

RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

SPRING 2024

And the **WINNER** *is...*

PAGE 6

2023 Writing Competition

WINNERS & FINALISTS

PAGE 25 & 30

Poetry

PAGE 21

Tips & Tactics

MANAGING YOUR DWAA MEMBERSHIP



Ruff Drafts

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

ISSUE DEADLINES

Spring, February 16
Summer, May 17
Fall, August 16
Winter, November 15

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It seems like only a week or so since we published the last issue of Ruff Drafts. In fact, this issue is a tiny bit late because we have been so busy on your behalf. As most of you know, we launched the 2023 Writing Competition during Labor Day weekend. In the past, the contest grew to be large and unruly. It involved hours and weeks, (sometimes it felt like years,) of painstaking recruitment of judges, sorting and mailing entries to them, following up with emails and telephone calls, collating, double-checking the math in scores... and that is just a partial description of some of the mechanics of this contest.



Therese Backowski
and her dogs, Lucy
and Hank



So, **MERRIE MEYERS** and **MARSHA PUGH**, with the help of **KAREN HARBERT** and **LISA BEGIN-KRUYSMAN**, (and me, though I never do enough) did a lot of behind the scenes revamping of the entire process. I am surprised that neither Merrie nor Marsha is bald because there was a great deal of weeping and hair pulling during the long nights of decision making. I am an empath, and my heart went out to the two.

No improvements could be made without a redesign of our website, and that meant we needed a new webmaster. Our webmaster had to be capable of developing the tools that corresponded to our specific and slightly weird needs. The new webmaster, the brilliant and determined **ANGELA CAPODANNO**, met all our expectations, as all the entries are now online, even books. The submission of books was especially challenging for those who self-publish through an online platform, but that process was eventually mastered. This presented a learning curve for a few, though the contest chair, **MERRIE MEYERS**, only needed to help a few entrants.

Payment is online too, though we still accept checks. All judging was done online for the first time. Nothing had to be mailed. Judges read all entries inside the digital platform. Keeping everything in-house made it easy for us to remedy a problem if a judge couldn't open a document or access the scoring scale.

There were nearly 80 people who judged, comprised of members and non-members. That sounds like a lot, but we had almost 500 entries, all of which had to be read by 3 different judges. We are already taking the names of people who want to judge next year even if they intend to enter the competition. If they are competing, they won't be asked to judge a category they've entered. Believe me, there is plenty to go around! If you are interested, send an email to: info@dogwriters.com. There will be an official call for judges around Memorial Day.

A complete listing of each finalist and winner is included in this issue of Ruff Drafts. All the entries are readable on our website. Whether you are a seasoned competitor or a first timer, your participation is important to the organization. Very soon, a participant survey will be sent to all this year's entrants. I am looking forward to the announcement of the 2024 contest this summer.

Last, but certainly not less important, is the fact that all of you make us happen. DWAA has been serving those of us who serve dogs for a very long time, and you make our future bright. Thank you!

Therese Backowski

Therese Backowski

DWAA President

RUFFDRAFTS

Spring 2024

THE MOST ENJOYABLE THINGS
I'VE LEARNED FROM MY DOG

6

Finalists and Winners

IN DWAA'S 2023 WRITING COMPETITION

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Lost Doggy Drama

BY ANDRA GILLUM

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The Happy Wagging Tail

BY ELIZABETH ANNE JOHNSON

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Life with Lily

BY BARBARA E. MAGERA

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Member News

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Tips & Tactics

MANAGING YOUR DWAA MEMBERSHIP

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Thanksgiving, 1997

BY RHONDA HOVAN

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Calculations

A POEM BY LIZZIE NELSON

26

Dog Trotting

BY SHERRI TELENKO

28

My Worst Yet Best
Christmas Ever

BY ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

30

Confessions of a Dog

A POEM BY MARTHA M. EVERETT

31

Interview with a First Time
Writing Contest Judge

on the COVER



AS WE CELEBRATE THE WINNERS OF THE 2023 WRITING COMPETITION, OUR COVER IMAGE IS THE WINNER OF THE GRAPHICS: SINGLE ILLUSTRATION OR PAINTING CATEGORY — AUTUMN ENGLISH SETTERS, A PAINTING BY DANICA BARREAU

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Dog Writers,

This is the beginning of my 25th year as a DWAA member. I thought that a quarter-century tenure was significant until I helped update our membership database. While entering information, I learned that some of you have been involved for 30, 40, and even 50-plus years. Further, our membership is widespread, with mailing addresses located across the country, including Hawaii and Alaska, Europe, Asia and beyond. Thank you for continuing to support DWAA.

Whenever I talk to long term members I learn amazing things about some of our members and their contributions to the organization and dogdom in general. I've learned that many DWAA members are leaders in their field, often the first to do something, say something or document something, creating precedent for others to follow. I submitted an application for membership to DWAA after founding a community newsletter for dog park patrons (and serving as editor, cook and chief bottle washer). Even though I already had credentials as a working journalist, I was worried I wouldn't "get in" when measured up against such well known writers as Roger Caras, Mordecai Siegel and Cleveland Amory. DWAA saw something in my pluckiness, I guess. As a locally published writer I feel privileged to be part of such an esteemed group, especially when you look at the quality work produced by our current members.

While I'm on the topic of members, I want to mention that membership renewal notices were sent out via email. Please take a minute to renew yours. This issue includes information on how to renew, and just as importantly, how to update the information included in your member profile so that you can put your best paw forward.

And, speaking of paws, this issue has a wonderful assortment of articles submitted by members about their dogs in response to the theme, The Most Enjoyable Things I've Learned from my Dog(s). I hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as I enjoyed receiving and editing them.

This past year, I was privileged to chair the 2023 DWAA Writing Competition. It was a blast! I really enjoyed getting to know the

applicants who contacted me to ask a question or ask for help uploading their entry. As always, the quality of the entries was outstanding in both variety of topics and the quality of the material. As a judge I always learn so much from reading the work of others. By the way, it's not too early to think about serving as a judge in next year's contest. We've already started a list of folks who weren't judges this year, but would like to be included next year. Drop me a line if that sounds like something you'd like to do.



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

Merrie Meyers

Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA

Ruff Drafts Editor





CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE WINNERS OF THE 2023 WRITING COMPETITION

We are pleased to provide a listing of the Finalists and Winners in DWAA's 2023 Writing Competition. Job well done!

THIS YEAR, ALMOST 500 entries were reviewed by nearly 80 judges who generously volunteered their time. Contest entries were judged in 47 regular award categories and 17 special award categories. Entries were both international and domestic, ranging from locales as far away as Hong Kong and as close as local middle and high schools.

Regular Award Category Winners receive a Maxwell Medallion, named for one of DWAA's founders, Maxwell Riddle, and


a DWAA contest lapel pin. Special Award categories are sponsored by an individual or company and offer a cash prize. For the first time, all the entries can be read, heard, or viewed on the DWAA website. For some of the contestants, winning the coveted Maxwell Award is a dream come true. For others, it's the next step on their path to continued excellence. DWAA is happy to spotlight the work of these fantastic canine communicators! Four Paws Up to all who entered!!

DOGWRITERS.ORG/WINNERS


REGULAR CATEGORIES

A. Newspaper Articles and Columns


1. Health or General Care

-  When the End Approaches by Paula Piatt
Dental problems can signal worse health issues for pets by Arden Moore
Old Dogs and Vaccinations by Eileen Fatcher DVM
The Nose Knows: Localized Discoid Lupus Erythematosus by Nancy Paule Melone PhD
What to do if your pet is exposed to something toxic by Kim Campbell Thornton


2. Behavior or Training

-  Professional dog trainers unleash some savvy advice by Arden Moore
Nana Irene and Team Timmy by Joanne Anderson
The 3-Month Old Goldendoodle: What You Can Expect by Jenise Carl

3. Rescue


-  Rescue groups lend a hand to animals displaced by hurricanes by Arden Moore
“And the Mother and Child Reunion is Only a Motion and a Month Away” by Joanne Anderson
“RIP, the Talented Mr. Ripley” by Joanne Anderson

4. Art or Any Other Topic


-  “Nike Memorial & His Past Life Too??” by Joanne Anderson
“Audrey and Joseph’s Canine Wedding” by Joanne Anderson
Boca veterinarian is beating cancer and conquering social media by Arden Moore
Hiring a Top-notch Pet Sitter by Arden Moore
The Benefits of DNA Testing by Deb M Eldredge DVM

B. Magazines

5. Entire Issue, Single, Related, All-Breed


-  AKC Family Dog: The Training Issue by Russell Bianca
AKC Gazette by the American Kennel Club, submitted by Bud Boccone
Newf Tide - First Quarter 2023 by Annalyn Paz
The Alpenhorn - Summer 2023 National Specialty by Lara Usilton
The German Shorthair Journal by Bonnie Hill

6. Annual Special Interest or Any Other Subject


-  APDT Chronicle of the Dog by Devon Hubbard Sorlie
AKC Family Dog Digital Edition by Russell Bianca
FIT DOG! AKC FAMILY DOG THEME ISSUE by Russell Bianca
Professional Pet Sitter by Arden Moore

C. Magazine Articles

7. Health or General Care

-  Zinc-Responsive Dermatitis by Eileen Fatcher DVM
Internal Injury From Trauma by Deb M. Eldredge DVM
Maximizing Microchipping by Jen Reeder
Puppy Primer of Everything Your Need to Know A to Z by Elizabeth Anderson Lopez
What’s New in Kibble by Arden Moore

8. Behavior or Training

-  Visiting National Parks with Your Dog by CJ Puotinen
Could Your Dog Have ADHD? By Deb M. Eldredge DVM



Read the Entries

Is Your Dog As Smart as a 2-Year-Old?

By Mary R Burch PhD


Straddling the Fence on Dog Parks?

By Mary R Burch PhD

The Non-Compliant Client by Melissa

McMath Hatfield MS, CBCC-KA, CDBC

9. Rescue

 Saving the dogs of Ukraine
by Alan David De Herrera

A Trailer Park Sanctuary
by Rachel Cay Phelps

How Much is That Doggy in the Shelter
by Mary Schwager

K-9 from Ukraine by Jen Reeder

Rescue Mission From Ukraine to Oklahoma
by David Gallant PhD

10. Breed

 Pick of the Litter by Jen Reeder

Comedy Team by Jen Reeder

Don't Wait: Surgery for BOAS
by Eileen Fatcheric DVM

Greyhounds of Dodge City
by Brian Patrick Duggan

The Sealyham Sit by Bev Thompson

11. Art or Any Other Topic

 By A Nose by David Gallant PhD

Heroes Helping Heroes by Jen Reeder

Open For Business by Sarah Rumble

Taking It to the Streets by Jen Reeder

Whose Dog Are You? By Alan Fausel

D. Canine or All Animal Newspapers or Newsletters

12. Any Topic

 The Four-Legged Wedding Present
by Anne Marie Duquette

A New Leash on Life
by Anne Marie Duquette

Cornell DogWatch by Cynthia Foley



Read the Entries

E. Canine All-Animal Newspaper or Newsletter Articles

13. Columns Any Topic

 Healing at Twilight
by Lyn T. Garson CVT, CCRP

Dogs and Bloat
by Lyn T. Garson CVT, CCRP

Westminster 2023: A New Venue
by Barbara E Magera MD

F. Online

14. Blogsite


 Dogs Who Cook Stories For Other Dogs
by Leslie Brown

DoggyBiome Blog by Katie Dahlhausen

HappyGoDoodle.com by Jenise Carl

The Dog Behavior Institute Blog
by Stephanie Keesey-Phelan

15. Website

 The Pet Food Con by Dr Tom Lonsdale
BMDCA.org by Annie Ma

16. Magazine - Entire Publication

 USDAA Overview Digital Magazine Rescue
Dog Issue by Betty A. Weibel


17. Newsletter- Entire Publication

 USDAA Overview E-Newsletter
by Betty Weibel

AKC Canine Partners News by Penny Leigh

G. Online Article or Blog Entry

18. Health or General Care

 Owner of golden retriever poisoned by
Thanksgiving roll has this warning
by Jen Reeder

Allergies in Dogs: Symptoms, Triggers, and
How to Help Your Pup by Katie Dahlhausen

DEGENERATIVE MYELOPATHY IN
DOGS by Maggie Marton

Dog Diarrhea: How to Know What's Causing
It and Help Your Dog Feel Better
by Katie Dahlhausen

Fighting Canine Cancer in Memory of Deuce
by Penny Leigh

19. Behavior or Training

 The Mythical Brewery Dog
by Stephanie Keesey-Phelan Ph.D


Do Gentle Leaders Work? What to Know
about Haltis and Other Head Collars
by Liz Coleman

Dog Photography Tips for Your Holiday
Cards by Mary Schwager

Truffle Dogs by Kim Campbell Thornton

Want to Bring Your Dog Everywhere with
You? First, Set Them Up For Success
by Jen Reeder

20. Rescue

 100-year-old woman adopts 11-year-old dog
in perfect senior match by Jen Reeder

Former Shelter Dog Becomes Top Titled Fast
CAT All American by Penny Leigh

Ginger's Story: From Nobody's Dog to
Everyone Know It's Ginger by Ted Slupik

Saving Senior Dogs Week Celebrates Joy of
Adopting Older Pets by Jen Reeder

Scent Work Works for Shelter Dogs
by Rachel H Lane

21. Any Other Topic

 Do Dogs Grieve Other Dogs? By Jen Reeder

Doggy DNA Misconceptions About Nature
vs Nurture by Amy Shojai

Floridians rescue animals in the wake of
Hurricane Ian: 'Pets are family' by Jen Reeder

Knock 'Em Downs, headwhipping, and more:
a quick guide to simple data collection with
Google Forms by Ran Courant-Morgan

Professional Decision Making Animal in
Assisted Play Therapy: How the Goodness-
of-Fit Model Impacts Practice
by Risë VanFleet PhD

H. Graphics**22. Single Photo**

 Prince of Darkness by Danica Barreau


His majesty (boxer on a dock)
by Angela Schneider

Standard Poodle Diana by Derek Glas

Two is Better than One by Rachel Brix

Timber (top photo on page)
by Angela Schneider

23. Series Photos

 Location spotlight: An idyllic dog-friendly
beach on Lake Roosevelt by Angela Schneider

10 Dogs Training Hand Signals
by Rachel Brix

24. Single Illustration or Painting

 Autumn English Setters by Danica Barreau


Border Collie 'Joey' by Gail Elksnitis

Cardigan Welsh Corgi 'Chester'
by Gail Elksnitis

25. Series of Illustrations or Paintings

 Sydney and the Christmas Star
by Kay Whaley


26. Posters, Calendars, Brochures or Pamphlets

 Paws of the Inland Northwest
by Angela Schneider

Bernese Mountain Dog Calendar 2024
by Doris Rosmarie Braun

Nutmeg Portuguese Water Dog 2024
by Melinda Miller

I. Humor, Poetry, Short Fiction, Essays/Editorials**27. Humor**

 Basenjis and Physics: The Laws of Attraction
by Marcia Anne Woodard

K9 Laundry Assistant Gibson
by Dorothy Wills-Raftery

OK, You Win: I Learn a Lesson (and Acquire
Some Empathy) by Marcia Anne Woodard

Twins Antics by Barbara E Magera MD

Weather Report: Puppy Tornado
by Elizabeth M. Jarrell

28. Poetry

 A Message from Lily by Barbara E Magera MD

Dolphins on the Wing
by Anne Marie Duquette

29. Short Fiction

 Mama's Home by Barbara E Magera MD

A Happy Holidate/A Short Fiction Romance
(927 Words) by Dorothy Wills-Raftery

30. Essays/Editorials

A Leap of Faith
by Jacqueline Aucoin McQueeney

Child's Play? by Emily Holmes

Ode to Daisy: the Yellow Rescue Lab Who
Stole Our Hearts by Mary Schwager

"Waltzing Matilda" by Amanda Stronza

J. Other Media**31. Video, DVD or TV**

Meet the Breeds in the Field
by Doug Ljungren

A look at the Bernese Mountain Dog
by Nancy Stewart

Honoring Our Seniors: How to Improve
Vitality, Quality of Life, and Longevity
by Chris Zink DVM, PhD, DACVSMR

Pug in a Tutu is part of pet-friendly racing
team - Episode 8 Grateful Rescue TV
by Pamela Terhune

Train Your Dog to Gait for Fitness
and Performance
by Chris Zink DVM, PhD, DACVSMR

32. Podcasts

New Ideas on Hemangiosarcoma in Dogs
by Kelly Diehl

Arden Moore Talks with AVMA President
Lori Teller by Arden Moore

DogTV's Dog Mom Chrissy Joy
by Arden Moore

Dayna Hilton and Her Dogs Help Keep Kids
Fire Safe by Arden Moore

Meet Amber McCune - Dog Agility Legend
by Arden Moore

One Last Network by Angela Schneider

33. Radio or Other Audio

Lucky Dog stars and Dr. Dodman on the
Four Legged Life Show by Arden Moore

Insights into Therapy Dogs with Annie Peters
of Pet Partners by Arden Moore

Rev Your Engines for Pets by Arden Moore

Unleashing Great Dog Tips With What A
Great Dog Trainers by Arden Moore

K. Club Publications**34. Magazine Format**

The Courier by Bonnie Hill
and Kathy Butkovic

The Kooiker Chronicle by Karen Dean,
Nancy Melone, and Lisa Gerardi

Winter Issue 2023 by Pamela Leighton
and William Hinchman

35. Newsletter Format

The Parson's Nook, Summer 2023 Issue
by Brenda Koeppel and Gary Koeppel

Belgian Sheepdog Newsletter Issue 72.6
by Mary Grace Buckwalter and Sherry Hanley

Dawg Scoop by Jo Unbehaun

L. Club Publication Articles**36. Any Topic Article**

A Heart-to-Heart Chat on Subvalvular Aortic
Stenosis (SAS) in Bernese Mountain Dogs
by Nancy Paule Melone PhD

Goal Setting with Your Performance Dog
by Katherine Leigh Butkovic

Lessons in Lyrics for New Breeders: From
Jagger to Joel by Nancy Paule Melone PhD

Puppy Rescues Bloom into Agility Stars
by Cheyenne Lord

Rationality, Risk and Uncertainty:
Lessons from a Parvo Panic
by Nancy Paule Melone PhD

37. Regular Column or Series

Earth Boy Meets Galactic Girl
by Elizabeth M. Jarrell

The Sealyham Sit; Breed Disposition and
Canine Temperament Depicted in Art;
Sealyhams at Home; Basic Off Leash Training
and On by Bev Thompson

M. Special Club Publication**38. Any Topic**

The Courier – Year in Review by Bonnie Hill
and Kathy Butkovic

2022 Doberman Pinscher Club of America
Year In Review by Susan Hurrell



Read the Entries

N. Books


39. Single, Related or All-Breed

-  Chihuahuas For Dummies
by Kim Campbell Thornton

40. Rescue or Adoption

No entries

41. Training or Sports

-  Think Like a Sheepdog Trainer: A Guide to
Raising and Training a Herding Dog
by Beth Kerber and Kay Stephens

42. Behavior, Health or General

Enrichment Games for High-Energy Dogs
by Barbara R. Buchmayer

Mood Matters: MHERA: An innovative
assessment approach to animal emotionality
in the treatment of behavior problems
by Karin Pienaar

Ten product Must-haves as a dog owner
by Paige Mable Ann Krause

The Plant-Powered Dog: Unleash the healing
powers of a whole-food plant-based diet to
help your canine companion enjoy a healthier,
longer life by Diana Laverdure-Dunetz

Understanding Your Pet's Labwork: A Guide
to Communicating with Your Veterinarian
by Sally Suttentfield

43. Human/Animal Bond

-  Military Dogs of World War II by Susan
Bulanda

Forever Home
by Larry Lindner and Ron Danta

Paws of the Inland Northwest
by Angela Schneider

44. Reference

-  Multi-Billion Dollar Pet Food Fraud: Hiding
in Plain Sight by Tom Lonsdale

45. Fiction, Adult or Humor

-  Dog of Thieves by Neil S. Plakcy

A Corpse in the Condo by M.K. Dean

The Poodle Who Sang Undercover: Top Dog
Detective Cozy Mystery by Lynn Franklin

Wild Call to Boulder Field--An Arizona Trail
Adventure/Fiction; Adult
by Robert T. Ronning

Xolo by Peter Michael Hurd

46. Children Picture Books (up to age 3)

-  Rook and the Magic Door by Danica Barreau


Doghouse Drama
by Andra Gillum and Andy Case

G-lee's WISH by Sherry Bennett Warshauer

Good Girl, Karma by Laurie Ann Hanson

Sydney and the Christmas Star
by Kay Whaley and Kathy Hamrick

47. Children Early Readers (ages 4 to 8)


-  THE ADVENTURES OF
EXTRAORDINARY K9S
by Sherry Bennett Warshauer

A Place for Grace by Martha Mosley

Annie the Jack Wagon by Julie Swigart

Dogs: An Early Encyclopedia
by Marie-Therese Miller PhD

48. Children Young Readers (Ages 9 to 12)

-  Copper and his Rescue Friends
by Pam Atherstone

Jillian at the Junior Showcase
by Sassafras Lowrey

The World Is a Sniff by Mindy Hardwick

49. Children Young Adult (Ages 13 to 18)


-  Tree Talker by Susan J. Kroupa

CASH the Dog with the Butterfly Ears by
Hazel Loretta Christiansen



SPECIAL AWARD CATEGORIES

AKC Club Publication Excellence Award

 Rationality, Risk and Uncertainty: Lessons from a Parvo Panic
by Nancy Paule Melone PhD


A look at the Bernese Mountain Dog
by Nancy Stewart

A Heart-to-Heart Chat on Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis (SAS) in Bernese Mountain Dogs
by Nancy Paule Melone PhD

Lessons in Lyrics for New Breeders: For Jagger to Joel by Nancy Paule Melone PhD

The Parson's Nook, Summer 2023 Issue
by Brenda Koepfel and Gary Koepfel

AKC Family Dog Award

 Good Girl, Karma by Laurie Ann Hanson
G-lee's WISH by Sherry Bennett Warshauer

AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Public Service Award

 Puppy Primer of Everything Your Need to Know A to Z by Elizabeth Anderson Lopez

"Anal Gland Care" by Sue Barrett DVM

Do Dogs Grieve Other Dogs? By Jen Reeder

Heimlich Maneuver for Dogs
by Arden Moore

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER by Maggie Marton

AKC Reunite Microchip Awareness Award

 Maximizing Microchipping by Jen Reeder

Captain William Lewis Judy Award

 March 13 is K9 Veterans Day: Honoring Our Military Working Dogs
by Dorothy Wills-Raftery

Meet Mission K9 Rescue's Bob Bryant
by Arden Moore

Rescue Mission from Ukraine to Oklahoma
by David Gallant PhD

The Amazing Working Dog: Highlighting

Heroic, Historical, and Helpful Canines
by Dorothy Wills-Raftery

The Art of Becoming a Couch Potato
by Angela Schneider

DWAA Junior Writer Award (Ages 10-12)

 Adventures with Eve by Brynn McGuire

DWAA Junior Writer Award (Ages 13-14)

No entries

DWAA Junior Writer Award (Ages 15-17)

 Child's Play by Emily Holmes

My Journey to Becoming a Therapy Dog Handler by Lauren M Marcotte

Harrison Stephens Inspirational Feature Award

 "Waltzing Matilda" by Amanda Stronza

A Leap of Faith
by Jacqueline Aucoin McQueeney

Ode to Daisy: the Yellow Rescue Lab Who Stole Our Hearts by Mary Schwager


Reflections on Life with Honcho
by Christy A. Doherty

Spotlight on Dr. Lindsay Butzer
by Arden Moore

James Colasanti, Jr. Poetry Award

 A Message from Lily by Barbara E Magera MD

Manette Begin-Loudon Memorial Award

 Animals Are So Easily Misunderstood...the Importance of Empathic Understanding
by Risë VanFleet PhD

A Trailer Park Sanctuary
by Rachel Cay Phelps

An Ambassador for Many & Therapy Dog Extraordinaire: Meet Petey by Penny Leigh

Doggy DNA Misconceptions about Nature vs Nurture by Amy Shojai

Pet Portrait Painting: "Fleur" by Mak Tang
YC Prissy

National Dog Show Presented by Purina Excellence in Writing/Producing Award

Heroes Helping Heroes by Jen Reeder

An Ambassador for Many & Therapy Dog Extraordinaire: Meet Petey by Penny Leigh

Ginger's Story: From Nobody's Dog to everyone Know It's Ginger by Ted Slupik

I Love Lucy: A Senior Shih Tzu in Service by Cheyenne Lord

My Journey to Becoming a Therapy Dog Handler by Lauren M Marcotte

Professional Decision Making in Animal Assisted Play Therapy: How the Goodness-of-Fit Model Impacts Practice by Risë VanFleet PhD

PSI Professional Pet Care Award

How to Become a Pet Sitter by Mary Schwager

Hiring a Top-notch Pet Sitter by Arden Moore

On the Job! Is Your Dog Office-Ready by Arden Moore

Pet Portrait Painting: "Fleur" by Mak Tang YC Prissy

Understanding Your Pet's Labwork: A Guide to Communicating with Your Veterinarian by Sally Sutenfield

Rio Award

Ode to Daisy: the Yellow Rescue Lab Who Stole Our Hearts by Mary Schwager

Forever Home by Larry Lindner and Ron Danta

Grieving a Pet by Christy A. Doherty

THE ADVENTURES OF EXTRAORDINARY K9S by Sherry Bennett Warshauer

"Waltzing Matilda" by Amanda Stronza

Second Chance Award

Ginger's Story: From Nobody's Dog to everyone Know It's Ginger by Ted Slupik

A Place for Grace by Martha Mosley

Coming Home by Kim Campbell Thornton

Copper and his Rescue Friends by Pam Atherstone

Saving Senior Dogs Week Celebrates Joy of Adopting Older Pets by Jen Reeder

Sleepypod Pet Safety Award

Today's Must Know Rules of Road by Mary Schwager

Come Sit Stay by Elizabeth Anderson Lopez

Dog Enclosures: How to Keep Your Dog in A Safe Area by Amy Shojai

Heimlick Maneuver for Dogs by Arden Moore

Walter R. Fletcher Memorial Award

Child's Play? by Emily Holmes

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers: Our National Specialty Show, October 2022 by Betsy Horn Humer

Irish Water Spaniels Gather Up North by Laurel Reeves

Snapshots from the 147th Westminster KC Show by Barbara E Magera MD

Westminster 2023: A New Venue by Barbara E Magera MD

Whole Dog Journal Health and Wellness Award

What to do if your pet is exposed to something toxic by Kim Campbell Thornton

Dog Diarrhea: How to Know What's Causing It and Help Your Dog Feel Better by Katie Dahlhausen

Dog Wont Eat by Elizabeth Anderson Lopez

Heimlich Maneuver for Dogs by Arden Moore

The Rise of Fungal Pneumonia by Eileen Fatcher DVM

Dogwise Book of the Year

Multi-Billion Dollar Pet Food Fraud: Hiding in Plain Sight by Tom Lonsdale



Read the Entries

ANDRA GILLUM

LOST DOGGY DRAMA

W

WE LOST OUR BELOVED Westie Riley in 2018, and I'm still grieving. At just 6 weeks old, we brought this sweet West Highland Terrier into our hearts and our home. I had no idea how much she would change my life.

Riley was our first "child," so she got all our attention. My husband and I showered her with treats and long walks and even a birthday burger from Wendy's.

Life was perfect for sweet Riley until about a year later. That's when my son was born. Suddenly, he got all the attention and toys and treats.

Of course, we loved Riley just as much. We were just too busy with the baby to give Riley the long walks she once got, or to spend our Saturdays at the pet store.

After a few years, things were settling back into place. Now we were all taking nice long walks together, and the baby was dropping plenty of food onto the floor.

That's when our daughter was born, and poor Riley's world was rocked once again!

More time passed and things got better, but as our daughter got older, she started asking (ok, begging) for a puppy. She was convinced that Riley needed a friend.

She was obviously quite persuasive, because it wasn't long before we brought home a new puppy. Little Lucy was adorable but also a little crazy. She followed Riley everywhere and got into all her stuff.

They fought like any two sisters. They both wanted the best toy, or the bigger treat, or the most attention. The reminded me of my kids!

As Lucy got older, I watched as Riley tried to assert her dominance. She was definitely the "bossy big sister" of the family.

Riley was definitely the boss of things, but as she grew older, she started to show signs of her age. She couldn't walk as far and needed lots of rest. She started to lose her hearing and then her vision.

It broke my heart to watch our feisty, energetic Riley grow old. As I watched Riley start to decline, I loved how she was still a happy dog. She still wagged her tail, got excited, sniffed around the yard, and ate anything in sight.

I knew she wouldn't live much longer, but I wanted to enjoy her as much as we could. I struggled with whether I should put her down. I didn't want her to suffer, but I also didn't want her to go before it was her time.

Then one awful day last fall, Riley went missing. We noticed the back gate was ajar. We started an intense search to find her. We enlisted friends, neighbors, and family. We posted on Pet FBI and Facebook. We made signs and called the shelters and police.

For weeks, we continued the search. Our house backs up to a park and a wooded area, so the search became harder as more leaves fell.

After about a month, I knew that Riley could not have survived that long on her own. I'd heard



stories of animals who wander away to die peacefully. Like the brave dog in the movie *Marley and Me*, I am convinced that Riley went away to die.

She must have sensed how I was struggling to decide what to do. She didn't want us to watch her suffer or to find her dead, so she made sure we wouldn't find her. What an amazing and brave thing to do.

I don't think it's possible to imagine how hard it is to lose a pet until you've gone through it your-

self. Some people might say "she was just a dog," but my fellow animal lovers know that she was far more than that.

To anyone who has ever lost a beloved friend, I am so sorry for your loss. Don't let anyone tell you that you're overreacting, or you shouldn't be so upset. They simply don't understand the joy of a best friend wrapped in a soft, furry blanket. ■

ELIZABETH ANNE JOHNSON

The Happy Wagging Tail



W

HO DOESN'T LOVE a happy, wagging tail? Animal behaviorists have long since gathered all the clues of tail height, sweep range, and speed that can determine the nuances and meanings of numerous different tail

wags, including my favorite—*happy wagging*. Can't you just feel the beautiful energy of *happy* when your pup is happy wagging? Doesn't it fill you up with a full-bodied smile? I've watched stone-faced people soften and break into the most beautiful smile when a happy wagging dog tail says hello. I've spent my whole life trying to make that happen. My own efforts pale compared to my dog's successes!

Truth be told, I've learned from my dogs how to be vicariously happy and wag my tail when I see a dear friend, or something that touches my heart or makes me laugh. And of course, I always give a happy wag when I see a happy wagging dog!

I like to think of happy wagging as a sign of connection, a deep, heart-opening connection that floats gratitude all around you like a gentle mist on a hot day. The kind that fills your whole body with an utterly complete smile. To me, happy wagging is a metaphor for a peaceful, meaningful existence, one that brings happiness and joy to the little things in life. A wag here, a wag there, look at all the beautiful energy we can toss out into the wind to blow seeds that flower and create more smiles. It truly can be contagious!

We are in a refreshing new era of honoring the silent connections we have with our incredible dogs and all sentient beings here on Earth. Noticing the complexities of the interweaving of their lives with ours gives us a drive to learn more and to create space in our hearts to share, advocate, and support their evolution and each being's genuine expression.

Everyone and everything has a purpose, a reason for being. Bees have the amazing job of pollinating plants and making yummy honey in the process. Birds scatter seeds for new growth while giving us beauty and joyful songs. Dogs give us loyalty, laughter, companionship, and, if we are listening, teach us about life. How can we be the best expression of ourselves as humans to accomplish what these beings can? How can we open our eyes and hearts to truly see who other beings are, and create a beautiful bubble of understanding that enfolds our relationships? How can we learn from the many, many teachings of all these amazing beings here on earth?

We can widen our view, quiet our minds, and open our hearts to find genuine empathy and awe for every creature, large and small. Like the many great masters before us, we can accept others and their place in the world. We can be a steward for their growth and a vibrant torch for their well-being. We can daily embrace their wisdom to find the best versions of ourselves and others.

This understanding, compassion, and empathy can be a panacea for our inner selves and our relationships. Animals feel all our vibrations. The tiniest beings, even bugs and plants, and certainly our dogs, can be affected by our inner thoughts and feelings. The more awareness and kindness we project, the more we see and feel kindness.

Dogs are ambassadors for the many other species of this world. They were brave enough many centuries ago to step up and be part of our human lives. I envision that the first humans who accepted dogs as companions felt that happy wagging smile surround them and deeply touch their own wild hearts. I am certain it was an odd feeling but a good one, which has managed to endure and expand for

Money can buy you a fine dog, but only love can make him wag his tail.

KINKY FRIEDMAN

centuries. Dogs too have endured and thrived beside us, as we have beside them. For dogs it is a very long story of leaving the wild behind and moving towards domestication. But the species accomplished it. Now it is time for us to return back to the wild that we once knew and honored. The wild of our hearts.

A dog's medicine is trust, loyalty, reflection, protection, family, honor, and integrity.

These are all solid values that live in the uncharted wilds of our human hearts. Dogs ask us to ex-

plore these values within ourselves and walk a good road with each step we take. They are truly our teachers, even when we think we are teaching them.

When we look at the interactive personalities of our dogs and ourselves, our different or similar wants and needs, we can finally understand the unique dynamics that brought us together so many moons ago. Dogs and humans have always shared an innate drive for companionship and family, as well as the need for support and guidance, and if we humans pay attention, we also share our high

See HAPPY WAGGING pg 31



BARBARA E. MAGERA

Life *with* Lily



FEW YEARS AGO, I placed a Cavalier puppy with a loving family in Canada. The family consisted of parents, who were successful business owners, and their middle school

daughter and son. Grandparents lived nearby to help with family duties and support. This was a dog-savvy family who lived in the suburbs and had a tall, chain link fence enclosing their backyard. The father took precautions to clear any tall brush or wooded areas near their immediate backyard. Their house was large and spacious, allowing their puppy ample room to run and play even indoors.

Their black and tan girl puppy immediately bonded with the children. The first week with the family, I received photos, videos and stories of Lily tucked under their son's bed covers, on her back, front paws gently positioned outside the sheets. Her large dark eyes were focused on the young boy's narrative as he read Lily his children's stories. Lily attentively listened to the boy's voice until her eyelids became heavy and she drifted off to sleep. Here was a once socially shy little boy who didn't like to speak in class. Reading to his little dog every night improved his diction and instilled confidence in his public speaking skills. Often, the boy's mother entered and found both Lily and her

son fast asleep with a book covering his face and Lily's head. Her son was hugging his little Cavalier puppy as both quietly slept.

Lily enjoyed the rough and tumble activities of play with the daughter who was much more extroverted than her brother. She loved high action sports and soon Lily learned to fetch, catch and retrieve balls and soft toys. Lily accompanied the daughter to many of her sporting events and watched intently as she scored baskets or competed in ice skating events. Lily was part of her coaching team. After a practice or a meet, the whole team took Lily out for ice cream. She served as their mascot and informal coach.

At home, Lily loved frolicking in the soft snow of an early winter. She performed zoomies in their snow-covered yard. Excited, Lily jumped great heights over the kids while they carved snow angels within the fresh snow.

During winter evenings before a fireplace in the family room, Lily spent time cuddling with her family. Lily loved belly rubs, body massages and scratches behind her ears. She provided much comfort to the entire family but particularly to the children's grandparents who had recently lost their senior dog.

As Lily matured, she was happy to lie on her tummy with back legs sprawled out while the kids completed their homework, usually on the floor. She seemed to understand that this was the time for the children's serious studying.

Lily was a happy little girl who was a perfect fit with this loving family. She was not barking, whiny or demanding. In true Cavalier style, she was a perfect companion spaniel who was loving and obedient. She gave the children and their teammates confidence, helped her little boy overcome his shyness and provided unconditional love to her family and friends. Lily embraced the perfect Cavalier companion personality as she loved to please her family and people in her world.

About a week before Christmas, I received a hysterical phone call from the mom. She was crying so inconsolably that I could only make out intermittent phrases. When she finally gained her composure, she relayed this scenario: An hour earlier, her daughter brought Lily into their backyard for poo and pee. Lily was leashed with the slip lead tightly wrapped around the girl's wrist. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a large animal jumped the 6-foot chain linked fence and attacked Lily. The little girl was screaming for someone to save her beloved Cavalier. The Mom realized it was a coyote that attacked and murdered Lily. Her daughter saw this gruesome event occur before her eyes. The whole family was horrified, but the daughter blamed herself for Lily's tragic death.

As I heard this event, I was choking back my tears. I could not imagine this horrific event etched in these children's young minds forever. Christmas would no longer be a happy time of wonder for this family. These children were deeply traumatized. Worse, the daughter, who witnessed the attack, felt guilty since she could not protect Lily.

Later that evening, the mom called to ask if I could help this family find another Cavalier. Meanwhile, her husband was busy installing a deep concrete paving under the fence, raising the height of the fence, adding electric-shock wiring to the top of the fence and building covered runs. His goal was to secure a bullet-proof outside area for his dog and family.

For the next several days, I contacted many of my colleagues who bred or showed Cavaliers. Trying to locate a Cavalier puppy days before Christmas was no easy feat. At a recent dog show, I remembered an old friend who agonized whether her four-month old Ruby puppy, which she bred, had show potential. When I contacted her and related this tragic event, she quickly decided

on placing her puppy with this family. Despite treacherous weather, the father and grandfather made the 16-hour trip from Canada to the States. They picked up Daisy and drove back home just in time for Christmas. The children were overjoyed as neither sibling knew Daisy was coming to live in their home. I have since received many photos of Daisy playing with her family.

Despite our best efforts, wildlife is an increasing threat to our pets. As urban sprawl continues, wildlife also continues to adapt and live among humans. In our lovely coastal Charleston home, we are aware of potential attacks from coyotes, birds of prey, alligators and snakes. Pet owners try to take necessary precautions but accidents still occur.

This scenario taught me compassion and humility. This tragic accident could happen to any dog owner. Since this event, I tore down and rebuilt my entire back deck and porch. Working with a talented carpenter, he designed an 8-foot

See LILY pg 25 ►



MEMBER NEWS

ELIZABETH ANN JOHNSON

KNOW YOUR DOG'S TRUE NATURE

Understanding Canine Personality Through *the* Five Elements

Elizabeth Ann Johnson's new book, *Know Your Dog's True Nature* is a dog owner's gateway to understanding the complex relationships of dogs and their humans. Full of "aha!" moments, it provides a clear and accessible interpretation of the ancient wisdom of each

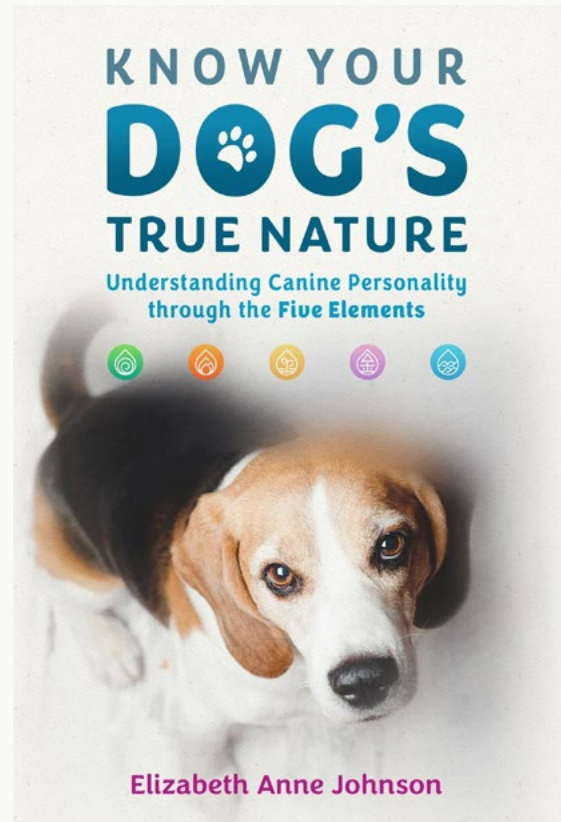
Five Element dog and human Archetype. It is an organized "tried and true" perspective on how to really see your dog and how to create relationship harmony and a peaceful, adaptive home environment.

Discovering a dog's personality using the Five Element Theory is easy, insightful, and fun. This exploration provides a fresh view on both a dogs and a dog owner's personalities, behavior, wants and needs, emotions, and more. It also provides supportive lifestyle measures for balance in the body, mind, and spirit, and ways to create elemental harmony within the dog/human relationship.

This book is written from a dog centered perspective, however it also includes Five Element descriptions and stories for humans. This encourages readers to find their own predominant Five Element archetype and learn how it interfaces and weaves together with their dog's element archetype.

As a Five Element animal practitioner for nearly 30 years, Elizabeth has shared this helpful wisdom with clients and friends and has gotten back many reports on how they never look at life, animals, or other humans, the same way. This can infuse a solid dose of understanding when people are struggling with relationship challenges with their animals, family, coworkers and/or the world around them. This book will change and enrich dog and human lives, and reach out into the world to create more connection, one dog and one human heart at a time.

The book will be published in September, 2024. Pre-orders are underway.



by Elizabeth Anne Johnson
Foreword by
Allen Schoen DVM, MS, PhD (hon.) CVA



TIPS & TACTICS

ANGELA CAPODANNO

Managing Your DWAA Membership

You may have noticed changes to the DWAA website in recent months, including improvements to the Writing Competition entry process, and how we published the entries for public viewing. In this article, I'd like to introduce you to the new membership features of the website, and offer additional information about managing your membership.

The first step is to log into the Member Area. Visit one of the following places on the website:

- Click the Log in button at top of any page on our website. If you see "Member Area" instead of the "Join" and "Log in" buttons, you are already logged in. In this case, click "Member Area" to visit your dashboard.
- Or choose from the menu Membership > Member Area
- Or visit the direct link:
dogwriters.org/my-account

Be sure to log in with your email associated with your DWAA membership. If you forgot your password, click the "Lost your password?" link for help resetting your password.

Now that you're logged in to the Member Area Dashboard, you'll see lots of options:

Subscriptions

This is where you manage dues renewals. You'll notice options to manage your payment method and may toggle auto-renew on or off, according to your preference.

Many of you have already renewed your membership dues, thank you! If you need further

instructions on how to renew, I've published instructions here:

dogwriters.org/dues-renewal-tutorial/

Memberships

This is where you'll find the members-only pages of the website, including a page to download your updated press pass. This area will continue to improve with more members-only features that are currently in development.

Account Details

You've come to the right place, if you'd like to change your password!

My Profile

Please update your profile, as this is the information that is shared with fellow members in the Member Directory. Speaking of the Member Directory, it's also a members-only page, so don't worry, your profile information will only be available to fellow members. This page is still undergoing some improvements, so please be patient with me as I work with the plugin developers to get some of the kinks worked out.

What else would you like to know about the website? Feel free to reach out with any questions or suggestions.

Angela Capodanno is the owner of Visual Spring, a design and printing studio located on the Oregon Coast. DWAA has been a client since 2013. She can be reached at angela@visualspring.net or call (541) 765-8765.



RHONDA HOVAN

Thanksgiving, 1997

TODAY IS THANKSGIVING, and unfortunately, a bit of a sad one for me. It's a personal thing, a family situation that is particularly noticeable on this day of family gatherings. I hadn't anticipated that it would affect me this much, but I felt the weight even before getting out of bed this morning.

My husband and sons were still sleeping when I began letting the dogs outside. First out were eight 5-and-a-half week-old puppies, greeting the new day with little more than breakfast on their minds. Five grown or semi-grown Golden retrievers charged out right behind them. That left one big teddy bear of a dog still inside, in no particular rush to join the pack. Instead, Thunder pressed up close to me with a giant red Kong in his mouth. His eyes were half closed, and his tail wagged so hard that his whole back half wagged with it, and greeting growls and lovesick moans came from somewhere deep inside. To anyone else, the scene probably would have looked silly, but it was exactly what I needed. I knelt down and he forcefully smashed

his forehead against my chest, almost knocking me over. His serenade continued, with me massaging his ears to egg him on. In a few minutes our ritual was over, and Thunder went outside to join the rest of the crew. I wasn't ready to embrace this day of thanks yet, but I felt some comfort.

A cup of coffee later, and with the dogs fed, I went outside to clean runs. The hot water from the hose raised clouds of steam in the chilly air, and through the mist the sun's first rays broke over the lake. No matter what I felt inside, nature's daily renewal was still awe-inspiring.

By this time, the indoor raccoons, Vger and Creature, were trilling for attention too. Both were leaning back in their "sitting Buddha" pose (relatively small arms resting on an enormous belly), and when I opened the door, Creature flopped backward into my lap. It was a well-rehearsed maneuver. She cuddled into the well of my crossed legs, and proceeded to lick all the make-up off my chin. Vger, meanwhile, did the same with my just-applied hand lotion. As they groomed me to their standards, I ran

my fingers over and over through their luxurious winter coats. It's said that just the act of petting an animal can soothe the soul.

Busy with holiday preparations, an hour passed, and then another. During a midmorning break, I let the dogs out again and they began dancing in anticipation of a real walk. I tried to tell them no, not today, but they didn't understand. And I simply couldn't look into all those eager eyes and turn my back. So we went.

The sharp, cold wind forced a brisk pace, and it wasn't long before I was breathing deeply. The dogs raced and romped, with the two youngest chasing blowing leaves as if it was a game designed especially for Golden Retrievers. Maybe it was.

There came a bend in our path where we often turned back, but not on this day. I needed to continue just walking with my dogs for a while longer, watching them, taking joy in their joy. At some point I was no longer cold, and a little further along the way I began to feel the warmth of the winter sun on my face.

I've been walking like that – therapeutically – since I was a kid with my first dog. My then sixteen-year-old sister, Sandy, used to invite me (a 9-year-old tagalong) to walk with her and our dog every evening before bed, and the bond we developed on those walks remained strong. I decided to make a point of thanking her later that day when our extended families got together (nearly 40 of us).

Finally heading back, my thoughts went to the wondrous ways that Golden Retrievers have influenced the course of my life. I recalled a phone call one August afternoon in 1973: "Hi, my name is Michael Hovan, and I'm interested in buying a Golden Retriever puppy. I got your name from a breeder directory." Although perhaps not intended as such, it turned out to be a great pickup line!

I have met nearly all of my closest friends in some way through dogs. These friendships that nourish and replenish the spirit, that bring laughter and allow tears, and that make everything else worthwhile – they have their roots firmly anchored in a shared passion for dogs.

Dogs can be a shortcut connection into personal relationships. People with little else in common, who might otherwise never interact, can become "family" through the sale of a puppy. Each new puppy placement comes with the possibility of embarking on a new friendship journey. Of course, I didn't have a clue about any of that as a teenager with my first Golden litter, but how incredibly lucky I was to be drawn to a life that included such a privilege. By this point, I was well on my way to be a renewed spirit of Thanksgiving.

As my immediate family gathered to join the larger group, my 14-year-old son, John, ducked out of sight into the raccoon room – soon revealing that he had arranged Pop Tarts, chocolate covered pretzels, caramels, Eukanuba, and pizza-flavored Combos on a platter. "The raccoons deserve a Thanksgiving feast too," he teased with a twinkle in his eye, knowing that it totally blew their diet plan for the day. He clearly had absorbed another of my quirks, and I mentally added one more item to my growing list of reasons to give thanks.

Once the main family activities began, the day moved into fast forward, and the early morning interactions with my animals had "set the table" for a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving meal.

And that brings me to now, nearly at the end of a long day. While a touch of this morning's sadness remains, it is far overshadowed by optimism and – corny as it sounds – thankfulness. I'm so thankful to love animals, because all of us who love our animals are given a special gift in return: that no matter what else is going on in our lives, our animals can be a source of comfort, renewal, joy, connection – and fun.

There's one more thing yet to do tonight to complete this day of giving thanks. Remember those 5-and-a-half week-old puppies I mentioned earlier? John and I are going to let them loose and just play for a while. ■

Correspondence invited: rhondahovan@aol.com
330-338-4236. And thank you for reading!



JAMES COLASANTI JR.

THAT'S WHAT LOVE HAS *to do* WITH IT

THE BEST THING ABOUT LOVE is the memories it leaves behind. They are never-ending, and they make an indelible imprint on the stories of our lives.

I have always been surrounded by love, and in some cases, lots of it. I'm speaking about the 3-or 4-legged variety—we have had both—that bark at each and every doorbell, and who often-times hog the bed and blankets. During our many years of rescuing, we took in and cared for over 53 dogs and 5 cats. And each one that has come into my life had a story, their own special story, and their own special moments in my life.

As I remember that December day a little over 19 years ago, the heavily falling rain in the busy Barnes & Noble parking lot set the tone. My good friend and co-worker, Ray, brought me his small cream-colored terrier, a pound rescue, Mr. Neville. His current girlfriend had given him the final ultimatum: it's me or the dog.

Ray made the wrong choice, the wrong decision. Mr. Neville was becoming my new addition. And as I had advised Ray: once my dog, always my dog. Ray knew my word was good.

Mr. Neville joined us when we had a pack of 7 or 8. Each had their own special place on the bed. Some were right next to us, some were on top of us, and a couple of the very big ones slept in dog beds on the floor.

For being one of the least affectionate dogs we ever had, Mr. Neville had a very special routine. He always slept on the bed on my left side, not touching, by my left foot. He would be there waiting until I came to bed. When I laid down, he would get up, come to my head, and he would lick me on the left side of my face. Just once, and then

he would go back to his spot. He did this every single night. I did not train him to do this, he just did it on his own. Every night the same thing—one quick lick. It was his special sign of affection.

Now that he is 19, he has to sleep in a dog bed on the floor. I am afraid of him jumping off my bed and hurting himself, but now he has a new routine. Where we are currently living I have to take him out on a leash. For my own peace of mind, I call him to the door and put him in a secure safety harness. When he hears and feels the buckle close and snap, he turns his head and licks my hand. And while he doesn't do it as often as he used to, I know in my heart that he sincerely appreciates the care and companionship.

As do I. ■

LIZZIE NELSON

CALCULATIONS

They count our love by strokes.

They judge affection by the cheese we share.

They gauge acceptance by not being kicked off our bed.

They weigh commitment by walks

and devotion by dinner on time.

But what they have given to us

is immeasurable.



Lily

► Continued from pg 19

railing for my deck with a sturdy double-lock gate system. The deck and porch have thick galvanized-wire screening that the dogs cannot easily rip or pry open.

I advocate dog owners subscribe to the many AKC programs and publications. AKC offers extensive educational information concerning canine safety and prevention. Local dog breed clubs offer a wealth of information concerning how to protect canines from wildlife. In our area, contractors are

becoming more creative with building materials and designs to protect our beloved canines from predatory wildlife. ■

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

SHERRI TELENKO

DOG TROTTING

Love dogs, books, and writing? Ok I've got your attention. If you've ever dreamed of escaping to a secluded place with your dog to read books or write that lingering first (or second) draft, I've got the place for you: Frankie's Chateau in Bentonville, Virginia. No internet, no television, and very few distractions in a log cabin with a fully fenced back deck and front yard - ideal for break time with the pup, and a ball or any toy from the bin at the back door. My dog and I could have lived there. Here's why.



Writer-friendly, Distraction-free, Dog-friendly Cabin

Chateau Frankie is a two-bedroom cabin on six acres of forested property at the edge of Shenandoah National Park. The upstairs bedroom has a feature that goes straight to the heart of an avid book lover: a library nook. Beside a wooden antique writing desk, similar to what I can only assume Jane Austin might have hunched over with fountain pen in hand, there is built-in shelving that holds about 80 books - some dog books, some writing advice books, and some summertime fiction left behind by other visitors.

Look carefully, and you'll also find the first three novels by writer (and DWAA member) Cara Sue Achterberg. She penned these novels before being drawn into the world of rescue dog fostering, then wrote two non-fiction books about her experience with fosters, rescues, and shelters: *Another Good Dog* and *100 Dogs and Counting*. (I read Achterberg's first novel, *I'm Not Her*, cover to cover during my visit.)

Achterberg, along with her husband, is the owner of Shenandoah Valley Dog Friendly Rentals. Frankie's Chateau was the first property they acquired under the company's umbrella.

"I wanted to offer not only dog-friendly properties," she told me when I met her during my Virginia visit, "but dog-welcoming properties." Too many accommodations that claim to be dog friendly actually have limitations on size, number, and sometimes even breed. Shenandoah Valley Dog Friendly Rentals has none of these restrictions.

Chateau Frankie has a fenced play area - exactly what I need for my high-energy spaniel who figured out very quickly the door downstairs led outside. Every time she came in from the backyard, she'd stick her head into the toy basket by the door and carefully select one toy to bring upstairs. One by one, toys ended up on the main floor where the sitting area, kitchen, second bedroom, and second bathroom are located.

Not only toys, but dog dishes, beds, and crates are provided.

If you assume, as many might when they hear the word log cabin, bare minimum and hard bunk beds, you're in for a surprise. Chateau Frankie is far from roughing it (or even ruffing it). Bring your own food, but not cooking supplies, because there's a full kitchen with ceramic cooktop, fridge with ice maker, heat, air conditioning, flat screen in the basement for movies, and my favorite, a whirlpool tub in the upstairs bathroom.



What good is a dog who doesn't bark and can't alert a family to danger? When a young girl is left alone and at risk, can this silent dog save the day?

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE

MY WORST YET BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

C

H RISTMAS HOLDS a very frightening yet special memory for me. I will never forget one particular December when a joyful holiday turned into a nightmare.

I had just turned 15, and it was two days before Christmas. We lived in Utah at the time, and the falling December snow was new and fluffy. My father had decided to take my mother and siblings to the movies. This was an unusual occurrence, because my parents were very religious, and they never went to movies during Christmas week. But Dad decided he just had to see *The Americanization of Emily* with Julie Andrews. Holiday or not, he was going.

I wasn't feeling well so was left behind on the couch, my head on a pillow and the rest of me wrapped in a blanket. The tree lights were blinking in the dark, there were lovely Christmas carols on the radio, and stacks of presents encircled the tree. Except for the soft snoring of Jade, my German Shepherd, the house was peaceful. I should have enjoyed the holiday mood, but I didn't. I was all alone, busy feeling sorry for myself, when I heard a strange noise outside.

I quickly realized that someone was out back and removing the screen from behind our curtained window! My sick stomach felt even sicker. Terrified, I listened as the intruder started removing the first of five louvers that made up the backyard window.

The nearest police station was half an hour away, and a phone call would be useless. I realized that the only chance I had was to open the back door and let Jade out. Jade was not a barker, but he hated strangers and wasn't afraid to use his teeth. Unfortunately, the back door was right next to the window, and I was terrified. I must have stared at that door for an eternity while I silently counted those louvers being removed until only two were left. I knew it would be too late when he took out the last one and climbed inside. He was using a knife to open those louvers. What would he do if he saw me?

I had to open the door and let Jade out before the intruder came in. Shivering with fear, I crept off the couch, the dog at my side. Closing my eyes because I was too frightened to look, I prayed for strength, then yanked open the door, let Jade out, and slammed it shut, locking it again.

I raced to the kitchen to hide under the sink. Curled up in that dark place with the garbage, potatoes, and dishwasher soap, I shook with fear. Why did I get sick? Why wasn't I at the movies with everyone else? I fervently wished I owned a dog that barked like other dogs because I couldn't see him. Jade could be dead, the man could be in the house... Anything could be happening.

Finally, I heard a loud scratching sound. It was my dog's familiar signal to be let back into the house. I mustered up enough courage to leave



my hiding place and open the back door. There, in the newly fallen pristine snow, were my dog's paw prints. And alongside them were the fresh footprints of a man's boots as he ran away.

He was gone and I was safe. Our intruder was never caught, but it didn't matter. I drew strength from my loyal dog, fought my fear, and won.

Every Christmas I think of that day. That memory is still just as fresh now as when it happened decades ago. And while I thanked God and Jade for my safety, I grieved for what I lost. That evening marked my abrupt transition from innocence to adulthood. Ironically, on a holiday that celebrates one very special child, I stopped being a child.

That was the price I paid on Christ's birthday years ago. And although he is long gone, I remember and celebrate my beloved Jade every December. My four-footed protector gave me the best Christmas present I've ever received—my life. ■

“

Those who teach the most about humanity aren't always human.”

DONALD L. HICKS

MARTHA M. EVERETT

Confessions *of a* Dog

You throw a ball for me to fetch,
I sit and watch you field the catch,
Why should I go and fetch it when,
You'll only throw it out again.

That mailman comes here every day,
But when I bark, he goes away,
Although I find that satisfying,
Why won't he learn to just stop trying.

I wish I were the kitchen trash,
That lucky can gets all the scraps,
But my treat cabinet has enough,
I think that's where they make the stuff.

I've figured out the people brain,
That's how I got you humans trained,
I raise my paw for you to shake,
You offer me a hand to take,
And when my head rests in your lap,
You sit and stay so I can nap,
Should I want room anyplace,
You roll over to give me space.

But there's one thing I'd like to know,
A place I often see you go,
It's most intriguing of them all,
More than treats and tennis balls.
Just what's behind that garage door,
Whose lure it seems you can't ignore,

I watch the people go inside,
Do you go in there to hide,
Right inside those garage walls,
Is there a maze of winding halls,

It must be quite a special place,
To go so long without a trace,
You close the door and disappear,
Then hours later, come back here,

I often wonder as I play,
What do you do in there all day?



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MERRIE MEYERS

INTERVIEW WITH A FIRST TIME WRITING CONTEST JUDGE

It's difficult to recruit enough judges for the DWAA Writing Contest.

In addition to soliciting our own members, we put out calls to members of other organizations (Breed Clubs, AKC Clubs, Cat Writers, etc.) and recruit several people directly.

As contest chair, I was really concerned about not having enough judges. Every year a few hardy souls selflessly read upwards of 10 categories when we need additional readers or judges are unable to complete their assignments. Because I am not above begging, I convinced several of my friends to volunteer, along with members of our local writers' group, including Mike "MJ" Howson, who is a successful book author and script writer. Since he'd just published his first children's book, *The Adventures of Lucky and Mr. Pickle*, which is dog-centric, I thought he might be interested in serving as a judge, as well as entering his book in next year's competition.

After the contest was over, I asked Mike what he thought about the contest and judging

process. This was the first year the contest details were on the web, including the scoring.

"I found the process intuitive and easy to follow. I appreciated the guidelines and things to consider when judging. I referred to those instructions many times. I also enjoyed the variety of categories and topics, along with the range of skill levels. I had a great time and would definitely do it again."

Mike's input was encouraging, and we will use his feedback as we continue to improve the Writing Contest for next year.

Many first-time judges enjoy their experience so much that they volunteer again. Hopefully, this motivates judges who are not members to join the DWAA as well.

P.S. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that most of Mike's stories are super scary. I'm not a Horror book fan but I enjoyed reading the chapters of his books as they developed and discussing plot twists. You can learn more on his website, <https://mjhowson.com/>



<https://mjhowson.com/>

Happy Wagging

► Continued from pg 17

sensitivity levels for others, our own health and well-being, and even sometimes danger.

We can also see the richness, joy, and supportive structures in our combined relationships. This understanding can soften our judgements, stimulate acceptance for who we both are, and create a gentle harmony between us.

Understanding can truly make the world a better place, as our peaceful home vibrations reach out and stretch like the sun to create a kinder, gentler world. Every piece of awareness, acceptance, and clarity fills not only our life but energetically radiates out into the world, making life just a little

bit better and a little bit brighter. We finally see the background behind the curtain and it's not nearly as scary as we thought it was. It holds whimsy, hope, and potential.

It holds a happy wagging tail. ■



Dog Trotting

► Continued from pg 26

What hardworking reader/writer doesn't deserve a good soak after completing 5,000 words or more?

Writer-friendly, Dog-friendly, Coffee-shop Adjacent Historic House

However, if cabin living with a National Park outside your door (and proximity to bears) is too remote for you, Shenandoah Valley Dog Friendly Rentals has you covered with Gracie's

Place in Woodstock, Virginia. This three bedroom, two bath Victorian house has an enclosed second floor sunroom and whirlpool tub in the upstairs bathroom.

If you're traveling with a canine crew, Gracie's Place might be the best option. There's no limit on the size or number of dogs (great rental option if you're headed to the dog show or agility competition) and the enclosed back patio has a gravel pee zone and sand box for digging. Also, there's no need to bring your own crates. Two big ones are inside in case you need to leave the pups in the house for a short time.

You will likely be out and about because of Woodstock's charming main street, with great cafes, ice cream parlors, and a pub that is literally outside the back door of Gracie's Place. What writer doesn't love a coffee shop nearby? And yes, summer sidewalk tables allow you to saddle up with your pup, so maybe you won't need to use those crates after all. We didn't, because my dog went everywhere I did. ■

You can find both properties at <https://shenandoahdogfriendlyrentals.com/>.



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