

PetGazette

Western North Carolina

January-February 2018

Volume 7 - Issue 1



The Healing Power of Horses, page 7. Horse Dreams, page 9.

Calendar of Events January-February 2018

January

National Pet Cancer Awareness Month
National Pet Diabetes Awareness Month
National Train Your Dog Month
National Walk Your Dog Month

Sat. 1/13. Deadline for Sarge’s Holiday Pet Photo Contest entries. Article page 8. Details at sargeanimals.org or 828 246-9050.
Sun. 1/14 - 4 & 7pm. Screening at Flat Rock Cinema to benefit Blue Ridge Humane Society (BRHS). “Parodies for Charity” featuring Gary Goose Gump and other short, beer-themed parodies by local filmmakers. Tickets, \$15, include one raffle ticket for prizes donated by Hendersonville merchants. Food, beer, wine available for purchase. More at Flat Rock Cinema – 828 697-2463 or BRHS 828 692-2639

Mon. 1/15. - 4 & 7pm. Benefit screening. See above.
Mon. 1/22 – 4-7pm. BWAR. Haircut: \$40 minimum donation with all proceeds helping local animals in need. Call 828.692.4452 for appointment.
Thur. 1/25 - 6pm. Free expert presentation on dog and wolf research and its applications to dog training by Kathryn Gubista, PhD. At Lord Auditorium in Pack Square Library. She is an evolutionar y biologist, college biology instructor, author and certified professional dog trainer. For more, call Lucky Dog Training, (828) 423-9635

February

National Pet Dental Health Month
Responsible Pet Owners Month
Sun. 2/4 - 8pm. Raffle and

auction at Dugout’s Super Bowl Party benefits Blue Ridge Humane Society. \$15 pre-order covers seat, buffet, one raffle ticket. \$5 seat only. \$20 day of game covers seat, buffet, ticket. Details at Dugout, 828 692-9262 or BRHS, 828 692-2639.
Sat. 2/10 - 1-4pm. Valentine special adoption day at FUR sanctuary in Waynesville. \$35 for cats one year old and older. \$20 for kittens. See story on page 13, call 8-844-888-2287 (CATS) or visit furofwnc.org.
Tu. 2/20 - Love Your Pet Day
Fri. 2/23 - National Dog Biscuit Day

Ongoing

Please call or email to confirm events since schedules can change.
Every Saturday morning - 10-11am. BRHS Yoga with Cats! A

fantastic yoga class with YAM Yoga and Massage plus the opportunity to mingle with adoptable cats. Venues change. Details at blueridgehumane.org, 828 885-3647
Every second Tu. of the month: Hendersonville Paws for Love tests potential therapy dogs. Venues vary. Sign up, get directions at 828 553-4085
Every Wed., Sat., Sun. - 10am. BWAR. Outward Hounds Hiking Club meets at shelter to take dogs on hikes. volunteer@bwar.org.
Every Sat. & Sun. - 10am-5pm. Furever Friends Cat Adoptions. Petco, 825 Brevard Road, Asheville. fureverfriends@att.net; 828 398-4943
Every Sun. - 10am-2pm. AHS Hiking Hounds. Take shelter dogs for hikes. ashevillehumane.org
Every First Sat. - 11:30am-1pm. Volunteer orientation at AHS, 14Forever Friends Lane. volunteer@ashevillehumane.org.

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Happy New Year!



Dear Reader,

The Chinese New Year – 2018 is the Year of the Dog! What could be more auspicious for any pet lover? Starting on February 16 and running through next February 4, 2019, the year is characterized by all that is good in our canine companions: friendliness, loyalty, and service.

We are looking forward to being of service to you in the upcoming year, and we thank our readers and advertisers for their loyalty. In 2018, Pet Gazette will continue to bring you the expertise of outstanding local experts in all areas of pet behavior and care. We'll research all the fun pet events in our area, so you can make plans to attend. Pet Gazette is the place to find out about the work of the many rescue and animal welfare groups in our area, and how businesses are supporting them. And much more!

There are some new things for 2018. Hello, you writers out there – we will be publishing some short fiction and are looking for submissions. Please call our office to discuss. Also new, starting in the March issue, we'll be searching the area just outside WNC for fun things to do or pet places to go, for day trips or weekends.

Peace and Prosperity for 2018

Carol

Happy Year of the Dog.



Photo by Louise St. Romain, FastCat Photography Studio

Legend: AHS=Asheville Humane Society BRAS=Blue Ridge Agility Club BRHS=Blue Ridge Humane Society BWAR=Brother Wolf Animal Rescue CAAR=Charles Angels Animal Rescue FEF=Forever Friends Animal Rescue Network FUR=Feline Urgent Rescue SARF=Sarge’s Animal Rescue Foundation



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Expert to present “Science-Based Dog Training”

A free exploration of “science-based dog training” will be presented at 6pm on Thursday, January 25 at the Lord Auditorium at Pack Library in downtown Asheville. Although the presentation will be all about dogs, only humans will be welcome.

DOG & WOLF BIOLOGY

Speaker Kathryn Gubista, Ph.D. will explain past and present research on dog and wolf biology and its application to dog training. Gubista is an evolutionary biologist, blogger, author, and certified professional dog trainer. She is also a college biology instructor well aware that people are often fearful and/or turned-off by the sheer mention of biology. She feels this avoidance of biology most likely comes from less than ideal educational experiences in high school and/or college biology courses. That’s one reason one of her personal teaching goals is to make biology easy to understand and fun to learn for everyone.

In Gubista’s words, “Biology is the study of life! It is the foundation upon which to understand all that is around us, including our furry doggy friends and their wolf relatives.” Her presentation will cover how past and present research in wolf and dog biology shape our view of, and communication with, our dog companions.

OLD & NEW RESEARCH

Gubista’s presentation will also cover how technology and other innovations are

changing everything around us, including how biological research is conducted. Past research was limited to making inferences about how dogs think. But inferences and interpretations are subjective approaches to science that create bias and errors. With technological advances, we can now actually look inside dogs’ brains and determine what they are thinking and feeling.

Groundbreaking research using MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is paving the way and will be highlighted in the January 25 presentation.

How we study wolves and wolf populations has dramatically changed over the years. Prior to 1995, studies of wolf populations were restricted to captive populations in zoos and sanctuaries. Of course, captive populations are artificial populations, and not representative of wild wolf populations. This matters greatly.

Gubista stresses that if we are making decisions about dog biology based on wolf biology, their closest living evolutionary relatives, the assumptions we make

about wolves need to be fact, not fiction. Unfortunately, she points out, results from captive wolf studies have created more fiction than facts, which dramatically affects how we view today’s dogs.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN DOGS & HUMANS

Comparing dogs to wolves is one thing. However, comparing dogs to humans



Gubista’s personal Muttley Crew

is a completely different thing. The distinction between dog and human biology is critical to understanding and to the development of effective dog training approaches.

Gubista points out those adult dogs are perpetual toddlers, no matter their age. “You cannot compare the mental capacity of a 7-year-old dog to a 7-year-old child,” she says. “While human children grow out of the toddler phase in the blink of an eye, dogs are forever toddlers. Understanding this simple fact is critical in dog training.”

“You cannot reason with dogs, just like you cannot reason with toddlers,” Gubista emphasizes. Both toddlers and dogs

approach life from basic survival needs. In terms of Sigmund Freud, dogs live in the “Id”. Dogs do not have the higher reasoning powers described as the “Ego” and “Super-Ego”.

COEVOLUTION OF DOGS & HUMANS

Where would the human species be without dogs? Where would the domestic dog species be without humans? Gubista will explore those questions and suggest some answers in her informative and entertaining presentation.

Dogs and humans have been associating and cooperating with each other for thousands and thousands of years, she will remind people. The dog species is the first animal that humans domesticated. In fact, all other domestications, including all our agricultural plants and animals, were modeled after the domestication of dogs.

Gubista emphasizes that dog and human evolutionary histories are intricately intertwined. And, she points out, our modern-day lives are highly dependent on dogs, such as service dogs, drug-sniffing dogs and search-and-rescue dogs as well as our scruffy little pups who brighten up our days.

Kathryn R. Gubista, PhD has over 30 years of dog training and human teaching experience. The Dog’s Perspective is a training philosophy based on how dogs think, and the title of her book series and blog.



Rescued Pug gets own wheels

Rachael Lastoff was a New Englander born and bred. She also was a lifelong Pug lover. Even though she grew up with German Shepherds and Dobermans, she got a Pug as soon as she was out on her own. She even fostered Pug after Pug for Pug Rescue of New England.

The dog she now calls Pug-Pug had a host of problems when he was rescued, the biggest



Pug-Pug smells the flowers

of which were nails growing into his paw pads and a completely blocked urethra. The situation was so bad that he needed emergency surgery to prevent permanent crippling. Fortunately, the surgery was performed and he began a “normal” life with Rachel and her husband, Pete Tessier. Then, when he was offered a career opportunity in Asheville, she had doubts about moving to North Carolina.

But a visit to Asheville changed her mind. The Lastoff/Tessiers stayed at the Aloft Downtown Hotel, which works with Charlie’s Angels Animal Rescue to foster dogs on the premises and help them find new homes.

Rachael was impressed with the hotel’s dedication to dog rescue, and with the whole city’s pet friendly ethos. She was convinced, and the move was made to Asheville three years ago.

The couple was settling in comfortably, but Pug-Pug was starting to exhibit pain and trouble walking. X-rays revealed that he had problem discs in his back. Corrective surgery

was done at Upstate Veterinary Specialist Hospital in Greenville, SC, funded in large part by the pet insurance the Lastoff/Tessiers had purchased. “We were certainly glad we had that!”

Rachael said.

Post-op, Pug-Pug was fitted with his wheels and provided with physical therapy sessions. Now he moves around comfortably, and gets along just fine with the Lastoff/Tessiers two cats, Pug Brother Navy, and a cat the couple are currently fostering. Rachael now organizes long distance adoptions for the Mid Atlantic Pug Rescue, while Pug Pug has acquired a substantial following on Instagram.

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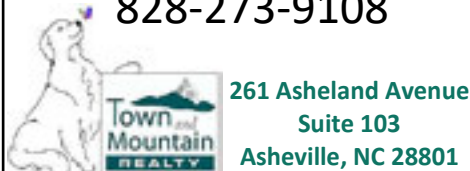
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Horses Heal People

Equine-Assisted Practices and Therapeutic Horsemanship

by Shannon Knapp

This field wouldn't exist without Natural Horsemanship, which is the training of horses with love instead of fear. Equine-assisted work in all its forms wouldn't exist if we still used horses as machinery. So much would be different without Natural Horsemanship.

This is not to say horses haven't been therapeutic for people even back in the day when horses were used for plowing fields, transportation, and welfare. But people of those times likely would have scoffed at any attempts to make this therapeutic benefit tangible and credible.

Like Natural Horsemanship, equine-assisted practice, as an activity, has deep roots. References from as early as 600 B.C. speak of early Greeks utilizing horses not only for people with disabilities, but for general health and well-being. Jump forward to the 1800s, where European physicians found horseback riding helpful in the treatment of certain neurological conditions to improve balance, posture, and strength.

Physicians used riding therapy during a Scandinavian outbreak of poliomyelitis (a kind of polio) in 1946. In a famous case from that time, horsewoman Liz Hartel used daily riding sessions to recover from the disease, and later went on to win a silver medal in Dressage in the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. Her story brought attention to horseback riding for the disabled, and she later partnered with physical therapist Ulla Harpoth to bring equine therapy to patients.

Therapeutic riding began in the U.S. and Canada in the 1960s; in 1969, the North American Riding for the Handicapped (NARHA) formed in the U.S. Therapeutic riding practitioners were able to catalogue a range of beneficial aspects, including physical, psychological, social, and educational outcomes. These included improved balance and strength, decreased spasticity and



increased coordination, emotional control and self-discipline, and improved hand-eye coordination. Hippotherapy evolved as a separate focus in therapeutic riding, with a direct application toward achieving functional outcomes as part of a physical, speech, and occupational therapy treatment strategy under the supervision of a professional therapist. Hippotherapy is also often viewed as another form of rehabilitation.

In Therapeutic Riding, the focus is instruction to ride, with a goal towards independent riding,

along with all the intangible benefits. In Equine Assisted Practice (EAP) and Equine Assisted Learning (EAL), the end goal is not about horsemanship or instruction to ride or competence to ride. To learn more about the history of Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy, visit PATH website and peruse PATH's *Strides* magazine. Much of the preceding information was gleaned from those two sources.

During the following decades, the beginnings of EAP for psychotherapy and learning formed. Equine-assisted activities evolved from the focus on special needs and physical and occupational therapy to include a focus on therapeutic benefits in the realm of mental health professionals. Practitioners realized the implications of expanding equine-assisted work into other areas. They started working with different populations and focused on adapting equine-assisted work to include mental health issues, complex social problems, skill building, behavioral and motivational psychotherapy aspects in their work with at-risk youth, family therapy, and personal growth therapy.

Stay tuned for more about Equine Assisted Practices and horse psychology, including donkeys and mules, in the next issue of *Pet Gazette*!

Shannon Knapp is Executive Director of Heart of Horse Sense and President of Horse Sense of the Carolinas, Inc., both based in Marshall, NC. For comments and inquiries, email shannon@heartofhorsesense.org.



Taking photos for pet portraits

by Susan M. Young

One year ago we lost our beloved Tag to cancer. He was a big, handsome, Golden Retriever with such soulful eyes. He was only 8 years old and my husband's heart dog. For therapy, Don decided to draw Tag and the resulting portrait brought tears to my eyes. He had captured Tag and then some. We posted the portrait to Facebook and have both started following other pet portrait artists on Facebook and become friends with several more.

One thing we have learned in the last year regarding commissioning portraits...most people have no clue on how to choose a good photo for an artist to draw from. In an email conversation with Mark Whittaker, a pet portrait artist in Wales, U.K., he shared some tips for getting the most out of your commissioned portrait. I've also added a few tips of my own. (I am also a portrait artist but my medium is glass.)

A photo that is well lit, preferably in sunlight, is always best for natural color. Avoid using a flash which can distort the colors. Harsh shadows or no shadows at all rarely make a good photo. Very bright sunlight will wash out your pet, leaving little detail for the artist to see, but too dim a photo will be flat. Keep it balanced.

Photograph with the sun behind you so your pet is not backlit. Try to get a shot at eye level with your pet. If you stand too

high above him you will get the top of his head. Too low and you get too much chin. Both distort the image. Remember: Artists can only draw what they see. They may be



Tag, by Don Young

able to fill in some missing details, but they will only be guessing and they might guess wrong. Better to have a good, clear photo that relays your pet's personality.

Posing is also important. Your goofy dog

laying on his back with his feet all splayed out looks cute, but it may not translate well on paper. A nice clear head shot of your pet is always the best pose, although some artists love a bit of naturalness, like a dog holding a favorite tennis ball or taking a swim. Take several photos of your pet and send them to the artist. This gives them a choice of poses and lighting to choose from. Hopefully, one will inspire the artist because then the magic happens. Send the photos to the artist via email as a very high resolution attachment. Again, this gives them more details to work with as lower resolution photos kill all details.

This may sound like a daunting list but it really is not. Today's cell phones have wonderful lenses and take good photos. Take several over a course of three or four days, then send the best to the artist. It's worth your time to make this initial photograph as perfect as you can so the resulting portrait will be stunning. Commissioning a portrait of a beloved pet shows how much you love them and what they mean to you. It's worth the time to get it right.

Susan M. Young is a long standing Asheville area Real Estate Broker with Town and Mountain Realty and has been active in dog sports with her Golden Retrievers for over 20 years. She is also a stained glass artist and can be reached through her glass website, susanyoungstainedglass.com.



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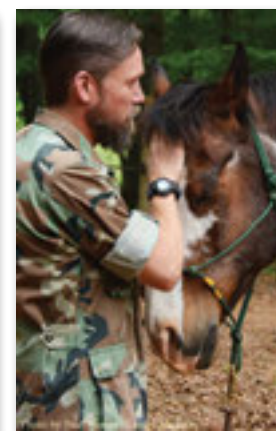


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Sarge's photo contest entries due January 13

Brenn Rohman, event coordinator for Sarge's Holiday Pet Photo Contest, is urging all area pet owners to shoot their pets in holiday costumes and get the photos entered by January 13, 2018.

"You can enter a few of your existing favorites," Rohman said. "Or you can dress up your pet in seasonal finery and take some new shots specifically for the contest."

An awards ceremony for contest winners will be held on Friday, February 2 at the Boojum Tap Room on Main Street in Waynesville. The time for the festivities will be announced on Sarge's website, sargeanimals.org, which will also have contest entry forms.




The contest fee will be \$15 per photo entered. Proceeds will help fund medical costs and the food supply for Sarge's rescued dogs and cats. Photo prints should be unframed, not matted, and printed on photography paper 4"x6" to 8"x10". The contest is open to amateur photographers only. Photos cannot be returned and electronic submissions cannot be accepted.

Photos, entry forms and checks should be mailed to SARF, PO Box 854, Waynesville, NC 28786, or delivered to Sarge's adoption center at 256 Industrial Park Drive in Waynesville. The center is open Tuesday through Friday, 12-5pm and Saturday, 10am-3pm. For more details, visit sargeanimals.org or call 828 246-9050. 🐾

Some entries from past Sarge's Animal Rescue Foundation's Holiday Pet Photo Contest.

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Fiction by Carol Marks

Horse Dreams

How does a city girl get born with horse dreams? Seems like they've always been with me, and I can't imagine they came from the cement streets of Yonkers, NY, where we lived.

To answer my own question, I've developed a kind of mystic theory. I'm told that time loops around in the heavenlies, so I think that while God was busy knitting me together in my mother's womb, his most blessed horse – the white warhorse who appears when the gates of heaven open – happened to be passing on his ordained errand*. Looking over God's shoulder to find out what he was up to, snorting, snuffling, and anxious to be charging off, his breath indelibly imprinted me with a desire for both horses and words.

The first manifestation came so early in my life that I don't know if it's a dream or a memory. My grandpa took me to Central Park which is in New York City, and we rode in a white carriage with flowers and I stood under the velvet nose of the patient lovely beast who had ferried us through the park. He bent his large face to my tiny one. Tenderly he snuffled my hair. His warm breath curled down my cheek, around my smile, and even without the mystic hoofbeats, I knew he loved me just for me and the thing that was just me bloomed inside. I was filled with warmth. I wanted to stand under this giant forever. From that day forward I longed to get that warm snuffle into my life any way I could, because there in his shadow was refuge from the world.

That's where the little girl's nag for a pony, began. My parents met my longing as best they could – with books, statues, books, pictures, books – and did I mention books? Grandpa read *Black Beauty* to me before I could read it for myself – an event that came earlier than it might have, because I was hungry for those words. I needed to get to Beauty by myself, to read the happy ending for the horse who was separated from love.

The real pony never materialized, but how I rode her through the pages of *The Black Stallion* series – movies like *National Velvet* – and oh, blest is the person who invented television, with Roy Rogers and Trigger, Dale Evens and Buttermilk, the Lone Ranger and Silver... My Friend Flicka.... I was steeped in the myths of horses who by their very heart, elevated their humans to resolutions and accomplishments undreamed of, on foot. Together, horse and person achieved more, were greater, than either could ever be on their own.

One miraculous Christmas, I opened a red box to find a complete Dale Evans official cowgirl outfit. Skirt, vest, hat, boots – even a cap pistol. I gasped. Tears filled my eyes. I fell headlong into the dream, coming out the other side – as if digging to China – in fantasy. As Little Dale, I lived on a ranch with lots of horses. I rode Buttermilk to school every day, jogging along with my books in one hand and her reins in the other, and clucking softly to her. I tied her to the bike rack. Knowing she was waiting outside for me got me through each day with its ration of taunting. Inside my head was a voice, "Go ahead and laugh at my glasses and my absolute inability to play basketball (or anything else that required gym shorts) – I am riding home soon on a beautiful horse. We love each other and that is something you do not have".

Weekends, I had time to saddle up the Pinto. It took a while, as her tack was in the living room. Her saddle was two couch pillows which I balanced on the porch railing, in the corner by the bamboo blinds. The Pinto scared me a little, being hotter than the obedient Buttermilk, but when I climbed onto the pillows, swinging my leg over the saddle, and as the cords of the blinds became reins in my hands, all fear left. At my command, we galloped out of the corral onto the trail, in perfect tune, her breathing snuffling warmly as we trotted to adventure. This was indeed heaven. My horses may not have been real, but I could ride them into realms the real ones couldn't go.

As I was soon to discover.

After much nagging, Mom and Dad relented and agreed to take my sister and me to the pony rides! We are jumping up and down and screaming with joy, right up until we arrive at the Slow-Medium-Fast Pony Rink. That's where my sister and I, with our different experiences of dream and reality, enter parallel universes. Eager for her first pony ride, Ellen drags my father to the line of dancing little kids and worried parents. In just a few minutes she will choose the fast lane, urge her pony into a full gallop, jump him over the fence into the medium lane, and race for home, whooping for joy.

Just behind her in line, I stand adjusting my glasses to better see the line of pony backsides arrayed in front of me. They shuffle their feet, heads hanging under the burden of huge safety saddles, and switch their tails against the flies. It's a very hot day, and the closer we get to the pony backsides, the worse it smells. I'm listening for the warm snuffle of my "First Horse", but what I hear sounds distressingly like a cough. "Hey kid, Slow, Medium or Fast?" the ticket-taker barks at me. Somehow Mom and I have reached the head of the line.

“Grandpa read *Black Beauty* to me before I could read it for myself.”

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My fate is in front of me. I freeze. My mother leans down and whispers "It's ok. You don't have to."

What! Not ride the pony?! Turn back now? I can't - I am wearing my full Dale Evans outfit! So squaring my shoulders, I stick my chin out and in my best cowgirl voice I say "Slow". He lifts me up, straps me in, and smacks my mount, which causes a jump that scares the bejeesus out of me. Then we thump along the track. Somewhere I hear the commotion my sister is creating, but mostly I am holding tight to the saddle, searching madly in my mind for the dream on which to hang this bumpy passage and finding none, endure. I finger the reins and they are just not turning into cords, as we slowly, ever so slowly, turn for home.

The next day my sister and I began to write a book about horses. The pages were oddly soothing to me. As the words and pretty pictures fell on the pages, in between the dream and the reality, the horses resumed their accustomed place in my mind. There again was the warm snuffle, curling down my face. I rode that book for hours; days even, until I could dream again of having a horse of my own. That, I was sure, would be heaven.

Carol Marks, a writer and the publisher of Pet Gazette, lives in Candler near a field with two horses. The passage referred to is in Revelation 18: "Then I saw the gates of heaven open, and behold, a white horse!... whose rider is called .The Word of God." This article was first published in WNC Woman in May of 2011.



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What’s in Your Pet’s Food?

by Chip Bridges

Did you know that four companies produce 75% of all the dog and cat food purchased worldwide? Those giants are Nestle, Mars, Colgate-Palmolive, and Del Monte. I don’t say this to promote a bias against large corporations, but to point out that when you change brands, you aren’t necessarily changing companies.

For example, if you switched from Pedigree to Cesar’s to Royal Canin to Nutro, it’s all made by Nestle, and could well be formulated by the same people and made in the same factory. It seems almost monthly a successful independent dog food manufacturer is acquired by one of these companies. This wouldn’t bother me so much if they would source and formulate the foods the way they had been. But all too often the new bags roll out with a banner reading “fresh new taste!” and an ingredient list that is inferior to the original.

The most important part of your dog food bag is the ingredient panel. Many nutritionists insist the majority of dog and cat foods on the market aren’t even appropriate for the species for which they are marketed. The knock on most dry foods is insufficient meat content. Meat costs the manufacturers much more than grains or potatoes. The front of a dog food bag is designed to get you to buy it. When you see “with roasted bison” on the front, labeling laws allow that roasted bison to be only 3% of the food.

The ingredient panel is more honest. Ingredients are listed in order by weight. For a dog or cat, I prefer to see at least the first five named ingredients to be meats. I don’t like to see fast-rising starches, such as grains or potatoes or any concentrated vegetable protein (e.g., pea protein, potato protein). At the end of the panel, the fewer added vitamins, the better. If the company sources good components, there will be no need to add a paragraph of synthetic vitamins to bring it to market. But as buyers have become more aware of ingredients, some manufacturers have been “splitting” less desirable ingredients to make the food look better. For example, if peas, pea protein, and pea fiber all appear on the same label, it’s safe to assume there are more peas in the food than where it originally falls.

The feeding guide can also be an indicator of quality. If a 50 pound dog is being recommended more than 2 cups or so daily, that indicates filler. There are \$80 bags of dog food in my store that are cheaper to feed than a \$45 same size bag, simply because so much less is fed daily. Also, subtract from your dog food any treats you give. Treats are usually high calorie. Vets will tell you that more than half of dogs and cats they see are overweight or obese.

Most dog and cat foods are made by the process of rendering. If you see “chicken meal” or “chicken fat” as an ingredient,

chicken has been rendered, or cooked under pressure to separate moisture and fat. If you see “meat meal” or “animal fat,” absolutely anything made of meat could have been rendered, per labeling laws.

I am skeptical of the claim that euthanized dogs and cats are commonly used in these foods, but pentobarbital (substance used to euthanize pets) has shown up in several foods over the years. I personally avoid all foods with generic terms like “meat” or “animal.” On the plus side for meals, they aren’t inclusive of water content, so there is more of it in the foods. Fresh meats are roughly 80% moisture. So if your label reads, “Salmon, venison, chicken meal,” the main component of the food might well be chicken. Few foods tell the percentage of meat anywhere on the bag. The ones that do tend to be the very most premium brands.

The biggest factors in our pets’ health are beyond our control - genetics and predispositions. The biggest factors we can control are diet and exercise. To learn even more about dog food, check out [Dogfoodadvisor.com](#), the Pet Fooled documentary on Netflix, and Whole Dog Journal - all good starting places.

Chip Bridges is the owner of Blue Ridge Reef & Pet at 102 WNC Shopping Center Drive in Black Mountain. You can reach him at [blueridgereef.com](#) or (828) 669-0032.



Selecting a Pet Care Provider

by Ryan Jo Summers

When you travel, what are you going to do with your pets? There are several options, depending on what pet species and number you have.

Dogs and cats can often be taken to a good, reputable boarding kennel. Start early by asking your vet or neighbors for recommendations of who they like, or don’t. A neighborhood online site like [Nextdoor.com](#) is good too. Try a Google search for boarding kennels + your town. Caveat is to check out your selections in enough time to shop around.

Kennels should welcome drop-in visitors, smell and look clean, and the pets should look reasonably happy. Ask if they are familiar with the Pet Care Services Association, formerly the American Boarding Kennel Association. Ask what vaccines they require and their emergency policies. Inquire if they are familiar with your breed of pet and mention any idiosyncrasies. **If you don’t feel comfortable, don’t leave your pet!**

Suppose a boarding kennel isn’t what you’re looking for? No problem. How about a house sitter? You pay someone to stay at your house, watch your TV, eat your food, make sure the house looks lived in, and take care of your pets. This is a great option for multi-pet households or with higher maintenance pets.

Start your search in one of two ways. The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) can be found at [www.petsitters.org](#) and allows you to ‘Find sitter locator’ in a few

steps. They come bonded and insured. They usually have a code of ethics they adhere to. Ask them their requirements of you, fees, and experience with your specific pets. Have them meet the family and be sure to check out a few individuals. They are professionals.

Similar but different are online sitter service companies like [Care.com](#), [Sittercity.com](#), and [Rover.com](#). Individuals set up



profiles on their nationwide website. Many cover all aspects of care: children, pets, elderly, etc.... The individuals are screened for background checks, identification, and other vetting measures before their profiles go public. Some do this full-time and others as part time. People in need of services can search profiles in their area by selecting what they want. Warning: you might be asked to join but many offer free trials. Once you find a few profiles you like, contact them with specifics

and arrange to meet. Ask lots of questions, make sure your pets feel comfortable around them, and vice versa.

Normally the pet owner pays the host site, and the sitter collects their fee afterward. Some sitters from both [petsitters.org](#) and Care.com/Sittercity.com/Rover.com also keep visiting pets in their home. Like a boarding kennel, only all the personal touches of a real home.

Browse the profiles and tailor searches to what services you want for your pets.

Prices vary. Sometimes you can negotiate and sometimes not. With some time and searching, you can find the perfect person to welcome and care for your pet as if it were their own. Whatever method you end up choosing, you can relax knowing your pets are well cared for. You know what to expect if an emergency arises and you shouldn’t come home to any bad surprises. You can expect to come

home to a happy pet who is glad to see you.

Ryan Jo Summers is a local author who also dog-walks under the Rover banner. Follow her at [www.ryanjosummers.com](#), [summersrye.wordpress.com](#) and [facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor](#) to learn about her newest book releases & specials this winter.

Editor’s note: For local pet sitters, visit [ashevilleareapetsitters.com](#). For local boarding, see the listings in the PetGazette Search Engine on page 3.



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by Larry Jandrew

As our pets age, their nutritional needs can change. So as pet owners, we should continually evaluate those needs and make changes accordingly. We need to look at diet as well as evaluating the pet's physical condition and activity level. But just because your pet is a senior does not mean that you need to immediately switch to a senior diet.

Many pet foods are designed for all life stages. Protein and fat levels in these foods are regulated by feeding levels. But not all foods fall into this category. You need to research the foods that you are feeding and make sure that they are formulated to meet the nutritional needs of all stages of life. If they do not then you need to evaluate your pet's health and determine if you need to switch to a senior diet.

Generally, if your pet is healthy, of a good weight and their activity level is at least at a moderate level, then you are probably better off staying with the food that you are currently feeding. Senior dogs' metabolism levels generally decrease with age. But active dogs in good condition need to maintain their protein and fat levels. As their activity levels decline, adjustments to protein and fat levels must be made so that weight issues do not occur.

In addition to weight gain, another

Care for Senior Pets

effect of aging is loss of muscle tone and joint health. Many pet foods contain glucosamine and chondroitin. However, in most of these foods, the levels are only at the maintenance level at best. I would much prefer that manufacturers remove glucosamine and chondroitin from the



foods to prevent overconfidence in pet owners that their pets' needs are being fulfilled. I much prefer that pet owners maintain glucosamine and chondroitin in levels that meet the needs of their pets by adding the proper amount of supplements. If you add too much they will just pass through your pet but

cost you more money. If you don't add enough your pet may develop problems in joints and muscles.

Glucosamine acts as a joint lubricant. This helps your pet to move freely and without pain. Chondroitin, or chondroitin sulfate, helps with stress injuries and recovery of damaged connective tissue caused by arthritis. The combination of the two will help senior dogs, or dogs that have suffered an injury, to have more normal activity levels.

As your dogs age they may also show changes in their behavior. They can become less tolerant, especially to children, may have some restlessness, and may develop vision or hearing problems. Weight issues can also cause problems with their heart, lungs, kidneys and liver. I highly recommend that owners feed senior dogs twice a day. Lower levels twice a day will help keep your pet from getting hungry. Use fruits and vegetables as snacks instead of biscuits as rewards or snacks. And try to give your senior some exercise. Short walks are better than no walks. Don't let your pet become a couch potato. You will be rewarded with a healthier, longer-lived friend.

Larry Jandrew has owned The Pet Source in Hendersonville since 1999. Before that, he spent decades in various capacities in pet food businesses. 🐾

Valentine cat adoption special at FUR

In the spirit of Valentine's Day and love, Feline Urgent Rescue of WNC, (FUR) volunteers will be opening the sanctuary on Saturday, February 10, from 1-4pm for a special adoption day for cats one year old and older.

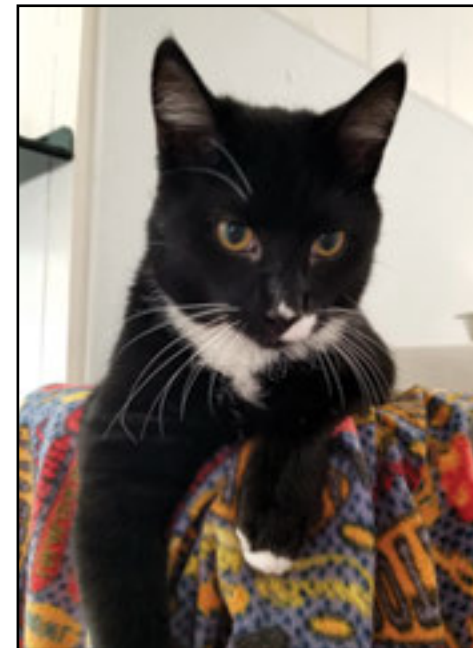
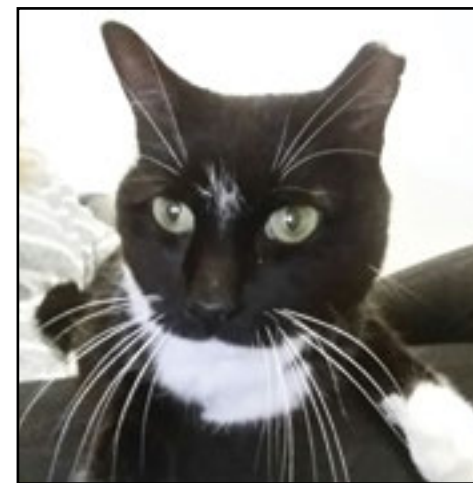
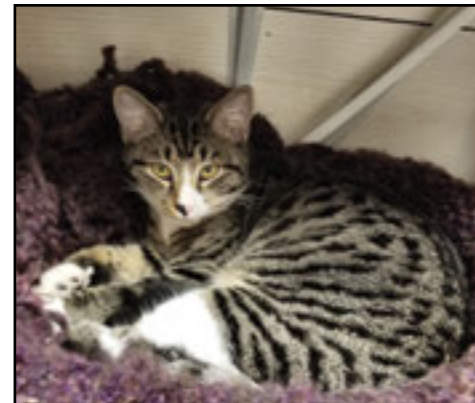
"We have many beautiful and loving older cats that will be wonderful companions for families or single people," said Shirley Oltman, adoption coordinator. "We've timed the special adoption day to help these cats become someone's forever Valentine."

Refreshments will be served and there will be door prize drawings for those opening their hearts and adopting a cat. The adoption fee will be \$35 on this day

only. There will also be kittens available to adopt for only \$20. All cats have been spayed/neutered, are current on shots, have been tested for feline leukemia and have microchips.

The FUR 2600 square foot, state certified sanctuary sits on 3.5 acres where rescued cats live in a cage free, two story haven. It is located at 38 Safe Haven Drive off of Rabbit Skin Road in Waynesville at the junction of Highway 276 and I-40 at Exit 20. One mile up the road, Safe Haven Drive is on the right.

For more information, call 1-844-888-2287 (CATS), visit furofwnw.org and see FUR'S Facebook page at facebook.com/fur.of.wnc. 🐾

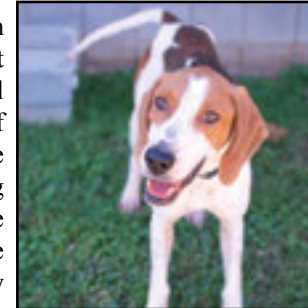


PAW plans promote healthy pets, healthy adoptions

A new program initiated at the Animal Hospital of Waynesville is helping to promote preventative veterinary care for both area pets that already have homes and homeless pets currently housed at the Haywood County Animal Shelter.

The program is called PAWS for a Cause. The practice offers its clients PAW plans, which cover preventive wellness care for their pets. And for each new enrollment in one of the plans, the practice donates to the Haywood shelter to provide some dogs and cats there awaiting adoption with their own PAWS plan. That increases the animals' chances for adoption since the expense of preventive care for them will be entirely covered by the PAWS plan.

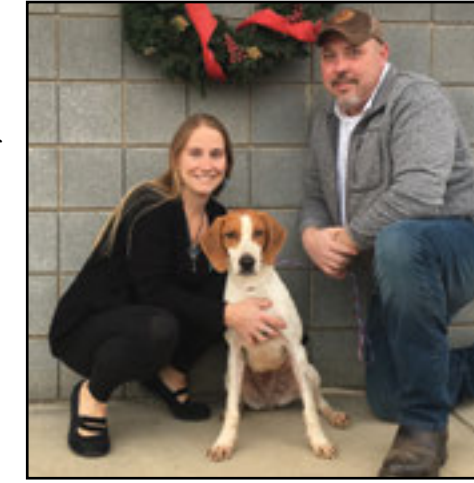
When enough donations have been collected to fund a plan, Hospital Manager Danielle Treadway, RVT, calls Doyle Teague, Director of Haywood County Animal Services. Together, they select a potentially adoptable dog or cat that might need a little extra help getting a home, whether for medical reasons, age, or just



that the pet has been at the shelter for an extended period.

The most recent canine beneficiary of a donated PAWS plan is Penny, a six year old Treeing Walker Coonhound. When she arrived at the shelter she was sick, greatly underweight, and anemic. She received a thorough examination, de-worming, and a lot of love. Now she is on her way to complete health and, hopefully, adoption by a loving family or individual.

For more information about PAWS plans, call the Animal Hospital of Waynesville at 828 456-9755 or visit their website, animalhosp.com. For more information about Penny, call the Haywood County Animal Shelter at 828 456-5388. 🐾



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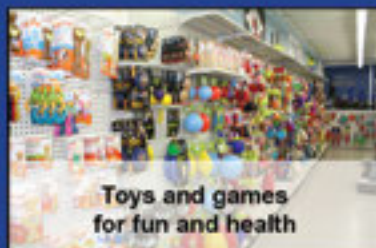
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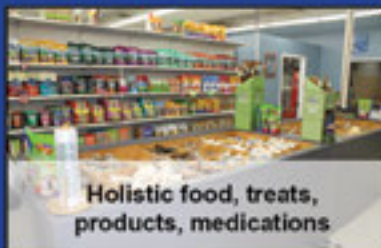
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Top 5 Reasons to Communicate with Your Pet

by Renee Takacs

*"I use the services of an Intuitive for myself,
but I never thought of it for my pet!"*

A client shared this comment with me, so I thought you might find it helpful to understand the top five reasons why people request an animal communication session: **Understand a problem** behavior; **Gain insight** into declining health; **Communicate** with pet in spirit; Explain changes in routines in home environment such as travel arrangements, adding a new pet; or **Learning about life** from your pet's perspective. Following are two examples.

Understand a Problem Behavior

One of my clients, Karen, has three cats. She was finding urine around the house where it shouldn't be, like the couch and behind her bed pillows. She needed to know who was doing this and why.

Actually two cats were the culprits. When I'm connected with an animal, I actually can smell and taste what they smell and taste. In this instance, when I was intuitively merged inside of one of the cats I sniffed the urine on the couch. I could smell the odor of an infection. When I asked who peed on the couch, one of the cats, in my mind's eye, actually raised its paw claiming responsibility. This was not the cat who Karen thought it was since she had already witnessed a different cat peeing and assumed it was the only culprit.

Learning it was actually two cats who were physically uncomfortable gave Karen more

peace of mind and the knowledge she needed to arrange appropriate care with her veterinarian.

Explain Changes Regarding Travel

Pets are used to a routine. Meals, walks, play, sleep are supposed to occur at predictable times and in established sequences. So a change in routine can be upsetting for them. A client, Anna, was going on a trip. She placed Sasha, her dog, at the familiar kennel where Sasha had stayed many times. When Anna returned to pick up Sasha, she ignored Anna and wouldn't go to her. Anna was devastated and called me to see what was wrong with Sasha.

Sasha was feeling sad, fearful and abandoned. She conveyed feeling this way before, as if this was a repeating pattern. Sasha's feelings of trust turned to distrust and distancing. Anna admitted that this was her fourth trip in one year and Sasha's fourth stay at the kennel. Typically they are like Velcro together.

The good news is that Sasha rebounded after Anna lay on the floor beside her, gently talking with her and stroking her. Sasha feels friendly and trusting again. Sometimes it's hard for a pet to understand when there is a change in routine. They can be affected, even traumatized, in ways we may not be aware. Sometimes a shift in understanding on the human's behalf can make a difference in restoring harmony in the relationship.

Animal Communicator Renee Takacs lives in Hendersonville. She blogs about pets at www.intuitguide.com and can be reached at 828-685-3231.

*"A change in routine
can be upsetting
for pets."*



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Book Review

Dog Heaven (and its companion book *Cat Heaven*) creates a wonderful world where our furry friends go when they pass from this one. There is no heartbreak here, only soothing for the heartbreak and almost a gladness that our friend is in such a wonderful place. The book is written for children, but speaks to the heart of anyone who grieves over the loss of a pet. Here are some excerpted descriptions:

From Amazon:

"In Newbery Medalist Cynthia Rylant's classic bestseller, the author comforts readers young and old who have lost a dog, as she did for cats in the bestselling companion book, *Cat Heaven*. Recommended highly by pet lovers around the world, *DOG HEAVEN* not only comforts but also brings a tear to anyone who is devoted to a pet"

From Booklist:

"... In this joyfully imagined place, God is a smiling, white-haired gentleman who watches the goings-on as dogs run and bark, play with kids, ... and sleep on fluffy clouds. It's also a place where dogs patiently wait for old friends: "They will be there at the door. Angel dogs." Rylant's kindergarten concept of the hereafter is cheerful but not humorous or glib. The story seems quietly and deeply rooted in faith, but it is neither sober nor sentimental, and the notion of a higher being is blended naturally into the text in an unpretentious, comforting way."

From Publishers Weekly:

"God knows that dogs love children more than anything else in the world." Rylant's childlike

Dog Heaven

*Written and illustrated
by Cynthia Rylant
The Blue Sky Press,
an Imprint of Scholastic Inc.*

acrylic paintings...are filled with checkerboard steps, yellow daisies and pink stars. ... "God has a sense of humor," Rylant tells us, "so He makes His biscuits in funny shapes... kitty-cat biscuits and squirrel biscuits," and "every angel who passes by has a biscuit for a dog" because "every dog becomes a good dog in Dog Heaven."

From School Library Journal:

"... There are ... clear lakes filled with teasing, honking ducks... memory trips back to favorite spots and people, and cozy homes with petting hands. Rylant uses simple, comfortable language and an abundance of careful detail to create a place of warmth and happiness. Dressed in colorful clothing and sporting an orange scarf, God is friendly and accessible; he looks after "His dogs," making sure the biscuits are appetizing and the dreams are serene. ... The reassuring story might comfort a child after the loss of a pet, but this pleasant, imaginary paradise will have a broader appeal to all animal lovers."

Rylant tells us that best of all, the dogs who have had no home on Earth are given one in Dog Heaven, with a porch and a couch and his own bowl and his own angels, "and each dog is petted and reminded how good he is, all day long".



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Living in a multi-dog household

by Trish McMillan Loehr

I remember when I went from one dog to two, more than 20 years ago. The best part of adding a second dog was that I stopped feeling so guilty when I left the house, because I knew my dog had a playmate. But I had a lot of things to learn, too.

Feeding time

This week, we have five dogs in the house: three of our own and two visitors. Do I set five bowls down side by side in the kitchen at feeding time? That's what would be easiest for me, but as a trainer I know this can be where problems start. Every dog in our house has their own spot for feeding time, behind a baby gate or in a crate. No one gets out until the slowest dog has finished eating. This means no one has to gulp down their food because another dog is trying to get it, and I have never had a fight at feeding time. I pick up all of the bowls after dinner, so there's nothing at all to cause conflict.

Chewies and food-stuffed toys

Similar rules apply for all high-value edibles. If the dogs are getting bully sticks, stuffed Kongs, or are licking out peanut butter jars, again, they each go to their designated feeding spot, with a barrier between them and all other dogs. Many dogs will guard these things as highly as they will their food bowls.

When I leave the house, each of the dogs gets a food-stuffed toy to keep them busy. All together in one room? Nope. All separated (are you sensing a theme here?)

Toys

When I bring a new dog in for training or boarding, I put all of the dog toys into the toy

box and put it away. I want to know the dogs are all comfortable with one another and the house before I bring the toys back, starting with

competitive is while being hand-fed treats. I say each dog's name as I hand them the treat. If the wrong dog grabs for it, I block them with my



"Three of our own and two visitors."

the lowest value ones. Some dogs are OK with the tug toys and stuffies, but become aggressive around antlers or real bones. And some of our visitors can't have any toys at all when other dogs are around.

Treats

Another area where dogs can get

body or hand. Grabby dogs get treats last, and polite dogs get treats first.

Gates, doors and cars

Many dogs are injured, lost or killed when they burst out a front door, a yard gate, or a car door. I teach each of our dogs (and visiting dogs) that we always wait at exits that lead to a

road. If a dog tries to zoom past me, I simply block them with my body, like a goalie (dogs will always be on leash for safety while practicing.) If a dog tries to launch themselves out of my car, I simply block with my hands or body, and place them back into the car. Even if I'm standing aside, dogs must never hop out without permission. You can either do a group "OK!" to release, or teach each dog to wait for their name before leaving important doorways.

Playtime

"My dogs sound like they're killing each other when they play!" I hear this one all the time. Dogs don't have hands, so they have to play with their mouths and their teeth, and this can be scary to watch if you don't know what you're looking for. (And sometimes, indeed there is cause for concern.) Ideally, dogs should display soft and loose body language, lots of bent elbows (play bows and playful, popping movements), and gentle play mouthing. If you're not sure if both dogs are OK with the play, take the one you think is being too rough and lead him away. If the other dog follows, begging for more, they were probably OK. If the other dog "shakes off" and walks away, you were correct to interrupt. Take a slow-mo video if you want to see how elegant and careful dogs can be with their teeth when they play.

Trish McMillan Loehr, MSc, CDBC, ACCBC, CPDT-KA, owns Loehr Animal Behavior in Weaverville, NC. To enlist her help, contact her at loehranimalbehavior.com. 🐾



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