

RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

SPRING 2022

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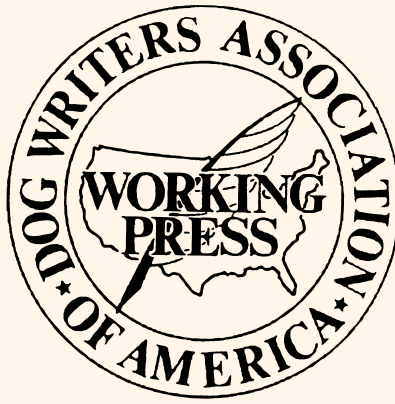
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Therese Backowski

DOG WRITER OR
DOCTOR DOOLITTLE?



Ruff Drafts

Send all material to Merrie Meyers
at: rdeditor@dogwriters.org

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Spring, April 2
Summer, July 3
Fall, October 2
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW what is going on? Our organization is growing in order to adapt to today's ever-changing need for information and support from us, the media.

A membership in Dog Writer's Association of America is an honor. Why? Through the years we have been blessed with many noted authors, artists, photographers, bloggers, and just plain great people. We are bound to support each other in this difficult and highly competitive field. We owe it to each other to continue tradition, to mentor new writers, and to enhance the careers of the already successful. Having said that, it is time to update you about the growth and progress of Dog Writers Association of America.

After a rousing board meeting last month, it was decided that we are going to revamp the writing contest. It is becoming so huge and unwieldy that almost no one wants to be in charge and it is difficult to find enough judges. We've experienced numerous problems with the distribution of awards and certificates. In addition, some entries are dubious because they end up in the wrong categories and some submissions become invalid and confusing. The simplest way to sort out the issues is to extend the contest into different time frames and to reduce the number of categories. This isn't an original concept; many publications who host writing contests sponsor staggered entries. As I am writing this, the board is reviewing all of the contest categories and discussing the deletion of some of them. This isn't easy; we don't take the task lightly. If you have any helpful suggestions, please send them to me at: theresebackowskil@gmail.com.

Barbara Magera is willing to chair the Writing Contest, but she can't do it alone. She will need help in the form of co-chairs and judges. We intend to divide the task so that it doesn't overwhelm any one person. You can contact her at: bemagera@gmail.com. And yes, you can co-chair or judge the contest and still enter. Obviously, you may not judge in a category that you've entered.

In Other News...

Now, let's talk about the amicus brief...

Kim Kavin is a member and co-founder of an ad hoc coalition called Fight For Freelancers. They are doing volunteer advocacy work to try and stop legislation and regulations that would make it illegal for freelance writers (among others) to continue being published in certain outlets unless we became employees. This group intends to file an **amicus brief** to support the American Society of Journalists and Authors, which is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to hear its case on this issue.

I, for one, hadn't a clue about amicus briefs, and even though my son, an attorney, is visiting right now, I looked it up. In short, this is what I found: "An amicus curiae is a person



Therese Backowski
and her dogs, Lucy
(L) and Hank

who isn't a party to a case. They assist an appellate court by offering additional, relevant information or arguments the court may want to consider before making their ruling. They are submitted in a specific case under review. They essentially show the court that its final decision will impact people other than the parties." Because we have so many freelancers in this organization, it is important that the legal system is aware that we are interested, so, of course, we are participating in this brief. Feel free to contact Kim if you have more questions at kimkavin@comcast.net

Thanks for letting me serve you.

Therese Backowski

Therese Backowski

DWAA President

RUFFDRAFTS

Spring 2022

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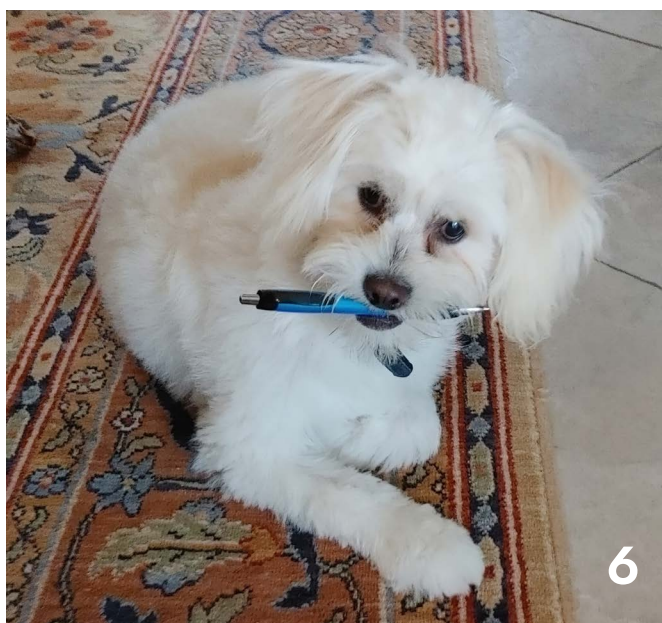
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME SPRING! For those living in colder climates, the appearance of green buds breaking through the earth is a welcome relief from the gray skies and/or your local version of heavy weather. It's great to see leaves return to tree branches and hear birds chirping while building their nests. Even those living in communities featuring warmer weather, nervously anticipating a spring-summer storm season, can appreciate the wonder that Spring brings to us and our four-legged family members.

Each morning, we (Danny, Sunny and me) walk the same route. But there seems to be new growth. Here we are, as if this is the first time we've ever, in the history of walking, traveled this path. I'm not sure if the ground actually smells different, or just looks different, but Sunny and Danny can tell something new is in the air. They stand with their four paws firmly planted, noses pointed upward, drawing the air inward.

One drawback to spring is the multitude of species that use my yard as a rest stop in their travels. I live in South Florida and until recently had a 40-foot mango tree in the middle of my backyard. The tree was a prolific annoyance. Mangoes fell across the walkways for about 4 months, growing in size, tender and gooey globs as they ripened. Pollen covered all the outdoor furniture no matter how often I hosed it off. Did I mention I'm allergic to mango sap and pollen? Ugh!

The sweet sickening smell of decaying fruit was a magnet for iguanas, raccoons and opossums. The rats seemed to like it too. One summer, we got an infestation of Norwegian roof rats that danced across the roof and literally launched themselves into the tree.

Although Jack Russell Terriers are known for chasing rats out of barns and foxes into or out of holes, Sunny had no interest in chasing any of the creepy, toenail-clinging tree huggers. It was left up to me and my spray hose. I usually ended up wearing as much water as I shot into the tree.

Recently, I finally found a tree service that would cut down the mango tree for less than a second mortgage. They came by one morning the

day before our bulk trash pick-up, and two hours later, half the tree was gone, including all of the parts that bloom, drop sappy fruit and powdery pollen. The other half will come down soon.

Ah, the sweetness of spring. Now that the sun can come into my yard, I've planted herbs in a raised bed. Please don't tell the other species.

Merrie Meyers

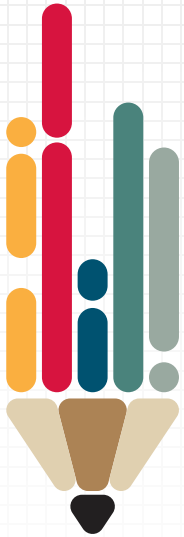
Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA

Ruff Drafts Editor



Merrie Meyers
with Sunny (L)
and Danny (R)





TIPS & TACTICS

LISA BEGIN KRUYSMAN

BEST IN KNOW:

NOTES FROM A DOGGED INTERVIEWER

Does the word “interview” evoke fear and apprehension in your heart and mind? Whether you are the questioner or the questioned, being asked or asking others about work and life experience, accomplishments, weaknesses, dreams and goals, it can make for a daunting and complex situation. However, it can also be so rewarding.

Whether you are seeking to find or fill a job opening, conducting interviews for a book project or article, or working on a profile piece for a newsletter such as Ruff Drafts, the ability to convey an original and genuine article can educate and inform with your own personal stamp.

Years ago I had the good fortune of working for HBO in Midtown Manhattan. I will woefully age myself here and relay that in the early 1980s, the use of the internet and cell phones was still a thing of the future and a myriad of resumes weren't sent by email. Instead, they collected on my desk where I'd spend a good part of my day digging through a pile to peruse and categorize them for qualified job candidates for current job openings.

I had no trouble attracting candidates. EVERYONE wanted to work for HBO, even at an entry-level position. The challenge was to find the most suitable candidates for each distinct position.

My first order of duty was to interview supervisors to ascertain the unique, not always easy to define expectations of the candidate that often went beyond specific job needs such as typing and phone skills. The ability to ask the right questions and then to engage in focused listening was the key to any successful interview.

After I left that incredible corporate position, I became a full-time working artist and active in a large art guild in New Jersey. As a volunteer, I enjoyed my role of interviewing my fellow creatives for the guild's monthly newsletter. With guild members representing so many categories of media



including fiber, sculpture, pottery, wood, painting, and jewelry, it was imperative to gain some basic knowledge and terminology of each specific craft and art form no matter how unfamiliar it was to me.

During my involvement with the guild, I interviewed approximately 100 artists including a prominent weaver who told me that my article about his work was better than the one that appeared in *The New York Times*! His wife even commented how I'd understood her husband's process and work and had relayed it so well to others. That's the ultimate compliment for any interviewer and writer.

In recent years, I've found myself interviewing writers, authors and producers for Ruff Drafts. When our editor, Merrie Meyers, suggested I write an article on interviewing, I thought I'd share my own personal approach to the interview process.

For my articles for Ruff Drafts, I welcome DWAA members who wish to share their experience and accomplishments to contact Merrie or myself for consideration for their work to be featured. Once I find a willing subject, I request that they send links to their online sites and past items that feature their work. This gives me an understanding of their "art form" and some insight on their personality and creative path.

Based on what I learn, I formulate questions that delve deeper into some aspects of their work and life, to clarify techniques and terminology, and other issues that might not have been covered. I'll typically send a list of questions and welcome the interviewee to provide any additional information they'd like to convey about recent accolades, works-in-progress, or any upcoming exciting news they'd like to share.

Occasionally, if the interviewee prefers, I will jump on the phone for a chat. Sometimes the subject wishes to see the finished product, but I have been humbled that most trust my judgment and wish to be surprised to read it live with the larger audience. I am also humbled by their enthusiastic feedback and when they tell me I was not only accurate, but conveyed them so positively.

But sometimes we can be intimidated by those we view as very accomplished, if not considered famous in our professional circuits. That is when one needs to step outside their comfort zone and reach out with genuine interest.

This can be as simple as using Messenger or email to contact an author or other "creative types" directly, contacting their representatives, or asking mutual and trusted colleagues for a referral. Sometimes the response is amazing; the worst case scenario is you'll be ignored.

FIVE EASY STEPS TO A GREAT INTERVIEW

MAGGIE MARTON

So, you've landed an interview with a key source. Congratulations! Now what?

You want to gather the insights and information that will help your piece shine. It takes more than simply sitting down with someone and grilling them over their work. Before you log into Zoom or pick up the telephone, here are five tips to help you conduct the best interview possible:

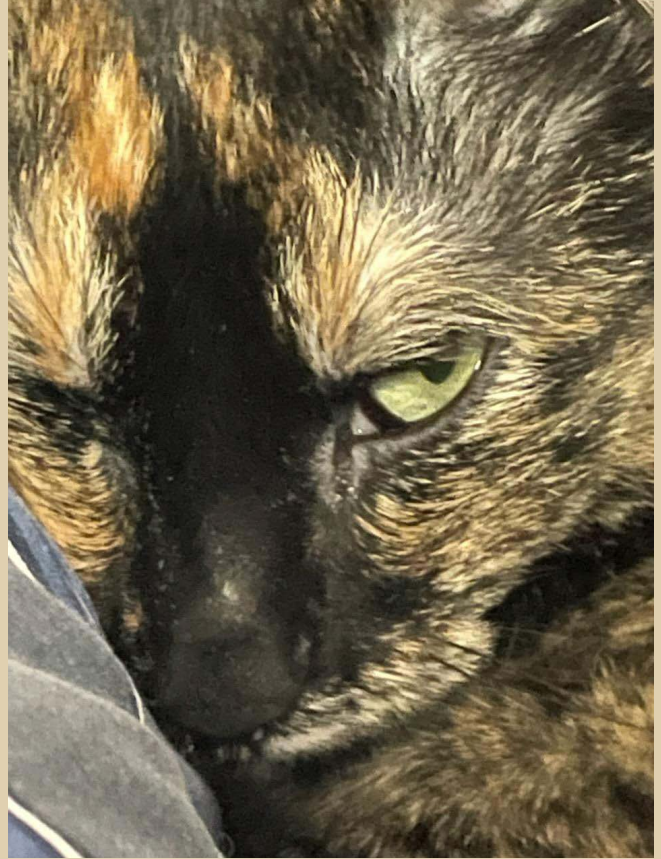
1. BE FLEXIBLE. Provide lots of days and times for your subject to choose from, or allow them to pick altogether. Suggest multiple formats—Zoom, in-person, telephone, Google Meet, and so on—to find their comfort zone. Your interview will go smoother if your subject feels comfortable and unhurried.

2. RESEARCH YOUR SUBJECT. It seems obvious, but know your subject well. Do your homework: check out their LinkedIn page, read their publications, follow their social media channels.

3. CREATE RAPPORT-BUILDING TALKING POINTS. Before you craft your questions, brainstorm ways to connect personally with your interviewee. Many people haven't been interviewed before and may feel anxious. Connecting over their latest YouTube video or an essay they recently published can help your subject feel at ease. Conversely, someone who gets interviewed often might be tired of the same-old-same-old questions. Get them on new footing by connecting over something personal, like a recent Instagram post or a cause they support. Show you've done your research (see point 2!) to create a personal connection before you dive into your questions.

4. PREPARE MORE QUESTIONS THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY NEED. If the interview goes off the rails or if the subject is reticent, having more questions ready can keep the conversation flowing—and help you get the info you need for your piece!

5. ALWAYS SEND A THANK YOU. Immediately after the interview, send a quick email to thank them for their time and for sharing their expertise. Then, once your piece is published, send another email with a link and a note to let them know how much you appreciated their insights. Not only is this a kind gesture, but it keeps the lines open in case you need to interview this person again or if you need them to refer you to another expert in their field for a future piece.





THERESE BACKOWSKI

Birds, Fish, Cats

INTERSPECIES MORNING MAYHEM

When I wake up in the morning, I freeze. I don't dare move until I figure out who is sleeping with me, and where. I gingerly stretch, feeling with my toes to see who is there. If my first toe-feel-find is furry and warm, I know it is a Chihuahua. When my visiting son leaves early in the morning, he tosses her on my bed. Then she'll worm her way under the covers and work her way down my side until she finds my feet in order to avoid the sleeping cats. I dare not fling back the covers, lest I send a cat flying through the air like Rocky the flying squirrel gone wrong. The last time I forgot, Puck, my vaguely psychotic cat, didn't speak to me for hours. I suppose it didn't help that her unplanned flight caused her to land in a waste basket... Anyhow, none of my bed fellows care that I need to visit the bathroom pronto. There are rules, you see, and most of the time they think they make them.

Next, I grab Lucy the Chihuahua from under the covers, stuff her under one arm, fish around with my feet for slippers, and carefully shuffle to the bathroom, lest I step on someone. I stick Lucy in the bathroom sink, so I know where she is. The Standard Poodle, Hank, tries

to stay out of my way and huffs at me as he rolls his eyes, because he needs to pee too. He is the stoic in our group.

As soon as Hank and Lucy are outside, I grab much needed coffee and open the drapes for the Cockatoo, Casper. He greets me with untranslatable bird grumblings, with a vague "hi" tossed in, mostly because he wants out of his cage. That will not happen until I am wide awake. **Very** wide awake. Cockatoos need supervision, attentive observation, especially when they live with dogs, cats, fish, me, and windowsills. (I have yet to repair the one he ate.) I adore Casper, who I sold as a hand-fed baby 24 years ago and then got him back when his owner, with whom I'd become friends, had to downsize and move to an apartment. Cockatoos are not apartment birds unless one wants to be evicted. I love him so much that a few days before, I bought an expensive and supposedly indestructible toy for him. The toy is made of slick steel rings and contains a blue and a yellow ball. The company guarantees that the balls can't be removed by even the cleverest big-beaky bird. Imagine my surprise when I found him sitting on a perch with a red ball in



► his mouth! Shocked, I looked at the toy and it only had two balls in it! I thought to myself, “that son of a bird got a ball out!” Balancing my coffee with one hand, I contacted the company and arranged for a replacement toy. I received the replacement within 24 hours. I opened the box and pulled out the new toy. It had two balls, one blue and one yellow, not three. I realized I had to return the return, or something like that. I looked at the used toy with its two balls, sighed, and started a letter to the company that basically said I couldn’t count or read labels, must be color blind, and that I would return the *new* toy promptly and reimburse their postage. In the meantime, my son put the *new* toy in Casper’s cage and handed me the old one. As soon as my progeny was out of sight, because I didn’t want to admit to him that I goofed up, I removed the *new* toy, replaced it with the old one, and printed a letter of apology so I could stuff it in the box with the *new* toy and return it. I still hadn’t had my coffee. Then I remembered I hadn’t fed anyone. I feed them all. Lucy goes in her crate so she won’t steal Hank’s food, and the cat’s food is placed on the cat tree so Hank won’t steal hers. Now that everyone has stuffed their faces, I can settle in for coffee, but it’s cold. So, I dump the coffee in the sink and pour a new cup.

I need to make my bed, but I don’t want to disturb the fat, territorial, full-bellied, and sometimes grouchy cat, Puck. Her friend, William S., the other cat, is sacked out with her, but he doesn’t care what I do as long as I pay my respects by petting him and allowing him to chew on his wire grooming brush a little while I am grooming him. I must be quick, because with every pull and tuck on the bedspread, Puck will hiss at me. The hissing will escalate to slapping my hand with no claws. I already know the no-claws clause is temporary. I am the fastest bed-maker in Ohio.

Casper still wants to get out of his cage. When I open the door, he backs away from me as if I am carrying a hatchet and intend to murder him for dinner. I’ve told him many times that he could taste like chicken, and I guess he remembers what I say. So, since his mood today is weird, I leave the door open and step away. When he comes to the door and starts through it, I offer my arm, and say, “step up.” Nope. This is a morning when he prefers to climb out, walk across the floor like

a bleached blonde penguin with a weird hat, and follows me to the couch. On his way to the couch, he detours to play with a cat toy, and William S. decides he wants to play too. Bird and cat push a ball back and forth in the channeled cat toy until Casper decides it would be easier for both of them if he chewed through the toy to get the ball. I pick up the toy and put it out of sight. Casper, deterred, climbs my leg to the couch and sits on the back, looking out the window. He could have done that in his cage, but he likes to change his perspective. William S. and Lucy usually join him in the search for burglars and birds.

Casper loves to snuggle, but not this morning. He and Lucy have some things to talk about and they like to be close during their conversations.

Hank, Lucy, Puck, and I often watch the news. Casper tucks himself under one arm, Lucy the other. Hank will lie beside me and both cats will settle on my lap and knees. Not bad on cold winter mornings...

When it’s time to get dressed, Puck joins me. She jumps onto the sink and I am expected to remove her collar, thoroughly brush her head and neck, and quickly attend to her back and sides, before I tick her off. When I put her collar back on, she knows I am finished. Naturally, she hisses at me to make sure I understand that the session ended too soon. I guess she is just stuck with a lazy human attendant.

This, indeed, is a lucky morning. Puck didn’t chew my shoelaces last night, no one threw up, not even on the carpet, and I managed to drink a cup of hot coffee. We are all ready for our next adventure.

I don’t know why they all get along; they just do. They were introduced carefully to one another, that helped. In addition, I listen to them. When other dogs come to visit, they are curious, especially about Casper and the cats, but again, I am careful, especially because Casper, who never learned to fly, sometimes dive bombs a dog from the couch, just to cause a little mayhem. When they flee in terror, he uses his maniacal laugh to further terrify them.

Interspecies? I think I might be the most interspecies of them all. Perhaps someday I will tell you about my afternoon! ■

New Books *from* DWAA Members

LOREN SPIOTTA-DIMARE



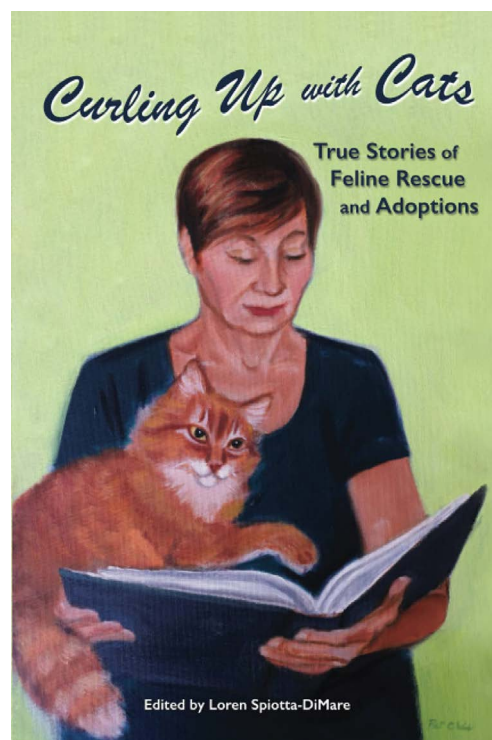
DWAA member Loren Spiotta-DiMare's latest publication, *Curling Up with Cats... True Stories of Feline Rescue and Adoptions* is now available. This beautiful collection includes true stories about feline rescue and adoptions as told by the cats' devoted authors. Each story offers a unique perspective of various rescues/adoptions and what the experience has meant to the pet parents, and the animals as well. The book is suitable for adults and children. You can learn more about Loren's books at www.lorensreadingroom.com or on Amazon.



lorensreadingroom.com



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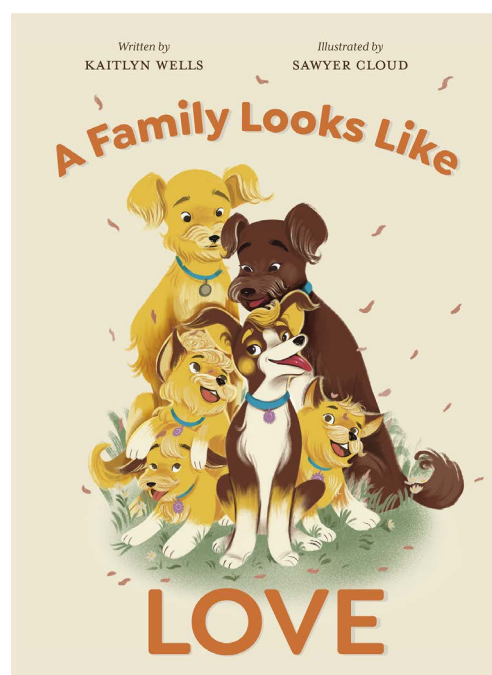
KAITLYN WELLS, M.S.



Kaitlyn Wells, M.S. shared that her debut book, *A Family Looks Like Love*, arrives May 31, 2022 with Penguin Random House. *A Family Looks Like Love* is a heartening picture book about a young pup that looks different from her siblings and ultimately learns that love, rather than how you look, is what makes a family.



[Learn More](#)



LOREN SPIOTTA-DIMARRE

Louie *and his* Bunny Boys



I

joined the DWAA in the early 1980s. I had a dog, a rabbit, a Lovebird, and a Parakeet.

Oh, yes. I also had a husband :-)

We live in a rural part of New Jersey and our animal family has grown over the years. We now have seven dogs, four rabbits, an Amazon Parrot, 28 small birds (American Parakeets, English Budgies, Parrotlets, Lovebirds, Canaries and Finches), plus a goldfish pond.

Since I work at home, I let our canine kids out to run and play in our two-acre fenced yard every three to four hours. Our current cast of canine characters consists of a large, long-haired Chihuahua mix, a Tibetan Spaniel, an English Cocker Spaniel, an English Springer Spaniel, a Red Setter (field-bred Irish), a Hound mix and a Collie.

Since several of our dogs are sporting breeds, my bunnies Biscotti, Ballino, Smerf and Bosco live on a porch in individual hutches. They're intact males. Though rabbits are very social, they're also territorial. They have been known to fight to the death. So I always let the boys out individually to play with their toys and visit one another.

When a new bun joins the family, I set him up in my office so he can bond with me. Eventually I move him to the porch.

From the beginning, our Tibetan Spaniel, Louie, has been fascinated with the rabbits. I'd go so far as to say he loves them. He'd play with them in my office and later on the porch. I've actually seen him lift a front paw and pet them as they hop by.

Since the rabbits have been raised with Louie, they aren't afraid of him. In fact, Bosco, our chocolate Mini Lop has been known to chase Louie around the porch. It's quite a sight. The perplexed expression on Louie's face is hysterical.

Louie and his bunny boys are a wonderful example of Unlikely Friendships. ■



SANDY KUBILLUS

Kaylee & Willie

AN UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIP

WHEN I HAD A PUPPY die from distemper, my vet said to wait at least a month before bringing home another dog. Feeling like I couldn't wait that long, I purchased a miniature Dutch bunny. A few weeks later, I was able to bring home my new Springer Spaniel puppy. I had read that dogs and rabbits could get along, but I didn't know what to expect.

On Kaylee's second day at my house, the eight-week-old puppy followed me toward the rabbit's cage. She wrinkled her nose and wagged her stumpy tail when she spotted Willie sitting in his litterbox. She cocked her head slightly while standing next to me.

Looking from one to the other, I noticed that their markings were very similar with a narrow white blaze that curved to the right, white necks, chest, bellies, and paws. Kaylee's coat was mostly dark brown, or liver, while Willie's was a deep gray. I wondered what the puppy thought of the bunny that was a quarter of her size. After all, she was a predator and he was prey, or was she too young to understand?

Willie was not. He lunged at the wire mesh cage separating him from Kaylee. The puppy jumped back and shot behind my legs.

I knew that they had to get used to each other, so going against all the rules for introducing two animals, I flung open Willie's cage door, figuring I could intervene if Kaylee got rough.

Willie hopped out of his cage, stood in front of it with his nose twitching.

Kaylee pricked her ears and took a step forward.

Willie darted underneath his cage.

Kaylee ran behind me, peering at Willie with a wrinkled forehead.

Willie crept out from under his cage and slowly hopped over toward Kaylee. Their noses touched. Suddenly, Willie reared up on his hind legs and lunged at her, nipping her in the nose. She yipped and ran behind me. I chuckled at the surprise attack.

The bunny hopped over to the nearby carpet and started zooming around, jumping and twisting in the little dance he liked to perform. Kaylee plodded after him, cocking her head. She lifted her paw and Willie whizzed under it, leaping into his cage.

Willie hopped back down to the floor and raced back to the rug. Kaylee followed him, but Willie was faster, shooting underneath his cage to hide. A few seconds later, Willie returned to the rug, racing around in circles. When Kaylee got too close, Willie would lunge at her.

Willie decided he was alpha and in control. They appeared to play a game of tag with Kaylee chasing Willie, and the rabbit chased the dog. I couldn't stop laughing.

After a few rounds of chase, Willie raced back into his cage with Kaylee following him into his cage. She sat in his litter box. Daily they followed this routine of chase, even after Kaylee grew to a 50-pound dog while Willie remained at four pounds. Often they lay on the carpeted stairs near each other after a romp. Their odd friendship continued for four years until Willie passed away. ■

AN OP-ED BY

BARBARA E MAGERA MD, PHARMD, MMM

the Norway Verdict: Banning *the* Breeding of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

I

T IS WITH GREAT sadness that I read a Norway court decision banning the breeding and registration of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (CKCH) and English Bulldogs (EGB). The

Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals brought a lawsuit against 3 CKCH and 3 EGB Norwegian breeders based upon the Animal Protection Act (APA), a unique law in Norway. The APA law prohibits the breeding of known “sick” animals. I wonder what scientific data was presented to the court by the one veterinarian and geneticist to warrant this harsh verdict. This court decision is not yet law.

The study of purebred dogs allows identification of medical conditions prevalent in each breed. Mitral valve disease (MVD) and syringomyelia (SM) are considered hereditary conditions in Cavaliers and many other toy breeds. Responsible breeders utilize health screening and testing of their stock to minimize propagating these and other serious conditions in their progeny.

In Denmark, Cavalier breeders are required to perform routine cardiac testing. The Danish protocol requires an echocardiogram (Echo) clearance that helps breeders exclude Cavaliers with evidence of moderate to severe MVD. For more than a decade of cardiac screening, the Danish protocol documents a 37 to 40 percent decrease of

MVD in Cavaliers. In the medical literature, these findings are reported as an effective methodology to decrease the prevalence of MVD. In my experience as a medical expert, it is common for lawyers and judges to not understand scientific papers. They depend upon the presentation of the medical experts to form a legal opinion. If the results of the Danish protocol were not presented to the court, then the Judge arrived at a conclusion based upon faulty evidence. Norwegian breeders have a justifiable cause to file an appeal.

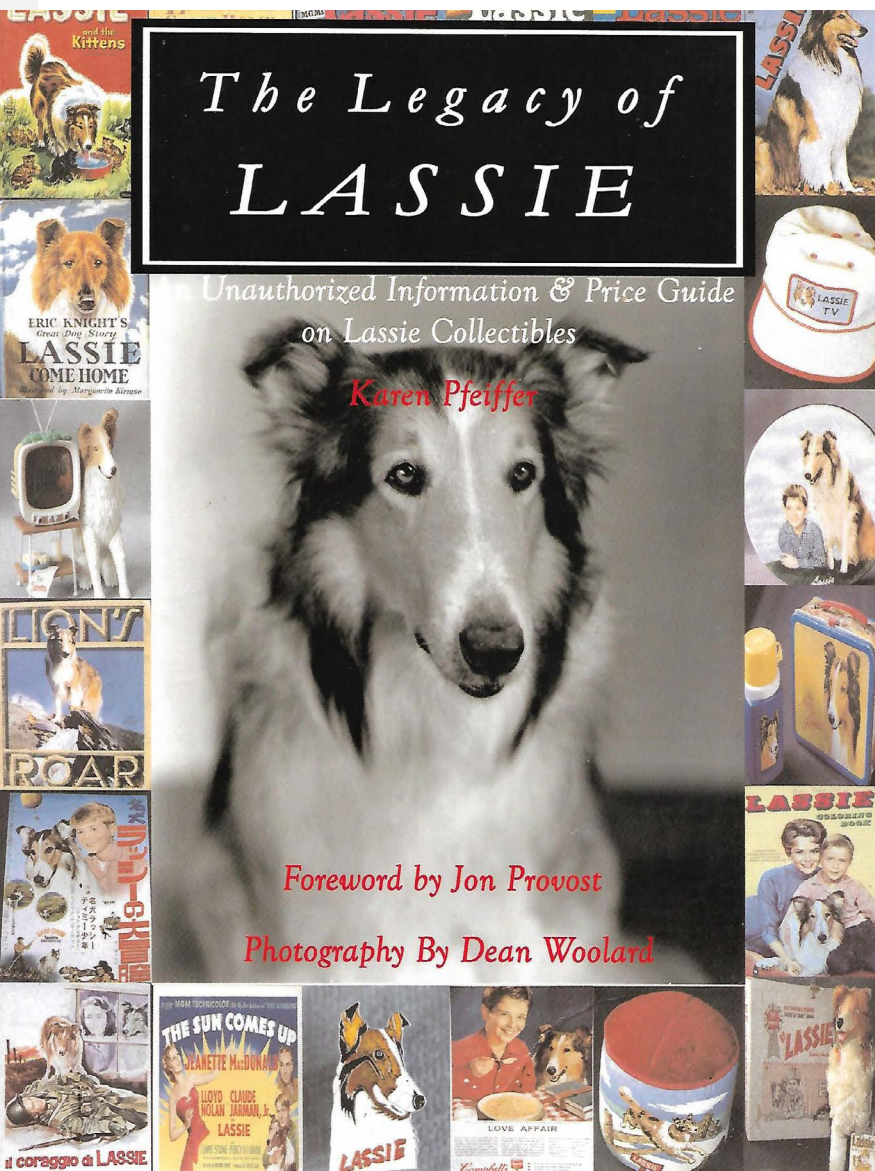
The issue of SM in toy breeds is more complex. The exact genetic mechanisms responsible for SM in canines and humans remain unknown. The transmission of SM or Budd Chairi (BC) malformation is an intense area of study; however, factors such as trauma may cause these neurological conditions. Many responsible breeders use an MRI to identify anatomical abnormalities associated with SM/BC. They use the MRI results to guide their breeding decisions. From a scientific viewpoint, the MRI was never intended to “screen” for a neurological condition, rather the MRI is utilized as a “diagnostic” test. Usually an MRI is ordered if neurological symptoms are present then identification of specific anatomical abnormalities supports a diagnosis of SM or BC. Is it possible that the MRI findings may result in the unnecessary elimination of dogs that do not in fact harbor SM/BC? The answer is an emphatic yes. In scientific terms, whenever a diagnostic test is used for screening

TED SLUPIK

Lassie Come Home, Again

an INTERVIEW *with* KAREN PFEIFFER,

LASSIE HISTORIAN



Over the years, Lassie has had many encounters with other species of animals that would not normally occur; horses, cats, cows, donkeys, geese, and flying squirrels. Yes, flying squirrels, and not one of the Rocky and Bullwinkle fame. You can see this episode [here](#) on YouTube (Lassie - Episode #502 - "Lassie and the Flying Squirrels"— Season 15, Ep. 27). The episode is interesting, as there are no humans in it, with animals only appearing when Lassie saves a flying squirrel from a coyote.

As children, we all have favorites; favorite toys, favorite characters, and favorite movie stars. Some of our favorites fall away as we grow up, but some stay with us forever. For Karen Pfeiffer, her childhood favorite was Lassie. Into her adulthood, Lassie continues to be her heartfelt passion. Karen has chronicled everything about Lassie, from the character's early beginnings to Lassie's more recent events and everything in between. She has written books about Lassie and has curated a massive Lassie memorabilia collection.

Karen, like every other child in America, fell in love with Lassie after watching the TV show in 1962. Lassie was played by Baby. The love for Lassie that Karen felt back then has remained with her until today. The shows were riveting and suspenseful

but of course there was always a happy ending. We knew that a dog couldn't possibly perform the heroic acts that Lassie accomplished week after week, but we all wanted to believe that she could.

Karen is an accomplished author, having written two books about Lassie. The first, *The Legacy of Lassie*, is a complete catalog of Lassie memorabilia published in 2005. It contains 341 pages of photos and descriptions of 1,000 items. The foreword is written by Jon Provost, who played Timmy. He spent seven years on television with Lassie. Even Jon was surprised by the amount of information Karen put together. The AKC Museum of the Dog in New York proudly includes her book on their library's shelf. It's THE go-to book for any collector of all things Lassie.

Karen's second book, *The Romance of the Collie*, was written in 2010. After reading this book, readers are sure to feel a strong desire to hug their own collie. One of the best chapters discusses the life of Albert Payson Terhune (APT). Terhune established the breed's popularity in this country. He started out by writing short stories for Redbook Magazine and wrote a story about his collie, Lad, and Sunnybank in 1915. APT became a very famous author almost overnight. Many of today's collies can trace their ancestries back to Sunnybank Farms.

The second chapter in *Romance of the Collie* is about Colin, Karen's soul mate. We can all relate to her feelings as she describes her relationship with Colin, with whom she had an unbreakable bond.

If Karen's previous literary efforts haven't been enough to feed Lassie enthusiast's appetites, her latest accomplishment is sure to please. She is currently putting together a ten journal magazine. The first one has just been released.

She has published the first of ten *Lassie and Company* magazines. Published in January 2022, the first issue is titled: *Where the History of Lassie Comes Alive*. In this inaugural edition, Karen shares images of promotional movie posters including those designed for the seven Lassie movies in theaters between 1943 and 1951. It tantalizes her readers with tidbits about the iconic beloved dog who delighted us when we were children, including stories about Lassie and her various animal friends.

The Romance of the Collie

True Tales of an Amazing Breed

Karen D. Pfeiffer

Cover Illustrator: Karen St. Jean



The first issue also contains an episode summary of the television shows, including cast members, from September 12, 1954 to May 27, 1956. I gleaned that several actors, appearing in these episodes with minor parts, went on to perform more famous roles. Phyllis Coates, who appeared in two episodes, played Lois Lane in the original *Superman* series. Some of the Lassie TV episodes were also written by famous people, including Carl Reiner of *Dick Van Dyke* fame. Hugh

Tips & Tactics

► CONTINUED from pg 7

A few years ago, back in the good old days of our live DWAA Awards Banquets in New York City held on the evening before the Westminster Dog Show, I was honored to be part of a Speaker Panel on dog writing and publishing. At the time I was struggling with a book I was writing, told from a dog's POV. I wanted to share that journey with my co-panel and audience, so I sought some insight from those who'd done it so well.

I first reached out to W. Bruce Cameron, author of *A Dog's Purpose* and so many other captivating dog-centric books. As he was already a Facebook connection, I contacted him via Messenger and requested a moment of his time for a talk I was preparing to help others (and myself). He shared his own challenges on the topic and his personal strategy for making his stories succeed. During his response, he mentioned Garth Stein's *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, a very popular and successful novel told from the POV of a dog named Enzo.

I knew that Garth was represented by Jeff Kleinman at Folio Literary Management, a prestigious literary agency in NYC. I reached out to Jeff and had the pleasure of a lengthy phone chat

in which he imparted the obstacles and challenges he'd faced when Stein pitched his book project, so much so that it required several rewrites before Jeff felt he could not only rep but also sell the book to a major publisher.

Whether interviewing highly successful and well-known members of the publishing or other industries, or colleagues that are emerging authors and artists, while seeking information to help other creative types, I'm always able to gain some useful advice for my own writing; a win-win situation.

I like to think that I'm a better person, interviewer and contributor to the creative community at-large with each published article and interview. ■

Lisa Begin-Kruysman resides in coastal Southeast Georgia where she writes and paints accompanied by her new pup Quint. She is a Board Member of the DWAA, regular contributor to Ruff Drafts, DWAA Social Media Contributor and the author of several dog-centric books. She's always looking for fellow-members to interview so please consider your work for future issues of Ruff Drafts.

Norway Verdict

► CONTINUED from pg 15

purposes, the risk of a false positive test is high. A false positive test is a present when the test suggests the presence of disease, but the individual does not actually have the disease. With each generation of 'new' and improved MRI machines, the ability to visualize structures, even down to the muscle fiber level, increases. In human medicine, often the Neuroradiologist cannot establish a diagnosis because the MRI findings may represent an anatomical normal variant rather than pathology.

The public is unaware of the extraordinary measures undertaken by responsible breeders to maximize the health of their stock and progeny. In the US, many veterinarians including the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) are

unaware of how responsible breeders are diligently working to improve the breed.

The challenge of Cavalier's clubs and breeders is to inform the public about what we are doing to improve the health of Cavaliers. Legal decisions that restrict breeding will only destroy our efforts to ensure the health and preservation of the Cavalier breed. ■

Barbara E. Magera MD, PharmD, MMM (Caracaleeb) is a Cavalier breeder & fancier who lives and practices medicine in Charleston, SC. She is a member of the Danish Cavalier Kennel Club.

Lassie

► CONTINUED from pg 19

Beaumont, the actor who went on to star in *Leave it to Beaver*, appeared in several Lassie episodes. Perhaps the most famous episode of the series was named “*The Well*” (#24 airing on February 20, 1955.) Lassie did rescue someone from the well, but it was not Timmy.

I have learned so much from Karen’s first magazine. Besides the episode-by-episode guide covering the first few years of the series, Karen has included short stories about some of the show’s main actors and guest stars. Karen has an inside track which gives her access to all the people who contributed to creating The Lassie Legacy. She has been an integral part of the Lassie Family since 2000 as a historian. She’s also owned collies from both the 9th and 10th generation of the Lassie Line.

There are many, many more fascinating items disclosed in Karen’s first edition of her magazine, including information regarding initial episodes. She tells us about the eyebrow-raising story regarding the rights to the Lassie name and story.

Issue two promises to discuss the TV series in more detail. Subsequent issues will contain chapters of Karen’s third book, *The Story of Lassie – Part 2*, which will document the never before known history of Lassie.

The journey over ten issues will be a long one, but we want to know more about Rudd Weatherwax and his family, the cast members, and the various dogs that played Lassie over the years. We will also no doubt learn about more Lassie/animal stories.

An important part of Lassie’s duties was serving as a therapy dog. We want to read more about Lassie visiting hospitals as one of the first and certainly the most famous therapy dog. She surely paved the way for many therapy dog programs. We wonder how the children reacted when Lassie visited them bedside.

In addition to Karen’s literary accomplishments, she’s also responsible for initiating the Lassie and Company Facebook page launched over ten years ago. With more than 37,000 followers, it has rekindled our interest in Lassie’s legacy. The page’s followers certainly enjoy the photos she shares while discussing Lassie’s history.

I am not sure ten magazine issues will be enough to cover all the stories Karen has to share, but we anxiously anticipate the next issues. ■

You may contact Karen Pfeiffer at karpfe@gmail.com for more information.



TONI EAMES

Soothing Purrs

Although Cameo and my beloved Golden Retriever guide dog Ivy lived together for six years, they could not be called friends. When the day came for me to make that dreaded call to ask our veterinarian to euthanize thirteen-year-old Ivy, surprisingly, Cameo sprang into action. This fourteen-year-old tuxedo cat flung herself into my arms with a clear message that she felt my pain and was there to comfort me. With tears rolling down my face, I sat on the floor stroking Ivy.

Cameo shared her ministrations with her long-term house partner by walking back and forth between the two of us, purring loudly and stopping periodically to lick Ivy's face, something she had never done before.

When the vet arrived, my husband, and several friends and I sat on the floor in a circle

around Ivy to provide comfort in her last moments. At this time, Cameo was fast asleep in her favorite chair. Waking with a start and sensing our need, the sound of Cameo's tinkling bell alerted me that help was on the way. Cameo jumped over my husband Ed and joined the circle to provide the comfort we so desperately sought in this emotion-laden crisis. As I held Ivy in my arms and reached down to touch her, I felt Cameo's tiny paw touching Ivy's large paw. Cameo seemed incredibly attuned to the importance of this touch since Ivy was now totally blind. The last sounds my treasured teammate heard were my sobs and Cameo's soothing purrs as Ivy slipped quietly into a sweet and painless death. ■



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