

SPECIAL
FOLD OUT
COVER

RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

FALL 2023

DOGS *that* WORK



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Writing Competition
NOW OPEN

PAGE 10

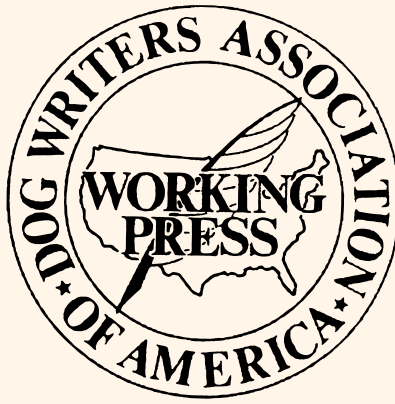
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Paddy
JUST A FARM DOG



Ruff Drafts

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

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Therese Backowski
and her dogs, Lucy
and Hank



BRAM STOKER made me do it. In his book *Dracula*, there was an especially eerie scene that described the vampire's departure from a ghost boat. Dracula took the form of a black wolf, *Canis Lupus*, and bounded to shore. I was entranced by the worded image. Then I started thinking about the myriad ways that we use animals. As I researched this, I realized that we use animals everywhere, all the time. Our world couldn't exist without them.

"Using" our animals, especially our dogs, sounds offensive, but frankly, it isn't, as long as we use them kindly. Dogs are our confidants, bed warmers, bad-guy catchers, mobility assistants, sheep saviors, and everything else we can think of and train them to do. The wonder of the dog is that through management and selective breeding, a working dog wants to work. Nothing seems to make them happier than having a real purpose. Unlike people, dogs don't like to be useless. Nothing is crueler than leaving a puppy to his own devices, with no direction, and with nothing more to do than bark in a back yard.

So, the moment I learned the theme of this issue of Ruff Drafts, I was excited. It is past time to celebrate every single working dog, no matter their job.

Not only do we need to celebrate the working dog, we also have to tell people about them. There is no better way to convince people that dogs are not disposable, but in fact, they are indispensable. In general, many people in this country seem to believe that training is a four-letter word. Training is the best way to help a dog be the best he can be.

With guidance, most dogs can have a job. Even if their only task is to retrieve a newspaper, I can assure you that having that job will make them happy. I know that when I see the light in the eyes of a working dog, the wag of their tail (if they have one), and the spring in their step when given a command they understand, I feel more complete.

So, my friends, write. Write to a general audience as often as you can; tell them how great their best friends can be.

Therese Backowski

Therese Backowski

DWAA President

RUFFDRAFTS

Fall 2023

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR READERS,

Has your dog decided they are responsible for sounding the alarm whenever squirrels, moles, cats, or the like pass by your house? Or perhaps your beloved pooch believes they should manage your schedule, and constantly follow you around to make sure you're not getting into any trouble or consuming some of their favorite human snack foods without them. If so, you may have a contemporary version of a "Working Dog."

This issue of Ruff Drafts is dedicated to Dogs That Work. A working dog is not a new thing. Long before the AKC established the "Groups" classification in 1924, hieroglyphs and cave paintings from Egyptian, Greek, and Assyrian civilizations depicted dogs engaged in warfare or hunting. While interpretation of these drawings varies, it's clear that dogs have been part of the fabric of our existence for a very long time. In 2005, a grave discovered in Israel, dating around 12,000 BCE, contained a human skeleton with its hand resting on the skeleton of a small dog.

Today, working dog categories include Search and Rescue (SAR) Dogs, Herding Dogs, and Service Dogs.

Search and Rescue

Search and Rescue Dogs have been locating "the lost" for more than 300 years, the most famous being the iconic Saint Bernard breed used for that purpose in Switzerland, Italy, and beyond. Since World War I, tens of thousands of dogs have been "enlisted" by the military to locate injured and lost soldiers.

Amazingly, since the Middle Ages, "K-9" dogs have been used to track runaways and outlaws. Fun Fact: In the late 19th century, bloodhounds Barnaby and Burgho helped hunt for Jack the Ripper. K-9 subcategories include Sentry Dogs, Narcotic Dogs, Explosive Dogs, and the USDA's Beagle Brigade, which sniffs out contraband at airports and seaports.

Herding

Recorded use of dogs for herding sheep and other livestock goes as far back as the 16th century. University of Copenhagen researchers found evidence that 2,000 years ago, ancient Siberians traded dogs with other communities to strengthen herding, hunting, and sledding.

Service Dogs

In the last 50 years, the use of service dogs for managing a variety of disabilities grew exponentially. Today, these dogs help people with



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

See EDITOR'S COLUMN pg 6



MEMBER NEWS

SHERRY BENNETT WARSHAUER

DWAA Member Publishes 8th Book



DWAA member Sherry Bennett Warshauer is an award-winning author and member of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators. She is the former Executive Director of K9sPLUSKIDS, a volunteer therapy dog program at public and private schools, enhancing

the lives of children, especially those with learning disabilities. She now focuses on writing full time. In May, she published G-lee's WISH, which is her 8th book.

"The inspiration for this book came from the therapy dog work I did over a period of 7 years," Sherry said. "I had the privilege of seeing the effect therapy dogs had on children with autism."

In her book, the title character, G-lee explains, "I do not want to have autism. It means I will always have to work hard - harder than other kids. But with love and help, I proved that I could do more than you think. I even surprised myself. Be my friend, and let's see how far I can go."

G-lee doesn't know it, but her life is about to change when she meets a musician in the subway, along with the homeless puppy he is trying to find a loving home for.

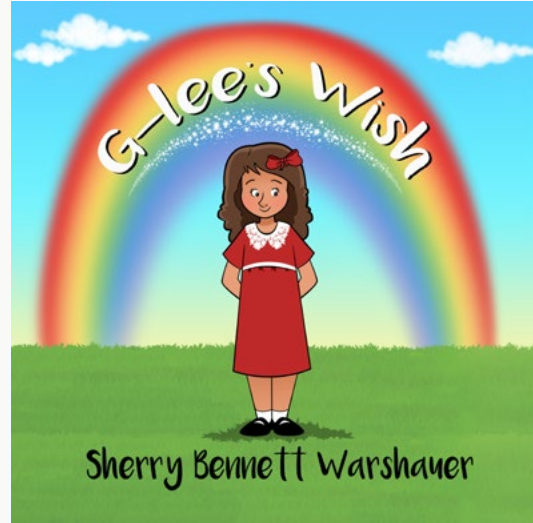
G-lee's WISH:

To know the wonder of true friendship
To have the power to express yourself
To feel confident
To feel happy in the world around you
To believe in your greatness
To be at home in your body
To be accepted
To feel safe
To live unafraid

All of Sherry's books are available on Amazon. She is listed as Sherry Bennett Warshauer.



Sherry Bennett Warshauer



Editor's Column

► CONTINUED from pg 5

disabilities, including those who are blind or low-vision, deaf or hard of hearing, have mental or physical disabilities, epilepsy, and diabetes. During World Wars I and II, service dogs were used as messengers and scouts and morale boosters for soldiers.

No matter what the "job," it takes a special dog to "work" and remain focused despite constant and sometimes appetizing distractions. Handlers/owners require dogs that are intelligent, confident, and obedient. Sure, there are stories about working dogs that seemingly go against type such as Turner and Hooch with Tom Hanks, K-9 with Jim Belushi, and Show Dogs with Will Arnett. But most working dogs are like Rin Tin Tin; faithful to a fault and committed to a task well done. After all, if it weren't for Lassie, Timmie would still be at the bottom of the well.

Merrie Meyers

Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA

Ruff Drafts Editor



Judges Needed *for* Writing Competition

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR! DWAA has kicked off its annual writing competition and the search is on for judges willing to review one of the largest writing contests devoted to dogs.

Seven hundred and fifty entries were submitted in the 2022 competition and were reviewed by 90 judges. Each entry was judged by an independent panel of three volunteers. This year, eligible entries will include work published between September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023.

"We anticipate that the number of entries will meet or exceed last year's number, so the need for judges is even more important than before," said 2023 Writing Competition Chair Merrie Meyers. "Entrants can also volunteer to judge, just not in the category they've entered."

Judges are recruited from DWAA's membership as well as from other interest groups, such as the Cat Writer's Association (CWA), AKC, and multiple breed clubs.

Judges are asked to review and score entries in one or more categories. Except for books, all entries are submitted online via our website. Judging and scoring is also online, making it easy to complete their reviews and upload scores. Judges have three to four weeks to complete this work. ■

Those interested in being a judge for this year's competition should contact the contest chair, Dr. Merrie Meyers at 2023dwacontestchair@gmail.com.



2023dwacontestchair@gmail.com

CONTEST NEWS

from the WRITING COMPETITION



Enter the Writing Competition

SO, PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD. The DWAA Annual Writing Contest opened on September 11, 2023, and will close on October 31, 2023. Finalists will be announced via social media at the end of 2023. Winners will be announced at an awards event in early Spring, 2024. Entries must have been published, posted, or aired between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023. For young writers, publication can mean posting on a school website, literary magazine, or blog. There are 49 regular categories and about 20 special award categories. Special categories include sponsored cash prizes.

"We appreciate all of the generous sponsors and program partners who support DWAA and the dog writing community," said DWAA President, Therese Backowski. "Their involvement in the program is one of the reasons that it is so successful. It's wonderful to see these opportunities for recognition provided for dog writers and artists."

In addition to the 49 regular categories, all of which are listed on DWAA's website, there are 17 special award categories, sponsored by individuals and organizations, all offering cash prizes. They include:

| | |
|---|---------|
| AKC Club Publication Excellence Award <i>(sponsored by the AKC)</i> | \$500 |
| The AKC Family Dog Award <i>(sponsored by the AKC)</i> | \$500 |
| AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Public Service Award <i>(sponsored by the AKC)</i> | \$500 |
| AKC Reunite Microchip Awareness Award <i>(sponsored by AKC Reunite)</i> | \$1,000 |
| Captain William Lewis Judy Award <i>(sponsored by American Legion Post #348 and Lisa Begin-Kruysman)</i> | \$350 |
| Dogwise Best Book Award <i>(sponsored by Dogwise Publishing; chosen by DWAA President from category winners)</i> | \$500 |

“We appreciate all of the generous sponsors and program partners who support DWAA and the dog writing community.”

—THERESE BACKOWSKI
DWAA PRESIDENT

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| DWAA Distinguished Service Award (sponsored by AKC, selected by DWAA Board of Directors) | \$1000 |
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| DWAA Junior Writer Award (sponsored by Young Writers on the Web Committee Chair Ted Slupik, mystery author Karen Harbert and children's book author Karen Petit) | \$400 |
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| Harrison Stephens Inspirational Feature Award (sponsored by Sally and Tom Reeder) | \$300 |
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| James Colasanti, Jr. Poetry Award (sponsored by James Colasanti, Jr.) | \$250 |
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| Manette Begin-Loudon Memorial Award (sponsored by the family of Manette Begin-Loudon) | \$300 |
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| National Dog Show Presented by Purina Excellence in Writing/Producing Award (sponsored by the National Dog Show) | \$500 |
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|---|-------|
| PSI Professional Pet Care Award (sponsored by Pet Sitters International) | \$300 |
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| Rio Award (sponsored by Jen Reeder and Bryan Fryklund) | \$300 |
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| Second Chance Award (sponsored by Merrie Meyers) | \$250 |
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| Sleepypod Pet Safety Award (sponsored by Sleepypod) | \$500 |
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| Walter R. Fletcher Memorial Award (sponsored by The Westminster Kennel Club) | \$500 |
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| Whole Dog Journal Health and Wellness Award (sponsored by Whole Dog Journal/ Belvoir Media Publications) | \$500 |
|--|-------|

The 2022 competition was chaired by **BARBARA E. MAGERA, MD, PHARM D, MMM**, and the number of entrants and entries was at an all-time high. This year, the contest committee will be chaired by **MERRIE MEYERS, PH.D., APR, FELLOW, PRSA**. “We are hopeful that we can meet or exceed last year’s number of entrants (500+) and entries (750+) again. Chairing such a fantastic event with so many moving parts can be daunting. Thank goodness we have a terrific committee: **THERESE BACKOWSKI, LISA BEGIN-KRUYSMAN, KAREN HARBERT** and **MARSHA PUGH**, some of whom (looking at you, Marsha Pugh) have been involved for a very long time and offer invaluable advice. **SU EWING** is heading up the planning for DWAA’s annual awards event. More information about that event will be sent out later in the year.”

You can enter the contest by visiting <https://dogwriters.org/writing-competition/>, completing the entry form and uploading your entry into the contest portal. Regular category entry fees are \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Special category entry fees are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

If you are going to enter the contest, there are a few important rules to remember.

1. Make sure your entry was published within the publication window. Entries must be produced (published, posted, aired, etc.) between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023.
2. An entry isn’t considered available for judging until payment is made.
3. ALL entries must be uploaded either as a hyperlink or a PDF file, INCLUDING BOOKS. This is new for 2023. We are no longer accepting hard copies of books.
4. Make sure your entry category is the correct one for your item.
5. Entrants can also judge. Judges can also enter. You just can’t judge and enter the same category.

Good luck to all who enter and thanks to all who judge ! ■

LISA BEGIN KRUYSMAN

IN *any* GIVEN MOMENT

HOW CANINES HELP WIDOWED PEOPLE HEAL

Perhaps there is no place more in need of some specially-trained grief counseling canines than a gathering of over 500 people who've lost a spouse or significant other.



I DISCOVERED this firsthand in July, when I attended and presented at a unique place known as Camp Widow in San Diego.

Before I share the impact of some special canine-human teams

that were present to lend emotional support, I want to relay a little about an organization called Soaring Spirits International (SSI) and Camp Widow. SSI was established after its co-founder, Michele Neff Hernandez, lost her husband Phil in a motorcycle accident in 2005. Only in her mid-thirties at the time, Michele, like anyone who has lost a partner, was seeking answers and guidance to help her through her widowed journey. She soon found herself embarking on a mission to unite with others who'd been widowed to learn from their experiences and challenges.

Camp Widow, organized by SSI, is held in Toronto; Tampa, FL; San Diego, CA; and Australia each year. These events present a one-of-a-kind authentic experience for those charting a new course, an opportunity to share with others who truly understand their profound grief and everyday struggles. These events, and other programs offered by SSI, provide practical tools and research-informed resources for widowed persons rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of the death of a spouse or partner. For example, for the past year, I've posted every Saturday morning on SSI's blog, sharing my own story and perspective on being widowed, one of seven widowed bloggers reaching out to those in need each day of the week.

Not long after becoming widowed, Hernandez-Neff became acquainted with Michelle Dippel, a young widow who'd lost her husband to cancer.



The two became close friends with Hernandez-Neff sharing her vision of organizing gatherings just for widowed persons, an idea initially scribbled on a napkin.

That “small spark” of an idea led to the creation of SSI and Camp Widow when Hernandez-Neff remained determined to ensure that no widowed person would have to grieve alone. It helped that she knew she could count on the support of Dippel every step of the way. Today, Hernandez-Neff continues to serve as the CEO of SSI, dedicating her life to advocating for the widowed with Dippel continuing to serve on the SSI Board of Directors.

I was delighted to learn that at Camp Widow San Diego, teams of personal pets and their owners would provide comfort and stress release to those in need. These teams, presented by Love on a Leash, must pass a Control Evaluation and complete at least a minimum of ten supervised visits to become certified. Love on a Leash, founded in 1995 is a charitable organization, based in San Diego County, California. Their San Diego Central chapter was founded in August of 2010, and is currently Love on a Leash’s second largest chapter, coordinating multiple group visits in that region each month at hospitals, nursing homes and anywhere they are needed. As of April 2022, there were over 2,400 Love on a Leash members, volunteering as therapy teams with their dogs, cats, and/or rabbits.

At Camp Widow I met up with Sue Subkow, the founder of the San Diego Central Chapter and her fellow human and canine teams on the second day of the conference. I’d just finished presenting my own writing workshop, and although my session had gone well, the combination of absorbing the intense stories of so many others while dealing with my own

The presence and companionship of dogs, the observation of their playful antics has helped patients on their way back to normal thinking and living.

CAPTAIN WM. LEWIS JUDY

nervousness about presenting had taken its toll. I needed some caring canine comfort.

I walked out of the dark air-cooled conference room where I’d spoken for an hour and a half to decompress. In the lobby, I was greeted by the presence of some sweet canines who lounged in patches of bright sunlight waiting to lend a loving paw to conference attendees.

I approached a labradoodle named Skeeter who greeted me enthusiastically. His handler informed me that he did not do that for everyone! Skeeter resembled a larger version of my own dog, Quint, who I’d been missing. I sensed he knew that.

It also occurred to me at that moment that 20 months earlier I’d come to San Diego to fetch Quint, and named him in honor of my late husband, Rich. And there I was, not far from the very spot where I’d first held Quint in my arms. Although only eight weeks old and completely untrained for grief support, or anything for that matter, he’d found a way to help me find my own “way back.” That is the true power of the paw.

In 1949, Captain Wm. Lewis Judy, co-founder of DWAA wrote, “The presence and companionship of dogs, the observation of their playful antics has helped patients on their way back to normal thinking and living.”

Spending time with Skeeter, and the other dogs and their human teammates, I felt the stress leading up to the conference fade away. In the presence of a good dog, no words are ever needed. No invasive questions asked or concerns exchanged. Just the gentle presence of a loving dog that somehow knows just what is needed in any given moment. ■



RHODA HOVAN

HOW *to* MEASURE A DOG

PETE WAS MY HIKING BUDDY, and I had kept her by default. There were two very nice little girl puppies in the litter and since I couldn't decide between them,

I let another breeder have first pick and I kept the other. The puppy my friend picked out won four majors, the last of which was a Specialty win to finish her championship on her one-year birthday. She then went on to become an Outstanding Dam and the top dam of CHs in the country one year, producing multiple Specialty BOB, OS/OD, and SDHF kids. I, on the other hand, got Pete. How lucky could I get?

It was clear immediately that Pete was a tomboy, although it was just happenstance that her boyish name fit her so perfectly. She was joyous and bold, and I've never seen a dog have so much fun in everything she did. By four months old she had become my hiking companion, and we covered about three miles a day. I'm incredibly fortunate to live just over a mile from Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and there are about a dozen wonderful woodland trails within a 15 minute drive from my house. We explored them all, but over time settled on a few that suited us best.

One trail was Pete's favorite right from the beginning. At the highest point there was an old, overgrown orchard, and a few gnarled apple trees were still scattered over the long-abandoned homestead clearing. Pete loved to snack on fallen apples, but instead of eating them immediately, she would "toss" them down the hill to chase and eat, and then do it again. She invented the game as a puppy, and that hike became our fall "apple-picking" tradition.

I never trained Pete because she simply didn't need it — she just figured out stuff on her own. The park has strict leash laws, but we favored trails without too many other hikers so she could be off-leash. And I trusted that I only needed to say Pete's name quietly when we encountered other people,

and she instantly returned to my side. I used to dangle a loop of slip lead at my side, and she would put her head through it as if she'd been leashed all along. It was her idea.

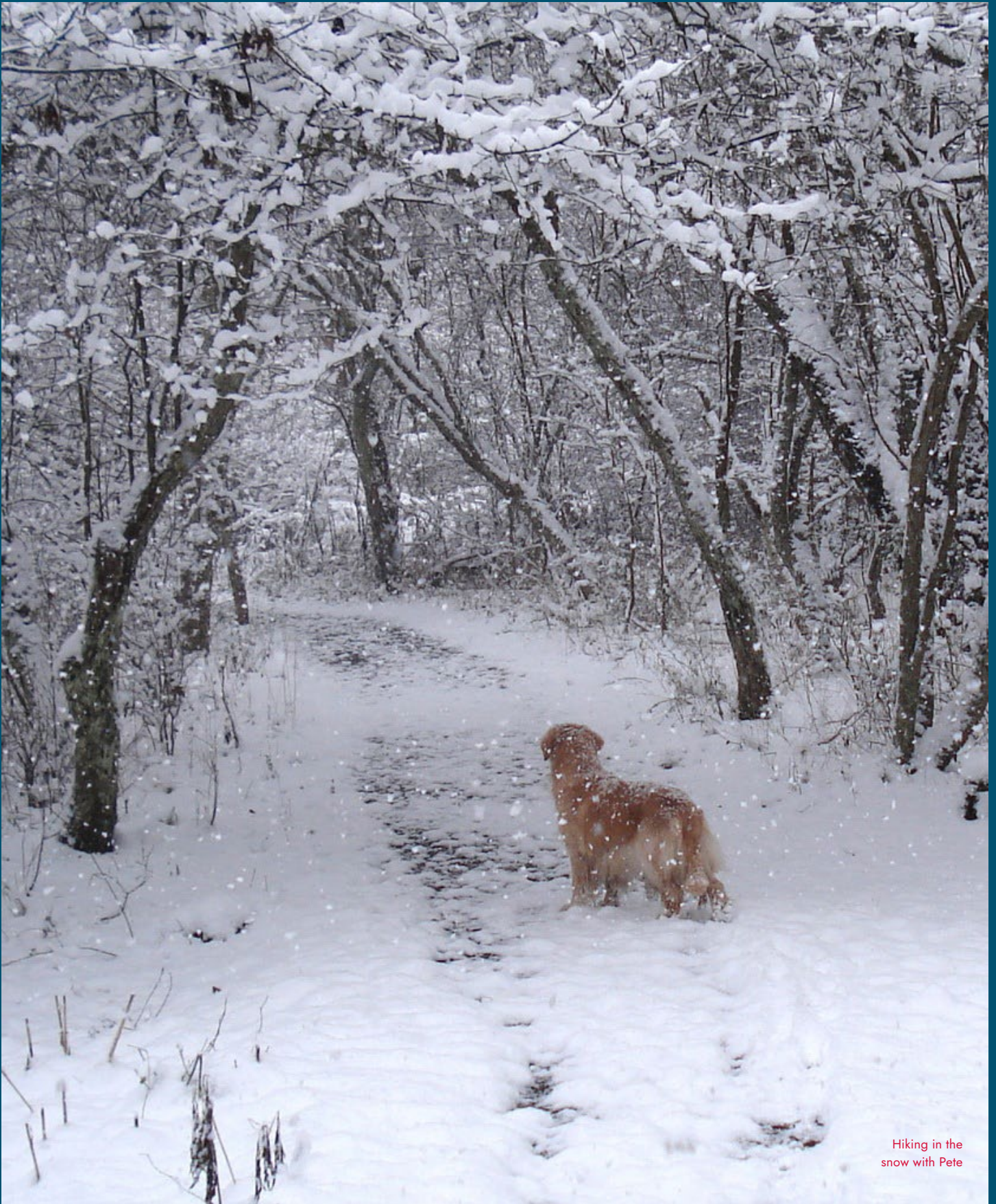
One time I was on the phone and didn't notice a park ranger through the trees until he was nearly upon us. But Pete had seen him first, ran to my side, and quickly put herself on leash. The ranger wasn't fooled, however, and said to me, "You deserve a ticket, but I can't ticket this dog." He let me off with a warning and let Pete off with a tummy rub.

The terrain in the park was created by ancient rivers that cut into the bedrock, and deep valleys that were partially filled by glacial sediment during the last ice age. Consequently, the woods were crisscrossed by steep hills, ravines, and winding streams, with glacial sand under the vegetation. The sandy soil kept Pete's nails ground short, so after 4 months old, I never trimmed her toenails again (except her dew claws). Never trimmed her whiskers either. Just one of those quirky little memories about Pete.

I have lots of those.

Her mother, Frog, had been a disciplinarian, so Pete was a pushover. (Have you ever noticed that strict moms produce pushover moms, and in turn, pushover moms produce strict moms — it seems to alternate generations.) Pete loved to carry toys, of course, but the other dogs always stole them from her. But Pete found a solution I never would have thought of. Somewhere in the way-back field she came across a hunk of broken cement block that was almost too heavy for her to carry. The other dogs had no interest in it, so she claimed it as her special toy and was happy with it. She was happy with everything.

Our daily three miles on hilly trails endowed Pete with the power and athleticism of a young



Hiking in the
snow with Pete

KAREN HARBERT

Am/Can. Ch. Aelwyd Pirate Program, CD

WE CALLED HIM POND SCUM



H

E WAS A KLUTZY puppy. Big-boned, big ears, big appetite. The first thing that was evident was that we had to set down a separate dish for his littermates or he'd hog the whole meal. I had planned to

keep a male, and this one was so like his sire. I wanted a breeder's dog, so I sent his pretty brother up to a good friend in Canada who had just lost her own best dog.

His official name was Pirate Program, and his call name was Cobol. One day in spring I got an envelope in the mail with two show photos of his pretty brother. "Here are Cali's back-to-back BPIGs." I ran down to the back yard to show them to my husband.

"What's a BEE-PIG?" he asked.

"Best Puppy in Group," I told him.

"Well, her puppy may be a BEE-PIG, but the one you kept looks like Pond Scum." He pointed to my Cobol, just climbing out of the fishpond with a green scum line along his ribs.

His dam was a littermate of the first Cardigan Welsh Corgi to win an all-breed Best in Show in Canada, but I showed him in puppy class without a single win and the name Pond Scum stuck. That summer I

was invited to judge Sweepstakes at the Canadian National Specialty, so I took him along. As a judge I couldn't enter the specialty, but I watched his brother win Best of Winners and Best Puppy.

Then, our turn came. First in Canada where he won a BPIG of his own, then back home on a show circuit where he won a four and two five-point majors. By the time he was fifteen months old he was Am/Can. Ch. Aelwyd Pirate Program. Two years later his son was Winners Dog at the Canadian National and finished his championship in five shows from puppy class, and then his American championship in twelve shows.

Pond Scum added an obedience title with High Score at the Canadian National Specialty, and High Score at a regional specialty back home. At the age of four he won Best of Breed at the Canadian National, which placed him in the Top Ten in the breed for the year. His wins in the US earned him a spot in the Top Ten in the breed for one quarter of the year. All his show points in both countries were from the Bred-by-Exhibitor class; he was always breeder-owner handled.

Looking for more ways to have fun, we tried Brace competition. His sire lived in eastern Canada; I lived in southern California. (As far apart as we could get and still speak the same language, we joked.) We got together for shows a couple of times a year, usually at specialties. In a breed where it's rare for any two dogs to have identical color and markings, Pond Scum and his sire were almost clones. I did it primarily to demonstrate the superb temperament of these two dogs. On one Canadian circuit they won back-to-back Best Brace in Show.

The Canadian friend who owned Pond Scum's sire had invited me up to "look over my investment" after we had traded breeding stock for several years. That started a tradition of show circuits at my west coast shows and my friend's Canadian shows. There were adventures, and there were misadventures; I kept a travel diary, and finally, my friend challenged me to turn our stories into fiction.

Pond Scum was a part of those circuits and those adventures. He traveled with us in vans, in rented motorhomes and our own RV's. He (and

the rest of our dogs) survived the wreck of my van and trailer on a California freeway. He traveled through the California Redwoods and to Fort Macleod, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and the Frank Slide in Alberta. He herded sheep at US and Canadian shows. He was a dog who did everything I ever asked of him and did it well. He shared my pillow on most of our journeys. His breeding line spans over 50 years, from my first Cardigan to our eleven-year-old female today. There have been many outstanding dogs throughout these years, but when I think back on my success, it's always Pond Scum who stands out: show dog, sire, obedience dog, best buddy.

'Murder at the Dog Show' was born from my travel diary, 'Travels With Charlie,' or, 'Off the Road Again.' There are lots of true stories buried in the pages of my fiction, and while I hope I don't really know any murderers, we all know someone who needs killing.

There are now 21 published books in the series and my beloved Pond Scum is the canine hero of them. Four in the series have been finalists for the DWAA Maxwell award (who do I have to kill for a win?) and there are more books to come. ■

JUDE HEIMEL

Paddy, Just *a* Farm Dog

I

HAD JUST TURNED TEN when my father brought home a copper red cocker spaniel pup and put it into my arms. I called him Paddy and we went everywhere together. Before I was eleven, we moved from the city to the country. Paddy and I were fast friends by then.

When we moved to the country, my father bought a flock of sheep. By fall, the spring lambs were strong and husky. They played together for hours, especially the young rams. They would face each other, butting heads with a bang. And then, again. Bang! Bang! I shuddered at the sound. The young rams did not have horns but the top of their heads, starting almost immediately above their eyes and past their ears, were solid bone, hard as rock. It formed a nice flat “battering ram.”

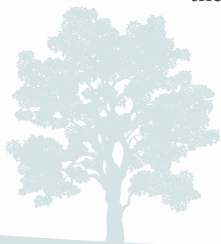
One day after school, my younger brother, Ed and I were outside doing chores. Ed was in a corner of the sheep pasture near the house, watering the sheep.

I was in the garden weeding when I heard Ed scream. “What was that?!” I looked up and around for him. Ed was crying. “What was the matter?” Then I saw that Wooly, a young ram, had him

cornered up against a large wooden fence post. I saw Wooly butt him just as he did his fellow young rams. Ed screamed again. Wooly’s head was rock hard. He butted Ed in the groin again. To get to Ed, I had to run out of the fenced-in garden, through its far gate and around to the front pasture to crawl between the rails of the fence. Ed screamed again. I ran as fast as I could, but Paddy was there first.

As I ran up to the fence, I saw Paddy lunge at the young ram’s shoulder, bumping him hard. But the ram was almost three times his size and Paddy’s effort was not enough to stop him from his fun. Paddy lunged again, jumped high, and grabbed Wooly’s ear, biting down hard. That stopped him and he turned on Paddy who had tumbled to the ground after his high jump. While Paddy kept the ram at bay, I was able to help Ed gingerly climb between the fence railings.

Mom appeared and escorted Ed, crying and limping, up to the house. Once Ed and I were out of the pasture, Paddy trotted over to me and lay down at my feet, panting. I was so proud of him. He had figured out the situation and courageously rushed in to save Ed. “Good dog, Paddy!”



No one else seemed to think too much of it. Paddy was just a farm dog after all.

Nevertheless, I was proud of him and I told him so that night as we sat side by side on the dock. I put my arm around his shoulder as we gazed out at the lake. "Paddy, you are wonderful! You are just as good as Lassie!" That incident was when I first knew I had a very special dog.

Not long after that, my father brought home a second dog, a two-month-old black Labrador puppy. We named him Mike. Paddy took Mike in hand and began to teach him some of the basics: sit for your meal, walk with Ed and Jude to the school bus stop and return home without too much loitering.

The puppy seemed to enjoy country life. One day he was out in the front pasture, lost in the sights and smells of the horse pasture. That day, a truck load of new horses came in. The current group of horses jockeyed around the gate to see who was coming. As the new horses were unloaded, a lot of shuffling occurred. A run began, the horses neighing and snorting, bucking and rearing as they raced after each other. The pasture formed a large oval with an old apple orchard at the far end. The horses began galloping the outer loop of the pasture. They swooped up into the orchard and raced toward the far side. It was a sight to behold.

I think I noticed it first. "Look! Mike is out there!" The puppy had wandered onto the sandy track that the horses used when they galloped out of the orchard, down the hill, and out to the flat land below.

"He is going to get killed! The horses will kill him!" None of us could get to the puppy in time. "Mike! Mike! Get out of there!" Our calls and yells did not get his attention.

At my side, Paddy stood up. He saw Mike and scooted under the fence. He sprinted toward the puppy. Could he make it in time? I swear he ran so fast that day that his ears streamed out behind him. But the horses were already in the orchard and coming fast. Mike was exactly on the path they were headed for.

Paddy rushed straight through the tall grasses, unerring in his direction to Mike. He reached the puppy, picked him up by the scruff of the neck and half carried, half dragged him to the side of the sandy track, just far enough to be out of the horses' way. The horses swept by, some bucking, all running flat out. Paddy and Mike were safe. We were jumping and screaming, clapping and laughing.

To me Paddy was a hero. To the others, he was just a farm dog. A damn good farm dog. ■





TIPS & TACTICS

Putting *a* Bow on It

HOW TO BE A GOOD COMPETITION JUDGE

AT LEAST TWO to three times a year, I get an email from a public relations group I belong to asking if I have the time or interest to judge a competition. I usually say yes because I always learn something about other professionals and how they practice their craft. But judging can be daunting, especially if it's your first time.

Most judging assignments provide a set of guidelines and/or criteria for scoring entries. This is the case with DWAA's Writing Competition as well. Judging criteria is helpful to both entrants and judges. The criteria, when reviewed before submitting an entry, can help entrants decide if their work meets category and contest objectives. Properly designed judging criteria also helps minimize judges' unconscious biases and focus attention on the desired elements to be assessed and assigned a score.

The World Food Championships follows its proprietary scoring process, the E.A.T. Method, defined as Execution, Appearance and Taste. In my mind, DWAA's Writing Competition Judges follow the W.U.F.F. method, which I define as Well-Written/Executed, Unique, Flows, and (Audience) Focused.

Here are some quick tips on how to be a good contest judge.

1. Become familiar with the rules.

What is the timeline for entries? If it's not clear when the material was created, ask the contest committee/chair to ask the entrant. **DON'T** reach out to the entrant yourself. Judging is supposed to be anonymous. There is a process for getting clarification on an entry.

2. Be unbiased.

Judges should not let personal preferences about a subject or the entrant affect the scoring process. Stick to whether the objective of the category has been met.

3. Evaluate Creativity, Originality and Effectiveness.

The contest values how well the entry can engage the intended audience. Hence, the statement earlier about how the criteria also provides a road map for the entrants.

How can you prepare to be a good judge? Review the contest criteria and set aside adequate time to review the entries assigned. If you've never judged a contest, this is the time to start. ■

If you'd like to volunteer to be a judge for this year's writing competition, please send an email to



2023dwacontestchair@gmail.com

TONI EAMES

The Versatile Golden Retriever

I KNEW LITTLE ABOUT DOG BREEDS when I was matched with my first guide dog in 1967. Charm, a blonde Golden stepped right into my heart and became the foundation for my love of the Golden Retriever breed. Charm, a Goody-Miss-Four-Paws, guided me through the New York City streets during my graduate school studies and accompanied me on my interview for my first job as a rehabilitation counselor at a psychiatric center.

For me, a guide dog is more than a mobility aid. In addition to stopping at curbs and steps, finding entrances and exits at stores, making sure I safely negotiate around obstacles, using intelligent disobedience for traffic and other moving objects, the guide dog is a social icebreaker. Pedestrians, shoppers, restaurant goers and seat mates at airports and other travel venues cannot resist commenting on the beauty of the Golden Retriever. I allow my dogs to socialize if the person asks permission and I am not holding the harness handle and actively being guided. Charm was succeeded by Flicka, Ivy, Escort, Keebler and my sixth Golden, Adora, and they all have been gracious ambassadors for the breed.

I met my anthropologist husband Ed when he was working with his first guide dog, a Black Labrador. After living with me and my clever, kind Golden, Ivy, he transferred his allegiance and only worked with Goldens until his death in 2009. Ed's fifteen-year-old retired guide Latrell, despite multiple health problems, demonstrates the true Golden spirit of friendliness, cuddliness and acceptance of all life has to offer.

In the 1970s, the use of Goldens as guide dogs expanded into the hearing and service dog movements. Hearing dogs alert their deaf or hard of hearing partners to sounds such as the doorbell, kitchen timer, telephone, smoke alarm and a name call.

The Golden service dog in tune with his/her partner, can pick up dropped or requested items, open or close doors, brace to offer assistance out of a chair, get help in a medical crisis, alert to diabetic lows, provide comfort to an autistic person or someone with PTSD, and a myriad of other tasks. One paraplegic man described his Golden as providing a "portable mouth."

A hunting dog, bred to work closely with his/her human partner, the Golden is a natural retriever. The breed's social temperament is a plus in having a dog comfortable with other animals and lots of people. The gorgeous Golden is generally not feared by the public, so denial of access to public places is rarely a problem. The downside to the Golden's sociability is controlling the desire of the working dog to meet and greet everyone!

The Golden's size is perfect for a guiding harness or mobility assistance. Their double coat, which generally does not shed profusely, makes the Golden comfortable in all weather conditions and seasons. In terms of training, the Golden has stamina, and does not mind repetition. The fact that the breed is food motivated, makes positive training easy. The downside is they can become scavengers and weight gain can become an issue. This breed is bright, motivated and quick to learn. They retain what they have been asked to do. ■

This article was published in 2018 as part of the quinquennial Golden Retriever gathering at the ruins of Guisachan House in Scotland.

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

Wonder Dog's Tennis Ball

When our beloved family dog finally crossed the rainbow bridge, I knew he was gone forever...or so I thought.



I WAS WRONG! He miraculously, unbelievably, came back! To start at the beginning...

Baron was our Wonder Dog, all the canine perfection that could be packed into a mixed lab pound puppy. I'd visited the animal shelter and fallen in love with the black-haired, brown-eyed pup. I brought him home the same day, much to the delight of our diapered daughter, son, and two other dogs.

Baron became a member of the family who continued to amaze us all. He grew from a pup into a shining gem—loving, loyal, protective, intelligent, and the best darn babysitter in the world! I proudly put him on one of my book covers. He was that special.

Yes, Baron was the perfect pet except for two things. One, he hated delivery men, and two, he grew old. When I knew it was time to end his suffering and said we were going to the vet, I was shocked to see huge tears fall from those big brown eyes. I had never, or ever since, seen a dog cry.

Baron didn't come home, and the four of us went into mourning. I placed his favorite toys, the five tennis balls he would never share with the pack, as a memorial on the fireplace mantle. My breaking heart knew our Baron was never coming home. Guess what? He did.

I started seeing him about the house, lying in his favorite places. I thought I was definitely losing my marbles until I heard the same from my now 11-year-old daughter. She was especially hit hard, for she had no memory of life without Baron like the rest of us. She didn't know whether to be frightened or not of "the dearly departed." When you're a kid, ghosts can be scary. But what about when it's not Halloween, and the ghost is real?



There will always be that dog that no dog will replace, the dog that will make you cry even when he's been gone for more years than he could have lived."

MEGAN DAUM

I was definitely out of my element here, but somehow, I knew what to say. "Don't be scared. I've seen him too, sweetheart. Baron knows we aren't ready to let him go. He's staying with us until we are." She soon felt comforted by his presence. I did, too. If my husband or son saw him, they never said, and I sure wasn't about to bring it up.

Weeks went by. The tears started to dry somewhat, yet our phantom dog remained. I finally suggested to the family that we get another lab. My daughter burst into tears. "No Barons!" she cried.

"How about a small dog?" I suggested.

She agreed, but only if she could make the final choice. At a no-kill shelter she finally found "my dog." At least, a sad shadow of a dog. Tivvy the terrier had belonged to a woman whose boyfriend had beaten the little thing, left her with broken ribs and tail, then thrown her into the ocean to drown. The woman had bravely rescued her pet—at great peril to her own safety—from the ocean and the man who abused them both.

For Tivvy's safety, she left her at our local no-kill shelter, along with five handwritten pages telling us every little thing about her beloved dog. Those pages were heartbreaking. She begged Tivvy's new family to please keep her safe and to love her very, very much.

By now, Tivvy was traumatized and terrified of people, especially men, and peed all over herself whenever anyone approached her kennel. No one had been able to make a connection.

My daughter swore Tivvy was "the one." My husband and I shook our heads. The shelter woman said the terrier had been spoken for, and the new owners were coming to pick her

up. My daughter broke into tears and pleaded, "At least let me hold her!"

The sympathetic shelter worker went to get the dog. My daughter begged me to "Do something, Mom!" When I didn't answer, she sank to the floor cross-legged and cried even harder.

Here came Tivvy, resisting the leash. Shivering and terrified, she pooped on the floor, and without squatting, wet herself again, urine dripping down her shaking legs. Then, to the worker's surprise, Tivvy yanked the leash free and ran straight into my daughter's arms, who hugged Tivvy close.

"Please, Mom, she loves me! Can't I have her?" Three pairs of eyes—spouse, shelter worker, and my child—looked toward me for the verdict.

Well, I am a mother, after all, and I'd walk over hot coals for my kids. I said, "I'm a writer and I work at home. This little dog obviously needs around the clock care and attention. She'll definitely get it from us."

The woman nodded her agreement. My husband heaved a heavy sigh. My daughter squealed with joy startling poor Tivvy who peed some more on my daughter's jeans. Tivvy's

scheduled adopters went home with another dog. It seemed meant to be... but no one except my daughter was happy about it. Not even Tivvy.

Tivvy's first four months with us were a nightmare. She lived, slept, ate, peed and pooped on the carpet under my daughter's bed, only coming out when my daughter came home from school. She was afraid of almost everything and everyone, and my son sadly said, "She's no Baron."

Everyone agreed except our daughter. "She's perfect! She just needs time." She was right. One day, the light dawned in this poor little terrier's head. She wasn't in hell anymore! She had nothing to fear! Slowly her true personality began to emerge. I was glad to see it, but I still mourned my Baron who, now that my daughter had a new companion, continued to keep only me company.

I'd been the first one to see him as a pup. Unlike anyone else, I'd spent 24-7 with Baron for 13 years. He was my faithful office buddy, always there under my desk when I was writing. I just couldn't let him go.

I took in Baron's row of tennis balls on the mantle, the only things he ever refused to share with the pack and held one in my hand. Even with Baron dead, I wouldn't let the other dogs have them. They were Holy Relics.

IT WASN'T EASY TO PICK THIS MONTH'S COVER. OUR NEWSLETTER DESIGNER PUT THE WORD OUT AMONG HER SAMOYED FRIENDS, AND GOT SOME GREAT SUBMISSIONS OF THESE SMILING WORKING DOGS HAVING FUN AT WORK.

Your submissions are always welcome for potential cover photos!



◀ Dezi's all smiles at a lure coursing event, submitted by Doreen Nelson



◀ CH Stardan's Rumble in the Jungle, "Georgie" is displaying his strength in weight pull, submitted by Debby Jahnke



◀ These TundraWinds Samoyeds are enjoying a pack hike, submitted by Donna Dannen

Pete

► Continued from pg 12

gymnast, and when the time came to show her in a 6-9 mos Puppy Class, she quickly garnered Specialty wins, BOB's, and Group placements on the way to finishing at 8 months old. And that was just for starters.

All of my dog show friends knew I was smitten with Pete, and she with me. If I asked someone to hold her ringside, she would put on the brakes and resist leaving my side, while keeping her eyes glued to me if I was in the ring with another dog. One time when I returned to my setup, I found a nametag on her crate that read, "Pete, the Perfect Puppy." (Thank you, Jennifer K.) To me, she was.

She was the right dog at the right time in my life. I don't know, maybe the years have faded the bond I felt to dogs from long ago, but of all the dogs I have loved, she is my favorite. I don't think I'll ever share a connection like that with another dog. I wish it wasn't so, but I think it is.

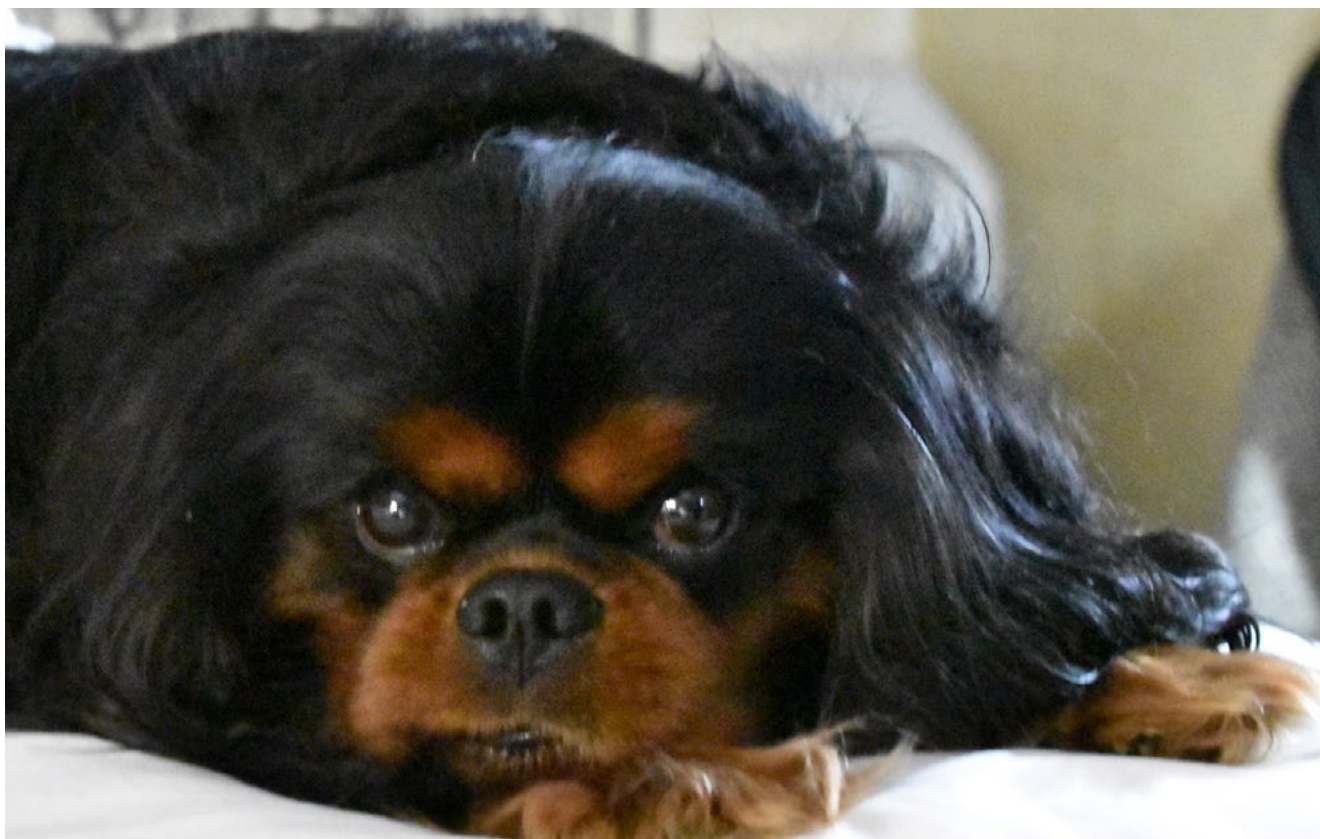
Pete and I walked together side by side, season after season, and year after year. We hiked together for 11 years right until the end. I lost her on Valentine's Day, 2010. The date was fitting because she owned my heart.

For me, it turns out that the way to measure a dog is not in inches, but in miles. In Pete's case, 8000 of them. ■

Thank you for listening. Correspondence invited: rhondahovan@aol.com or 330-338-4236

BARBARA E. MAGERA MD, PHARM D, MMM

A Sixth Sense



When I look into your eyes, I understand your soul. Just by your presence, I know your character and personality. I feel your sense of joy and disappointment; happiness and anger; courage and fear.

As a member of the canine family, I see what humans cannot. I know your emotions before you speak. I know when disease is smoldering in your body before you know you are sick. Some humans attribute this to my keen sense of scent. But it is more than just sniffing. God gave dogs a “sixth sense”. We canines know, I know, when you are teetering on the brink of death. As a comfort companion, I want to be with you during your last moments to make your transition easier. When your time has come, I am the first to see the angels approach.

A 91-year-old woman sits in a hospital bed reading her bible. The rhythmic pulsations of her

oxygen tubing soften her faint wheezing. Recurrent pneumonia and lung infections scarred her delicate airways. As a young widow, she worked tirelessly as sole provider for her children. More than 30 years of mill work explains her sense of breathlessness. As I approach, her tired eyes lock onto mine. My presence brings a warm smile as she outstretches her thin arthritic hand to pat my head. “You are so beautiful,” she softly whispers. “I am so glad you are here.”

Although this lovely woman is very sick, I sense that she will not die tonight. At present, she is weak but, with time, her strength will improve and she will enjoy her grandchildren. She is fighting an infection that ravages her frail body, but I sense she is in no immediate danger. When I leave her bedside, I hope her busy family will visit her. She yearns to see at least one of her six married

See SIXTH SENSE pg 24 ►

Baron

► CONTINUED from pg 21

But should they be?

Sadly, I tossed the ball down the long empty hall, just as I'd done hundreds of times for Baron. Suddenly, Tivvy popped up from underneath the couch and chased it with unrestrained joy. She actually brought it back to me! Shocked, I held the ball in my hand, and she barked, eagerly urging me on. She'd never barked before, this silent, timid, frightened little dog, yet she was now. I repeatedly threw the ball, and Tivvy retrieved it over and over until she was breathless, then hopped into my lap, ball in mouth. She let me cuddle her for the very first time.

I never saw Baron again after that day with Tivvy and his old green tennis ball. Our beloved canine friend finally went to whatever reward The Creator has in wait. And I finally said good-bye, a very hard thing to do. Baron was an incredibly loyal dog who, even in death, chose to stay and comfort me until Tivvy learned to accept her new family... and we her.

Tivvy was dearly loved by us for 19 years. She and I both learned that second chances are possible if you dare trust in new beginnings. Every time I saw her with a tennis ball, I marveled at two miracles: her new lease on life, and Baron's afterlife with me.

Some people think I've stretched the truth about my Wonder Dog. After all, they say suspiciously, I AM a fiction writer, but I stand by my story. When questioned, Tivvy, who lived in the house with my phantom companion, always remained silent.

YOU decide... ■

P.S. Tivvy's former owner kept in touch with the shelter. I hope she finally found the strength to leave her abuser, and was comforted with the knowledge that, thanks to her fierce courage and selfless devotion, her beloved dog didn't drown, healed physically and emotionally, and found a loving, forever home with us.

Sixth Sense

► CONTINUED from pg 23

children. A short visit with one of them would surely lift her spirits and accelerate her healing.

A 62-year man lies in an ICU bed. Tubes hang from every orifice. Alarms sound but no one rushes to his bedside. I see the letters DNR written over his hospital bed. Visitors standing immediately outside his room are holding hands and praying. They are red faced, sobbing and scared. I sense these are his close family members. They are God-fearing country folks who don't understand what is happening. They pray for a miracle. They are too frightened to return to his bedside. Swelling and broken skin grotesquely distort his body. Someone asks that I go into his room. Compassionate hands place me on his bed. His fingers gently touch my fur. Through swollen eyelids, his squinting eyes stare at my face. I am grateful to be the only living being he sees before he dies.

A 14-year-old girl sits in a wheelchair flailing her arms with no purposeful movement. Her head bobs from side to side. Drool pours from her mouth. "I don't know what she wants," her caretaker shouts in frustration. I sit quietly in front of her and listen. I comprehend her thick and garbled speech. What I hear is a soft voice that speaks with clarity and perfect enunciation. She says, "I am a beautiful person trapped inside a broken body. I am a human being who wants to be loved. Please help me." I immediately rush to her side. My eyes are wide and shining as I extend my head to her eye level. A shimmer of hope adorns her face. She moves her tremulous hand towards me. I raise my head high to touch her fingertips.

I love my work as a therapy Cavalier. I treasure my moments with the sick. My role is to comfort and assist them. I exist for them. Each patient is special to me. If I could speak to humans, this is my message: "Cherish each day of your life. Live each day with meaning and thankfulness. Be kind to each other for you don't know when illness may besiege you and your family. Spend time with the sick because your presence gives them hope and courage as they struggle through adversity. Know that I love them all." ■

Barbara E. Magera MD PharmD MMM (Caracaleeb) is a Cavalier fancier, writer & photographer who lives and practices medicine in Charleston, SC.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL MARTIN, LINDA VON HANNEKEN IS DRIVING HER TEAM OF SIX SAMOYEDS IN A FAN HITCH FORMATION—AN ANCIENT METHOD OF HOOKING UP A DOG TEAM.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, THE DOGS ARE STORMY, MOONRISE, LIGHTNING, CANYON, NIMBUS AND MOXIE. LIGHTNING FURTHER DISPLAYED HIS PROWESS AS A WORKING DOG BY WINNING THE SAMOYED CLUB OF AMERICA NATIONAL SPECIALTY IN 2004.



on the COVER

Special thanks to Paul and Linda for permission to use this photo on our cover.



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