



ruff DRAFTS

Summer 2020

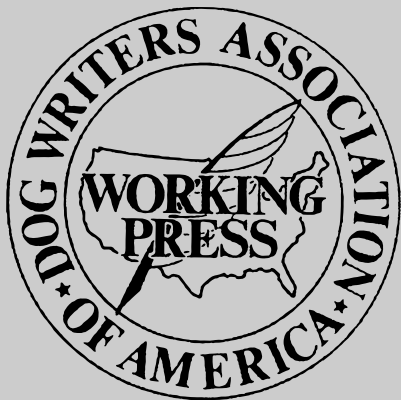
In This Issue

Writing Competition Categories and Special Awards, page 6 • Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet Goes Virtual, page 6 • Member News, page 12

A Tribute to Cooper

Page 20





Officers

Carol Bryant, President

fidoseofreality@gmail.com

Maggie Marton, Vice President

maggie.marton@gmail.com

Kristin Avery, Secretary

kristinavery9@gmail.com

Marsha M. Pugh, Treasurer

marsha_pugh01@comcast.net

Jen Reeder, Past President

jen@jenreeder.com

Ida W. Estep, Esq., Legal Counsel

iwestep@earthlink.net

Board of Governors

CLASS OF 2022

Caroline Coile, Ph.D.

ccoile@windstream.net

Laurie C. Williams, CPDT-KA, CDTI

lauriecwilliamsk9@gmail.com

CLASS OF 2021

Joel Gavrielle-Gold, Ph.D.

dr.joelgold@gmail.com

CLASS OF 2020

Gail C. Parker

rebelslair@aol.com

Patricia Cruz

lacruz928@optonline.net

CLASS OF 2019

Karen Harbert

aelwydcwc@aol.com

President's

COLUMN

By **Carol Bryant**

DWAA PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow DWAA Members,
I hope this note finds each of you doing well, staying safe, and getting through these unprecedented times as best as possible.

In my spring Presidential Message, I invited each of you to join DWAA for our next in-person annual awards and gala event in 2021, but then life changed. Like most organizations and businesses, DWAA is not immune to the global pandemic and its ramifications. Taking a cue from a dog's philosophy on life, I decided to embrace change and live in the moment.

Your DWAA Executive Team and Board of Governors gathered to discuss the format of the annual banquet, which takes place each year in February on the eve of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

We unanimously decided to host the DWAA Writing Competition Awards and Annual Banquet virtually in 2021. I've personally heard from many members who expressed concern in traveling without knowing if and when the pandemic will cast a second wave.

Ultimately, the decision was made to place the health and safety of our members first. Aside from obvious health concerns, economic issues are also a factor for many members' ability to afford a trip to New York and New Jersey for the event.

The good news is the show must go on. On Sunday, February 14, 2021, DWAA will host an online virtual event free of charge.



Carol Bryant, President of the DWAA

The other piece of good news is the writing competition is not affected by the pandemic. The DWAA annual competition officially opened for entries on July 6, 2020. Our special awards sponsors have contributed over \$11,000 in prize money, so be sure to submit your entries before the September deadline. Further details can be found inside this issue of ruff DRAFTS.

We ask that you bear with us as we navigate these new waters while staying true to the spirit of the competition and the organization.

Finally, DWAA has transitioned from a YAHOO! private group to a Members-Only Facebook group. We'd love to have you join. The name of the group is DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA MEMBERS ONLY. All members in good standing are welcome to join.

See PRESIDENT'S COLUMN pg 19

LETTER

By **Merrie Meyers**

Dear Members;

I hope this finds you healthy and safe. Like you, I have (mostly) sheltered in place for the past six months. I venture out for the necessities and not much more. Is it bad that I know the Fed Ex and UPS drivers by first name, my dog no longer barks when they pull up and I bought a bigger mailbox for all of the Amazon packages?

Since March, I've Zoomed from alpha to zed; enjoying happy hours with other secluded friends, engaging in faculty meetings to discuss topics that would be better served by a memo or a PowerPoint; enduring the poor lighting and sound of client meetings; and even experiencing a few author-book chats.

To unplug, I've crafted; sewing four "COVID Quilts" and several smaller wall hangings, hot gluing wine corks- souvenirs of the happy hours- into a trivet, crocheting a rag rug, cooking and baking- which led to a larger pant size, and reading or listening to books from my "someday" list.

The dog has done his share. He faithfully lies on the floor, silently supervising my every move, especially in the kitchen, where something could possibly roll his way. On occasion, friends will drop by so their dogs can enjoy a little doggie play time. Despite the total pandemonium, I enjoy the result - a tired and happy dog. I don't even mind that I have to vacuum and mop more.

I am lucky I can work from home. I teach, write and submit grants online. I



Merrie Meyers, Editor of Ruff Drafts

can even see friends and family online. Some folks don't have that option. They are essential workers; first responders, service workers, everyday heroes.

The anxiety caused by working in an environment with unknown health risks is tremendous. A pharmacist friend had a mini meltdown from daily contact with so many people, even with the safeguards that were, eventually, added to her work environment. Teacher friends are extremely anxious about going back to public school classrooms.

While economists will eventually tell us what the impact has been in terms of lost wages, medical supplies for health care and daily living, no one will be able to calculate the impact of the virus on our collective men-

See EDITOR'S LETTER pg 17

DWAA Committees

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Ida Estep, Chair
Carmen Battaglia, Martin Deeley,
Susan Ewing, Marsha Pugh

BYLAWS & LEGAL

Ida Estep, Chair
Carmen Battaglia, Patricia Cruz

2019 CONTEST

Darlene Bryant, Chair
Officers and Board

HALL OF FAME

Joel Gavrielle-Gold
Bryna Comsky

LIAISON WITH CAT WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Susan Ewing

MEMBERSHIP

Marsha Pugh, Chair
Bryna Comsky, Susan Ewing

RUFF DRAFTS

Merrie Meyers, Editor
Maggie Marton, Assistant Editor
Morgan Humphrey, Assistant Editor
Leslie Brown, Assistant Editor
Angela Capodanno, Designer

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: Shelley Bueche, Lisa Begin-Kruysman
Twitter: Dawn Taylor
Instagram: Hannah Zulueta

WEBMASTER

Jill Caren

Ruff Drafts

send all material to Merrie Meyers
merrie.meyers@gmail.com

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.

Awareness is the First Step Toward Change

By **Cara Sue Achterberg**

"Eight thousand? I had no idea!" That was the response of another rescue advocate in Mississippi when I informed her that a shelter I visited recently in her state was destroying over eight thousand animals each year.

If you aren't aware of a problem, you can do nothing to fix it. In fact, you don't even know you need to fix it.

In too many places in this country, dogs are suffering unnecessarily and/or being destroyed. In North Carolina, you can look at the numbers yourself. By law, the intake and outcome numbers of dogs for every county and municipal shelter are published annually. This year's report revealed that in Robeson County, 4,085 of the 5,275 animals the shelter took in were euthanized. That equates to 77% of the animals destroyed, despite having a budget of \$605K. If I lived in Robeson County, I would be outraged. Actually I don't live in Robeson County, but I am outraged! Those are tax dollars at work.

North Carolina is an easy target for national rescue organizations because they so blatantly flaunt their numbers. Personally, though, I applaud North Carolina. I wish every state followed their lead, not just by publicly declaring their numbers but by having public shelters in nearly every county.

This is a country of dog-loving people. We spend billions on their diets, medical care, and training. We buy them monthly subscription boxes of toys and treats, send them to doggie daycare, even provide our beloved furry family members with their own wardrobes.

As I've traveled and visited almost 50 shelters and rescues in the southeastern United States, one truth has become very clear. The problem of so many animals being senselessly destroyed or suffering for months, even years, in ill-equipped shelters and dog pounds, does not exist because people don't care. It exists because people don't know.

At a shelter in South Carolina, on the clipboards hanging outside individual kennels are papers indicating where the dog came from, when it arrived, and other vital statistics. Some papers are covered with a large, hand-scrawled X. That indicates which dogs will be killed when their kennel space is needed for an incoming dog. The X's are put there by the Animal Control Officers for any number of reasons – breed, size, age, health, or aggression. The rescue I foster for, Operation Paws for Homes, has

pulled two six-month-old puppies from death row following our visits there. Both puppies landed there because they were black and possibly had some



Cara Sue Achterberg with pup



Boxer at MARL in MS photo by Nancy Slattery

'pit bull' in their heritage. Both were easily adopted and have turned out to be wonderful family pets.

Photos of those X's brought enormous reaction and public outcry, but I have had timesince to think about the X's. If not for them, both of those puppies would have died at that shelter. I would have seen those sweet puppies and walked past their kennels, certain they would be adopted or pulled by a rescue. I wouldn't have been motivated to stop, take pictures, ask for more information, and then advocate for them to be rescued.

Knowledge is power. There are invisible X's on kennels in nearly every high-volume shelter or rural dog pound in the south (and other urban and rural parts of this country). No one wants adoptable dogs to die, but until we are aware of the situation, we can never hope to change it.

I write a lot about shelter dogs and many people will confess to me, "I couldn't read your post/article/book because I couldn't handle it, it would make me too sad." Maybe this is why shelters and governments, and even

rescues, hide the truth. We don't want to offend anyone or make them sad. But if we don't own up to what is happening, how can we ever change it?

How will people become aware of the municipal dog pound in Tennessee that houses about 30 dogs hidden in a backlot of the county fairgrounds? The dogs that land in those outdoor kennels suffer in 100+ degree heat, in vicious thunderstorms, and even in the snow. Then they die in succession when their time is up. They are not vaccinated, treated for fleas or worms, spayed/neutered, or given any kind of medical treatment. It's \$50 to adopt one, but adopters are few and far between and most rescues don't even know the pound exists. The dogs don't get any exercise; their kennels are sprayed out while they're inside because the current Animal Control Officer says, "I'm too old to chase after them." On the day we visited, we met a beautiful, purebred Great Pyrenees, two chocolate labs, and a litter of boxer puppies, plus countless hound dogs and mixed breeds.

In Hyati, the county in the bootheel of Missouri, there isn't an Animal Con-

trol officer or shelter, just four kennels behind the county maintenance shed. Hundreds of stray dogs run loose. The few that are caught are held for the five days required by law before they are sent to a local vet just over the state line to be killed. I found stories like this everywhere.

In Jackson, Mississippi, there is a privately-funded shelter killing more than eight thousand animals a year. Pit bulls, heartworm-positive dogs, pregnant dogs, and dogs with any type of medical problem, even ringworm, are killed on intake. Their director told me this, unflinchingly, as she blamed an ignorant public and the fact that theirs is the only open-intake shelter in a 100-mile radius. She bragged, "People come from other states even because they know we will take any dog."

I also found stories of incredible individuals sacrificing their time, energy, and their very livelihoods to save animals. One pair of sisters, now in their sixties, house 75 dogs and 145 cats on their small farm. They give them better care than they would get in any dog pound, but the animals linger there for years. In Alabama, a remarkable woman who many consider a Great Dane expert, rehabilitates and rehomes Great Danes and other dogs on her small, shady property. She rotates the dogs between the outdoor kennels and her house so they have a chance to learn to live inside before she places them in adoptive homes.

At some public shelters, I met directors with tiny budgets and few resources who are managing to save every adoptable dog through rescue and innovative marketing programs. I met directors who handle huge numbers of animals and find a way to save every dog they can, mainly through out-of-state rescues.



Great pyr in TN county pound photo by Nancy Slattery

See FIRST STEP pg 7

The DWAA 2020 Writing Competition Is Open

It's the most wonderful time of the dog writing year! The DWAA 2020 Writing Competition is now accepting entries.

This year, we are doing things a bit differently, we added some new categories, and the rules have been updated. Please read them carefully before submitting any entries.

Due to the pandemic, the health and safety of all entrants, judges, Competition Chair, and Treasurer, only certain categories will be accepted this year via snail mail. DO NOT send entries via snail mail unless your entry qualifies. Please read the categories and rules carefully.

Once again, the manner of entry has been incredibly streamlined and Darlene Bryant returns in her role as Competition Chair for the second year in a row.

This year, we are doing things a bit differently, we added some new categories, and the rules have been updated. Please read them carefully before submitting any entries.

In the Special Awards categories, so far, we have 22 special categories totaling over \$11,000 in monies to be given out to the winners thanks to our amazing sponsors, which you can view below.

Finally, the show must go on and the 2021 Dog Writers Association of America event and awards will be our first virtual celebration! The pandemic won't stop us!

On Sunday, February 14, 2021, DWAA will host an online virtual event free of charge at which time all winners will be revealed PLUS some special surprises. Details will follow in the coming months.

Now it's time to enter the writing competition. Visit [DWAA.org](https://www.dwaa.org) and click on "Competition" to access everything, including the entry form.

Good luck to one and all! 🐾

Call-Out for Judges: TIME SENSITIVE

DWAA is calling upon you to help us with the 2020 Writing Competition.

Without your assistance, the competition would not be possible.

In 2019, DWAA received close to 1,000 entries in all categories combined with over \$14,000 awarded in the special categories thanks to our sponsors.

Although I cannot predict the number of entries we will receive this year, it is my hope that we can exceed last year's number. The organization has grown, we have more members, and a renewed enthusiasm for the writing competition. This is why I need your help more than ever. As a bonus, we have a few new categories this year.

I've streamlined the judging process and ask you to volunteer to be a

DWAA writing competition judge. We welcome all new judges to the process.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

1. Email me to indicate your interest in serving as a 2020 DWAA writing competition judge. My email is frmrtcher@gmail.com.
2. Please note: Requests for categories can be made but not guaranteed.
3. If you are planning to enter the competition, you may not judge or score entries in any of the categories you enter. Entries entered in categories you are judging will be immediately disqualified.

I will send you a link to a form to get started. The 2021 writing competition and awards will be a virtual event. It will be held on Sunday, 02/14/21.

Have a wonderful summer, and I will be in touch with the judges who confirm their participation in September. Thanks, in advance, for volunteering.

P.S. If you have access to a computer, you can fill out the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/r1kGqKx7LiFbtNL87> 🐾

Be well and stay safe,

Darlene Bryant

DWAA EVENT & WRITING
COMPETITION CHAIR
frmrtcher@gmail.com



The Search For Next Term Officers Is On: *Apply Today*

The two-year terms of our current President, Vice President, and Secretary cease on February 15, 2021. Carol Bryant, Maggie Marton, and Kristin Avery will be stepping down, with Marsha Pugh staying on in the role of Treasurer. Darlene Bryant will be continuing as Contest Chair.

The current slate of officers welcomes the opportunity to pass the torch to a new round of officers. The roles are in a volunteer capacity, but the intrinsic rewards are priceless. If anyone is interested in the event chair position or contest chair position, the latter comes with a financial stipend.

DWAA was founded in 1935 and as the organization moves forward, please consider nominating yourself for the roles of President, Vice President, or Secretary.

The current team has all documentation, an organized system, and will happily train the new slate of officers and be available for questions. Help us move the organization forward by serving DWAA in a leadership role.

EMAIL US

If you are interested in running, please email Su Ewing at dogwriter@windstream.net with your name and the position you are interested in.

First Step

Continued from pg 7

I met advocates who were frustrated by the enormity of the problem and in the inaction and apathy of local governments do all they could and still felt defeated.

What I really saw, though, were individuals with buckets trying to empty a beach full of sand as the ocean continued to wash up more every day.

Awareness is the first step toward change. It is past the time for our country to acknowledge what is happening in public shelters and municipal pounds of our southern states. We can fix this. I have seen change happen even in impoverished communities, despite resistant local government. All it takes is one simple decision. It was voiced beautifully by a shelter director in Anderson County, South Carolina. She has taken her high-intake, high-kill shelter dogs to a shelter that saves every last savable animal in just six months. When I asked how she did it, she told me, "You just stop killing animals."

Once that decision is made, progress can begin. It is a many-pronged problem, but the answers are not difficult. We have resources and dog-loving people in this country. Change will not happen, though, until we see the problem clearly and make a decision to fix it. 🐾

Cara Achterberg is the author of [100 Dogs & Counting: One Woman, Ten Thousand Miles, and a Journey Into the Heart of Shelters and Rescues](#) (July 2020, Pegasus Books). She is also the co-founder of [Who Will Let the Dogs Out](#) (and initiative of Operation Paws for Homes), which seeks to raise awareness and resources for shelter and rescues in the southern US. For more information, visit [CaraWrites.com](#).

Does Your Dog Really Need a Perfect Lawn?

By **Adria Henderson**

Spring has finally arrived. Along with bright green grass shoots and colorful early flowers comes the constant drone of lawn mowers and the follow-up whine of leaf blowers showering streets with a toxic residue from lawn care products. It is also the time that our dogs, confined inside for long periods during the icy winter, finally get to go outside to play and romp in the soft new grass. If you have applied chemical lawn products purchased from your local garden store or had them applied by a professional lawn care company, you will be exposing your dog to a potentially fatal, toxic mix of chemicals.

A study published in the January 2012 issue of the Journal of Environmental Research found a link between exposure to professionally applied lawn products and a significantly higher risk of canine malignant lymphoma (CML). Since that time, many studies have confirmed that CML cases are higher in dogs living on property treated with either herbicides or pesticides, regardless of whether treatments are applied by lawn care professionals or the homeowner.

More recent studies, such as one done by the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, concluded that the use of certain lawn care chemicals, specifically weed killers containing 2,4-D, are linked to canine cancers, including lymphoma and bladder cancer. Many lawncare products such as Weed N Feed-type formulations include 2,4-D which have been banned in Canada and elsewhere.

Effects from the toxic mix of chemicals may not be immediately obvious in your pet but may create lasting health problems once ingested or absorbed. There are also other long-term health hazards connected to your dog's exposure to lawn chemicals, including nausea, skin inflammation and rashes, eye irritation and the onset of frequent respiratory problems. And recently a study of canines exposed to herbicides revealed the product in dog's urine.

Labels on retail lawn care chemicals often mention that the product is safe for pets when dry, but the chemicals can be reactivated by morning dew. And, any residual, dried chemical dust that remains on grass shoots can get trapped in your dog's fur and tracked inside embedding in carpets, dog beds and upholstered fabrics. This dust can linger for days, exposing your dog, other pets, and you to this toxic environment.

To avoid exposing your dog and other household pets to these poisons, here are some precautions you can take to keep them safe:

1. Keep your dog away from treated areas as much as possible.
2. Wipe your dog down before bringing him or her inside if they've played on a chemically treated lawn.
3. Check with your city and town about the chemicals used in public parks and playing fields and keep your dogs away from those areas.

4. Become familiar with the chemical lawn care products used by companies and sold in garden centers.
5. Always read the warning labels on garden products BEFORE you purchase them.
6. Ask your lawn care company for a list of the lawn care chemicals they are planning to apply.
7. Protect wildlife from these same chemicals. Use of these toxic chemicals can kill off the very wildlife whose job it is to kill the garden pests you are attempting to eliminate.
8. Check out the many natural lawn care products at your local garden center.

There are bright yellow "caution signs" placed by lawn care companies advising that chemicals have been applied. Have you noticed that along with the graphic of an adult and a child is the distinct outline of a dog? Dogs cannot read. It is up to us to protect our furry family members. 🐾



The Home with Human Blues:

A Dog's Point of View

By **Lisa Begin-Kruysman**

In the wake of the social shutdown caused by COVID-19, many of us were sequestered in our homes for prolonged periods of time. Life for humans and their pets was far from normal. In early March, just as the state of New Jersey went into full shutdown mode, my husband and I found ourselves sheltering in our new community in Georgia for three months before finally venturing north to facilitate the sale of our home.

Even during "normal times" moving is stressful, but moving seven states away at a time when most people didn't restrict their outside activities made life all the more isolating. Just about the only time I'd get to meet my new neighbors was when I walked our

dog, Teddy. During these lonely times, I truly understood that our dogs not only provided comfort and companionship in the confines of our homes, but also offered opportunities for many of us to socialize from the safe distance afforded by an arm's length and a leash.

At the height of the pandemic, I grew increasingly concerned by how fearful society had become, especially when it was reported that some pet owners, believing that their dogs or cats could infect them with coronavirus, were abandoning their animals. But other stories were more heartwarming, like those about how pets were enjoying all the time they were spending at home with their humans.

As I often write for kids, these stories inspired me to create something timely and meaningful to remind people,

young and old, of the comforting and healing capabilities of our dogs and other pets.

I've learned that humor can help during troubled times, and I thought it would be fun to write a story about a spirited dog that really wasn't so happy about the fact that his humans never seemed to leave home anymore. How egocentric of us humans to think otherwise!

Like any selfless dog, however, our four-legged hero knows just what his humans need to be happy and makes everyone feel better, as only a good dog can.

Note: This was written as a picture book for kids and was shared with a local elementary school to stellar reviews! Only one Illustration Note remains. Without further interruption, I present:

I'VE GOT THE HOME WITH HUMAN BLUES (A DOG SHELTERS IN PLACE)

I used to love spending time alone.
Squeaking toys and chewing my bone.
In empty rooms always space to zoom.
Look out for that table - slip, slide - BOOM.
When I got bored, I'd explore the trash.
The can would tip over - watch out! CRASH!!
In the flowerpot I'd dig a huge hole.
Then wash my paws in the toilet bowl.
I crunched my snacks then licked crumbs off the rug.
Under a chair I found a dead bug!
At the window I'd bark at our cat.
She loved to nap on our Welcome Mat!
(Note: Cat is NOT happy to be out.)

See HUMAN BLUES pg 15



How to Become a Full-Time Freelance Dog Writer in a Changing Landscape

By **Carol Bryant**

Whether you are just starting out as a dog writer or you already do this for a living freelance writing is a great way to diversify your revenue streams.

One of our newest DWAA members, Sassafras Lowery, is an author, a Certified Trick Dog Instructor, and a freelance dog writer. I asked Sassafras to share her journey to full-time freelance writing. Here's what she had to say, along with her advice for dog writers at any stage of their career.

.....
DWAA: What made you want to become a dog writer? Why did you choose "dogs" as your niche genre?

SASSAFRAS LOWERY (SL): I'm a Certified Trick Dog Instructor (CTDI) and have been involved with dog training in one form or another for over 20 years, starting when I was a teenager and an active dog show competitor in the sport of dog agility.

Now I mostly train and compete in tricks and play around with rally competition. Working with dogs has always been a big part of my life and while my first books weren't dog-focused, it was a very natural progression for me to begin leaning more heavily towards writing about dog-related topics.

.....
DWAA: What did you do prior to being a full-time freelance dog writer?

SL: My first non-dog book was released a decade ago, and since then I have been consistently writing and publishing. I currently have eight books in print (a mix of traditionally published books and self-published indie projects) and I am in contract for another traditionally published book, which will be released later this year.

My first books were honored by organizations like the Lambda Literary Foundation and the American Library Association. At the same time, I was working in nonprofit management as a director of a large social justice focused nonprofit in New York City.

I was writing books during my subway commute to and from work and on my lunch break. I would then use my vacation time for book tours, travel to lectures, give keynote speeches, and teach guest writing workshops at colleges and community groups across the country. At the same time, I was also freelance writing and volunteering as an assistant dog agility instructor. At this time, my freelance work increasingly took on a canine focus.

.....
DWAA: Can you share a bit about your journey to becoming a dog writer? How did it all start and how were you able to make the transition to doing it full time?

SL: My first book was released in 2010, and since that time I have been freelancing and writing regularly while facilitating writing workshops and lecturing at colleges and community groups as well as maintaining my day job. At



Sassafras Lowery

the same time, working with dogs has always been a passion of mine.

During this time, I was also an assistant dog agility instructor, became a Certified Trick Dog Instructor, and my freelance writing slowly transitioned into focusing on life with dogs, dog training and dog behavior. Two and a half years ago my partner and I decided that it was time to take a bit of a risk and for me to quit my full-time job in nonprofit management.

I used this opportunity to go back to school and earn an MFA degree in fiction and to focus on growing and expanding my freelance writing. As a dog trainer, I have found that I am able to have the biggest positive impact on the lives of dogs by writing accessible and relatable content, so that has become my priority. By the time I graduated with my MFA, my freelance career



had blossomed, and we decided that it made sense for me to continue growing my dog-related writing business.

DWAA: What does a typical day look like for you as a modern-day dog writer?

SL: I try to maintain a very consistent writing schedule and work a pretty traditional Monday-to-Friday schedule from 9 to 5 or 6 pm. I spend a lot of time pitching stories to editors, answering email, and engaging with readers on social media.

I am very protective of my evenings and weekends with my family and try not to use that as writing time unless I'm doing a public reading, etc. I also try not to schedule meetings during evenings or weekends. During the day I rotate between writing projects to keep myself from getting bored or frustrated

with any one project. Because I mostly write about dogs, I find a really organic relationship between writing and taking breaks to train, groom, and play with my dogs, and then return to the page rejuvenated and inspired.

DWAA: Writing is hard in general and breaking into it can be brutal. Some publications have perished, others are digital only, and some are barely staying afloat. Would you share a sage tip or two about how one can get featured in a publication such as the New York Times or Dogster magazine, as you have done?

SL: I've been very fortunate to write for some incredible publications. I think the key is to remember that this didn't happen overnight, and I have worked really hard to make the connections to get

to where I am today. I started out with small local publications and worked my way up to national and international mainstream magazines/publications. In this work, I have prioritized building relationships with editors. I write daily, I pitch weekly to publications I have written for in the past, and I cold pitch new-to-me publications.

DWA: A lot of folks get nervous pitching to a publication. What advice can you offer?

SL: If you don't pitch, you're never going to get published so I'm a big believer in just hitting the send button and not spending too much time over analyzing and worrying about a pitch before sending. That said, obviously you need to make sure when hitting send on those pitches that they are well formulated. Know your audience, know the publication's voice and style, and make sure that your pitch is aligned with that. Never ever send fully written articles or essays. Editors want pitches because in general the writing process will be collaborative and influenced based on the needs and interests of the publication. They do not want to see finished stories.

DWAA: In terms of revenue, in what ways do you earn an income (magazines, book deals, etc.) and do you believe that diversifying a dog writer's income is important?

SL: Absolutely. I think that for anyone who is trying to make a living in the arts, it's important to have a diverse income stream. It's a hustle, and that's part of the fun of doing this work. I love that each day is a little bit different. My writing and writing-adjacent income takes a few forms:

See FREELANCE pg 22

MEMBER NEWS

Author and DWAA member Loren Spiotta DiMare has written a new book, *Bowser's Back!* in collaboration with third-grade teacher Becky Kwiatkoski. The book details the exploits of Bowser, a loveable Basset Hound, who adopted Long Valley Elementary School and became their mascot.

Long Valley School Mascot Stars in Children's Book

Back in the 1970s, Bowser the Basset Hound lived with the Chase family on Old Farmers Road in Long Valley, New Jersey. Bowser loved children. When Pam and Michael Chase left for middle school every weekday, he was lonely. One morning he walked over to Old Farmers Road Elementary School in search of friends.

In those days, it wasn't uncommon for dogs to run loose in neighborhoods, and school doors were left wide open in warm weather. So on that particular day, Bowser just wandered in. He was welcomed by everyone, the principal, school nurse, teachers, support staff and, of course, the children. Over time he became a regular visitor, delighting everyone with his antics.

First, Bowser visited the principal who always gave him a dog cookie, then it was onto the nurse's office. The nurse also gave him a treat. Next, he'd wander down the halls and pop into classrooms. Usually he was welcomed, except the music teacher closed the door and kept him out. So Bowser sat in the hallway howling in tune with the children singing.

Bowser's Back!



By Becky Kwiatkoski & Loren Spiotta-DiMare
Illustrated by Rebecca Backer

Over the years, Bowser had many adventures at the school. He joined students on stage during a holiday performance and had to be removed, participated in many student birthday parties, followed along while Principal Kopecki played his bagpipes in the hallway and so much more. Eventually, the beloved Basset Hound became the school mascot.

Current Principal Ciulla asked animal book author Loren Spiotta-DiMare of Tewksbury, New Jersey, and long-time Old Farmers third-grade teacher Becky Kwiatkoski of Long Valley to write a picture book about Bowser. The two were delighted to take on the project.

Spiotta-DiMare has been writing animal books for adults and children for 40 years. In the last seven years, she has also started teaching Introduction to Book Publishing classes. Kwiatkoski was one of her first students. "Becky and I are avid animal lovers and easily became good friends," Spiotta-DiMare says. "I'm proud to say she is my star student, hav-



ing self-published four books since taking the class. Her titles are: *Harley and Heloise- It's a Rescue*, *Paisley You're Crazy*, *Moose is Loose* and *Bo's Pond*."

"I was really excited to have the opportunity to co-author a book with Loren," Kwiatkoski says. "I requested stories from past principals, teachers, students and others who knew Bowser. The anecdotes were so touching and sometimes just amazing."

Spiotta-DiMare adds, "I've never co-authored a book before, but I have to say it was a lot of fun. I'd certainly do it again." The author's previous books have been recognized by the Dog Writers Association of America, the Doris Day Animal Foundation, the Humane Society of the United States,

USA Book News, and the EQUUS Film & Arts Fest.

The co-authors named their book, *Bowser's Back!* and hired Long Valley animal artist Rebecca Backer to illustrate it. "Rebecca joined the Just 4 Kids Writers Group that I chair in Long Valley," Spiotta-DiMare says. "When I saw samples of her work, I said to Rebecca, 'You have missed your Calling, you should be illustrating children's books!'" Interestingly, Backer's son attended Old Farmers Road School.

Both authors say Backer did an amazing job of capturing Bowser's likeness

and expressions. "She really brought his story to life," they echoed.

The story was further enhanced by graphic artist Lynn Eberenz of Mendham, New Jersey, who designed the book. Eberenz is also an artist and member of Just 4 Kids.

Bowser's Back! is sure to appeal to Long Valley residents, especially those who knew Bowser, Basset Hound lovers and children of all ages. The hardcover book sells for \$20 and can be ordered online at www.LorensReadingRoom.com or www.RebeccaReads.org. 🐾

One Hundred Dogs and Counting: One Woman, Ten Thousand Miles, and a Journey into the Heart of Shelters and Rescues

By **Cara Sue Achterberg** (July 2020, Pegasus Books)

Author and DWAA member Cara Sue Achterberg's new book recounts her rescue work across the South. Here is a brief summary of her experiences.

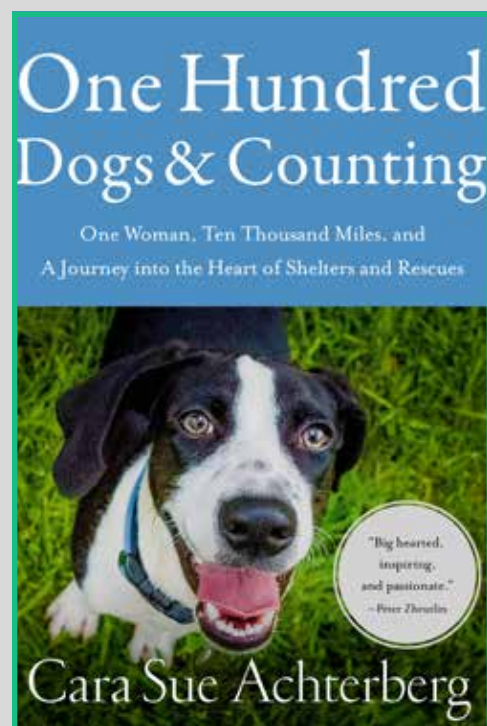
A challenging foster dog inspires an experienced foster mama to explore where the endless stream of unwanted dogs is coming from—and how things could change.

After nearly a year of struggling to find a home for a challenging foster dog, Cara wonders—when will all the dogs be saved? Even after the one-hundredth foster dog passes through her home, the stream of homeless dogs appears to be endless. Seized by the need to act, Cara grabs her best friend, fills a van with donations, and heads south to discover what is really happening in the rural shelters where her foster dogs originate.

What she discovers will break her heart and compel her to share the story of heroes and villains and plenty of good dogs in the hope of changing this world.

From North Carolina where pit bulls fill the shelters and heartworm rages, to Tennessee where dogs are left forgotten in pounds, and onto Alabama where unlikely heroes fight in a state that has largely forsaken its responsibilities to its animals, Cara meets the people working on the front lines in this national crisis of unwanted animals. The dogs, the people and their inspiring stories draw her south again and again in search of answers and maybe a dog of her own.

One Hundred Dogs and Counting will introduce the reader to many wonderful dogs—from sweet Oreo to gentle Fanny—but also to inspirational people sacrificing personal lives and fortunes to save deserving animals.



Join Cara on the rescue road as she follows her heart into the places where too many dogs are forgotten and discovers glimmers of hope that the day is coming when every dog will have a home. 🐾

Quarantine? What Quarantine? Until.....

By **Gail C. Parker**

The situation caused by COVID-19 didn't change life very much for my Irish Setter, Daisy Mae, and me. We had safe areas where we could walk without encountering many people. The public school around the corner was closed, so we didn't worry about being surrounded by children the way we were pre-virus. I wore a mask for protection and most of the humans we saw wore them as well. My husband and I are retired. We ordered dog and cat food online from Chewy and the local grocery stores took all the necessary safety steps; it was an idyllic life for Daisy and me.

I guess I lapsed into a kind of complacency. I wasn't a "party person." My dog, cats and husband were all the company I needed, along with a good book, of course.

When I adopted Daisy from the Irish Setter Club of America's rescue, I knew she had some special needs. We were told then that Daisy was eight years old, but she looked and acted much older. She had lived with me for almost two years when the virus hit the country. Veterinarians suddenly changed the way they saw patients. We felt fortunate that ours still allowed us into the facility to stay with our pets. Most required the owners to wait outside in the parking lot while the staff tended to the pets inside. They were then returned to the humans with instructions for care. Daisy depended on me to be by her side so that was not a good option for us.

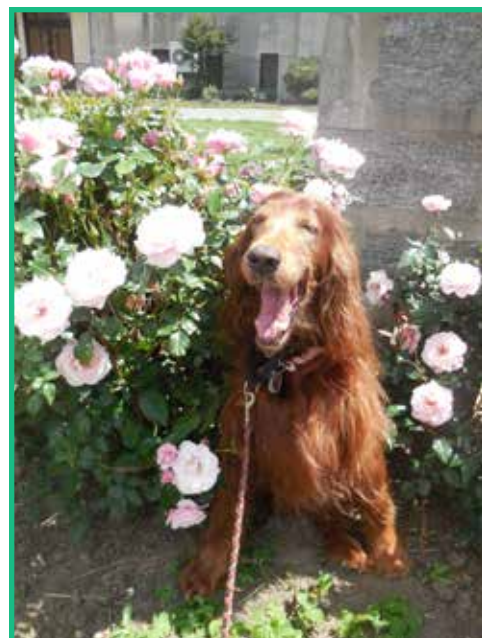
Although Daisy sometimes needed some help on the stairs, she seemed fine for her age. She liked her walks, and I let her choose the routes and length

of time we spent on them. She was taking treks of 40 minutes or more at least once a day, with three or four other shorter walks as well. I guess I relaxed thinking that one or two little signs of possible problems were age-related.

One afternoon, I noticed she turned her hind foot under as she walked and that same foot was always turned in when she stood still. I knew these could be signs of big trouble, but I told myself my veterinarian would fix whatever it was, as she always had. I would have called her, but it was Monday and she was closed then. Anyway, Daisy seemed fine.

The next morning, our vet would normally have been open, but I only got her answering machine when I phoned the office. Horribly, this was the morning Daisy completely collapsed. She managed to get outside, but it was soon obvious she would not be able to get back up the few steps to our house. I could usually lift her hind end if she had problems with the steps in the past, but this time she was unable to use her front legs when I lifted her rear. I called to my husband for help. Both of us just could not move her. I did manage to get her situated on the patio and brought her favorite bed outside so she would be comfortable. I locked the gates and no one could see her from the street so she was safe there. I began frantically calling our veterinarian, but it soon became obvious that she was not going to be there that day. I never did find out why.

This was all happening in the midst of "safe social distancing" and some people were very leery of making con-



Daisy

tact with others. Anyone who helped us would have to be in very close proximity to us (to lift Daisy). Desperate, I did something I would never have done before: I posted my plea for help on Facebook. I immediately received two offers from women who could come and help. One was the owner of a local cat rescue who had helped me place an abandoned cat in the past. She and her mother could be at my house in five minutes.

Before they arrived, I had been calling every vet office in our area to try and find someone who would treat Daisy. No one was available at that time or they referred me to offices farther away from our house (another long story). Praying, I tried one last place and not only would they see us, but I could be with Daisy if she had to be euthanized. (Some facilities would not even allow you to be with your pet then. How awful!).

My rescue friend arrived with her mother and insisted we use their vehicle as it would be easier for Daisy. They told me not to worry, it was the “dog” car so if she got sick it was no big deal. Daisy was able to get to their car at the curb on her own, for which I was grateful.

I finally had to admit to myself that this would be my last trip anywhere with Daisy. I knew she had a brain tumor – all of the signs were there*. We had never been to this doctor before, but he and his staff were very kind. They brought out a gurney with a blanket to the sidewalk so Daisy could ride in and not have to try to walk; she had collapsed again.

I could go on and on about the kindness and caring these people showed us - and we were not even clients! The doctor took the time to ask me questions to make sure Daisy really did have a brain tumor. He agreed that I was correct and that she could not be helped. I wore a mask, but no one worried about masks or distancing at that point. I was able to hold my girl and tell her I loved her and kissed her sans mask as she left this life.

Despite my sorrow, I saw how kind people can be even in the middle of a national health crisis. When a fellow animal lover (me) and her beloved dog needed help, everything else took a back seat – even the “rules.” Daisy and

I felt the love and caring of many that day, a comforting memory during this time of scary virus news.

I miss Daisy every day. I learned that people can be pretty nice when you give them a chance.

*Note: In case you were wondering how I could be so sure Daisy had a brain tumor, she was my third Irish Setter to have one! I have had six Irish Setters. My fourth, fifth, and sixth have all had them AND two sisters of my fifth Irish also died from a brain tumor - all from different places and situations and all on different diets. Perhaps this needs to be researched because the doctor told me he was seeing a lot of dogs lately with the same condition. 🐾

HUMAN BLUES

Continued from pg 9

But something has changed; and I can't believe it.
Now my humans stay home - they just won't leave it.
At first our days were filled with fun.
More treats, belly rubs, naps in the sun.
They'll be staying at home longer; I just got the news.
And this once happy dog is singing the blues.
Now someone just let the cat back in.
I give up - I just can't win!
She steals my toys and licks my dishes.
She purrs and meows and gets what she wishes.
Now my life is full of demands.
COME, SIT, DOWN - so many commands.
STAY OFF THE BED, DONT BARK AT THE DOOR.
I spend most of my days slumped on the floor.
But something is wrong, and it hurts my heart.
The humans are keeping so far apart.
No one hugs, or even shakes a paw.
Is touching now AGAINST THE LAW?
My humans aren't happy, they're lonely and blue.
I feel so helpless, what can I do?

Outside a bird tweets away in a tree.
“COME OUT, COME OUT, and sing with me!”
I think my humans could use some fun, too.
And then I know just what to do.
I grab up my leash and stare outside.
Until my humans stand by my side.
They understand - dogs really can talk.
“Let's all go out and take a long walk!”
From the end of my leash I touch another dog's nose.
We sit still not moving, holding that pose.
When other dogs join us, their humans smile.
It's the happiest they've been in a very long while.
When I wag my tail, I'm trying to say.
We can all be friends from six feet away.
At the end of the day my humans rest.
I snuggle my head upon their chest.
Bump. Thump. Bump Thump; a gentle sound.
Once again, I'm a happy hound.
Our house is still crowded - there's NOWHERE to hide!
Scents and sounds all trapped inside.
Sometimes I dream of a quieter day.
But for now, I'm just glad to COME, SIT and STAY. 🐾



The Day the Earth Stood Still

(WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE 1951 SCIENCE FICTION CLASSIC STARRING MICHAEL RENNIE AS KLAATU)

By **Ted Slupik**

The last several months have seen the most unusual set of occurrences in our lives. No one could have predicted the length and depth of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is difficult enough for us to comprehend, let alone our pets. They have been used to us going to work in the morning and coming home at night. Then all of a sudden, for those of us required to work from home, our pets saw us 24/7. Yet when we went out for a daily walk (or maybe two or three now) the dogs had to be restrained. We used to go out and socialize on their walks, meeting and greeting people. What they were used to stopped. We could

not get close to our other friends and their pets. We had to socially distance. Worse yet, most of the humans had to wear these masks which were scary to our pets. It was like Halloween every day and our dogs couldn't get close enough to recognize who was behind the mask. What was going on?

As this seemed to go on forever, it finally started to change. The humans were slowly going back to their routine at work, but they were leaving their faithful companion at home. Separation anxiety started based on the time dogs now spent alone at home.

Sometimes, reality imitates fiction, and in this case, the fiction eerily became reality in 2020. When an alien

spaceship landed in the 1951 movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still* with Michael Rennie as Klaatu (the alien) and Gort (his robot) to tell the people of earth to live peacefully or be destroyed as a danger to other worlds, the people panicked. Weirdly enough, Klaatu's spaceship was named Covid by the Army Defense Team. The entire world lost power for a short period of time and was at a complete standstill, being controlled by an unknown alien force. The movie scanned the emptiness of large cities such as Washington D.C., New York, and Chicago; eerily like the reality of 2020 in March and April.

How do dogs fit into this? Dog show events have been cancelled. The 2021

Westminster Dog Show, which has been an annual event for 144 years, may be cancelled. Lots of other types of dog activities have also been cancelled as well. Many dog parks are closed. This virus also affects dog-related sports such as agility and tracking, as well as the work of dog trainers. One good thing that has come of this though, is that shelters are reporting increasing adoptions.

The area that seems to be most affected by the COVID-19 crisis is animal-assisted therapy programs (AATP), especially those that occur in geriatric centers or nursing homes. Because of health and safety concerns, teams of handlers and dogs are no longer allowed in those facilities. Therapy animals are absent from all the places they were previously welcomed prior to the pandemic.

AATP work, which I have been a part of for 18 years, has been completely shut down since the first week of March. Federal and state guidelines now indicate that it cannot restart until the virus recovery enters its final phase. Some states now prohibit this work from resuming until a vaccine is available, something that doesn't appear to be forthcoming any time soon. The polio vaccine took many years to develop. I wonder what parts of our lives will not come back at all.

In the current environment, nursing homes do not allow any visitors. No family, no friends, and no dogs. This means that for the 100 residents I visit on Sundays with my team of volunteer handlers, dogs, and junior high school students, the residents are undoubtedly lonely and heartbroken. The dogs are their link to the outside world and many residents interact with them even when they won't talk to any other visitor.

Dogs fulfill a social need of companionship with these elder residents. The dogs were always happy to visit on a

Sunday and showed their excitement as soon as we arrived at the facility. The residents might not have remembered the names of the human volunteers, but they sure remembered the names of the dogs! That bond was strong and very apparent.

As a substitute for face to face visits, we have created and dropped off greeting cards with pictures of past visits, the dogs and their handlers for the residents. We don't have any way of knowing if the cards reached all the intended residents who needed them most. It's not like we can FaceTime or Zoom with a group of 80 to 90-year-olds. If and when we do return to our regular visits though, it will take some time to get back into sync, as most likely some of the residents as well as the handlers and student volunteers may be worried about resuming social interaction. Another troubling thought is that 50% of COVID-19 deaths have happened in nursing homes, so the first visit back will be very difficult because it is likely that some of the 100 people we visited will no longer be with us. We know that nine residents in the facility have passed away from COVID-19; we just don't know the names of those individuals.

Let's hope that we get back to reality soon and don't have to continue turning important events into remote virtual ones. Some things in life require personal contact. Otherwise, Klaatu and Gort may need to come back to start up the world as they did in the end of the movie. They said "Klaatu barada nikto" which meant "putting back everything in place as in before they arrived." The difference in our movie (experience) is that our world cannot come back exactly as it was. My dogs have taught me a very important lesson in all of this and I will impart this lesson to you...that every day is a gift. 🐾

Editor's Letter

Continued from pg 3

tal health. How do you manage a stress that comes from coping with something that you can't see, hear, taste or touch?

Now, more than ever, dogs will play an important part in the recovery of our nation and for the rest of the world as well. Dogs will be enlisted as therapists and comforters in increasing numbers. Some senior centers are holding pet therapy visits through class windows. Shelters report huge increases in adoption and fostering. In a news story that went viral, Palm Beach, Florida, animal shelter workers celebrated a day of completely empty cages. A first!

This issue of Ruff DRAFTS includes great member stories describing the many roles pets are playing during this tough and confusion time. Individuals who support those efforts are also highlighted.

Please consider submitting your work (from this issue, past issues or other publications and platforms) to the DWAA Writing Competition. The categories are listed on our website. Last year, entries hit a record number. If you are not interested in submitting an entry, perhaps you will volunteer to assist with judging. Judging is both rewarding- to read the great work of our membership- and humbling- in recognition of talented DWAA members.

Wherever you find yourself during this crazy time, make the most of it. Hug a Dog! 🐾



THE TRUTH

ABOUT BECOMING DOG CARTOONISTS

A Story that Ends with a Moral

By **Laurie Leach**

Once upon a time, a 70 plus-year-old woman (me) woke up with big thought. Before she even had a sip of coffee, she announced that thought to her partner and four dogs. "I am going to become a cartoonist," she said.

This was a big thought because she had never done any drawing at all. Her partner responded with a solid, "Huh," and went back to reading the paper. The dogs glanced up. Here is a photo of my eldest Border Collie's response.



Then the whole pack tucked back in their beds since it was another half hour before breakfast.

Over the next few days, the big thought crystalized for the 70 plus-year-old woman (still me). The cartoons would focus on a group of dogs that participate in dog sports and their people.

By then, the realization that she knew nothing of drawing and even less about how cartoons are put together had settled in. The idea teetered precariously.

But the woman had hurt her knee and had to take a year off from agility to recover, so she had a good deal of extra time and energy. She tackled the problem of drawing by watching several YouTube videos on cartooning. These were mostly intended for children who wanted to draw goofy characters and not very helpful to someone who wanted to draw dogs.

Then she found an online school with a lot of drawing classes. She signed up for one and then another and another. These were real drawing classes. She

settled into learning to draw circles and lines. Even when practicing these exercises, sketches of dogs began to turn up nestled between circles and oblongs.

And every day she practiced. Her first class culminated in drawing a bird. While it was far from perfect, it was satisfying for someone who had never drawn a bird.

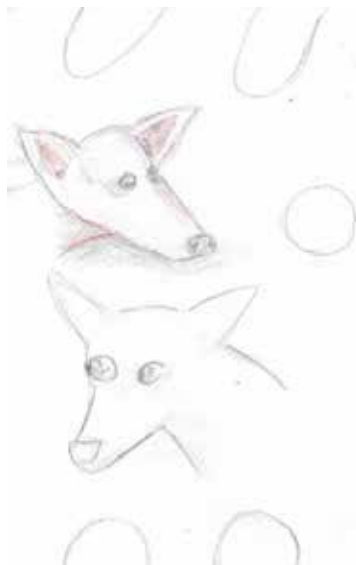
Every day the lessons continued. Retirement is a wonderful thing... She produced drawings of vases and bananas and mountains.

Finally, the day came when it was time to get serious about drawing a dog.

Many of the dog drawings started out well, but when they were done the Labrador Retriever looked like a river otter. The Border Collie looked more like... something from outer space.

She struggled with those internal critics who want to snuff out creative ideas. They kept asking, who was she to try and publish cartoons? Those censors are vicious beasts. She fought back and drew and drew. Although she almost gave up the dream several times.

Then an unexpected and wonderful thing happened. Her good friend decided to draw too. Like our main character, she knows dogs and dog sports. Like her, the friend had never drawn. Our main character and her friend decided to take



the journey together. They got together for all-day drawing sessions. They encouraged each other. They did not say, your Labrador looks like a large rodent or your Border Collie looks like a space alien.

Until finally one day, they decided to launch a Facebook page and webpage with their cartoons (<https://ourdogpack.com>) and a blog (<https://ourdogpack.com/blog/>). They each committed to one cartoon per week. They told their friends about their work and their friends responded in the nicest ways.

And because of that, they kept drawing and sharing. Until finally, there was nothing to say but: they are cartoonists. They continue to grow and learn. And they are loving it.



I promised a moral to this story. Here it is: If you wake up and you want to do something crazy, just do it. Seriously. Nothing to lose. Unless your dream is skydiving... 🐾

President's Column

Continued from pg 2

Be sure to follow us on social media on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, where our social media team keeps everyone current and up-to-date.

I'd like to end my message this time with a special quote from the late great Gilda Radner. "I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me, they are the role model for being alive."

In these most tumultuous and challenging times, I take comfort in knowing my dog is there. 🐾

Yours in all things canine,

Carol Bryant

Meet our

NEW MEMBERS

Anne Marie Duquette

The granddaughter of two coal miners, *Anne Marie Duquette*, was raised all over the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. Her love of the country's bounty, the richness of the land, wildlife, and its beauty grew during her many travels as the daughter of a career U.S. Air Force pilot and Air Force nurse. She was a Navy veteran herself, and the wife of a career Navy Chief Petty Officer Hospital Corpsman.

Different landscapes and people sparked her interest, and in both *writing and photography*, she kept track of her many adventures as a "military brat."

Anne Marie has published 25 books, 20 of them by Harlequin, and sold a treatment to Paramount Studios. Her

credits are listed on Paperbackgems.com, but her favorite site is Minigems.scriptmania.com, where free unpublished dog stories and novels abound for her loyal readers.

Her books and sometimes her book covers include her beloved dogs, models for her fictional canines. Presently, she is working on a 3-book trilogy involving "helper dogs."

Anne Marie's real-life romance began when an unknown Navy corpsman put a cast on her broken leg for their "first date." They now have two grown children and three grandchildren, all residing in Southern California. She's also married to her Disneyland annual pass, and dog lover that she is, PLUTO is her favorite character!



Anne Marie Duquette

TRAINING FOR TWO

By **June Greig**

"Cooper called you," my husband reminded me as I was clearing dishes from the kitchen table.

"I know, I'm going," I replied.

We had just finished dinner and my Golden Retriever had already gone downstairs and was "calling" for me to come and play with him.

Cooper was seven years old when this routine started. He would bark once and wait. If I was slow to respond, I'd get a second bark a few minutes later. After two barks, he would come and look for me.

"He has you trained," my husband said, as I headed down the stairs for playtime. Yes, I thought, he's trained me to come when he calls.

I always thought I did a pretty good job training him.

Cooper went to puppy kindergarten, dog agility and rally classes. He knew basic obedience commands and obeyed them in a super fast, enthusiastic way.

His best in obedience was his recall. Whether in the backyard or out in the woods, he came running at top speed if I called him. He also came running if a friend on a hike called her dog.

Cooper mastered an assortment of tricks; my favorites were his bowing, spinning, and stretching with me as I exercised. When asked to throw a screwball, he would get his ball, shake it with his head flying back and forth and around, and then he'd launch it.

Early on, I discovered my pup had a problem with impulse control. I tried to work on it, but when we went to a place he loved, especially a river or lake where

"He has you trained,"

my husband said, as I headed down the stairs for playtime. Yes, I thought, he's trained me to come when he calls.



Cooper also graces the cover of this issue of Ruff Drafts



rapidly in the direction he wanted me to go. He kept me on a schedule.

In the evening, he would wait for me to go to bed. If it was getting late, he would sit by me and stare until I told him, "You can go to bed. I'll be there soon." And I often cut short what I was doing and joined him.

On walks, Cooper occasionally tried to choose different routes. He would stop and stare at where he wanted to go. Sometimes I followed his lead.

he had previously enjoyed a swim, he would spin in circles pulling and twisting with excitement to get there. He would be out of control.

While all of Cooper's training took place over a period of years, he was secretly training me. He did a superb job.

Cooper began finding me and using his communication skills to lure me into the kitchen at 5 o'clock so I could start cooking dinner. He would stare at me or put his face close to mine, and then do a quick turn of his head and walked

When he wanted to play and I didn't respond, he would occasionally steal a sneaker or slipper and start running so I would chase him. He loved to be chased through rooms and around tables, but would give up playing the game after a while. I joined in for the fun of it.

If Cooper stole something of more value, such as a shoe I wore to work, I would offer to trade with him. He would drop the shoe in return for a treat. Sometimes he milked the trade game. I

See COOPER pg 23

Times of Uncertainty Call for Creativity, and These Groups Are Up to the Task

By **Shelley Bueche**

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, all rules are thrown to the wind. History is unfolding and there is no guidebook for how to proceed. As the country enters its third month of quarantine and isolation, states are beginning to ease restrictions, but unknowns still exist. Fortunately, pet therapy organizations and teams have adapted to the crisis by creatively responding through Zoom's virtual meetings and home delivery or curbside pickup.

Employers are increasingly calling for employees to work from home on a permanent basis, classes are being conducted remotely, virtual tours are being offered in museums and galleries across the world, and there are even virtual wine tastings. And DWAA will hold its annual writing competition virtually for the first time.

One national agency that registers animal therapy teams, Pet Partners, has over 11,000 teams in their database. Pet therapy visits are one aspect of Animal-Related Engagement (ARE) that promote the benefits of the human-animal bond. Although visits have been severely limited during the COVID-19 crisis, many pet partners are turning to virtual visits as a resourceful alternative. And the organization states that while they hope to return to in-person visits soon, they expect to continue virtual visits even after pandemic restrictions have been lifted.

A registered pet therapy team, Tonka the Great Dane therapy dog and Court-



ney Leigh, of Austin Texas, gained national attention early in quarantine when the team had to curtail their regular visits to the Cedar Pointe Health Wellness Suites and instead turned to creative virtual visits. Elderly residents waved homemade

signs that said "We missed you" and "We Love You" to Tonka and Courtney separated by a glass window. The team plans to visit the Round Rock Police Department in the near future.

See THERAPY TEAMS pg 23

Freelance

Continued from pg 11

Book deals – This is probably what I'm most known for, but honestly, I don't make anywhere near as much money from this as most people assume.

Magazine writing – I do a lot of magazine writing and am a regular writer for a variety of national publications, both print and web editions. This includes dog-specific publications and more mainstream publications.

Patreon – I maintain a Patreon where readers/supporters can pledge monthly donations to get behind-the-scenes access to my work, as well as Patreon-only content.

Teaching – From time to time I teach and lecture (online and in person) about topics that include trick dog training and creative writing.

Writing coaching – I work one-on-one with writers who are looking for content/developmental editing support on short or long-form projects.

Touring – I don't do as much touring now as I used to, but part of my income has historically included paid speaking

engagements, keynote speeches, and writing workshops for colleges, conferences, and community groups.

YouTube – I have built up a big enough following to be approved for a monetized YouTube channel where I post vlogs with my dogs, dog training videos, etc. I make pennies on those videos, but it does very, very, very, very slowly add up.

DWAA: What advice would you give long-time writers who are faced with an ever-changing landscape?

SL: Be ready and open to change. Publishing has changed so much in the 15 years since I started writing. It has changed substantially in the last year, and I'm sure a year from now will look different. Be willing and ready to get creatively out of your comfort zone, try something new, and be open to experimenting. If you aren't willing to grow and change your approach, you probably won't get much work.

DWAA: Why did you join DWAA and how has it been beneficial for you?

SL: I joined DWAA last year out of curiosity. I had been writing about dogs professionally for many years but didn't really know anyone who was actively involved with DWAA.

DWAA: How many pets do you have right now, their types and their names?

SL: It has been a hard year for my family, which happens when your pack includes a large number of medically fragile and aging animals. There have been three big deaths in my family this year: our 19-year-old cat, Noirchat, who passed away from cancer late last summer, and then Charlotte, our very high-needs former street dog who was probably about 10 or 11 years old, passed away from cancer in the fall. This spring, my 17-year-old Chihuahua mix, Mercury, passed away from age-related complications.

I'm still getting used to our much smaller family, which includes our 20-year-old cat Sierra; our 6-year-old cat, Thing, who we found living on the streets of New York City and who Charlotte raised; and Sirius, our 3-year-old Newfoundland who is a Champion Trick Dog and competes in tricks and rally obedience. We also play around with some other sports.

DWAA: Where can folks find you online and on social media?

SL: Website: www.SassafrasLowrey.com
Instagram (mine): <https://www.instagram.com/sassafraslowrey/>
Instagram (my dog's – she has more followers than I do): <http://instagram.com/siriuasthebear>
YouTube: Introvert Circus – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC87_y-mMPGv0hPAuXq-sXw
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sassafraslowrey>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sassafraslowrey>
Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/SassafrasLowrey> 🐾



Cooper

Continued from pg 20

knew I was being played, but if I wanted the item back in a timely manner, I had to make the trade.

From time to time, Cooper would get his ball and lay down with the ball in front of his nose near the cabinet with the treats. This move worked sometimes. I called it, "treats on demand."

My boy was such a character. He consistently wiped his mouth on a dishtowel in the kitchen after he drank water. I'm not sure how that came about, but I eventually bought a dishtowel with Cooper's name on it.

Although he was a retriever, Cooper would only retrieve his ball three times. After that, I would go get the ball and throw it again. No response. So I would go and get the ball and try once more. Nothing again. Then I would give up, realizing that I was the retriever.

After nearly 11 years of the two of us training each other, I lost my bright, beautiful boy in December to hemangiosarcoma, with the diagnosis coming on his last day.

My routine shattered.

I now go to bed later at night and sleep later in the morning - something he would never have allowed. I eat more snacks because I previously refrained to avoid tempting him. There are no more daily one-to-three-mile walks, regardless of the weather.

While it's clear I've lost my trainer and direction, I remember what Cooper taught me. I hope in time to recapture his lessons on taking long walks and hikes, swimming and playing, going to bed at a reasonable time, staying on schedule and most of all - rising early with the joy of another day. 🐾



Therapy Teams

Continued from pg 21

Ricochet is a 12-year-old Golden Retriever known around the world as a surfing therapy dog. Ricochet was in isolation along with most of the world when her guardian, Judy Fridono, realized that Ricochet was missing interactions with people. The team began holding virtual pet therapy sessions for frontline healthcare workers in addition to the people she had served before - people with special needs, wounded warriors, and just about anybody that needed a little support.

With the popularity of curbside pro-

grams growing exponentially, Fridono came up with the idea of Ricochet providing curbside comfort sessions in the Southern California region. Although Ricochet is a senior dog, Judy Fridono decided to weigh the pros and cons of personal therapy. After curbside comfort sessions, Ricochet was happy to see people in person once again. Fridono then realized she had made the correct choice.

While pet therapy may return to in-person settings, it seems that virtual visits will still be a viable option, expanding geographical access and distance healing, limited only by one's imagination! 🐾



WHAT A GAL!

By **Kate J. Kuligowski**

Without knowing we would become strong, cherished friends, we passed each other in the holiday crowd entering and exiting Costco. Even though we did not know each other yet, we smiled and nodded. I had almost reached the checkout line when she called out, "Wait! Please!"

I turned and watched as she hustled through the line, then stood in front of me and said, "I know you from somewhere, don't I? I am sure. I can feel these things. I'm Gloria." We quickly determined that we both had spent the majority of the last few decades rescuing abandoned and abused pets in our state. But she had done so as a volunteer for a rescue organization, while I was on my own. That was the least amount of words we would ever exchange at one time.

It was humbling to learn that my new compassionate friend respected all breathing creatures, so she didn't limit her rescues to canines. Gloria had rescued and adopted a variety of injured reptiles, such as turtles, tortoises, and lizards, and she was in constant touch with the herpetologist at our zoological park. She was an active supporter and contributor in our TNR (trap-neuter-return) program for feral cats. And her mentor and partner in rescues was Wally's bud, Alan, a former dentist. Alan served as the dog adoption coordinator for one of our state's most highly respected animal rescue organizations.

Gloria was the notorious "go-to" person for all of the area's surrendered pets with behavioral difficulties. Through her infinite patience and kindness, she was usually able to improve their situation, making each pet ready for adoption. Through years of countless rescues, Gloria recognized that, when most dogs were first rescued, they



Gloria waits in the county shelter lobby with newly rescued momma and pup.

needed to decompress for about three days with some quiet and downtime, as their previous life was most likely chaotic, dangerous and unstable. She patiently introduced her resident dogs, one at a time, to the new pack member, who spent her first few nights indoors in a blanketed crate. She modeled floor-play, soft talking, touching, and loving with her own dogs; a routine to be first

observed by the new pup so that when he felt comfortable, it would join in.

Years later, I was still in awe of Gloria's 24-hour dedication and the gentle skills she brought to these thrown-away creatures. She was like a continual whirlwind, traveling to all points of our state, adopting, fostering, and rehoming pets, all who were unwanted and most likely scheduled for euthanasia to make room for other dogs. Gloria's waited with her rescue kits in the hatchback of her electric blue car and tried to ignore the reality of these helpless creatures. The first crate not only included the all-important doggie bags and paper towels, but also leashes, collars, muzzles, harnesses, Elizabethan collars, and hand-sewn lifts. In a second crate, there was also dog clothing, throws, and blankets, which were all neatly folded. A third crate contained the essentials for wound treatment. The last and most sizable crate was home to pet food (kibble and canned), water bowls, and, of course, an assortment of treats. The remaining trunk space had folded metal crates and cloth carriers. This gal was serious about rescuing!

During 2019, Gloria rescued more than 50 dogs of all ages, sizes, and breed types from uninhabitable situations; 25 were from the county landfill. Her easy-going manner attracted even those hard-to-catch lost or abandoned dogs running scared in the streets or vast, open spaces.

The year 2020 began with a call informing Gloria that each morning an elderly pug had been staggering across

eight lanes of rushing traffic, eventually reaching the restaurant located on a vast truck stop property. Before most Albuquerqueans woke up, Gloria spent consecutive daybreaks wandering around the grounds, questioning patrons about the dog...in vain.

In early January, a call came in from a friend, Josette, one of our city's contacts for rescue-transport. She had found a young black Chihuahua on the sidewalk in front of her business. Could Gloria help locate the owner identified on its microchip? Luckily, the listed phone number was a working one, and the owner assured Gloria that she would pick up her little canine within the hour. After two hours Gloria again spoke with the owner, whose nonchalant, calloused answer threw Gloria for a loop. "I've decided I really don't want the dog. Put her back in the street. Someone will find her and give her a home."

Gloria provided the home, a temporary home with her menagerie of fostered and adopted dogs, to a dog named Segunda. This bright and perky dog was housetrained and proven friendly with other dogs and cats. After her grooming and vetting, Segunda was ready for the next scheduled rescue-transport to Utah. Meanwhile, Michelle, one of Gloria's friends, paid her an unexpected visit. Always pestering Gloria to find her a dog to adopt--any dog but a Chihuahua--Michelle's fascination with Segunda came as a complete surprise. Even though Gloria assured her that Segunda was already spoken for in Utah, Michelle still waged, in vain, a campaign with no holds barred to adopt this friendly, well-behaved, personality plus, nine-pound cutie. After several potential Utah adopters received Segunda's picture and bio, they actually vied to be chosen as her forever home. Such a dichotomy, as too many of New Mexico's citizens do not open their homes to



Alan, Gloria, Wally and Kate Kuligowski pose for presentation of 2019 Top Rescuer Loving Cup to Gloria

new pets! Rather, they callously dispose of their current pets for various senseless reasons.

The last Thursday in February marked the annual date for the "To the Rescue" pet food giveaway by family-owned Long Leash on Life pet store. One hundred thousand pounds of dog and cat food were donated to needy animal shelters and organizations across the state. Gloria is one of 20 regular volunteers who help lift the heavy bags onto pallets in waiting pickup beds. She repeats this routine with the Tractor Supply Company, who contacts her when damaged pet food bags, which cannot be sold, are available for Gloria to distribute to her fosters.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic was officially recognized in our state in March, our savvy Governor Lujan-Grisham and her educated and cautious staff, closed all non-essential businesses.

This, of course, included animal shelters, whose employees were put on leave; most of their incarcerated pets were euthanized. Two of our many shelters made successful pleas for fosters. But the norm now involved scheduling for an appointment for adoption, while scads of unwanted pets ran loose, starved and died in our streets for almost three months. Private rescues and shelters were hindered as they lacked enough foster homes to care for this surge in "unwants," and they were unable to do their required home visits before adoptions. It was a tragic time for New Mexico's pets.

Gloria, hindered by her lack of space and resources, still continued to help. When Valencia County Animal Shelter put out an SOS that they had been inundated with 200 dogs in one week, Gloria fostered two inseparable Chihuahuas.

See GLORIA pg 27



TIPS & TACTICS

Ten Graphic Mistakes to Avoid in Marketing Pieces

By **Merrie Meyers**

Many DWAA members design their own promotional materials. In 2005, Robert W. Bly published “The Content Marketing Handbook” to help writers increase the appeal of their work. This article summarizes the 10 most common graphic mistakes and how to avoid them.

Long before readers go through your work, they will judge the value of your content by its appearance.

1. OVERUSE OF COLOR

Readers that print articles and other written material often use inkjet printers. The overuse of color, such as solid color backgrounds, is a costly disservice to readers. Bright colors can create distractions that make text hard to read, and text set in color can be harder to read than black text on a plain white background.

2. MISSING PAGE NUMBERS

Readers depend on page numbers to track their progress through a publication. They also rely on page numbers to refer back to previously read information. Include page numbers in your work.

3. LONG LINES OF TEXT

Text that extends in an unbroken line across the page, from the left margin to the right margin is hard to read. Leave white space along the edges of a page to provide a resting spot for readers’ eyes and emphasize the text.

4. INAPPROPRIATE TYPEFACE

There are three basic groups of fonts: decorative, serif, and sans serif.

- Decorative fonts, such as Constantia or Broadway, are heavily stylized and great for attracting attention or projecting an image. Use decorative typefaces sparingly, restricting them to logos and packaging, where the image is more important than the readability.
- Serif fonts, such as Times New Roman and Garamond, are ideal for extended reading. Serifs, or finishing strokes at the edges of each character, help define the unique shape of each letter and help a reader’s eyes move from one letter to another.
- Sans serif fonts, including Arial and Verdana, are very legible. They feature a clean, simple design, helping readers recognize words from a long distance. Sans serif typefaces appear in headlines and subheadings combined with serif body text.

5. WRONG TYPE SIZE

When the size of a font is too large, such as 14 points, readers can’t comfortably skim the text. Conversely, when the size is too small, such as 8 or 9 points, it diminishes the detail that readers use to identify each character. Small font sizes also require excessive left-to-right eye movements, which causes eye strain over time. The most popular and readable font size is 12 points.

6. DIFFICULT-TO-READ HEADLINES

Headlines should form a strong contrast with the text they introduce. Readers shouldn’t have any trouble locating or reading them. Headlines in all capital letters are harder to read than headlines that combine uppercase and lowercase type.

7. FAILURE TO CHUNK CONTENT

When text is broken into manageable, bite-size pieces, or chunked, it is easier to read. The best way to chunk content is to insert frequent subheads throughout the text. Subheads help skimmers become readers by “advertising” the text that follows. Subheads offer an entry point into the text. They also reduce the visual boredom created by page after page of the same body text.

8. POOR SUBHEAD FORMATTING

Effective subheads offer a strong visual contrast to body text. It's simply not enough to italicize them. They should be noticeably larger and/or bolder than adjacent body text, limited to a few words in a single line. Never underline subheads; underlining decreases readability.

9. DISTRACTING HEADERS, FOOTERS, AND BORDERS

Headers and footers are the top and bottom sections of each page. They can include things like page numbers, copyright information, or the publisher's address, and should be smaller and less noticeable than the body text. For example, large logos repeated on each page can be distracting.

Pages can be "boxed," or bordered, with lines of equal thickness at the top and bottom sides. Boxed pages project a conservative, old-fashioned look. A more contemporary look can be created using "rules," or lines of different thickness at the top and bottom of each page.

10. WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

Widows and orphans occur when a word, a portion of a word, or a partial line of text is not able to fit at the bottom of a page or column (an orphan) or at the top of the next page or column (a widow). The worst case is when a subhead appears by itself at the bottom of a page, isolated from the paragraph it introduces at the top of the next page. If possible, use a software that allows you to automatically "lock" subheads to the text they introduce, reducing the possibility that widows or orphans will be created. 🐾

Gloria

Continued from pg 25

huas, Sonny and Cher, whose comical personalities shortened her sometimes endless hours during the pandemic. Within a week, this bonded pair found a new and loving home in Utah.

For several months, Gloria had been actively searching for a whitish husky reported wandering along the north valley streets. Finally, one Sunday at dusk she encountered the tired, thirsty, disoriented and dispirited canine, but this emaciated dog was also pregnant. Naming her was easy: Dominga. Gloria placed Dominga temporarily with a well-known foster mom, Belle, a recognized rescuer of Rez dogs. It was Belle's youngest daughter, Holly, who became enchanted with this white husky cross and adopted her. Dominga now accompanies Holly daily as the two trek across her sizable acreage, tending to Holly's assortment of rescued horses and donkeys.

Tracy, a friend from Southwest Airlines now living in Tennessee, reached out to Gloria for help. Her father, a New Mexico resident hermit, had recently fallen into an arroyo and died of hypothermia. Tracy was concerned about Drifter, his eight-year-old cattle-dog cross, whom he had rescued as an abandoned eight-week-old pup. Unable to travel during this pandemic, Tracy hoped that Gloria could locate a new and loving home for his treasured pet. Gloria kept Drifter while she hunted for a match with a foster. Within a month, she arranged a meet-and-greet with a husband and wife nurse team who had recently lost one of their two senior dogs to cancer. The pairing produced an immediate, waggin' tail bond between the two dogs and their two owners.

Rio got his name from the Rio Grande rescue. Lefty, a Dona Ana Care

animal care officer, was shocked while driving over the bridge, as he observed a dog being cast into the river from an open car window. His quick reactions yielded a fawn-colored, wet pup who greeted his rescuer by continually jumping up with his legs out straight, as if he were spring-loaded. There was no space for him at the closest shelter, so he was scheduled for euthanasia to make more room for other dogs. When Josette, as contact for the rescue transport, was notified, she contacted Gloria, who added Rio to her menagerie for two weeks of pure bliss until there was room, two weeks later, on the transport to a forever home in Utah.

Jetta, an especially sweet and charming black Chihuahua, was still nursing her four ten-week-old puppies when she was rescued from a hoarding situation in Alamogordo, 208 miles south of Albuquerque. Gloria, who volunteered as her new foster, felt that now Jetta was permanently separated from her puppies, the two girls, Jetta and Gloria, should take a girls' day on the town, visiting a dog treat bakery and a doggie spa, ending with snuggles in bed. Gloria wanted to make up for some of Jetta's abusive past. "Her behavior mirrored Jetta's tough existence before being rescued, so I continued to spoil my new five-year-old foster with daily back and tummy rubs and homemade treats. My doggies and I were sad to see her leave only one week later for her new family in Utah."

In the last week of May, Gloria was contacted by Josette, who was in a quandary about a Chihuahua named Princess, surrendered by her family after 11 years because, "She is sick. We do not want her now." Gloria was at Josette's in a flash, abandoning all other plans, for this little elderly dog was needy... now! It was obvious to Gloria that this

See GLORIA pg 30

The Power of Wheels

By **Barbara E. Magera MD PharmD, MMM**

I am amazed at the amount of "stuff" exhibitors haul around at dog shows. They transport carts and wheel grooming tables with virtuosity and grace, like a well-choreographed ballet. The key elements to accomplishing their feats of transportation are wheels. The vital importance of wheels became painfully apparent to me when I didn't have any. An exhibitor without a mobile cart is similar to a sky driver without a parachute.

After intense study, it was apparent that not just any cart would suffice. Wheels that are too small, too big, too thin, too flimsy, too inflexible or the plastic is too hard, will not do the job. The engineering design of how the wheel is attached to the cart is critical to help determine cart mobility. Wheels must be tough enough to drag mounds of equipment through snow, mud, sand or across flimsy carpet. We have even navigated our carts over plastic mats covering the ice of a hockey rink.

On a sweltering summer day, we attended an all-breed show in South Carolina. The facilities were new, spacious and looked over rolling hills. My Cavalier show buddy was plagued by arthritis. Negotiating even a few stairs was incredibly painful for her. She took the front entrance.

I quickly volunteered to haul all our equipment through the service entrance. The building sat on a bluff. My path included 70 stairs that led to a large stone porch. As I stared at the near ninety-degree incline, my plans were to haul, on a wheeled grooming table, about 40 pounds of equipment to our grooming site. I carefully packed the grooming table with all our stuff, including more



grooming tables, show chairs, x-pens, a metal tack box, dish pans, bottles of shampoo, conditioner, blaster, hairdryers, grooming supplies, towels and even a coffee pot. I strategically secured everything with bungee cords.

I started guiding the packed cart slowly and carefully across the asphalt lot. Everything went smoothly until I hit grass. With a lot of effort, I managed to drag my wheeled vessel about 1/3 of the way up the steep mound. With

my heart pounding, I stopped to catch my breath and wiped my sweaty brow. Daylight was breaking through the cloudless sky, which meant temperatures started to soar. I looked up at the incline ahead. "Piece of cake," I thought. "Just navigate the cart up the hill, clear the stone landing and proceed to the grooming site." As I began dragging the oversized load, my cart became much heavier and harder to pull. My arms

See WHEELS pg 30

What Dogs Think About PUNCTUATION

By **Leslie Brown**

FROM HER BLOG

[A DOG AND A KEYBOARD](#)

I don't know about other dogs, but I think all punctuation is optional. If I spend too much time figuring out which type to use and where it should go, it slows down my writing. So I usually skip it altogether. Or I make up my own.

Worms and balls

To me, punctuation looks like a bunch of worms and balls. There are some fun ones and some boring ones. If I use punctuation at all, I only use the ones I like.

My favorite is the semicolon. It has a fat worm on the bottom and a ball at the top. My mother said people don't use it much anymore; but I do. I like the way it looks.

The question mark is also fun. It looks like a squiggly worm with a ball at the bottom instead of the top. I use it all the time, even if it's not right.

My least favorite is the period. It's just a single ball, which is too boring for me. If I need something to go at the end of a sentence, I use other types of punctuation instead. Like the question mark?

Or the ellipses. It has three balls in a row instead of just one. I use it when I'm not sure if a sentence is finished or not...

The exclamation mark is also a good choice. A lot of people use it instead of a period. Sometimes they use two or three in a row. I guess that makes sentences seem more important than they are!!!

Creative punctuation

I like to make up my own punctuation. I use it more that way. I also invent the rules. My mother calls it creative punctuation. I call it punctuation for dogs.

It's always optional. 🐾



Wheels

Continued from pg 28

quivered, my joints ached and then my muscles cramped. After another 30 minutes of struggling up through thick grass and mud, I realized I had not progressed even 4 feet. Sweat was pouring down my face and torso. My grip on the ropes became weaker and weaker. Trembling, I stood in the mud wondering what to do. If I lost my hold of the ropes, the whole packed vessel would fly back down the hill, gain momentum and crash into vehicles, with people and even dogs located below. Trying to go even a bit further was impossible.

As I stood there shaking and sweating, a muscular youth approached me and announced "Looks like you're having a hard time. Let me help you." With a smile on his face and a briskness in his demeanor, his massive deltoids gleamed with a light mist of sweat. Well pumped pectoral muscles outlined his cotton tee. He effortlessly pulled my overstuffed cart gracefully up the incline until it gently rested on the stony landing. "There you go! All done," he said. "You made that look so easy," I replied. "You must be in great shape." "Well," he explained, when I'm handling and showing Tibetan Mastiffs, housed in wooden crates, I don't have to go to a fancy gym or studio to get my workout." I realized why packing lighter might be a wiser decision, rather than packing everything we might need but not ever use.

As I found our grooming spot, my show buddy asked how I managed to get our cart up the steep hill. "Not a problem!" I smiled, with sweat stinging my eyes. "Super" she said, "because our next adventure is to go to an old venue where the only parking is about 1/4 mile from the show building and there are a lot of stairs and no elevators." "Ter-

rific," I mumbled, "another day in paradise." Actually, I was too embarrassed to admit my misjudgments.

When I returned home, I studied transport carts available online. I found a music website and was encouraged by the testimonies recommending an expandable aluminum music cart with huge, thick wheels. These carts were designed to transport a whole stage of equipment, like those used by Hootie and the Blowfish. I bought two of these carts. They performed well, however their bulky size ate up too much room in my SUV.

For air travel, I now use a lightweight hand cart. With one bungee cord, I can transport a Cavalier in a Sherpa bag (a moderate size of luggage), a large Think Tank camera bag and my huge purse. This cart can move easily through the narrow aisles of most airplanes. When I arrive at my economy seat, the Cavalier goes under the seat while the hand cart is tucked easily in the overhead storage bin. A neat feature is the retractable wheels that markedly decrease the cart width. This durable cart is less than \$75.00.

Recently, I purchased several Impact Dog crates with the latest model of dollies. The wheels on the dollies are thick and treaded, which allow for easy transport through all kinds of surfaces and conditions.

I constantly search the internet for products that will ease my transportation of "stuff" to dog shows. I study new products that are lightweight and compact but are also durable and sturdy. I suspect that many others do the same. We all hunt for products that can assist in transporting our Cavaliers to and from dog shows. 🐾

Barbara E. Magera MD, PharmD, MMM (Caracaleeb) is a Cavalier fancier who lives and practices medicine in Charleston, South Carolina.

Gloria

Continued from pg 30

gal was indeed sick, as she refused all food and water. So Gloria, sitting on her couch, just continued petting and speaking softly to this small abandoned and frightened soul so she would not be alone during her last hours. Five hours later, Princess surrendered her life. Gloria and her dogs held a short, touching ceremony before burying their newest friend, Princess. She was noticeably choked-up when she phoned me that evening, "How could they...after eleven years?"

Today Gloria is once again opening her heart and her home to abandoned and abused pets. Her newest residents will be two young, homeless Phoenix Chihuahuas (now sporting matching harnesses) whom she will foster until the next rescue transport. When it concerns animals, she never tires.

As pandemic statistics level off and our state will continue its slow, gradual reopening, hopefully our abandoned pets can once again be granted protection, sustenance and kindness through our shelters, rescues, new fosters, and adopters. But my friend Gloria was and will be there during these troubling months for as many of our "throwaways" as is humanly possible.

Gloria continues to be an inspiration. One evening, I was praising her virtues to a friend and her daughter, as we enjoyed a "socially distant" patio dinner. As they were leaving, my friend's daughter, Laura, confided in me. "Mrs. Kate, when I grow up, I want to be like Gloria."

I smiled and squeezed her small hand. "My thoughts exactly." 🐾



Kristin Avery, Secretary
PO Box 7052
Evanston, IL 60204

Roxie

By Janice Biniok



I bet I can run faster than a run-on sentence!