

# THE HYDRANT

The Monthly  
Bulletin  
for Members of  
Intermountain  
Therapy Animals  
Volume 22/Number 7



# Are you current with ITA?

**ITA Office Hours:**  
**Monday ~ Thursday, 9 am**  
**to 5 pm**  
**(Fridays - CLOSED)**

## **Membership Dues:**

**Individual \$99**

**Family \$150**

## **How to Pay:**

Call the office with a credit card (801-272-3439), request a PayPal invoice, or send a check to PO Box 17201, SLC, UT 84117.

## **Update your Contact Information:**

If your contact info remains the same, you can just make your payment.

If any of your contact info has changed, please let us know by responding to this email or you can use the membership renewal application on our website in the member's section.

*If you are not planning on renewing your membership, please let us know so that we don't send more notices.*



*\*from the 2022 "Animals in Swimsuits" Pinup calendar by Planet Wilderness*

**July**  
**(It's still summer-camp season!)**

**July 7th and 18th - Rock-A-Bye Child Care Center**

**July 9th and 12th - Wolfe Creek Foundation**

**July 14th, 19th, and 21st - Primary Children's Constraint Induced Camp (Riverton)**

**July 26th, 27th, and 28th - Royal Family KIDS Camp (Wanship)**



# Service Opportunities ~

**FACILITIES:** We are back at 60+ places. **STILL WAITING:** 40+ !!

# ITAVOLUNTEERS.COM

**Come explore ~ the list of possibilities grows by the day!**



Ardi (Yorgason), Kingsley (Daynes) and Nikki (Prince) encountered Channel 2 Weatherman Sterling Poulson at the airport, on his way to France where the choir he conducts was participating in D-Day commemorations. Sterling has been a longtime friend and supporter of ITA, having MC'd several events for us. We heard that he also got engaged during this trip, proposing to his girlfriend on Normandy Beach! Congratulations, Sterling!!



# NEW UTAH TEAMS

*Wow! Welcome!* (What a beautiful—and much appreciated—pack of new teams here at headquarters!)



**Lindsay Arnold & Milo**



**Abi Felsted & Hazel**



**Erik Felsted & Lucy**



**Jeff Jerabeck & Rhea**



**Faye Keller & Bella**





**Charlyn Leichty  
& Axle**



**Ilene Nelson & Jasper**



**Kirsten Nilsson  
& Pippi**



**Cheryl McKay & Mozart**



**Kelly Olson & Colt**



**Mo Starr & Lazlo**



# OUT & ABOUT



**NEW UTAH TEAMS**, smiling upon completion of volunteer orientation (from top to bottom, left to right): Charlyn & Axle, Kirsten & Pippi, Abi & Hazel, Ilene & Jasper, Eric & Lucy, Lindsay & Milo, Jeff & Rhea, Faye & Bella, Cheryl & Mozart, Mo & Lazlo, and Kelly & Colt.



We got a visit from Daisy today! She's as gentle & loving as she is beautiful.

What an enrichment to my day.

May she & Erika bless many lives to come.

*Rikki*

Rikki Meece  
Traffic Reporter  
KSL



# MORE OUT & ABOUT

Nancy Dodd & Yuki, along with Carol Baumann & Maggie, visited the Gallatin Gateway grade school on Friday, May 20th. They invited the therapy dogs to come and visit **all of the classrooms, K-8**. Separately we visited all 9 classrooms so the children could meet both of the dogs. We had a wonderful time! The children and the staff were so happy to meet Yuki and Maggie. We were there for 1-1/2 hours. We are hoping to be invited back in the fall to provide R.E.A.D. sessions to the kindergarten class.

We were given the attached poster with the message:

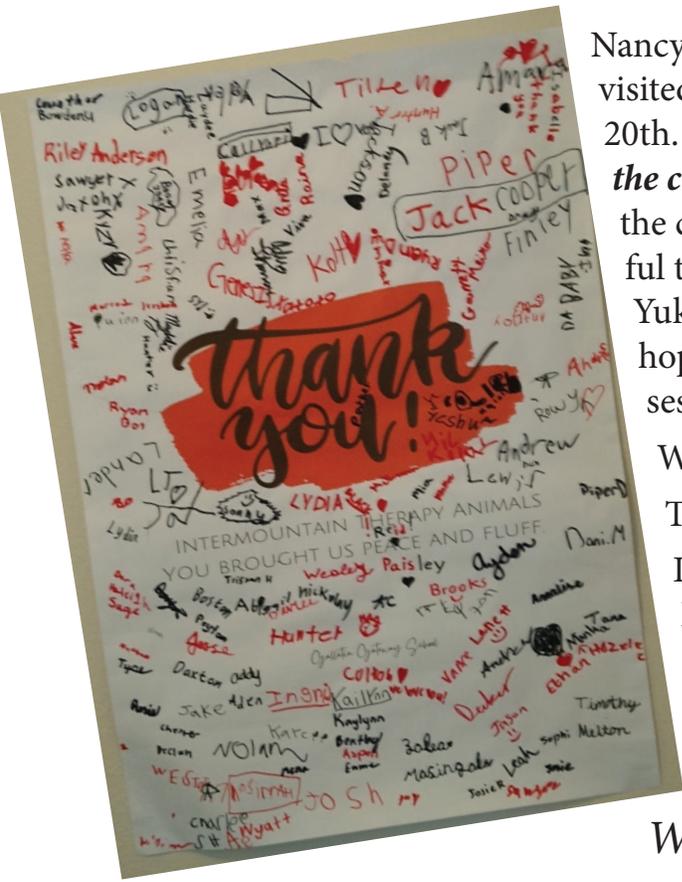
THANK YOU!

INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS—YOU BROUGHT US PEACE AND FLUFF, signed by all the children!

Lots of fun!

(As reported by Carol in the Bozeman Chapter)

*We say, PEACE & FLUFF FOR ALL!*



(LEFT:) Gus, partner of Peggy Chudd, soaking up love at the Club U Summer Camp on June 22nd.

(RIGHT:) Suzanne's partner Sasha decided to crash a wedding in Central Park in NYC. We are betting it will end up being their favorite photo of the day!



# TRANSITIONING



## **Ky, partner of Eileen Ambrose**

(Salt Lake) Eileen lost her beloved partner Ky (at left) in June after a long ordeal with cancer. Late in May she had just registered with her new partner, **Kevin** (at right).

Eileen has been with ITA for 18 years (July 2004), starting with her first partner Gabbie. She and all three of her wonderful Golden Retrievers have been so faithful and supportive over these years and



we are so lucky and grateful to have them. Eileen also serves as a member rep on ITA's board of directors.

## InfiniteWags™

### Another Valuable Offer for ITA Members and Friends!

A new and comprehensive pet shopping site, Infinite Wags, has asked to help ITA on their site. YOU get 10% off any pur-

chase when you use the code below, and WE get a \$5 donation.

**\$5 GOES TO THIS CHARITY  
WHEN YOU USE OUR  
10% OFF DISCOUNT  
CODE: THERAPYANIMALS**

SHOP NOW

[InfiniteWags.com](https://www.infinitewags.com)



# TEAM LEAVING EARTH



## **Connie Koenemann & Blue Velvet**

(Ogden) Connie Koenemann passed away on June 3, 2022, due to cancer. Blue Velvet, her second ITA partner and faithful companion for 14 years, joined Connie on the other side just a few short hours after Connie took her last breath.

Connie joined ITA in October of 2000 with her first partner, Sadie, and has been active ever since. She said the best years of her life were after her retirement in 2011 when she became a volunteer, at that time she was able to serve her fellow humans along-

side of her therapy animals, Sadie and Velvet.

She wouldn't have traded those years for anything. She served countless hours for ITA, Bristol Hospice and the George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans home where she made forever friends.

In late 2021 Connie was nominated for NHPACO's volunteer of the year award. When asked what being a volunteer meant to her, she replied "Through volunteering, I've learned to listen more, to hear some of the emotions behind the words. I've learned that sometimes the best thing we can say is nothing, that silence together might be more important. I've learned that everyone has his own way of thinking and doing, and that's ok. In being present while other people go through some of life's crises, I've watched them rise to meet their difficulty, seen them grow; this has strengthened my faith in humanity. There have been a wealth of experiences, and this has broadened and enriched me, leading towards tolerance and acceptance. And over time, I believe it has tempered my character and refined my spirit, helping me be a more compassionate individual."

One of the lovely stories Connie wrote about her ITA experiences is reprinted on the following page.

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## Martin, Chico & Velvet

That day at school was different: we never got down to the blanket. Martin generally chose to do his writing exercises first, which we usually did at the table, then we would read on the floor so Velvet could be involved. Today, however, we went straight from the writing to the reading without getting down on the floor. You could call it my gray-haired forgetfulness, and you might be right. A couple pages into the book I realized Velvet was standing beside me. I quietly scooted my chair back a little and patted my leg so she could get up in my lap. She likes to sit in my lap, her eyes on about the same level as mine, and I like it too. Martin glanced up, a little surprised to see Velvet looking down at him instead of up, but he kept on reading.

It was a book on fossils, and we soon came to a part where the author was describing how dinosaur bones become fossils. The first step in the process, of course, is that the dinosaur dies. Martin read the sentence, started to go on and then stopped. Without raising his eyes from the book he said, "My dog died, too."

It caught me so off guard I wasn't quite sure how to respond. "Oh, no. Did this just happen? Did he live with you?"

"Yeah, my dad just told me. He lived with my dad, but I live with my dad sometimes, too."

"Wasn't his name...?" I tried to think.

"Chico."

"Now I remember. You told me about him the day we met. I'm really sorry. Did you cry?"

"Yeah, a little."

"I cry a lot when my dog dies," I said, and then there was a pause, each of us lost in our own memories and neither of us having anything further to add to this conversation.

Martin went back to reading. In the middle of the next page he stopped, turned to me and asked, "Can Velvet sit in my lap?"

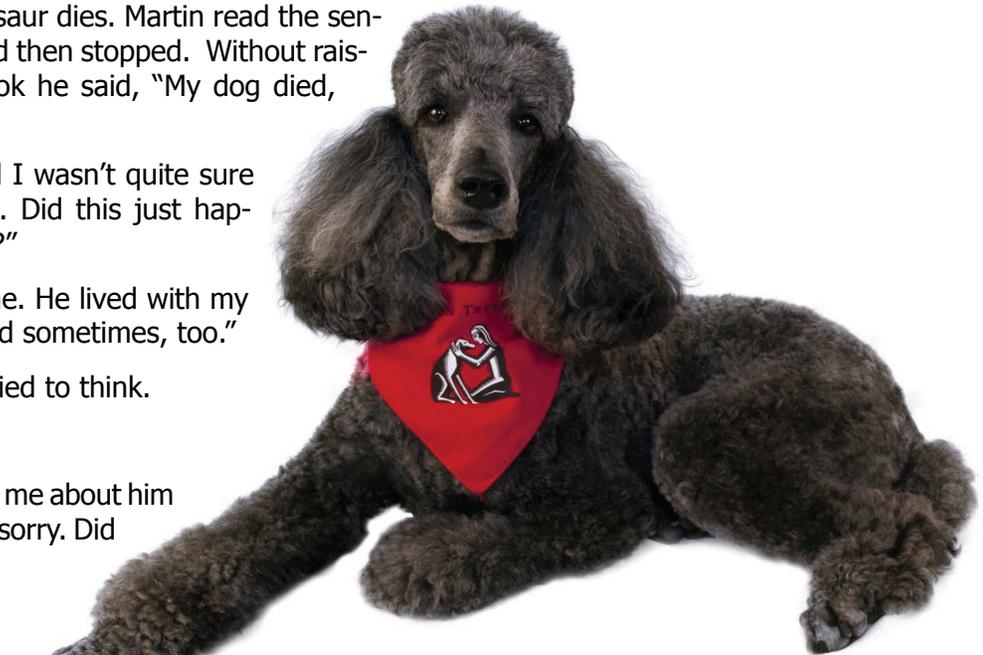
"Hmmm, I'm not sure your lap is big enough," I said, looking back at him. Velvet's small for a standard poodle, but still she weighs a good 40 pounds, kind of big for a lap dog. Martin is only 8.

But he insisted. "Yes, it is. It is. It's big enough."

"Okay," I replied. "Move your chair close to me so Velvet can just go from my lap to yours, and as soon as she gets there, put your arms around her so she won't fall off."

He did exactly that. Velvet sat in his lap and he hugged her close to his chest. That's how we read the rest of the book, with Martin holding Velvet, and with me holding the book up high so he could see around her.

(- ITA R.E.A.D. Team Connie Koenemann & Blue Velvet, Ogden, Utah)



# The Problem with “May I pet your dog?”

*Another step on the journey of understanding and honoring our partners*

I have been quite impressed over the last few years that when children approach my dog and me (and our teams, when I watch the interactions), they almost always ask if they may pet my dog. I have the impression that parents, schools, etc. are doing a much better job at instilling good doggy manners in their kids. ***But now it's time to take it another crucial step further!***

The *Whole Dog Journal*, having just given us excellent advanced instruction on “Does your dog opt in?” (see last month's *Updates*), follows up with yet another brilliant piece urging us all to ***ask the dog—not the human—whether we may pet a dog.***

This will be life-changing for all our companion animals, and especially for us as handlers who believe so ardently in treating our partners with respect for their intelligence, emotions and overall wellbeing. It also has implications for us in helping all our clients, of all ages, learn the better way to approach all animals. Once again our thanks to the WDJ and their contributing experts for keeping us all moving forward. Enjoy! – KK

## *Let's ask the dog—not the handler—and learn when his body language truly is answering “Yes!”*

By Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA

It used to be that if folks wanted to pet your dog, they just reached out and did it. Happily, in today's more well-informed world, there's usually a quick, “May I pet your dog?” first. All too often, though, the moment that permission is granted, the stranger is moving in close and looming over the dog, swiftly thrusting a hand an inch from the dog's nose. The dog—perhaps pushed forward a bit by the owner who sees how eagerly the other human wants this—might find an enthusiastic, two-handed ear jostle is next.

For some dogs—the stereotypical Golden Retriever, perhaps?—this is the moment they've been waiting for! That extra human attention may even be the highlight of their walk. If your family has only included extroverted canine ambassadors like this, the idea that a dog would not welcome an outstretched hand is incomprehensible.



Is this dog looking forward to being touched by a stranger, or has she learned she has to tolerate it because she's stuck on a tight leash and has no choice? If you slow down your greeting and let the dog choose, you'll know. *Photo Credits: Yuril Zushchyk / Dreamstime.com*

Yet, comprehend we must. Because, believe it or not, few dogs automatically love being trapped on a leash and touched by new people. As hard as it is for us to accept, that quiet dog being petted may well be hating every moment that the human is enjoying so much. While that's important to understand when you're the

*(continued next page)*



## Let's Ask the Dog (cont.)

stranger in the scenario, it's absolutely critical when you're the one holding the leash.

### DON'T ASSUME THAT DOGS WANT TO BE PETTED

Indeed, plenty of wonderful dogs are not eager to say hello to strangers. They may feel anything from uninterested, to wary, to terrified.

In some cases, they have been specially bred—by humans—to feel what they're feeling.

Unfortunately, because we humans value petting dogs so much, we often ignore that pesky truth. We tend to believe that all good dogs should happily accept petting from anybody at any time. But dogs have plenty of reasons for choosing to say no:

- Perhaps they've been bred to guard, so this forced interaction with strangers is deeply conflicting.
- Perhaps they're simply more introverted and don't enjoy this kind of socialization.
- Perhaps something in their background has made them less trusting of people.
- Perhaps normally they'd be all in, but today their ear hurts, or they are very distracted by the big German Shepherd staring at them from across the street.

There are many reasons, all legitimate, that may make a dog prefer to skip this unnecessary interaction.



### DON'T GIVE CONSENT ON BEHALF OF YOUR DOG

Becoming conscious of just how deeply some dogs do not want to be randomly touched is the first step toward realizing that we really should be asking dogs, not their handlers, whether or not we can pet them. Ultimately, it's the dog's consent we need in order to safely pet them, not the human's.



Look for consent before the two-handed ear jostle!

Photo Credits: Antoniodiaz / Dreamstime.com

Maybe the idea of giving our dogs the right to consent feels strange to you. For my part, it feels downright creepy to not give my dog the right to consent or decline to being touched by a stranger. It feels wrong that I have the power to decree, "Sure, absolutely, you go right ahead and put your hands all over this dog's body. She's so pretty, isn't she? We all love to touch her." Ew!

Of course, dogs can't verbally answer the "May I pet you?" question (when given the opportunity to do so), but they sure do answer with their body language. Unfortunately, most people don't have the skills to read what can be very subtle signals, and as a result, many dogs are routinely subjected to handling that makes them uncomfortable. Worse, this often happens while they're restrained by a leash with their owner allowing it.

That experience can make dogs even less enamored of strangers, and—the saddest part—less trusting of their owners, who did not step up to help them through that moment.

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## TIPS FOR MAKING FRIENDS WITH A DOG

I give my dogs agency when it comes to who touches them and when. If somebody asks, “May I pet your dog?” I smile at their interest and tell them I’d love for them to ask the dog. Then I show them how:

- Keep a little distance at first.
- Turn a bit to the side, so you don’t appear confrontational.
- Use your warm, friendly voice to continually reassure.
- Crouch down, so that you’re not looming in a scary way.
- Keep your glances soft and light instead of giving a steady stare.
- Offer your hand to sniff. But instead of the fist shoved unavoidably in the dog’s face (which is what society has been taught is the polite thing to do), simply move that hand ever so slightly toward the dog so she has a choice of whether to get closer to investigate. Look elsewhere as she does so, so she can have a little privacy as she sniffs.

Often, this approach gets us to a waggy “yes” from even a shy dog in 30 seconds!

## HOW TO TELL IF YOUR DOG IS GIVING CONSENT

If the dog pulls toward the stranger with a loose, relaxed, or wiggly body, the dog is saying yes. Great! The next step is to begin petting the dog in the spot she’s offering—likely her chest or rump. (A top-of-the-head pat is on many dogs’ list of “Top 10 Things I Hate About Humans.”)

If my dog does not give a quick or easy “yes,” I may try backing us up a bit and making conversation, because many dogs warm up after having a few minutes at a safe distance to size up a new human. I might feed my dog a few treats while talking to the stranger, or give him some treats to toss near my dog. If she then relaxes and leans into the experience, great!

If not, we just call it a day and move along. That is also—and this is critically important—great! No harm, no foul. No need to apologize if our dogs say, “No thanks.” We can simply and cheerily head on our way.

## APPLYING THIS UNDERSTANDING TO OUR THERAPY WORK

I smile just thinking about the whole new world that will open to people when they ask to pet your partner and you say, “Why don’t we ask her?” and follow up with letting them see and experience how they can interpret your dog’s reactions.

At this point, in our culture, the idea of asking a dog’s opinion will simply not have occurred to most people.

We are devoted to being at the forefront of how our fellow humans treat dogs—and all animals. While we have long recommended honoring our partners’ opinions when they pull us to particular clients, we have also fallen into the general assumption that because they are therapy animals, they will automatically welcome petting by any and all strangers. We can be even more respectful and consistent by asking for their consent at each encounter.

As always, we appreciate that all of you are with us in our continuing journey of greater understanding of our exquisite animal partners. ❤️ – *Kathy Klotz*



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# Love Letter

Patients in one of our residential facilities (which we will not name) had the assignment to write a letter to someone important in their lives. One of them (who we also will not name) wrote her letter to Addie, partner of Rebecca Goldhardt. This is what she said:



*Dear Addie,*

*You bring me so much joy when you come to visit. You really light up my dark world with your warm and fluffy persence. There is so much love and understanding found in your big puppy-dog eyes. I feel like you see me ... and the many lives I've lived. You embody love and affection, comfort and hope. And even if it's just for a little while, you help me forget the pain, even for a moment. I can't help but smile when you come to visit, and I'm very grateful for your wonderfully enduring, unconditional love, something many of us are still trying to grasp in this wild, chaotic, oftentimes tragic human existence.*

*Keep spreading all your puppy love and sharing all your puppy joy.*

*Hugs and kisses to you,  
sweet Addie ~*



# Call Waiting

(Melissa Korsch - NYTimes - 6.11.22)



A crowd gathered in Times Square recently for the removal of what the city promoted as New York's last public pay phone. "End of an Era," declared the news release headline, even though the era when pay phones played any meaningful role in New Yorkers' lives certainly ended long ago.

One might be forgiven for feeling a bit nostalgic. Pay phones are vestiges of the analog world, before the "I'll be 15 minutes late" text, when long-distance was a consideration and people on calls in public got their own private booths. "People miss a period of time when a call meant something," Mark Thomas of The Payphone Project told *The Times*. "When you planned it and you thought about it, and you took a deep breath and you put your quarter in."

I've been considering the familiar refrain about smartphones, that they've made our lives easier to navigate at the expense of our manners, our attention, our safety while driving. We may be physically present, but we're never really there.

Pay phones were stationary monotaskers. Before cellphones, if you wanted to talk to someone, you

did it at home, at work or in a booth. Your telecommunications were contained to these discrete spaces, separate from the rest of your life. Pay phones may be nearly obsolete, but there's nothing stopping us from reinstituting some of their boundaries in a post-pay-phone world.

What might this look like for you? For me, it would mean pulling over to the side of the road to send a text rather than dictating my message to Siri. I'd step out of the pedestrian flow and into the phone booth of the mind to listen to voice mail. I wouldn't check social media while waiting for a friend to arrive at a bar. Long phone calls would take place at home, not while I'm on a walk or sitting on a park bench, ostensibly enjoying the outdoors.

My sentimental ideal of the phone booth—Richard Dreyfuss calling Marsha Mason from outside her apartment in the rain at the end of "The Goodbye Girl"—is a time capsule, a romantic vision of the past. But the phone booth as metaphor, as inspiration for creating boundaries between virtual and real life, still seems useful today.



British phone boxes have always been more charming than ours!



# The Lighter Side

