

SE Minnesota's Premier Animal Magazine

Fall 2014

# wagazine

wags, whines, paws, hooves and fins

## ON THE HUNT

Flushers  
and pointers  
and retrievers,  
oh my

## UNDER THE SHELL

Tortoise with  
a fan club

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*Top Cat*  
**TIMBA**

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# wagazine

wags, whiskers, hooves and fins



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**W**ith pets, life seems to be in constant motion. If we're not taking them places, they're taking us outside every few hours to potty and play. Or they're walking across our keyboards for attention. Or demanding that we feed them, as their internal clocks never lie.

**CHANGE OF SEASONS** When the season changes over to fall, our pet-related activities change. Our thoughts (and our kids) return to school, and the Wagazine is excited to feature some dogs who are also returning to school and to the public library to assist with elementary reading (see pages 16 and 18).

As hunters dust off their camouflage, their canine hunting companions can sense the change in the air with palpable anticipation. Our "On the Hunt" story on page 13 discusses the three types of hunting dogs and showcases a hunter and his partner in the field, Deus.

**SEASONS OF LIFE** Pets provide us with such joy during their short lives. When it's time to say goodbye, we want to make the right decisions at the right time. We are proud to present three stories about this important time: photographed joy sessions, preparing for your pet's last days and the business of cremation and custom pet urns.

**TOP CAT** In Minnesota, there are more cats (1.3 million) than dogs (900,000), according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. One of those Minnesota cats lives in Rochester, but he's no ordinary cat. At age 2, Timba is a retired show cat, having earned the title of the Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) 2013–2014 Sixth Best Cat in Premiership. Read about his exciting career on p. 20.

**Yes, we in southeast Minnesota are busy with our amazing animals.** Whether you're reading, hunting, showing, playing or lounging with your pets, keep sharing your stories with us.

*Ellington*

*Congratulations*



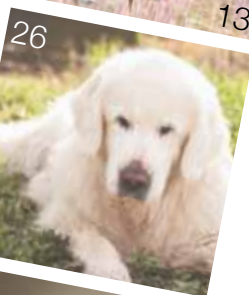
PENNY & GARY

*We, Cloe and Baxter, would like to announce the marriage of our parents, Penny Marshall and Gary Lex. They went to Las Vegas and got married while we stayed at the kennel and made new friends. Not sure what Las Vegas is or what they did there, but with all our play times we're pretty sure we had more fun. We do know that Mom came back with a ring on her left paw, names have changed, and we are one very blessed and happy pack! WOOF, WOOF.*

16



13



26



20

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send us pictures, stories and questions about the wags, whiskers, hooves or fins in your family!



Kelvin, Kate, Penny, Mike and Ellie.





*FAR LEFT:* Louie is a 4-year-old Lhasa. *LEFT:* Rin is a 5-year-old Lhasa. Mama's boys.  
~ Terri Schlichenmeyer



*RIGHT:* Gizmo is all about having fun and helping others. He rides on a motorcycle to visit veterans and others in this area to give them a smile.

He knows over 20 tricks, has gone 48K miles on the bike in 3 years, and has over 200 visits with veterans and others.

He is now helping in matching veterans with dogs from Minn. dog rescues. We started working with TDInc (Therapy Dogs Inc.) and are able to register dogs for therapy starting this November

**[www.gizmohelpingothers.org](http://www.gizmohelpingothers.org)**

~ Dave Soderberg



# Pets on Parade

Want to see your pet in print?  
Send photos to [kate@thewagazine.com](mailto:kate@thewagazine.com).



Derek and Amanda Westby with their male and female boxers, Tweak and Tizzy at their spring wedding May 24 at the Mayowood Stone Barn in Rochester. *Photographer: The Moments of Life. Rochester, MN*  
~ Amanda Westby



Daisy, 3, is a Soft Wheaten Terrier who will always be a fun, loving, happy puppy at heart. Her favorite thing in the summer is playing in the water! Here she is relaxing in her puppy pool at home and on Lake Mille Lacs over the 4th of July.

~ Brianna Elwood

Stinky the cat, 14, is thrilled to finally see a cat on the cover of the Wagazine. But supervising Wagazine designer, Kate Brue, is tiring work. Luckily this desk drawer has a pull out bed.

~ Kate Brue



Leo, a Bengal, perfecting the art of relaxation.

~ Shari Jarett



## In Loving Memory...

Chloe, owned by Pam and Ron Knoll, was a therapy dog for Seasons Hospice and a store greeter at Hight & Randall Personal Jeweler. She had a way of sensing if people needed a little extra TLC. She passed away doing what she loved, playing ball. I would recommend all people to check your deck railing height if you have small dogs. Chloe, while chasing her ball, slid right under our railing.

~ Pamela Knoll

*"If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever."*



# { Halloween }

{ candid canines }



2-year-old Kobe is a Jack Russell/Puggle mix, plus part pirate!  
~ Blair Cronk



This is Reba Ray, a 7-year-old Australian Shepherd, in her peacock costume. I had a stray peacock show up at my house so I thought this would make him feel more at home if he saw another peacock!  
~ Tami Jones



Me and my 8-year-old long haired Chihuahua, Prada, as a pregnant zombie!  
~ Sarah Rymarkiewicz

## AVOIDING PET PERILS OF



by Penny Lex

**Many people delight in sharing festivities with their pets,** but the elements of some holiday activities can pose dangers to their companions. Over the Christmas holidays, it's chocolate fare and plants; fireworks on the Fourth of July; then Halloween arrives with its own scary lot of potential hazards.



**Here are some tips to keep your pet SAFE AND STRESS FREE during the hoopla of HALLOWEEN:**

- **Remind everyone in your home** to keep candy, treats and wrappers out of the reach of pets. Some goodies may be toxic to animals, including chocolate and some artificial sweeteners.
- **Watch out for wrappers.** Discarded candy wrappers and sticks from lollies can cause choking, obstructed airways and internal blockages. Make sure they're not accessible even after they've been thrown away (in an open-top waste basket, for example).
- **Keep your pets where they are most comfortable.** If they're not used to being around children or guests, don't force them to engage.
- **Take precaution so your pet doesn't** dash out the door when opening frequently for trick-or-treaters. Use a baby gate or confine your pet to another room.
- **Even a pet that is used to an** occasionally ringing doorbell might react differently or become stressed when there's someone at the door every few minutes.
- **Beware of glow sticks and glow jewelry.** They are foul tasting and may cause GI upset.
- **Even if they know the person, pets** can be frightened by people in costumes and may react differently than normal. For example, while Beufort the Boxer might be best friends with little Suzy from down the street, he might growl or be frightened when Suzy comes to the door dressed as a zombie.
- **Animals in costumes can be cute,** but be aware of safety issues. Don't leave your dressed-up pet unattended. Accidents can easily happen by tripping, choking or getting costumes caught on something.
- **Try on costumes ahead of time so** your pet can get used to the feel and fit. Make sure he can easily move, see and hear. Watch for possible allergic reactions to fabrics and accessories as well. If your pet is obviously uncomfortable or afraid, don't force him to wear the costume.
- **If your pet has a hankering for** decorations such as pumpkins or corn, keep them away. Large consumptions can cause serious illness.
- **Watch out for jack-o-lanterns,** candle flames, swishing tails and the potential for fire and burns.
- **If trick-or-treating with the family,** be sure your pet dons reflective gear.
- **Sadly, there are pranksters who** prey on cats during the Halloween holidays, so best to confine your feline for days before, during and after the spooky time.
- **Don't leave your pet outside and** unattended.
- **Assess for stress.** If Fluffy or Scruffy appear to be scared, uncomfortable or anxious, put them in a safe, tranquil environment until the activities subside.
- **Educate children so they're aware of** your pets safety needs too.
- **Always, always, always make sure** your pet is wearing an ID. 



# ANIMALWONDERS

Got a question or something you've always wondered about? Send **WONDER WOMAN** an email at [wonders@thewagazine.com](mailto:wonders@thewagazine.com) and watch for her response in an upcoming issue.

**DEAR WONDER WOMAN:** We recently purchased a small farm and would like to get a horse or two. Is there something for horses similar to dog and cat rescues? Is adopting a horse even possible, and are there such things as horse shelters?



**WW:** What a wonderful idea, and fortunately yes, such groups do exist. Check out [www.horse.rescueshelter.com](http://www.horse.rescueshelter.com). The horse adoption process for some organizations is much like that of other animal adoptions in that you must complete an application, be approved and may pay a fee. Note that there are equestrian rescue groups seeking foster homes and animal sponsorship as well.



**DEAR WONDER WOMAN:** I recently started brushing my 2-year-old Fox Terrier's teeth and surprisingly, she doesn't seem to mind. I bought some canine toothpaste at the pet store, but is there some reason that I can't use the same toothpaste that I use when I brush for Foxy?

**WW:** Best not since non-fluoride toothpaste is recommended for dogs and most people-paste has that ingredient. "Pets are like kids in that they swallow the toothpaste instead of spitting it out," says Ann Anderson, DVM, Quarry Hill Park Animal Hospital. "Swallowing fluoride paste can irritate the animal's stomach."



**DEAR WONDER WOMAN:** Our dog was diagnosed with bladder stones. The vet recommended a dog food specifically for canine urinary problems but I'm wondering if there aren't alternative, healthier foods we could be giving her.

**WW:** A high-quality diet is important in good health and even more so during ailments and when trying to fight infection and heal. As explained by Brad Treder, DVM, Northern Valley Animal Clinic, "the prescription food most recommended by veterinarians is the result of 30-plus years of research. It's a precise diet and doesn't vary from batch to batch. This type of feeding assures vets that the animal is getting the correct quantity of appropriate vitamins and minerals for their bladder ailments." That's particularly important because the last thing you want with bladder stones is food with too many minerals. Dr. Treder recommends the prescription food as the "gold standard" fare for specific health concerns and calls it an "incredibly good, quality diet and very healthy."







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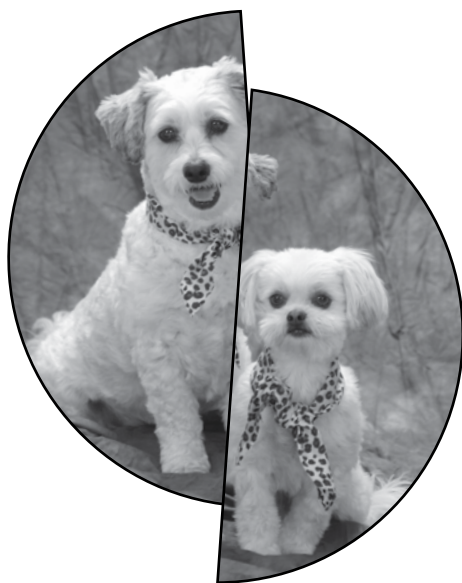
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# HAPPY HOUNDS

## The Dos and Don'ts of Introducing a New Dog to Your Home

By Nicole Czarnomski

Photography by Kelvin Andow

**“W**hen you bring home a new dog, you need to view it from the dog's perspective,” says Lisa Pearse, a self-taught dog behavior specialist with 37 years of training and rehabilitation experience. The dog is usually nervous and is looking for direction. He needs to understand who to take direction from.

So clear your schedule and bring home the new pooch when you have a few days to devote to him or her. Use this time to establish a routine.

### DOGGIE DOS

#### Set the rules of the household.

“This isn't the time to ask the dog to sit or stay, but it's the time to layout the boundaries,” Pearse says. For example, if you don't want your dog to bark when the doorbell rings, now is the time to let the dog know what's right and wrong.

**Supervise exploration.** Let your new puppy or dog explore his new home and keep a watchful eye on him at all times. He needs to know where he can roam. If you don't want the new pooch in your bedroom, keep the door closed or put up a gate to close off the room.

**Make introductions.** Introduce your new puppy to your longtime fur friend in small doses. The constant energy of a new puppy overwhelms an older, more sedate dog. In the beginning, constant supervision is a must. “How long you need to supervise them really depends on their ages, energy levels and personalities,” says Tekla Viker, dog trainer at Leashes and Leads.

**Keep it neutral.** If you choose to adopt an adult dog and you already own an adult dog, bring home a dog with a similar personality and introduce them on neutral territory.

Let your longtime fur friend serve as a trainer to the new fur kid. Let your new pooch pick up mannerisms from your older pooch.

### DOGGIE DON'TS

**Don't ignore insecurity.** Don't bring home a new puppy if you have an insecure or shy dog at home. Pearse says to consult a professional in this case.

**Don't play favorites.** “It's really important that you spend one on one time with each dog. Your current dog will appreciate the attention with you, and your new dog needs to learn to trust you, bond with you,” says Viker.

#### Don't give up on the new pooch if things get off on the wrong paw.

Janet McCollough likes the idea of having two dogs, so when her 15-year-old Shih Tzu, Cabo, passed away, she started searching for a new pooch to pal around with her other dog, Joey, a Shih Tzu Bichon mix.

Unfortunately, Joey didn't share the same enthusiasm for the new pup. Joey was aggressive towards Riegley, the new Shih Tzu Poodle mix.

“Joey attacked Riegley and I had to take him to the emergency room,” says McCollough. The aggressive behavior continued, so McCollough consulted Michael Morath, DVM, in Plainview.

Morath recommended doggie downers for Joey, the aggressor, because he was most likely grieving for his pal, Cabo. At first, McCollough was adamantly against doggie downers, but Morath assured her that it would be temporary and Joey wouldn't be lethargic from the dosage.


McCollough agreed and continued to keep a careful eye on the two pooches. And, when Riegley was old enough, McCollough had him neutered, also at the recommendation of Morath.

She was consistent with her training and praised both animals too. She made each one feel welcome and loved in her home. And before long, McCollough said the pooches became pals.



Joey and Riegley are now pals.

### HAPPILY EVER AFTER

To ensure you're getting the best fit for your household, make sure all family members are ready to love and take on the responsibilities of a new dog or puppy. All breeds of dogs have different personalities, so do your research and find one that fits with your family. Enjoy your new dog for who he is, and provide the guidance he needs to become a lifelong companion. 

*Next issue: Introducing a cat to your home.*

*Nicole L. Czarnomski is a freelance writer.*



# PRAIRIE'S EDGE humane society



By Allison Croat | Photography by Bridgette Hallcock



Left to right: Christine gave birth to her kittens at the shelter. Kathy Jasnoch, executive director, with Holly. Some of the available dogs at an event. Sandy Vesledahl, business operations manager, with her foster dog, Sooner.

## ESTABLISHED: 1985

**LOCATION:** 680 Professional Drive, Northfield, with many foster homes around the area

**MISSION:** To promote the value of animals through care and education

[www.prairiesedgehs.org](http://www.prairiesedgehs.org)

## WHO THEY ARE:

Prairie's Edge is a non-profit, volunteer- and foster-based shelter, taking in animals of all kinds: dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and more. They take in animals from greater Rice County and the surrounding areas, and are funded mainly through private donations, grants and funds raised from events.

## PASSION:

In addition to treating and finding homes for their animals, Prairie's Edge works to "educate the public in prevention of animal homelessness and neglect," says Sandy

Vesledahl, business operations manager and former volunteer. "We facilitate low-cost spay and neuter programs in order to reduce pet overpopulation; we educate the public in responsible pet ownership and provide a safe haven for animals in need."

## IN ACTION:

Recently relocated, the new shelter doesn't house dogs anymore; dogs are placed immediately into foster homes as it is healthier for them. The new shelter houses about 60 cats and kittens, which are easy for the public to access, allowing for quicker adoption times.

## VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT:

"We currently have a volunteer base of 65 people who help in various roles," says Vesledahl, "including working at events, helping with mailings, caring for the animals, socializing animals and helping remodel our new facility."


Prairie's Edge was able to take advantage of its new Northfield location and increase its volunteer base by tapping in to Carleton and St. Olaf colleges.

## BY THE NUMBERS:

Prairie's Edge helps an average

of 1,000 animals per year and has a save rate of 90 percent.

## HOW TO HELP:

Volunteer, foster or donate. Donations can be made online, by mail, or by attending one of Prairie Edge's fundraising events. Fostering is paid for by the shelter; all you need to do is open your home. Contact them at 507-664-1035 or [info@prairiesedgehs.org](mailto:info@prairiesedgehs.org). 

*Allison Croat is a local editor and freelance writer who spends most of her time playing with her rescue cat Sylvia.*



# Vanity Fur Lisa Pearce

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# On the HUNT

Flushers and pointers and retrievers, oh my

By Allison Croat

Photography by Kelvin Andow

**There's nothing better** than doing an activity with your best friend. It's even better when you can enjoy it with your dog. Hunting is one activity both you and your dog can enjoy, as long as your canine buddy is properly trained and is safe while in the field.

## HUNTING STYLES

There are three main hunting dogs: flushers, pointers and retrievers. Some breeds are better suited to specific hunting types.

Flushers are immediate-action dogs. Their job is to rush into the field to stir up the animal so the hunter can spot and shoot it. Pointers, on the other hand, go rigid when they spot their prey, using their entire body to point out the animal to you. Both flushers and pointers are trained to do the work before you shoot your prey.

Retrievers go to work once the prey has been shot. Essentially, they are trained to play fetch and bring the animal back to you. Their skill lies in the ability to have a soft mouth, meaning they do not damage the animal upon retrieval.

Tim Kelly, avid hunter and owner of Deus, an American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon, has worked with both flushers and pointers. His first dog was a flusher. Though he had a good temperament, pointing was what Kelly wanted.



## POSITIVE TRAITS

When he was choosing a breed for hunting, Kelly relied on recommendations from other hunters. “A friend of mine owned an English Wirehaired Griffon and he swore by them,” he recalls. “Their temperament and intelligence is very impressive. They are an all-purpose breed, and an incredible bird dog.” For Kelly, genetic instinct in a dog was important, as his large family leaves him little time to train.

Other important traits in canine hunters include obedience, intelligence and drive. “A good nose is a plus,” he notes, “along with a general like for finding things.”

In working with a pointer, Kelly says the dog’s ability to lock its body in place when on point is crucial, so as not to “bust the bird.” This allows the hunter to set himself for when the bird takes flight.

Inga From, on the other hand, relies on her Labrador for retrieval purposes. From, a certified dog behavior consultant (CDBC) and certified professional dog trainer (CPDT), is founder of and trainer for Positive Gun Dogs Minnesota ([www.positivegundogsminn.com](http://www.positivegundogsminn.com)), an alternative training business. From works closely with her enthusiastic dog in the field and takes an almost holistic approach to hunting.

“Necessary hunting traits in a dog depend on your expectations,” she says. Determining factors include what kind of hunting you will be doing and what type of dog you may already have. “Use your dog’s natural talents to your benefit.”

In addition, make sure you get along well with the breed and work well with the specific dog. Just because a dog is a skilled pointer doesn’t necessarily mean it’s one that will work well with you.

## TRAINING OPTIONS

There are a variety of methods used to train hunting dogs. Many of the traditional methods include some combination of compulsion and praise. With compulsion, a force shows the dog the correct behavior. For example, you may have a flush dog that gets overly excited when flushing the field and gets too far away. At this point, some hunters use a shock collar to alert the dog to return. Once the dog returns, he is rewarded.

Tim Kelly and his dog, Deus, work together in the field.

A second training option is From’s specialty: positive training. She began Positive Gun Dogs Minnesota in 2008 to train dogs in a positive manner. With this type of training, you need to be especially in tune with your dog’s body language. From notes that her dog will keep retrieving until he drops from exhaustion, and it’s up to her to know when to stop.



Inga From, CDBC, CPDT-KSA, specializes in sporting breed dogs.

## KEEP YOUR DOG SAFE

No matter how you choose to train, it’s important to keep your dog safe when hunting together. She’s going to be doing a lot of work and will need hydration, so bring plenty of water for your dog. Keep up-to-date identification on your dog, and consider a GPS if your hunting field is large enough.

From recommends a canine first aid kit. Kelly seconds this and warns never to shoot a bird that’s on the ground—you might mistakenly hit your dog. If you’re hunting ducks and will be in the water, consider a neoprene vest for your buddy.

You’ve invested a lot of time and effort into training your dog. It is wise to do everything you can to make sure the two of you will be hunting together for years to come. 🐾

*Allison Croat is a local editor and freelance writer who spends most of her time playing with her rescue cat, Sylvia.*





## PARTNERS IN THE FIELD

**A dog is not just a tool in the hunting field. He is a partner in the process.**

"Bird hunting with Deus is a great experience," says Tim Kelly of his American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon. "His nose is very sensitive and he loves to find things with it. He loves the outdoors and is unafraid to go through the thickest brush if he smells something hiding in it."

Deus is also skilled at finding a bird after it has been shot, "leaving less chance to leave a dead or wounded bird in the brush," says Kelly. "After the hunt Deus typically has some burrs in his fur that need to be combed out, which I consider bonding time for us."

Tim's wife, Calli, learned a few things about her husband while listening to him discuss this partnership with his dog. "We've been married for 17 years, but I never knew how much in awe he is with watching the dog do what his breed has always done for centuries without any formal training," she says. "It is pretty amazing how dog breeds stay true to their characteristics."

When Tim and Deus are in the field, they work together, "much like a farmer and a Border Collie or a cowboy/cowgirl and a horse," says Calli Kelly. "The real bonding for my husband comes after the hunt when he is caring for and brushing the dog's coat. (It takes a long time!) The dog loves it too, as they were outdoors and now it's time for the brushing and treats. It's like icing on a cake."



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# Sit. Stay. Read.

## Rochester Public Library offers canine reading buddies for children

by Amy Brase | Photography by Kelvin Andow

While most six-year-olds collect rocks and stickers, Oliver Anderson has his own unique show-and-tell treasure.

At first glance, it's just a handful of bookmarks. With dog photos. But, a closer look reveals something special about these canines. Each one serves as a literacy buddy for Rochester Public Library's Sit Stay Read Program. The dogs on Oliver's trading cards have been his reading buddies for almost two years.



Oliver Anderson reads to his canine reading buddy.

### UNCONDITIONAL LISTENERS

Sit Stay Read is a nationally recognized program that uses therapy dogs to improve the literacy skills of children. Rochester first began offering the program in 2007.

"We have a total of 11 dogs," says Sarah Waletzki, coordinator of the Sit Stay Read Program. "Three to four dogs participate in each reading session and each child signs up to read for 15-20 minutes."

The certified therapy dogs and their handlers settle in and wait for the children in various corners of the first-floor auditorium. This allows for some privacy and a relaxed reading session.

"The dogs are very well-behaved, although they are still dogs and do occasionally get excited wanting to play," says Sarah. "A few like to bark when coming and going but I think that's just to let everyone know they are there."

Participants have found that dogs make wonderful, unconditional listeners for beginning or struggling readers. They don't care how long it takes to read a page. They are just happy to be in the presence of children.

"The kids LOVE the dogs," says Sarah. "Several have come to Sit Stay Read because they do not have pets of their own or may be scared of dogs and use Sit Stay Read as a way to overcome their fear. The dogs are so calm and relaxed that it creates the perfect environment for a successful reading program. Many of the handlers will stick around after the sessions, greeting patrons and answering questions as they leave the library."

### INSPIRING A LOVE OF READING

Oliver wasn't always the voracious reader that he is today. In fact, he was quite hesitant the first time he arrived at the library to meet his canine buddy with a beginning reading level book in his hand.

"He was shy at first, but the more he went, the more he liked it," says Oliver's mom, Nicole. Before long, he was running into the room with the dogs before I could even say goodbye!"

Nicole fondly recalls the moment she peeked in on Oliver just as



Young reader Zach Brue reads to a patient and attentive Retriever.



he turned the book toward the dog so she could see the pictures, too.

"I like the doggies," says Oliver. "I like to sit beside them and pet them and read them a story."

Today, Oliver loves to read and claims to read a chapter book a day. He can't wait to share a Magic Tree House or Magic School Bus book with a furry new friend this fall. 🐾

*Amy Brase is a writer and teacher whose puppy dreams of being a therapy dog one day.*



The dogs are calm and relaxed, which creates a perfect environment for reading.



1. The Fall Sit Stay Read Program runs Monday evenings, September 15 through November 19, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Advanced registration is recommended as times do fill up. Call the Youth Services Desk at 507-328-2303 or register at [www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org/kids/sitstayread.html](http://www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org/kids/sitstayread.html).
2. Children can come early to select books that they'd like to read from the library's shelves. There are also some books set aside in the auditorium.
3. Dogs are eligible to participate in the Sit Stay Read Program after certification through Therapy Dogs International.

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# Teacher's Pet



## A dog who reads inspires kids toward literacy

By Amy Brase

**Children learn best** when there's a **personal connection**. First grade teacher **Peggy Bennett** has always believed this to be true. What she didn't know was that her own **canine** companion would be a bridge that **inspires kids to read and write**.

### COLTER COMES HOME

Five years of breed research led Peggy to Canada for a Shiloh Shepherd puppy that she named Colter, after mountain man John Colter. Peggy's first grade students back at Sibley Elementary in Albert Lea, Minn., followed the adventure and anxiously waited for their teacher to return with a new friend. Peggy later wrote a story about the journey titled "Colter Comes Home." It was the first of many Colter stories written with her students in mind.

It didn't take long for Peggy to recognize Colter's unique characteristics.

"I noticed it right away. It was almost like having a human around, the way he would look at me as I talked to him. It was as if he was comprehending what I said."

### THE MATH TRICK

Peggy had enjoyed a tradition of taking her former Lab-Border Collie Mix named Bridger into the classroom each year on his birthday. The children wrote stories for him and celebrated with a birthday cake.

"I liked to do a special trick with Bridger. I asked him what two plus three was and

then gave a special hand signal to bark five times. The students were convinced that he could do math!"

### AS EASY AS A-B-C

Colter's first birthday visit to the classroom was a success. By his second visit, Peggy had a surprise for her class. Only this time, it wasn't a trick. Colter had learned to read.

Inspired by another Shiloh Shepherd owner who had trained her dog to read commands, Peggy had begun working with Colter at home.

"I thought, 'What a great idea for school!'

Photos courtesy of Peggy Bennett





*Opposite page Left to Right: Peggy shows Colter the Down card. Colter poses with his favorite friends, the kids in Peggy Bennett's first grade class. This page Left to Right: Peggy and Colter in New York. Peggy and Colter at home.*

It could really get the kids excited about reading," Peggy recalls.

Peggy taught Colter to read by pairing verbal commands with printed words on big cards. Gradually, Peggy removed the verbal commands. She says it took about two days to train Colter to learn the commands but that he needs to keep practicing, just like children need to practice reading.

"Colter recognizes the shapes of the words," says Peggy. "He can read three command words. Sit and Paw are the tricky ones because they are the shorter shapes. Down is the other command that Colter can read."

### **FOLLOWING IN HIS PAWSTEPS**

Students have responded enthusiastically to Colter's example. Those who are hesitant to write will do so willingly if it's a story for

Colter. Those who are reluctant to read are inspired by Colter's success and realize that they just need practice, too.

"I had one student this past year who started out below grade level in reading, but he just loved the hardcover photo books that I have written about Colter. I bet he read one of them 100 times this year and I'm not exaggerating. By the end of the year, he was above average in reading."

### **HOLD THE PAWPARAZZI**

It comes as no surprise that Colter's special talent has caught the attention of many. He has made special appearances on KIMT and KTTC.

"That's when friends all over the United States started saying that they had seen us on ABC World News and other national

news networks that had picked up the story," says Peggy. "Then a producer from Fox & Friends contacted me about being on the show so Colter and I drove all the way to New York City for the interview."

Fame has not gone to Colter's head. He may have enjoyed his tour of New York City (and howled at every siren) but he still loves the kids at Sibley Elementary the best. He squeals when Peggy drives up to the school parking lot.

"The more kids, the better, is how Colter sees it," says Peggy. He loves to socialize. I've always said that if he was a human, he'd be a party animal." 🐾

*Amy Brase is a writer and teacher whose dog, Bentley, hasn't yet mastered reading.*

# Top Cat TIMBA

*Award-winning show cat from Rochester has style, moxie and a build like a brick wrapped in silk*

By KL Snyder | Photography by Kelvin Andow

**If you drop in on the Henrys, expect to pet their cat, Timba.** He'll make sure you do. He'll sidle up beside you and nudge your hand. If his hint fails, he'll push his head underneath your hand to demand that you stroke him.

Timba's eyes are big, round and yellow, and he knows how to use them. They plead for attention which, they assure you, he never gets.

This pathos from a cat who sleeps every night on Lauri Henry's pillow.

"He is a performer," she says.

He is a star. His sociable nature and zeal for the spotlight are two of many assets that made him a National Winner: The Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) 2013–2014 Sixth Best Cat in Premiership. Cats from all over the world vie for that "national" title. "National" is a misnomer," Mike Henry says. "It's going to be changed to 'International.'"

## CAMPAIGNING THE CAT

CFA national winners are the highest-scoring competitors in worldwide cat shows throughout the show season. "Points are based on the number of cats you have defeated over the year," Mike says. "It takes a hard, long campaign and a lot of shows to get an award."

Timba, formally known as GP, NW Mouse Island's Timbavati of Singita, was six months old when he made his debut. In cat show business, that's late. Four-month-olds can compete in the kitten class; at eight months, they move to the adult division.

"He was scared," Lauri says. Nevertheless, among 88 entrants he took a first place at his very first show. "His career has sort of been like that."

Timba's career spanned 16 months, during which he, accompanied by a Henry (Lauri usually, Mike occasionally and both sometimes), contended in 44 shows, "almost every weekend," Lauri says. "And most weekends we traveled out of state, all over the U.S."







“We used more than 600,000 frequent flyer miles last year,” says Mike. “We’d saved them up for four or five years.”

## CAT SHOW – AND SHOW CAT – PROTOCOL

Cat shows run one or two days. Most events have 120 to 180 contestants; the biggest have 300 to 400. Three to six shows take place most weekends, and because of the cumulative points scoring, it’s good strategy, and often guesswork, to pick the biggest.

At each show, six to 12 judges examine and rate every cat in every class in every round of competition. (Timba’s class was premiership, CFA’s division for neutered and spayed competitors.)

The action begins with breed judging, evaluating aspirants by their breeds’ standards. Timba is a Burmese, and this is from the standard:

*“The overall impression of the ideal Burmese would be a cat of medium size with substantial*



*Left: Timba poses in front of his awards.*

*Above: A trophy case fit for a winning cat.*



Mike and Lauri Henry with Timba and his national winning ribbon and trophy.

*bone structure, good muscular development and a surprising weight for its size.” And the coat: “Fine, glossy, satin-like texture; short and very close lying.”*

There are further criteria, several paragraphs for each breed, specifying ideal heads, ears, eyes, body, legs, paws, tails, colors (Timba’s is champagne) and more. CFA recognizes 42 breeds and so has 42 sets of standards.

Cat show people describe the Burmese ideal as “a brick wrapped in silk.” Timba portrays it. He also abounds in qualities such as affability and aplomb, requisite for every breed.

With all the judging that goes on, show cats must like getting touched. “Judges give no awards to cats unhappy with handling,” Lauri says, “including even the most beautiful cats.”

Personality (feline-ality?) counts. Lauri did clicker work with Timba to keep him entertained, awake and focused. “He gets excited and starts strutting, and an alert, enthusiastic, strutting show cat is exactly what you want.”

At the completion of breed judging the judge awards best of breed and second best of breed. After all of the breeds are judged the top

ten from all breeds are selected. A fresh round of appraisals follows from which the judges rank the 10 and award ribbons from 10th to best. When the rosettes are presented, most judges explain why they think each cat deserves its placement and what they like about the cat.

### SHOW PREP, AND RETIREMENT

“You bathe them,” Lauri says, “and pack up for the show. You’re together, you and your cat, in the hotel and in the show hall. They barely have time to adjust to living at home.”

Now, though, Timba is adjusting to just that. In April, having achieved stardom, he retired from the cat show circuit. It was early retirement. He turned two in June.

His lifestyle is more laid-back now, the rules have eased a bit, he need not watch his brick-wrapped-in-silk physique quite so diligently. “The little dude is retired,” Lauri says, “and he deserves a cookie.” 🐾

*Timba widened freelance writer KL Snyder’s dog-person horizons. Now they’re dog-and-cat-person horizons.*

## Shows in Minnesota

Lauri Henry wishes Minnesota had more cat shows each year. The club she belongs to, Twin Cities Cat Fanciers, sponsors a show every September. This year’s will take place September 27 in Crystal. “It’s fun,” she says. “People should bring their kids.” (See [www.tccfcatshow.info](http://www.tccfcatshow.info).) Household pet entries are welcome at this show.

Saintly City Cat Club holds its annual show during the St. Paul Winter Carnival. Household cats take part and wear costumes. The highlight is the crowning of the king and queen. Their royal highnesses are the highest scoring male and female household cats. “It’s hilarious,” Lauri says.

Twin Cities Cat Fanciers and Saintly City Cat Club are affiliates of Cat Fanciers Association. Another organization, American Cat Fanciers Association (ACFA), hosts a number of shows in the Midwest, including a show in Rochester the first weekend in August. The 2014 event’s title was “Catsino Nights.”

## Household Cats Can Sashay, too

Cat shows are beauty contests, Lauri Henry says, and purebreds aren’t the only felines who get to flaunt it. Many shows include a household cat division and invite people to enter their pets. Contestants must be spayed or neutered, in good health, not be declawed and have outgoing dispositions. An entry form and entry fee need to be submitted before the deadline on the show flier.

“And they have to like being in shows. Shows are supposed to be fun for the cats, too,” she says.

“The household class can be a hoot.” People cheer for the entrants. “Some shows let you tell the cat’s story. Some shows allow rescue groups to exhibit their cats in an effort to find homes for them. And it works!”



# 4 Cat Facts

Lauri and Mike Henry of Rochester, cat lovers and show cat experts, debunk the myths and declare the truths about felines.

**1 TRAINING A CAT? IMPOSSIBLE!**  
 “Cats do the same things as dogs,” says Lauri who devotes five minutes a day per cat to clicker training. All five Henry felines – Timba, Imara, Kimbia, Uhura and Zahara – know tricks. Timba sits, taps his paw and touches a pencil with his nose.

For information on clicker training for cats, click [www.clickertraining.com/cat-training](http://www.clickertraining.com/cat-training). (Clicker training guru Karen Pryor says she’s taught cats to play the piano: [www.clickertraining.com/node/978](http://www.clickertraining.com/node/978).)

Regarding agility, dogs don’t hold the franchise. This link will take you to a cat agility site: [www.agility.cfa.org/clicker-training.shtml](http://www.agility.cfa.org/clicker-training.shtml).

**2 ALOOF? WHO’S ALOOF?** When Lauri and Mike get home, five cats dash to the door to say hello. Indeed, they greet everyone. “They love company,” Mike says.

**3 CAR RIDES? KITTY HIDES.** Not the Henry crew who started going for rides as youngsters. “We’d drive them around and take them to PetSmart,” Lauri says. “You can walk cats on leashes, too. They just need to get used to the idea.”

**4 BATH PHOBIA?** Not every cat has it. Lauri has a friend whose cat is crazy about baths. (Although some felines like bathing, none of the Henry quintet is one of those. All rue that Lauri loves the smell of a shampooed cat.)

“I love everything about cats,” Lauri says. “I think they are underestimated. I think there’s no limit to what they can do. We just haven’t figured them out yet.”

## Meet TIMBA



Timba will make an appearance at the **Twin Cities Cat Fanciers show in Crystal, Minn., on September 27**. Come meet him and see his national award. “He would really love to meet everyone!” says owner Lauri Henry. Show information at [www.tccfcatshow.info](http://www.tccfcatshow.info)

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# UNDER THE SHELL

## Fern the tortoise has her own fan base

By Penny Lex

A tortoise isn't the most common pet you'd expect to find in someone's home. Especially when it's free to wander about and four felines claim the same abode. But for Fern, a 1-year-old Ibera Greek tortoise and the newest member of the Reynolds' pet family, it works just fine.

Erin Reynolds is an animal lover and veterinary technician at Quarry Hill Park Animal Hospital. "Luckily I married Eric, a man who accepted we would always have pets in our lives," she says. "We've had cats, toads, a rat and an assortment of fish, but I'd always wanted a tortoise."

Erin researched and found a breed suitable for indoor living. "I chose the Ibera Greek because of the small size and pretty domed shell."

### TINY TORTOISE

Fern is about the size of an orange and weighs about half a pound. Full grown, she'll be about 8 inches tall by 6 inches wide.

"Fern definitely has a sweet little personality, but I would be lying if I said she was super active and cuddly," says Erin. "She sleeps about 75 percent of the day and the rest is spent eating, basking in her UV and heat lights, or out and about with the family."

By nature, a tortoise is a quiet animal that prefers solitude, and, Erin explains, Fern likes to be alone and explore by herself. She isn't like a cat or dog who responds to its name. "We do hold Fern, talk to her and she likes her chin and neck to be petted."

### FAST FERN

Fern's home is a tortoise hutch that provides proper heat, cooling and humidity. When Fern is out, Erin explains that she can move surprisingly fast so they need to keep an eye on her. "We've learned where her favorite spots to go are, and if we do lose track of her, there's usually a kitty or two—Lucy, Ella, Ash or Bindi—in attendance. The kitties love to watch Fern walk around and she shows no fear with them."

Fern enjoys the great outdoors too. She explores the grass and basks in the sun. The Reynolds watch to keep her away from chemically treated lawns and protect her from dogs, natural predators.

### WATER HABITS

Many people think a turtle and a tortoise are one and the same. But turtles live on land and in water while tortoises are strictly land animals. Fern's breed comes from the desert so she only needs to drink once a day. As she gets older, she will only need to drink a few times a week. Today her aquatic experience is limited to a shallow water bowl in her hutch and a daily soak in a shallow tub where she imbibes and does her potty.

### PICKY EATER

Fern's cuisine is a mixture of lettuces, greens and tortoise pellets. "She's actually very picky and chooses what she'll eat," says Erin. "She loves





Fern enjoys her feline friends without fear.

spring greens and recently discovered dandelions, which she thought were very tasty.” Fruit is given only occasionally as a treat because it isn’t easy for Fern to digest.

Tortoises are not immune to health concerns. They can get upper respiratory infections, GI upset, dehydration and calcium deficiency without sunlight or adequate supplement in their diet. One of the many misconceptions about tortoises is that they carry Salmonella. “While it’s true they can harbor the disease, many captive-bred tortoises do not have it,” Erin says. “Salmonella is spread through their feces, so as long as you keep their habitat clean, wash your hands carefully after cleaning their cages and do not ingest their stool, you’re okay.”

## FERN’S FACEBOOK

“Fern is feisty, stubborn, sweet and I love everything about her,” says Erin. “She’s so special to me and many others. She’s developed a little fan base on Facebook (Fern’s Page) and it’s so neat how many people love tortoises because of her. I want people to remember that if they like the idea of having a tortoise, they should really think about it. Tortoises are forever pets. Fern could easily live for over 50 years and live longer than me,” Erin says.

“I’m very excited about growing old with her.” 🐾

*Penny Marshall is a Rochester freelance writer.*

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# Before Goodbye

Photographer's joy sessions preserve cherished memories

By Jennifer M. Gangloff | Photography by Grape Soda Photography



Like many pet owners, Ashley Ignatius faced some heart-wrenching decisions as the life of her faithful Golden Retriever was nearing an end.

But a bittersweet photo session with the 16-year-old dog, named Reba Wildflower, has forever preserved memories of their companionship, bringing some peace to a painful journey's end.

The photo session was the work of a new cause called Project Cleo, which provides end-of-life joy sessions for pet owners who want to celebrate their pet and create lasting memories on digital film and video through professional photography. Project Cleo was created by Grape Soda Photography, whose owner, Eva Hagel of Rochester, once had to say her own mournful goodbye to a beloved Boxer, Cleo.

"When we lost her, it was heartbreaking," said Hagel, who had to suddenly rush Cleo to the emergency vet one night a few years ago, leaving the family without a chance for a proper goodbye. "It was something we didn't see coming. We missed her so much."

## PROJECT CLEO

With that painful experience in mind, Hagel wanted to create an opportunity for pet owners to share some special moments when possible, when they know that their pet has little time left. "It's a beautiful project," Hagel says. "You want to be able to look back and remember these moments and have something you can cherish forever."

Because end-of-life care can be so expensive, Hagel doesn't plan to charge Project Cleo customers for their pet's photo session—funding comes through public donations. "If your pet is dying," she says, "the last thing you want to think about is more expenses."

The joy sessions can be wrought with emotion. When Hagel photographed Golden Retriever Reba's joy session in the dog's favorite local park, the tears were flowing. "You have to be strong to be able to do something like this," Hagel says.

For Ignatius, the poignant joy session was especially difficult but one that she's thankful she did. Ignatius included her family—her parents and her brother—in the session, as they wheeled Reba around in a garden wagon and gently set her in some of her favorite spots as Hagel snapped pictures, careful not to cause stress for the ailing dog by manually positioning her or barking orders on how to pose.

"I was already sad, and I had a lot of anxiety about it," says Ignatius, who was only 12 when she got Reba as a 6-month-old pup. "But Eva was really wonderful and took her time—she was literally crawling in the dirt to get pictures of Reba without making her uncomfortable."

It was only about a week later, at the end of May, that Reba's time had come, and Ignatius summoned a vet to her house to administer euthanasia in the comfortable shade of an old oak tree. "The pictures Eva took of her are really beautiful. Reba couldn't really hear or see very well, and Eva was so understanding. Even though I was apprehensive originally, I'm so glad now that I did this." PAW

*Jennifer M. Gangloff is a freelance editor and writer in Rochester.*

**Find Project Cleo at: [www.facebook.com/ProjectCleo](https://www.facebook.com/ProjectCleo).**  
Contact Eva Hagel at [grapesodaphotography@charter.net](mailto:grapesodaphotography@charter.net).



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# Saying Goodbye

## Preparing for your pet's last days and final remains

By Jennifer M. Gangloff

When it became clear to Ashley Ignatius that it was time to say a final farewell to her ailing 16-year-old Golden Retriever last May, she knew she wanted to avoid a painful experience in the clinical setting of a vet's office.

So instead, Ignatius had a veterinarian come to her house in Rochester, where her dog, Reba, who was unable to walk and couldn't hear or see well, was gently and peacefully euthanized under the shade of a sprawling oak in her own familiar backyard. "I felt like it was more private and comfortable for all of us that way," says Ignatius, still tearful with jagged emotions over Reba's loss.

### **GROWING DEMAND FOR HOUSECALLS**

Ignatius is among a growing number of pet owners who are choosing in-home euthanasia for their dying pets. Around the Rochester area, several vet clinics now offer in-home care for pets, including euthanasia for dogs and cats.

One of those is vet Kathleen Appell, D.V.M., who runs vaccine clinics, works at Cascade Animal Medical Center and also owns Riverwood Veterinary Housecalls, a practice she opened in 2011 to cater to the growing demand for in-home vet services.

Riverwood can provide most types of veterinary services in the home, including exams, behavioral counseling, bloodwork and disease management. Euthanasia services are becoming more common, she says, as pet owners seek options that they feel are easier on both themselves and their companion animals. "They don't want their pet's last experience to be a stressful trip to the vet," Dr. Appell says. "They want their pet to be peaceful in their own surroundings."

Sometimes, too, it's the owner who has difficulty making it to the vet—they may be elderly, lack transportation or

simply feel too distraught. "When you do it at home, there isn't that sense that you have to pull yourself together,"

Dr. Appell says. "I have actually found that people are a lot more peaceful this way, too."

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR EUTHANASIA**

Before considering in-home euthanasia for your pet, talk to your vet about your options and plans, as well as how the actual procedure will unfold, advises Dr. Appell, who does lengthy phone consults with new clients.

Pet owners need to decide in advance who will be present during the euthanasia procedure, where it will take place and even how they will handle their pet's remains.

For instance, while many pet owners want their children to witness their pet's final passing—whether at home or in the vet clinic—that's not always a good idea, cautions Ann Anderson, D.V.M., who owns Quarry Hill Park Animal Hospital in Rochester.

"Keep in mind the age of the children you want to bring," she says. "Especially if they're under age 10, it may really be too much for them emotionally. I have seen people attempt to force their kids to be in the room, and I don't think that's fair to the kids."

And even though euthanasia may seem like a relatively straight-forward procedure, problems can arise. Dr. Anderson has had clients bring along other pets to the euthanasia procedure in an attempt to provide comfort or a chance for pets to bid farewell, too. But in some cases, that does nothing but cause undue stress for both animals, she says. Some animals may release their bladder or bowels during the procedure, and others may appear to take gasping breaths as the medication takes effect. Dr. Appell has even seen cases where pets vomit during the procedure



because well-meaning owners have given them a bountiful last meal of their favorite treats.

In addition, not all pets are good candidates for in-home euthanasia. While it may be an option for most dogs and cats, as well as larger domestic animals like horses of course, it's typically not available for small animals known as pocket pets—rats, hamsters and ferrets, for example. Those animals generally require different euthanasia options that may involve gas, rather than medications that can be injected, Dr. Appell notes.

#### **HANDLING PET REMAINS**

When her beloved dog Reba was euthanized, Ignatius had her body taken to her vet's office, and from there she was picked up by Justin Holtan of Cherished Pet Cremation in Hayfield. Reba was privately cremated and her remains—called ashes or cremains—were returned to Ignatius.

Private cremation is one of several options for handling a deceased pet's body. Disposal of pet animal remains is generally subject to city, county or state laws or ordinances. But not every community has explicit regulations, and Rochester is one of them.

"There are no regulations in the city of Rochester related to the disposal of your deceased pet," says Dave Goslee, deputy city attorney in Rochester. The city does defer to state statute 35.82 on the disposition of carcasses, but that statute does not address domestic animals that would typically be housed in a person's home—in other words, cats, dogs and similar pets.

That's not to say you can simply dispose of a deceased pet's body in any manner you wish. For instance, you can't toss the body onto public property, such as a ditch, because that would be illegal under littering laws. Similarly, while you can scatter a pet's ashes on your own property, doing so on public land would also be considered littering, Goslee says.

Olmsted County strongly discourages pet owners from disposing of deceased pets in the trash, says regulatory compliance coordinator Tony Hill. Instead, the county recommends cremation.

Burial of pet remains on private property is allowed but precautions are needed, Dr. Appell says, particularly if a pet has been euthanized or was diseased. That's because if a dead pet is dug up or scavenged, other animals can get sick or even die from eating the medicated carcass—and that can affect an entire food chain.

If a coyote digs up a euthanized cat, for example, the coyote may get sick or die. An eagle that feeds on the

remains of the dug-up cat or the coyote could also become sick and possibly die. Deceased pets should be buried at least four feet deep, Dr. Appell says. Depending on the burial location, owners may need to call utility companies to have underground wires and cables flagged.

#### **CREMATION**

Like Ignatius, many pet owners rely on cremation for their pets. In fact, this may be the best option for pet owners who live in apartments or condos or who have homeowners associations that ban burial. Pet owners who want remains back can opt for private cremation, as was done for Reba. Others can opt for group cremation, in which the animal crematorium or vet office disposes of the ashes.

Holtan says that Cherished Pet Cremation picks up deceased pets either directly from the pet owner or from the vet, and in some cases the owners go right to his facility—some find peace of mind and closure watching the procedure. Holtan has offered cremation services and decorative urns for a large variety of animals, including cats, dogs, rats, goats, a mini horse and even a fish. Some owners, he says, also want the ashes back because they eventually want to be buried with their pet.

"We take pride in our facility and we give pet owners peace of mind," Holtan says.

#### **BE PREPARED**

With so many options for your pet's last days and final remains, try not to be in denial about facing the death of your pet. Having a plan in place ahead of time can help you avoid making hard and hasty decisions in the midst of grief.

"We see the whole spectrum of clients," Dr. Anderson notes. "Some people come in unprepared. Some have been waiting for this moment for the last six months. Others are taken by surprise."

Ignatius struggled with that final decision herself, having tried numerous therapies as her elderly dog slowly declined. "People just don't plan for their pet's death," says Ignatius, who is still waiting to choose the perfect decorative urn for Reba's ashes.

"There's usually not a magical moment when it becomes clear what to do," Dr. Anderson says. "A lot of people are in denial. I just try to guide them as to what's best for the pet and for the family." 🐾

*Jennifer M. Gangloff is a freelance editor and writer in Rochester.*

# PRESENCE ENDS, *but a pet urn can live on*

## The business of remembering

by Bob Freund | Photography by Kelvin Andow

Maybe it's a shelf, where Tabby liked to lounge. Perhaps the special spot is a window bench, where the family terrier waited each day to bark for familiar faces. Or it could be a credenza in a corner where a pet canary once sang in its cage.

Many dog, cat, bird—and even horse—lovers want to keep the final resting place of Tabby or Terrier close by, where it can spark a memory and a smile.

He is part of a specialized industry serving owners who lose their pets to death. Veterinary clinics, cremation services and urn engravers also help handle details for owners who choose to preserve their pets through cremation.

Manufacturing urns is a side line of Van Natta's main business. He owns and operates Mazeppa Millworks, which has been making wood cabinets for homes and businesses for 26 years.

### DIGNIFIED, PERSONALIZED

Van Natta creates his urns from a range of woods including oak, cherry, alder and black walnut.

They are small enough for a shelf. Van Natta's basic urn, which might hold the ashes of a cat or a small dog, measures six inches wide and five inches high and it features a decorative, molded top.

After cremation, the pet's ashes typically are contained in plastic. They are placed in the urn through a bottom panel, which then is secured by screws and a silicon sealant. Van Natta also hand-stains the urn and protects it with a lacquer spray. Each urn takes about 1½ to 2 hours to produce.

The pet urn often is on display, so appearance is important. Van Natta's urns can include a window for the owner's favorite photo of the pet. "Lots of pet owners, they have it somewhere where they can see it (urn) once in a while," he says. Patrons typically purchase a custom-made pet urn for \$40 to \$50, but the type of wood also can raise the cost, the woodworker says.

Although pet urns are a small part of his business—he makes only a few a year—pets also have been part of Van Natta's life. Among them was a Welsh Corgi that had to be bottle-fed because of a cleft palate. He eventually had to euthanize Miss Muffin. "That was really hard," Van Natta says. He also has lost cats. "I can relate," he says.

### LIFELIKE ENGRAVING

Specialty businesses also add permanent decoration instead of photos to urns. CompTech-EDM, a precision machine shop



Woodworker Mark Van Natta, of Mazeppa, makes cremation urns sized for pets. They are simple and elegant wooden boxes manufactured to contain the ashes of a companion animal.

In 1995, he started producing wooden urns for human cremains at the suggestion of a salesman who worked with funeral homes, Van Natta says. Six years ago, he branched out to cremation urns for pets.





*Opposite page:* Companion Pet Cremations offers an array of wooden and metal urns. *Above/Right:* Mark Van Natta hand crafts simple, elegant pet urns.



in rural Rochester, specializes in laser engraving of pet urns among its services. “We do one every other week,” CompTech-EDM owner Carl Johnson estimates.

His equipment can convert a pet’s photo to an image that then can be cut into wood or metals. Pet owners also will place a message or other vital statistics, such as dates of birth and death, much like those on a grave marker. “We’ve done memorial plaques that you can put over the grave site,” for an owner who chooses to bury the urn, Johnson says.

CompTech-EDM has engraved pet urns since 2002, said Johnson, who owns a West Highland White Terrier named Pearl and two cats.

#### INDIVIDUAL CREMATIONS

While Van Natta and Johnson focus on urns, Companion Pet Cremations of Lewiston delivers a broader range of services to grieving pet owners. Rick Speltz opened the business four years ago after the death of Under, his Blue Heeler Australian Cattle Dog.

“The vet clinic sent it away (for cremation),” he says. “It took about a week to 10 days, and that was a long time without my

pet. I was worried about where he (was) and what was happening.”

Speltz moved to shorten the wait for others by creating Companion Pet Cremations. “I try to keep it to a 24- to 48-hour timeline,” he says.

His company picks up and cremates each animal individually. It also offers an array of wooden, metal and other urns from various makers. Some owners prefer urns with dual compartments for something else meaningful, such as a collar. Also available are mini-urns called “portion” urns. “Each member of the family can have a portion of the family pet,” he says.

While dogs and cats are the most common pets he sees, Speltz says he has cremated companion animals ranging from a parakeet to a newborn Clydesdale colt.

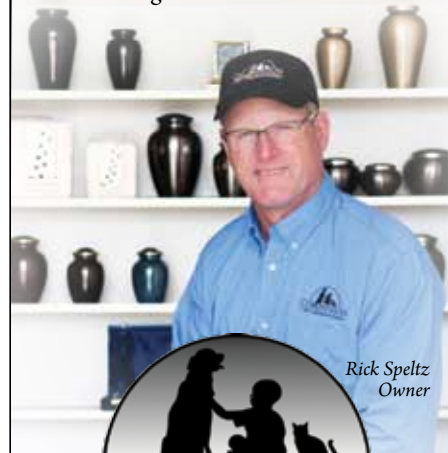
Typically, cremation and related services cost between \$50 and \$300, but they also can be more expensive.

“The satisfaction that I have is that people appreciate the service I offer,” Speltz says. “They’re grief-stricken. They bring their pet to me and I take care of it and it brings some closure to their loss.” 🐾

*Bob Freund is a Rochester freelance writer.*

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**Carl Johnson, CompTech-EDM:** [www.comptech-edm.com](http://www.comptech-edm.com)

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# NOSE for NEWS...

## COMMERCIAL DOG AND CAT BREEDER LAW

The Minnesota Commercial Dog and Cat Breeder Law went into effect on July 1. Signed by Governor Dayton, the law enforces humane treatment for dogs and cats bred in the state. According to [www.votersforanimals.org](http://www.votersforanimals.org):

### THE PROBLEM

- There was no state law to license, inspect or regulate commercial dog and cat breeders.
- Minnesota is among the top producers of puppies in the United States with some of the largest breeding kennels in the nation – housing 300, 600 or over 1,000 dogs and puppies. Kittens are also mass-produced in Minnesota.
- While many breeders act responsibly, there are those who keep dogs and cats in deplorable conditions and are willing to make a profit at the expense of the animal's health and wellbeing.

- The puppies and kittens are sold to the public and many are sick, diseased and have genetic problems.

### WHAT THE NEW LAW DOES

- **Licensing** – requires commercial dog and cat breeders in to be licensed to operate and sell dogs and cats in Minnesota
- **Inspections and Enforcement** – gives legal authority to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health to inspect commercial dog and cat breeding facilities annually and enforce existing state laws and new laws to ensure animal care standards are met
- **Penalties** – imposes civil, administrative and criminal penalties for those who violate the law

### OTHER PROVISIONS INCLUDE:

- Must keep identifying and medical records on each animal
- Animals must be provided daily enrichment and must be provided positive physical contact with human beings and compatible animals at least twice daily
- All animals sold must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate
- Puppies and kittens may not be sold, traded or given away prior to 8 weeks of age

To read the full language of the law, visit [www.votersforanimals.org](http://www.votersforanimals.org) or [www.animalfolksmn.org](http://www.animalfolksmn.org)



## DOG WALKER WATCH

Recently, the Rochester Police Department launched the Dog Walker Watch, a new crime awareness program for the City of Rochester. The Rochester Police conducted classes in the spring for dog owners who walk their dogs daily. So far, 96 dog walkers have been trained.

"There are hundreds upon hundreds of dog walkers throughout the city," said Advanced Crime Prevention/CPTED Specialist Darrel Hildebrant. "Through Dog Walker Watch, we hope to convert many of those walkers to extra eyes and ears for the police department as part of the city's ongoing crime prevention efforts. Dog walkers can be a valuable resource in helping to make our community safer."

The class trained citizens how to be more alert when walking and how to effectively report suspicious activity to 911 using their cell phones. Dog walker reports have included two prowlers, a possible burglar and other suspicious activity. For more information, contact [dhildebrant@rochestermn.gov](mailto:dhildebrant@rochestermn.gov) or 507-328-6890.





# NOSE for NEWS...



## LOU WITH A LITTLE LESS HOP

The Flemish Giant rabbit named Lou, who starred on the cover of our Spring 2014 issue, broke his femur in May. The veterinary prognosis was amputation—better than the alternative of euthanasia. When Lou's owner, Elizabeth, needed help funding the emergency surgery, a group of generous animal lovers, including some Wagazine readers, donated to the cause.

"I know to many Lou is just a rabbit, but for me and many people in our community he's so much more," said Elizabeth. "Lou has brought smiles and shock to everyone he meets. Now with three legs he'll be even more lovable and even more shocking. Thank you! I can't tell you that enough."

Today, Lou is getting his hop back, and you can follow his progress on his Facebook page "LOU: with a little less hop."



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507-400-3100  
*Foster-based, no-kill, non-profit rescue.*

**PAWS AND CLAWS HUMANE SOCIETY** (Rochester)

pawsandclaws.org  
info@pawsandclaws.org  
507-288-7226  
*To promote and provide humane protection and shelter for abandoned or lost companion animals, seek adoptive homes, provide public education regarding the societal problem of animal overpopulation, promote responsible companion animal care, and advocate the spaying and neutering of all companion animals.*

**PAWS=PRECIOUS ANIMALS WORTH SAVING**

pawsofjackson.com  
pawsofjackson@gmail.com  
507-841-1834  
*Working together to save as many animals as possible in the Jackson County area.*

**PET HAVEN INC. OF MN**

PetHavenMN.org  
admin@pethavenmn.org  
952-831-3825  
*Created in 1952 to rescue, rehome and advocate for companion animals.*

**PRAIRIE'S EDGE HUMANE SOCIETY** (Faribault)

prairiesedgehs.org  
admin@prairiesedgehs.org  
507-334-7117  
*Serving Rice County. Mission to promote the value of animals through care and education*

**RESCUED PETS ARE WONDERFUL**

rpaw.org  
info@rpaw.org  
763-757-8204  
*To rescue companion animals and find them loving forever homes.*

**RETRIEVE A GOLDEN OF MINNESOTA (RAGOM)**

ragom.org  
rescue@ragom.org  
952-946-8070  
*Rescuing and re-homing Golden Retrievers and Golden mixes in MN, IA, ND, SD and western WI.*

**RUFF START RESCUE**

ruffstartrescue.org  
info@ruffstartrescue.org  
763-355-3981

**SAFE HAVEN PET RESCUE**

(Rochester)  
safehavenpetrescue.org  
safehavenca@yahoo.com  
507-529-4079  
*Committed to finding safe, loving and secure homes for lost, abandoned and stray companion animals.*

**S.A.F.E. SANCTUARY (FARIBAULT)**

safesanctuary.org  
safeanimalsanctuary@hotmail.com  
507-334-7901  
*Foster-based, no-kill rescue*

**SAVE-A-BULL RESCUE**

saveabullmn.com  
*Dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and re-homing of American Pit Bull Terriers and other Bull breeds.*

**SECOND CHANCE ANIMAL RESCUE**

secondchancerescue.org  
651-771-5662  
*Foster-based dog and cat rescue organization dedicated to rescuing, caring for and adopting out homeless dogs and cats.*

**SECONDHAND HOUNDS**

(Minnetonka)  
Secondhandhounds.org  
SHHAdoptions@gmail.com  
952-322-7643

**SHIH TZU RESCUE OF MINNESOTA**

shihtzurescuemn.org  
*All-volunteer organization with a mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome Shih Tzus and Shih Tzu mixes.*

**SMALL DOG RESCUE OF MINNESOTA**

smalldogsmnnesota.org  
info@smalldogsmnnesota.org  
*All-volunteer group committed to the rescue, rehabilitation, and placement of dogs 20 pounds and under.*

**SOUTHWEST METRO ANIMAL RESCUE**

swmetroanimalrescue.org  
swmetroanimalrescue@hotmail.com  
952-368-PAWS (7297)  
*Non-profit organization committed to the rescue of abandoned, abused and stray domestic animals.*  
**STEELE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY** (Owatonna)  
steelecountyhumane.org  
adoptapets@yahoo.com  
507-451-4512  
*Foster home based rescue helping stray and abandoned animals in greater Steele County.*

**TRI-COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**

tricityhumane.org  
pets@tricityhumane.org  
320-252-0896  
*We believe in the human/animal bond and exist to support Central Minn. by practicing and promoting quality adoption services and education programs.*

**WAGS & WHISKERS ANIMAL RESCUE OF MN**

wagsmn.org  
wagswhiskersmn@gmail.com  
*Volunteer 501(c)(3), non-profit animal rescue organization dedicated to saving the lives of homeless animals and educating the community on responsible pet ownership.*

**WASECA COUNTY ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY**

wcahs.petfinder.com  
wcahsadoptions@gmail.com  
507-201-7287  
*501c3, no-kill organization that helps homeless animals of all types in numerous counties in South Central Minn.*

**WINONA AREA HUMANE SOCIETY**

winonahumane.org  
507-452-3135

**LOST AND FOUND PETS**

Report lost and found pets of Southeast Minnesota:  
facebook.com/SEMNLost.Found

Report lost and found dogs of Minnesota: facebook.com/LDoMN

**STOP OVER-POPULATION  
SPAY AND NEUTER  
YOUR PETS**



# GET THE SCOOP

## SEPTEMBER

**September 5** Pints for Paws, craft beer and BBQ with Paws and Claws Humane Society and Northwest Liquors, 6–9pm, Rochester Eagles Club, [pawsandclaws.org](http://pawsandclaws.org)

**September 6-30** Free Feline Rescue Cat Claw Clippings, check dates at various Chuck & Don's locations, [feline rescue.org](http://feline rescue.org)

**September 6** 4th Annual Super Adoption Event, over 100 adoptable animals with their rescue groups, 11am–1pm, Rochester Fairgrounds, [facebook.com/RACofSEmn](http://facebook.com/RACofSEmn)

**September 6** Woofstock, 10am–3pm, Linden Hills, [explorelinden hills.com](http://explorelinden hills.com)

**September 6 & 7** Ye Old Pet Fest, Minnesota Renaissance Festival, Shakopee, [renaissancefest.com](http://renaissancefest.com)

**September 10** Out and About Adventure Class, first of 4 sessions with Inga From, Hippie Dog Training, Twin Cities, [ahippiedog.com](http://ahippiedog.com)

**September 11** Yappy Hour, 5–7pm, hosted by The Wagazine, Wildwood Sports Bar and Grill, [wildwoodsportsbarandgrill.com](http://wildwoodsportsbarandgrill.com)

**September 12** Moonlight Memorial, companion animal walk to remember pets we've lost, includes luminaire dedication, 7pm, Shoppes on Maine, [campcompanion.org](http://campcompanion.org)

**September 13-14** Safe Haven Pet Rescue annual rummage sale, 7am–4pm Saturday; 8am–2:30pm Sunday. Olmsted County Fairgrounds, [safehavenpetrescue.org](http://safehavenpetrescue.org)

**September 13-14** Rochester MN Kennel Club Dog Show, 8am–4pm, Olmsted County Fair Grounds, [rochestermnkennelclub.com](http://rochestermnkennelclub.com)

**September 14** Goldzilla, Golden Retriever Fun Fair & Walk for Rescue, 8:30am–2pm, Long Lake Park, New Brighton, [goldzilla.ragom.org](http://goldzilla.ragom.org)

**September 13** 5th Annual Slobberfest, Rochester Pet & Country Store, [rochesterfeed.com](http://rochesterfeed.com)

**September 13** Minnesota Boxer Rescue's 8th Annual WiggleFest, 11am–3pm, Bush Lake Park, Bloomington, [mnboxerrescue.rescuegroups.org](http://mnboxerrescue.rescuegroups.org)

**September 19** Decoding Dogs seminar, presented by Paws Abilities Dog Training, learn what

your dog is saying and how to talk to dogs so they can understand you, 7pm, Rochester Feed & Country Store, [www.paws4u.com](http://www.paws4u.com)

**September 20** Save-a-Bull Rescue adoption event, noon–2pm, Minnehaha Falls Park, [saveabullmn.com/events](http://saveabullmn.com/events)

**September 20** English Springer Rescue America "Meet the Springers," 11am–2pm, Chuck & Don's, Savage, [springerrescuemidwest.org](http://springerrescuemidwest.org)

**September 20** Steele County Humane Society low-cost spay and neuter for companion animals and feral cats. Check qualifications at [mnsnap.org](http://mnsnap.org) or 612-720-8236, register at [steelcountyhumanesociety.org](http://steelcountyhumanesociety.org)

**September 27** New Leash on Life, 5K Dog Run/3K Walk for Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center and Paws and Claws Humane Society, 8:30am, Silver Lake Park, [pawsandclaws.org](http://pawsandclaws.org)

**September 27** Meet cover cat Timba at the Twin Cities Cat Fanciers Show, Crystal, [tcccatshow.info](http://tcccatshow.info)

## OCTOBER

**October 4** Blessing of the Animals, Benediction of St. Francis is for any furry, feathered or finned family members, all are welcome on short leashes or in cages, free will offering, 1:30–3 pm, Assisi Heights, [rochesterfranciscan.org](http://rochesterfranciscan.org)

**October 4** BARKtoberfest, hosted by BACB Unleashed, 11am–2pm, Eagles Club of Rochester (next to Cub Foods), hunde und menschen willkommen (hounds and humans welcome), [BACBunleashed.com](http://BACBunleashed.com)

**October 5** Reactive Rover seminar, presented by Paws Abilities Dog Training, learn about causes and tips to help dogs who lunge, whine, bark or growl around people or dogs, 5–7pm, Rochester Feed & Country Store, [www.paws4u.com](http://www.paws4u.com)

**October 11** Pets in the Park, including pet walk, hamster races, minnow races, vendors, games, petting zoo and demos. Funds raised will purchase pet clean-up stations and support local adoption organizations and shelters. 9am–3pm, Florence Park, Stewartville, [admin@stewartvillechamber.com](mailto:admin@stewartvillechamber.com) or 507-533-6006

**October 18** English Springer Rescue America "Meet the Springers," 11am–2pm, Chuck & Don's, Lakeville, [springerrescuemidwest.org](http://springerrescuemidwest.org)

**October 18** Dobe O Rama, Bloomington Obedience and Training Center 10am–4pm, [dobermanrescueminnesota.com](http://dobermanrescueminnesota.com)

## NOVEMBER

**November 1** All Saints Day, Rochester Pet & Country Store, north location. Visit with your 4-legged friends in their best costume for 10% off. Grand prize 3 months of free dog food. Runner up prize free holiday dog cut (\$50 value). [rochesterfeed.com](http://rochesterfeed.com)

**November 13** Pause 4 Paws Annual Fall Fundraiser: Harvesting Hope for Animals, Minneapolis Hilton, 5:30–9:30pm, [pause4pawsmn.org](http://pause4pawsmn.org)

**November 15** English Springer Rescue America "Meet the Springers," 11am–2pm, Chuck & Don's, St. Paul, [springerrescuemidwest.org](http://springerrescuemidwest.org)

## DECEMBER

Look for the **WINTER** issue of the **wagazine** in early **December 2014!**

**December 6** Doberman Rescue Minnesota meet and greet, 11am, Chuck & Don's, Elk River, [dobermanrescueminnesota.com](http://dobermanrescueminnesota.com)

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# STAND BY ME

By Sadasha Cameron

## The pup I saved returned the favor



### FOR BETTER OR WORSE

The expectation when adopting a puppy is the usual housebreaking, chewing, separation anxiety. No one expects to be thrust into an unpredictable situation within the first 24 hours. But there we were, in the summer of 2008, stuck in a frightening circumstance without answers.

Our new puppy was a Yorkshire Terrier—a heavy-weight champion weighing in at exactly one pound. The day after we brought Tallulah home, it was clear that something was wrong. She had no interest in eating, playing with her toys or exploring her new home. She was lethargic with pale gums, and she fainted after walking short distances in the yard.

This was our “normal” for the first three weeks. Between a near-constant roulette of vet appointments, I stayed home, nursing her with vitamin paste, sweetened water to keep her blood sugar elevated, and wet food scraped on her tongue. Both the vet and the breeder insisted it was probably a congenital heart defect, that she would probably die. I fought to keep her alive.

At the end of the third week the vet finally took a stool sample. The source of our issue was a parasite that the breeder hadn’t disclosed. She had given us medication she claimed was for anxiety. The medication was tossed out weeks ago under the assumption

**Family comes in all shapes, sizes and colors.** There’s the family we’re born into, and then there’s the family we adopt gradually, life by life. Tallulah came into my life six years ago, and it has not been the same since.

that Tallulah was allergic to it, when in fact it was the course of treatment for coccidia, a parasite common in small dogs.

The unfortunate truth is that we were the victims of irresponsibility and dishonesty. It still angers me, but here we are today. Veterinarians regularly remark on her impressive health for a dog of her size, and I can’t complain. She’s healthy, we’re happy, and it’s all that really matters, isn’t it?

Five years later, the tiny dog I fought to save would give me much more in return.

### IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

On January 10, 2013, I sat in a sterile stall waiting to be taken to surgery. For over a month, I’d been searching for answers about the five hard masses in the right side of my neck. Despite blood tests, x-rays, CT scans and a small needle biopsy, doctors hadn’t determined the problem.

I was referred to Hematology, and in less than 24 hours, I was sitting in operation prep.

The next day was a Friday. The Hematologist called with an apology for having to do this over the phone, but she didn’t want me to have to wait a whole weekend to hear this.

The floor fell out from beneath me. It was cancer.

For five minutes, it seemed the room was without air, without sound. My heart stopped. And then came frustration and anger and sadness. The tears. But in those first few life-changing moments, all three of my dogs gathered around me, Tallulah among them.

Thanks in part to an extensive family history of cancers, it was never an “if I get it” situation so much as a “when?” I just didn’t expect it to come when I was 22 years old.

I gave up school, work and a sublease. I surrendered my independence and my body to science. The only thing I didn’t have to relinquish was the companionship of my dogs.

On the worst days, Tallulah was a guaranteed smile or a laugh, a constant companion and nurse. The dogs became my saving grace and the light in some of my darkest and loneliest hours.

My friends were making plans to travel and study abroad while my life was on hold. Tallulah climbed into bed with me and I asked her “What am I doing this for? What’s the point of any of this?” Her ears pricked up and her head tilted to the side as if she didn’t understand the question.

“Would you hate me if I wanted to give up?” She crawled toward me and gave a disgruntled bark as if she were saying “How dare you think like that!” She inched a little closer and rested her head on my arm. Her eyes pleaded with me to keep going. If I couldn’t find the reasons for myself, then for the sake of the dog who loved me enough to encourage me to keep fighting when I needed it most.

Love motivated me to fight for Tallulah, and love motivated her to stay by my side, unyielding. Love is stronger than pain, and that was what drove both of us to carry on. It’s why she’s here today, and the love of my family and my dogs is the reason why I’m here today.

When I saved Tallulah’s life, I did it selflessly with no hope of gaining anything in return. She repaid her thanks in kind, and for that, I am eternally grateful. PAW

*Sadasha Cameron is from Rochester.*



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