

Inspired Woman

PETS



SIT. STAY. HEAL.
PET THERAPY

FROM OUR READERS:
PET PHOTOS

OH MAN:
PARTNERS FIGHTING CRIME

FEBRUARY 2017
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mercy is over all that He has made."

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SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING WORKING MOTHERS

SOLUTIONS FOR COMBINING EMPLOYMENT WITH BREASTFEEDING

Although balancing employment and motherhood can be challenging, a supportive worksite environment can help reach their breastfeeding goals.

Help Mothers Succeed. The research is clear that the following four components of a worksite lactation support program help create the positive environment that women need to be successful in combining employment with breastfeeding:

1 A PRIVATE PLACE TO EXPRESS MILK

Being able to express milk in a comfortable, private place helps release the hormones necessary for milk to flow. A designated space within the worksite for a lactation room is one of the health benefits most valued by breastfeeding employees.

FLEXIBLE BREAKS

Women usually need to express milk every 2-3 hours (i.e. three times during a typical 8-hour work period). Normal paid break times are usually sufficient for women to express milk; in some situations, any extra time needed can be made up before or after work.

2

3 RESOURCES

Human resource staff at the organization can play a critical role in helping them anticipate their needs for managing working and breastfeeding.

SUPPORT

A positive, accepting attitude from both supervisors and coworkers helps breastfeeding employees feel good about their decision to continue breastfeeding and returning to work.

4

To learn more about Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health and how we can help you reach your breastfeeding goal, visit www.bismarcknd.gov/publichealth or call us at 355-1540.



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Editors' Notes



My sister was my first friend, but our dog Rags was my second, and most loyal friend. When my older sister went to kindergarten, Rags and I became inseparable, and I cried a million tears when she passed away many years later. We had other dogs and dozens of cats over the years, but none ever replaced my beloved Rags.

So 15 years ago when my husband suggested we get a dog, I was all in. Bob the black lab, joined our family and quickly became everyone's favorite member. He loved scotcheroos, beer, and pheasant hunting. The day we had to put him down was one of the hardest days of my life. But now we have Toby, a chocolate lab. His personality is completely different than Bob's but he's weaseled his way into all of our hearts. When my father-in-law died, Toby was the only one who could comfort our daughter Morgan, who was six at the time. He has a lot of energy, and doesn't sit still for long. But when Morgan needed him, he sat patiently and let her hug him and cry into his fur.

Coping with the loss of a loved one, whether that's a person or a pet, is never easy. We've got some tips to help those of you mourning the loss of a pet - that's on page 22. There are happy pet stories too! Mandy Anderson shares the lessons she's learned from her furbaby, and Lexi Kerzman shares some advice from an expert to help take better photos of our pets.

Working on this issue, one thing is clear: pets love us unconditionally. Pets are loyal and always happy to see us. We should all try to be more like our pets.

Jody



"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

Whatever kind of pet you have—dog, cat, guinea pig, or rabbit—this quote by Roger Caras can be true. Animals have a way of making life better. I believe they help us know ourselves, understand humanity, and teach us to connect and build relationships with other people. Think about the times you or your children have encountered a complete stranger walking their dog. In my own experience, it's just natural to stop to ask, "Can I pet your dog?" And that simple question leads to a brief, enjoyable conversation with someone I might have otherwise never met.

And animals do much more, as you will read in the articles waiting for you in this issue. Whether they help fight crime, nurse someone back to health, or ease anxiety and depression, animals do more than we realize or think about. Then there are the people who devote their lives to caring for our pets. This issue honors people who and the animals that love them.

I can't remember a time when I wasn't sharing my life with a pet. I grew up on a farm, so I was always caring for the baby kittens in the barn. We always had a dog or two, and even raised a couple litters of puppies. My husband and I don't have children, but we have always had dogs. The worst part, which any pet-owner knows, is having to say goodbye to them. We loved our black lab, Jet, and miniature dachshund, Molly, as if they were our children. Now Mickey and Sophie are "the kids." They might be little girls, but they take up a lot of space in my heart. Dogs have definitely made my life whole. Many times over.

Marci

If she were able, Lori Geist would have smiled when unexpected guests arrived at her hospital room doorway for a visit in January.

"Hi sweetheart. Look at you," Lori says, petting Jillian, a 13-year old Sheltie. "You're so beautiful."

Lori is recovering from Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a rare disorder in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system, resulting in paralysis. Her doctors say she will be hospitalized at least four months, so a surprise visit from Jillian made Lori's day. There was happiness in her eyes and her voice as she

of those visits is tough. He recalls seeing a woman who had just been told she had cancer and was being sent to Mayo Hospital.

"A nurse came to get me. She said the woman's daughter asked for Bailey and me to come to the woman's room," Gary says.

Bailey crawled up onto the hospital bed and lay quietly next to the woman.

"She would pet Bailey on the head, and then wipe a tear with the bedsheet," Gary remembers. "No one said anything. We sat there for a long time. Bailey was a hyper dog, normally. But she just stayed right beside the woman. I think Bailey knew she was needed."

But the comfort the dogs bring when they go into a hospital isn't just for patients.

"The nurse's stations really look forward to the visits," explains Jane Morrow, Sanford Health Director of Volunteer Services. "A lot of them have treats for the dogs."

SIT. STAY. HEAL. PET THERAPY

by Marci Narum
Photography: Photos by Jacy

stroked Jillian's long, smooth coat.

"I grew up on a farm and I was the one that would always bring stray dogs home. Even to this day my mother says, 'Lori, don't you bring another dog home.'"

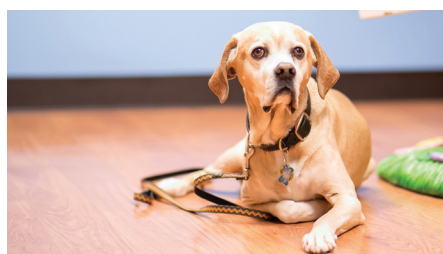
Jillian is right at home at Sanford Health in Bismarck, where she and other certified therapy dogs visit twice a week.

"If it's not naptime we can go up to the pediatric unit," says Jillian's owner, Joyce Masseth. She just crawls right up into bed with the kids."

"Therapy dogs provide happiness and comfort to patients," says Dr. Parag Kumar, pediatrician at Sanford Health. "It allows the patient to take their mind off of their illness and focus on something else. If a patient is feeling down and sad, the therapy dogs are a great way to spread joy and put a smile on the patient's face."

Gary Braun is one of several pet therapy volunteers at Sanford Health. He visits the hospital regularly with his dog, Sage, a nine-year old Portuguese Pointer. It's his second therapy dog; Bailey was his first.

Gary says being a pet therapy volunteer has its ups and downs. He says everyone needs a visitor, but making some



(TOP) From left to right: Chelsea and Remi, Gary and Sage, Myron, Joyce, and Jillian

(MIDDLE) Jillian

(BOTTOM) Sage

"A couple of years ago when there was a huge computer changeover we had the dogs come in to de-stress those who were working around the clock to get that done. So it's as much for the staff as it is for the patients," Jane says.

And then there are the people in the hospital just watching the clock—waiting to hear news about their loved ones. Joyce and Myron Masseth visit the surgical waiting room each time they bring Jillian to the hospital.

"You know people are so tense anyway in the waiting room. We just go in and wander around and sit down," Joyce

says. "Some are sitting there all by themselves and you know how bad that must feel. Even if they don't pet Jillian or say anything to her, they still have a smile on their face. That makes your day."

Jillian has been a pet therapy dog for several years. She was named the Pet Therapy Dog of the Year in 2013, but retirement could be in her future.

"I'm not sure how much longer she can do this," Joyce says.

In the meantime, others continue to become certified. Chelsea Schmaltz and her nine-year old Chocolate Labrador, Remi, have been pet therapy volunteers a

"It's not necessarily something that is trained. They've got in in them. She's got such a big heart"
—Joyce Masseth, about Jillian

“



little more than a year.

"She passed her Canine Good Citizen test, and we also got certified with Love on a Leash, a National Therapy organization for pets. It's a certification and insurance policy to say the dog is well-behaved and can go into the hospitals," Chelsea explains.

Chelsea says she has been very proud of Remi as a therapy dog. She recalls, during one visit to the pediatrics unit, three boys were so happy to see Remi, they tackled her. Remi didn't mind. She just loved them back.

Lori Geist couldn't tackle Remi when Chelsea stopped by to visit her, but she did get to pet Remi and give her a treat. And she told Chelsea about her own pets waiting for her to come home.

"I have a potbellied pig, a cat, and a Jack Russell Terrier," Lori says.

Lori also shared a smile—by way of words.

"Thank you so much for coming. This was so nice."

"Something always happens in those rooms, says Jane. "You just know these dogs have made a difference." *W*

(MIDDLE)
Lori Geist
petting Sage

(BOTTOM) Remi

TALES ABOUT FRIENDS WITH TAILS

by Pam Vukelic

I had a brief moment of panic when I learned this issue of Inspired Woman was going to focus on pets. I've never had pet. I did empty Furmann's litter box a few times but that is as close as I've come to having a pet. Furmann was my daughter's cat, named after Firemann (pronounced furmann), my much beloved father. I'm less capable of caring for Abe, my son-in-law's Golden Retriever, so am grateful that when "the kids" need help they trust me with Claire, now a perfectly delightful toddler, instead of Abe.

I do like to read, however, and I love books. For this article I decided to embark on the mission of finding a few books written from the point of view of an animal. It proves to be quite an interesting perspective and was a fun research project. I am indebted to friends and neighbors for making suggestions and for review-

ers whose material I have copied. What follows is a list of some books that even a non-pet owner might find enticing.

DOGS

"The Art of Racing in the Rain"

by Garth Stein (2009) Amazon 4.7 stars

Savor this book for many reasons: a dog who speaks, the thrill of competitive racing, a heart-tugging storyline, and, best of all, the fact that it is a meditation on humility and hope in the face of despair.

"A Dog's Purpose"

by W. Bruce Cameron (2011) Amazon 4.8 stars

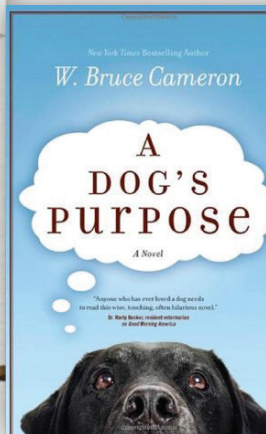
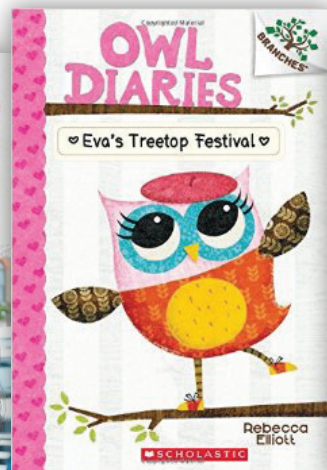
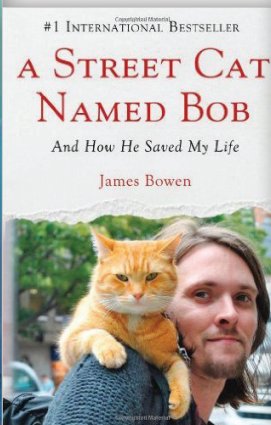
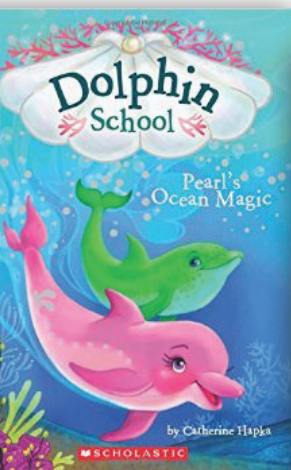
A tail-wagging three hanky boo-hoo-er, this delightful fiction debut proposes that a dog's purpose might entail being reborn several times. A book for anyone who admires canine courage, the author successfully captures the essence of a dog's amazing capacity to love and protect.

SHEEP

"Three Bags Full"

by Leonie Swann (2008) Amazon 3.9 stars

In this refreshingly original detective story a flock of sheep investigates the murder of their beloved shepherd. Leading the effort is Miss Maple, considered the cleverest sheep. She slyly "pretends" to graze while eavesdropping on suspects. The author's sheep's-eye view and the animals' literal translation of the strange words and deeds of the human species not only create laugh-out-loud



humor but also allow the animals occasional flashes of accidental brilliance.

CATS

"The Dalai Lama's Cat"

by David Michie (2012) Amazon 4.7 Stars

Spend some intimate time with the Dalai Lama as glimpsed through the devoted eyes of his gorgeous (self-described) Himalayan rescue cat. The author, an expert on Buddhism and mindfulness, shares Buddhist principles through everyday situations, not for purposes of conversion, but to create greater happiness. This charming and highly entertaining book will cheer you up and warm your heart.

"A Street Cat Named Bob: And How He Saved My Life"

by James Bowen (2014) Amazon 4.7 stars

Only a heart of stone will not be moved, even to tears, in bearing witness to the love of a London street musician for the gorgeous ginger tomcat he found one day in his apartment building hallway. The cat, soon called Bob, was injured, so Bowen took him in. This is a beautiful, never maudlin story of second chances for both man and beast. It is a poignant testimony to how much caring for someone, or, in this case, some feline, can give you renewed direction when you're down and out.

FOR CHILDREN

"Pearl's Ocean Magic (Number 1 in the Dolphin School Series)"

by Catherine Hapka (2016) Amazon 4.7 stars

Pearl is a magical dolphin of the Salty Sea and today is her first day of school. Her classmates Echo and Splash make great new friends. Together they start learning dolphin skills like magic, music, and jumping.

"Eva's Treetop Festival: A Branches Book (Number 1 in the Owl Diaries Series)"

by Rebecca Elliott (2015) Amazon 4.6 stars

This adorable early chapter book series is perfect for young girls who love friendship stories starring animal characters. The series is part of Scholastic's early chapter book line called Branches, aimed at newly independent readers. With easy-to-read text, high-interest content, fast-paced plots, and illustrations on every page, these books will boost reading confidence and stamina.

"There Is a Bird On Your Head! (Elephant and Piggie Series)"

by Mo Willems (2007) Amazon 4.9 stars

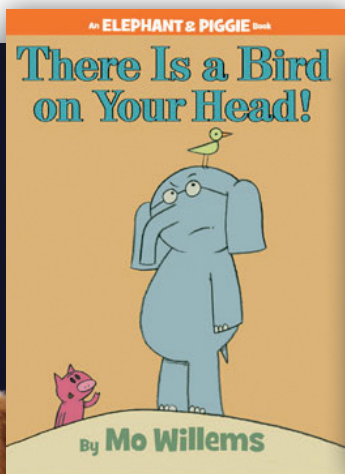
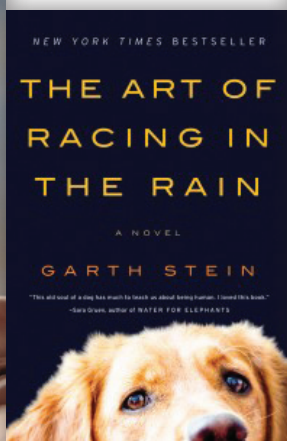
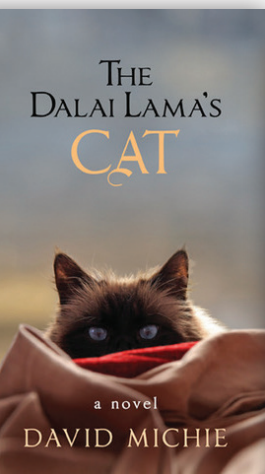
Gerald is careful. Piggie is not. Piggie cannot help smiling. Gerald can. Gerald

worries so does not ha
ald and Pigi
friends.

Other
come to mi
Beauty, Jon
ington Sea
the Wild, Tir
Horse, and
Down. *W*



Pam Vukelic is an online FACS (Family and Consumer Sciences) instructor for the Missouri River Educational Consortium. Pam is also grandma to Connor, Evin, and Claire. She splits her time between Bismarck and The Villages in Florida. And if you need your cat's litter box changed, call someone else.



RESOLUTIONS

by Noreen Keesey



There are a lot of good things about January. It's the start of a new year. It's fresh. A new beginning, and a popular time to resolve to make changes in our lives. We will eat better, exercise more, lose weight, and be more productive. We make plans and give it a solid effort. We join the gym, Google healthy recipes, and think about all the things we'll do to make our dreams reality.

And now it is February, and 92 percent of us gave up on our resolutions weeks ago. The year isn't as fresh, and we are likely to be disappointed in ourselves for not following through. Our internal critic gets vocal, and we go back to our normal routine. At least until next year when we try again.

My father told me about the resolution he made years ago that was the only resolution he has kept. He resolved to never again make resolutions. I think that perhaps the greatest brilliance in his approach is that he figured out what works for him and stuck with it. We are all very different, with varying strengths and talents, so one bit of advice is unlikely to work for everyone. It's to our benefit if we stop berating ourselves for our continued failings, and figure out what works with our own particular quirks and habits.

Before considering ideas to increase

your chances of success, or at least quiet that inner critic, let us take a minute to bring some clarity to the topic of resolutions. Specifically, how they differ from goals.

A **resolution** is a decision; a firmness of purpose. It is a commitment to an action or method. Eating a healthy diet, committing to regular exercise, and meditating daily are examples of resolutions.

A **goal** differs in that it has a defined outcome or end, such as losing 25 pounds by the end of the year or running a marathon before the snow flies again. We may have to incorporate daily action in order to accomplish the goal, but it has a clearly defined end date and timeline.

Many people use the terms goal and resolution interchangeably, but it can be helpful to understand the difference and how they can work together to support your success.

A critical component to the success of your resolution or goal is to be sure that it is important to you. As difficult as change is, your desire for the new reality must be clear and desirable to you. This deserves some extra attention; if your

“Failure is only the opportunity to begin again,
only this time more wisely.”

—Henry Ford

outcome is important in theory or important to someone else, it will be difficult to attain as you may not have the motivation needed to make the necessary changes to your daily routine. When considering your commitment or outcome, take the time to outline exactly why it is meaningful and important that you succeed. What does the goal support in your life? How will it improve your relationships, health, work, or well-being? Why do you care about it? Incorporate the answers into your resolution or goal.

Now that your motivation is clearly defined, find a way to keep it within your awareness. Our habits run a large portion of our day, and if we fail to maintain attention on the new behaviors we are working to incorporate, the days can slip by and we lose momentum. Pull out a sticky pad and jot down notes to leave around your living space, write your reason in your planner each week to help you schedule the actions you will take, or enter a digital reminder on your phone to pop up at regular intervals to help you remember your "why." Perhaps do all three.

The last recommendation I'll make is to stop trying to be perfect. If you have broken the resolution you made on New Year's Eve or failed to implement any action toward your goal, just begin again. Remind yourself of your motivation and take advantage of the new day that is to come with another chance for a fresh start. Give yourself permission to start small. If you don't have time or energy for a two mile run, then take a 10-minute walk and congratulate yourself for doing something rather than being frustrated that it wasn't enough. Allow yourself time to incorporate your new habits with small, consistent steps in the right direction.

Celebrate the small successes along the way, forgive the missteps, and use them as learning opportunities. What can you adjust in order to prevent its recurrence? It may take a good deal of trial, effort, and support, but identify what you really want, figure out what works for you, eliminate what doesn't, and stick with it. *M*



Noreen is a leadership coach and trainer who believes deeply in the Army leadership principle "Know yourself and seek self-improvement." She enjoys reading, watching movies, and laughing with friends over a good cocktail. She is uncomfortable with small talk and is scared of moths but she has welcomed her daughter's pet guinea pig, Moony, into the family.

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KRISTIN SATHE

When Kristin Sathe's doctor at Mayo Clinic suggested she look into alternative therapies for wellness, her search led her to beads and crystals. She never dreamed it would lead to a business venture.

"I fell in love with the beads," she says.

Kristin says healing beads help her deal with multiple sclerosis, chronic migraines, and fibromyalgia.

"I didn't want to just carry around a bunch of rocks in my pocket. I wanted to wear them as jewelry," she explains. "I started looking for ways to wear the stones, but I couldn't find any jewelry I liked so I decided I would just make it myself. People wanted to buy it right off of me! So I started my own business."

Kristin's business, Aunt Kitty's Designs, is just over a year old, and already her jewelry, handmade in Williston, North Dakota, has been featured in swag bags at pre-parties for both the Emmys and the Golden Globes.

Kristin is quick to point out she is not a doctor, and does not recommend using stones instead of seeing a doctor, but she says the stones are worth incorporating.

"I still seek medical help for all my issues and I take my doctors' advice," she says. "I do feel better and I think the stones bring a sense of calm and peace. There are no side effects and if the stones don't make you feel better, you still have a pretty piece of jewelry."

To learn more about Kristin's designs, and to purchase your own, visit her website, auntkittysdesign.com.



ANNE MAHLUM

Anne Mahlum's life has been full of challenges and successes. The Bismarck native now calls Washington, D.C. home, where she is the owner and CEO of [solidcore], a boutique fitness company she founded 2013. In just three years, Anne and her team have opened [solidcore] studios across the country, including studios in Maryland, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. She'll open a studio in Bismarck by late February or early March. Studios are also planned in Dallas, New York, Chicago, and Florida. And that's just for 2017.

"Bismarck is very different than any of our other locations. But as long as there is a fitness-focused community and a way for us to get locally-connected in those communities, we think [solidcore] is a good fit."

Anne says [solidcore] is not a gym; it's a studio where high-intensity, low-impact 50-minute sessions tone and lengthen your body. Anne explains you burn an average of 600 calories per class, but for the next 24-36 hours after class, your metabolism is increased so your body can repair the muscles. Anne says it is about more than just exercising. It's also about helping women learn to love their bodies.

"We don't body shame anyone. We all have different body shapes, different heights, different torso lengths, leg length, whatever. You'll see a bunch of different shapes and sizes and people respecting and loving their bodies."

To learn more about [solidcore], visit solidcore.co.



RENITA BRANNAN & MONICA HANNAN

Writing and telling stories comes easy for Monica Hannan. She's been a trusted news professional for decades, as the veteran co-anchor of NBC North Dakota News on KFYR-TV, and as co-host of the ND Today Show.

Publishing her own story was a little different. But it's already been on Amazon's best-seller list, reaching number one within the first two days of its release.

Monica teamed up with local fitness and health expert, Renita Brannan to co-author "*Nice and F.A.T.*," published last December. In the book, Monica shares her decision to lose weight and get back into shape. Renita reveals how she helped Monica succeed.

"Renita has all this health and fitness knowledge and was really help-

ful to me," Monica explains. "I wanted to help her in return and also share the information with others. Her plan of attack is different from what most people do when they're starting a diet and exercise plan."

"It's about blood-sugar stabilization," Renita explains. "Eat protein, fats, and carbs every three hours. So then your blood sugar stays stable, and you don't have these highs and lows that cause you to store fat, and burn muscle."

"I think people can relate to the story," Monica adds. "We have so much food available but we don't take time to cook. We make it harder than it is."

Find "*Nice and F.A.T.*" at Barnes and Noble, the Rainbow Shop in Bismarck, and on Amazon.



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www.bigbluecouchcoaching.com



A WOMAN FINDS HER *Cape*

by Tracie Bettenhausen
Photography: Photos by Jacy

Kelsey Schulz says it happened because she's different.

It's why the kids bullied her, all the way back to kindergarten.

They picked on her because she was skinny. She was pale. Quiet. Short.

Kelsey says the bullying started so young because her classmates seemed to have their groups of friends built before school even started. They were in preschool together, or went to the same daycare.

"I had a couple friends eventually,

but they were more like bully friends," she says. "We were friends one day, and I was there the next day for them to stomp on."

In middle school, they called her fat and ugly. This followed Kelsey all the way to high school. Kelsey says she would try to fight back.

"It was a hurricane of girl power, cornering me in the locker room. Fighting back just gave them more ammo.

"I kind of told my parents about it then, but nobody realizes just how much this affects a person," she says. "I had it planned out since I was a fresh-

man, how I could graduate from high school early to get out of there, but my parents wouldn't sign off on it."

Kelsey's mom, Jackie, thought the stories were just girl drama.

"She didn't tell us the detail of what was happening, and I just assumed things would get better," Jackie says. "I wanted her to stay in high school. I thought she would regret that."

One day, Jackie came home to find Kelsey hyperventilating, in the middle of a full-blown anxiety attack. So worked up, Kelsey needed to be carried to the car to get to the hospital.

After several emergency room visits, Kelsey was diagnosed with anxiety and depression. But it took outpatient therapy for everyone to learn the cause of her distress was likely bullying.

As Kelsey went through therapy, and learned why her self-esteem was so low, she was having trouble finding the right combination and dose of prescription drugs to treat the anxiety and depression.

That's when Jackie began to knit a cape.

"When your daughter is hyperventilating for two hours, and she stiffens up so bad, it scares you," Jackie says. "I was doing whatever I could to try to fix it. I got on the internet, and found horse therapy."

A friend connected Jackie with the Triple H Miniature Horse Rescue, founded by Alison Larson Smith. Though not a licensed horse therapy provider, Alison knows working with horses can be therapeutic and invited Kelsey out to help take care of the animals.

"They're rescue horses, so it was them building trust with me, and me building trust with them," Kelsey says. "I hadn't been around horses before this, but they teach you a lot about yourself. We did grooming, basic handling. I got to work with a young filly, and a little goat."

During this time, Kelsey also started attending Search for Christian Maturity, a weekend retreat sponsored by the Diocese of Bismarck, located in Medo-

ra, North Dakota. During Search, Kelsey got up in front of the entire group to tell her story about being bullied and her journey toward accepting herself.

Kelsey found strength and confidence in sharing. When she was talking with Alison one day, they had an idea. Kelsey could help by putting on her own cape.

Alison organizes a program called "Put on the Cape." Alison has five adopted pets with different disabilities. She fits the pets with superhero capes, and the crew presents at schools.

The students receive bracelets that read, "Put on the cape," to remind them to speak up if they see somebody getting bullied. The animals help demonstrate that being different isn't bad.

"Some animals are different, but they want to be loved like everybody else. It's the same with people," Kelsey says.

Kelsey shared her story with Alison's help at Highland Acres Elementary in Bismarck, North Dakota.

"For elementary school kids, it's all about accepting everyone just as they are. Don't judge, be compassionate to everybody. When I was finished, the kids had questions," Kelsey says. "One asked if I'd ever told anyone I was being bullied. That's a great question. They asked, 'Did the bullies ever get caught?'"

She approaches older kids differently.

"I try to be realistic and not sugarcoat anything. I think if I'm real with them, and tell them what happened to me, it helps it sink in a lot more. I'm close to their age (20 years old), so I think they can relate to me," she says. "If I could talk to the kids who are doing



the bullying, I want them to know how severely they're affecting their victim. Do they know that person might cry themselves to sleep? They might start cutting themselves, or starving themselves? I think if they know the true effect, they wouldn't do it. They're not thinking about their victim, they're only thinking about how to build themselves up."



Jackie says it's hard to forgive herself for not understanding how bad Kelsey's bullying was.

"I thank God every day Kelsey is still with us. I'd call home, and if she wouldn't answer, I was so scared I'd come home and find her

somewhere," she says. "I do believe that if bullies would know the hell they put people through, it would change their behavior. I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy."

Kelsey says she's still different. She always was, and always will be.

"It's that difference that's given me two manager positions at work, good grades all throughout school. I feel like I am where I am now because I am different."

And the cape worn on her shoulders can wrap around others as well.

"I've always been super-duper sensitive, and have always wanted to do good for other people," she says. "If I talk about this, I feel like I can help prevent this from happening to others." *M*



Tracie Bettenhausen is a senior staff writer/editor at Basin Electric. She gives a warm home and regular meals to two once-foster, now-adopted kitties, Basil and Sweet Pea. She is a meditation wannabe who spends too much time on Twitter.



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UNEXPECTED LESSONS FROM A FUR BABY

by Mandy B. Anderson | Photography: Mosaic Photography

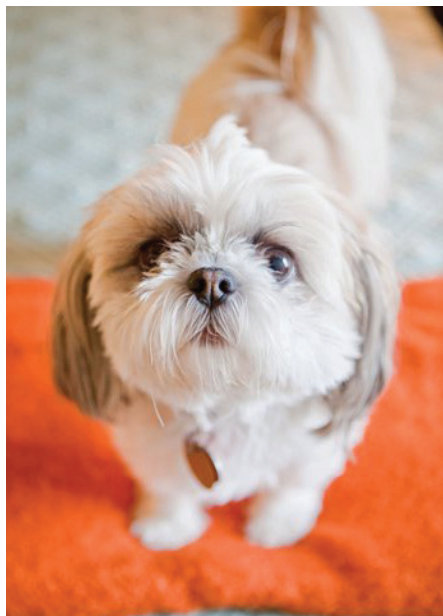
“Hi Bestie!!! Where’s Ajah?”

This is the question I get every time I see my adopted niece. She’s four and loves my dog almost as much as I do. It’s not hard to see why – Ajah has been popular among the kids for years. It’s probably because I’ve kept her as close to me as possible ever since the fire of 2010.

Dogs have always been a part of my life. As an only child, my dog was the only sibling I had. So it only made sense that my husband and I would become parents to a four-legged fur baby as soon as we bought our first house.

I’ll never forget the day I met her. She was only two weeks old, and she fit in the palm of my hand. The moment I held her and then handed her to my husband, I knew she was my dog. She cried in his hands and immediately stopped when he gave her back to me. We brought her home at seven weeks old and she’s been my baby ever since.

Ajah B. is a shih tzu. She’s a princess, that’s for sure. She loves people and detests other dogs. Her 13th birthday was last month and lately I’ve become very aware of how short her life will be compared to mine. You see, Ajah has some health problems and it’s only a matter of time before we have to make some hard decisions. My heart breaks just thinking about it, because it turns out that this fur baby of mine has completely stolen my heart and taught me some unexpected les-



sons through the years.

1. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE IN MEANINGFUL WAYS.

We have our own language, she and I. It wasn't always this way; I guess it transpired over the course of the last six-and-a-half years of learning how to live the schedule of a rig-wife when my husband was working in the oilfield. Ajah has taught me that you don't have to speak the same language to understand each other. In her eyes I can read happiness, frustration, irritation, and pain in ways nobody else can. She can read mine the

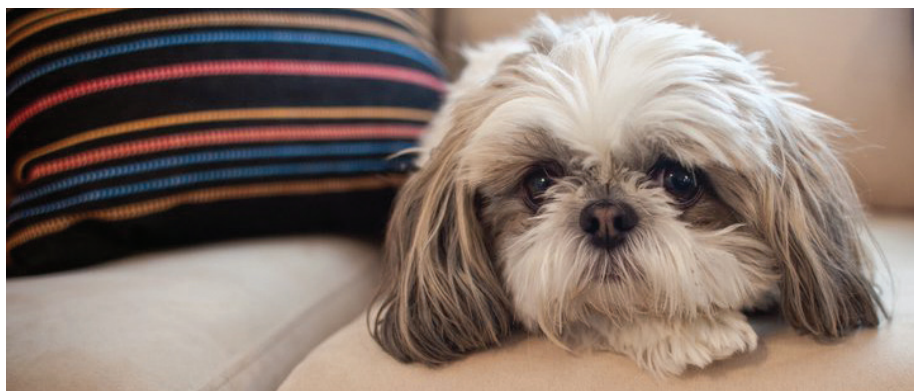


3. THE COMPASSION OF A DOG IS A TREASURED GIFT AND IT'S MY JOB TO RETURN THE FAVOR.

In 2012 I was going through some pretty life-threatening health challenges. Ajah B. was my constant companion and showed her compassion for me by cuddling next to me, sometimes for hours on end, as I struggled to muster up the energy to let her outside. She was so patient with me; it's like she knew how sick I was and that I was doing the best I could.

(TOP) Mandy and Ajah B.

Well, now it's my turn to be there for her. Lately I'm reminded that this precious little friend of mine is looking to me to ease her pain and love her through the tough days, while creating moments to cherish on the many good days that she still has left. So I will return



same. It's really quite fascinating to be able to understand an animal in such a way. Beautiful, really.

2. COURAGE COMES IN ALL SIZES.

This prissy little 10-pound pup of mine is the most courageous dog I've ever met. She survived six hours in an apartment fire that destroyed everything and left over a hundred people homeless in one night. To this day I don't know how she did it. I suspect she really was scared, but found a safe spot somehow. I also suspect that God was with her and heard my prayers for a miracle. She is a brave little dog. (And yes, I remind her of this often.)

the favor and show her compassion, even when it's hard for me.

Soon, the day will come when I will find myself missing the loving language that Ajah and I share. Her courage will be but a memory, and I will long for the compassionate cuddles that have been a part of my life for so many years. However, we still have the gift of right now.

And I'll forever have the gift of the unexpected lessons from my fur baby. *M*



Mandy B. Anderson is the CEO of Big Blue Couch® Coaching, LLC. Born with Cystic Fibrosis, Mandy has walked the road of an overcomer her entire life. She is passionate about helping others rise above their circumstances, be brave, and live beautifully whole.

WHEN YOUR PET DIES

by Sue Buchholz | Submitted Photo

Losing a companion animal, whether it's a dog, cat, horse, hamster, or any animal, is a deeply personal experience for each of us. I have often heard people say that the pain can be more intense at times than the loss of a human family member. Then they experience even more guilt for feeling that way. Experts reassure us that this intense grief is completely natural and has been shared by many animal lovers. Animals fill a deep need in our lives, individual for each of us. The unconditional love and companionship they freely give every day we share with them is a painful void indeed when they pass away. How could it be anything else?

In all my years at the shelter I have seen both ends of the spectrum. People who sadly come through the door loaded down with pet beds, toys, leashes, collars, medications, and a need to talk about their recent loss. They sometimes say that they want to wait a while before consid-

ering getting another pet. And that's ok. Some say that they will never get another pet, because the grief they are experiencing is too much to go through again. And that's certainly understandable. Usually those people come back a few months later and say, "the house is just too quiet, I am lonely and ready to consider adopting again" and that's most certainly ok. Some look to get another pet immediately, and I think for them that can ease their pain and be the right decision too.

You can never replace a pet that was lost to you. Never. But you can always offer your heart and home to another in need, and there is always another in need. *M*



Sue Buchholz has been the Shelter Director at Central Dakota Humane Society since 1994. With a job like that, it is impossible not to take home the strays. Sue currently has a cat and three dogs, and may be adding another dog soon.

Brenda Bergan makes home visits for grief support to families served by Eastgate/Parkway Funeral Service, and she leads support groups for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. She has made the Eastgate/Parkway her own: "Helping Families Heal." Most of the time, that means helping families cope with the loss of a person, but she says she has done visits for those grieving the loss of a pet. Brenda has some tips for people mourning the loss of a pet:

1. **Talk about it.** Brenda says talking about your pet and about your grief is an important step to healing.
2. **Be patient and kind.** Brenda says it's ok to be sad. Be patient with yourself and know that, in time, those feelings will become more tolerable and the sharpness of the loss will be replaced with the beautiful memories.
3. **Remember the good times.** Brenda encourages people to recall the entire movie of your life with your beloved pet, not just the snapshot of

the ending.

4. **It's okay to get another dog or cat.** Your pet will never be replaced but Brenda says some of us just need to have an animal in our lives, and adopting a new pet is a great way to honor the pet you lost.
5. **Be honest.** Brenda says for a lot of kids, the death of a pet is often a child's first experience with grief. "Any child old enough to love is old enough to grieve," she says. "Be honest with your children and let them know it's okay to be sad."

If you're mourning the loss of a beloved pet, Brenda says she's always available to talk. She can be reached at 701-223-7322 or 701-426-1021.

Brenda Bergan
Grief Care Coordinator
Eastgate Parkway Funeral Service





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Betsy Hamkens

FIRST LOVE

by Marci Narum | Photography: Photos by Jacy



Betsy Hamkens has been happily married to her husband, Steve, for 43 years. But she still remembers her first love, long before Steve was in the picture.

"When I was growing up, my dad was into dogs," Betsy says. "Dogs, dogs, dogs, dogs, dogs. And we had six kids in our family. That many years ago, as a girl, you were expected to be in the house helping with cooking and cleaning. My dad was with his hunting dogs and I just found that it was so much more exciting to be out with him and his hunting dogs."

And it was more than puppy love for young Betsy. At every opportunity, she was learning all she could about dogs, different breeds, and how to train them.

"I got started reading training books as a kid. At that time there was no such thing as the Internet. I would be reading and talking to people and I started applying what I could find out there. I started doing my own kid training and that just sort of evolved into adult training. It's always been in my background.

"I did a lot of competitions with my own dogs, not so much for the competition aspect, although that was great. I competed in order to get through the different levels of obedience, getting certified by a judge, and getting titles on my dogs. It was proof that yes, indeed, I know what I'm doing and I know

how to go about training dogs. I went to a major amount of seminars and did a lot of networking and observing, including learning behaviors of many breeds and groups of dogs."

In the late 1970s, while working a full-time job, Betsy started offering private lessons on the side. She was becoming the local expert on dog training.

"People were calling from all over the place. They needed help with their dogs and since that's my first love, I thought let's take that leap of faith. I've been going ever since."

LOVE & FAITH

And people have been putting their faith in Betsy and her Pawsitive Motivational K9 Instruction for 35 years. She has helped countless individuals and families in Bismarck and Mandan train their dogs, and is still considered the local "dog whisperer." People have come from communities across North Dakota with their dogs to take the dog training classes Betsy teaches at Bismarck State College. Betsy also gives private in-home lessons and holds class in her backyard during summer months. People from all over the state and beyond call Betsy for advice on everything from house-training to basic commands.

"I still get a lot of calls from women who say, 'My dog listens to all the male figures in our family but will not listen to me.' And that's due to how the



woman is more nurturing and needs to be more assertive—not angry or more aggressive, but more assertive. And I get simple calls about dogs that won't come when called."

Brian and Jeanne Masseth recently called on Betsy, after surprising their kids with a puppy in December. They needed advice on potty-training their 10-week old black Labrador, Molly. And this isn't the first time the Masseth's have worked with Betsy. She also helped train their first dog, Copper, a chocolate Labrador.

"The first time Betsy ever came to our house, she gave us all sorts of advice as far as tips on finding a good place to keep Copper in the shade during the day if we're at work, and here's a good place to section off in your garage for him."

That was 15 years ago. Jeanne says they have taken all of Betsy's classes and are signed up for her spring class at BSC.

TRAINING INJURY

Betsy has seen generations of devoted followers like the Masseth's. But lately, she has been doing less training—doctor's orders. In March 2016 Betsy had shoulder replacement surgery, but the incision has not healed properly.

"The surgeon said, 'I really wish you would quit doing training for a while, because any movement on that shoulder that is above and beyond normal, is setting it back.'"

In December, Betsy's prosthetic shoulder had to be removed. Her surgeon will perform a second operation this March. In the meantime, there is a spacer where her shoulder would be, her arm is supported by a sling, and Betsy is managing the pain until she gets her new shoulder. She is due to begin teaching classes at BSC March 15.

"A couple of people will help me. The surgeon and his team will determine whether I'm ready. But I'm still wanting to do something to get back into the game. I've told the surgeon, 'I want my life back!'

"When this happened with my shoulder I was in a funk for a long time. It really got me down. I thought, I can't end like this. I can't end it. I've got to be able to keep going."

LOVE HURTS

December brought another round of gloom for Betsy, when she had to say goodbye to one of her Australian shepherds. Twelve-year-old Rain had bone cancer and began to fail rapidly on Christmas Eve.

Brian, Carson,
Emma, and
Jeanne Masseth



"Steve and I made the decision on Christmas morning to send Rain on his journey to the Rainbow Bridge.

"Rain was one of the most special dogs I ever owned out of 35 years," Betsy says, her voice cracking. "He was my buddy. My challenge. He was just a glorious, beautiful dog."

Rain was as well-known in the dog training community as Betsy is. He went along with Betsy everywhere, including pet therapy at the hospitals. So when the messages of love and sympathy for Betsy came, they poured, like rain.

"They knew him through competitions. We were always in the ribbons. Rain was just a magnificent competition dog. I've had others, but Rain did the best of all my dogs, ever. In 2015 he was listed as number five at the Utility Obedience level in the Australian Shepherd Journal for the United State Australian Shepherd Association. He was a fine dog."

Betsy's other two Australian shepherds, four-year old Haze, and 10-year old Cloud are still adjusting to a new routine and life without Rain.

GOOD DOGS

Over the years, Betsy figures she's had more than a dozen of her own dogs, and has especially been fond of

the herding group dogs for their high level of intelligence.

"I actually like the challenge the herding breeds will give you. Unlike some of the other groups, when you start teaching the herding groups, they will study and think about what you want them to do. They don't just jump in and do it because you're asking them to do it."

All of her dogs have been obedience-titled and some confirmation-pointed and championed. Betsy and her dogs have earned so many ribbons, trophies, and certificates, she began running out of wall space to display them all. So she started scrapbooking. Each of Betsy's dogs has its own set of scrapbooks.

Betsy will be the first to tell you that your dog doesn't need to earn ribbons or trophies to be a winner. You have a top dog when you have a well-behaved dog that listens to your commands. Giving clients the tools to achieve that is her goal.

"I just want people to be happy with their dog, so I jump in with both feet trying to find something that will work for dogs. If one thing doesn't work, I've got a good tool box so I can pull out other things that work.

Betsy can't say exactly how many dogs she has helped train in 35 years,



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(LEFT) Denise Ziegler

(RIGHT) Lucky and her new family, Ross and Barb Ebel

THRIVENT CELEBRATES WOMEN OF GENEROSITY:

Denise Ziegler

As a Realtor®, Denise Ziegler finds homes for families in the Bismarck-Mandan area. As an animal lover, she does the same for homeless animals. It started four years ago, with a sick little dachshund named Lucky.

"My friend, Brenda Smith called and said, 'I need your help. There's a dachshund at the pound. She's not eating, she's not drinking, and no one is claiming her. Can you go get her?'"

"Lucky was a black and tan," Denise explains. "Filthy and matted, but she was a little lover."

Denise rescued Lucky, took her to the vet for a checkup and vaccinations, and found her a new home within one week. Since then, Denise has rescued several dogs, including three other little wiener dogs, two of which were going to be euthanized.

"I love all dogs, but dachshunds just steal your heart. They are tenacious and stubborn and cute, and fun to play with. But there are a lot of them in rescue. If you don't train them, they can become a problem."

Denise knows, because dachshunds have been part of her life for a long time. Her most recent is Roxee, whom she adopted through North Dakota Animals in Need (NDAIN). And that was even after Roxee bit her when they first met. Denise still has a tiny scar on her left hand.

"I couldn't get her out of the crate, so I said, 'can I take the crate too?'" De-

nise laughs. "I brought her home, and she's come a long way in two-and-a-half years."

Denise went on to foster dogs for NDAIN. She also made room in her home for Gypsy, a Border collie-golden retriever cross she rescued from abuse and neglect, plus many rescued cats that now live in her barn with her four horses. The vet bills over the years have added up, but Denise has no idea what she has spent rescuing and re-homing animals over the years; she has never kept track. That was never the point.

"There is no sense in adding more unwanted dogs into the world. I can't have human children so this was maybe God's plan, for me to help out the four-legged ones when I can."

The downside: Denise has said goodbye to many dogs that have found a home after finding a place in her heart.

"It's hard letting them go. But I can't keep them all. And if I do, there's not room to rescue another one."

"For me, it's all about them getting a forever home, Denise says. "I just want to get them to be the best little dog they can be so they can find the best home, where they'll be forever." *M*

by Marci Narum | Submitted Photos



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LIVING TREASURES

Margrieta Skroms

by Marci Narum | Submitted Photos



Marg Skroms,
age 97



Veterinarian
school in Latvia



Marg & Janis

As she sits in her Edgewood Vista apartment in Bismarck crocheting baby blankets and afghans, 97-year old Margrieta Skroms has a claim to fame few people know about.

Marg, as she is most often called, moved to the United States in the late 1940s with her husband, Janis. They had come from Germany on sponsorship, and received five dollars when they arrived. They went to work on an Ohio farm, where Marg fed the pigs and took care of two thousand chickens, while Janis milked the cows, and helped in the field.

But that didn't last long. Marg and Janis had bigger plans. Born and raised in the Baltic state of Latvia, the Skroms were both doctors of veterinary medicine.

Their next move was to North Dakota. They had heard the town of Carson was looking for a veterinarian. And at a time in our country's history when gender roles rarely shifted, Marg was a pioneer: Marg Skroms became the first female veterinarian in North Dakota.

"Our vet school had about the same program as some here in United States," Marg says, with her strong Latvian accent. "And so when we came here we didn't have to pass exams, nothing. Yes, we had to pass the state board to get a license to work."

Marg says she and her husband made a good team. And although she was the first woman in this role in North Dakota, Marg is quick to say that certain jobs in the field of veterinary medicine were better left to her husband.

"Because you need the muscles," she explains. "Helping borne calves. Sometimes there are accidents when they're having a calf; the whole womb comes out, and this has to be put back. It's a very hard

job. My husband didn't want me to do those things. Just those things that were not as physical. So he did the heaviest job and I did the lighter job."

But there wasn't any job Marg didn't like or wasn't willing to do as a veterinarian.

"Sure there were some that were smearable and you have to shower after. You do what comes and that's it. You don't think about if you like or not, you just do it."

And Marg and Janis did this work together for decades, never having their own family.

"No," Marg says, raising her hands, smiling, and chuckling. "You see, Sweetheart, I'm sorry, but I would say, we didn't have time."

From Carson, the couple moved to New Leipzig. Then in 1961, they settled in Mott, where they bought some land on the edge of town, built a house, and then a clinic two years later. They operated Cannonball Veterinary Clinic for 30 years.

During this time, Marg's family left Latvia too. Marg and Janis sponsored her parents and one of her younger siblings to join them in North Dakota. Marg says her family, especially her father, was a major influence in her decision to become a veterinarian. Her love for animals was nurtured early, during time she spent with her father. He raised horses for the Latvian Army, and produced race horses.

"And I was raised together with the horses. I liked the horses. I was the oldest in the family and was kind of the tomboy, you know, who saw what dad would do, and I could do it."

Her father would have been proud. In 1984 the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association named Marg Veterinarian of the Year.

It has been a long time since Marg retired from her work as our state's first female veterinarian, but incredibly, only about a year since she's been on a horse. If not for some pain in her knees and the pacemaker in her chest, she might like to ride again. Instead, she enjoys cherished memories and stories, while she crochets hundreds of afghans and baby blankets.

M



Marg & Janis
in Latvia



Marg at Cannon-
ball Veterinary
Clinic, 1971



Race horse Marg's
father raised,
1942



Marg & her
working horse,
Joe 1986



Marg, 1942

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PARTNERS FIGHTING CRIME

by Jody Kerzman | Submitted Photos

Dogs are great pets, but they're also great workers. Just ask the officers at the Bismarck Police Department, where there are currently three patrol dogs working. The dogs—Luna, Bala, and Oscar—are specially-trained to search for drugs and people. Their handlers have put in thousands of hours training and bonding with their dogs, whom they proudly call their partners and their best friends.

LUNA AND LT. CHAD FETZER

"I've always been a dog guy," says Bismarck Police Lt. Chad Fetzer.

So when he had the opportunity to become a K9 handler with the department, Lt. Fetzer jumped at the chance.

"It's an opportunity that doesn't come around that often. There are only three dogs in our department, so it's a pretty big honor to be one of the handlers," he says.

Lt. Fetzer started working with Luna, a Dutch shepherd from Holland, in December 2012. They hit it off immediately, and the two have been recognized for their work. In 2014, Luna was the North Dakota Professional Animal of the Year, was inducted into the North Dakota Animal Hall of Fame, and was also named Top Dog Overall

at a regional K9 competition in Minnesota. Luna is now six years old and still working hard everyday. She is trained and certified in narcotics detection, tracking, evidence recovery, and criminal apprehension. She is also Lt. Fetzer's best friend.

"Being a K9 handler is much different than getting a dog as a pet," he explains. "As handlers with the department, our dogs are with us 24 hours a day—they come to work with us for 12 hours and then go home with us. The bond is pretty close, and having that bond with them helps us do the job and helps them want to work for us. We have cameras in the front and the back of our patrol cars and if you watch our in-car videos, you can see when I am outside my patrol car and Luna is in the back, she is staring at me the whole time. If someone gets animated or starts talking loud, she goes crazy. She totally has my back."

Lt. Fetzer says Luna and the other police dogs are the most popular officers at the department.

"We get a lot of requests to bring the dogs to events, schools, and job fairs and show people how they work," he says. "Every year when we do our citizen survey, citizens say they wish we had more dogs."

Luna and
Lt. Chad Fetzer



People know there is a drug problem in Bismarck and that dogs are the best way to deal with that problem. If there are drugs like meth or heroin concealed in a car there's no way for a human to know what's in there without using a dog to find it. There's not an odor that an officer can smell, but a dog can tell us if it's in there."

Luna and Lt. Fetzer have over 400 career patrol deployments as a K9 team, including narcotics and building searches, tracks, and cash seizures.

At age six, Luna's working days are nearly over. Most police dogs work an average of five years, depending on the dog's health. Lt. Fetzer says jumping in and out of a police car all day has been hard on Luna's hips. Still, he says there is nothing Luna loves more than going to work.

"Police dogs have the best life of any dog. They get to come to work all day and do what they love to do and then go home and be inside and get lots of attention. It's a great life."

BALA AND OFFICER DAN SALANDER

You can't miss the sense of pride in Officer Dan Salander's voice as he recalls his dog Bala's first criminal apprehension.

"There was a felon who had a weapon and was holding a woman hostage. She managed to get away and call police, but the suspect fled. Detectives saw him go into a building so officers surrounded the building. The suspect said he had a knife and he said he wasn't coming out alive. He called his family and told them this was it. He had been shot by law enforcement before and he wasn't listening to the officers'

commands. They called in Bala and I and she went to the front of the line and started barking. He heard her and he surrendered. He was willing to get shot by the police, but he didn't want to get bit by a dog," says Officers Salander. "That was a really rewarding call because no officers got hurt and the suspect didn't get hurt either. That was our first real apprehension and Bala did everything she was supposed to do, just like we trained. Those situations are really rare and even though we train for them, you never know how your dog is going to perform. As a handler, you have to trust your dog and Bala was ready. I trust her completely."

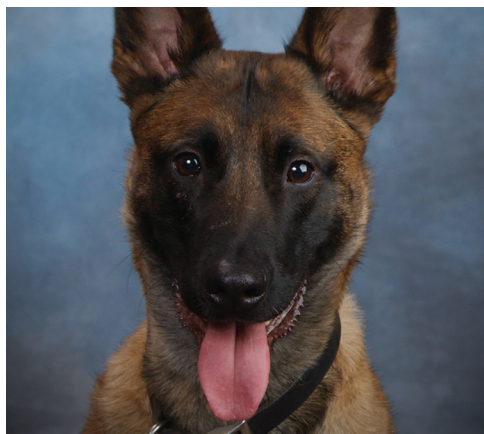
Bala is a three-year-old Belgian malinois. She was born in Europe and came to Bismarck in February 2015. She and Officer Salander were trained in Bismarck and she started working patrol in 2015. Bala was named the Top Rookie Dog in 2015.

"All she wants to do is work. Bala is so loyal and obedient. I have to have enough energy to match hers. She is motivated 24 hours a day to work, and that motivates me to be better at my job," says Officer Salander. "All of our police dogs here are amazing animals. They are so excited to please their handler. They can do so much and are happy to do it all."

Bala does drug searches, tracks, building searches, and apprehensions.

OSCAR AND SGT. TIM SASS

Sergeant Tim Sass knows his days of having his partner, Oscar, on patrol with him are about to end. Oscar is an eight-year-old Belgian malinois. Oscar and Sergeant Sass have been working together



Bala and Officer Dan Salander

at the Bismarck Police Department since 2013. Oscar was selected as the 2013 Professional Animal of the Year by the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association. If you ask Sergeant Sass, it's an award Oscar has deserved every year.

"I have spent every day with this dog for the past four years. I see this dog more than I see my son," says Sergeant Sass. "Oscar has helped protect me on numerous occasions and the thought of him not being there is very disheartening. It will be a very sad day when he is no longer riding with me."

But at age eight, Oscar is starting to slow down, which has forced Sergeant Sass to think about Oscar's retirement.

"He will still tear off like a puppy but after a long work day it takes a few days for him to get energy back," he says. "When he's in the back of my patrol car, he always used to be pacing around but now he is a little more relaxed until it is time to go to work. He's such a good dog, he's been a

good partner, and I know sometime this year he will retire. I hope once he retires he can have some time to just be a dog, to be lazy and enjoy life."

But until then, Oscar and Sergeant Sass will continue patrolling the streets together.

"The K9s we have are invaluable to the department. They do cost a lot of money and maintenance but we are able to get so many more drugs off the street because of these dogs," explains Sergeant Sass. "It's hard to explain the bond between Oscar and me. I find myself driving around on a quiet night talking to Oscar. I trust my fellow officers with my life but I also trust Oscar with my life. I can look at how his ears twitch, how his body moves and know he's found a suspect. I can see the way he looks around a room and know that someone is in there. I've got hand commands to control him to sit, come, and stay. We have that connection. The bond is just amazing. It's truly an honor to be a part of the K9 team here." *TM*

Oscar and
Sgt. Tim Sass



Each year the Bismarck Police K9 Unit puts together a calendar, sponsored by Terry Richter Insurance. Calendars are available for purchase at KT Animal Supply in Bismarck. All proceeds from calendar sales go back to the Bismarck Police Department's K9 Unit. In past years, the money raised has been used to make trading cards, a heat alarm bail out for one of the cars, as well as other miscellaneous equipment and trainings that were not in the budget.

The Bismarck Police Department is always looking for additional buildings to conduct trainings for narcotics and people searches. If you have a business or a building and can help, contact Sergeant Lyle Sinclair at the Bismarck Police Department, lsinclair@bismarcknd.gov.

To learn more about Oscar, Bala, and Luna, and to see video of them working, visit our website.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair holding a baby. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The baby is looking towards the camera. The woman is wearing a white top, and the baby is wearing a pink and white striped shirt.

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THROUGH THE LENS OF MY SOUL:

Key West, Florida 1985

by Carole Hemingway | Submitted Photos



I was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1984, and given at the most, six years to live. The stress of my mother's deathbed confession and a looming divorce had not only attacked me emotionally, but physically.

The search for my true self began in February 1985. Imagine if you can, my sense of loss of roots, when my mother's secret was revealed to me back in July 1981 on her deathbed. In a raspy voice, she told me that she'd had an

affair with a rugged man, a famous man—Ernest Hemingway. Shocked, I sent myself on a 15-year odyssey of looking for Papa Hemingway.

My journey began in Key West, Florida. I looked for him in the only way I knew, trying to find his spirit in his home on 907 Whitehead Street.

Freshly-divorced, feeling drained and emptied, when the plane landed in Key West, I leaned against the hot glass window, touching it with my shaking fingers. I chose to come here because I had to be in the place where he had lived and worked. I had to find the thin string of my heritage that connected us together.

My first night, in a clean, well-lit hotel room on the beach, I turned the key in the door to my room, undressed, showered, and collapsed in a pile of fresh, sweet-smelling linens, naked, the way I came into the world. Exhausted, I then realized I hadn't slept in over 30 hours. Sleep came; I did not dream.

The early morning sun found me the next day, the heavy smell of frangipani outside my balcony window, while the Gulf of Mexico rolled outside like a big water bed. I rolled over onto my back and groggily looked up at the blue cobalt sky, and thought about my mother. For 40 years, she had me wrapped in an invisible cocoon, insulating me from the truth of who I was. There must be a time when a person wants something so badly, that price or condition cease to be obstacles, and I had wanted my father, most of all, and for him to love me.

It was here that I assembled the pieces of my life, and began to learn how to become whole. I felt safe enough to begin to thaw out inside, and to connect with my emotions. I was about to live a completely different and new life, to learn about my self-worth, how to nurture it, and protect it.

My first visit to his house on Whitehead Street felt like I was coming to pay my last respects in a quiet, dig-

nified way. Even from the grave, I felt he was constantly testing my strength and courage, because it was what he looked for in a woman.

What would he have wanted his daughter to be like? He admired spirit, courage, earthiness, and authenticity. His generation produced women like Beryl Markham, Amelia Earhart, Isak Dineson, and Marlene Dietrich. I'm sure he would not have found Madonna or Cher attractive, but I think he would have adored Sophia Loren.

My need was strong for him in 1985, my grief hard. How often I sat in his garden in silence, while tourists roamed around me, thinking I was just another tourist—if they only knew. I found a new strength and purpose in Key West. My life became less pressured, and more grounded. To this day, my parents' enduring strength has been passed on to me, and has helped me to survive. Key West was a floating hospital, the end of the line. A survivor's camp, a mere 90 miles from

Cuba. A waiting room.

Over time, I began to learn about my father. He wanted the direct experience of living life. I doubt very much if Papa would have been satisfied to go to a therapist for his problems. Too much analysis has prevented action. There were so many great writers born in the 1890s, and if they had all been in therapy, we might never have had this great burst of literature. He believed that direct experience was the final test for determining the truth of any matter. I often wonder what Papa would think of the Fortune 500 group, or could he have tolerated the 24-hour news cycle? Would he understand the term "couch potato," when his real power, a man's power, was all in physical expression? I think not. *TM*



Carole Hemingway is an internationally regarded author, speaker, and historical researcher. She currently lives along the coast of Maine where she is writing a book about Gettysburg, and waiting to publish another book about her father, Ernest.

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS



There are many pet rescue organizations in the area. Each one has its own mission of finding forever homes for animals and educating the public about responsible pet ownership. Here are three that serve the Bismarck, Mandan, and Dickinson areas.

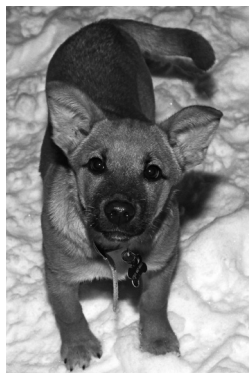
CENTRAL DAKOTA HUMANE SOCIETY Give us a little history of your organization.

The Central Dakota Humane Society was founded in 1960 as the League for Animal Welfare and has seen steady growth and a couple of name changes. When we purchased our current facility in 1994, we changed our name to Central Dakota Humane Society to better reflect the central Dakota area we serve. The shelters in North Dakota are on average about 100 miles apart. Dickinson, Mandan, Jamestown, Fargo, and Grand Forks all have physical shelters, but there are many other groups scattered around the state dedicated to animal welfare. Most others are volunteer-driven foster home operations. To date, CDHS has housed 5,270 cats and dogs since we opened our shelter doors. We are fortunate to have a

physical plant for people to visit, whether it is for volunteering or if they are considering adoption, or need a resource to re-home an animal already in their care. We shelter on average 40 dogs and 75 cats every day, 365 days of the year.

How are you different from other organizations like yours?

Because there are city impound resources available for cats and dogs that are found inside the city limits of Bismarck and Mandan, this has led us to make stray cats and dogs found in the surrounding counties a main priority. Unfortunately, under state law, the counties have no current animal control provisions at all, so animals from these areas seem to be the ones that need us the most urgently. Requests for us to take in animals come in by the dozens on a daily basis, so injured animals are also bumped to the top of the priority list. Our founding members stipulated we operate a no-kill facility, a philosophy we follow to this day. As long as the animals in our care are healthy and adoptable they stay with us with no time limit. If they come to us with inju-



ries that we can fix we will fundraise to make that happen. If an animal comes to us after a catastrophic injury that a veterinarian recommends euthanasia, of course in that scenario we would follow that recommendation. However, we focus mainly on fixing them up, feeding them up, loving them up, and then sending them off to forever homes.

Learn more about the Central Dakota Humane Society at www.cdhs.net

FURRY FRIENDS ROCKIN' RESCUE

Give us a little history of your organization.

We are a foster-based rescue that started out saving animals from euthanasia at the local impound in August 2015. We received our 501(c)3 in October 2015. We have since branched out to help animals in other dangerous situations. In 2016 we placed approximately 350 animals into their forever homes. We have a volunteer force of approximately 70 active members who help foster and keep events moving.

How are you different from other organizations like yours?

We have worked with the community to implement animal rights in ways that help get them justice in abuse situations. We are also the first rescue in the area to conduct a spay event. Many animal rescues all have the same mission: to save animals. We've received guidance and help from others in the same business. We couldn't be more grateful.

Learn more about the Furry Friends Rockin Rescue at www.furryfriendsrockinrescue.org

OREO'S ANIMAL RESCUE

Give us a little history of your organization.

We became a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation in 2005 with the purpose of helping the unclaimed pets at the Dickinson City Pound. We expanded that effort to include other pets in need, but continue a primary focus of assisting the Pound. Our mission statement is "To protect the quality of life and improve the well-being of abused, neglected, and unwanted animals through prevention, education, intervention, placement, and lifelong care." Oreo's Animal Rescue also offers spay and neuter incentive programs to pet owners. We work to educate the public on the importance of responsible ownership and population control.

How are you different from other organizations like yours?

To help the city manage the wild cat population, we have partnered with another volunteer group, Second Chances, to offer the Barn Cat Project. Through Oreo's Animal Rescue, all cats in the program receive a health exam, are spayed/neutered, tested negative for FeLV/FIV, and receive rabies vaccinations. Second Chances processes applications for the barn cats to make sure homes are suitable. They also educate the new owner on proper care and introduction to help assure a successful placement. There is no adoption fee for cats in the Barn Cat Project. We simply work together to place difficult cats in homes that are suitable for them.

Learn more about Oreo's Animal Rescue at oreosrescue.org 

Visit our website to learn more about other animal rescue organizations in your area:

Prairie Paws Rescue
Jamestown

For Belle's Sake Rescue & Rehabilitation
Minot

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Minot

A Cause for Claws
Bismarck

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EIGHT TIPS TO SNAP A GREAT PHOTO OF YOUR PET

by Lexi Kerzman

Photos: Photography by Kayla K.

Pet owners in many senses are like parents. They love their pet more than anything and treat them as if they are their children. Parents take pictures of their children, and pet owners try to take pictures of theirs.

Any pet owner knows the struggle it can be to take a decent photo of a hyper puppy or sly cat. Pet photographer Kayla Schmidt, shares her top eight secrets to achieve a stunning photo of your darling pets.



1

Take the pictures in an area where your pet is comfortable. Try taking photos in your house or backyard; your dog will be comfortable with the area and will not get distracted by new smells during the photoshoot. If you want a professional picture in a studio like Kayla's, give your pet the opportunity to explore before the pictures. Pets need to be aware of their surroundings and the smells going on, so give them time to get comfortable. Do not rush the process; the best pictures will happen once your pet is comfortable.

2

One of the most important things to remember while taking pet pictures is to have patience. Pets are like toddlers, constantly moving and cannot stay focused. The best pictures are not going to happen right away; keep working at it, they will come. Fido will get tired of playing games and give in. When your pet moves from the spot, move him back, it will not stop right away, but eventually your pet will give in and sit still.



3

Talk to your pets. Use commands they already know. Tell them to sit, sometimes simple is best. Talk to them how you normally talk at home. Try to make the experience as comfortable as you can.

4

Praise them. Pets respond best with positive praise. Tell them they are a good boy and they will respond by being a good boy.

5

If praise doesn't work, try treats. If you are having trouble getting them to look at the lens, try holding a treat near the lens—they won't be able to take their eyes off of it. After you successfully snap the pictures, reward them. Don't tease them with the treats, otherwise they will no longer be effective. When using treats, be cautious of the types of treats you are giving. Avoid hard treats that take a long time to eat. Try little treats that can be eaten fast to keep the picture process moving.

6

Decide what kind of photos you want. If you want action shots, perform the activity. If you want a picture of your dog playing fetch, play fetch and snap pictures before you throw the ball.



Know your angle. Try to avoid hovering above your pet. The best pictures are at eye level, so try laying on your stomach or sitting down. Don't be afraid to get creative.

8

Finally, stay patient. The first time you take pictures, might not turn out, so keep working with them. Try a different day or different time. The more they are exposed to taking pictures, the better they will become. Don't be afraid to try again. *W*

To see Kayla's work, visit her Facebook page, *Photography by Kayla K.*

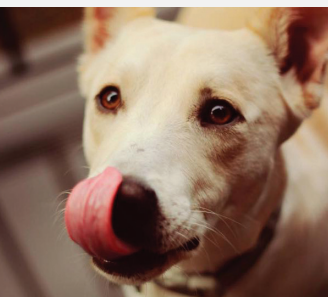


Lexi Kerzman is a senior at Bismarck High School. She got her first dog at age two and named him "Bob." Many of her childhood memories focus around the giant black lab, pictured here with Lexi in 2001. Bob passed away in 2013.

From Our Readers:

Pet Photos

We asked you to share your pet photos on our Facebook page. You flooded our page with adorable photos of your furry friends. We picked out a few to share with you here. To see all of our reader submissions, visit our website.



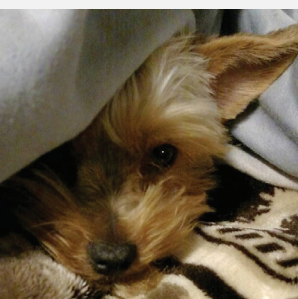
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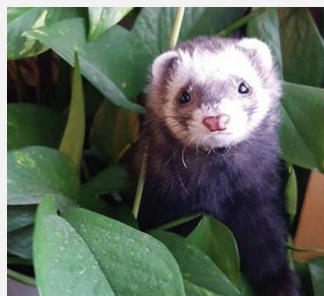
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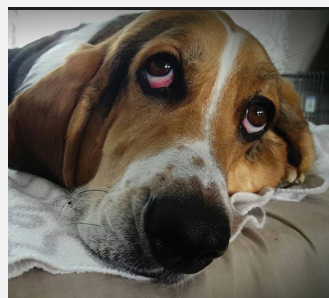
Mazie



Oscar



Larry



Grw



For even more on the stories in this issue—including photo galleries of Betsy, Pet Therapy, and Kelsey—visit our website: inspiredwomanonline.com



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