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Humane Society of Jackson County
PO Box 298, Sylva, NC 28779

Or make a one-time or monthly donation through Paypal at arhumane.org/donation/

Name _____ Phone _____

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FALL/WINTER 2024 ISSUE

HUMANE

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jackson county*

ARF



MORE ON
FOSTERING
ADOPTING
RESCUING
DONATING

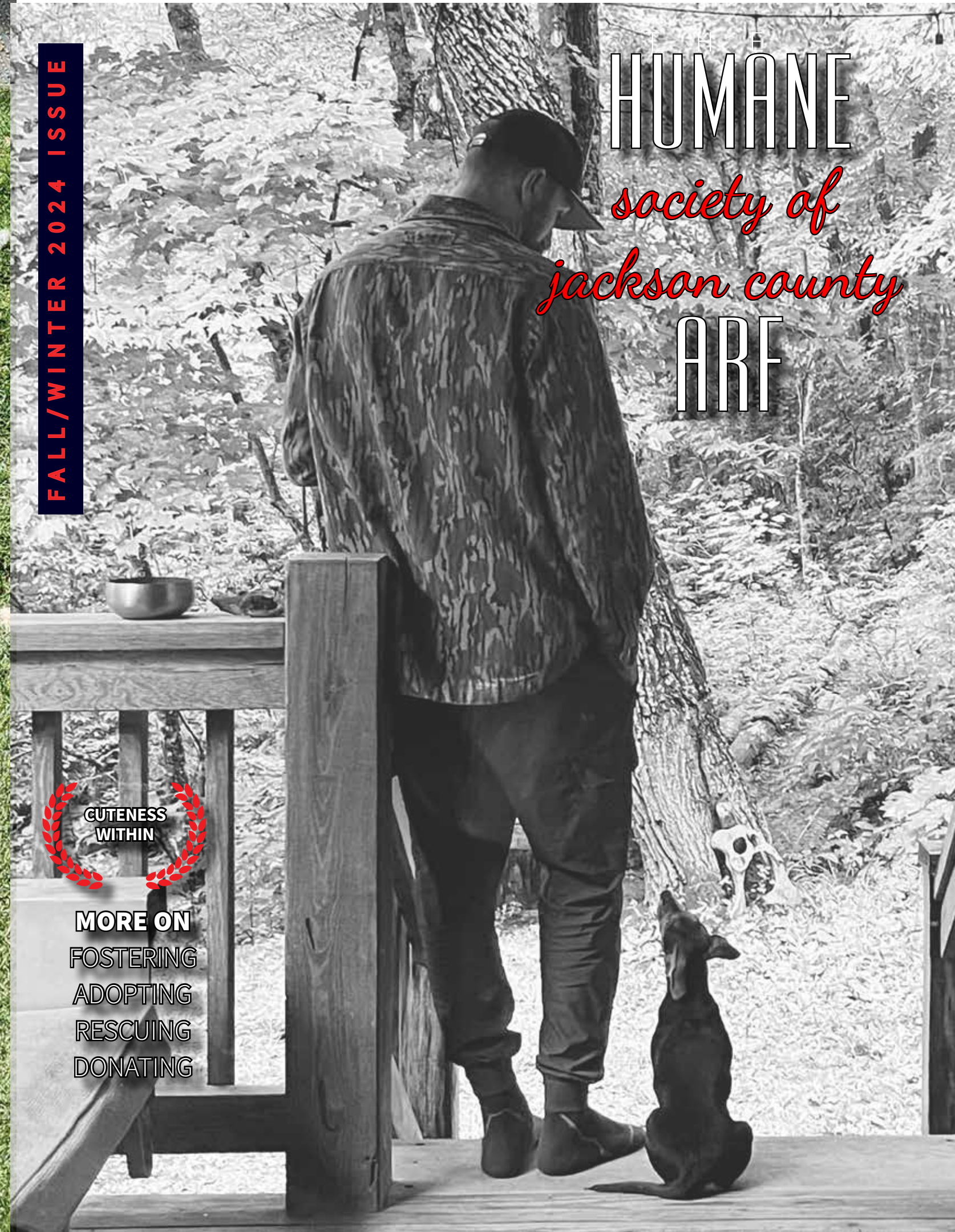


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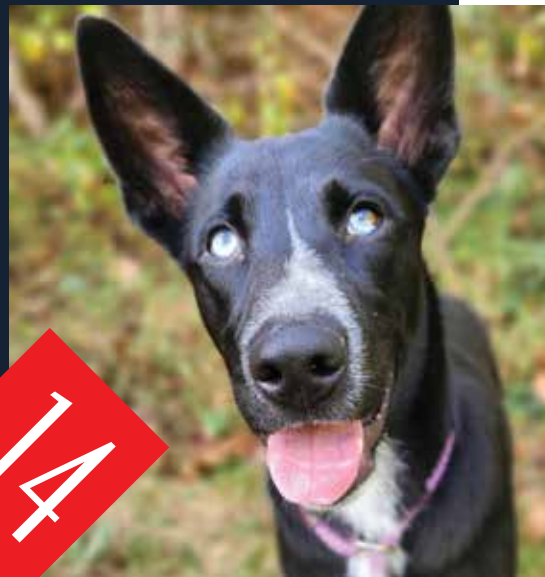
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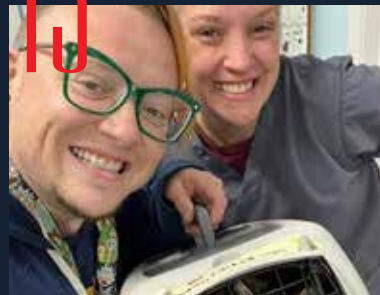
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BABY!



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THANKS TO
DAVID JOY
AND ASHLEY EVANS
AND ALL WHO PROVIDED
PHOTOS

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Sarah Little
President, ARF

What year it has been! So much change and disruption for so many people on so many levels. And ARF is no exception. We have had changes in organizational structure, changes in fund raising efforts, changes in our board membership, and with the advent of hurricane Helene and its devastating effects, we have even, at least temporarily, made changes to how we provide our spay and neuter program.

One thing that doesn't change, though, is our commitment to helping the animals of Jackson County. We continue to rescue, foster, adopt, transport, vaccinate, spay/neuter, and even provide medical assistance when needed. We are continually fundraising, fostering good relationships with individuals and businesses in our local community and beyond, and looking for ways to improve and expand our foster and adoption efforts.

None of our work could be done without your support, for which we thank

you. Your donations enable us to remain as active and successful as we are, and as the new President of ARF, I am beyond grateful to every single one of you for your kindness and generosity. As a business owner and active member of my local community, I know how often we are all approached to donate and support causes. I also know how supporting everyone and everything we would like to be impossible, at least financially. We have

to pick and choose. The fact that you choose to support ARF is an honor we do not take lightly, and we take seriously our responsibility

to spend your money wisely and in the best way for the animals.

In the ongoing aftermath of Helene, now more than ever we need to serve the animals of this community—as well as their owners—in the best way possible. Your support and donations enable us to do that, even when we have to think on our feet, changing our approach to caring for animals and their owners as longer-term implications of the hurricane continue to unfold.

So once again, thank you. Without you and your support, we would not be here.

Did you know?
Dogs have 18
muscles to
control their
ears.



On Being ARF's Vet

BY DR SANDRA BLACK DVM

Shortly after beginning my job at Sylva Animal Hospital (30 years ago!), I was introduced to ARF. Dr. Zemel, who belonged to our practice then, had agreed to do their vet work. Through the past three decades I have seen how committed ARF's members are to rescuing and caring for the needy dogs and cats in Jackson County. It has been my pleasure to help them help these animals. Many heartbreaks, but even more successes!

I have adopted several cats over the years from ARF. These are litter mates, Mango and Cinder, my last two cats from Veronica Nicholas—who was one of the founders of ARF and a truly great human being. Anyone who knew her knows what I mean when I say, "Who could say no to Veronica?" I will continue to support ARF, not only as a veterinarian, but also through my membership and my financial contributions. Can you? Will you?



Cats walk like camels & giraffes, moving both of their right feet first, then moving both of their left feet. No other animals walk this way.

A Really Reliable Recall

by Jane Finneran, Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT)

Teaching dogs to come every time you call may save their lives someday. A really reliable recall is not difficult, but it takes time, consistency, and rewards. Anyone can get a dog to come when you call from the kitchen while making a sandwich or rustling around the cookie jar; that is kindergarten level. To call dogs from 100 feet away or more while they are interacting with another dog or animal is college level. Dogs must pass many “grades” to graduate.

First of all, your dog should look at you when you say its name. (Without that, all you have is a cat!) Practice saying the dog’s name and rewarding for eye contact. Practice with the distractions at a distance, and then move them closer and closer to the dog. If your dog will not give you the time of day when distractions abound, you will not get a recall when you need one. You are only teaching your dog to ignore you. Go back to the beginning.

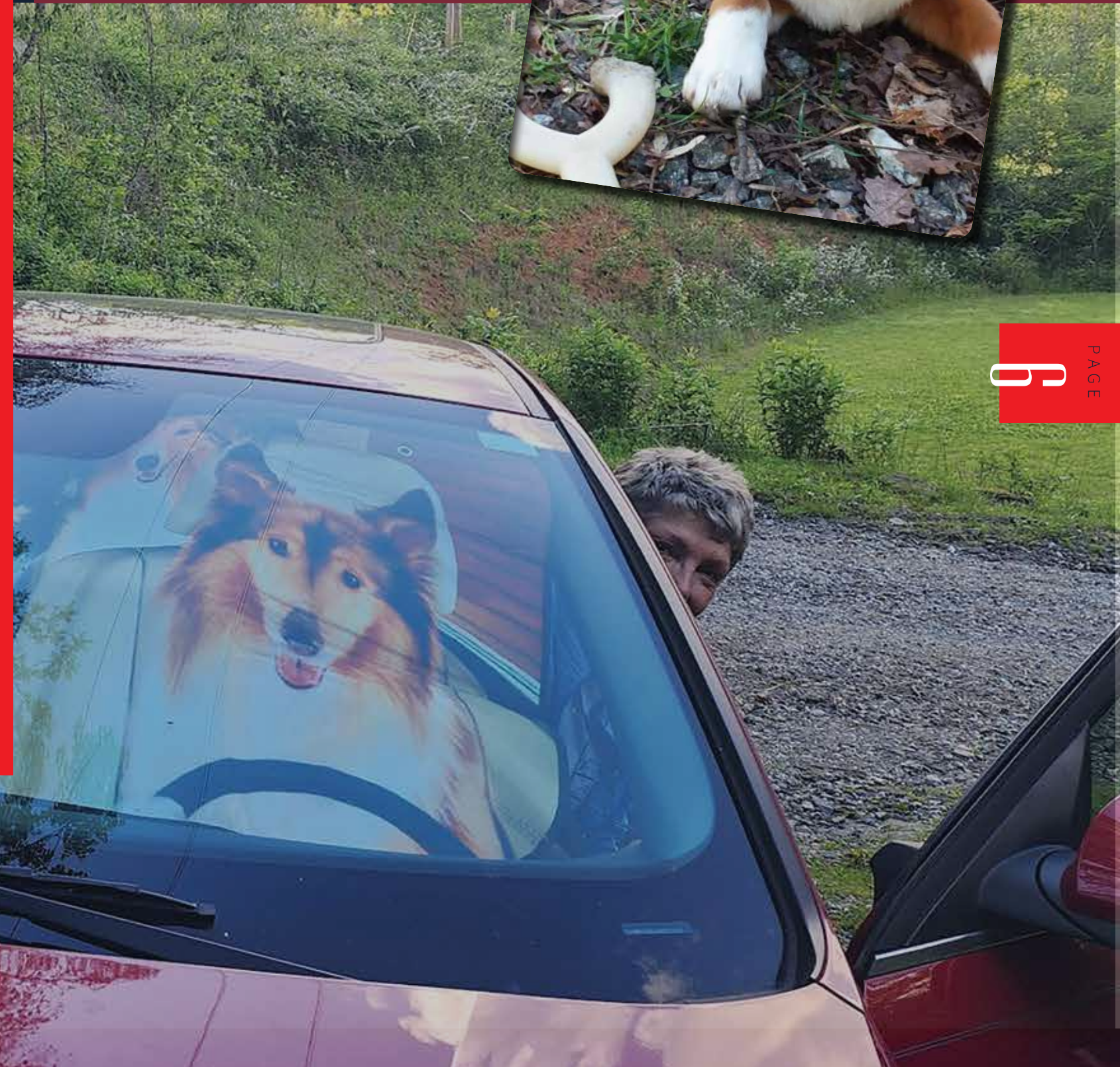
Once you have your dog responding to a name, call the dog from a short distance of six to ten feet and gradually increase the distance three to six feet at a time. Practice with the dog on a long line or a piece of rope. You do not want the dog to learn that recall is optional, so do not say “come” until the dog

is coming towards you. Every time the dog comes to you, make it a party. Reward, reward, reward!

Never chase your dog while yelling “come.” Your dog will think that running as fast as it can is what “come” means. Dogs love that game. In fact, don’t chase your dog at all; you will ruin your recall.

When your dog is coming 105% of the time (I know—math!), practice without the rope or line but do so in a safe area. Continue to practice every day. When you are outside, call your dog six to ten times to come. Reward the dog and let the dog return to whatever it was doing. Don’t wait for an emergency. Also, don’t only call your dog when you’re ready to go in. Never call your dog when something “bad” is going to happen, like a bath, nail trim, or vet visit. Always make “come” a positive experience.

When can you stop using rewards? Never. Remembering these rules might save your dog’s life. “Come” is the one command that I always reward. Someday when I do not have treats on me, I want my dog to think I do.





We're
Adopted!

FREE PET FOOD DISTRIBUTION

by **Kaleb Lynch**

Early this year, we took part in a collaborative effort to help our community feed its pets by running a FREE pet food distribution day. Between Catman2 and ARF, we gave out over 1,400 pounds of cat food, 1,800 pounds of dog food, 650 cans of cat and dog food, and 490 pounds of cat litter! The event served 98 families from 11 towns and 5 counties, and fed 278 dogs and 335 cats, totaling 613 animals fed for free. ARF bought all of the dog food with generous help from The Pet Stop of Sylva and the good people at Fromm. The Jackson County Animal Shelter hosted us and held an Open House for the new shelter. It was a successful day to promote life-saving partnerships and good animal stewardship, and it also showcased ARF's new office and spay/neuter location.

To break up a dog fight, try opening an umbrella between them. Keep your hands clear.



11 Same Special Saves in 2024

Here's an update on some of ARF's special saves this year, who had some special needs. Some dogs are just worth the time and money. Thanks to their foster parents for sticking by them:

- Rosellen was dropped off with a buddy in Tennessee and rescued by a traveler who brought her to our area. She tested high-positive for heartworms and was fostered and cared for by Nick a.k.a. "The kid." Rosellen is a sweet, housebroken American staffie who would love a home of her own.
- Milo was a 2-yr old yellow lab who was his foster mom Nikki's longest foster. He was huge and strong. One adopter turned out to be allergic to him. Milo finally found an excellent home in Florida.
- Marnie was dropped at the Webster Baptist church with a litter of very young puppies. They took a long time to get ready, and Marnie was particular about what home she went to. Thanks to John and Debbie for helping her find the perfect situation.
- Betty and Buster were two strong and exuberant mixed-breed dogs who were fostered by Mary and Nikki. They ended up with outstanding homes.
- We helped Ivory's siblings travel to a northern shelter early this year, but the foster wanted to keep Ivory. When that didn't work out, our foster parent Mason stepped up and kept him for months. Ivory finally got a home worthy of him.
- Schlomo, Shari, Sherman, and Sheldon not only got to go north, but they got on Good Morning America thanks to our friend Christy Swanton at Noah's Advocates and the wonderful folks at Pilots and Paws.
- Lucille had been adopted a couple years ago but was returned because the owner had trouble keeping her contained. She found a wonderful new home with our foster Nikki's mom Wanda. If you want to foster, we hope you have as many friends and family as Nikki does!
- Molly, Murphy, and McCoy were some extra sweet bottle babies that got a great new life thanks to fosters Annette and, later, Mary. Bottle feeding is a huge commitment, and we're so grateful for people who can devote the time to it.
- Ginny the beagle had to have multiple surgeries because she was born with malformed back legs. These were costly despite a generous discount from the surgeon. We decided to bite the bullet because Ginny had a prospective adopter. Even though that fell through, she's thriving now to the devoted care of fosters Debbie and John, who still have her (but they'd probably part with her to the right home!)

These are just a few of the dogs and puppies ARF helped last year. Adoptions are down, but ARF is still doing its best to help, and if you're willing to foster puppies for a few weeks or more, we can usually find homes for them. Please contact our office at 877-ARF-JCNC (877-273-5262).





STATS SINCE NOVEMBER 2023

Intakes	Spay Neuter (ASPCA)
7 owner surrender	121 dogs from ARF
43 stray	17 dogs Logan's Run
47 transfer in	8 dogs Sylva Animal Hospital
97 dogs total	160 cats neutered (Catman2)
Outcomes:	195 cats spayed (Catman2)
65 adoptions	
49 Transfers	
Total 114 dogs	

SPAY/NEUTER DAY VOLUNTEER TIMELINE

by Ann Marie Dunn

Preparing for spay/neuter trips is a huge job that most people never see. Animals whose owners signed them up must now be put into a portal, their documentation checked, and their medical needs detailed. These arrangements are made weeks ahead of the trip by our intrepid spay/ neuter coordinator Kaleb. Before the trip, Kaleb alerts volunteers so they know how many crates to prepare. Other volunteers make sure we are stocked with paper collars, newspaper, pens, markers, and scissors.

Monday 7:00 a.m. We get to shelter. Set up. Open bay, get desk and chair out. The volunteers get the signs out, pull out the crates, and prep them for dogs. We make paper collars with dogs' names.

7:30 a.m. Each car gets a number as they drive in so we can check them in in order of arrival. Careful! Some volunteers take their lives into their hands to give out numbers, as morning drivers are sometimes rushed and sleepy.

7:45 a.m. Once volunteer staff are in place, we start signing in the animals. Volunteers collect cats from cars in their own crates or traps. Owners walk dogs up, and volunteers help them don their paper collars. We load them into crates and label them. Fortunately, we have experts ready to coax dogs into crates or, if necessary, hoist them in bodily.

8:00 a.m. When all animals are signed in, volunteers load them into species-specific vans. We're grateful at this point for our tallest and burliest volunteers.

8:15 a.m. Put signs, desk and chair away. Last minute paperwork changes are completed.

8:30 a.m. Vans leave to bring animals to the ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance in Asheville.

Tuesday 11:15 a.m.: Get to the shelter. Set up is easier—we just need signs, hose, and soap. We use Rescue spray, which kills the most persistent puppy germs.

11:30 a.m. Volunteers unload the vans upon arrival. We alphabetize paperwork and separate publicly owned animals from ARF, shelter, and Catman2 animals.

11:35 a.m.: Each car gets a number in order of arrival.

11:45 a.m. Our volunteers go car to car to give owners paperwork. Cats are brought back to owner's car; owners retrieve their joyful dogs from crates. All owners receive after-care instructions, and dogs receive E-collars to prevent worrying their incisions, before pets and owners depart.

12:00 p.m. Volunteers clean crates, load everything back into storage, and head home until next time.



A lot has changed with our spay/neuter program, but one thing remains the same: It is affordable! ARF/Catman2 pay 55% of the actual cost of each surgery we provide to the public through the ASPCA Spay Neuter Alliance, leaving clients to pay just \$20 for their pet's surgery, plus the minimal costs of other services like vaccines and microchipping. Our long-standing relationship with the ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance and generous donors allows us to provide this life-saving service to our community at the lowest possible cost. The best way to tackle the issue of pet overpopulation is to promote low-cost spay/neuter, and supporters like you help us do just that!

This year, several cases of pyometra were successfully treated via our program. Pyometra is an infection of the uterus, which is fatal if left untreated. What is the treatment? Spaying. What is the prevention? Spaying! We also had some interesting medical finds, such as a kitten with uterus unicorni, a congenital condition where a uterine horn is absent and, in about 50% of cases, the kidney on that side is also absent.

Additionally, our partnership with Catman2 means we have assisted with sterilizing over 100 feral and community cats this year. This ac-

complishment dramatically impacts reducing cat overpopulation and keeps colonies of free-roaming cats healthier.

Our online registration system has made signing up for our program much more accessible. Over 300 animals in our community have registered online this year. The program is immensely popular, and appointments are booked months in advance as of this writing because the need is so great. Your support allows us to continue providing these deeply discounted, essential services.



I'm proud of our fantastic team of spay/neuter volunteers who show up at every transport with a smile, ready to play a part in reducing pet overpopulation. They work quickly and effectively to check in around 40 dogs and cats every few weeks, even if it's freezing cold or

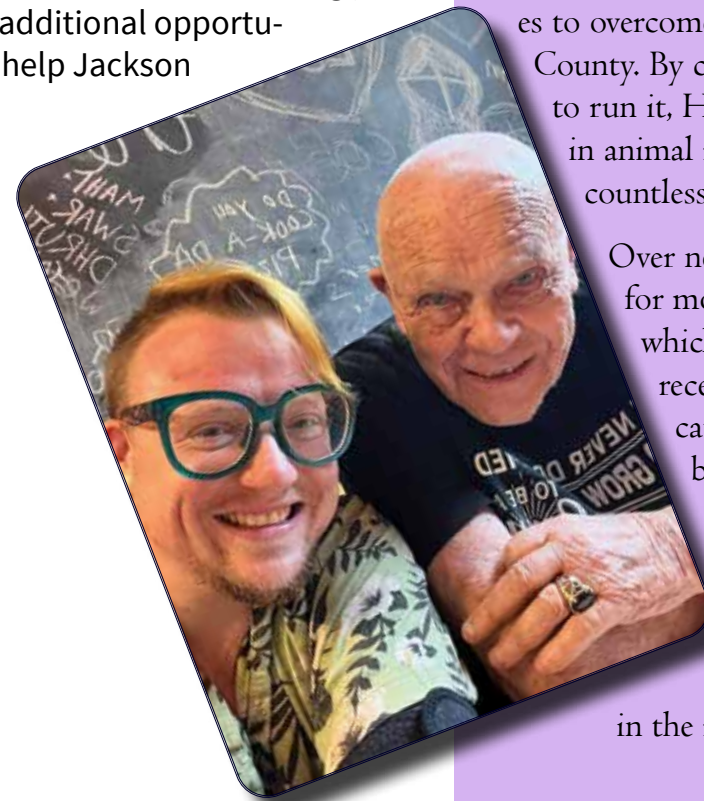
raining or sweltering hot. They've turned the stressful checking-in process into a smooth operation. I am grateful for their hard work and for animal lovers who use our services and who help others access them.

In September, Hurricane Helene's devastation shook all western North Carolina and rippled through our mountains. Asheville, a hub for major services (trauma center, healthcare, emergency vets, veterinary specialists, major supply companies, etc.) was hit extremely hard. Parts of the area still lack potable water. Our beloved ASPCA Spay Neuter Alliance had to suspend services for a few months,

so the many rescue partners in surrounding counties—including us! — couldn't use their low-cost spay/neuter services. In the interim, we sent 17 dogs over to Logan's Run Rescue spay/neuter clinic in Murphy (an hour and a half away), and we are working on the possibility of having a mobile spay/neuter clinic come out once a month in addition to our regular clinic. Sylva Animal Hospital helped spay and neuter public animals at higher risk for pregnancy, displacement due to being unaltered, or surgical complications.

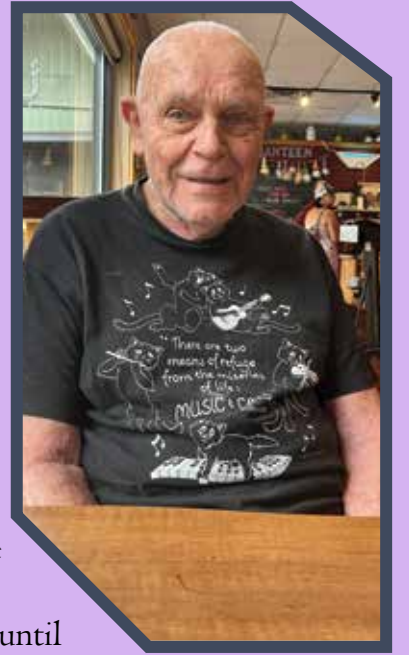
But the ASPCA was not idle. They pulled more than half the animals from our community shelter. They donated supplies, participated in mobile health clinics and microchipping, and even collaborated with non-partner shelters to help animals in need. They are some of our heroes.

We are all excited for the coming year to bring additional opportunities to help Jackson County.



By Kaleb Lynch

Harold Sims



Catman2 recently shared “the passing of our founder, local legend Dr. Harold ‘Catman’ Walter Sims, Jr. He crossed The Rainbow Bridge to meet the entire army of cats waiting for him. Harold was one-of-a-kind, choosing to use his savings to build a safe-for-life cat shelter and sanctuary, and the largest cat museum in the United States right here in Sylva. He never took a salary for working seven days a week at the shelter until hiring a shelter director, and then transitioned to working full time for the cat museum well into his late 80s. He was a hard worker for his entire life, from dairy farm work in his early years to teaching biology and ecology for 22 years at a junior college in FL to spending his post-retirement years rescuing cats and building a museum to exhibit his 30+ year collection of cat art and memorabilia.”

ARF and Catman2 go way back. Both worked to rescue from what in the early days was a high-kill shelter. ARF worked with Kaleb Lynch to create Catman2's first community spay neuter grant, which allowed ARF and Catman2 to join forces to overcome the pet overpopulation problem in Jackson County. By creating his shelter, and by hiring Kaleb Lynch to run it, Harold Sims gave ARF a long-term partnership in animal rescue that has benefited both groups as well as countless people and animals.

Over nearly three decades, Catman2 has found home for more than 5,000 cats. Harold's cat museum, which he started in 2017 and worked on till his recent death, has raised awareness of the plight of cats. Catman2 started in Sims' back yard, funded by his smart investments and retirement income from his teaching career. Where would we be without visionaries like Harold and his late wife, who literally dedicated their lives to the animals of this county? Rest in power, Professor Sims. ARF mourns a great soldier in the rescue community.

BY DR. SANDRA BLACK, DVM

Here I am to answer some of your questions about odd pet behaviors. Why do dogs scoot? Why do dogs eat grass? Why do dogs circle before lying down? Why do cats knead? Why do cats love boxes? If you have ever found yourself pondering these burning questions, read on. If not, move on to the heartwarming stories of pet rescues and how you can help ARF.

Why do dogs scoot? Certainly, the most common reason is that their anal glands are full (and uncomfortable). Scooting often helps them empty those annoying sacs. (Think brown stripe on your white carpet.) Other reasons include tapeworms (which will actually crawl out of a dog's anus), anal tumors, diarrhea (with a bit of feces causing irritation), perivulvar irritation, and my personal (unproven) theory that they just want to photo-bomb your video. When dogs scoot, check out their patoot (I mean, ask your vet to have a look).*

Why do dogs eat grass? Experts are divided on the root cause, but most agree some grazing is normal behavior. Some think dogs eat grass because they are nauseous and the grass facilitates vomiting, which relieves nausea. However, studies show less than 25 percent of dogs who eat grass vomit regularly after grazing. I have heard other suggestions: Anxiety, boredom, a need for fiber, and well,

they just like the taste and/or texture. If your dog eats grass but is otherwise fine, I wouldn't be overly concerned.

Why do dogs circle before lying down to rest? The prevailing answer is they lie down out of instinct, a behavior dating back to prehistoric times. Dogs would circle to flatten their bedding surface, root out any rodents or critters in their sleeping area, and mark that spot as their own. While most dogs today don't have to worry about shooing away other animals, most do like a well-made bed. Unless dogs circle constantly, all day long or for hours at a time, their circling behavior is normal.

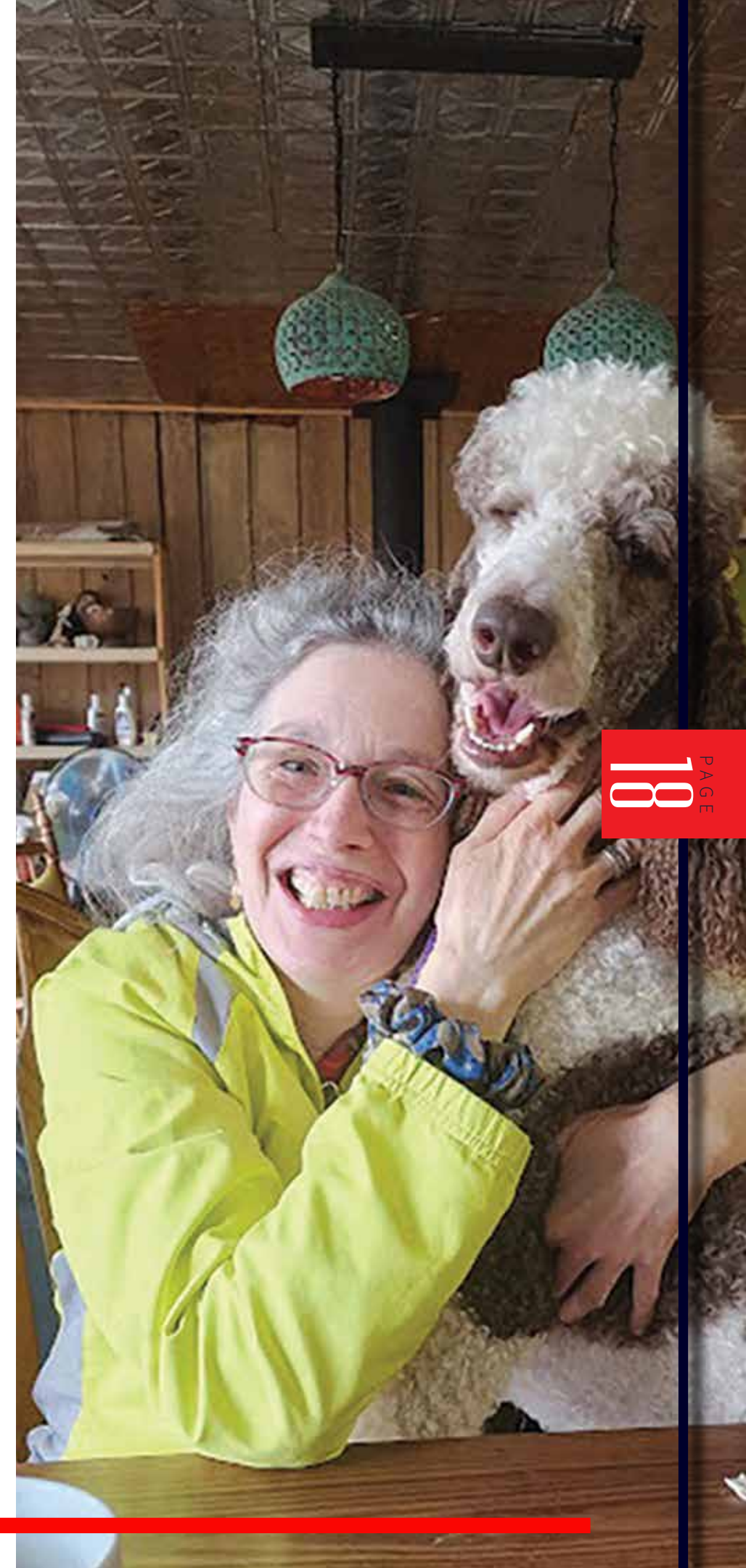
Why do cats knead? Most cats who knead are not doing it to annoy or hurt you, even if kneading your body parts is annoying and sometimes painful. Kittens knead to stimulate milk production, and most people think cats continue kneading as adults to create a similar sense of calm and relaxation. Other observations support kneading to create a soft spot to lie on, a way to deposit their unique pheromones from the scent glands in their feet to mark their territory, and a way to stretch their muscles and relieve tension in their limbs. Some theorize kneading is a sign of stress or discomfort as cats search for that dopamine

release. So, most kneading is normal cat behavior. If your cat's kneading behavior changes, discuss what you notice with your vet. An exam, blood work, and/or medications may be in order.

Why do cats love cardboard boxes? No matter the size of the box or size of the cat, most cats will get in a newly available box pretty fast. (In my house, the record is 2.5 seconds). This often funny, sometimes exasperating, behavior has many causes. A box is a place to hide so cats can pounce on an unsuspecting fellow pet or human ankle. A box is a new playground/toy which cats can scratch, chew on and jump into and out of. A box can be a safe place to relieve stress, offering comfort and security, and a place to recalibrate when cats seek to avoid stressors in their environment. A box is a place cats can mark as their own by rubbing their faces on it and releasing their own unique pheromones. And finally, a box can be a place of warmth. Studies have shown that cats prefer an ambient temperature of 86-97 degrees. I am betting most homes are not generally that warm. The cardboard offers insulation, and the curling up preserves body heat—a win-win for them.

If you made it to the end of this article, thanks! I hope you are more enlightened on these quirky things our little friends do. Now you can move on to the heartwarming stories of pet rescues and how you can help ARF continue their fabulous work.

*This bit of wordplay added by our editor. Dr. Black did not approve it.



By Sarah Little, Proprietor, Best Day Ever Doggy Daycare

Owni ng and running a doggy daycare and grooming facility means I see just about every size and temperament of dog imaginable. Not every dog is a daycare dog. But for those good candidates for daycare, what are the benefits? What should I consider when looking for a daycare? I own a daycare as well as six ARF rescue dogs who treat my home like a daycare, so while subjective, my opinions are informed by experience and research.

How do I find a reputable daycare?

First, verify that they are licensed and insured and that they test all dogs for temperament and vaccinations. Requirements vary by state, but the best establishments require vaccinations over and above the state requirement. Reputable centers require current rabies, distemper/parvo, and kennel cough vaccines.

Use independent customer reviews and social media sites to find a good daycare in your area. Reach out to shelters and rescue groups for their endorsement. Many states, NC included, require animal daycare and boarding facilities (even in-home facilities) to be licensed, so check out your Secretary of State's website or ask them for a list of licensed establishments and annual inspection reports. If something happened your dog while unlicensed people cared for it,

you would have no legal or financial recourse.

Will the daycare assess my dogs before they join?

The best daycares temperament test all dogs with another dog, especially in a business where all dogs directly interact. At our business, owners fill out a detailed application, provide proof of vaccinations, and make an appointment to do on-leash and off-leash introductions in a contained outdoor area. We carefully watch their behavior and interaction with other dogs. A rigorous assessment, while time-consuming, ensures the business takes your dog's safety seriously.



What kind of dogs go to daycare?

Any and every kind and size of dog! We are an open and social daycare where all dogs mix together regardless of size. Some love to run and play all day, but a few just like the company without joining in. Non-aggression is essential for our social daycare environment; everything else we welcome.

While no single "daycare type" exists, some types suit certain dogs

more than others. Some dogs need rough and tumble play. Some just want company and to see the goings on. Some prefer or require a daycare that keeps dogs separated and focuses on enrichment through human-based interaction. Dogs with separation anxiety, even those requiring medication, often thrive in a daycare environment where they are occupied and challenged and entertained and spend less time missing their parents.

What happens at doggy daycare?

Every daycare works differently. At ours, we have open play all day every day, with no enforced nap times or quiet times. We do not train, but we positively encourage good canine interactions and discourage antisocial behaviors. Some use a more structured approach, so look

for the place that would most benefit your dog.

What should I look for when choosing a daycare?

Visit the daycare. How clean is it? Is it well maintained, both front and back of house? Does it smell clean? Viewing the dog area is essential to the decision-making process, so be a little cautious of places that don't allow it. Ask them about their emergency plan. How do they manage dog fights? What happens if a dog gets injured? Do they have a plan in case of fire or damage to the facility? Will they separate dogs that become aggressive towards one another, and what signs do they watch for? How will they handle infectious diseases?

Look at how the dogs behave when you're there. Do they seem playful and engaged? Watch how the staff interact both with the dogs and with you. You're trusting these people with your fur baby, so being confident in their abilities and knowing they're the sort of people with whom you can discuss a problem, is vital.

Most of all, ask lots of questions. That's what introductory sessions are for. They're as much for your peace of mind as they are for assessing your dog, so don't be afraid to speak up. Your gut feeling is usually

right, so go with it.

What are the benefits of daycare?

Every owner's answer will differ, but some benefits are universal.

1. **Manners.** A tired dog is a good dog! Any dog who comes to daycare and plays for ten hours straight is going to go home tired.
2. **Social Skills.** A dog who learns to socialize with dogs of many different sizes and energy levels is best equipped emotionally. Small dogs overcome their fear of big dogs, and big dogs adjust their play style to play with smaller dogs.
3. **Enrichment.** Your sofa, flip flops, and wooden floors could escape being chewed to death! Playing with other dogs beats a human throwing a tennis ball every time. Bored dogs make their own rules. Healthier dogs live longer, happier lives. That's something we all want for our best friends.

Doggy daycare isn't the answer for everyone, but it enables many of us to provide their dogs with a worry-free safe, fun, and entertaining environment while we work or play outside our homes.

FROM THROWAWAY TO AGILITY STAR

BY NORÝ PROCHÁSKA

Emmy's story started as many do—a college student gets a puppy (in this case, a pair) and soon realizes dogs don't fit in their changing life and surrenders them to an animal shelter. Our community shelter is small, and surrenders are at some risk. Fortunately, we have an active rescue organization here, too. ARF pulled Emmy and her brother and approved them for a transport to a no-kill shelter partner in Florida.

But when transport day arrived, Emmy had a bout of kennel cough and was left behind. I soon adopted her as an early retirement present to myself. I teach mathematics, and my colleagues thought the new dog should have a mathematical name.

I consulted our resident math historian, asking for names of female mathematicians. I named Emmy after Emmy Noether, a German mathematician who made important contributions in the areas of abstract algebra and theoretical physics. At our first vet visit, we discovered she was quite insecure and fearful of people she didn't know. Building confidence and comfort in meeting new people would take time and patience. She did not react aggressively, her reactions were purely—ahem—physiological, but she had all of them, and quite dramatically!

One of my previous puppies had gone to a basic manners class at "A Good Dog's Life" training center in Asheville. That class led to another basic class, and then I got interested in dog agil-

ity, and Lewis became my first agility dog. When Emmy joined the family, she also attended a basic manners class, and eventually a foundation agility class. People who train dogs for a living understand undeveloped and inappropriate social skills in dogs, and the people Emmy met in dog school classes helped her overcome her fears. Lots of friends—and lots of treats—later, Emmy is more confident and friendly, though loud noises and sudden motions still cause some discomfort.

One of the best moments early in Emmy's training happened as an offshoot of her training classes. At a class for Lewis, I took Emmy to the outside field to practice

the "cheese-ball game": you throw a cheese ball behind you (or through your legs), and as the dog runs to get it, you take off in the other direction. The dog grabs the cheese ball, and then turns and comes running to you. You stop at the other end and do the same thing, in the other direction—like playing tag with your dog. That game was the first time I ever saw Emmy really let go of her fears and have FUN! It was a wonderful moment in her growth, and a great experience for us both.

But Emmy, in spite of her fears, loves to please, and lives to do the right thing. She was remarkably easy to train. She started her agility career at a smaller local trial, just doing jump-

ers (no "contact" obstacles—no dog walk, A-frame, teeter). I worried she might be difficult to catch at the end of her run—she still hates people diving at her—and if she got loose in that unknown environment, it could have been bad. But she was a star about it, actually thought it was kind of fun, and received her first "Q," or qualifying score, at the starters level in that first run.

The next day, in the second run of her career, she decided the agility arena—lots of space, just her and me, and things to do—was an okay place. She gave me one of the best runs of my life. All I had to do was look at the next obstacle, and she zeroed in on it and over she flew! She actually got out ahead of me toward the end and missed a direction, but no matter. The confidence and pure joy she showed were worth it. In her next trial, before she was even ready to start running in

"standard" classes (including obstacles such as weave poles, contacts, and tunnels), she earned two more "Os" in starters jumpers and earned her first agility title—that means three Os in the first four runs of her career. That doesn't happen very often with a relatively beginner handler and her second agility dog.

Today, less than two years later, Emmy is competing in the intermediate level (Advanced in USDAA, or Open in AKC) in both jumpers and standard. She has completed four titles at the beginners/starter level (two with AKC, two with USDAA) in relatively few trials, and she's starting to get some attention as a dog that "Os" more often than she makes mistakes. She's made friends wherever she goes and is a loving and friendly companion.

Overcoming her social issues took time, and she can still be defensive if I'm not around (and that teeter totter landing with a bang still bothers her sometimes), but her competition record clearly shows a shelter dog can turn out to be pretty darned special.

Update—2024.

Emmy's agility career has continued. She is now at the Masters level in AKC and continues to dabble in USDAA trials as well. We've just started competing in UKI trials. We're both starting to show our ages and making the time can be a challenge in some classes, but we still have fun going to trials with our "dog friends" and just doing the best we can. A new ARF dog has joined our family, and "Handy" is in school as an up-and-coming agility dog. It is habit-forming, and a great way to extend and reinforce one's relationship with the canine members of the family.



One dog and her first litter can produce around 67,000 puppies in six years.

Who's on ARF's Board?

Sarah Little:

Sarah has worked with ARF for seven years, initially as a foster parent and volunteer, and then Vice President for over four years until becoming President in mid-2024. She is originally from England, moved to the USA in 2004, and now has dual nationality. She has lived in Sylva since early 2017 and opened the local doggy daycare and grooming facility, Best Day Ever Doggy Daycare, in late 2021. She is an avid animal lover, owning dogs for over 20 years (as many as 12 at one time!), having horses and riding for well over 40 years, and now lives in a homestead gardening and raising chickens when she's not at work. Sarah loves to cook, bake, and can in her free time, and if all of that doesn't keep her busy enough, she enjoys visiting the local breweries in Sylva and beyond for a few rounds of trivia or music bingo.

Kaleb X. Lynch:

Kaleb has served as the Spay/Neuter Coordinator for ARF since 2015. He began volunteering with ARF as a foster parent and helping with spay/neuter trips in 2012. He has been the Shelter Director for the Catman2 Shelter in Cullowhee since 2011 and frequently collaborates with ARF for community events. He has one dog named Fred and a retirement home of delightfully strange, elderly kitties whom he loves to spoil. In his small amount of free time, Kaleb enjoys watching horror movies, hiking adventures, and volunteering for other worthy organizations and projects.

Nikki Young:

Nikki grew up in Sylva and graduated from Smoky Mountain High School in 1990. She earned degrees at NC State University in 1994 and 2000. Nikki taught Agriculture at Smoky Mountain for six years and has owned Tuckasegee Trading Company since 2005. She has fostered for ARF for the last 12 years and currently owns two foster-fail dogs. In her spare time, Nikki enjoys hiking, skiing, playing volleyball, running, and traveling.



Nory Prochaska:

Nory was born in California and graduated from UC Berkeley and received her PhD in Physical Chemistry (molecular spectroscopy) from the University of Virginia. She came to Sylva in 1978 and directed the Mathematics Tutoring Center at Western Carolina University until retirement. She has been a lifelong dog and horse owner and competed in western horsemanship as

a teen, then transitioned to lower-level eventing and dressage as an adult. Nory recently began doing dog agility and is currently seeing her second dog through the Masters level.

Dr. Sandra Black, DVM:

Dr. Black was born and raised in Miami and attended the University of Florida for both undergraduate and veterinary degrees. She moved to Whittier in 1994 and has been part of Sylva Animal Hospital ever since. She sees plenty of pets all day and has plenty of pets at home! When not working, she enjoys working on puzzles, playing pickleball, and spending time at the lake.

Jane Finneran:

Jane moved to Sylva in 2000 and immediately went to the animal shelter to see how she could help. The supervisor liked the idea of starting dog training classes at the shelter, so Jane has been doing them ever since. She had previously done classes for the Greater Raleigh Dog Training Club. She trained dogs at PAWS in Bryson City to make them more adoptable. In 2003, Jane passed the exam for the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, of which she remains a member. They require 36 hours of continuing education every three years. She has also offered private training for dog owners through Courteous Canine of Jackson County. When not helping dogs, Jane works as a physical therapist.

Jean Lewis:

Jean aka The Puppy Lady was born in Miami, Florida many years ago. She attended the University of Miami and Florida International University, and received her Doctorate from the University of Florida. Jean worked in Dade County Public Schools until retirement and moved to North Carolina in 1992. She began volunteering with ARF in 1997 and is presently the Secretary of ARF, keeping us all in line!

Mary Adams:

Mary grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and moved to Sylva in 1995 to teach English at Western Carolina University. She has fostered for ARF most of that time, caring for hundreds of dogs each year, writing grants, arranging out-of-state transports, and keeping ARF's technology running. She stepped down from being ARF's president in 2024 and looks forward to other opportunities. She has several former ARF dogs that she never successfully rehomed.

Ann Marie Dunn:

Ann Marie was born in Minnesota where she grew up and graduated high school. While serving in the United States Army for five years, she married and had one son, Nick aka The Kid, who also now volunteers for ARF's spay/neuter trips. She moved to North Carolina in 2009 and has volunteered with ARF since 2014.



Empty Nest – Almost

By Jean Lewis

Since 1999, I have been known as “the Puppy Lady” for ARF, but the years have caught up with me.

I can no longer foster animals, especially puppies. I can no longer smell that “sweet puppy breath.” I am writing this article to alert younger animal lovers to *not* say “I can’t foster an animal now because I am too busy with the rest of my life. I’ll wait until I am retired and have more time.” You will miss out on one of the best parts of *my* life—fostering animals.

Fostering has been part of my identity and a reason for being. I meet people frequently in Ingles and elsewhere who have adopted an animal I fostered. They tell me how that adoption has changed their family’s lives. They sometimes tell me when their 14 year old dog has passed over the “Rainbow Bridge.” One told me how their dog had led the Sylva Christmas parade. Adopters become my friends with a connection that lasts for years. Of course, dogs can’t tell me how their lives have changed because an organization saved them when a shelter filled up or when they were homeless or when they landed in an abusive situation. But their families tell me, and I know I’ve made a difference.

I still have three “rescue” dogs that are forever mine. My nest is not empty. I just have to limit my numbers. Puppy litters are too difficult for me to physically manage. I would strongly recommend those able-bodied enough to foster to go for it. Though most of our transport partners have become overwhelmed with adult dogs, puppies can still find homes out of state or even here in town. Sure, puppies poop, but what’s a little mess between friends? If one has the space, the love of animals, the patience, the permission of landlords or family members, and the desire to change an animal’s life, contact ARF and volunteer to foster.