

RUFFDRAFTS

Fall-Holiday 2022

HOW DOGS MAKE THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHTER



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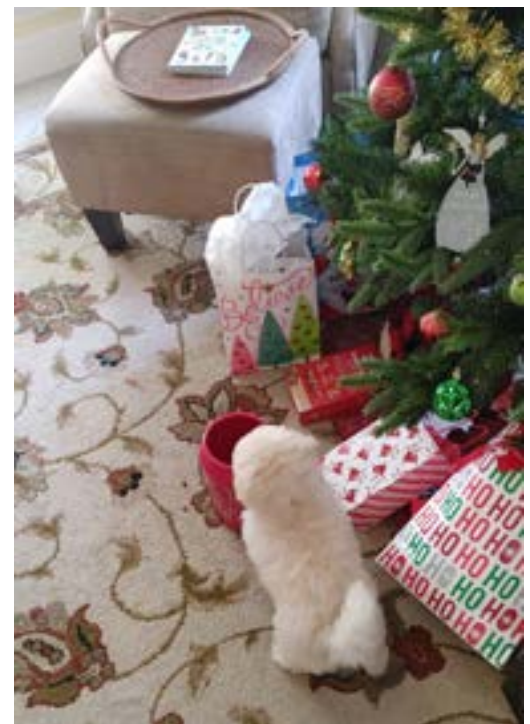
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BARBARA E. MAGERA

Mama's Home



I decided to take a break from my hectic hospitalist job where I cared for the sickest imaginable patients. The Cavaliers were thrilled.

I NO LONGER HAD TO frantically blast out the door to run to work. Now, our mornings are filled with leisurely walks through our picturesque neighborhood which reveals a view of Charleston harbor. The Cavaliers enthusiastically gait through our circling streets. We all enjoy “taking time to smell the roses,” study the coastal critters, and watch the egrets forage for food in the marsh grass.

Following our early morning walk, we settle in our porch overlooking the marsh. Breakfast includes an assortment of local fruits and cheeses. Their favorite morning fare is John’s Island blueberries. Good choice for their high oxidative content. Everyone wants morsels of local goat cheese. With full tummies, everyone is a bit groggy and falls asleep within minutes. Their gentle snoring allows me time to outline my nutritious meal plans for the upcoming days.

Despite urging, my pack doesn’t care for salmon oil; rather, they want the “real deal” of baked salmon. Occasionally, they allow me a small portion. Regular feeding of salmon ensures a thick, shiny coat, even on older canines.

After they awake and stretch from their nap, I sit on the floor, and cradle one of the Cavaliers for a body massage. While on his back, I gently massage his shoulder and neck muscles. While working on his lower limbs, he naturally extends his hind legs. I move to massage both facial cheek muscles in a circular motion. His big brown eyes reflect his contentment. Finally, we embrace with wet kisses and cuddles. I perform individualized massages on each Cavalier, which is followed by a cool drink.

I locate their toy box. Two youngsters jump into the toy box and enthusiastically search for their favorite toy. Interesting how each has their favorite and how the toy matches their personality.

I throw several knot balls around the room to engage them in a fastpaced game of fetch and catch. Several volley to catch the moving ball but only one

Mama's Home

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manages to outmaneuver the others and control the ball. One canine runs towards me and drops the ball at my feet. He wants me to continue the fun. Two of the girls' athletic and clever abilities outshine their experienced males. Despite their petite size, they manage to outsmart them and repetitively retrieve even steal the ball and drop it at my feet. This strenuous game continues nonstop for a solid hour.

For the shy guys, a game catching soap "bubbles" engages them in a running and jumping exercise. A few novice players appear perplexed when the bubbles float in the air or hit the floor and disappear. Both these simple games improve strength, stamina and agility. Each Cavalier learns coordination and cooperation when at play with the pack. After our afternoon of play activities are finished, it's time for me to get started on dinner. For our evening meal, I prepare tossed salads, roasted herb potatoes, a squash casserole and flash seared beef tips for our entree. The kids are treated to bite size pieces of raw beef that are mixed with their regular evening meal.

During the last warm days of autumn, we eat dinner on our screened porch. Ceiling fans provide some moving air. The melodic cicadas usher in the sounds of dusk. After sunset, the soft bellowing of bullfrogs echo in the marsh. The Cavaliers join us on the porch. They intently listen to the symphonic sounds of evening marsh activities however; tonight they are sleepy and plop their soft bodies in overstuffed doggie beds. Before falling into a deep sleep, my husband and I caress each Cavalier in our arms for a time of cuddling. We gently place each in their individual crate lined with a comfortable doggie bed. Each receives a goodnight kiss before drifting off to sleep. Our evening prayers are filled with gratitude as we thank the Almighty for entrusting us to care for these loving little dogs whose primary mission is to please and comfort us. ■

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WRITING COMPETITION UPDATE

The 2022 DWAA contest was a success with over 800 submissions including writing, illustrations, photography and more. Artists and authors from around the world entered the contest. The majority of entrants were DWAA members.

"The submissions represent a huge amount of talent from artists whose work exemplifies our canines. DWAA is privileged to receive their submissions to our contest."

— BARB MAGERA
CONTEST CHAIR

