

# RUFFDRAFTS

the DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

SUMMER 2024



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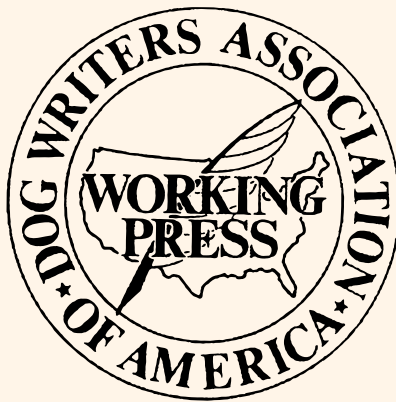
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*Dog Prayer*

BY ALBERT SCHWEITZER

VACATIONS *with your* DOG



## Ruff Drafts

Send all material to Merrie Meyers at: [rdeditor@dogwriters.org](mailto:rdeditor@dogwriters.org)

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

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### Don't think, write!

Years ago, I watched a movie titled *Finding Forester*. I was profoundly affected by the main character's words. He had been experiencing writer's block and was just beginning to mentor a budding young writer. When he asked the young fellow why he was staring at a blank computer screen, the kid replied, "I'm thinking." The established author yelled, "don't think, write." Normally I follow that advice, because it works.

Not this time. I've been thinking, wallowing around, and in fact, worrying, about how to tell this amazing group of writers what is really on my mind.

We don't do enough.

Ruff Drafts is an important tool, available only to us. Very few of us take advantage of the fact that for the most part we have free rein to teach, mentor, share personal experiences, and even vent through this publication.

Ruff Drafts is a great space to begin a story, or even a book that can be developed in full later. Are you aware that space isn't even really limited because we publish online? You can say as much as you want and ignore the word count. Our editor declares a theme, but even that edict is flexible. If you are in doubt, check with her to see if she can use that idea that is stuck in your head and wants to reveal itself through your words.

Ruff Drafts needs more. You need to use it to your advantage. Are you aware that, for a few writers, publication in Ruff Drafts is the first time they are published?

We are a collective of brilliant writers who sometimes tend to take our organization and lives for granted. That is not productive. Let's all stop and think for a minute or two about how we can use Ruff Drafts to hone our skills, or to help our fellow authors and then, stop! Don't think, write.

*Therese Backowski*

**Therese Backowski**

DWAA President



◀  
Therese Backowski  
and her dogs, Lucy  
and Hank

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RIO ON HIKING TRAIL. PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN REEDER.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

A lot is happening in DWAA. We are working on improving our member benefits and your use of them. Did you know that members can now download a copy of the DWAA Press Pass? Once you log in to the website member area, click on the memberships line in your dashboard, and Wala! Your press pass awaits! This is very helpful when you are hoping to get ring side at a dog show or attend another canine-related event.

We've also updated the Member Directory. We covered how to access your specific profile in a previous issue of Ruff Drafts, but, to recap, once you are logged in to the member area of the website, click on My Profile at the bottom of your Dashboard. This is a great way to market some of your work.

Have you seen our **Blog posts**? Longtime member Anne Marie Duquette has been interviewing some of the writing competition winners and sponsors. These posts appear on Monday and Thursdays. Promos about them also pop up on our Facebook page. It's wonderful to get to know a little more about these dog lovers. In addition, we've reposted some of the Tips and Tactics articles that ran in Ruff Drafts over the last few years.

We've restarted publishing profiles of new members in Ruff Drafts (see pages 16-17 in this issue). If you joined DWAA since January, 2024, you likely received an email inviting you to send a profile, join our io issueroup and join our members-only Facebook page. If you haven't taken advantage of these opportunities, what are you waiting for?

This issue of Ruff Drafts includes your stories about vacations you've taken with your dog(s). We received some great photos as well. Thank you for contributing to the publication. We've also included some information about the Writing Competition on pages 8 and 9. More

*Merrie Meyers*

**Merrie Meyers, Ph.D. APR, Fellow PRSA**

Ruff Drafts Editor

information will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Finally, we're always looking for some ways to increase Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for our website. If you've got ideas, we want to know!



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





ANGELA SCHNEIDER

# The Strength We Gain *from Our Dogs*

**H**ER PAWS PRESS INTO the ground with intention.

Each step so careful, so purposeful.

Her head is constantly on a swivel, observing the world around her, forever cautious against potential threats.

She moves through the world with grace, patience and power.

She always knew she was supposed to be here.

I learn from her every day.

To be more intentional, more purposeful, more observant.

## **My adventure buddy**

My boy, the catalyst for all my life has become.

His movements were more fluid, yet no less deliberate.

He had an exuberance, that he'd finally found his place in the world ... after already moving through two families before me.

He saved me from myself.

## **The lessons we learn from them**

I believe our dogs are our greatest teachers, if we allow ourselves to see their lessons.

They show us to live more in the moment.

To observe. To shed the judgments of others. To

shake off our own mistakes and perceptions of how hard life is today.

To be happier with who we are right here right now.

These lessons, their companionship, their love, the safety they allow us to feel stronger, more confident, more powerful ... safer.

## **Before we find them**

I grew up the only girl in a family of four children – three brothers.

I didn't feel heard in my home, and school was hell.

My jeans were not 501 Red Tabs, my clothes were hand-me-downs from my wealthier cousins, and I was never given the two or three dollars for Sloppy Joes at the cafeteria. I couldn't hang with the cool kids and was bullied by them.

My brother gave me a beautiful three-chain necklace for Christmas one year. Several months later, during a drama production in junior high, my "best friend" invited me outside to the parking lot.

There, I was surrounded by a gaggle of girls. One stepped forward to tell me I wasn't "the shit" I thought I was, grabbed the necklace and broke it.

I never told my brother what happened to the necklace ... just let everyone assume I lost it, which was easy to figure, based on reckless me.



The author and  
her dog, Bella



Schneider  
with Shep



Bella

# CONTEST NEWS



## UPDATED CATEGORIES

DWAA'S WRITING COMPETITION will kick off around Labor Day again, but this year's categories will look a little different.

### COMBINING PRINT AND DIGITAL CATEGORIES

Now that almost every publication and broadcast outlet has a digital platform, and content is published simultaneously, we've combined a print and online platform in each of the respective categories. This should clear up some confusion for those entrants who weren't certain where to enter their work.

### CHILDREN'S BOOK

#### JUDGING

Judges will be encouraged to evaluate Children's book entries using industry standards that look at word length, by age group,

and appropriate use of language and art. To help increase your success, here is a list of those criteria:

#### BOOK LENGTH\*

##### Children's Picture Books (up to age 3)

- Picture Book — 600 words max

##### Children Early Readers (ages 4-8)

- Early Reader — 1,500 words

##### Children Young Readers (ages 9-12)

- Young Middle Grade or MG — 15,000 to 25,000 words
- Middle Grade or MG — 45,000 words max for contemporary, mystery, humor

##### Children Young Adult (ages 13-18)

- Upper Middle Grade — 65,000 words max for fantasy/sci-fi, adventure and historical



- Young Adult or YA — 85,000 words max for contemporary, humor, mystery, historical, romance, etc. 95,000 words max for fantasy, sci-fi, paranormal, etc.

### TEXT

- Author uses a writing style appropriate for intended audience/age in terms of reading level, word choice, sentence or non-traditional text structure, clarity, length, and interpretation.
- Traditional elements such as plot, setting, and characters are evident and skillful. Does the plot tell a good story?
- Subject matter, concepts, and vocabulary are relevant to student ages, developmental levels, and abilities. Does the story move? Is there conflict or suspense? Is the plot fresh and original? Is it plausible and credible? Is there preparation (foreshadowing) for events? Is there a logical series of happenings? Is there a basis for cause and effect in the happenings? Is there an identifiable conclusion/climax? Do the events build to that outcome/ending?
- Error-free and current information where required.
- Content compatible with the reader's intellectual maturity.
- Formatting (page layout, print size) reflects targeted audience.
- Effective use of sections or chapter divisions.
- Narrative true to selected genre, such as fantasy, short story or "coming of age."

### MORE INFO ABOUT YOUNG READERS:

*Early readers* are the earliest "chapter" stories that a kid can get. They're very short in terms of manuscript length (1,500 words max) but are broken up into either chapters or vignettes to give the reader the feeling of reading a book with real chapters in it. The target audience is kids, ages 4-8. **Books for early readers** feature a smaller trim size, some are the size of or slightly bigger than a paperback novel, and can go from about 32 to 60 pages. The font size is smaller and they feature spot illustrations in either color or black and white instead of full color throughout, like a picture book.

*Chapter books* are for more independent readers who are making the bridge between early reader picture books and **middle grade**. Some

bookstores designate these for kids 9 to 12, but many of these readers are even younger. Manuscripts can range from about 5,000 words to about 15,000 words, max. Since this audience is still developing its reading skills, you have a wider berth in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, story and character.

### ART

#### Cover:

- Attractive.
- Clearly indicates topic/theme of book.
- Appropriate for targeted audience.

#### Interior Art:

- Art and text are interdependent and aesthetically pleasing.
- Appropriate and relevant to graphic format and content.
- Use of a variety and appropriate symbolic art, such as text bubbles and graphical representations of sound effects and emotions.
- Adequate in size and legibility.
- Effective use of color and shading.

## YOUNG CREATORS

DWAA recognizes writers under 18 in three age groups. We are always encouraged when young people submit their work. This year, we will be adding a category in the Visual Arts, formerly Graphics, for creators under 18. Work must still be published during the time frame, and those under 18 will still need a parent or guardian's signature.

# SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

IF YOU WERE INVOLVED in this past competition, you know that the entry process had a new look and feel. All activity was conducted through an online portal. We wanted to know what people thought about the process. So, for the first time in quite a while, we actively solicited feedback from DWAA's Writing Competition entrants and judges. Maybe you responded to one or both of these surveys. Here's a summary of what we heard.

## RESPONSE RATE

About one-third of the contestants, 34%, and judges, 32%, surveyed responded. This is a great response rate for a direct mail survey.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEST

Six in 10 of the contestants and nine of 10 of the judges participated in the past.

## CATEGORY ENTRIES AND JUDGING

Four in 10 of the contestants entered more than one category and almost ALL, 95%, of the judges looked at multiple categories.

## AWARENESS

Seven out of 10 contestants heard about the contest as a result of their membership in DWAA or through a friend/family member who is a DWAA member.

## EASY PEASY

A whopping 98% of respondents said the instructions were either easy to follow and if there was a problem uploading or accessing an entry, they asked for and received help.

## INTERACTIVE ENTRY PAGE

Following the conclusion of the content, nine in 10 contestants and eight in 10 judges visited the interactive site to read other entries.

We also received lots of good suggestions and comments about how to make the contest more 21st century relevant. (See related story on upcoming changes.) Thanks to everyone who shared their two cents!

## BLOG NOTE

WE ARE NOW PUBLISHING interviews of the 2023 writing contest winners and sponsors in the DWAA blog. If you'd like to participate, please contact Anne Marie Duquette at AMDQ1@yahoo.com to request the interview questionnaire. Put DOG BLOG in the subject line. Due to viruses, your email will NOT be opened without it. Thank you.



[Read the Blog](#)



[Email Anne Marie](#)

# Ruff Drafts Editor Receives DWAA 2023 Distinguished Service Award



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN once said that “if you want something done, ask a busier person.” It seems that the busier we are, the better we manage our time. Such is the case with

DWAA’s 2023 Distinguished Service Award Recipient, Dr. Merrie Meyers. Earlier this month, she was named the latest honoree for Extraordinary Achievement and Communication Excellence by award sponsor, The American Kennel Club.

Meyers, who has helmed Ruff Drafts, DWAA’s quarterly publication since 2017, received the honor because of additional role she assumed as Chair of the DWAA 2023 Writing Competition. Building the work of former contest chairs, Meyers worked closely with a committee of volunteers and DWAA’s indomitable webmaster Angela Capodanno, to transition the Association’s signature event to an all-digital platform. Feedback from participants and judges alike praised the new process. “Greatly simplified,” said one contestant. “Easy to work with,” said a long-time judge. Meyers is already working on improvements for the 2024 Writing Competition, which is expected to kick off again around Labor Day Weekend.

In addition to volunteering her time to work on Ruff Drafts, the Writing Contest and DWAA’s own Board of Directors, Meyers also mentors younger members of the Western North Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and serves on the chapter’s Bylaws Revision Committee. She has served as a national advisor to the Delta Iota Chapter of Sigma Delta Tau for the past five years, and last year she joined the University of Miami Miller School of Health Patient Communication Advisory Committee, working with the health system to create patient-focused communication practices. ■

The 2023 Distinguished Service Award was established by the American Kennel Club in 1986 to recognize individuals who, by word, deed, exemplary conduct, public commitment and professional excellence, promote the best interest of the sport of dogs.

*Congratulations!*

ANNE MARIE DUQUETTE (WGA)

# The Changeling

*Her name was IVY. Black as night and as impossible to catch as a feather in a storm.*



AFTER A PREVIOUS BELOVED canine passed from old age, I mourned until it was time to embrace a new life again. I always choose rescues from my favorite breeds -- German shepherds and

dachshunds. I usually have one of each sharing our home. I know their traits, behaviors and quirks. I stay proactive so our human/canine family can live and love in harmony.

My German Shepherd Dogs (GSDs) were intelligent, loyal and fearless, but territorial, needing a firm alpha leader and a job to keep them happy. Then there are my dachshunds. Clever, yes, but oh, so stubborn, and highly reactive to unknown sounds, sights, or movement. It's always tempting to manually lift a troublesome little dachshund instead of enforcing commands. I refuse temptation. They can be crafty, calculating and cute, all at the same time. As the saying goes, if I give them an inch... But like my GSDs, they're fiercely loyal. Yes, I know the score with my favorites and stay in my comfort zone.

Yet somehow a quirk of fate decreed that I'd rescue a breed I knew nothing about-- an Afghan. I named my new puppy "Black Ivy." I should have named her "Ballistic." I soon learned that my new sighthound loved, no, lived to RUN. AKC

stats--40 mph. Our new dog could be in the next county in sixty seconds. No matter how huge our yard, or how much we exercised her, it wasn't enough. EVER.

Biking with a leash? She'd outdistance me, tow me into the bushes, yank free, and fly. We'd need the car to catch up to her. My poor son was forced to "capture and contain" multiple times in strange territory. Despite my constant training, COME wasn't in her vocabulary.

Ivy wasn't willfully disobedient. Running was in her DNA. As Maverick said in Top Gun, she felt "the need for speed." I soon learned she couldn't walk any more than a bloodhound couldn't sniff. Ivy's races were a sight to behold. Her legs folded, her muscles bunched, then she exploded forward with pure power. When Ivy ran, I swear her paws never touched the ground. She laughed and soared and circled from our house to streets to open fields...rested...and soared again.

Ivy refused to accept boundaries. Our family took multiple precautions. We were terrified of car-dog accidents. A true Houdini, no gate, yard, or door could stop her. Ivy once jumped out of my moving car when I was driving 35 mph. I'd rolled the windows up tight because I knew her tricks. We kept her away from electric windows. But if she saw a lovely meadow, she rolled the window down with her paw rotating the lever, launched herself from the back seat, and was off. Injury or death seemed inevitable but Ivy kept beating the odds.

I was always getting phone calls from my sympathetic neighbors. “Your dog’s jumped the fence again.” Our six-foot high fence. I tried to keep Ivy inside when she’d get the “wandering fever,” but that fever never abated.

Because Ivy was so active inside the house, I wanted her outside but contained during my little daughter’s nap. I bought a metal leash, its bright red plastic covering 25 feet of flexible, pet-approved cable. In the backyard, I hooked it up to her for the first time. Not even an hour later, I heard Ivy pawing at the door. I opened it, and there she stood. She’d completely gnawed through the metal leash. The hook was still attached to the collar, the frayed metal end hanging below.

I gasped with horror at her bloody lips and chipped teeth as she pranced into the house. She was so proud of herself. Her warm brown eyes sparkled. Mine filled with tears. I decided then and there my daughter could sleep to the beat of canine feet, or not sleep at all.

It was wrong to tie my sunbeam down. Terribly wrong. I never did it again.

Ivy later escaped during a torrential rainstorm when a huge gust of wind popped our front door inwards and open. As she ran from the house, I screamed, “Ivy, come! Come!” As always, she didn’t. Suddenly I saw a huge bolt of lightning strike the house right across the street with a BANG that shook our own house.

Ivy didn’t cringe, whine or freeze at the simultaneous flash and boom of thunder mere yards away. Magically...supernaturally...this gifted athlete spun around without one break in stride. Half deaf and temporarily blind, Ivy retreated with winged paws, and came when I called her for the first and only time in her life. She defied Mother Na-

## When you find that people have failed you, turn to shelter pets. People have failed them, too. You can heal together.

### ANONYMOUS

ture, laughed at death, and ran back, following the sound of my voice until she was safely inside to dry and recover. That incredible scene remains forever seared on my brain.

Ivy remained a joyous racer for twelve years. I was shocked when she suddenly stopped. It seemed surreal. Bizarre. Ivy merely walked the next three days, then collapsed. She died in my arms, her once dancing paws limp on the vet’s metal table. As grief stricken as I was, having Ivy at home, listlessly dozing away her last days, would be too cruel. Running was her heart and soul. When she couldn’t, I do believe she chose to move on.

I said goodbye to Ivy over thirty years ago. I’ve deliberately not adopted any sighthound since. As I stroke my little dachshund in my lap, I revisit the past. The truth is, despite her affectionate nature, Ivy refused to bond with me. Or with anyone. We’d raised her since she was a puppy, but she wasn’t happy when grounded to our home, hearth and kin. She wanted to run, run, run! To be free, free, free!

I couldn’t accept her rejection back then. I didn’t understand. I do now.

Of all my dogs, only Ivy lived with the inherent belief in the Goodness of Our World. She didn’t feel the need for my individual love and protection, because she truly believed she was loved and safe

EVERYWHERE. Pure innocence in any creature doesn’t last. As younglings grow, that pureness fades in the face of life’s realities and slowly disappears.

I’ve only seen one exception. Her name was Black Ivy.

And if she was an exception, perhaps there are others out there like her. So I set aside my senior citizen’s cynicism and stay open to the possibilities. Ivy gave me more than just wild chases. Ivy showed me that a magical world does exist on this earth. What an incredible gift to give!

Bless you, my sweet changeling. And thank you. Rainbow kisses until we meet again. ■





LOREN SPIOTTA-DIMARE

# Lily

M

Y HUSBAND, LOU, and I share our lives with a Canine Party of Seven—two small, two medium, and three large dogs. Our little guys are Topo Gigio, a Chihuahua mix, and Louie, a Tibetan Spaniel; our medium girls are Lily, an English Springer Spaniel, and Bella, an English Cocker Spaniel; and the big girls are Pepper, a hound mix, Mandy, a Red Setter, and Daisy, a Collie.

Some of our dogs were purchased through reputable breeders. Others were adopted through rescues. All are wonderful dogs with their own endearing personalities and behaviors. But there is something truly special about Lily.

Lil is one of our rescues. When we adopted her as a three-month-old pup, 13 years ago, we were the only females in the household. So, I often said to her, “We girls have to stick together.” She was very happy to oblige and became very attached to me.

But she also became very close to Lou. Even as a young pup, Lily would flirt with him. When

he sat in his recliner watching TV, she’d jump in his lap, look into his eyes, and ever so gently touch his cheek with her paw.

She was also very gentle and caring each time a new pup joined the family, easily taking on the role of mom. She patiently put up with ear pulling, being jumped on, and other puppy pranks.

To this day, I often spot her licking the head or snout of one of our other dogs—a gentle and obvious sign of affection.

Lily’s maternal instincts also extend to me. She is fiercely devoted to me and loves nothing better than taking a nap together—just the two of us.

Lou tells me Lily searches for me when I’m away from home, peeking in my office and other rooms I frequently spend time in.

But one day, Lou and I witnessed something truly remarkable that demonstrated the depth of Lily’s compassion. Our beloved Border Collie mix, Junior (aka Junie) was failing.

In September, he had been diagnosed with bone cancer, an insidious disease, in his front left leg.

We did everything possible to extend the length and quality of his life: palliative radiation treatments, acupuncture, and added herbal supplements to his diet. We even ordered a Bemer Therapy mat from Europe to ease his pain.

Junior seemed to be comfortable; he was holding his own, but in January he lost his mobility. It was heartbreaking. But he was still with us. He liked to be in the center of activity and had a great appetite.

Lou built him a push-up stand so he could eat in a normal position. He also bought him a foam mattress so he could lie in the family room comfortably.

When he rested on the mattress, the other dogs took turns lying beside him. I once found Louie, our Tibetan Spaniel and Junior's best friend, lying on top of him. They took a nice nap together in that position.

We also lifted Junie onto his favorite couch and moved him to the kitchen for meals and onto the deck in nice weather so he could continue to survey his two-acre kingdom—always a favorite pastime.

That winter, Christina Leone, a wonderful house-call vet who became a friend, checked on Junior weekly. When he became more uncomfortable, she gave him a pain patch.

Sadly, by mid-February Junie decided he was tired of the battle and stopped eating. We knew it was time to let him go.

I called Christina and made arrangements for her to euthanize him at home on a Sunday morning. Lou and I placed Junior on his favorite couch and waited for Christina to arrive.

I stepped into the kitchen for a moment when Lou called out, "Come here! You have to see this."

For weeks Junior had been unable to curl up in a ball as dogs often like to do. When I went into the kitchen, Lily jumped onto the couch and pushed herself between Lou and Junior.

She leaned into Junior, which allowed him to curl his body. Lily curled up as well to support him.

Then Louie came into the room and lay down on the floor beneath Lily and Junior until Christina arrived. When she did, I moved all the dogs except Junie into the kitchen.

Gently, with Lou and me by his side, Christina helped Junie to the Rainbow Bridge. When he was gone, I invited the dogs back into the family room to say goodbye. Lily placed herself on the floor between Junior and Christina.

"She's guarding him," our vet said.

I've owned many dogs over the years and have loved each and every one. But I have never witnessed anything as extraordinary as Lily's empathy and support of Junior in his final 11 hours. It's a memory I will treasure the rest of my life. ■

▼  
Junior and Lily



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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## NEW MEMBER

**ELIZABETH JOHNSON**

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Elizabeth Johnson has nearly 40 years of experience in diverse animal-related fields including canine and equine therapy and rehabilitation on competitive, service, military, police, and companion animals. She has worked as a small/large/exotic animal veterinary technician and instructor, and in the wildlife world as a biologist, instructor, and rehabilitator. Elizabeth is the author of *Know Your Dog's True Nature – Understanding Canine Personality through the Five Elements* (Findhorn Press/Inner Traditions) and also a 2020 TEDx speaker: *Four Life Lessons from Our Old Dogs*, a mentor, and copywriter for non-profit animal and conservation organizations, and contributes blog articles and webinars to numerous rescue organizations. She is vice president of Global Wildlife Resources, a company that teaches ethical and humane handling of wildlife. Elizabeth happily lives with her veterinarian husband on Whidbey Island, WA. They enjoy hiking, kayaking, gardening, supporting a sustainable community, and howling at night with their two rescue dogs, Wilbur and Pretzel.



[elizabethannejohnson.com](http://elizabethannejohnson.com)

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## NEW MEMBER

**ANDREA KUSKA**

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Andrea Kuska has been in love with Chihuahuas since she looked into the eyes of her very first dog, Rocco. That passion for Chihuahuas has grown in the 14 years since and resulted in the creation of All Things Chihuahua. All Things Chihuahua is an award-winning dog blog focused on giving breed-specific advice on grooming, training and caring for Chihuahuas.



[allthingschihuahua.com](http://allthingschihuahua.com)





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## NEW MEMBER

CARMEN LEAL

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Carmen Leal relocated from Hawaii to Oshkosh (yes, there is a story behind the move) and has become an awesome dog mom. She is the author of twelve books including *When Love Wags a Tail*, *I Chose You*, *Imperfectly Perfect Rescue Dogs and Their Humans* and many articles, devotionals, and human interest stories. Carmen didn't know enough about rescuing dogs, okay she knew nothing, but despite her complete lack of research, she ended up adopting her tail-wagging friend who was, and continues to be, perfect for her. She is a storyteller, Coconut's mom, and a reluctant garden-er. She is an active member of the Oshkosh Southwest Rotary Club and an adjunct professor for Fox Valley Technical College's award-winning E-Seed Entrepreneurship workshop. When she is not writing and speaking Carmen reads, cooks, and is a major bargain hunter at consignment and antique shops.

 [carmenleal.com](http://carmenleal.com)

 [rescuemoredogs](https://www.facebook.com/rescuemoredogs)




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## NEW MEMBER

ANDRA GILLUM

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Andra Gillum is the author of the *Doggy Drama* picture book series featuring *Doggy Drama*, *Puppy Drama*, *Old Doggy Drama*, *Lost Doggy Drama* and *Doghouse Drama*. Her sixth book, *Pet Shop Drama* is expected in fall of 2024. It is a chapter book written for elementary readers. Andra is a dog lover! All of her books are about her real Westies, Riley, Lucy and Rosy. Andra believes that bookreading should be fun, and books should make you laugh. Andra loves to make school visits, and to read and write with children! She also teaches a variety of writing classes to kids, adults and seniors. Andra lives in Columbus, Ohio with her family.

 [doggydrama.com](http://doggydrama.com)



JEN REEDER

# Alaska

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MY HUSBAND BRYAN AND I always used to say if our dog Rio ever died, we'd finally go to Alaska together. Our 88-pound Labrador retriever mix was too big to take on an airplane, and why would we go on a hiking vacation without our hiking buddy?

In a few weeks, we're going to Alaska.

Rio was my very first dog, and the reason why I started narrowing my focus as a journalist to pets back in 2010. He opened my eyes to the wonderful world of dogs. Thanks to Rio, I've written around 1,000 articles about pets – mainly dogs – for regional and national publications and served a 2-year term as DWAA president. Bryan and I even sponsor The Rio Award in the DWAA Writing Competition each year for work about a dog “who changed someone's life in a profoundly positive way.”

We got to spend over 13 years with our smart, gregarious boy, whose motto we decided early on was “Born Ready.” We loved exploring Colorado trails together – especially when they led to a lake or river where Rio could swim.

Age and arthritis took a toll, and Rio couldn't hike in the last couple years of his life. I remember the first time I hiked without him: I felt so alone. It had never seemed strange to head outside for adventures with my awesome trail dog. We'd meet young girls and their families on hikes – my friendly Lab always loved meeting new friends – and I'd feel proud that maybe we'd modeled how exciting life can be with a dog by your side.

I missed him then, and I miss him now. We said goodbye to Rio last November on the day before Thanksgiving. He was a perfect dog with a perfect life and a perfect death, and we leaned into gratitude for that on the suddenly surreal day of giving thanks.

“We always said we'd go to Alaska when Rio died,” I said to Bryan at some point during the holidays. “Do we still want to do that?”

The answer, of course, was “Yes.” So this June, we'll hike in Denali National Park and fulfill a lifelong dream of gazing at the highest peak in North America. I'm not sure if dogs are allowed in the park because, sadly, I haven't needed to research it, but I know that if they were, Rio would have delighted in the open space. I can picture the way a gust of wind would blow our way and how he loved to face into the breeze, ears flopping back, eyes squinting, nose twitching – as always, born ready.

I suspect we'll take some of Rio's ashes with us to Denali and release them on a particularly beautiful overlook, or near a river he would have splashed into. I'll think of him every time the wind rustles leaves on a tree, and turn to face it, like Rio would have.

We'll cry, and we'll remember. That night, we'll raise a glass to the amazing dog that made a profoundly positive impact on our lives.

Then after a week, we'll return home to Colorado and Tux, the Yorkshire terrier mix we adopted a few months before Rio crossed the Rainbow Bridge. We'll hit the trails with the little comedian to help prepare him for his first camping trip later this summer. Because I've learned that special dogs come into our lives, and then they pass the torch to our next canine teacher. They each have something uniquely important and magical to bring to our lives.

So I'm dedicating this summer to honoring beautiful canine memories – and making new ones.

Award-winning journalist Jen Reeder is former president of the Dog Writers Association of America. Visit her online at [JenReeder.com](http://JenReeder.com).

Jen with Rio in  
September 2023.  
Photo credit  
Chrisi French.

Rio after a swim.  
Photo credit  
Jen Reeder.



JenReeder.com



JANE FRANCIS

# TRAINING CHASER



I HAVE TAUGHT DOZENS of people to rock climb, kayak, and ski. Now I train my dog, Chaser, a five-year old Black Labrador Retriever, for the sport of hunting, which I rarely do. So, I train her for the sake of training and to compete in hunt tests.

Hunt tests - retriever performance events sanctioned by the American Kennel Club - have not come easily to me. I am shy about having people looking at me and there can be dozens of spectators. Plus, there are two judges who are not just looking - they are evaluating, making me doubly nervous.

I love training, especially alone with my dog and outside, but I run the hunt tests to keep moving forward in my training, to set goals and then achieve them. I run them, too, for Chaser, who is out of control with enthusiasm.

Hunt tests can be boiled down to marked retrieves and blind retrieves, or marks and blinds for short. Initially, you and your dog learn to run marks. In a marked retrieve, the dog watches the fall of a downed game bird or retrieving bumper (in actual hunt tests, birds are used, but a lot of training is done with bumpers), marks the location where it hits the ground, remembers the spot, and makes the retrieve.

Marks are fun and generally rewarding for a retriever. Retrievers are born to retrieve, and some, like Chaser, are nearly insatiable in their desire to do it. Marks can be easy or difficult. A retrieve on a flat football field is easiest, suitable for a very young retriever or a dog just starting out. Wind blowing the scent of the bird into a young retriever's face simplifies the retrieve even further. Add in other factors such as terrain, heavy cover (tall

grass, bushes, or trees), entering and exiting water, and a cross wind, and only an experienced, trained retriever is likely to succeed. I enjoy learning how to teach my dog more complicated retrieves.

A possessive dog who retrieves may want to keep the bird. Possessiveness indicates a strong prey drive. Drive is part of what I want to see, part of what adds to the excitement. Chaser is a natural at charging out, has all the drive in the world, but coming back? Not always so much.

To pass a beginner Hunt Test, my dog must bring the bird back and you (the handler) must get it from her before she drops the bird, before it touches the ground, and before you touch your dog. This is "delivering to hand" and proves you have rudimentary control over your dog. And it shows you work as a team.

With a young dog, finesse at quickly scooping up the bird before the dog decides to drop it, then just as quickly, grabbing your dog's collar before she decides to leave, means you pass the test. A more experienced dog willingly delivers to hand.

After gaining a beginning proficiency with marks, you and your dog learn to run a blinds retrieve - that is, to retrieve a game bird when the dog does not know the bird's location. Everyone has heard of the duck blinds hunters hide in. These blinds are different. They are not physical locations; they are exercises of trust between dog and handler.

Blind retrieves, and the satisfaction I get when my dog and I complete one, are what really keep me in the hunt test training game. Maybe it is partly that they are difficult to teach, and the reward when it goes well feels so good. But it

so often doesn't go well and then I feel I have let Chaser down.

Why does this make me want to do more? The process of trying over and over and gradually working it out until my dog and I execute one perfectly fills me with the joy of satisfaction. Progress comes slowly, and that feeling of accomplishment when it works makes me greedy for more.

Blinds test communication between dog and handler and this closeness with my dog keeps me trying again and again. John Cavanaugh, a dog trainer, calls a blind "a remote communication system." He says that "successful blinds are mutual victories" for both me and my dog. Often that tantalizing victory is just out of reach.

James Spencer, premier dog trainer and author, must have trained hundreds of dogs. He describes a blind as consisting of three parts:

1. "Lining," in which the dog is initially sent toward a downed bird,
2. "Topping," in which a whistle is used to stop the dog whenever necessary to redirect the wandering animal; and,
3. "Casting," in which the dog is redirected by the handler after stopping.

The key is the dog's confidence in him that there is a retrieve to be made. His dog has not seen the bird fall, so Spencer uses whistle blasts, verbal commands, hand signals, and sometimes body movements, to indicate which direction the dog must go to get to the bird. His dog follows these commands, finds the bird and retrieves it.

Totallygundogs.com has this to say about blinds: "There will be many times in the life of a retriever when he has to search for game that he has not seen fall... blind retrieving requires both persistence on the part of the dog, and great faith in his handler.... a blind retrieve is an act of enormous faith on the part of the dog.... he is traveling 'blind' and relying totally on his handler to send him in the right direction. If he is hesitant or unsure, the retrieve may be bungled or delayed. We need him to travel fast and with confidence... To do that requires the dog to have absolute faith in his handler. We need to build into the dog an unshakeable belief that when we send him in a particular direction, there will be a retrieve at the end of his journey... the dog's drive, tenacity and confidence in his handler lie at the heart of the

process and must be carefully nurtured as we train the dog..."

That's what I want for my dog and me. I want my dog to have faith in me, to trust me, to have the confidence in me to work as a team.

I find it harder to teach a dog the nuances required to complete blinds than it is to teach a human, for example, how to ski. I am not an advanced dog trainer, and because I am still learning myself, I always feel like it's similar to trying to teach someone to ski at the same time you're learning how to ski yourself. I have done that at times, staying a step ahead of the students, but I could talk to human students. With dogs there is another layer of complexity - teaching without two-way verbal communication. We can't talk to each other, at least not with words. And that's what a hunt test is, a test of communication. But there's more.

John Pilley, a psychology researcher, wrote about the joyful intensity of dogs in their work and the closeness of their bonds with their trainers. He studied language and wrote about communication with his border collie who learned over 1000 words and became famous in both academic circles and on late-night talk shows. I feel that closeness and joy when I train my dog.

According to the husband-and-wife team Brian Hare (evolutionary biologist) and Vanessa Woods, in their book, *The Genius of Dogs*, "dogs show an affiliation towards humans that is unlike any other in the animal kingdom." Hare and Woods show that our relationship with dogs changes our physiology. In experiments with blood testing after the dog owner interacted and played with their dog for 30 minutes, oxytocin, beta-endorphins, prolactin, phenylethylamine and dopamine all increased. These are hormones associated with euphoria and pain relief, feelings of bonding and affiliation, parenting behavior, and finding a romantic partner. Dogs experience the same rise in these hormones; the feelings are mutual.

Gregory Berns, a neuroscientist, who trained dogs to sit in an MRI scanner so he could study their brains confirms Hare and Woods' work. He notes a similarity between dogs and humans in both the structure and function of a key brain region: the caudate nucleus that plays a role in the anticipation of things we enjoy, like food, love and

See CHASER pg 29 ▶

LISA BEGIN KRUYSMAN

# Wherever *the* Dogs May Lead Us



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HE FLORIDA KEYS hold a very sweet and sentimental place in my heart. It's where my late husband, Rich, and I honeymooned in 1996. When he'd learned that I'd never been,

▲ he'd wanted to share that special place with me. In early October, one week after our wedding on the Manasquan River in NJ, we flew into Fort Lauderdale, rented a car and glided down Route US One, arriving for a stay at Hawks Cay Resort on Duck Key.

Sunset Park, Key Colony Beach

Most people might think that The Keys are just another Florida resort among so many in the Sunshine State filled with wide white beaches and rows of towering condos. But The Keys, a series of islands connected by bridges spanning Key Largo to Key West, are unique, defying words. In between are communities such as the bustling municipality of Marathon and the more rural Big Pine Key with its beloved herds of tiny Key Deer that seem to pop out of the woods as you drive by. There's also the famous No Name Pub on No Name Key with its walls papered with dollar bills.

I fell in love with The Keys like Rich had hoped and from that visit on we'd spend a lot of time there renting homes in Islamorada, Lower Matecumbe, Big Pine Island and Key Colony

Beach, making so many special memories with visits from family and friends, and our Portuguese water dog, Hooper. The weather is almost nearly perfect, the food and drink amazing, and sunsets spectacular. What has always struck me about The Keys, however, is how dog-friendly they are.

In January 2021, we'd taken our Havanese-mix, Teddy, to Key Largo. He'd already lost a leg in a desperate yet futile effort to rid him of his mast cell tumor. A weary tripod by now, we knew it would be Teddy's first and last visit to The Keys.

But, who knew it would be my husband's last as well. Rich's passing in October 2021 turned my world upside down. No one is ever prepared for the loss of a spouse, especially when it's so sudden. Words truly defy that as well.

At the time of his death, I had no dog to provide me with comfort. Just seven weeks after Rich had passed, however, I flew solo from the Jacksonville airport in Florida to San Diego, California, to rescue a little pup I'd "met" online who was born on the same day Rich was admitted to the ICU. Quint was one of five tiny Maltipoos delivered by a stray pulled from the street. It was only through the work of a foster group that she gave birth in the comfort of a loving home. For me, watching their progress and challenges from a distance had brought hope and light during a dark time. Having him by my side as we both navigated new lives together was just what I needed to get out and keep going somehow.

▼  
 Rental Rule  
 Breakers. What,  
 we aren't allowed  
 on the couch?

Within a year of Rich's passing, I moved forward and began a relationship with a "new" man, and his beautiful Australian Shepherd who took a liking to Quint early on. It's no easy task starting over after a profound loss. When I thought it was time for David and I to begin a new life together in a brand new place. I purchased a log cabin in rural Florida and invited dog and man to live with us, subsequently adopting a lab-hound mix we named Jackson, one of a litter of nine abandoned at a local tire shop down the road.

Talk about warp-speed change. I think many people must've thought I'd lost my mind, but I saw an opportunity to be in a new community where I didn't know a soul - to reset so to speak. With the passing of my dad a year ago and my mom in February, combined with the process of finding a tenant for my home in Georgia and venturing further south, I thought the time had come to just get away and what better place than The Keys.

I was fully aware that this would be the first time I'd be there without Rich; a locale filled not just with memories of him, but those of so many late family members, and dogs, that had spent time with me there for over 25 years.

David, a Floridian, had never even been to The Keys, and I realized I was not just sharing a destination with him, but making a new start - celebrating the past while seeing this place with new eyes, and dogs. Restful and relaxing, even with a new puppy who seems to like life on the road with his pack, we enjoyed the interaction with our dogs, and the people who welcomed them wherever we went.

Vacation can be defined as, 'the action of leaving something one previously occupied'. Somehow, that action just seems to be better when there's a dog (or a few) involved and those special places in the world where all are welcome. It is truly "The Keys" to contentment. ■



▶  
 Jackson and  
 Quint enjoying  
 the view in Key  
 Colony Beach

KIM CAMPBELL THORNTON

## HAPPY TRAILS



**W**ITH SUMMER fast approaching, you may be planning a road trip vacation with your family—including your dogs. Having your dog as a travel companion means you have a little bit of home with you, and it can also open your eyes to some activities and places you might otherwise not have explored if you hadn't had a dog along. My husband and Sparkles and I took our own road trip in March and April. Here are some of our favorite pet-friendly places and activities.

The trip started with a drive across Death Valley to see the wealth of wildflowers bursting



Sparkles poses next to a bear in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, one of many stops on our five-week road trip.

forth after heavy winter rains, as well as the shallow lake that formed at Badwater Basin from said rains. While we could all enjoy the blooms, Sparkles and other dogs weren't allowed on the trail to the lake—for good reason. Walking on salt flats—especially damp areas—is painful for paws because saline crystals dig into the skin. Even my Keen-wearing feet weren't fully protected from the ouch factor. We overnighted at Old West-themed Longstreet Inn Casino & RV Resort in Amargosa Valley, Nevada. Grassy grounds around the pool are great for dog walking. Don't miss casino cat Jackpot.

The next stop of note was a long-time favorite: Riverbend Hot Springs in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. We've stayed there with multiple dogs over the years. While the rooms inside the main part of the resort are cozy, the new Sunrise Suites across the street are a luxe upgrade. Dogs can't hang out at the springs with you, but if your dog is a sun worshipper, a nearby sitting area with lounges and hammocks for resting after soaking has pet beds, too.

In Eureka Springs, Arkansas, many shops posted "dogs welcome" signs and even if they didn't, Sparkles wasn't turned away anywhere. We stayed at historic Crescent Hotel, founded in 1886, and notorious for being "America's most haunted hotel." We didn't encounter any ghosts, but we did enjoy sitting with Sparkles in front of the massive fireplace in the lobby, making the acquaintance of the hotel cat, and walking the wooded trail to town. Choose it if you don't mind slanted floors, slow elevators and grand-macore decor. Sparkles joined us for dinner on the hotel's deck while we caught up with friends in the area: dog judge Allan Reznik, whom I've known since he was editor of *Dogs in Canada*

See SPARKLES pg 30 ▶



## Strength

► Continued from pg 6

I felt silenced.

I felt I had no voice.

Though I learned from my days as a sports writer in Newfoundland that you “say what you mean and mean what you say,” it wasn’t until I met Shep that I learned how to center myself on me.

I was always desperate to prove myself to the cool kids, to belong, to hear my voice heard.

But when Shep came into my life, I discovered what that voice was supposed to say. This dog, this Maremma sheepdog whose family didn’t want him anymore, came into my life to show me I should stop caring about belonging to the cool crowd, that I was cool enough for him.

He taught me to take things less seriously, that I can’t control everything, that I needed to go more with the flow, that I needed to be in the mountains.

That I needed to have a camera in my hands.

If I were to write a book about our life together and the impact dogs have on our lives, it would be called “He Led Me Here.”

Because he did.

Without him, I would not be the person I am today.

### To celebrate women and their dogs

For the last several months, I’ve gathered women – women who love adventure and hiking with their dogs – and taken them into the mountains and parks of the Inland Northwest. I’ve put them in glamorous dresses next to their dogs, juxtaposing their feminine beauty against the rugged landscape of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

The goal was to create portraits that depict the relationship between women and their dogs.

Jordan left a long-term relationship five years ago and needed a change.

“Cutting my bangs or dyeing my hair wasn’t enough,” she says. “Instead, I saw a white fluffy puppy and claimed him as my own. Since that day, my bond with Ares is unmatched.”

They have journeyed across the country together, through heartbreak and grief, and to Jordan’s discovery of who she wants to be.

Ares is her rock.

“In his bright, blue soulful eyes and unconditional loyalty,” Jordan says, “I find a source of strength that encourages me to face the world with courage and resilience ... Through our time together, I have weathered life’s storms, knowing that his presence serves as a guiding light through life’s many switchbacks, both literally and figuratively.”

Samantha was in an abusive relationship for more than a decade and when she finally had the strength to leave, Leila was her guiding light.

“She taught me to keep going, to keep looking ahead and she kept me strong,” Samantha says. “She was the ever faithful sidekick that happily went along with all of the adventures my new life has in store for me.”

Leila is 11 and Samantha sees the signs of age setting in. Leila is slower, less able to go on big adventures in the mountains. When Samantha comes home, though, Leila is right there waiting.

“What hasn’t changed,” Samantha says, “is her smile and wiggly tushie when I walk in the door after work or just from running out to the car. This girl is my world.”

### A tribute to my dogs

We are phoenixes who have risen from the fire.

Each feather on our wings is intertwined with dog fur. The relationships we have with our canine companions have been transformative, empowering us to take our next steps and find new paths.

Our true paths.

In the face of adversity, our dogs have been grounding forces, giving us an endless supply of comfort, support and love.

I continue to work with women who want to celebrate their femininity and the strength they’ve found through their dogs. As each one tells me her story, I am led back to my beginnings.

To Shep. To Bella.

My muses.

They led me here. ■

SUSAN HARTZLER

# Pet-Friendly Travel Trend Soars:

DOG TRAVEL GEAR LAUNCHES *to* MEET GROWING DEMAND

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ET-FRIENDLY TRAVEL is no longer a niche market—it's a booming industry trend. According to a [recent survey conducted by Hilton](#), more than half of pet owners are now planning to take their beloved furry companions along on their adventures. With approximately 63.4 million American households owning dogs, the demand for pet-friendly accommodations and amenities has skyrocketed.

As a dog-centric author, dog travel expert, and advocate for pet-friendly adventures, I recently launched [Dog Travel Gear](#), a one-stop destination for all things essential when traveling with your canine companion. Dog Travel Gear features a diverse array of products aimed at ensuring bark worthy and tail wagging explorations, from essentials such as crates, treats, travel bowls, and toys, to crucial items like dog first aid kits, a selection of collars and leashes and doggie seat belts, and much more. Additionally, for fashion-forward furry friends, the site offers a range of adorable hoodies, ensuring that every aspect of your pet's journey is met with comfort, safety, and style.

My personal journey into the realm of canine travel began long ago and has proven to be a profoundly enriching experience. Accompanied by my loyal pack, two active Australian Shepherds, Seven and Paige Turner, we have embarked on countless adventures. Our escapades have been chronicled and shared with the world through a variety of publications, ranging from the digital realm of [GetAventura.com](#) and [Paws on the Go](#), to

glossy spreads inside [Fido Friendly Magazine](#), and [California 101 Traveler's Guide](#), among others. With each story shared, we aim to ignite a spark of inspiration in fellow dog-loving adventurers, encouraging them to explore the world with their furry travel buddies by their side.

My mission is to cultivate a vibrant community of like-minded individuals who share a passion for exploration, connection, and the boundless joy of discovering new horizons with their beloved pooches. With years of travel experience under my belt, I understand the significance of providing top-notch products for pet travel. Curious about what you'll find on the new site? Here are just a few of our featured products:

- [Pet Life 'PYURE' Handheld Travel Filtered Water Feeder](#): Keep your furry friend hydrated on the go with this convenient water bottle designed specifically for dogs.
- [Cruising Companion On The Go Food Bag](#): The travel-ready pouch has a zipper top to help you quickly fill and dispense food on the go.
- [Dog Baxter Backpack](#): Get Fido packed up and ready to go with the lightweight, tough, custom-fit Baxter Pack.
- [Mendota Diamond Series Braided Slip Leash](#): Simply slip the end loop around your dog's neck and you're ready to go!
- [Dog First Aid Kit](#): Be prepared for any mishaps with this comprehensive first aid kit designed specifically for dogs.

- **Pendleton National Park Pet Beds:** Inspired by vintage Pendleton Woolen Mills® patterns, this collection takes us on a journey of the beautiful landscapes of our great National Parks enjoyed by millions over the years.
- **Stylish and Comfortable Hoodies:** Show your furry friend the love they deserve with a custom-made hoodie.

#### Paws On The Go Blog: Your Guide to Canine Adventures

The site's blog, "Paws on the Go," serves as a treasure trove of knowledge and expertise in dog travel. Drawing from my lifelong love for dogs and extensive experience in pet-friendly travel, the blog offers invaluable insights on destinations, tips, and resources to make every adventure unforgettable.

Some of the stories you'll find on "Paws on the Go" include:

- **Essential Packing Tips for Dog-Friendly Road Trips**
- **The Importance of Crate Training Your Dog: Creating a Safe Haven**
- **Dog Mountain in St. Johnsbury, Vermont**
- **Essential Items for Your Dog's Travel First Aid Kit**
- **Celebrate National Parks Week With Your Dog**

#### About Dog Travel Gear

Dog Travel Gear stands as the ultimate destination for paw-some canine travel essentials, curated by renowned dog travel expert Susan Hartzler and her trusted companions, Seven and Paige Turner. Every product featured on Dog Travel Gear undergoes rigorous testing to ensure a successful and enjoyable pet-friendly journey.

For more information and to embark on your next adventure with your furry friend, visit [www.dogtravelgear.com](http://www.dogtravelgear.com) today! ■

#DogTravelGear #DogFriendlyTravel  
#FurryFriendsOnVacation





# TIPS & TACTICS

MERRIE MEYERS

## Are You Dashing?

I ADMIT COMPLETE CONFUSION over the proper use of the en dash, em dash, and hyphen. Back in the Stone Age, our journalism professors didn't touch on this. After all, that was almost 50 years ago, and an IBM Selectric typewriter was my only option for creating news copy.

In my mind, every dash I see is a hyphen. But, as several colleagues, including our graphic designer have told me, that's simply not true. There's actually an assortment of horizontal marks to choose from, including the hyphen, soft hyphen, minus sign, angled dash, swung dash, en dash, figure dash, em dash, two-em dash, three-em dash, and horizontal rule. Confused yet? Me too!

To make sense of the differences between a hyphen, an en dash, and an em dash, I had to do some research. Here's what I found. Hyphens (-) are the shortest. En dashes (–) are in the medium range, and em dashes (—) are the longest. Length aside, the types of dashes perform different duties, and they are not interchangeable.

The use of **hyphens** began with Johannes Gutenberg who used them to indicate when a word at the end of a line continued onto the next line. Hyphens connect the parts of a compound word, such as part-time, high-strung, and one of my favorites, chocolate-covered. Hyphens highlight the relationship between the parts (words) involved and create a new meaning. HOWEVER, there are exceptions, like when you use hyphens in a story to spell out a word like d-o-g. Or to indicate a stutter, such as b-b-but.

The **AP Style Guide** doesn't use **en dashes**; rendering those of us with traditional journalism training "en-less." However, within generally accepted punctuation rules, en dashes are typically used to show a range of quantifiable items, such as

pages, dates, sports scores or numbers. The en dash replaces the words "from" or "between" in a sentence. You can also use an en dash instead of using "versus," such as the Detroit-Cincinnati game or the Nixon-Kennedy debate.

Just as the en dash was named such because it is supposedly the width of the letter "n", the **em dash** is so named because it is supposed to be the width of the letter "m." Em dashes can add emphasis to a sentence, call attention to an idea, or even replace parentheses. Here's an example. The veterinarian—holding a squeaky toy—managed to distract the dog. You can also use em dashes to indicate a break in the conversation, as in, "I want to apologize—"she said as the boy turned and walked away. Em dashes can be used without spaces on either side. The AP includes the spaces, the **Chicago Manual of Style** (CMOS), followed by more literary and professional types, does not.

Many of us who learned (labored) to write in journalism classes using a typewriter were taught to use two hyphens to make a dash, underline text to suggest use of italics and insert double spaces after periods to indicate the end of a sentence. Microsoft Word, the most common word processing program in the world, uses combinations of hyphens and spaces to reflect these dashes. If you type two dashes between two words they become an em dash—, however if you put a space on either side of a hyphen, -- it becomes an en dash. Microsoft Word also provides other dash options (which made my eyes glaze over) including soft hyphens, non-breaking hyphens, minus signs, angled dashes, and swung dashes. **The Week Magazine** offers more information on those dashes. Another great source is [wordgenius.com](http://wordgenius.com).

If you're wondering how to create these dashes on your keyboard, try these hacks from [Write-PublishSell.com](#) and Audrey Hodge of [Hodge-podge Solutions](#). I tried them and they work.

- To type an en dash on a PC, press and hold the ALT key and type 0150. On a Mac, press the Option key together with the Minus key
- To type an em dash on a PC, press and hold the ALT key and type 0151. On a Mac, press the Shift key together with the Option key and then press the Minus key.

However you decide to punctuate, do it with gusto and become Dashing!!



#### Angela Capodanno

The aforementioned Graphic Designer here. Thanks for this article, Merrie! I've been through sufficient therapy to stop trying to make all the dashes consistent in this publication — generally speaking, we publish them the way they are provided.



## Chaser

► Continued from pg 21

money. In dogs, the caudate is activated during MRIs in response to signals indicating food, to smells of familiar humans, and to the return of owners who had momentarily stepped out of view.

In Berns' MRI experiments, the dog and his or her owner must stay focused on each other while the MRI scans the dog's brain. Berns writes about his dog Callie, describing the intense period of training his dog to stay in the MRI. "Our relationship began to change... we became a team... for lack of a better word, it was intimate... Staring eyeball to eyeball, I could see my reflection in Callie's eyes. Yes, she wanted hot dogs, but there was something more. Callie had been communicating with me... we were staring at each other for minutes on end... As Callie and I honed our performance, I had a growing sense that we were beginning to read each other's mind." Sometimes when communicating with my dog while we run a blind, I feel that too.

Pilley, Hare, Woods, and Berns capture parts of what is going on with me when I train my dog. It is hard to find words to describe it. John

Bradshaw, in his book, *Dog Sense*, writes about evidence that 26,000 years ago, the canine bond was already established, based on child and canid footprints in Chauvet Cave in France. He says that dogs may experience attachment more intensely and in more nuanced ways than we do. Is Chaser so devoted to me that I can't compete with her emotions? I'd like to reciprocate and to experience that kind of devotion. So, I train.

When we are on, working smoothly as a team, the world slips away. It is just me and my dog talking in a language without words, performing automatically. And doing it together.

Dog training and hunt tests are as much of an adrenaline rush as anything I have done - scaling a crag, bagging a peak, running a rapid - but with the added layer of an intimate relationship. Not with a climbing or boating partner, but with another species. Dog training is different and yet the same. The dogs need it. I need it, too. ■

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

— humanitarian and winner of —

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

# Prayer *for* Animals and Their Masters

Hear our humble prayer, O God,  
 for our friends, the animals,  
 especially for those who are suffering;  
 for animals that are overworked,  
 underfed, and cruelly treated;  
 for all the wistful creatures in captivity,  
 that beat their wings against bars;  
 for any that are hunted or lost or deserted,  
 or frightened or hungry;  
 for all that must be put to death.

We entreat for them all  
 Thy mercy and pity,  
 and for those who deal with them,  
 we ask a heart of compassion  
 and gentle hands and kindly words.  
 Make us, ourselves,  
 to be true friends to animals  
 and so to share  
 the blessings of the Merciful.  
 Amen.

## Sparkles

► Continued from pg 24

and I was editor of Dog Fancy—and Facebook friend and dog groomer Dorothy Guertin, daughter of longtime DWAA member Joan B. Guertin, who had Corgis. Besides our walks through town, we also enjoyed lunch at dog-friendly Brews on Pine Street.

A stay in Jackson, Tennessee, had us visiting family, so I can't comment on dog friendly activities there, but I must give a shout-out to the Courtyard Marriott, whose staff enjoyed fussing over Sparkles and made sure we were aware of the walled courtyard behind the lobby where she could explore leash-free while we sat around the fire pit. At Parnassus Books in Nashville, an employee approached me to ask Sparkles' name and welcome her to the store. I think asking my name was an afterthought. We also enjoyed meeting shop dog and manager of canine staff, Opie Brennan.

Eventually, we made our way to Augusta, Georgia, home of the Masters and the Morris Museum. Sadly, neither welcomed dogs, but our hotel, the Partridge Inn, built around a house that dates to 1836, did. Sparkles was warmly welcomed at the wraparound deck for breakfast and at the penthouse Six South Restaurant and Bar outdoor deck for lunch and a sunset happy hour. It was also a great place to sit and read in the afternoon. While I visited the Morris Museum to view the [Joseph Sulkowski exhibit](#), my husband and Sparkles walked Augusta's Riverwalk, a brick trail that runs along the Savannah River and features a fountain, pedestrian bridge and sculptures, as well as easy access to restaurants, a playground and gardens and activities such as kayaking.

We're back home now and planning a trip to Europe this fall—all three of us. Stay tuned. ■



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