

THE HYDRANT

The Monthly Bulletin
for Members of
Intermountain Therapy Animals

Volume 24 / Number 11

November 2025



Are you current with ITA?

Membership Dues:

Individual \$99
Family \$150

How to Pay:

Pay online at therapyanimals.org/ita-members-only/
OR 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 simply 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 (using the link above).

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

ITA Normal Office Hours:

Monday ~ Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm (Fridays - CLOSED)

CLOSED for THANKSGIVING: Thursday, November 27th



COMFORT, HOPE, HEALING AND LOVE - SINCE 1993
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS



NEW TEAMS



Samanthe Lyons & Dr. Watson
(Salt Lake City)



Bonnie Allred & Dixie
(St. George, UT)

HANDLER W/ NEW PARTNER



Nova & Katherine Howe
(Livingston, Montana)

Katherine's other current partner is Skye, and Katherine has been a member since 2017.

RETIRING



Peggy Peterson & Tucker
(Salt Lake City)

Tucker has an osteosarcoma on his front paw. They have been an ITA team since June of 2023.





The Gift

Today Harvey and I hear delighted calls of joy...HARVEY! as we come for our hospital therapy visit. (When Hugo and I come we hear, HUGO!)

As we visit the patients, we find people at their "Worst" with severe illnesses, injuries and broken hearts, but when we walk into a room, the smiles are everywhere; patient, visitors, nurses and staff. Since Covid started, we've realized that nurses and staff need visits too, to help relieve the incredible stress their jobs bring them.

Shaking, brittle fingers reach out to touch his soft fur. Chins reach forward so he can oblige them with a kiss. Squeals of delight as little children watch him "bow" and then receive a picture of him to take home.

And everywhere I look, people are at their "Best" now. These doggie visits are truly a gift to them, and as my heart swells with joy, I realize it is a gift to me as well.

The dogs feel it too and remembering how special it is, they line up each time I'm getting ready to go for a visit, saying "Take me please!"

These special souls, who were meant to be a service dog for one person for life, have chosen a different "career". A therapy dog career which allows them to give their gift to so many, including the person at the end of the leash.

Thank you for the many gifts over the years.
 Love, Linda, Hugo, Harvey,
 Donny & Cara, rest in peace 2023

[Clockwise from above:] Linda Weiskopf created this beautiful tribute to her four beloved ITA therapy partners.

[Right below:] For Halloween, Gypsy, partner of Ilene Nelson, dressed in pink to be Glinda the good witch, complete with Tiara, to the delight of her patients at McKay-Dee Hospital.

[Left below:] Valerie Duffin & Beau got into the Halloween spirit with the Primary Rehab team in Bountiful.



ITA's Very Popular Court Teams

Here is a shoutout to the fabulous teams that represent ITA in the Third District Juvenile Court.

The old saying “it takes a village” is certainly true when it comes to Family Recovery Court (FRC). These twice-monthly courts work to help reunite families by providing support and services.

FRC is only a small portion of the work we do. ITA also provides support for individual youth involvement cases. Court hearings can be very traumatizing for children, and having an animal by their side helps ease some of their discomfort.

– Linda Webster

ITA Court Teams Program Coordinator



[Clockwise from left above:] Deb Graber & Teddy in Judge Diaz’s courtroom; Linda Webster & Tundra in Judge Flater’s courtroom; Peggy Chudd & Gus in Judge Johnson’s courtroom; and Andrea Storey & Jiffy Pop in Judge _____’s courtroom.





Get ready to CELEBRATE at the ITA Annual Holiday Party!

Sunday, December 7, 2025

5 to 8 pm

Becky Butler's Home

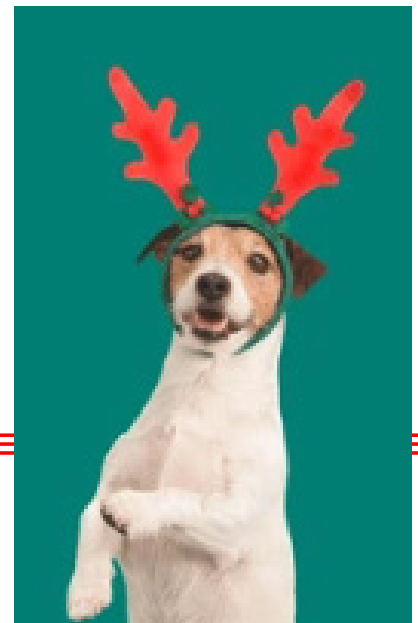
6654 So. Mill Stone Lane in Cottonwood Heights

(Becky's phone 801.556.6881)

Please bring . . .

- Your partner/guest (2-footed only—sorry)
- One of your favorite holiday dishes
- Your own special "cup of cheer"
(Only if you have a special beverage in mind. Lots of soft drinks, beer and mixers provided)
- A non-perishable food item for the Utah Food Bank (canned goods, tuna, peanut butter, pasta, baby food and diapers are high on their list)
- And, a fun, fascinating gift or gifts* to play our traditional exchange game
(*One gift from you and one from your guest — Spend \$20-25 each, max)

Please respond by December 3rd to the ITA office: **801-272-3439**



Please, please come!



“It’s Just a cat.”

Meaningful Support for Those Who Are Grieving the Loss of Their Companion Animal by Julie Knopp

Years ago, a friend of mine lost a loved one. When she told others about her loss, they offered compassion — until she mentioned that her dearly departed was a cat. Needing validation for her grief, my friend had started telling people that her *daughter* had died.

The travesty here is not my friend’s lie, but that she had to fib to receive adequate support for the pain she was experiencing. Grievers suffering unconventional losses often find themselves navigating a society unwilling or unable to provide them with the empathy they need to heal.

I recently made the difficult decision to say goodbye to Waffle Cone, my 18-year-old cat. My loyal companion, who had followed my every move around the house for years, could barely stand any-

more. The diverse responses to Waffle Cone’s death among my friends and family were astounding. Within an hour of her death, a florist’s truck pulled up in front of my home. A friend had sent flowers with a card offering condolences. Messages from other loved ones included offers to give me hugs and homemade soup.

Not everyone was so generous with their empathy. Several people I communicate with daily

knew that Waffle Cone had died and never acknowledged it. When my partner told an acquaintance about our loss, the acquaintance replied, “It’s just a cat.”

Those four words—and other dismissive responses to grief—are common following such tragedies and can complicate the healing process. Breakups, miscarriages, deaths of companion animals and other misfortunes can result in something called “disenfranchised grief,” which stems from losses that are

not widely considered significant. In these cases, the bereaved may receive little social support and be limited in their ability to fully express their grief.

“Although grief over the loss of a cherished pet may be as intense and even as lengthy as when a significant per-

son in our life dies, our process of mourning is quite different,” psychologist Guy Winch wrote in 2018 for *Scientific American*.

“Many of the societal mechanisms of social and community support are absent when a pet dies. Few of us ask our employers for time off to grieve a beloved cat or dog because we fear doing so would paint us as overly sentimental, lacking in maturity or emotionally weak.

(More on next page ...)



Meaningful Support (cont.)

Studies have found that social support is a crucial ingredient in recovering from grief of all kinds.”

The euthanasia decision implicit in many companion animal deaths can exacerbate grief. Choosing to end the life of a loved one, especially when they cannot communicate to us whether they want to die, can be confusing and painful.

Shifting the way we think about the bereaved and their losses has powerful implications. When we let the griever decide what constitutes a loss and how significant that loss is, we can better understand what support should look like. And while everyone grieves differently, most people share in common a need for their loss to be acknowledged.

Try words like these: “I’m so sorry for your loss. This must be very difficult. Would it be helpful to talk on the phone? Can I bring you takeout? I don’t know exactly what to say, but I know this is painful, and I’m here for you.”

Send flowers or a card. Text a photo you took of the individual who passed away. Share a memory of the departed that you’ll carry with you.

If there is one thing I’ve learned from losing Waffle Cone, it’s that my grief is a reflection of my love. Big loss follows big love. Who or what we love varies dramatically from person to person. Though I may not understand someone

else’s loss, I can trust their lived experience and meet them with compassion. Consoling the bereaved can be a rare and beautiful invitation to be present when love is let go.

I find that my grief is constantly evolving. I’m thankful for the people in my life who offered empathy, which paved the way to healing. As time passes, I feel my pain transforming into

gratitude for the time I had with my companion and for her unconditional love.

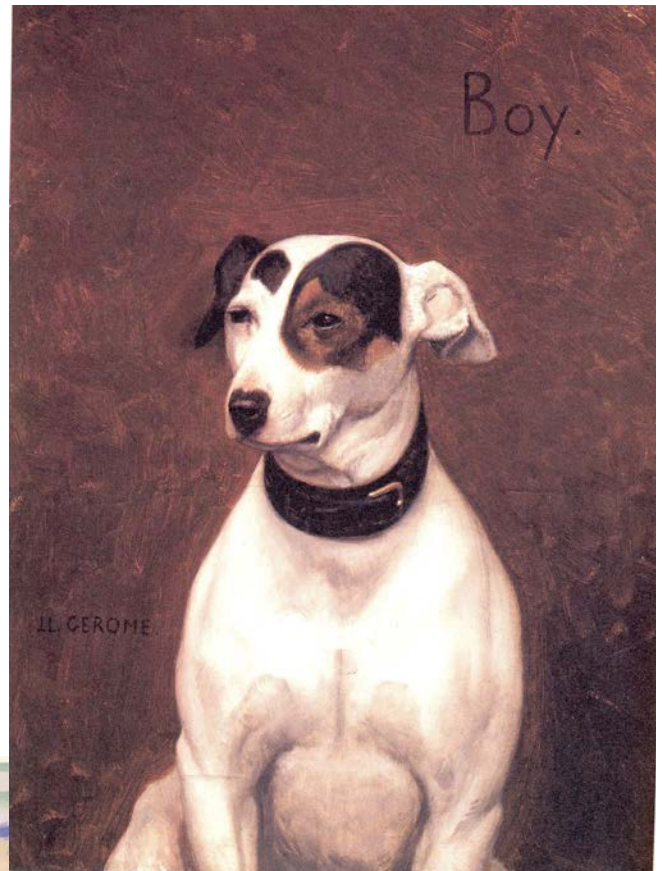
In the words of author and dog trainer Suzanne Clothier:

“There is a cycle of love and death that shapes the lives of those who choose to travel in the company of animals. ... Only we know how small a price we pay for what we receive; our grief, no matter how powerful it may be, is an insufficient measure of the joy we have been given.”

Julie Knopp is a writer and animal advocate. She is a certified companion animal end-of-life doula and the board president of Compassionate Action for Animals in Minneapolis.

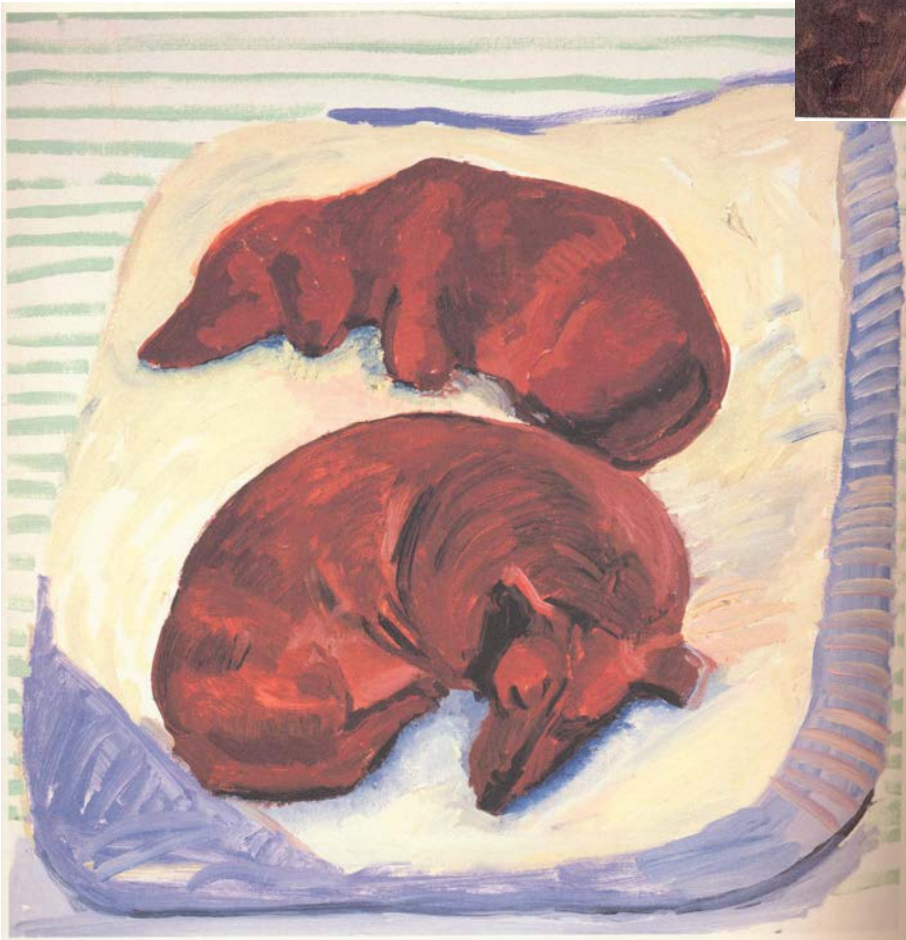


Paintings with Dogs



RIGHT: Boy - Jean Leon-Gerome

BELOW: Dog Painting 3 - David Hockney



The Lighter Side



off the mark .com by Mark Parisi



off the mark .com by Mark Parisi

