

PetGazette

INFORMATION THAT NURTURES THE PET-PEOPLE BOND

Western North Carolina

July-August 2020

Volume 9 - Issue 4



Helping

AHS COVID response
Asheville Cat Weirdos
Cause for Big Paws
A Greyhound's Road
Hungry Paws

Health

Cat grooming
Fleas, ticks, mosquitoes

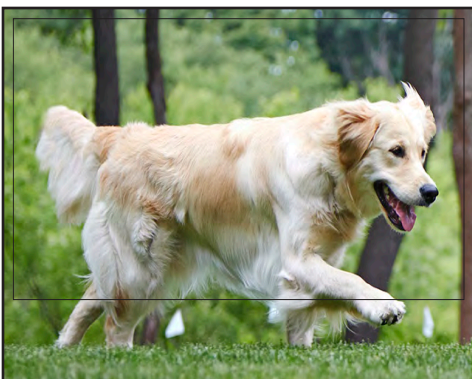
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Online training
Petsitting adventures

And furthermore...

AKC Canine Partners
Leash clip patented
Wagbar Dogs & Beer

Artistic fundraiser for big dog adoptions



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A special showing of original paintings by local artist Marsha Hammel will be held on Wednesday, July 2, from 11am until 6pm. Admission will be by ticketed reservation only and attendees will have a chance to receive an original Hammel sketch drawn on the spot.

Tickets for the dog-friendly event are \$20, with all proceeds going to the Blue Ridge Humane Society (BRHS). The event is called A Cause for Big Paws and celebrates adoptable canines weighing 50 pounds or more. It is the



**Marsha Hammel's
"Truitt's dogs."**

result of a partnership between BRHS, Barkers Anonymous and The Gallery

at Flat Rock artist Marsha Hammel. The artist and the organizations have



**"Troubador and chick magnet"
by Marsha Hammel.**

joined forces to highlight the loving big dogs at BRHS that are currently seeking forever homes.

"We wanted to draw attention to big dogs, in that big dogs are slower to be adopted than small dogs," said Hammel. "We're celebrating the joys of living with big dogs."

A Cause for Big Paws will showcase new paintings inspired by big dogs at the M.Hammel Studio at 1901 Kanuga Road, Hendersonville. Barkers Anonymous will provide treats for both humans and dogs attending the

***"Attendees may get an
original Hammel sketch
drawn on-the-spot."***

July 2 ticketed event. From July 3 through July 10 the exhibition of Hammel's big-dog-inspired paintings may be viewed only by appointment.

For tickets and reservations for the July 2 event and/or a later viewing, contact The Gallery at Flat Rock at 828-698-7000 or email info@galleryflatrock.com. The Gallery at Flat Rock represents finely curated art and craft, and is located in Flat Rock Square at 2702-A Greenville Highway in Flat Rock. Gallery hours are currently Thursdays - Sundays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; or by appointment. To learn more, please visit the gallery website at galleryflatrock.com or call the gallery at 828-698-7000. 🐾

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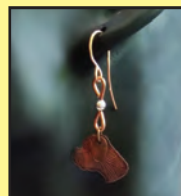
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Hungry Paws Initiative provides pet food

Inspired by his wife and a friend after organizing a regular food drive, Derek Fox, owner of the Refined Pup in Mills River, decided it was time to do something for the animals. The “something” became the Hungry Paws Initiative.

“The goal of Hungry Paws is to provide pet food for homes that have to choose between feeding themselves or their pets. We don’t want people to surrender their animals to shelters because they cannot afford them right now,” says Fox. “The fund is intended to cover the needed window until people can go back to work or who need the support to get by. Until then, it’s up to us to provide for these wonderful animals.”

Fox got to work, contacting area rescues and finding other partners. Pet Source, a Hendersonville pet supply store, jumped on board, contacting their suppliers to set up a discounted purchasing program that will make the donated funds go even further.

The fund partners with Blue Ridge

Humane Society, as both a recipient and distributor of funds and food to other rescues in the area with food support programs or that have a need in their community.

“The fund will help to set pet owners up for success and bridge the gap until folks are employed again or able to get ahead again,” said Angela Prodrick, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Humane. “This is even more vital during this time as there’s increased need as people are finding themselves in the new situation of needing help when they haven’t before, and we are here to help.”

There are several ways to donate to the fund. The Hungry Paws Initiative can be found on Facebook with an easy donation process, or online at therefinedpup.com. Donations can also be made to Blue Ridge Humane online at blueridgehumane.org or by mail to 14 Towne Place Drive, Suite 130, Hendersonville, NC 28792. Add a note designating the donation 🐾



Wagbar Opening Soon

The newest addition to the Asheville scene, Wagbar, is due to open soon and will combine two of Asheville’s passions in the same place: dogs and beer. Dogs like playing... people like beer ..., and it is Wagbar’s mission to combine both in one fun place, along with a passion to improve dog’s lives with, among other things, on-site adoption events.

Kendal Kulp, a Weaverville native and graduate of Asheville High School, is the entrepreneur behind Wagbar Dogs & Beer. “I’ve been thinking of a place like Wagbar for a long time”, he said when we visited him at the Merrimon Avenue site recently. “I’d be at a dog park waiting for the dog to get tired so we could head out for a beer - and watching everyone else do the same thing - and I thought, I wish there was something for people to do here, too.”

So Kulp scribbled his idea on a napkin, then, with a degree from Appalachian State, pursued a career in the outdoor industry. But the idea never went away, so in 2019 he put together a business plan. “When this site became available”, he said, “it was in the right place at the right time and we moved ahead.”

The “wag” in Wagbar Dog & Beer includes a 20,000 square foot outdoor off-leash fenced playground. “We


solved the worst problems with dog parks”, Kulp said, “with both health and behavior requirements”. A doggie sand box, water feature, bathing station, and drinking stations, will add to the fun. Then there are dog treats, dog accessories, doggie ice cream. What dog could ask for more?

The “bar” in Wagbar is a repurposed shipping container, crafted into a modern structure that will serve craft and domestic beer (can and tap), wine, hard cider, and non-alcoholic drinks along with coffee, light refreshments, snacks and pastry. Food trucks will be providing more substantial fare, rotating the vendor to provide different types of food. Live music from local talent will provide entertainment.

Wagbar will host fundraising and adoption events for organizations, pet charities and doggie foster parents. With every purchase, customers will receive a token to drop in a donation jar of their favorite charity, and Wagbar will make the donation.

When asked how he feels about his new venture, Kendal Kulp has a big grin when he says, “Wagbar’s tagline says it all. If I had a tail, it’d be waggin’.

Wagbar is located at 320 Merrimon Avenue in Weaverville. For more information see the website at Wagbar.com, Instagram is @Wagbar.dogparkbar; Facebook is @wagbardogpark. 🐾



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An Adopted Greyhound's Road to Home

by James Lyon

My fiancé and I have always been enamored by the grace, beauty and agility of greyhounds. They have a steady and, while most people are surprised by it, calm disposition. Over the last few years, we talked on and off about adopting a greyhound and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic recently made an opportunity available to us.

In mid-April, we read an article about the future of the greyhound race tracks in Florida and Alabama. It stated that most, if not all, would be closing to Covid-19 and that there would be an influx of retired racing dogs needing to be placed in permanent homes. That was the beginning of Dinah's (former racing name TNT Gamer) relatively short journey to her new home.

Two years ago, our beloved retriever mix Midnight had passed away at age 15 of cancer. Our home had been lacking her strong yet gentle presence. Our research, coupled with our intuition, enabled us to not replace the missing piece of our family, but to open our home and hearts to a new beginning.

Over the last several years, Ilio Canine Care worked with many wonderful students and has also gained an invaluable network of extremely well-versed dog owners. One of our clients,

Jolie, has a great deal of experience with the greyhound breed, having adopted several herself. Jolie was able to get us on the right "track" to facilitating an adoption through a group in Florida (Gold Coast Greyhound Adoptions) where Dinah was being fostered with



James Lyon and his rescued friends.

one of their volunteers. They were very thorough in finding out about us and our home and worked with us to find a match that would be best for our family. Through fate and circumstance, a little over a week after our first conversation

with Gold Coast, we found ourselves in South Georgia to meet Dinah's foster mom.

Of course, we had seen pictures and videos of Dinah, but she was even lovelier in person. She was a bit shy at first, but once we started walking with her, we felt we had met the newest member of our pack. Not only was Dinah a beauty, she was so sweet and calm that it was hard to not fall in love with her quickly!

For those who are considering adopting a greyhound, the learning curve we have experienced, even as a "dog smart" household, is important to share. When they retire from the track, most greyhounds are seeing the world through an entirely new lens. Many of them have never experienced things we do not often think much about, such as stairs and toys. This can be both exciting and possibly overwhelming at the same time. The first time Dinah saw stairs, her answer to the situation was to scale all six at once. Most adoption groups caution about homes with large flights of stairs, and rightfully so.

As you and your new greyhound companion embark on a new journey together, one common element is that their new experiences are new to you as well. You feel the joy they do when

they find out how much fun a squeaky toy is. You see their surprise when they realize that not all dogs are of their size and graceful stature.

As we take Dinah to a couple of our favorite pet stores in Hendersonville, people see her muscles and physique, and are surprised to learn that greys are sprinters, not marathon runners. They do need exercise, but their requirements are simple, such as a rigorous daily walk or some "zoomies" around their backyard. It is ideal for them to have a fenced in yard where they can run. Greyhounds flourish on routine and regularity. Dinah loves to rise at 6am each morning and "sing the song of her people" to wake up the rest of the household. If you like to sleep later, you will need to get used to an early morning wake-up call.

The road to home has no finish line on the horizon. As is often said, life is about the journey, not the destination. Our pets grow and learn from us daily – mostly how to love and trust. Every day is a new turn on the racetrack, but the loving bond you form together is the ultimate prize.

James Lyon, CPDT-KA is a professional dog trainer and owner of Ilio Canine Care.

His fiancé Kimberly Blackwell is an Accounting Manager for a law firm. 🐾

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Fighting Fleas, Ticks and Mosquitoes!

by Karel Carnohan, DVM

They are gross and annoying. Your cats and dogs are exposed to them every day, even indoors. When your vet urges you to keep your pets on flea and heartworm preventatives, she is looking out for your pet's long-term health, not just preventing itching and irritation.

Fleas, ticks and mosquitoes carry dangerous parasites – one bite can infect your cat or dog with a bug that you won't even know is there until your pet gets sick. Fleas carry tapeworm eggs. Fleas and ticks carry a variety of blood parasites such as Hemobartonella, Cytauxzoon, Hepatozoon canis, Anaplasma, Erlichia and Babesia. Lyme disease is caused by ticks carrying bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Weird sounding names, but all of these can cause life-threatening anemia, respiratory disease, lameness and other serious illnesses.

A mosquito carrying the Zika virus threatened to close the 2014 Summer Olympics. In North Carolina, mosquitoes carry the Heartworm. When a mosquito bites your pet, it transfers the larvae into your pet's blood where it travels to the heart, matures and replicates. Eventually the heart fills with worms, can no longer function, and your pet dies of heart failure.

Luckily, there are preventative medications that have been developed that are safe and effective. Dusting your pet with toxic "flea powder" has been replaced with oral and topical medications. I consider

these monthly treatments an insurance policy that can protect your pet *and* save you a lot of money; a blood test for flea and tick-transmitted diseases can cost up to \$250 and then there is the cost of treating the disease. A \$15 per month pill or spot-on is a better option.

Not all medications are created equal. Some don't work and some are downright dangerous. The new effective products are very specific in killing the flea, tick or worm. Many older products are merely pesticides that may be toxic to your pet, and you, if you contact them. One thing to remember:

NEVER USE A DOG PRODUCT ON A CAT!

Look at the label carefully because some dog products can be FATAL to a cat. There are many products that you can buy at WalMart or even at the grocery store that may not work or may be dangerous to use on your pet. (There is not a lot of regulation of pet products). Please consult your veterinarian about which products to use.

I am a big fan of the "multi products" such as Revolution and Advantage Multi. They work on fleas, heartworms, some intestinal worms and ear mites. There are no products that do everything. Frontline is not effective against fleas in North Carolina, but it is against ticks. Bayer now makes the Seresto collar that,

unlike the old flea collars, actually works against both fleas and ticks for 8 months. If using a Seresto collar, you will need to use a heartworm medication and a general dewormer regularly to get full coverage.

If you have a flea problem in your home, you must treat the environment as well as the pet. Fleas lay millions and millions of eggs. Diligently cleaning and treating carpets, bedding, and floors will help keep them from multiplying. Your dog or cat, with their medication on-board, will be a walking exterminator – when the flea bites the pet, the flea dies.

Lastly, fleas are very diligent and patient parasites -- their eggs can lay dormant for long periods, waiting for a warm-blooded host to wake them up. It is not uncommon for families and their pets to move into a new home only to set off a "flea bloom"; the previous tenants had pets with fleas leaving behind millions of eggs. Asheville winters are cold but fleas can live under porches, in sheltered sheds and on the squirrels that hop onto your deck. These are reasons I recommend keeping your pets on flea preventatives all year long.

After a long career in finance, Dr. Carnohan returned to school and graduated from the Kansas State College of Veterinary Medicine at the tender age of 50. She bought the Cat Care Clinic of Asheville in August 2013. The article above is reprinted from the July-August 2016 issue of PetGazette.



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Adventures in Petsitting

by Julie Davis

Tavi is a very independent tabby cat who loves being outside to roam and do as he pleases. His humans allow him to do this in the daytime when weather permits. On my first visit, after feeding everyone, I opened the front door to take the dog for a walk and Tavi ran outside. That wasn't surprising since I knew he was an indoor/outdoor cat. What surprised me was that as I started walking down the street with Harley, the dog, Tavi followed. Tavi walked along with us for close to half a mile. When Harley would stop to sniff something or go potty, Tavi would stop too. I've never seen a cat do that before. And, a couple of times when we stopped, Tavi and Harley touched noses and Tavi rubbed up against Harley. It was heartwarming to watch these two animals who clearly love each other. And Tavi continues to walk with us when I take Harley for walks, not every time, just when he wants to. In my opinion, Tavi is one cool cat!

I walk two Westies, a brother and sister, who surprised me shortly after I started taking them for mid-day walks when they started looking up in the sky and barking. At first, I didn't know what they were barking at and

didn't see anything up above. Then I noticed a hawk flying overhead. It took me a minute to realize that the dogs were barking at the hawk. It surprised me because the bird wasn't flying low or close to us. This was a new one on me. I hadn't seen a dog bark at birds before. When I mentioned it to their human, she commented that they don't like hawks, crows, or airplanes. I have

since experienced them barking at airplanes flying overhead as well as multiple birds. They continue to tickle my funny bone. One of the things I've learned about animals from my experiences with those I've cared for is that they all have their own personalities and idiosyncrasies just as people do.

Julie Davis, petsitter, with some of her charges.



AKC Canine Partners Anniversary

by Elizabeth A. Brown

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is celebrating the tenth anniversary of its Canine Partners program.

It was developed to welcome mixed-breed dogs and other dogs not eligible for AKC Purebred Registration, and their owners, into the AKC family. It promotes the strengthening of the human-canine bond by encouraging training, responsible dog ownership and pet owner education.

As of June 2020, more than 420,000 dogs and their owners have participated in the program. They have earned more than 21,000 AKC titles in Companion Events categories, including Agility, Tracking, Rally and Obedience. The fee for the program is \$35. The benefits include:

- AKC Canine Partners Program Official Certificate and ID number
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Elizabeth A. Brown, CPA, is the Hendersonville Kennel Club delegate to the American Kennel Club.





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A Cat Groomer Speaks

by Dawn Falzone, CFMG

About a week ago, I was finally able to get my haircut after the quarantine. I have never been so excited about getting my locks cut... but truth is, not only was I better groomed, but more comfortable.

Animals are no different. Certain dog breeds get groomed every 4-6 weeks, but not many people think about cats when it comes to grooming. But certain feline breeds do

benefit from a nice groom. Whether it be because of the breed, its age, or its weight, cats also can enjoy the comfort of being clean.

So how would you know if your cat needs grooming? First let us start with the breeds that have long hair. Ragdolls, Persians, Himalayans, and of course... Maine Coons!! We also find some kitties who lick themselves

excessively, causing them to vomit hair balls on a regular basis. Or maybe it is a senior citizen who has stopped grooming themselves. Another common case are animals with furry rear ends that are collecting deposits from the litter box. All of these cases make them an excellent candidate for grooming.

Other common "grooming-needed" issues are dry skin, oily skin and dandruff. Just like humans, cats can have skin conditions that lead to discomfort. Regular treatment for poor skin or hair can keep these issues at bay and lead to our four legged companions being happier and

healthier.

The last topic we see on a regular basis is more about human health, both physical and mental. NAILS!! Anyone who is ever had an animal knows that nails can be a weapon. They can pierce our skin, and destroy our

furniture. Keeping a cats' nails clipped helps keep us safe. And if you want to combat your furniture taking the brunt of the damage, consider adding soft paws to your cats' nails.

Soft paws nail caps from the conveniently named Company, Soft Paws, and come in many different colors from translucent to the hysterical glow in the dark version.

They go on with glue and stay on for a few months as long as they stay dry. They allow your kitty to scratch until their heart is content without sacrificing your couch.

The costs for all the above services can range from \$10-\$100 depending on a few variables including temperament, coat, and age. It's best to find a groomer who has experience with cats since their skin is very delicate and most felines don't care for the process.

Good luck with your search and enjoy your cat's new haircut.

Dawn Falzone is a Certified Feline Master Groomer with 12 years' experience. She grooms cats on Kitty Mondays, dogs the rest of the work week at The Refined Pup Pet Boutique in Horse Shoe.



A cat, well groomed.

*"...nails can be
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Getting to Know Your Local Rescues

Asheville Cat Weirdos

With a name like Cat Weirdos, one might think of a pop cult movement. Stereotypical little old ladies in houses filled with way too many cats and with eclectic tastes in just about everything. Make no mistake, that is certainly not the case here.

***“Its Non-profit
Emergency Fund
sets ACW apart..”***

The Asheville Cat Weirdos—or ACW as they are collectively called—is a unique band of people who came together for a common love of cats, and in the process have created a specialized niche for particular needs in the community. There are many groups in the area who provide cat rescue, but the ACW does something different that sets them apart.

Their beginnings started in March 2016, when founder Victoria Colt just wanted to form an online group to share kitty photos, laughs, and support. Since that time, they have grown into a powerful online community. Its Non-profit Emergency Fund sets ACW apart. This is a 100% donation-based community program. The group is classified by the IRS as 501(C)(3) and donations are tax-deductible.

The funds help cat owners with unexpected and life-threatening veterinary costs, and cover non-routine events such as hit by cars/amputations, blockages, skin infections, Etc.... There is also a food pantry, which offers cat food and litter to those in need. There are online forms to fill out and submit a request for either veterinary assistance or food pantry items of food and litter, each specific to one's situation and needs.

The sales of calendars, stickers, car decals, and clothing with the ACW logo are offered on the emergency fund's website, and this goes to fund veterinary assistance and food pantry items. Local retail partners who carry merchandise in their stores include Patten Ave Pet Co., Asheville Pet Supply, West Side Shears, and Mountain Pet Rescue. Secure online donations can also be made on the fund's website via PayPal or credit card. Amazon

Smile is additionally a source of funding.

The ACW do not offer adoptions, instead they focus on current pet retention. They have a spay/neuter piece of the emergency fund which is the only grant-supported aspect to the emergency fund. Because the spay/neuter is grant-provided, there are criteria that must be met.


Education is the driving force with the group. They want people to be the best cat-parents as possible, help keep cats retained in their homes, provide the services and supplies as needed and still share cute cat pics, laughs, and support.

The ACW Facebook group page, which features cute kitties and sappy stories, can be found at facebook.com/groups/AshevilleCatWeirdos. There is a direct link from there to the non-profit Emergency Fund website or it can be accessed via Facebook @ ACWEF or directly at ashevillecatweirdos.org.



**Some of the ACW
merchandise available**

Ryan Jo Summers is a local author and an animal advocate. She has worked in the professional pet care industry for more than thirty years in both business and non-profit sectors. Her home is a haven to a menagerie of rescued animals of various species. To find out more about Ryan's writing and her pets, visit her website at ryanjosummers.com or her Facebook pages [Facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor](https://facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor) and facebook.com/ryanjosummers.

“Getting to Know Your Local Rescues” is an on-going series highlighting WNC animal rescue groups. Any organization interested in being featured is invited to contact Ryan Jo at ryanjosummers.com and use the ‘Contact’ tab. 

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Hurray for Virtual Dog Training

by Kathryn R. Gubista

Are your pup's poor manners driving you crazy? Do you dream of fun walks with your dog, but your reality is a stressful tug-of-war episode as you get dragged down the street? Is your dog's separation anxiety a major worry of yours, especially in the age of COVID-19?

Seeking the help of a professional trainer is often the fastest, most effective way to solve your dog's issues. However, social distancing restrictions to mitigate COVID-19 have placed huge obstacles on dog training classes. For example, in-person private sessions and group classes have become limited resources and may remain limited for some time to come. So, are there viable options to dog training that do not require in-person sessions?

You always have other options.

Of course! You always have other options! And, some of these other options may be better alternatives to traditional, in-person classes. In the "digital age" of human history, virtual/online training is not only a logical alternative, but may be the wave of the future because it allows you to learn from the convenience and safety of your home.

The main disadvantage.

Unfortunately, virtual dog training does have a few disadvantages. The biggest obstacle is the trainer's inability to touch your dog. This is particularly significant for us at Lucky Dog because our training approach relies heavily on physical petting and verbal praise as our main reward. However, online training gives us the opportunity to teach you how to be your dog's handler, which encourages you to pet your dog even more than you do now!

All the advantages.

The advantages of virtual dog training far outweigh the disadvantages and include ease and convenience of training from home and around your schedule. It also provides the opportunity to record your training sessions for future review. In addition, a major advantage is the dog's inability to "sense" (i.e., smell) the trainer's presence. This eliminates distractions and allows the trainer to become the proverbial "fly on the wall." It also allows the trainer to observe your dog's behavior in their natural, unobstructed environment.

How online training works.

Online dog training is quite simple. If you


have an Internet connection on your computer and/or cell phone, you are all set! You don't need any fancy equipment! Your trainer will provide the meeting platform (e.g., Zoom, Go to Meeting) that they prefer to use and luckily, if you learn one online meeting platform, you will quickly learn they are all very similar. Once you login, you will be face-to-face with your trainer. Private online training sessions are basically the same as in-person sessions. You chat directly with the trainer and practice training skills with your dog while the trainer observes. As trainers, we typically demonstrate skills with one of our dogs, so that you will develop a mental image of your training goals. And, to continue training after we logout of our online sessions, we record all training sessions for later review.

The virtual dog.

Our online training program is THE VIRTUAL DOG. Along with private sessions, our online program includes monthly group sessions. These allow you to meet other clients and learn from their training experiences. In addition, our online clients have access to our online training library that provides a treasure trove of dog training videos. We are adding new training videos constantly, so you will always have new learning resources.

Beyond virtual.

Online training is a good way to go, especially these days. But it isn't the only way. At LUCKY DOG TRAINING ASHEVILLE, you always have other options to achieve your desired training results. Along with our online program, we also offer our board and train (B&T) program, which includes all the features of THE VIRTUAL DOG program. During B&T, we are able to quickly remedy manners, obedience, behavioral and socialization issues as your dog trains with our Muttley Crew of well-trained, well-behaved dogs. The B&T option can quickly solve your dog's issues and make your life much easier.

Kathryn R. Gubista, PhD is an evolutionary biologist, college biology instructor, former zookeeper, author and certified professional dog trainer with Lucky Dog Training Asheville. Please follow us on Instagram @LuckyDogTrainingAVL and @KyroRenPup. Please contact us for more information at TrainingLuckyDogs@gmail.com or call us at 828-423-9635. 

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Area Couple Patents a Safer Leash Latch

Bert and Connie de Bien of Hendersonville have developed and patented a new magnetic leash latch that is both more secure and easier to use.

The couple, who used to breed Rottweilers, realized the need for a better leash latch when their own pet Rottie, Ben, got loose at a busy intersection. He twisted and turned in such a way that the leash clip opened and he was unleashed. Fortunately, he didn't get hurt, but the defects of conventional leash latches became obvious. So the couple went to work.

Over a period of two years and through several prototypes, what has now officially become the Nifti SafeLatch Pet Safety Leash - Nifti for short - was created. They realized that the snap bolt in existing leash latches - based on a patent from the 1800s - had a potentially tragic flaw: the bolt just touched the tip of the latch's hook, so the bolt could move from side to side. And that movement, in turn, could cause the spring holding the bolt in place to weaken and eventually fail, literally letting the dog off the hook. That's what happened to Ben and what the de Biens wanted to prevent happening to other dogs.

So the deBiens designed the Nifti with a bolt that slides *into* the hook, not just against it. They also built a high-power magnet into the hook, to hold the bolt even more securely. The result is a latch that will

keep a dog leashed regardless of its twists and turns.

The magnet in the Nifti makes it easier to use as well as safer. That's because the magnet in the Nifti attracts the D-ring. Instead of laying flat against the dog's collar, the D-ring stands up, making it much easier to get the latch hook under it and the bolt safely seated into the hook. Users will know their dog is securely hooked up because they will hear a click when the leash is connected.

Connie deBien pointed out that the Nifti has an easy-to-use thumb lever that keeps fingers from being pinched. She also said that it can even be easily used while wearing thick winter gloves.

Once the product was developed to their satisfaction, the deBiens applied for a patent. Connie deBien said that getting the patent approved wasn't quick and easy, but was also not as difficult or lengthy a process as they had feared. She credited their patent attorney for making the process as comfortable as possible, and the result was that the deBiens are now proud owners of Magnetic Snap Latch US Patent #9206836B2.

The Nifti Safe Latch Pet Safety Leash has now begun distribution for dog owners who want to be sure their dogs won't accidentally get off the leash. It is available in most Hendersonville pet shops, online at Amazon, or at www.NiftiSafeLatch.com. 



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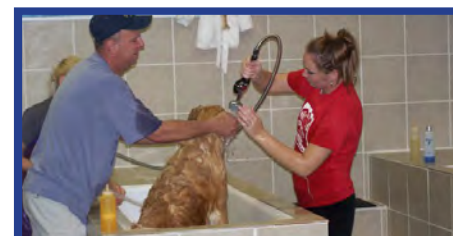
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Humane Society all-hands-on-deck emergency actions save 375 pets

Editor's note: The following is the response PetGazette got from Asheville Humane Society Executive Director Jody Evans when we asked how her staff and the community had responded to the COVID-19 crisis.

As the Corona Virus made its way from China to the United States the leadership team at Asheville Humane knew we needed to prepare ourselves for the worst-case scenario. At the time, no one knew a lot about how Covid-19 was transmitted and if animals could be carriers of the virus. We knew we had to be prepared for almost anything to happen.

In early March, we did an extensive emergency-scenario planning session that helped us write a Covid-19 Emergency Preparedness plan in less than a week. A key part of that plan was to reduce the population of animals at our Animal Care Campus in anticipation of a closure and also to prepare the facility for a possible influx of animals that may or may not be coming from COVID-infected situations. We wanted to ensure we would have the space to accommodate animals that might continue to come in through Animal Control. Additionally, we wanted to protect staff and ensure consistent care for the animals that remained on campus by moving to a two-team staffing schedule, cutting our caretakers in half.

Over the years, a committed group of volunteer families have provided invaluable care and love for animals from Asheville Humane while we searched to place them with their forever families. We hoped we could maybe bring in a few new volunteers to move more animals off site. Little did we know when we posted our emergency foster plea on March 18th that 645 new people would respond!

As a result, we placed 244 cats and kittens, 112 dogs and puppies, 17 rabbits and 2 chickens into foster care. Fifty-two of those foster parents chose to adopt their foster pets! And an additional 26 foster families decided to become Adoption Ambassadors, which means their foster pet will stay in their home until they are adopted! Many of our emergency foster parents had never fostered a pet before, and we were thrilled to have them be part of our team! We had so many applicants that we were able to refer many people to other local shelters that also needed foster help.

We focused on animals who were easy to place, as they would be the ones most likely to blend into a foster home quickly, and would require the least amount of follow-up from our behavior and foster teams. This resulted in allowing the behavior staff and caretakers to give those animals who remained on campus one-on-one attention and enrichment.

The silver lining of reducing our on-

campus population was the time our staff was able to spend with the dogs who remained on campus. Our behavior team resolved many behavior issues and increased the quality of life for those animals, but also increased their chances of being adopted more quickly than they would have before receiving the extra training, attention and loving care.

Our foster department is normally staffed by two people, but with the amount of applications and animals we placed in such a short period of time, we needed all hands on deck. The applications had to be processed and the animals and foster parents needed to be matched. Appointments for animal pick-ups had to be made and then managed and all animals had to get the medical and preventative care needed before leaving. We also needed to make sure the foster families who were taking animals with medical conditions received the support they needed to properly take care of the animal. When someone fosters an animal, Asheville Humane provides everything the animal may need from food and bedding to crates and litter. Every single department pitched in to help from our Behavior and Adoptions teams to our intake and administrative staff. We also had a group of volunteers who worked at home to help us manage the process.

While a global pandemic isn't something we would ever want to happen again, we did learn a lot about ourselves. We had to think on our feet, make quick and decisive decisions, and make sure the entire AHS team – staff and board – knew exactly what was happening at all times. Information was changing quickly and we needed to maintain our operations and provide the best possible care for the animals, but we also had to make sure our team stayed healthy and strong both physically and mentally. We've already discussed what worked, what didn't and how we would approach the situation again applying what we learned.

We were so fortunate that everyone at AHS really stepped up when we found out that COVID was going to impact AHS and Western NC! Our staff is always ready to act during emergencies, and are fantastic at figuring things out and making things work at a moment's notice.

I am so incredibly proud of how this group of individuals pulled together and handled this emergency with grace. They were flexible, creative and really pushed themselves to think outside the box. They worked hard and cared for each other, as well as the animals, and were even able to have a sense of humor through the whole ordeal.

Best,
Jody

