

RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA



SUMMER 2023

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2020-2022 FINAL RESULTS

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Tips & Tactics

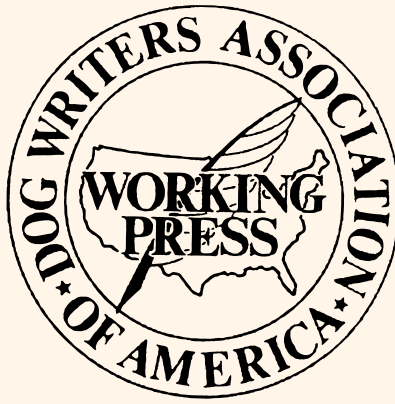
10 TIPS FOR LANDING
A LITERARY AGENT

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Writing with Distractions

FROM OUR FURRY FRIENDS

The **HUMOR** *Issue*



Ruff Drafts

Send all material to Merrie Meyers
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Spring, February 15
Summer, May 15
Fall, August 15
Winter, November 15

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P R E S I D E N T ' S C O L U M N

Writing Competition is a Wrap!

President's Note: Merrie Meyers and Marsha Pugh are unique humans. They do anything for almost anybody. Well, at least most of the time... In this issue, Merrie wrote my column for me! I have nothing more to say, sort of. Thank you, Merrie.



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



AS YOU MAY KNOW, DWAA's 2020-2022 Writing Competition has finally concluded. The finalists and winners announced were announced by Contest Chair Dr. Barbara Magera on May 30 via a video link and posted on our Facebook pages and website. (Check with website and Facebook pages for complete details).

Let's give a shout out to the 2020-2022 Writing Competition Contest Committee Members; Therese Backowski, Lisa Begin-Kruysman, Karen Harbert, chair Barbara Magera, Merrie Meyers and the indefatigable Marsha Pugh. These women gave of their time, willingly, to handle the behind the scenes activity. As if it wasn't enough that there was a wealth of submissions to evaluate after a two year gap in the event, this year's competition was plagued with multiple technology challenges; entries not uploading correctly, reports not being generated correctly, and links to online submissions breaking and having to be recreated as PDFs for judging purposes.

The entire process took FOREVER, and so we are also grateful to everyone who entered for their patience with what can only be called an exercise in exasperation.

Also, thanks to the 80 or so judges who volunteered their time to review and score the 800+ entries in this year's competition. Many judges evaluated numerous categories and stepped up repeatedly to shore up categories where additional judges were needed. Although I've judged entries for several years, this year I got to judge both written and multimedia submissions. The quality of the work in the digital field is impressive. Of course, we need to shout out to our special award sponsors. They offer contestants recognition for focused work and rightly so. *But most of all, we need to thank the entrants for participating and sharing outstanding writing about the social, scientific and sentimental aspects of the human-canine connection.* Despite significant delays in wrapping up the 2020-2022 competition, submissions for the 2022-2023 competition will begin in a few months. Stay tuned.

Therese Backowski

Therese Backowski

DWAA President

RUFFDRAFTS

Summer 2023

HUMOR

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DWAA Writing Competition

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Swimming Was Her Passion!

BY TONI EAMES

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Master Woodstock

BY PATRICIA DALY-LIPE

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Tips & Tactics

10 Tips for Landing a Literary Agent

BY MAGGIE MARTON

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A Toss, or Several, Away from Concentration

BY LINDA O. JOHNSTON

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Roscoe the Resilient

CYNTHIA CALLAHAN

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Twin's Antics

BARBARA E. MAGERA

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The Dune Buggy Dog

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

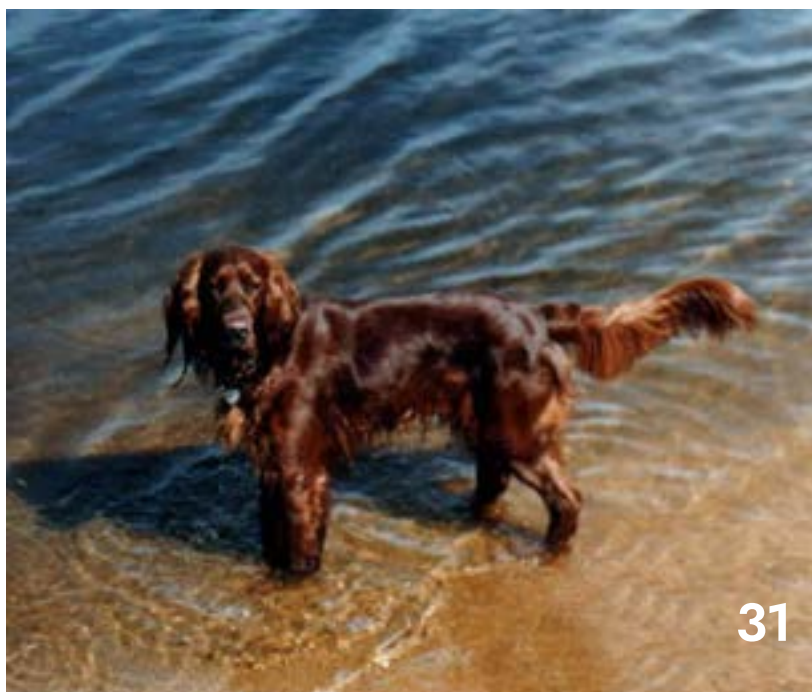
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Dolphins on the Wing

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR FRIENDS,

This editor's column is full of thanks and gratitude.

First, thanks to those who submitted items that support the theme of this edition: The Dogs Who Inspire Our Stories - Humor. One of my greatest pleasures as Ruff Drafts (RD) editor is receiving your submissions in my email inbox. I really am amazed at your breath of experiences and multiple ways in which you express them - be it poetry, short stories, essays or even illustrations. Working on RD is a bright spot in my life.

As a cancer survivor, I know that laughter is, if not the best medicine, surely an important element in any care plan. I am grateful for my dogs, who give me a chuckle every day as they solve problems and reorder the world according to their interests. I start and end my day with my 16-year-old Jack Russell, Sunny, barking out a wakeup call to me and my 13-year-old Bichon, Danny. Left to our own resources, Danny and I would blissfully snooze through the sunrise. However Sunny finds that totally unacceptable. There are bikes to bark at and numerous rocks and grassy patches to mark.

Each dog is a trickster and comedian in his own way. Two summers ago, I was a foster failure, with no prior experience with Bichon ownership (or being owned by a Bichon). Danny is a slightly pudgy bundle of white fluff. He prefers to take limited on-leash walks, staying close to home. He walks with purpose, using his back legs like mini pogo sticks to propel him forward. He is also a serious napper. His favorite positions are upside down or on his side, with one leg pointed upward to the ceiling. I'm told this is a sign that the dog feels safe and secure, but he could also be prepping for a "Playdog" photo shoot, the canine equivalent of Playboy or Playgirl (kidding).

In addition to his desire to patrol the neighborhood in the pre-dawn hours while on a leash, Sunny likes to roam the neighborhood

unsupervised. I think he channels Harry Houdini. Most of the time, I see him trotting a house or two away and I can grab him as he zips past me. He's been returned to me by an unhappy neighbor, carrying him by the scruff of his neck with outstretched arms because he was soaking wet after doing laps in their pool. He's also enjoyed taking off after a bath and diving into a mud puddle because, well why not! Just the other night, unbeknownst to me, a gate was left open by a delivery driver. When I opened the door at 10 p.m. so he could relieve himself, off he went. I quickly followed; a flashlight in my hand and my heart in my throat. As I was doing a sweep of the bushes bordering the house next door,



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

See EDITOR'S COLUMN pg 32 ►





DWAA Writing Competition

NOMINEES *and* WINNERS

2020-2022
Regular Categories

A. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND COLUMNS

1. ARTICLE – HEALTH OR GENERAL CARE

🏆 “My Dog Needed Advanced Cancer Treatment. The Price Tag Stunned me.”
by Kim Kavin

“Suspect Cataracts? Don’t Wait”
by Eileen Fatcheric

“The Looming Concern About Copper in Dog Food” by Eileen Fatcheric

“The Double Merle Gene”
by Joanne Anderson

“Two Total Hip Replacements”
by Joanne Anderson

2. ARTICLE – BEHAVIOR OR TRAINING

🏆 “The Over-The-Top Excitable Dog”
by Eileen Fatcheric

3. ARTICLE – RESCUE

🏆 “The Dumping of Pandemic Pets”
by Raj Tawney

“Daisy’s Valentine Miracle”
by Joanne Anderson

“Raising Funds for Pet Rescue Efforts in Ukraine” by Joanne Anderson

4. ARTICLE – ART OR ANY OTHER TOPIC

🏆 “The Last Hope Project – High School Art Show at Starbucks” by Joanne Anderson

“Tribute to Mary Bloom”
by Joanne Anderson

B. MAGAZINES

5. SINGLE, RELATED OR ALL-BREED

🏆 AKC Gazette by Bud Boccone

Whippet Review Magazine
by Bo Bengston

The Lassie Factor by Ace Mask

April/May issue of Dogster Magazine
by Laurie Katims

AKC Family Dog (Jan/Feb 2022)
by Mara Bovsun

6. ANNUAL, SPECIAL INTEREST or ANY OTHER SUBJECT

🏆 Chronicle of the Dog Summer 2021 by
Devon Hubbard Sorlie & Chris Guzicki

Chronicle of the Dog by Devon Hubbard
Sorlie & Chris Guzicki

C. MAGAZINE ARTICLES

7. ARTICLE – HEALTH OR GENERAL CARE

- 🏆 “Will the Rattlesnake Vaccine Protect My Dog?” by CJ Puotinen
- “A Short Life, A Big Purpose”
by Bridget Greene
- “Why a Pet Microchip Can Save Your Dog’s Life” by Mary Schwager
- “You Can Manage Diabetes”
by Debra Eldredge
- “Back on Track” by Jeff Grognet

8. ARTICLE – BEHAVIOR OR TRAINING

- 🏆 “Displacement Behaviors Can Be Subtle but Significant” by Melissa Hatfield
- “Talking Sports: They Smell a Rat”
by Lindsey Dobruck
- “Curious about Curiosity” by Melissa Hatfield
- “Using Food to Engage Your Dog”
by Arden Moore
- “How to Help an Aggressive or Reactive Dog”
by Rachel Brix

9. ARTICLE – RESCUE

- 🏆 “Whale of a Dog” by Jodi Helmer
- “Shorty Rossie to the Rescue”
by Rachel Phelps
- “Hope Found Me” by Christy Doherty
- “Saving Detainees & Dogs, One Life at a Time” by Pat Miller
- “Dog Lovers Unite for Pets in Ukraine”
by Laurie Katims

10. ARTICLE – BREED

- 🏆 “Battle Buddies” by Jen Reeder
- “First in Our Hearts” by Jen Reeder
- “Striking Gold” by Debra Lampert-Rudman
- “Wrinkles in Time” by Elaine Gewirtz
- “The Right Puff” by Lindsey Dobruck

11. ARTICLE/COLUMN – ART OR ANY OTHER TOPIC

- 🏆 “A Comet to a Candle” by Sarah Montague
- “Dogs Who Go the Distance”
by Elaine Gewirtz
- “Lawsuit Woes: What to do if You Find Yourself in Litigation” by Melissa Hatfield
- “Does Fido Need a Lawyer” by Mary Schwager
- “Beauty & the Beach” by Jen Reeder

D. CANINE OR ALL-ANIMAL NEWSPAPERS OR NEWSLETTERS

12. CANINE OR ALL-ANIMAL NEWSPAPERS OR NEWSLETTERS

- 🏆 AKC Canine Partners News by Penny Leigh
- Dog Watch Newsletter by Cynthia Foley
& Debra Eldredge

E. CANINE OR ALL-ANIMAL NEWSPAPERS OR NEWSLETTERS ARTICLES

13. ARTICLE – ANY TOPIC

- 🏆 “Elbow Lameness” by Debra Eldredge
- “Let’s Stay Safe This Summer”
by Eileen Fatcheric
- “Vestibular Syndrome Symptoms”
by Debra Eldredge

F. ONLINE

14. BLOGS

- 🏆 Dorothy Wills-Raferly - FiveSibes Blog & K9 Epilepsy Resource Library
- Jenise Carl - Happy-Go-Doodle

15. WEBSITES

- 🏆 Lauren Katims - Dogster.com
- AJ Arapovic - Showsight Magazine.com
- Teoti Anderson - A Dog’s Best Friend.com
- Dawn Secord - A Dog Bling.com

16. ONLINE MAGAZINE — no entries

17. ONLINE NEWSLETTER — no entries

G. ONLINE ARTICLES OR BLOG ENTRIES

18. ONLINE ARTICLE OR BLOG ENTRY — HEALTH OR GENERAL CARE

🏆 “Escape from Icy Waters”
by Deborah Fazenbaker

“Beware” by Suzanne Smith

“Feel Like It’s a Day at the Spa” by Jenise Carl

“The Best Flea Treatment for Cats & Dogs”
by Kaitlyn Wells

“Guide to Rawhide Chews for Dogs & the
Latest Alternatives” by Rachel Phelps

19. ONLINE ARTICLE OR BLOG ENTRY — BEHAVIOR OR TRAINING

🏆 “Dog to Dog Greetings: Your Dog Doesn’t
Need to Say Hi” by Sassafras Lowrey

“How to Train a Doberman Pinscher Puppy”
by Yasmine S. Ali

“Do Therapy Animals Enjoy Their Work?”
by Rise VanFleet

“Pasco County K-9s See Increase in Demand
Following Laundrie Case” by Miranda Grace

“How do I Teach My Dog to Put His Nose in
My Hands” by Kate Basedow

20. ONLINE ARTICLE OR BLOG ENTRY - RESCUE

🏆 “After Heartbreaking Abuse, Boone the Therapy
Dog Wins Top Title at American Humane
Hero Dog Awards” by Jessica Comstock

“My Greatest Risk (& Biggest Reward); Why
Rescuing My Dog was the Best Decision I
Ever Made” by Jodi Helmer

“German Shepherd Saves Owner’s Life during
a Stroke Just Months After Adoption”
by Jen Reeder

“Shelter Dog Spots Girl Having Anxiety Attack
& Rushes to Help” by Mary Schwager

“Adopting a Dog During the Pandemic”
by Raj Tawney

21. ONLINE ARTICLE OR BLOG ENTRY — ANY OTHER TOPIC

🏆 “Comfort Dogs Build a Bridge to Healing
from Uvalde to Sandy Hook”
by Courtney Campbell

“Woman with Dementia Rescued After 3
Days Thanks to Loyal Lab’s Barks”
by Jen Reeder

“A Heart Dog’s Origin Story” by Bryn Souza

“Easy Tips for Eco-Friendly Dog Training”
by Maggie Marton

“Dogs: Our Unsung Heroes” by Cori Solomon

H. GRAPHICS

22. SINGLE PHOTO

🏆 “Boxer Lincoln” by Naomi Gibbs

“Apache the Unadoptable Dog Turned Cover
Dog” by Ryan Brix

“Labrador Retriever Flynn”
by Elizabeth Arellano

“Effie” by Barbara Magera

“ISCA Memo Cover 10-2021” by Dawn Secord

23. SERIES OF PHOTOS

🏆 “Boarding Enrichment Series” by Ryan Brix

“Photographing Your Cavalier”
by Barbara Magera

“Enrichment Series” by Ryan Brix

24. SINGLE ILLUSTRATION OR PAINTING

🏆 “Heatstroke in Dogs” by Ann Hohenhaus

“Scottish Deerhound” by Sandy Bergstrom

“No Ghoulish Green Monsters Here” (cover)
by Dawn Secord

“Irish Setter Club of America Memo” (cover)
by Dawn Secord

“Garden of Love: A Dog & Love Alphabet
Party” by Debra Lampert-Rudman

25. SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIONS OR PAINTINGS

🏆 “Doggie Language: A Dog Lover’s Guide to
Understanding Your Best Friend”
by Lili Chin



"Garden of Love: A Dog & Flower Alphabet Party" by Debra Lampert-Rudman

"No Ghoulish Green Monsters Here" (illustrations) by Dawn Secord

26. POSTERS, CALENDARS, BROCHURES OR PAMPHLETS

- 🏆 "Lazyriver 2022 Calendar" by Susan Norrie
- "Please Keep Us Cool" (poster) by Dorothy Wills-Raferly

I. HUMOR, POETRY, SHORT FICTION, ESSAYS/EDITORIALS

27. HUMOR

- 🏆 "How to Have a Successful Real Estate Open House with Three Basenjis in Residence" by Marcia Woodard
- "A Little Dog'll Do Ya" by Chelle Martin
- "Basenjis in My Dating Profile" by Marcia Woodard
- "Vincent Van Dog" by Elizabeth Jarrell
- "Badminster Dog Show on SNL: How We'd Help the Troubled Dogs in This Hilarious Skit" by Austin Cannon

28. POETRY

- 🏆 "Canine Social Media" by Catherine Lawton
- "Tomato Girl" by Debra Lampert-Rudman

29. ESSAYS SHORT FICTION

- 🏆 "A Day in the Life of Puppies" by Barbara Magera

30. EDITORIALS

- 🏆 "Passages: Chollie's Story" by Miranda Carney
- "Ban Puppy Mill Stores" by Joanne Anderson
- "Please Don't Write Off Shelter Dogs Because of Major Biden" by Jen Reeder
- "Why do Dogs Win Our Hearts" by Martha Everett
- "Living Large" by Tiffany Butler

J. OTHER MEDIA

31. VIDEO, DVD OR TV BROADCASTS

- 🏆 "Multimodal Management of Arthritis" by Chris Zink
- "How to Brush Your Dog's Teeth" by Kaitlyn Wells & H. Boone
- "Picking a Puppy - 4 Steps to Evaluate Puppy Structure" by Chris Zink
- "Notes from the Schwarzman Animal Medical Center ER" by Carly Fox
- "Remembering 9-11" by Dennis Sprung

32. PODCAST

- 🏆 "Down & Back: Stories from the AKC Archives" by Melissa Olund & Bud Boccone
- "Pet Emergencies with AMC's Dr. Anne Marie Zollo" by Ann Hohenhaus
- "Dog Training DisrUPted, UPWARD Dogology" by Billie Groom
- "Ring-Ready LIVE!" by AJ Arapovic
- "Bobby Bones Salutes Service Dog" by Arden Moore

33. RADIO OR OTHER AUDIO

- 🏆 "American Veterinarians Volunteer at Ukrainian Borders" by Arden Moore
- "The Corgi Song" by Monty Drover
- "Meet Cooper: Big Dog on Campus" by Arden Moore

A FEW WORDS *from* *the* CHAIR...

DWAA is an important organization because we are the American advocate for all things Canine. I strongly believe in the work accomplished by all the talented writers, artists, photographers & other creative spirits who support DWAA. In this modern age where techno lingo often replaces concise and clear writing, it is refreshing to know many are still moved by the muse.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORK submitted to the contest was impressive. I was particularly moved by the children's books which revealed an important message. I envision a young mom or dad reading a heartwarming dog story to their child before bedtime. We need more of these types of positive books for our kids. Stories with meaning are far more memorable than a child playing a computer game.

The past few years of a pandemic, hurricanes & wars scarred our hearts & minds with fear, however; the warm & fuzzy dog memoirs supported our psyche. Writers shared their heartwarming stories of life with their favorite canine. These tales gave us hope & courage to face the future challenges of our uncertain world.

The technical writings and media explaining various aspects of canine health are very much appreciated. I wish there was an equivalent for humans afflicted with a chronic disease.

For those prolific writers, I encourage you to pursue future writing about these topics:

- How canines provide comfort to students who fear gun violence at school.
- How canines provide unconditional love & acceptance of kids with disabilities.
- Teaching the family dog how to hear what their owner cannot. Meaning deafness is an increasing problem in the modern world.

Childhood obesity is an evergrowing increasing problem. Replace computer time with canine play time. Encourage kids to get outside & romp with a dog. Still today, in some cultures, kids learn to fear the presence of a dog. Good dog books with a happy outcome can change these perceptions.

I have patients whose full time job is interaction with computer simulations ... all day & every day. It's tragic if the patient is single with a demanding job. Their only social interaction is with their dog. This is an increasing scenario of the modern world. The adverse effects of this myopic lifestyle are only recently recognized. Nurturing a canine relationship is the patient's only lifeline with reality. If the dog should pass, societal expectations are to "chin up" & move on. Serious depression and even self-harm are often the outcome. We as writers need to educate employees, families & society about the critical importance of canine-human bonding and the impact of dog loss.

I am excited about the future of DWAA. The talent of our colleagues is inspiring. I encourage you to invite even novice writers, poets, photographers and artists to join us on our creative journey as we explore all things canine by joining DWAA.

Happy writing!!!


Barb

Barbara Magera

DWAA Writing Competition Chair

K. CLUB PUBLICATIONS (NATIONAL, REGIONAL OR LOCAL)

34. MAGAZINE FORMAT


-  “The Courier” by Susan Myrick

35. NEWSLETTER FORMAT


-  “Dawg Scoop” by Jo Unbehaun

L. CLUB PUBLICATION

36. ARTICLE – ANY TOPIC


-  “Your Cirnechi & Their Smile”
by Debra Eldredge
- “Best Friends” by Brynn McGuire
- “Cynosport – Bound; Running an Atypical Dog with Optimism, Patience & Love”
by Cheyenne Lord

37. REGULAR COLUMN OR SERIES

-  “The Great Chase: Sealyhams in Service: Therapy Dogs; Sealyham Temperament: Genetics or Environment” by Bev Thompson
- “Walking Your Cavalier Part II”
by Barbara Magera
- “Recollections: History Unfolding, An Interview with Maryanne B. Murray”
by Maryanne Murray
- “Planning Ahead” by June Greig

M. CLUB SPECIAL PUBLICATION

38. CLUB SPECIAL PUBLICATION


-  “2021 DPCA YR IN REVIEW”
by Susan Hurrell
- “2020 DPCA YR IN REVIEW”
by Susan Hurrell

N. BOOKS


39. SINGLE, RELATED OR ALL-BREED

-  Extraordinary Old Dogs
by Laura Greaves
- Dogs of the Decade by Deborah Thompson

40. RESCUE OR ADOPTION

-  Returned by Amy Victoria Gilvary
- I Am Dexter by Steve Walter Pollinger
& Dr. Dru Pollinger


41. TRAINING OR SPORTS

-  A Dog Show Companion
by Leila Grandemange
- The Original Rocket Recall
by Lisa Lyle Waggoner
- Chew This Journal by Sassafras Lowery
- Positive Herding 101 by Barb Buchmayer & Sally Adam
- Component Training for TD & TDU
by Ed Presnall


42. BEHAVIOR, HEALTH OR GENERAL CARE

-  Doggie Language: A Dog Lover’s Guide to Understanding Your Best Friend
by Lili Chin
- Proactive Pet Parenting: Anticipating Pet Health Problems Before They Happen
by Lowell Ackerman
- Canine Enrichment for the Real World Workbook by Allie Bender & Emily Strong
- Puppy Socialization: What It Is & How To Do It by Eileen Anderson & Marge Rogers
- Discovering Your Dog by Chris Zink

43. HUMAN ANIMAL BOND

-  Solomon: One Dog’s Improbable, Two-year, Thousand-mile Journey to Find Home
by Gail Gilmore
- Poppy in the Wild by Teresa Rhyne
- BRAVO! Confessions of a Competition Obedience Junkie by Willard Bailey
- Dogopolis: How Dogs & Humans Made Modern New York, London & Paris
by Chris Pearson
- The Dog Who Came to Christmas by Callie Smith Grant

44. REFERENCE

-  Beware of Dog: How Media Portrays the Aggressive Canine by Melissa Crawley

45. FICTION, ADULT OR HUMOR

- 🏆 The Hiding Place by Paula Munier
- The Wedding Plot by Paula Munier
- An Embarrassment of Itches by M.K. Dean
- Smoke Screen by Karen Harbert

**46. CHILDREN – PICTURE BOOKS
(UP TO AGE 3YO)**

- 🏆 Dog Says, Cat Says by Marilyn Singer
- A Family Looks Like Love by Kaitlyn Wells & Sawyer Cloud
- No Ghoulish Green Monsters Here by Dawn Secord
- Best Day Ever! by Marilyn Singer

**47. CHILDREN – EARLY READERS
(AGES 4 TO 8YO)**

- 🏆 Rats in the White House by Judith Ann Tabler
- Bella & Blue: Bella Meets Blue by Berrie Torgan-Randall

Twass the Night Before Christmas: A First for Gus by Sherry Roberts

Tucker Finds His Forever Home by Beth Cherryholmes Miller & Erica Schindler

A Dog's Best Friend: A Sesame Street Guide to Caring for Your Dog by Megan Ciskowski

**48. CHILDREN – YOUNG READERS
(AGES 9 TO 12YO)**

- 🏆 Dog Daycare by Kathryn Kazoleas
- Garden of Love: A Dog & Flower Alphabet Party by Debra Lampert-Rudman
- Ill-Served by Susan J. Kroupa
- Switched by Bruce Hale
- Dog Park by Kathryn Kazoleas

**49. CHILDREN – YOUNG ADULT
(AGES 13 TO 18YO)**

- 🏆 Color Me Canine (Terrier) by Sandy Bergstrom Mesmer



CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE WINNERS!



2022-2022 Special Award Winners



AKC CLUB PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club, this award is for the best article in a national, regional or local AKC club publication in magazine or newsletter format. The award consists of a plaque and a \$500 cash grant.

🏆 “Mitral Valve Disease in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels” by Barbara Magera



AKC REUNITE MICROCHIP AWARENESS AWARD

Sponsored by AKC Reunite for the best article on how microchips can be used in pet recovery. Articles can include recovery stories of how dogs were identified or returned to owners, permanent identification in cases of theft, uses of microchips to confirm identity of dogs in competition, etc. The award is a \$1,000 cash grant.

🏆 “How A Microchip Helped Rescue A Tibetan Mastiff With Breeder 1800 Miles Away” by Elaine Gewirtz



AKC RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club, this award goes to the writer of a print or online feature article that best educates pet owners about responsible dog ownership. The award consists of a plaque and a \$500 cash grant. To enter, submit one article, which must also be entered in this year's contest in one of the regular categories.

🏆 “Puppy Obedience Training: Tips For A Successful Approach” by Amy Shojai



AKC FAMILY DOG AWARD

Sponsored by the American Kennel Club, this award is for the best writing (including books, articles and blog posts) about any or all of the good manners programs under the AKC Family Dog umbrella, including AKC Therapy Dog, AKC Trick Dog, AKC Canine Good Citizen, AKC Community Canine, Urban CGC and AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy. While participating in these activities that are fun for both dogs and people, dogs become well socialized and develop a lifelong bond with their owners. This award consists of a \$500 cash grant.

🏆 “Tucker Finds His Forever Home” by Beth Miller



THE CANINE SCRIBBLES AWARD

Sponsored by Canine Scribbles, LLC, this award is for the best article that promotes the reasons to own a purebred dog. The fiction or nonfiction article of 1000 to 1500 words must be published in a print or online publication. The focus of the article should exemplify the virtues of owning a specific purebred dog. A high-resolution JPG image (at least 300 dpi) should accompany the article that depicts the dog about which the article is written. The article should be clearly and succinctly written, and should outline the advantages of purebred dog ownership, with a unique journalistic voice. \$350 cash grant.

🏆 “How To Help Clients Reduce The Stress Of A Finding A Puppy & End Up With The Dog Of Their Dreams” by Debra Eldredge



**AMERICAN LEGION BRICK
MEMORIAL POST 348**

THE CAPTAIN WILLIAM LEWIS JUDY AWARD

Sponsored by American Legion Post 348 of Brick Township, New Jersey. For a submission in any form of media that educates the public about the important role our military dogs play in our Armed Forces, including issues affecting their emotional and physical care during their training, active service and retirement. Congratulations to The American Legion as it Celebrates its 100 Years Anniversary. The award consists of a \$350 cash grant.

🏆 "Down & Back: From The AKC Archives" by Melissa Olund & Bud Boccone



THE DOGSTER HEALTH & WELLNESS AWARD

This award recognizes the article/column that did the best to promote home healthcare awareness — identifying health and wellness best practices that dog owners can carry out at home for the dogs they love. Dogster helps dogs by helping dog owners and wants to recognize an outstanding written piece that does the same. \$500 cash grant.

🏆 "Can Dogs Eat Bones?" by Paula Fitzsimmons

**LISA & RICHARD
KRUYSMAN
CINDY & JACK BEGIN**

THE MANETTE BEGIN-LOUDON MEMORIAL AWARD

Sponsored by Lisa Begin-Kruysman. Presented to the writer/producer of a work that promotes awareness of the challenges faced by those who advocate for dogs included in the "Bully Breed" category, encompassing, but not limited to, topics centered on Breed Specific Legislation (BSL), Dog Fighting Rings and breed discrimination in general. The award consists of a \$300 grant.

🏆 "Guide To How To Train A Pit Bull & Why It Is So Important" by Rachel Brix



FEAR FREE DOG ENRICHMENT AWARD

Sponsored by Fear Free, LLC, this award is for an article, book, blog, TV segment, radio spot, video, column or other creative media formats that best educates, promotes, or demonstrates how enrichment activities (exercise, food puzzles, scent training, etc.) can benefit a dog's emotional—not just physical—well-being and the role this has in their overall health. This may also include topics relating to how the resulting benefits of such enrichment to the dog's emotional well-being can help set them up for more successful veterinary visits in the future, thus living a happier, healthier life. This award consists of a \$2,000 cash grant and a one-of-a-kind commemorative award.

🏆 "Call Bravo K911" by Penny Leigh



THE GREY MUZZLE AWARD

Sponsored by The Grey Muzzle Organization, this award goes to the best article, book, blog, TV segment, radio spot, video, column or other creative media format that best educates, promotes, or demonstrates to the public the plight of at-risk senior dogs. This may include stories about special programs at a rescue or shelter that enable older best friends to retain their homes or find new forever homes, Seniors for Seniors programs, medical victories, hospice care for homeless dogs or other ways in which communities and/or individuals are helping to make sure no old dog dies alone or afraid. The winner will receive a \$500 cash prize and a commemorative plaque.

🏆 "Passages: Chollie's Story" by Miranda Grace Carney



THE HARRISON STEPHENS INSPIRATIONAL FEATURE AWARD

Named in honor of Harrison Stephens, a newspaper editor who wrote thought-provoking features marked by journalistic integrity and humor until his death just before his 100th birthday. This award is for a feature article that highlights the human-canine bond and leaves the reader with a smile. Potential topics include working dogs (or a lazy dog with a winning personality), or dog-centric nonprofits that promote positive outcomes for pets and people. The award is sponsored by Sally and Tom Reeder and consists of a \$300 grant.

🏆 “A Malinois In A Wiener Dog Suit” by Mara Bovsun

JAMES COLASANTI, JR.

JAMES COLASANTI, JR. POETRY AWARD

For a poem/poetry which best exemplifies the unconditional love of a dog. Sponsored by James Colasanti Jr. The award is a \$200 cash grant.

🏆 “Tomato Girl” by Debra Lampert-Rudman



DWAA JUNIOR WRITER AWARD

Sponsored by DWAA for writers under 18 years of age. This award is to recognize and encourage young writers who exhibit talent, resourcefulness, dedication and integrity in their writing about dogs and dog-related topics. Award: \$400.00 cash grant per category, a DWAA Maxwell Medallion, and lapel pin.

- Category: Ages 10-12
- Category: Ages 13-14
- Category: Ages 15-17

🏆 “Growing Up Corgi” by Theodore Bernstein
From the Category: Ages 10-12



THE RIO AWARD

Sponsored by Jen Reeder and Bryan Fryklund in honor of their beloved Labrador retriever mix, Rio, this award is for an article, book or essay that profiles a dog who changed someone's life in a profoundly positive way. The award consists of a \$300 cash prize.

🏆 Kenzo: A Love Story by Debby McMullen



THE SLEEPYPOD PET SAFETY AWARD

Sponsored by Sleepypod, this award is for the best article or book that shares tips for pet safety and/or anecdotes of dogs helped by owners who take safety precautions. The award consists of a \$500 cash grant.

🏆 “Why a Pet Microchip Can Save Your Dog's Life” by Mary Schwager



UPWARD DOGOLOGY THE 'OUTDOOR ADVENTURE' AWARD

Sponsored by Upward Dogology, this award celebrates a story depicting an event, activity, or adventure that happens outdoors with a dog in a magazine or blog (any genre.) Spending time outdoors with our pets is one of the best ways to relax, unwind, and get some exercise. Sometimes these activities go just as planned, and other times we find ourselves in the most unexpected situations. Share your favorite outside adventure with your dog! Examples: a specific event on a hike, a picnic disrupted by a dog, a scary situation, or a travel vacation. The winner will receive a \$175 cash grant.

🏆 "Beauty & the Beach" by Jen Reeder



THE PSI PROFESSIONAL PET CARE AWARD

Sponsored by Pet Sitters International (PSI), this award is presented to the entry that best educates pet owners about the benefits of using professional pet sitters. Qualifying online or print entries include newspaper or magazine articles and blog posts. This award consists of a \$300 cash prize.

🏆 "Dogsitter Check List" by CJ Puotinen



THE WALTER B FLETCHER MEMORIAL AWARD

Sponsored by The Westminster Kennel Club in memory of legendary dog show reporter Walter R. Fletcher, this annual award goes to the writer who best exemplifies continued press coverage of dog shows in America. The writer's work must appear in a print or online publication with coverage generated from American Kennel Club-sanctioned dog shows, including but not limited to the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. The winner will be honored with a reserved seat in the press area for both nights of the 2023 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. The winner will also receive \$500.

🏆 "A First for Bloodhounds" by Kim Campbell Thornton



DOGWISE BEST BOOK AWARD

Sponsored by Dogwise Publishing. \$500 to the author of the best book. The winner will be chosen by the president of DWAA from the winners of all the book categories. The award is a \$500 cash grant.

🏆 "Rats in the White House" by Judith Ann Tabler



DWAA HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

🏆 Joel Gavriele-Gold, PhD



Joel Gavriele-Gold PhD

Joel Gavriele-Gold, PhD is a psychoanalyst and psychologist in private practice in New York City. He was one of the first to use dogs in therapy and his Bouvier des Flandres still attend his therapy sessions. He is an award winning author and has published several books and numerous articles on dogs used in psychotherapy. He is Executive Director of The Institute for Expressive Analysis and served on the Board of Directors of The National Psychological Association for Psychotherapy. He serves on the Board of Directors of the DWAA and numerous kennel clubs. Joel is a co-founder of Pet Talk, a pet problems support group in New York City and he has appeared on numerous TV shows including Good Morning America along with ABC, CBS, FOX, WPIX. He currently conducts AKC.TV interviews and hosts an AKC Facebook page. He lives with two Boviers.

Presented this 5th day of May, 2023

Therese Backowski
Therese Backowski
President



Emelise Baughman
Emelise Baughman
Secretary

TONI EAMES

Swimming Was Her Passion!

Ivy, my faithful Golden Retriever guide dog for eleven years, was growing old but it was certainly a reality I did not want to face. Unable to see the whitening of my Golden girl's muzzle, I was not confronted by the visual image of her aging. She had slowed down, but so had I and we were like perfectly matched book ends.



OVER THE YEARS, Ivy had developed into a meticulous guide, intuitively recognizing my pervasive fear of losing my balance and falling. I was able to confidently negotiate environments as diverse as the New York City subway system, Tel Aviv buses and major airports throughout the world by feeling her subtle signals through the harness handle. Her cautious approach to stairs, curbs and uneven footing was the hallmark of the effectiveness of our working partnership.

Then, this consummate professional, began occasionally failing to stop at curbs and appeared confused when entering a darkened theater from a well-lit lobby. When Ivy's caution suddenly bordered on hesitancy, I became frightened and realized something was drastically wrong. Fearing for my safety, I consulted with a veterinary ophthalmologist and received the devastating news that Ivy had completely lost vision in one eye and the other eye was compromised. This 1993 Delta Society Guide Dog of the Year award winner had expertly performed her duties with such brilliance, I was unaware she was functioning with extremely limited vision.

I was unwilling to prematurely break the bond, so continued working with my faithful partner. I unrealistically hoped her vision would stabilize. If she was able to adjust her guiding as she grew accustomed to the new vision level, we could continue our partnership for many more months.

With this thought, my husband Ed and I flew to Washington, DC to attend a conference. Living up to my expectations, Ivy expertly guided me on the crowded metropolitan streets and within the hotel. However, by the third day, Ivy's remaining

vision drastically deteriorated, and I felt my world crumble. Although she was able to safely guide me in the narrow hotel corridors, when entering the open lobby, Ivy appeared confused and disoriented. When I took her out for relief at dusk, she seemed particularly unsure of herself. Not wanting to put pressure on her or endanger myself, I relied on sighted human guides and did not ask my faithful friend to guide me for the rest of the trip.

Following the conference, we were scheduled to visit Ann Strathern, a long-time friend, in nearby Maryland. Ann, a field competitor and board member of the Golden Retriever Club of America, was my mentor in obedience competition. I was the first blind person working with a guide dog to obtain an AKC novice obedience title and had done so with Ivy's predecessors, Charm and Flicka.

Arriving at Ann's home, my spirits were somewhat lifted knowing Ivy, a passionate water lover, would have the chance to swim. Several years earlier, when Ann and her family purchased their property in Maryland, strict rules were established about water rights. The pool was for the exclusive use of humans, while the pond was for the canine corps. Shortly after Ivy became my guide, we took a trip to visit Ann. While I cavorted in the pool with Ann's children, Ivy joined Ann's Golden Retrievers in a fenced paddock adjacent to the pool. Suddenly, I heard a loud splash as Ivy, not recognizing the rules of the house, jumped the five foot fence and joined me in the pool to get her share of water aerobics. Placed back in the dog paddock, Ivy's water passion was not to be denied! If the pool was off limits, perhaps the pond was not! Jumping the fence in the other direction, Ivy

hit the water with a splash and cavorted happily in the water. Swimming was obviously a passion for Ivy, so for the rest of that visit and on subsequent visits to Ann's home, she was indulged and allowed to swim whenever she was off lead.

Arriving in Maryland after the conference, I was surprised to learn the rules at Ann's had been relaxed and dogs were now invited to join humans in the pool. I was concerned Ivy, with her limited vision, might injure herself trying to get to the water. Not to worry! Since Ivy was familiar with the house and property, she used her residual vision to run around the yard and quickly found the pool. To my dismay though, when a floating boat bumper was thrown, Ivy dove in but swam right by it. Eventually scenting the bumper, she retrieved it and brought it to us on the patio. Then when dusk fell, Ann noted in distress that Ivy was unable to locate the patio steps and tried to reach us by crashing through the bushes. Ann's observations confirmed my worst fears about my partner and beloved guide's continuing vision loss.

Our trip home to Fresno, California was bittersweet. I knew the prognosis was not good and plans would soon have to be made to train with Ivy's successor. She had been my loyal guide for 11 years and had accumulated thousands of flying miles. I was teary throughout the flight knowing Ivy's retirement would soon be official.

By the time Escort, my new Golden Retriever guide dog entered our family, Ivy had become totally blind. Although she adapted quickly to her blindness, my emotions were rocked hearing her bump into walls as she rushed to greet visitors at the door. The first time she tried to race down the stairs at meal time, she stumbled and slid down several steps. However, as she had adjusted her pace for me many years before, she knew to do the same for herself and from that time on, she never had another close call. Ivy learned to heel on my right as Escort assumed the guiding role at my left side. In Fresno, where Ivy was well-known, we were unofficially allowed to have her accompany us to meetings, restaurants, theater productions and friends' homes.

However, when Ed and I were away from home overnight, a corps of Ivy sitters had to step in. Having lost her official status as a guide dog, I could no longer claim the legal right to have her

with me. When Helen Shea was the designated dog sitter, Ivy was in ecstasy. Like Ann, Aunt Helen had a pool and dogs were allowed to use it!

Although Ivy would have preferred to swim in the pool anytime including during our Fresno winter, she was not allowed to indulge until the weather warmed up. Finally, the magic day arrived when air and water temperature were right. Fearing for her safety, I set about re-introducing her to the pool. Ed, Helen's daughter Beth and I got into the water and called Ivy to us. She cautiously negotiated the steps into the pool and swam several feet away. We called her back to the steps, and then let her swim further away. After two or three lessons, Ivy demonstrated her confidence by swimming the length of the pool.

Later that afternoon, as we humans dried off on the patio, Ivy emerged from the pool and embarked on an incredible investigation. In awe, Beth described Ivy's movements. Using her nose as a blind person would use a long white cane, Ivy carefully negotiated the perimeter of the pool, quartering between the edge of the pool and the edge of the deck, apparently measuring and memorizing the length and width of the boundaries. Having completed her task, she returned to the stairs and effortlessly glided back into her watery haven. Her message was loud and clear to me: "You have never allowed your blindness to interfere with your ability to follow your dreams, and adopting your attitude of independence, I too can pursue my passions!" ■

PATRICIA DALY-LIPE

Master Woodstock



WE WILL NEVER KNOW where he was born or how he came to Woodstock Farm in Albemarle County, Virginia. A little ball of fur, a mere handful of starving pup, he was following the heels of grazing cows. No doubt hoping for a drink. The cows kicked him away; he persisted. That pup was a survivor. We brought him home, fed him, took him to the vet, and now he has become a yacht pup. He is one loving, loyal, and smart sailor.

Becoming a yacht pup did not happen overnight, but it did not take long. As soon as he was on board the boat, he acknowledged it as home. Sure-footed as he is, there was no question of his falling overboard nor did he make any attempt to

jump. The first day, he learned how to swim with a life vest. We dropped anchor out at sea and had to literally drop him in the water. Of course he was frightened, but I was swimming along to grab him or coax him along. He was not pleased but he did swim. We hauled him up the swimming steps onto the swim ramp protruding behind the boat, disrobed him, and both he and the vest were hosed off before he could climb up the next level to the main deck. This routine became a daily ritual, but not on his first night since we returned to the dock. The next day was for real.

It was late afternoon before the breeze became enough of a wind to give us momentum. Our sailboat, 42-foot Jeanneau, has an engine but

it has not worked since we left the Dominican Republic. We rely entirely on the whim of the wind. This has been an amazingly windless summer so our progress has been slow. Captain Alexander and I had sailed 1,700 miles without the engine. We were glad to finally reach the mainland of Florida. It was much longer than we anticipated, and we needed to be in U.S. waters before we could retrieve Woodstock.

As we left the channel of Cape Canaveral, the so-called 'wind' diminished. What had taken a half hour the day before took three and a half hours today and this just to get out of the channel to the ocean! It was dark. As we sailed through the night, I worried about Woodstock. He must need to go to the bathroom. He treated the boat like his home and would not allow himself to make a mess. In vain, we tried to encourage him. I won't even discuss some of the ways we tried; and I'm sure he was not oblivious of our intentions, just stubborn in his opposition.

By morning, it was clear: he would have to be taken ashore. Thus began the pattern that would cause us to take weeks instead of days to travel up the East coast. We could not get on the 'Atlantic Express' (the Gulf Stream) and ride it north because we needed to hug the coast to accommodate Master Woodstock.

Our sailboat has a draft of six and a half feet. This limits just how close we can sail to the shore before dropping anchor. The first morning, the distance to shore was quite far. We learned a lot that first day.

We put Woodstock's vest on: a converted child's coast guard approved life vest placed upside down and strapped over his back. Not pleased, he was none the less tolerant. Alexander pulled in the dingy, which had been bobbing along behind the boat. We threw in the oars and then I got in. Alexander handed over the bewildered pup. With Woodstock in the middle, I sat at the bow with an oar and Alexander took to the rear with the other oar. We untied the line and started rowing. Now keep in mind that we are rowing to the shore; therefore, we could almost ride the tide and surf onto the beach.

See WOODSTOCK pg 32 ►





TIPS & TACTICS

MAGGIE MARTON

10 Tips *for* Landing a Literary Agent

WE ARE ON THE CUSP of major changes in the publishing industry. Publishing power is becoming more consolidated at the top. Meanwhile, smaller presses and self-publishing options are flourishing in response.

The reality, though, is that many writers, myself included, still dream of a traditional publishing deal.

Before you can get a book deal, you need to land a literary agent. A literary agent serves as your manuscript's sales team, taking it to editors at publishing houses and striving to get you the best possible deal. I recently signed a contract with Cole Lanahan, a literary agent at The Seymour Agency. She's taking my manuscript out on submission right now, which is exciting and nerve racking.

Before I signed with Cole, I spent months researching how to land an agent and today I want to share with you the ten tips that secured my agent. Please note this is only one person's experience. If you read social media or writers' forums, you'll see experiences span the gamut. I suspect there are solid reasons some writers find success while others don't.

Here are my 10 tips for landing a literary agent based on my experience:

1. POLISH YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Query work that is as close to ready to be on a bookstore shelf as possible. That means revising, editing, soliciting beta readers, revising again. And again. And again. I spoke with several agents who said they often get rough drafts of stories and can't

offer representation on a draft. Don't rush to query! Polish your manuscript until it gleams. Then prepare to write a query letter.

2. RESEARCH QUERY LETTER BEST PRACTICES

Every agent asks for different elements of your work to consider; however, there are a few best practices that span all agencies. You need a query letter and an author bio. You need an email address, ideally with your name (think maggie.marton@gmail.com versus tiredmama@gmail.com). You need a social media presence and a website so agents can look you up. Put those pieces in place before you query an agent so you are easy to research and get in touch with

3. CRAFT A COMPELLING PITCH

Query letters follow a basic format: a short hook, the meta details (word count, genre, and audience), a plot summary, and an author bio. And all that should be no more than 350 words. I spoke with an agent who said you should imagine your potential agent on a train commuting home from the office. She's trying to make split-second decisions on the hundreds of queries in her inbox during her short ride. How can you capture her attention with the length of a quick email on the commuter train?

4. SOLICIT BETA READERS FOR YOUR QUERY

Hopefully, you received some feedback on your manuscript before querying. You need to do

I'VE INCLUDED THE QUERY LETTER THAT SECURED MY AGENT.

For context, and to compare with what you see on social media, here are the stats for my letter:

- 38 sent
- 18 no replies
- 9 form rejections
- 5 personal rejections; two asked to see next MS
- 4 requests for full manuscript
- 1 request for partial manuscript (first three chapters)
- 1 request for proposal

Dear Ms. Lanahan,

I was thrilled to see you are looking for an exploration of the human-animal bond. I'm writing to introduce you to *FOR THE LOVE OF DOG*, a 60,000-word work of narrative nonfiction that combines the science of *INSIDE OF A DOG* with the heart of *DOG MEDICINE* to unravel the improbable bond between humans and pups.

Dogs and humans are buddies on an evolutionary scale. Our histories intertwine so inextricably that we can't separate our lifelines from theirs over the past 20,000 years. But, despite those tens of thousands of years of coevolution, it turns out we still have a lot to learn from dogs. (They, however, have us pretty well figured out.)

As a shy introvert and hard-core people pleaser, I wanted to move through life unseen. Invisible. So, when I adopted three dogs you simply couldn't ignore—Emmett, a gentle giant pit bull; Lucas, a three-legged shepherd mix; Cooper, a wiry and neurotic staffie—they blew my cover. As we tackled anxiety, cross-country moves, stray kittens, dog bites, and cancer (all of us), I learned to advocate for them. In turn, they helped me find my voice. To root our story in science, *FOR THE LOVE OF DOG* weaves together research on dog behavior and canine cognition with my experience with my boys. This book gets to the heart of why we first fell in love with dogs, why we still love them thousands of years later, and why they've always loved us right back. Prepare to look at your own pup in a whole new light.

I write the award-winning blog, *Oh My Dog!* (ohmydogblog.com), which has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Animal Wellness*, and *Dog Fancy*. For the past decade, I've covered dogs, cats, and the human-animal bond for publications like *National Geographic.com*, *Pet Enthusiast Magazine*, *PetGuide.com*, and Victoria Stilwell's *Positively.com*. My work has received numerous awards from the Dog Writers Association of America, the Cat Writers' Association, DogTime Media, Fear Free Pets, and the American Association of Feline Practitioners. I served as VP of the Dog Writers Association of America and currently help with the newsletter.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you!

Take good care,
Maggie



TIPS & TACTICS

► CONTINUED from pg 22

the same with your query letter. Ask friends and family to read your letter and tell you what they think your book is about.

5. RESEARCH AGENTS

If you spend any length of time reading #WritingTwitter, you'll see astounding query stats. Some authors write query letters for multiple manuscripts hundreds of times. I only queried manuscripts 38 times before I received my offer because I wrote only to agents who were the most familiar with my audience.. To start your legwork, use Twitter (agents use the hashtag #MSWL for their Manuscript Wish List), Publisher's Marketplace, QueryTracker.net, Writer's Market and manuscriptacademy.com. Each agent has specific guidelines. Some want only the query letter. Others want a query letter plus the first three chapters of your book. Some agents use online forms. Others use email. Follow their guidelines to write your letter. There's no point to knocking yourself out of contention simply because you didn't follow the guidelines!

6. CREATE A TRACKING SPREADSHEET

Data might not be your strong suit. It's not mine, that's for sure. But, I made a basic spreadsheet with columns for the date I sent a query, the agent's name and agency, a link to the agent's specific query guidelines, the date to follow up, and any relevant notes.

7. QUERY IN BATCHES

Most agents take several weeks to consider queries. Many agents take months. They all expect you to be submitting simultaneously, meaning you query multiple agents at a time. Because the process takes so long, you're doing yourself a disservice if you only query one agent at a time. I sent two or three letters a week because that was all I could manage with the time I had available. But each time I got a rejection, I sent an additional

query out to balance the odds between the number of rejections and potential acceptances.

8. FOLLOW UP

Unless an agent's guidelines specifically request that you do NOT follow up (and some do), send a follow-up email at the end of their consideration period. For example, if an agent's website says she replies within eight weeks, and your spreadsheet tells you when those eight weeks have passed, send a polite follow-up letter. She might just be behind schedule and your prompt will serve to bump up your pitch in her inbox.

9. DEVELOP A THICK SKIN

Rejection hurts. It's not personal, but it feels personal. I know, because this is your work! However, each agent looks for specific titles to fill their wish list of desired manuscripts, and yours might not hit the mark. Keep at it, and find ways to manage stress during the difficult querying period.

10. BE GRACIOUS!

Obviously, right? Well, agents report authors arguing with them, berating them, badmouthing them on social media, and more. Don't be that writer. Build bridges instead of burning them—even when you're disappointed by a rejection.

It's a long, daunting process, but I believe in you and your work. And I believe in the power of our dogs and our dog stories. Querying is difficult but oh-so worth it. Please reach out if you'd like support on your querying journey! I'm always happy to share my experience! Maggie. ■

LINDA O. JOHNSTON

A TOSS, *or* SEVERAL, AWAY *from* CONCENTRATION

WHAT DOES A FULL-TIME novelist do when her puppy brings a toy over while she's in the middle of writing an important story? And looks at her with those adorable puppy eyes, communicating well without words, unlike what the writer is attempting to do on her computer?

That writer puts the story aside for a moment and tosses the toy, of course. And gets back to work, hoping her concentration hasn't been badly affected. Or at least not too badly.

That's what I do when my 15-month-old ruby Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Roxie— yes, theoretically slightly older than a puppy, but still a puppy in appearance and action— brings me one of her squeaky toys, sits down on the floor beside me and stares. And stares. And if I don't immediately react, she brings the toy closer and drops it, and stares again. And wags her long tail when my eyes meet hers.

This continues till I throw the toy to the far side of the room and get back to work. For a few seconds.

Until it happens again. And again.

Until Roxie gets tired or bored or distracted by her older sister Cari, a six-year-old tricolor, who decides sometimes she'll join in the game for a minute or two.

So what toys does Roxie bring? A small, squeaky ball or an elongated squeaky dog. Or an even longer squeaky blue elephant. Or, more fun these days, among her most recent toys are some with soft rubbery spikes. Those toys not only squeak, but when she tosses them hard on the floor they also start flashing bright, uneven lights.

And, of course, especially when the toys make noise, Roxie yelps and sometimes barks back at them.

Oh, yes, writer me eventually can get back to work, although it sometimes takes me a little while to retrieve my concentration. And fortunately my husband sometimes takes over playing with Roxie. And sometimes I'm just reading or watching TV when she makes her demands.

So do I encourage this? Well, who do you think buys her most of her toys? Or adds to them when I find more that I think she'd enjoy playing with— or chasing?

Do I think she'll grow out of this? Maybe eventually. Maybe not, if I keep it up along with her.

After all, I can go back to writing eventually each time we play, but even though I may grump about it now and then, I enjoy the game. I enjoy Roxie being a puppy. I enjoy her communicating with me in her own, determined way.

Throw it,
Mommy.

Sure.

And I just might add this to a story... ■



CYNTHIA CALLAHAN

Roscoe *the* Resilient

M

Y HUSBAND, GUY, DIDN'T WANT A DOG. Not even one. But the first one, Layla, was a known quantity—loving, charming, reasonably well-behaved. Her elderly owner worried about what would become of Layla when she died, so we promised to give the dog a home. Caring for Layla was a tribute to the memory of her first mama.

Neither of us wanted two dogs. And Roscoe wasn't exactly ideal. For years he had been a thorn in my husband's side. Because of the dog, Guy reasoned, his son, Joshua, had fewer options as he made his way through recovery after decades of heroin addiction. It defied logic that someone with so little income, struggling on the margins, would insist on having a dog. Or so Guy thought. Over the years, as Joshua struggled through cycles of sobriety and relapse, Roscoe embodied my husband's frustration. Every challenge somehow traced back to the dog. For families of people with substance use disorders, very little is controllable. But a dog? You could give a dog away. Then it might be easier to get housing. And to save money.

Guy's kids rarely do what he tells them, so Roscoe stayed. Josh cared for him as well as he could on a limited income. If there wasn't enough food for Roscoe, then Josh didn't eat, either. When times were good, it was Taco Bell for both of them. When Joshua was in jail or in patient recovery, Roscoe lived with Josh's grandmother, but whenever Joshua was stable, Roscoe was his ride-or-die buddy. The pair would walk for miles to pass the time and clear Josh's head. Roscoe outlasted a marriage and another significant relationship, a miscarriage and the deaths of both of Josh's grandmothers. Together, Josh and Roscoe endured.

Months might pass, and Guy wouldn't hear from Josh or know where he was. Then we'd learn

that he'd called his grandmother and we'd know he was alive. Or his cousin would think she saw him under an overpass in Columbus. The worst times were when he was on the streets, in a mental health crisis. My husband would pay for a room in a cheap hotel, so Josh had somewhere safe to go until space could be found in a rehab facility.

Occasionally a firefighter who had worked with my husband would call to give a heads-up.

"Hey, we just saw Josh, and he looks pretty beat up. Thought you'd want to know."

Each call reminded Guy of his helplessness and reawakened his shame, fear of judgement, and belief that people blame him for his son's condition. Realistically, they probably do judge. It might be tempting to wonder what kind of parent would let their child live on the streets. Until I witnessed it first-hand, I didn't know how few options there are for people in crisis and how little concerned family members can do.

This is life for families of addicts—alternating peace and chaos. Each relapse creates a vortex, sucking everyone in and requiring impossible choices. Then families must establish new "boundaries," which means going against all instincts to save themselves.

In the last few years, Joshua was better. Not always great. But ok. He had a job, a sober community, and Roscoe lived with him. He and Guy were on good terms, planning to move Josh to Columbus, where he would have job opportunities and public transportation.

We'd always half-expected the call, but it still shocked us. The deputy said that Josh had been found in his apartment, an apparent accidental overdose of heroin or fentanyl. Or both.

"His dog is here—what should we do?"

“

At first, we gave Roscoe verbal affirmations and commands, then laughed at ourselves because he couldn't hear them, but now we talk to him all the time. We tell him that he is safe, we love him, and will take good care of him. Occasionally he leans into us as if he understands.

Guy's first instinct, born from years of seeing Roscoe as a problem to be managed, was to declare that he would leave him in a shelter in Josh's town. The shelters were full, and he devised Plan B. Get Roscoe to our town and take him to our county shelter.

Roscoe came to us a couple of days later. He arrived with nothing but a filthy red bandana instead of a collar, and a baggie of hot dogs used to lure him into the car. He was a mess. Thin and shedding with a few fleas. Deaf. So, so old. He had jack-o-lantern teeth and toxic breath. All day and night, he paced through the house, unable to settle down.

Roscoe manifested grief; his and ours. His condition was an unwelcome glimpse into the quality of Josh's last days. Guy declined the opportunity to go through Josh's apartment and claim his things. He had done it once before after Josh relapsed and knew what he might find. Still, Roscoe made it impossible not to think about those final hours. How long had the dog been with Josh's body? Hours? Days? What did he do when the deputies arrived? Did he understand what was happening?

So many questions we couldn't answer, and Guy, frankly, didn't want to contemplate. Roscoe's restlessness mirrored Guy's own unmooring. He embarked on even basic tasks without protective skin, all raw emotion, and lack of direction. Yet this old, deaf, gnarly-toothed dog required us to focus on the present. Roscoe needed help now, and so did we because once he limped through the door, he was here to stay.

Guy didn't want to share the news of Josh's death outside the family. I initially abided by that wish, so only a small team of helpers bore witness to our grief and indirectly cared for us by caring for Roscoe. After learning about the situation, our groomer/dog guru agreed to see him first thing the next morning. If he had fleas, they needed to be

dealt with right away. The vet got him in not long after. Roscoe was in decent health—except for his teeth. The vet warned fixing them might be expensive, but Guy didn't care. Roscoe's health became our family's priority.

Over time, we settled into a new routine organized around making Roscoe happy. He incrementally gained weight and settled down, thanks to daily doses of CBD. His coat started to shine, and he gained strength. He would launch into brief arthritic zoomies or awkwardly dance with joy when one of us picked up his leash. Behaviors that would have made Guy crazy in other circumstances—like sleeping in his leather recliner—suddenly became adorable.

At first, we gave Roscoe verbal affirmations and commands, then laughed at ourselves because he couldn't hear them, but now we talk to him all the time. We tell him that he is safe, we love him, and will take good care of him. Occasionally he leans into us as if he understands.

I sometimes catch Guy sitting with Roscoe, perched on a corner of the recliner that used to be his sole domain, talking quietly to the him. Joshua looked like his father, and I wonder if that's a comfort to Roscoe, if he even sees the resemblance. Either way, Roscoe is a comfort to us.

Caring for the dog of the dead is a special privilege, like tending to a living monument. It's a chance to do right by them one last time. So we bought Roscoe collars that reflected Josh's favorite things—a punk rock themed one and another with black and white checks, like the Vans he always wore. We heat water or broth to soften Roscoe's food each day. We spoil him rotten.

That relationship also goes the other way. The dead speak through the dog, the way our first dog's quiet but insistent begging immediately conjures her previous owner, who never failed to share her



BARBARA E. MAGERA

TWIN'S ANTICS

TWO BLACK AND TAN Cavalier girls with the same birthdate are part of our Cavalier family. Oddly, they are not litter mates. They are not even blood-related. But to look at them from afar, it is hard to tell them apart. Only when you study their faces and individual personalities does their uniqueness become apparent.

The Twins are best friends. They play, romp, eat and perhaps even telepathically, share thoughts. Both dogs are very smart, although one is bolder and more curious. She learns new tasks easily and teaches her surrogate sibling mischievous deeds. Both are also cuddle bugs who demand my immediate attention.

At first, the more outgoing of the two dogs aggressively licks my face and nose. As luck would have it, the teacher instructs her curious student to vigorously lick my ears. Playtime is done with gusto.

After an exhausting day in the clinic, I collapse into my favorite chair and the twins leap on me with enthusiasm. They wiggle and squirm to displace one another. They readily jump over an-

other Cavalier, a textbook, computer or anything else just to get close to me. Next, they both make a beeline to lick my face, nose and ears. Working as a team, they can effectively pin me down to enjoy their fun.

Both dogs try to be the first at running after toys or treats. The one with huge saucer eyes loves all toys. Not tearing the toys to shreds, but always having a toy in her mouth, by her side or stealing a toy from her playmates. The other twin is an athletic jumper and clears amazing heights. With one athletic jump, she can easily steal our dinner from the dining room table. I need to keep this in mind when designing our backyard fencing.

At breakfast, we play "antioxidant time" which consists of feeding the pack blueberries. This is great fun. The twins have learned to catch flying blueberries while everyone else scrambles for blueberries rolling on the floor. Another favorite athletic feat is jumping up to catch flying soap bubbles. Both dogs jump up with enthusiasm and attack the soap bubbles before the rest of the pack even notices the airborne spheres.

After an hour of strenuous play, everyone is pooped. The twins follow me into the family room where I collapse on the couch. One twin routinely cuddles in my lap while the other wraps her paws from behind around my neck. They locate favorite toys from the toy box and bring them to me. One attempts to stuff a small favorite toy down the front or back of my shirt. They play this silly game with me until they discover their favorite toy, which is paper. Not just any paper. They prefer munching on the high-quality, glossy paper used in magazines, professional journals or textbooks. Yum! When they finally fall asleep for a quick nap, I fan the pages of my expensive textbooks that I am using to prepare for an upcoming recertification board exam. I really didn't need to study those high-quality photos of immune mediated skin diseases that now are completely shredded. Expensive theater tickets that were inside one book are munched into slimy pieces. Maybe the box office manager will understand what happened when we show up at opening night and beg for our center stage seats.

Today, we are going to a dog show. I have decided to bring both twins. Because of their unique birthdays, one will compete and the other will learn the show routine. Both are enthusiastic about their bath and cooperate fully with grooming. On the day of the big debut, we awake predawn and go outside for their morning "relief" walk. It is a cool morning as we watch the sun peek through the horizon. Both girls are happy and excited. The chosen starlet minds well during our relief session, however, her curious sister is distracted by a squirrel. I loosen the grip on her lead and she runs in hot pursuit after the squirrel. Now her show dog sister is whining, trying to follow her. In my attempt to capture her sister, we both run through a mud puddle where I trip and fall directly in the gooey mud. After much excitement, I manage to grab both girls and run to the hotel elevators. I am a mess and hotel guests are staring at me. I manage to force a smile and say nothing.

My show starlet requires a hurried bath and furious grooming to prepare for the show ring. I spend only minutes gathering myself together to look presentable as a handler. With this morning's jaunt, my wet shoes are covered with mud. The only other shoes I brought are bright blue running

shoes. Doesn't exactly match the red business attire I plan to wear in the ring. Women's fashion is overrated anyway, I think.

Our little starlet performs perfectly in the ring. Most importantly, she is happy and excited to be strutting her stuff in the show ring. We return to our room with win toys and ribbons. Exhausted from predawn activities, I fall asleep for a short nap. Groggily, I dream that I hear their coos and playful yelps in my sleep. When I awake, I see both girls on top of my show cart. The contents of my show bag are strewn everywhere around the room. Brushes, combs and show leads are thrown on the floor. Both dogs are furiously trying to rip open the double zipper plastic bags that contain the liver I use for bait. Smart kids I think. A for effort, as the only obvious route they used to get to the bait is to jump from the bed to a nightstand, then leap a fair height and distance onto the show cart. I shudder at the thought that one of them may not successfully negotiate their acrobatic feat. I am amazed at their abilities to figure out how to jump from the furniture and get to the goodies on the cart. Both twins are rewarded with a morsel of liver.

It is time to pack up and go home. Instinctively, they lay on the bed with their curious little faces watching me. I think they understand that we must get serious about packing. They are patient with me until I pack their toys. They nimbly try to steal their toys out of my hands then paw the luggage where I pack the toys for home.

In the car, the twins are quietly sleeping in their crates. To easily distinguish between them, one is in a blue crate while the other is in a pink crate. Their rhythmic breathing is soothing to me during the drive home. As I reminisce about this past weekend's show, the fun and the Twin's antics, I think about our next dog show and which of the Twins will be my next little starlet in the ring. One thing is for sure, they are two little girls who truly understand the special bonds that exists only between twins. I hope I can muster enough energy to keep up with them and their antics. ■

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ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

THE DUNE BUGGY DOG

SO MANY OF MY DOGS have had unusual or humorous backgrounds, but adopting Scarlett started out on a sad note. A breeder of AKC Irish setters lived down the street. At the time we had one Irish setter, Brandy, and we wanted a second. But the prices were too prohibitive, and we were, of course, happy with just Brandy. One day I was biking home, and I noticed a sign outside of the kennels saying, "FREE IRISH SETTER PUPPIES." I did a double take, then turned around and pedaled up the driveway.

The wife answered the door and told me a tragic story. Her husband had been in a fatal dune buggy accident the day before. The puppies were weaned and ready to go, but she didn't have the energy to do the AKC registration paperwork. She didn't even want to sell the pups as unregistered dogs. She just wanted them to go to good homes so she could bury her husband in peace. I saw the litter and picked out my dog—a female I named Scarlett O'Hara. She fit perfectly into the handlebar basket on my bike. At home, our pleasure in her was somewhat dimmed by the circumstances.

(In fact, the wife closed the kennels and sold the property a month later.)

But we were happy with our new family member. Scarlett was a beautiful puppy who grew up into a beautiful adult. But unlike most Irish setters, she was calm and content without the breed's boisterous Irish spirits—not that we loved her any less. It was just so unusual, especially when compared to Brandy. When my son and daughter were born, however, Scarlett's temperament was a definite plus. She was gentle with them, even though my toddlers weren't always gentle with her!



"If you don't own a dog, at least one, there may not necessarily be anything wrong with you, but there may be something wrong with your life."

ROGER CARAS

See DUNE BUGGY DOG pg 34 ►

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE



"The bond with a true dog is as lasting as the ties of this earth will ever be."

KONRAD LORENZ

Years ago, we walked a beach
Picked our way across the sand.
Driftwood lay scattered all about
From waves heaving on the land.

The wind blew strong, the waves
stretched high,
The skies were bleak and gray.
The ocean laughingly fought the shore,
Mocking our mortal way.

But I trod the beach without a fear;
Though my lover and I walked slow,
We had the courage that only we,
The young and strong could know.

Then I saw them, dancing past,
A flash of grays in green,
They streaked before us, racing fast,

Five dolphins on the wing.
We watched our dog, a red flag flying,
A flash of Brandy across the sand,
He streaked before us, racing past,
Wanting dolphins on the land.

We glanced at each other, then back again,
To the storm-tossed, crashing sea.
We'd braved the winds and cloudy skies,
For the best in life is free.

My Irish Setter Brandy was as one with nature as the dolphins. I always think of him whenever I see our many dolphins in the waves in my hometown of San Diego.

Editor's Column

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he returned, casually trotting down the street, and looking at me as if to say, "What?, I needed more steps on my tracker!"

And, he can still tell time and isn't shy about sharing his opinion when it's appropriate to wake up or eat his meal. I find that faintly annoying, yet amusing, because it takes me out of my world and helps me remember to laugh.

Merrie Meyers

Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA

Ruff Drafts Editor

Woodstock

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And surf we did. The little white foam we had seen from the boat became very large, serious waves as we approached our destination.

"Keep rowing," yelled Alexander over the roar of the surf. I looked back over my shoulder. There was a huge wave descending upon us. "Row!" he yelled again.

"But look ..." I attempted. The wave crashed down and we went under. The dingy, now sideways because of my not rowing, flipped over. "Where's Woodstock?" I sputtered after coming up for air.

"Under the dingy!"

We lifted the dingy even as the waves pounded down on us, the surf pushing us ashore. Poor little Woodstock. In the dark under the shell of the dingy, he was paddling frantically, looking miserable, but afloat with the help of the vest. Not a whimper or a yelp. By now we were all ashore. Off came the vest and off went the pup. Relief at last!

That was one happy dog. Forgetting his ordeal with the dingy instantly, he scampered off, found some birds, and, tail extended, ran up and down the beach in hot pursuit.

Eventually it was time to return to the boat. How to do this? We tried pushing the dingy with Woodstock inside through the waves. But, one look at the white frothy mountains descending on him and he leaped out of the dingy into the water front feet paddling like a windmill at full speed and headed for shore.



Next, Alexander took the dingy out beyond the waves leaving me to swim out with Woodstock. He was petrified and I was not strong enough to hold him up as the waves crashed down on the two of us. We retreated to the beach. Poor Alexander had to come back with the dingy. Exhausted, the three of us sat on the sand, staring at the waves, the sea, the boat anchored beyond, and tried to devise a plan.

Finally Capt. Alexander came up with an idea. He would take the dingy back to the sailboat and get a small anchor, another vest, and a long line. It was a tough trip negotiating the waves again and rowing alone against the tide out to the boat.

This plan worked. We attached Woodstock to the second vest at the end of the long line. The dingy was anchored behind the waves. It was arduous but successful. Woodstock flopped over the side and into the dingy and then we faced the long row, the Captain's third, back to the boat. This day's expedition lasted over four hours. Obviously we had to modify the next outing or we would never get anywhere, wind or no wind.

Our trip from Cape Canaveral, Florida, to Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, lasted three and a half weeks. That portion of our voyage ended in the wake of Hurricane Emily. We have many tales to tell, but our star, our protagonist, our main joy is this young pup from Albemarle County, Virginia. He has changed our lives and we have changed his. Just don't let anyone tell you that a country pup can't become a great sailor! ■

Roscoe

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meals. Joshua speaks to us through Roscoe.

One day, Guy's last living son visited and saw Roscoe sitting at my feet.

"He's sitting pretty!" he said. "Josh taught him that!"

A few weeks later, I paced around the family room, talking and eating a piece of cheese, the two dogs following in the hope that I would drop something, as I frequently do. I gestured with the cheese as I talked, and Roscoe sat up on his back legs, front paws in the classic "beg" position. I gave him the cheese and held out some more, wondering if it was intentional. He did it again.

And there was Josh in his better days, training Roscoe to do a trick for a treat. It was a spontaneous reminder that there were better days. Roscoe made Josh happy, and Josh showed unconditional love to Roscoe, who never expected more from him than he could give. The fact that I can't get Roscoe to replicate that move consistently makes it even more magical that it happened at all.

It's impossible to convince my husband that he did his best for Josh. When I point to the moral and financial support over the years and the noticeable improvement in their relationship, he counters with examples of inadequate parenting during Josh's childhood. It's a simple cause and effect for him, and no rational observation from me, someone who wasn't there, will change his mind. And what does "the best we can" look like when someone is suffering? Guy helped to care for Josh's maternal grandmother in the last years of her life and then managed her estate on Josh's behalf to protect Josh and keep him from returning to a community that was one big relapse trigger. The money from the estate was supposed to fund the next step of Josh's recovery—relocation to a place with better transportation, more job prospects, and the potential for a new life. But I don't know if any of these efforts relieved Josh's suffering, the loneliness, and despair that he must have walked with each day. I do know that it made Guy feel better to do something.

And that's the thing with Roscoe. When he wags his tail and pokes around in the yard, we feel better. But we have no idea what he understands or how much pain he might be in. The extent of another's suffering is ultimately unknowable, and

part of our grief is the relentless speculation.

I would love this story to be a tidy closed loop, a happily-ever-after with Roscoe that heals the wounds. After all, the dog comforts us, allowing Guy to do one last thing for his son. Yet Roscoe constantly reminds us of mortality and all that can be lost. Much like living with an addict, life with an elderly dog is one of constant apprehension. I hold my breath as this dog creaks and trembles through each day. When he dies, Guy will lose Josh all over again, more obviously and more permanently. We will be forced to grieve in a way that we haven't necessarily yet.

Because each new death summons all the ones that came before, I have been thinking lately about my father's death from Parkinson's. Opioids were also involved in his final hours. We administered calibrated doses of morphine and Ativan, provided by hospice, to ease his discomfort. The family was close by, and he received the Catholic Last Rites from a priest. I sat next to him when he drew his last breath. I'm comforted by my belief that he had a "good death."

When the inevitable comes for Roscoe, it will look much more like my father's death than Josh's. Roscoe will have access to the best veterinary medications to ease his pain. More importantly, we will likely be there when he dies, keeping him company and bearing witness. It's a painful irony that this dog, whose life has always been precarious, will get the care Joshua deserved in his last days, but we could not give him. In truth, there is little that family can do for someone struggling with addiction other than to try to care for the ones they love when they cannot do it themselves.

It's not really good enough. But it has to be. ■

Dune Buggy Dog

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My daughter was especially attached to Scarlett, who had become my children's loyal companion. I have no unique tales to tell of Scarlett. She never escaped for unauthorized runs in the park like Brandy. She never stopped a man from breaking into our house like Brandy did—twice- but we always valued her greatly. Scarlett was a huge, beloved part of our lives.

I think people focus too much on the newsworthy feats of extraordinary search and rescue, military, and police K-9s. They forget that the vast majority of dogs aren't superheroes. They're like Scarlett—deeply loyal pets who are quiet heroes in their own way. They truly love their family and

only want to be loved in return. Scarlett lived a long, full life, and her absence left a big hole in our heart. To all the dogs like her out there, I salute you. Your families have been greatly blessed. I know ours was. Thank you, Scarlett. Rainbow kisses until we meet again. ■

Anne Marie is a member of the Writers Guild of America and has published 20 romance novels, many with dog characters. She is presently updating her "reader bonus" secondary website which contains 100 pages of original dog short stories, both fiction and non-fiction.



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