

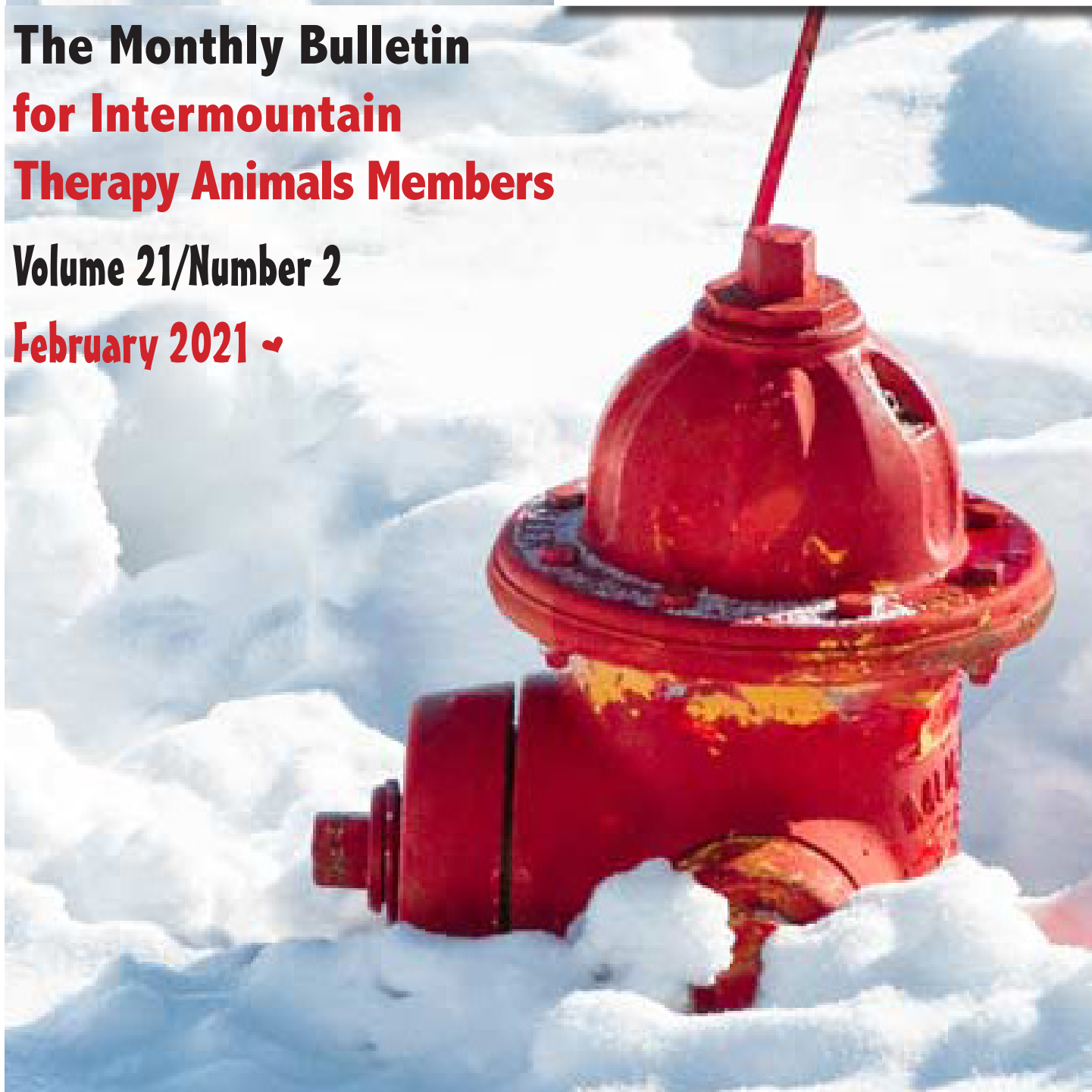
# THE HYDRANT



**The Monthly Bulletin**  
**for Intermountain**  
**Therapy Animals Members**

**Volume 21/Number 2**

**February 2021 ♡**



# The Status Quo ~

**The current facility list ... minimal change:**

Ogden Regional Hospital

Center for Change

Neighborhood House Adult Day Care

Salt Lake International Airport

Redwood Elementary School R.E.A.D. (starting 2/9)

R.E.A.D in Washington County Libraries

Copper Hills Youth Care

University of Utah Hospital - Virtual Visits & Monthly Employee De-Stressing

Hillcrest Senior Living - Bozeman

Gallatin Rest Home - Bozeman

## ITA Office Hours:

**Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm**

**Fridays - CLOSED**



## February Calendar

**Tuesday, February 9 - Board of Directors Meeting**

**Thursday, February 11 - VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION - ITA HEROES**

**Monday, February 15 - University Hospital Caregiver Stress Relief**



In a year of all kinds of heroes, we invite you to

# Celebrate Our Own ITA Volunteer Heroes - People & Animals

22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Volunteer Celebration 2021 (virtual, as needs must)

Thursday, February 11, 2021 ~ 7-7:30 pm MST



HAVE YOU  
R.S.V.P'd  
YET??

DON'T  
MISS IT!

This year's unique celebration will include:

- Raffle Prizes and Surprises
- The **Hearts & Paws Photo Contest** - Prize is **\$100** in Gift Cards!  
(in keeping with our usual seasonal theme, send us an irresistible shot of any of your animal companions with **HEARTS**, or otherwise demonstrating **LOVE**  
(to [Karen@therapyanimals.org](mailto:Karen@therapyanimals.org) - by 5 pm on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>)
- When you RSVP (to [Melissa@therapyanimals.org](mailto:Melissa@therapyanimals.org) - by February 9<sup>th</sup>)  
we will send you the link to the party



# PARTNERS LEAVING EARTH



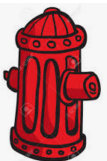
## Zoro (partner of Wendy Oaks)

(Salt Lake City) Sweet Zoro the 24-yr-old mini-horse passed away on January 13th. He and Wendy became members in November of 2019, and were already popular at the Copper Hills Youth Center when COVID struck and sidelined them. We are so very sorry.

*Always in our hearts. Wishing you peace and comfort.*

# LOVE IN ACTION

ITA Member **Eric Eikenberry** lost a good friend who passed away last June. The friend had asked **Eric & Otis** to adopt his chihuahua, **Flash**. So Otis now has a little brother, and has obviously welcomed him with open arms. Way to go, guys.





# RETIRING



## **Michelle Thibodeau & Alice**

(Helena) Members since August 2018. Alice (therapy dog) retired after we entered Covid restrictions last winter. I don't have another dog at this time so will contact if and when I'm able to rejoin ITA.

I enjoyed my short time with ITA and visiting Shodair.

– Michelle

# NEW TEAMS

We are delighted to welcome two veteran handlers back with new partners in our Salt Lake chapter.



## **Sandy LeCheminant & Satchie**

Satchie is a 2-year-old Boston Terrier, named after Louis Armstrong ("Satchmo"), who also happened to favor Bostons for his own companions.

## **Caroline Haws & Annabelle**

Caroline has a new husband and a new partner! Annabelle is a 4-year-old Portuguese Water Dog.



# ARE WE “THERE” YET?

Dear ITA Teams,

February already—and 2020 well behind us.

This is something to celebrate!

There are beginning to be hopeful indicators for our future, but as the experts are warning, this is the first chapter of recovery, not the “on” light switch.

We are hearing nice reports from our hospital volunteers that many of you have received your first vaccine doses. We are thankful that so many of our hospitals recognize the value of our service and have included our teams in the vaccination process.

We also heard from an assisted living center in Idaho that is ready to begin animal therapy visits again. They are not offering vaccines, however they feel it’s safe since the staff and all the clients have already received them. This is encouraging news.

We want to remind you that ***none of the ongoing restrictions are of ITA’s doing. We are not choosing to hold anybody back.*** You are free to begin visiting again when an appropriate opportunity presents itself to you.

The first line of authority for practices and protocols is ***each individual facility*** and what they

require of returning volunteers. We are seeing mostly care and common sense in the things that they will be asking. Still, in all cases, **YOU** get to make the final decision as to whether you want to begin visits again.

If you decide to return to service, ITA’s only expectations will be these:

- **We support your individual assessment** to feel safe and comfortable, and never to feel forced, either by the facility or by ITA.
  - **There may be some level of risk, no matter the conditions.** If you decide to return, you must do so in full willingness to do what the facility asks and to cooperate and collaborate for everyone’s sake.
- It would do no good to

agree to go back but then resist some of the requirements.

- **We need to be involved and informed about what you and the facility are doing.** We will likely need to put a revised facility agreement in place that covers the changes in our previously normal practices. We are always eager to help and it’s important for us to know what’s happening!
- **Returning teams must be exemplary in their cooperative behavior.** Perhaps it would help to imagine that cameras are on you, and





## A Big-Deal Promotion!

you would want to be preserved showing that you're doing safe, sensible, responsible things that represent our organization well.

- **Remember that, after knowing what a facility expects and requires, you as individuals are the final deciders about what is best for you, your partner and your own health, comfort and safety.**

- **If you receive notification from a facility** that they are interested in calling you and your partner back, please contact Karen (karen@therapyanimals.org) to discuss all the particulars, ask questions, and resolve any issues, in case you are unsure of the protocols for any reason.

- **Finally, check your ITA badge for your test expiration date.** We have permitted many to lapse or be extended since testing events were impossible and there was nowhere for you to go anyway. In your conversation with Karen you will need to discuss how to get yourselves up to date before you resume visiting.

We are here to help and support you, as always, and are eager to help you get back to visiting in a safe, healthy and responsible way!

With optimism ~

The ITA Staff:

*Kathy, Karen, Cindy, Melissa, and Sue*



I am beyond delighted to announce that **Karen Burns** (pictured above with her rescue boy, Riley) now has a new position and title: **ITA's Co-Executive Director.**

After 22 years with ITA, she is now full-time and her commitment, enthusiasm and accomplishments are greater than ever.

Our roles and responsibilities will stay pretty much the same for now, but it's time for me to start gradually turning over some of my tasks, as I am officially ancient.

I could not be happier about this, and I'm sure you will all join me in a chorus of congratulations and anticipation!

– Kathy Klotz



# Zoom dates? Election nights?

## Sourdough? Nope. Dogs are the heroes of this pandemic.

By Petula Dvorak

*The Washington Post* - Jan. 25, 2021

The dogs are here and they're the ones saving us, in so many ways.

Thank you, Chica, our sweet terrier mix from Puerto Rico, for every night you knew to curl up just behind my knees when I couldn't fall asleep, fretting about school and riots and my family.

Thank you, Glitch, our lanky old hound from New Orleans, for knowing the right moment to put your head on my angsty husband's knee. You did that little thing with your eyebrows — scientists say dogs developed eyebrow communication to better connect with us — looked at him with your caramel eyes, wagged that white tip at the end of your black-whip tail, and defused World War III.

And thanks to them both for racing into the boys' rooms like a nurses' brigade when one of them began raging in frustration over the 763rd hour of Zoom school or a fight with a friend or a blowout in Overwatch, and pressing your furry bodies to them like big, warm poultices of love and comfort.

The dogs are saving us.

Most Americans know this. Dogs and humans go way back to the campfire. Ancient man made a deal with the wolves — we'll give you scraps, you give us protection and

companionship, wholesome loyalty, even longevity.

The American Heart Association found, in a review of studies that included 3.8 million people, that "dog ownership was associated with a 24% risk reduction for all-cause mortality as compared to non-ownership."

After finishing the wine and the sourdough experiments and feeling still unfulfilled and uneasy, thousands of Americans flocked to animal shelters to find the kind of comfort, love, nonjudgmental understanding and loyalty that dogs uniquely offer.

Shelters across the country have been picked clean of dogs and folks now have to apply seven or eight times before they get lucky.

Because dogs are good for us. Reuben Jackson, 64, knows this firsthand.

"I go to bed to read, listen to music, send

emails—just be. He follows. I feel lucky," the D.C. poet and jazz scholar recently wrote on Facebook about his rescue beagle, Buddy. "Appreciated ... Dare I say it? Cared for ... Dear Buddy. A blessing in Middle age."



Reuben Jackson, 64, is getting through the pandemic with the help of his beagle, Buddy.

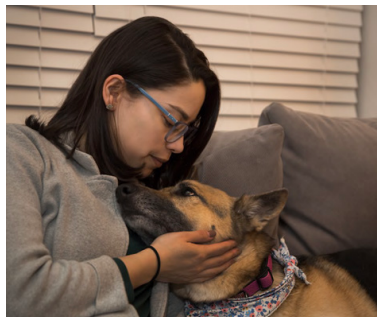
I started following Jackson on social media because he was a Smithsonian jazz archivist for decades and had a public radio jazz show in Vermont. I was





expecting to learn more about jazz from him — but his poetic tributes (“Buddy is my Dulcinea”) along with sweet selfies of him, with his archivist’s spectacles and snow-white pandemic beard and Buddy the Beagle, were the real treat.

They saved each other in February 2018, Jackson told me. “He’s a rescue. And a spunky, loving, perceptive sweetheart.”



And there’s Leo — the charming, sweet-faced, perky-eared Sato from Puerto Rico (maybe Chica’s cousin?), who deserves credit for getting the Lo-

baugh family moving.

“Our little rescue from Puerto Rico has literally saved us,” said Betsy Lobaugh of Arlington, whose family often hikes and walks the region — driven into the healing, restoring power of nature by the needs of Leo.

“We hit the doggy jackpot and it has made our family so much happier and healthier,” said Lobaugh.

Thank you, Penny the pocket beagle, for keeping my parents from feeling so alone and isolated while they endure nearly a year without seeing their grandkids.

And thank you, Barnabas the golden retriever, for giving my in-laws joy and slobber when their grandsons can’t be there to mess up their house.

But dogs are providing more than companionship and love

during the dark days of the pandemic. They can save us in other ways, too.

Blaze the Labrador retriever has been training in Pennsylvania to detect the presence of coronavirus on humans. The Miami Heat announced last week that the team will begin using coronavirus-sniffing dogs like Blaze to help them monitor spectators as they return to the stadium.

Trials have shown the dogs hitting nearly 100 percent accuracy, and they’re already being used in airports in Finland, the United Arab Emirates and Chile.

The dogs will save us.

And thank you, finally, to First Doggos Major and Champ, the German shepherds who moved into the White House with the Bidens on Sunday. As they bounded on the South Lawn, they were a welcome reminder to America of what normal looks like.

It’s no coincidence our nation’s recent, dark days happened at the same time there were no canines in the White House. President Donald Trump was one of only a handful of presiden-

tial oddballs who didn’t have dogs in the White House.

Thank Dog they’re back. And we’re all on the path to normal.



**Barney, one of two therapy dogs at Children’s National Hospital in Washington, gets a good petting from Mila Vasaio, 3, in the healing garden at the hospital on Sept. 3. (Bill O’Leary/ *The Washington Post*)**



# “NO” = LOVE (sometimes, anyway)

*Frank Bruni, the well-known columnist at the New York Times, recently took time off to re-group and refresh. In his return column, he touched on a variety of subjects, many with new perspectives; many, like the pandemic and the political upheaval in our country, of national and international importance. But, also, he wrote about his dog, Regan:*

I was touched by how many of you wrote to me over the past six weeks to say that you would or did miss these words, but I wasn't fooled—I'm not the prompt for your panic and longing. Regan is.

So I now bring her back to you, in all her beautiful goofiness. Or is that goofy beauty? On such questions does the fate of humanity turn. Or at least the fate of this paragraph.

Regan will be 7 years old in less than a week ... I can tell she's aging. (Actually, some of that could be projection.) Two years ago — even a year ago — I could easily get her to do a five-mile walk. I remember a few hikes of six, seven, even eight miles.

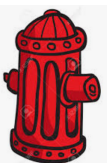
Now she sits in protest at the two-mile or three-mile mark. She sometimes does that near the beginning of a walk if she correctly associates the route I'm taking with long outings in the past. She's smart, my Regan. Willful, too.

With a stern enough command or an exuberant enough rallying cry, I can reanimate her, though she sometimes creeps along at the pace of a glacier just to spite me. She knows who's boss, but she reserves the right to pout.

She recently had a thorough checkup, including blood work, and the vet said that she's in excellent health, with one small asterisk: Regan would benefit from losing a few pounds. That in part explains my determination to keep her moving. If it were matched by my ability to deny her the treats that she routinely and creatively agitates for, she'd no doubt be slimmer. I'm working on it. I really am.

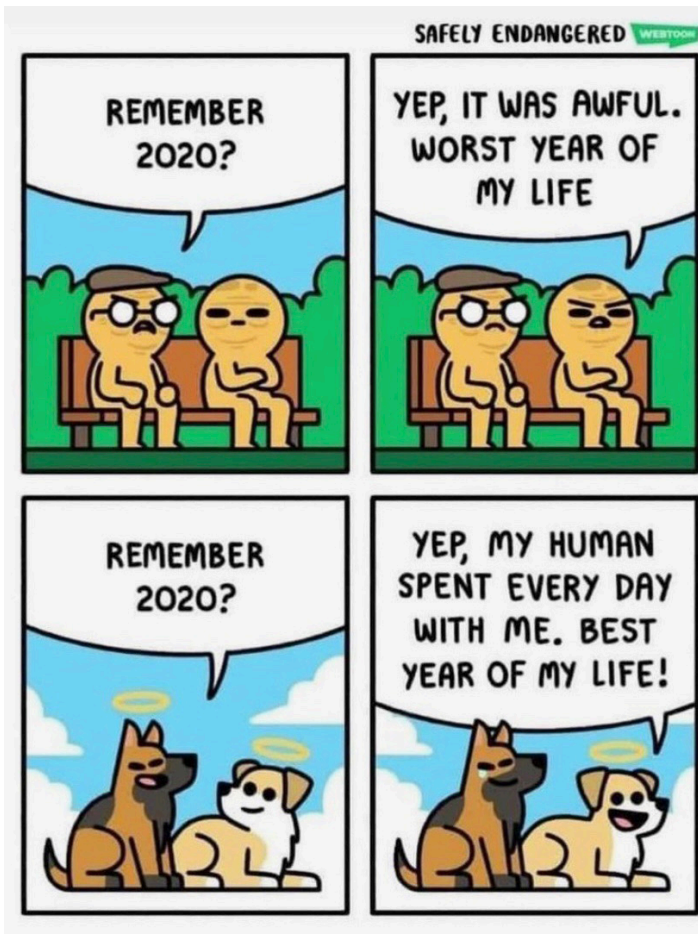
But isn't that one of the trickiest parts of love? It compels us to indulge the objects of our adoration. It opens the floodgates of generosity in a manner that feels like the biggest and best part of being alive. But that's a rush that needs containing and requires discernment, because often the most loving word of all is “no.”

Regan, you hear it plenty already. So forgive me if you start to hear it just a little more.





# The Lighter Side





## Dogs

this isn't loyalty  
it's not even love  
it's some kind of thing  
that doesn't exist in words  
the way you wait  
silently  
for me to come back

– Emmy Marucci

