

RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA



SPRING 2023



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*Agility and
Cynosport®*

The ROMANCE *Issue*



Ruff Drafts

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Spring, February 15
Summer, May 15
Fall, August 15
Winter, November 15

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dues, Dues, What Do They Do?

ON OCCASION a member will ask me, "What do our dues do?" Or, "What are dues for?"

I have to admit, most of the answers to that question comes via Marsha Pugh, our treasurer. She reminded me that all I needed to do was go to the website, DWAA.org, and get the information for myself. The list that I am giving you isn't complete, so again, you too, can go to the website for more information.



dwaa.org



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



First, let's address the Benefits of Membership. The Dog Writers Association of America strives to strengthen the careers of our members.

Membership benefits include:

- Access to "Members Only" content on the DWAA website. In addition to our private forum, you'll find "Editor Insights" from top dog-centric publications and examples of "Successful Queries."
- Listing of your website or blog on the DWAA website.
- Inclusion on our Twitter list, and Member's only Facebook page.
- Members follow one another's handles and share articles, book news and awards.
- Press Pass.
- Subscription to our quarterly newsletter, Ruff Drafts.
- Access to DWAA's io Group. DWAA members share book news and ask advice in this private group.
- Discounted entry fees for our writing contest. Our annual contest honors writers, authors, bloggers, photographers, illustrators and publications in many categories – plus our special awards come with big cash prizes.
- Networking opportunities at our annual awards banquet.
- Guest posting opportunities and book promotion through the DWAA blog.
- Continuing education through our webinar program.

Our dues pay for:

- Design, production and distribution of Ruff Drafts, our quarterly newsletter via email and posting on the website
- Design, updates and maintenance of the DWAA Website
- Website Domain registration
- Insurance
- State incorporation fees
- Event expenses
- Banquet program
- Hall of Fame
- Take the Lead Memorials
- Secretarial expenses
- Pins, welcome letters, other correspondence (slate of officers, by-law updates,) and more.

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WRITING COMPETITION UPDATE

Due to the overwhelming number of contest entries, judges are diligently working on their evaluations. Announcement of nominees and winners will be forthcoming. We thank all the talented writers and artists of "All Things Canine" for entering the DWAA contest.

—BARB MAGERA
DWAA CONTEST CHAIR 2022



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR FELLOW DOG LOVERS AND
WRITING ENTHUSIASTS,

This year, Ruff Drafts will have an overarching theme, with a focus area for each issue. The theme for 2023 is *"The Dogs Who Inspire Our Stories."* For the Spring 2023 issue, we are focusing on Romance. Future issues will highlight Adventure (Summer), Comedy (Fall), and Mystery (Winter/Holiday).

Selecting Romance as our first focus area was designed to give us an opportunity to reflect on those things we cherish. In addition to Valentine's Day on February 14, the first quarter of the year includes many reflections of affection, including Cuddle Up Day- January 6, Hot Pastrami Day- January 14 (very desirable in some circles), Cheese Lovers Day- January 20, Carrot Cake Day- February 3 (my mom's favorite), Love Your Pet Day- February 20, and I AM Day- March 12 (self love is always good). Now more than ever, we need this kindness and mindfulness. Our society is divided.

But, we dog lovers know that the path back includes paw prints and a wagging tail or two.

Research published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* (2021) assessed the biopsychosocial (biological, psychological, and social) aspects of human-animal interaction (HAI) leading to improved health and well-being.

It's no surprise to dog owners that a canine connection helps lower blood pressure and calms our minds. Study participants also self-reported a decrease in loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Still others reported higher life satisfaction and well-being. In some cases, motivation and the ability to engage with others increased. The social aspect of HAI is well documented with children, particularly those with cognitive or learning disorders.

Yes, the love of dogs can build bridges. With growing fractures and fissures across much of society, I would argue that it's time to infuse mandatory HAI into every government debate

and legal proceeding. Yes, I know, if only we could teach the world to view life like our dogs, full of optimism and love for all creatures, I truly believe that the world would be a happier place.

Merrie Meyers

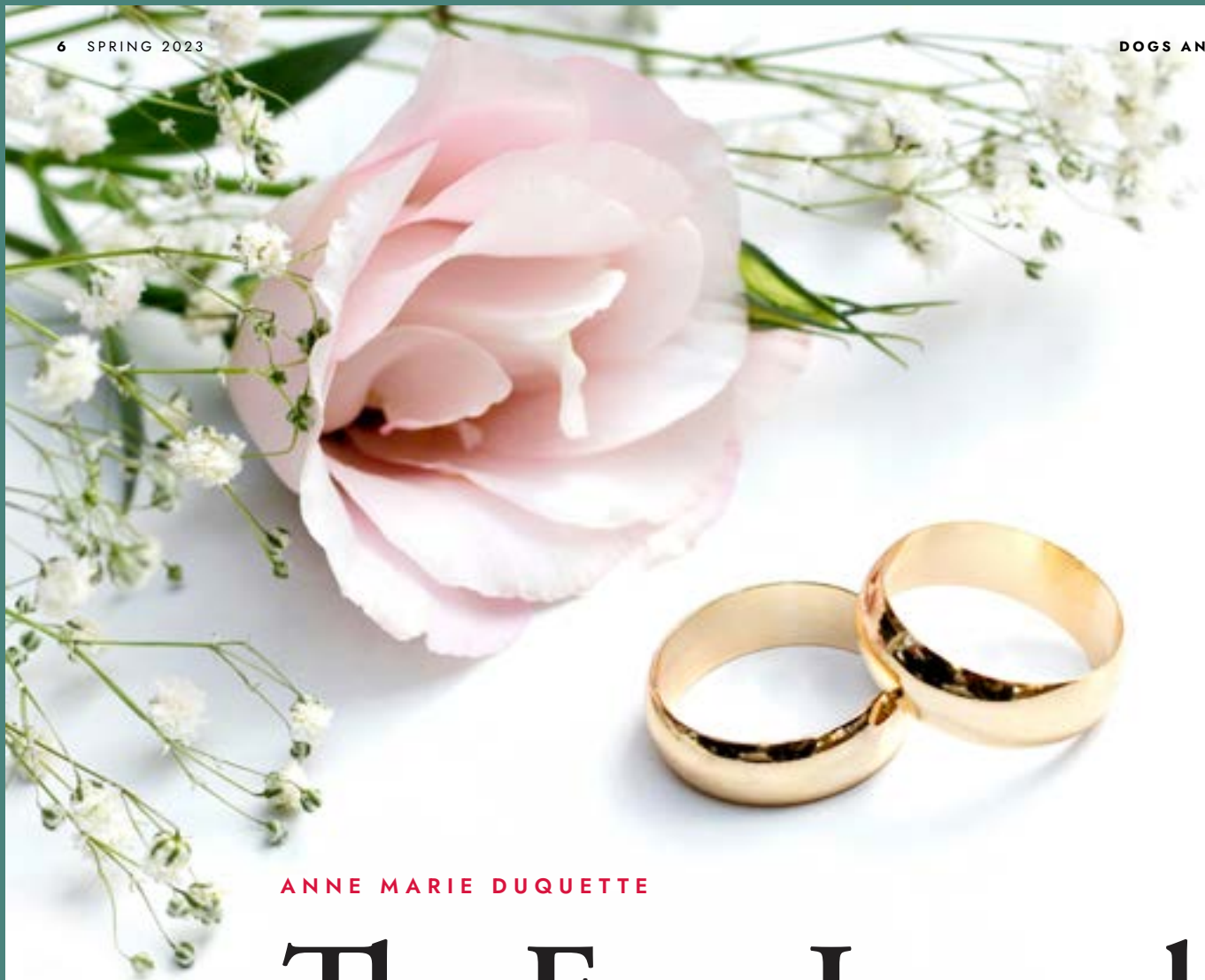
Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA

Ruff Drafts Editor



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





ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

The Four-Legged Wedding Present

A

AS A CHILD, I always wanted a dog. Alas, my father was career military and never granted me my wish. He refused to be one of those awful people who get a dog then abandon it when they move. Admirable, yes, but I still wanted a dog!

When my father retired, he brought home a German shepherd puppy for the family. We were all delighted! My mother had grown up with beagles and was confident she could guide us in raising the new addition. BIG MISTAKE. The two breeds are nothing alike, and our puppy, Jade, grew into a huge territorial male who guarded our family and home with chilling determination.

One day Jade went after my boyfriend but only ripped clothing, not skin. Next, he went after

one of my little brother's friends, but Dad stopped him just in time. To make matters worse, both my boyfriend and my brother's friend were in the house at the time. They weren't intruders in the yard. Dad decided Jade had to go. His new owner knew German shepherds well and would use him as a guard dog. I was heartbroken. We only had Jade for a year and a half, but I grieved for a long time. My father announced a new dog was out of the question, and that was that.

Fast forward through college and graduation. I started seriously dating a young Navy corpsman (medic). He told me he planned on making the military his career, and that wives were half-jokingly referred to as having, "The toughest job in

the Navy.” But I’d been a “military brat” all my life and knew the score. We soon became engaged.

My new fiancé asked me what I wanted for a wedding present. Inspired by love, he told me, “The sky’s the limit!” I surprised the hell out of him when I said I wanted a dog, and his solemn promise that my pet would never be left behind. I didn’t even know if he was a dog lover, although his family had once owned a husky. But I was serious in my request. He carefully thought it over before replying. Naval men could be stationed all over the world: Italy, Japan, the Philippines, Hawaii, and the list went on, as did the lengthy quarantines for dogs entering the country. Some quarantines were six months long—if the dog even survived the lengthy, cold overseas flight in the cargo hold. My guy’s Navy brother had loved his overseas duty stations, and my fiancé might want to experience that, too. I knew my wish for a dog wasn’t a simple one.

But he came through for me. My future husband solemnly vowed that he would never put in for overseas duty, and I could get my dog, but with one condition. I nervously waited to hear what “the catch” would be. It was simple. I had to agree to never feed my dog from the table. That was it! We sealed our deal with a hug and a kiss, and I fell in love with him even more. My new husband would settle for being bounced from East Coast to West Coast and back again. His family was from Massachusetts, and after the honeymoon we went to the state’s “Dog Orphans” shelter to rescue “my dog.”

I went for the complete opposite of a German Shepherd—an Irish Setter. Happy, friendly, boisterous, good with strangers, and according to the books, a “lousy guard dog.” I knew Brandy and I were the right fit! We bonded right away. My husband worked long hours, different shifts, and was often teaching out of state. Brandy was my faithful pal, then a great babysitter to my two young children. But it seemed my bonny boy had a little German Shepherd in him himself. He prevented three break ins! We had the open door, then a broken window, and lastly a smashed lamp near an open window to prove it. What could have happened to a mother alone with her children if we’d abandoned my dog when we moved to a new base? I loved my protective buddy even more.

Brandy soon ignited my rabid “animal lover genes.” With my husband’s blessing, soon the kids and I had three dogs, one cat, two horses, a parrot, a cockatiel, two French Lop rabbits, five guinea pigs, and a chinchilla. Most were rescues, including one of the horses. My children grew up with a deep respect for all life, and learned that love also comes with responsibilities and dedication. The joys and memories we had with our many four-legged friends shaped us for the better.

I gained more than just a dog when I said I wanted one for my wedding present. I gained a husband who kept his word, paid the bills for our menagerie without complaint, and showed me what true love was—fulfilling his spouse’s dream. In his 26 years in the Navy, we never went overseas or left one animal behind. We moved to new duty stations with two carloads full of children and animals, and paid for horse transport.

Fast forward again 46 years. I’m down to one miniature dachshund and two parakeets. Brandy, my beloved Irish Setter, is long gone, but the man who promised to never separate us is still at my side. Turns out he’s an animal lover, too, and was all along. And you know what? I wouldn’t have it any other way. ■


*“He’s not your prince charming if he
doesn’t make sure you know that
you’re his princess.”*

—DEMI LOVATO



TED SLUPIK

The Wedding

THE WORLD ACCORDING *to* ROSEBUD *and* BRODYA decorative green leafy branch with small, oval-shaped leaves, positioned on the left side of the page.

THERAPY DOGS, ROSEBUD AND BRODY, are great friends. Together the two collies visit a nursing home and rehabilitation center on Sunday mornings. Usually, Rosebud and Brody appear as themselves, but often many seniors insist on calling the collies “Lad and Lassie,” remembering the movie star who appeared on TV Sunday nights back in the good old days. Fond recollections of loyal farm dogs stimulated easy conversations with residents. The shared stories of beloved pets brought back cherished memories, sometimes with happy tears, but always with a smile.

The residents always enjoy visiting, but especially get a kick out of special holiday visits when the two collies dress up to participate in special events or activities. Often their handlers even get in on the act, wearing costumes as well.

Rosebud was celebrating her birthday and the residents asked if we could have a birthday party, so the party was planned. After the cake with the obligatory singing of the “Happy Birthday” song, Rosebud opened her gifts. Her boyfriend Brody had a special surprise for her. A card was read aloud while Brody “proposed” to Rosebud by bowing in front of her and offering a gift of a pink bedazzled neck kerchief. Of course, Rosebud, who was trained to speak on command, woofed a resounding “YES!” The residents were ecstatic!

Every week after Rosebud’s birthday party, the residents kept asking for a wedding date and suggested a traditional June wedding


would be perfect. June 20th was set as the date, and every week from early May during Rosebud and Brody’s regular weekly visits, the residents would continually ask “how many more weeks until the wedding”? It was sweet to see the residents looking forward to this unique event. In fact some of them were inviting their family members. The pressure was on!

The big day was officially announced on the large activity calendar displayed on the bulletin board in the main hallway. The elegantly designed “puptials” invitations were delivered, the cakes and flowers were ordered, and the officiator was booked. The closer we got to the big day, the residents became more and more excited. In anticipation, those residents who were able to travel asked the facility to reserve the bus to take them shopping so they could buy wedding gifts for the happy couple. The dogs enjoyed many memorable gifts, but what the bride and groom gave the seniors in return was priceless. When older and in a nursing home, one doesn’t get invited to too many weddings!

Finally, the day arrived!

The participants were:

The beautiful bride, Rosebud, was dressed in a beautiful white satin gown, with lace trim and ruffles on the sleeves and hemline. The back of the bride’s exquisite gown was adorned with a satin bow. She also wore a veil of white tulle, trimmed with lace that complemented

A decorative green leafy branch with small, oval-shaped leaves, positioned on the right side of the page.

- the gown. Brody, the groom, was amazingly handsome. Nothing made this boy look better than the classic black tuxedo lined with a satin leopard print and a red bow tie.

Pixie, a Zellicon Papillion and sister of the bride, was the flower girl. Pixie was stunningly dressed in a purple multi-colored dress with a lilac satin bodice and the skirt comprised of lilac and pink roses made of tulle fit for a princess. The bodice was trimmed with a beautiful lilac satin rose and black bow. Nacho, a Cavachon, the best dog and recent therapy dog trainee-graduate, stole the show. Dressed in a black tuxedo with a bow tie, Nacho complemented the groom. With a wagging tail and darling face, wearing black tails put his cuteness rating over the top. Nacho was the crowd's favorite.

All of the residents dressed in their Sunday best, complete with jewelry. Some had invited family members to attend. Many of the ladies were honorary maids or matrons of honor. Every resident got a flower and a bottle of bubbles to help celebrate the day. Almost 40 residents attended. The processional started with the customary "Here Comes the Bride". Rosebud looked so gorgeous in her bridal gown, that all the ladies gasped with admiration.

During the ceremony, the dogs exchanged "I do" dog bones, which were enthusiastically devoured without any desire to share marital property. After the processional and while the entertainment music was played, everyone enjoyed cake (both humans and dogs).

For that day, that moment in time, everyone forgot their troubles. They were smiling, singing, happy, and young again, mostly because of these two special collies. During the ceremony, there were even a few tears shed!

Mostly though, the residents have come to love Rosebud and Brody. Dogs live a relatively short time compared to humans. They touch our lives in a profound way in those few short years. They instinctively know how to live life to the fullest every day. In doing so, they teach us a very valuable lesson that we should embrace; that every day is a gift! We were all reminded of this on the day of the wedding, but a month later, the residents are still talking about "the wedding," and many are now asking, "When's the baby shower?" ■



Music of the Event & Notes:

There was also plenty of music to commemorate the special event:

Pre-ceremony:

CHAPEL OF LOVE (THE DIXIE CUPS)
I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU (THE FLAMINGOS)
AT LAST (ETTA JAMES)
OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY (NATALIE COLE)
HERE COMES THE BRIDE (TRADITIONAL)

Post-ceremony:

TRUMPET VOLUNTARY (PURCELL)
UNCHAINED MELODY (THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS)
VOLARE' (DEAN MARTIN)
ONE FRIEND (DAN SEALS)
LASSIE (TV THEME)



TIPS & TACTICS

MERRIE MEYERS

Storytelling

WHETHER YOU ARE A WRITER and reader of fiction, or a reporter of non-fiction happenings, you are telling a story. Researchers tell us that regardless of the content, authors have only three seconds to engage and connect with readers. Three seconds. How can you make it count?

Few of us have an innate ability to tell a story effectively right out of the gate. There are classes in storytelling taught by best-selling authors (masterclass.com), more than 90 certification programs (coursera.org), a well-known audio program and radio program (The Moth) and even national festivals (storytellingcenter.net) dedicated to the art. But there are also some basic approaches to capturing reader interest in that fleeting three seconds.

Try some of these attention-getting approaches: using anecdotes or analogies, posing a thought-provoking question, featuring a meaningful quote, highlighting powerful data or providing detailed descriptions.

Anecdotes

Using a brief story helps to set the stage for the narrative. Reminiscing about a personal experience can reinforce an intended message. For example, before giving a teenager a lecture about coming home before curfew, a parent tells about a time when staying out late led to dire consequences.

Analogies

Analogies are engaging, accessible and they have a wow factor. Good analogies are scene

setters, and a comparison to another, well-known entity helps the reader grasp the nature of an object or an emotion. Comparing a building to another well-known landmark gives a reader a sense of size or presence, allowing the mind to move in the direction the author wants the reader to go. Readers can immediately identify with such analogies as, “blind as a bat,” or “finding a needle in a haystack.”

Thought-Provoking Questions

Questions that can be answered with a yes or no should be avoided. Based on reader perspectives, 50% of the audience may turn away, thinking the rest of the content doesn't pertain to them. Pose questions that offer intrigue and require a little thought. For example, “How have increasing food prices impacted Easter Egg hunts?”

Meaningful Quotes

Starting your content with a personal, powerful quote helps to humanize the subject and introduce additional levels to the story. “When I completed the New York City Marathon, I knew I could achieve even the most difficult goal.”

Powerful Data

Sometimes, data can be an effective strategy for capturing reader interest. For example, “It takes 1152 bees, 22,700 trips to make one jar.” That statement speaks volumes, or actually, ounces!

See TIPS & TACTICS pg 16 ►

CHEYENNE LORD

Unbreakable Bonds

In and Out of the Ring

2022 CYNOSPORT® CHAMPION TALKS ABOUT
A JOURNEY WITH HER DOG



BEV SERAFICA was just looking for a fun activity to do with her Parson Russell Terrier mix, Pixie, when the agility bug bit her hard in 2014. The sport quickly became a passion for the duo, who gave each other the experience they needed to compete successfully at the regional level. Bev's partnership with Pixie also taught her how to be a better trainer for her next dog, a Belgian Tervuren named Jedi, who joined her family in September 2017 as an 8-week-old from Haute Volée.

"Pixie was such a great dog to start agility with," Bev said. "Jedi is a very talented teammate with a tremendous amount of power and speed. He likes to do everything FAST. It definitely takes

an edgy handler with a lot of courage to step into the ring with a dog like him. There's no looking back sometimes!"

Bev and Jedi, now 5 years old, proved how well they work as a team at their first Cynosport® in December 2022, bringing home the Grand Prix 24 Championship and Overall 2022 Grand Championship. But this victory was almost out of reach for Bev, who was able to recover from a near-fatal brain aneurysm in 2020, only to have emergency back surgery on Christmas Day a year later.

"I was at risk for paralysis from the waist down due to some compressed nerves," Bev explained. "I was told I would not be able to run

for at least 6 to 12 months after the surgery, which meant Cynosport 2022 was probably off the table.”

Still, Bev and Jedi didn’t let that stop them. Bev worked on her recovery and got medical clearance to train agility again by mid-April, 2022, with the in-between months focused more on the training tricks useful in their everyday lives, such as Jedi picking up and retrieving items off the ground, pushing/pulling doors and cabinets, and even pushing the crosswalk button.

Staging a comeback

“During my recovery, Jedi had to adapt to a life that was a bit slower paced,” Bev said. “No running for me meant lots of walking. At first, we walked around a few blocks, then built up to a mile, and gradually increased to five miles a day. Jedi was still able to run, so we also worked a lot on his off-leash and recall skills. Having fantastic off-leash skills helped him get the most out of our daily exercise.”

While she wasn’t able to handle her dogs in the ring during that time, Bev also continued to bring Jedi and Pixie to agility class where her friends could run them.

Outside of dog sports, Bev is a classically trained pianist who teaches piano and violin and performs with an orchestra. She feels that even that training has played a part in the ring, helping her to become more aware of her motions and timing.

“I’ve learned the most about how to perform well musically from watching, listening, and giving guidance to my students,” Bev explained. “I did the same thing watching friends with my dogs. Being able to explain your handling plan to another handler is such an important skill! In turn, it helped me to better visualize my plan while on course. When I got back to training, my mind was on par with having to think within a split second.”

Bev kept her mind going both by helping her friends and by analyzing videos from her past competitions. She realized she got nervous mostly during snooker runs when she switched her plans midway and always put pressure on herself to do well. While her friends sent her course maps from their trials to help her practice strategy, Bev learned to switch her mindset as a handler.

“I had to maintain positivity during my recovery,” she said. “I kept reminding myself that I

would get better and get back to doing the things I love. When I got back to training and competing, I stopped putting that pressure to do well on myself and focused on just having fun. I had to trust my dogs to know their jobs, do my best, and know that I was already a success because I was out there running again.

“In hindsight, that time away from the sport helped tremendously,” she added. “We made the best out of the situation, and I started building up my mental game as a handler while Jedi learned to be a more patient and thoughtful dog. These were all things that were beneficial to our success in the agility ring.

“We also participated in dock diving, protection and nosework, contributing to how well-rounded Jedi is.”

“My best advice to newcomers is to build your connection with your dog outside of agility training,” Bev said. “Everything you learn together could be applied somewhere in your journey. And to my fellow competitors, it’s totally okay to take a break and come back to the sport later! Jedi and I are living proof that it will be even better when you come back refreshed.” ■

“

When I got back to training and competing, I stopped putting that pressure to do well on myself and focused on just having fun. I had to trust my dogs to know their jobs, do my best, and know that I was already a success because I was out there running again.

BEV SERAFICA

LEANNE PAETKAU

A DOG'S HALLMARK CHRISTMAS MOVIE

I

HAVE NEVER BEEN A FAN of Hallmark Christmas movies and certainly had no desire for my life to become one. The contrived plot, cheesy scenery and predictable outcome never appealed to me. Dreyfus, my bearded Collie mix seemed to have other ideas.

We had recently moved back to my home province after living two years in Southern Alberta. I was burnt out after practicing veterinary emergency medicine and yearned for a quieter pace of life. Dreyfus was happy to be around friends and family who would sneak him treats and snacks. The doggy daycare attached to my new vet clinic was also an added bonus.

I had had a few disastrous dating experiences in Alberta – if you weren't a fan of dogs then there was no hope with me, or with Dreyfus. One gentleman claimed to love dogs and even had one of his own, but when they got a bit muddy on a walk he insisted on locking them outside. This would just not do for Dreyfus, and he certainly let his feelings known. We broke things off the next day. With all my recent life changes, I was ready to take a break from dating, settle down and focus on life with just Dreyfus. (Lonely vet moves home with her dog, settles down preparing for the holidays in her new house... clearly not Hallmark material).

Before I continue with the story there are a few things you need to understand about Dreyfus. Dreyf was one of the most intelligent dogs I had

ever met; he could escape from any kennel, open doors and cupboards, and was food driven. If there was a way to get to the food, he would find it. Dreyfus also loved people and had a quiet calm demeanor that seemed to comfort those around him; so, when an add popped up in the newspaper from an organization looking for volunteers to become therapy dogs I jumped on the chance.

We progressed quickly through the screening process thanks to Dreyf's charm and calm demeanor and graduated to public access training in early Dec. The trainers were very happy with his progress and wanted to test him out in a busy public environment. This is where we meet the love interest in our story.

Enter Steven – a part time firefighter and dog trainer who helps train therapy and service dogs for disabled children. Having been recently separated, Steven is also not keen or interested in romance and has a strong dislike for Hallmark Christmas movies. The idea of bringing a new trainee and her dog into a crowded mall around Christmas was not appealing. In fact Steven had planned on staying in the office all day but had this assignment pawned off on him from another trainer. Looking back Steve admitted to me that he was grumpy that day until I showed up. I like to think Dreyfus was what cheered him up, but Steve insists it was the cute shy vet.

So, we have the lonely burnt-out veterinarian, with a handsome charming dog and a dog trainer/

firefighter who has sworn off love come together to wander around a crowded mall at Christmas. Clearly not a Hallmark movie in the making.

Right away I noticed something different about the way Dreyfus was around Steven. I was impressed with how focused Dreyfus was with him around us and food. What I mean by that was Dreyfus didn't care about food when we wandered by the local Tim Hortons. This normally unsatiated canine was polite, attentive and on his best behavior. Weird. Dreyfus was also unusually charming, performing all his known tricks which included smiling on command and retrieving objects. No food distractions or interruptions, just happy to be out with his human on a Sunday afternoon. Steve insisted on buying coffee and we settled down at a booth to make small talk while evaluating how Dreyfus handled the people and crumbs.

Dreyfus decided this was the perfect time to take a nap at my feet, which meant I had to continue making small talk with the cute firefighter/dog trainer (in my defense I did not know he was a firefighter at the time, but it adds to the Hallmark movie ambiance) and it turns out we had a lot in common – he also loved dogs. After it was clear Dreyfus could handle a café, it was time to hit the mall.

Public crowds were not a new thing for Dreyfus, he often travelled with me when we were in Alberta. I let him take the lead and wander. I figured Dreyfus would follow his nose to the food court and plot his next meal but instead Dreyfus decided to head to the local lingerie store. I was so focused on the training that it took me a mortifying 5 minutes to realize where we were when Dreyfus pushed his way passed some pink frilly panties. Steve, to his credit, thought this was hilarious and shared a good chuckle with Dreyf, who stared up at both of us tail wagging, head draped in the pink frilly strips of fabric.

We continued to a section of the mall where four wide corridors lined with shops meet in the middle. Time had flown by, and we were already due back at the office. I wasn't in a hurry to get back and neither was Steve. There were large sky-

lights above, Christmas music playing softly in the background, and I was, for the first time in a while enjoying spending time with a kind gentleman who seemed to like my dog. To be clear though, not in a Hallmark movie type way.

Enjoying this new Romeo-like role, Dreyfus upped the stakes by circling behind me and then Steve, getting us entangled in the leash. The rest is history, as Dreyfus had Pongo'd us, having watched too many Hallmark Christmas movies. ■



President's Column

► CONTINUED from pg 3

It should be noted that dues have nothing to do with the writing contest. The writing contest is gargantuan, and is our main source of revenue. Dues don't even cover postage for certificates and medals. They are completely separate from the writing contest.

I, for one, am impressed that we can still manage to stretch \$50.00 as far as we do. Of course, we writers are known for living with less, aren't we?

This business of making "do" with dues would not happen without all of the help from our steadfast officers, board members and volunteers.

I appreciate all of you.

Therese Backowski

Therese Backowski

DWAA President



Emelise Baughman, Secretary
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TIPS & TACTICS

► CONTINUED from pg 11

Detailed Descriptions

Detailed descriptions create vivid images that convey sensory details, placing the reader into the story. Unlike concise writing, which offers only facts, descriptive writing paints a visual picture. For example, "They walked through the rain to cross the street," is more concise than writing "The rainwater seeped into their shoes causing them to squeak as they tried to cross the street".

Finally, practice makes perfect. Each technique requires attention to detail and several attempts to get it just right. Practice is critical to perfecting both written and visual telling of tales. ■