even the adoption fees for seniors, aged 7 or older. Find out more or make a donation at lizzysfund.org. You can also like us on Facebook!



Lizzy

Pet Therapy Thanks to DWAA

By **Gail C. Parker**

IT ALL STARTED WITH A SETTER PUPPY AND DWAA

Back in 1989 I purchased an Irish Setter who was of a breeding I never thought I would be fortunate enough to own. He and I soon discovered neither of us liked showing. I knew we had to do something – Irish Setters need a job – and I happened to mention it to a lady who was a member of the Dog Writers Association of America. In fact, she had recruited me as a member! Mary Ellen Tarman told me she thought Renegade and I would be good at visiting a nursing home. Pet therapy was just coming into public notice at that time so I did not know much about it. Renegade was smart, gentle and loved meeting people. He did not shy away from the motorized cars or Big Wheels the children in our area were always riding around us as we walked. Mary Ellen gave me the confidence to try pet therapy.

A MESSAGE FROM ABOVE?

I was a bit nervous about the idea of pet therapy, as there were no mentors in my immediate area at that time. I had a dream where I told my late grandparents I “had something to do” so could not join them when they invited me to walk with them. I awoke knowing my mind was trying to tell me to get moving! Much to my surprise and delight, when I went to church that Sunday, the bulletin held a message asking for volunteers to visit nursing homes. I signed up stipulating it must include my dog. I was assigned a home and it was up to me to find out about the pet therapy program there. I walked in to see a big sign: “We have pet therapy.” Talk about

getting a “sign from above”! It turned out the administration at the home was hoping for someone to volunteer who had a big dog. The resident dog at the home was a little Maltese and it seemed the male residents were asking for a bigger dog to interact with – I signed my dog and me up right away.



Photo courtesy of Gail Parker

NOT THE WAY I WANTED TO GET ATTENTION

Our first visit was almost our last. I was not used to wearing sneakers but the home had shiny tile floors so I thought it would be a good idea to buy a pair for our visits there. No one told me sneakers and wet floors do not mix well. It rained the day of our visit. I walked confidently into the lobby of the home, my feet slipped out from under me and the next thing I knew I was flat on my back with my feet up in the air. Did I mention I was wearing a skirt?

As I righted myself, the little nun at the admissions desk peered over the window shelf and asked: “Are you sure you can control your dog?” Poor Renegade, I think he was embarrassed and he had nothing to do with my falling. The day did get better after that. We continued doing pet therapy for almost ten years until Renegade developed neurologic degenerative myelopathy and was no longer able to walk the distance from the parking lot. He enjoyed his work so much and loved the residents. He also loved the resident Maltese who was soon joined by a Collie. It was the perfect job for my best friend.

SEX EDUCATION WASN'T WHAT I'D PLANNED ON

A convent of Catholic nuns ran the home and I grew up attending Catholic school. My best friend's aunt was a nun. The “nun aura” was ingrained in my mind big time. One day we arrived at the home to find several of the nuns and a volunteer waiting for us. Why they thought I would be the one to ask I have no idea, but they had an important question for me. The resident cockatiel had laid an egg. Because they only had the one bird (and they had been told Spike was a male) they not only wanted to know how he could have produced an egg BUT how did birds “do it” anyway. We got through the egg part easily enough, and Spike became Spikette, but the birds and the bees part had me choking. Luckily I was rescued by a visitor asking me to please come see her relative and I made a hasty retreat. When I got home, I contacted a friend who mailed me a magazine article about bird reproduction – just by luck she had the article. I gave it to the nuns

Continued on next page

on our next visit and was saved from talking about bird sex with nuns. That time. However, I was not let off as easily as I thought. The resident Maltese loved Renegade. On another trip, Renegade and I happened to be walking with a sister who had a Polish accent. She was a very sweet older nun. Along came Neumann, the resident Maltese. Renegade lowered his big Setter head to greet his tiny friend. Neumann immediately latched onto Renny's face and...well...you can guess the rest. Sister took one look at them and exclaimed, "Oh look! He looves heem! Where is Sister with her camera?" (One nun was the photographer of the group.) Red face for me again. Renegade saved the day by lifting his head and Neumann promptly fell off. I was beginning to learn I had a lot to learn about the sisters.

TENDER MOMENTS

There were the moments that made our volunteering all worthwhile too. There was the lady who had a stroke and was left with a kind of nasty temperament. People would leave the lobby if she happened to be sitting there.

She would tell Renny he should leave me; dogs didn't belong in the home, etc. I would just ignore her tirades and still greet her pleasantly each visit. I surprised her one day when I wished her a happy birthday. (She had balloons on her wheelchair so I knew what to say.) She seemed pleased at that. As time went by, she did grow frailer. The last time we saw her she was in bed in her room. She motioned me to come close to her face. I leaned over and she whispered, "Thank you for visiting me." It was the last time we saw her. That remark meant more to me than anything we could have won in the show ring. There was the lady who stopped chanting her seemingly endless wish to go home when she saw Renegade. She invited us into her room and we had the nicest conversation about squirrels. A nurse heard us and looked in at the doorway, pleasantly surprised when she saw with whom I was talking. There are so many stories I could share that would illustrate how rewarding pet therapy is to dog and human. We were flattered to be featured in an article in the Catholic Standard and Times newspaper. We were also honored to be asked to par-

ticipate in the home's new STARR program because we had done so well in drawing out the residents to interact with us.

THERAPY AT HOME, TOO

Renegade's work did not end at the home. I have blind spots in my left eye. This limits my depth perception. Going down steps is not easy for me if I have not used the staircase often. Renegade (all my Setters in fact) knew instinctively to walk on my left and let me put my hand on his back. This gave me the ability to feel where the steps were when I could not judge their outline due to my condition. (Imagine not being able to see in three dimensions and you will get the idea). He was a natural at helping people. We visited older neighbors who invited us to come to their homes as well. Renegade was an all-around therapy dog with a sideline in helping me with mobility. If I did trip on our walks due to an uneven sidewalk he knew to stand solidly as a brace for me to get back on my feet.

Pet therapy: try it – you will be so rewarded! 🐾

Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this year's devastating hurricanes. Soon after Hurricane Harvey hit, DWAA donated \$500 to AKC Reunite's Pet Disaster Relief Fund to support efforts for displaced families and pets. The donation was matched during a Challenge Grant by Barbara and Bob Amen (Delegate, Greater St. Louis Training Club).



AKC Reunite, an affiliate of the American Kennel Club, is the largest non-profit pet identification and recovery service provider in the United States. The AKC Reunite Canine Support and Relief Fund has donated more than \$6 million since 2001 for disaster preparedness and relief causes that impact our nation's pets. AKC Reunite also provides free recovery service enrollment for all active service, military, and law enforcement K-9 dogs. For more information visit www.akcreunite.org.



Lauren Darr, Secretary
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Roxie

By Janice Biniok



*When these two talk, it's like a run-on sentence
in a marathon...*