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Latham Letter

VOLUME XXXIV, NUMBER 2

SPRING 2013

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

SINGLE ISSUE PRICE: \$5.00

Good Legislation for Children and Animals:

Connecticut's Cross Reporting Bill



By Lori Fogler-Nicholson

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Edith Latham's Mandate:

“To promote, foster, encourage and further
the principles of humaneness, kindness
and benevolence to all living creatures.”



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The Latham Letter

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities

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The Latham Foundation, 1826 Clement Avenue, Alameda, California 94501

The Latham Letter

Volume XXXIV, Number 2, Spring 2013

**BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON
HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**



The *Latham Letter* is published quarterly by The Latham Foundation, 1826 Clement Ave., Alameda, CA 94501.

Subscription Rates: \$15.00 One Year, \$25.00 for Two Years

Publisher and Editor	Hugh H. Tebault, III
Managing Editor	Judy Johns
Printer	Schroeder-Dent, Alameda, CA
Design	Joann Toth, Fountain Hills, AZ

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The Latham Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private operating foundation founded in 1918 to promote respect for all life through education. The Foundation makes grants-in-kind rather than monetary grants. Latham welcomes partnerships with other institutions and individuals who share its commitment to furthering humane education.

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Hugh H. Tebault III,
Latham Foundation's
President

Bring Back Brother Buzz!

Good day, Latham.

Like many kids from the early 1960s, I was a member of the Brother Buzz club. The promotion of kindness for all living creatures is as relevant today as it was then. It's for that reason that I question what seems to be the relegation of Brother Buzz to the history. His message is alive and so should he. Please bring him back.

*Regards,
A Former Member of the Brother Buzz Club*



This recent note is one example of the messages Latham receives. I love to get these notes from our former Brother Buzz kids. The warm memories of growing up hearing about being kind to animals, showing respect to others, and in turn, earning respect for oneself are positive messages that we value.

The Latham message as delivered by Brother Buzz illustrates the value of classic humane education. Building on values that are timeless and diverse is at its core. Humane education is not a message of exclusion, but rather one of inclusion and showing kindness and respect to others. It is a message for people in all walks of life – no special diets, no special beliefs needed. It is a message shared across our society – in big cities and in the country. It is a value shared by business people, farmers, hunters, children, and adults alike.

Many of today's organizations cater to an exclusive audience. They declare themselves better than everyone else because they care more. Brother Buzz kids built upon a solid foundation and made their caring lifestyle part of their daily

lives – whatever and wherever that might have been. Brother Buzz kids lived in cities, in the suburbs, in the country and on farms and ranches. Brother Buzz kids had varied diets and were of every culture and religion. All these Brother Buzz kids shared a common foundation – humane education that taught them kindness and respect for animals and each other.

Knowing that these Brother Buzz kids are adults in today's society gives me a glimmer of hope when I read daily about the many problems that we face. I believe that the Brother Buzz kids will take action in their own communities and businesses to demonstrate the values of respect and kindness in all their actions. Those actions can bring back the true nature of the Brother Buzz club. It is up to us as adults today to maintain the values we learned as children and to teach today's generation the importance of kindness and respect. Brother Buzz urges personal responsibility and personal actions to carry on this timeless message. It is up to each of us to live it daily.



One Picture Saves a Life

News from Seth Casteel, the Underwater Dogs guy

Seth Casteel began his career as a Lifestyle Pet Photographer by volunteering at local animal shelters and creating positive portraits of homeless pets. He discovered that the public connected with these hopeful portraits and adoption rates increased. In 2011 he founded Second Chance Photos and taught workshops across the United States, Australia, and in Europe to further the reach of this important message.

Recently he announced a partnership with GreaterGood, The Animal Rescue Site, Petfinder Foundation and John Paul Pet in order to expand his reach. The mission of the newly-formed **One Picture Saves a Life** is to help save the lives of homeless pets through photography and grooming.

Look for a workshop in a city near you. 2013 Tour stops:

- June: Las Vegas, NV
- July: Los Angeles, CA
- August: Chicago, IL
- September: Charlotte, NC
- October: Puerto Rico



Read more at <http://onepicturesaves.com/#pDZvfTyElbdt4XJm.99>

Visit Latham's booth at these upcoming conferences to learn the latest about our DVDs and books to help you help others:

Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference
Bloomington, IL • June 10-12, 2013

No More Homeless Pets National Conference
Jacksonville, FL • October 10-12, 2013

PRAISE FOR LATHAM DVDs

"I was in need of some new DVDs for our camp program and immediately thought of the Latham Foundation. Their core values of empathy, kindness and respect for all life aligned perfectly with our goals for camp.

The DVDs really hold children's attention and are an excellent teaching tool."

*Kerry Ecklebe, Education Director
Nebraska Humane Society*



Thank You

Dear President Tebault,

Thank you for all you do for all of us – as well as the animals and the innocent children.

*Jean F. Atthowe, Past President
Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force*



Good Legislation for Children and Animals:

Connecticut's Cross Reporting Bill



This is the story of a dedicated Legislator, Representative Diana Urban, her intern (me) and an army of humane allies. Our goal was to legally acknowledge the link between child abuse, animal abuse and domestic violence by crafting legislation to dismantle what is called the cycle of violence.

Establishing the Need for a Cross Reporting Bill

What is the Cycle of Violence and How Can Public Policy Address the Problem?

A study by the National Institute of Justice reveals that victims of neglect are also likely to develop later violent criminal behavior (February 2001). Child abuse, animal abuse and domestic violence are intimately related. In fact: according to domestic violence expert Lieutenant Howard Black, "Everything goes back to family violence. Domestic violence is the nexus." If that's true, then it would make sense to interrupt violence as early as possible. In public policy we can address the problems when they are smaller problems, or we can wait until they become bigger problems such as juvenile delinquency, addiction and incarceration.

Unfortunately, abusers have many tools at their disposal, one of them being the family pet. Pets are often used to threaten, intimidate and silence the victims of abuse in domestic violence cases. Animal cruelty and neglect is often a red flag and part of the cycle of violence.

Connecticut's Cross Reporting bill aims at intervention while there's still a chance to affect positive change. It's good for children, pets, families, and for the

By Lori Fogler-Nicholson

taxpayers who can pay up front and correct a situation, rather than for damage control for decades to come. We believe that protecting the most vulnerable in our society is our business and that's why we fought so hard to pass the Cross Reporting bill. The link between child abuse, animal cruelty and domestic violence is very real. Connecticut Public Act 11-194 puts law enforcement and social services on the same team, and makes for a powerful collaboration between state agencies.

What is Cross Reporting?

Cross reporting is a *mandated* two-fold process that establishes the Link. Part One is the exchange of information between The Department of Agriculture, which represents animals, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), which represents children. In the past, these agencies weren't mandated to communicate their findings to each other. Part Two is the cross training of personnel from those agencies. Training is provided so employees performing their duties have the ability to accurately diagnose and report suspected abuse. The procedure according to the public act is as follows:

If an animal control officer investigates a report of animal cruelty, that officer has 48 hours to file a report with the Commissioner of Agriculture. Each

month the Commissioner of Agriculture sends animal cruelty or neglect reports to the Department of Children and Families' Commissioner. These reports will then be cross referenced with any address where there is an open investigation of child abuse or neglect. The information is then passed on to DCF investigators and a record is kept.

Any DCF employee who in the course of their employment has reason to believe an animal has been cruelly treated or neglected has 48 hours to make an oral report to the Commissioner of Agriculture giving the name and address where it was observed.

Cross reporting literally doubles the ground forces used to fight abuse. DCF staff and animal control officers are given training for accurately identifying both child and animal abuse and neglect. Because abuse needs to be tackled on many fronts, and from every angle, the value of having two departments collaborating is immeasurable. Cross reporting gives us a chance to intervene sooner than later and hopefully mend lives before the cycle repeats itself.

The Legislative Process

Tools

Latham Foundation Materials

One of our most persuasive tools was purchased from the Latham Foundation's video collection. The title, "Breaking the Cycles of Violence II." The movie is graphic, inspirational and factual. The personal stories of victims and investigators made a powerful impression on the legislators and citizens sitting in the hearing room. In one case, a wife recalled how her husband had tortured the family cat to control her, and in another, authorities investigating a dog that had been left out in the snow chained to a tree, arrived and found a child dead in the home. The wife had been battered for years. The video clearly established the power struggle that exists in domestic violence cases. It offered solutions through collaborative efforts which were at the heart of the cross reporting bill. The video was very persuasive and I highly recommend its educational value.

Expert Testimony

While politicians may be well versed in some areas, they can't be in all. Bringing expert testimony to the table was very valuable for us. Educating legislators is really the first order of business.

Law Enforcement

I scanned the web for expert testimony and found an article about DVERT (Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team) in Colorado Springs, Colo. I tracked down Lieutenant Howard Black who was the program director of DVERT from 1996-2003. He was also a presenter at the National Symposium on Domestic Violence, held faculty positions at the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the U.S. Justice Department and the United Nations Domestic Violence Collaborations for China. He had credentials that would get the legislators' attention, and that was my primary goal. Lieutenant Black was kind enough to answer all my questions which I recorded.

Later, I transcribed our conversation and presented it during an informational hearing:

Q: For the record and from your experience of 27 years in law enforcement do you believe there is a link between child abuse, animal abuse and domestic violence?

A: The Link is well documented and we see the cycle of violence every day. Animals are used to intimidate and threaten victims. When we had animal abuse associated with the arrest of the perpetrator, we saw juries give them more time and we were amazed.

Q: Can you explain the impetus for the DVERT program and its general purpose?

A: I was involved in a national research project measuring the effects of arrest rates on recidivism. We were shocked to find that arrest did not deter domestic violence or the rate of recidivism. We needed another strategy ... one of containment. Containing the situation and applying the experts in human services, animal control and humane societies, the prosecutor's office, mental health and addiction services.

My hope was that people of reason, would find it difficult to dismiss the opinion of a man with worldwide experience on the subject.

Mental Health Evaluators

Next, I called Lisa Austin Taylor of Milford, Conn., a licensed professional counselor, and a board-certified forensic mental health evaluator. The legislators needed to hear from someone who dealt with mental disorders from a clinical standpoint. Lisa also worked with gangs and gang violence. She quoted *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* which read, "The first criterion of the Conduct Disorder diagnosis is Aggression to People and Animals." If the professionals who designed the mental health manual could

state that aggression to people and animals is a disorder, then the legislators certainly could. At least that was my line of thinking at the time.

Animal Welfare Groups

Animal welfare organizations, both national and local, came to support the cross reporting bill. Representatives from The American Humane Association (Phil Arkow and Allie Phillips), Soul Friends, the ASPCA, and Connecticut Votes for Animals gave persuasive arguments in favor of the bill. Susan B. Linker, CEO of Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary had this to say:

“On behalf of Connecticut Votes for Animals, Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary and the statewide coalition of animal welfare organizations with the Animal Welfare Federation of Connecticut, we strongly support Raised Bill 6226. This crucial legislation is long overdue and is essential for the welfare of our state’s children and animals. In fact, it makes so much sense that many people are shocked when they learn that cross reporting of child abuse and animal abuse is not already mandated.”

The animal welfare groups cited a mountain of evidence to show that “lack of empathy” is at the very heart of violence. It was stated that both Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy had tortured animals before progressing to the torture and murder of human beings. Their statistics were impressive and told a story not many could argue with – that animal cruelty is a red flag not to be ignored.

Obstacles

We did not pass the bill the first go around. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association worried that animal control officers were untrained and unable to fulfill their duties, not to mention the cost to towns of having to provide training. The Department of Agriculture supported the bill but said training 350 animal control officers with scant resources would be a problem. Money seemed to be the biggest impediment to passage. Then the Department of Children and Families gave testimony and said, “We endorse adding animal control officers as mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect ... DCF provides training free of charge to mandated reporters ...” With this, the money problem was alleviated. Be forewarned that fiscal impact, especially in these economic times, carries a great deal of weight.

Adding to the drama was an outspoken legislator who let it be known that he thought the Link was a myth. In between votes, and with only a few minutes to speak, I asked the legislator why? I was told, “That every kid pulls the legs off frogs and shoots birds.” There was heated discussion on the floor, but ultimately the bill was sabotaged because we ran out of time.

Triumph!

We learned from our failure in 2010 and upped our game in the 2011 session! We didn’t sit back and hope; no, we took matters into our own hands by educating legislators and finding compelling expert testimony. We went after sponsors regardless of party. You can’t control what bills ultimately go to the floor for a vote, because they are at the discretion of the Speaker. However, I do believe that reaching across party lines and uniting our front made all the difference in the world. We tripled the number of

sponsors in doing so. It doesn’t matter who gets all the credit, it matters that you get it done. With only ten minutes remaining in the session, we got word that the labor of our love had passed the senate. I nearly cried... I was so happy. It was really hard work, but Connecticut HB 6226 did pass and the children, animals and families of Connecticut are safer because of it.

Thank you Latham Foundation

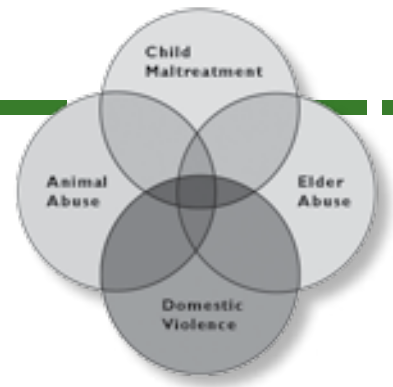
Thank you to the Latham Foundation for providing the educational materials that were instrumental in the passage of our bill. The Foundation continues to inspire! As Chair of Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter Commission, I’ve put forth a motion to begin the process of implementing an ordinance in Branford, Conn., that would ban the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in retail outlets. The motion was embraced wholeheartedly by the Commission, and we will pursue its passage. That inspiration came from a recent article in the Latham Newsletter. Keep up the good work.

Lori is a published songwriter and professional musician with worldwide touring experience. She went back to college at the age of 48 and interned for Rep. Diana Urban at the Connecticut General Assembly in 2010 & 2011. She received her B.S. in Political Science from Southern Connecticut State University and graduated summa cum laude in 2011. Lori ran for State Representative in 2012 and lost her bid, but hopes to run again in 2014. She chairs the Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter Commission and is currently converting her senior thesis on animal welfare into a book. Her primary goal is the advancement of animal welfare legislation and humane education.



News from the National Link Coalition's LINK-Letter

www.nationallinkcoalition.org



Will Connecticut Animals Have CASA-type Advocates?

Child victims of abuse, neglect and other domestic disturbances have long been entitled to Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to represent their interests in court proceedings. Legislative initiatives recently introduced would extend this concept to animals that have not traditionally had legal representation.

The Connecticut General Assembly is considering HB 5677 and HB 6310, introduced by Rep. Diana S. Urban and eight co-sponsors. The bills, which were referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, would permit the appointment of an animal advocate – a veterinarian from the State Department of Agriculture – in family relations matters, civil cases, and criminal proceedings including cruelty cases, which involve the care, custody and well-being of animals.

This just in!

International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge Update

CAMPBELLVILLE, ON: APRIL 1, 2013 – Plans for the International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge are well underway. Doggone Safe challenged its presenters to visit schools and educate 50,000 children about dog safety during March-May. So far 52 presenters have pledged to educate over 30,000 children in six countries, six Canadian provinces and twenty-four US states.

For more information about the Challenge, to become a sponsor, to book a presentation for your school or to register as a presenter, please visit the Doggone Safe website at www.doggonesafe.com.

About Doggone Safe

Doggone Safe is a non-profit corporation registered in Canada and Ontario, and in the US is a 501(c)(3) registered charity. Doggone Safe is dedicated to dog bite prevention through education and dog bite victim support. Doggone Safe has members from around the world. Educational programs offered by Doggone Safe are Be a Tree™ (for school-aged children), and online courses about dog body language and occupational dog bite prevention.



HARRY TRUMAN SAID,
"If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog."

How Therapy Dogs Almost Never Came to Exist

By Stanley Coren, Ph.D., F.R.S.C.

The idea of therapy dogs was originally met with derision and laughter.

Originally published on February 11, 2013 by Stanley Coren, Ph.D., F.R.S.C. in *Canine Corner* (*Psychology Today*, *Canine Corner* at www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner)

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I recently read a report about how Mineta San Jose International Airport's passenger waiting area is regularly visited by therapy dogs for a few hours each week. The program began after the 9/11 terrorist attacks which used hijacked passenger planes as weapons. After that event an airport pastor brought in her own dog to help soothe tense and worried passengers. However, even without such fear-provoking events, air travel is often a stressful event. Some people are simply afraid of flying, others are traveling for job interviews, important business meetings, to attend to family crises, in response to the loss of a loved one, or for many other purposes all of which tend to be associated with anxiety. Since the soothing effect of contact with a friendly dog is now well established, it seems like a useful thing to have dogs available for this purpose. The program now has 11 volunteers and the four-footed counselors wear red vests covered in patches embroidered with slogans like "Pet me I'm friendly."

When I see reports like this I must admit that I have a feeling of disbelief. This is not a disbelief in the usefulness of using dogs to relieve stress or to assist in therapeutic interventions, but rather disbelief that this practice has come to be accepted by mainstream psychological, educational and medical practitioners. This was not always so. My own first contact with this type of therapy actually led me to predict that such practices would never come to pass.

It was quite early in my career in the 1960s, and I was attending the American

“ **Freud often had his Chow Chow, Jofi, in his office with him during psychotherapy sessions.** ”



Sigmund Freud and his "therapy dog" Jofi

Psychological Association meetings in New York. Because of my interest in dogs and their relationship to humans, I was caught by the title of a talk to be given by a child psychologist, Boris Levinson, who was at Yeshiva University. This would turn out to be the first formal presentation of animal-assisted therapy given before a national audience in North America. Levinson was working with a very disturbed child and found, by chance, that when he had his dog Jingles with him the therapy sessions were much more productive. Furthermore, other children who had difficulty communicating seemed more at ease and actually made real attempts at conversation when the dog was present. Levinson gathered data from several such cases and this formed the basis of the paper that he presented at this APA meeting. The reception of his talk was not positive, and the tone in the room did not do credit to the psychological profession. Levinson was distressed to find that many of

his colleagues treated his work as a laughing matter. One even cat-called from the audience, “What percentage of your therapy fees do you pay to the dog?” This did not bode well for the future of such research and therapy, and I thought that it was likely that I would never hear about such use of animals in therapeutic interactions again.

I might have been correct, however, an individual whose voice could not be ignored by the psychological community essentially argued in favor of animal-assisted therapy from his grave. At this point in time, it was only some 15 years after Sigmund Freud’s death. Just by chance, several new biographies of Freud’s life had recently been released including translations of many of his letters and journals. There were also new insights into Freud’s life coming from books published by people who knew him, and some even described his interactions with his household full of dogs.

From these various sources, we learned that Freud often had his Chow Chow, Jofi, in his office with him during psychotherapy sessions. The dog was originally in the room as a comfort to the psychoanalyst, who claimed that he was more relaxed when the dog was nearby. However, Freud soon began to notice that the presence of the dog seemed to help patients during their therapy sessions as well. This difference was most marked when Freud was dealing with children

“ **The ultimate validation of animal-assisted therapy would come from psychologist Alan Beck and psychiatrist Aaron Katcher. They used direct physiological measures to show that when a person interacted with, or even was simply in the presence of, a friendly dog, there were immediate changes in their physiological responses.** ”

or adolescents. It seemed to him that the patients seemed more willing to talk openly when the dog was in the room. They were also more willing to talk about painful issues. The positive results were not limited only to children, but also were seen in adults. Thus it became clear that Freud had observed very much the same phenomena that Levinson described.

When Levinson and others learned about Freud’s experiences with this, it seemed like a form of validation. The climate now warmed given the evidence that Freud was willing to entertain the usefulness of animal helpers in psychotherapy, and thus the laughter stopped and some serious work began.

The ultimate validation of animal-assisted therapy would come from psychologist Alan Beck and psychiatrist Aaron Katcher. They used direct physiological measures to show that when a person interacted with, or even was simply in the presence of, a friendly dog, there were immediate changes in their physiological responses. Breathing became more regular, heart beat slowed, muscles relaxed and there were other physiological changes suggesting a lowering of sympathetic nervous system activity. Since it is the sympathetic nervous system which responds to stress, this indicated that the dog was clearly reducing the stress levels of the people in its presence. There is a bias among psychological researchers, in that they tend to use physiological measures as if they are the “gold standard” for the validity of a concept. Since they could now see the direct effects that pets were having on the physiological indexes of stress, the notions associated with animal assisted therapy became much more acceptable. This is evidenced by the fact that the number of pet-assisted therapy programs was under twenty in 1980, but by the year 2000 over one thousand such programs were in operation. One no longer hears laughter at the concept of dogs being used for stress relief, however we do see a lot of people smiling and relaxing as they pet therapy dogs.

“ **My own first contact with this type of therapy actually led me to predict that such practices would never come to pass.** ”

Stanley Coren is the author of many books including *Born to Bark*, *Do Dogs Dream?* *The Modern Dog*; *Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?* *The Pawprints of History*; *How Dogs Think*; *How To Speak Dog*; *Why We Love the Dogs We Do*; *What Do Dogs Know?* *The Intelligence of Dogs*; *Why Does My Dog Act That Way?* *Understanding Dogs for Dummies*; *Sleep Thieves*; *The Left-hander Syndrome*. He is Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia.



The History of Humane Education

By Hugh Tebault

Reprinted courtesy of The Humane Education Quarterly, formerly The Packrat, the official newsletter of the Association of Professional Humane Educators.

When did you first become aware of humane education? For each person the answer will be different. Perhaps it was with the introduction of a family pet, as you learned the value of caring for its needs and receiving its unconditional love. Or maybe it was later, in a school room where the teacher introduced pets – either live or in stories. In reality humane education has always been part of the human experience. In the Bible there are many stories told about people and animals to teach values. Aesop used animals to illustrate lessons in his fables. I have been surrounded by humane educators my entire life.

I am honored to be the current president of The Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education. The Latham Foundation was established in 1918 by Milton and Edith Latham, a brother and sister whose own family values and work with the local SPCA helped them recognize the importance of humane education to the community. They saw how it could be used to improve society, and they devoted their lives to promoting it.

The core members of the Latham Foundation worked diligently to develop their outreach, taking every opportunity to cooperatively work within their communities to introduce the value of teaching humane education in all programs. A newspaper article in the Berkeley Daily Gazette dated May 10, 1922, quotes then president Mrs. Gronlund, “The justice of our claims, reasonableness of our appeal, and high character of our work have won for the foundation the cordial cooperation of prominent

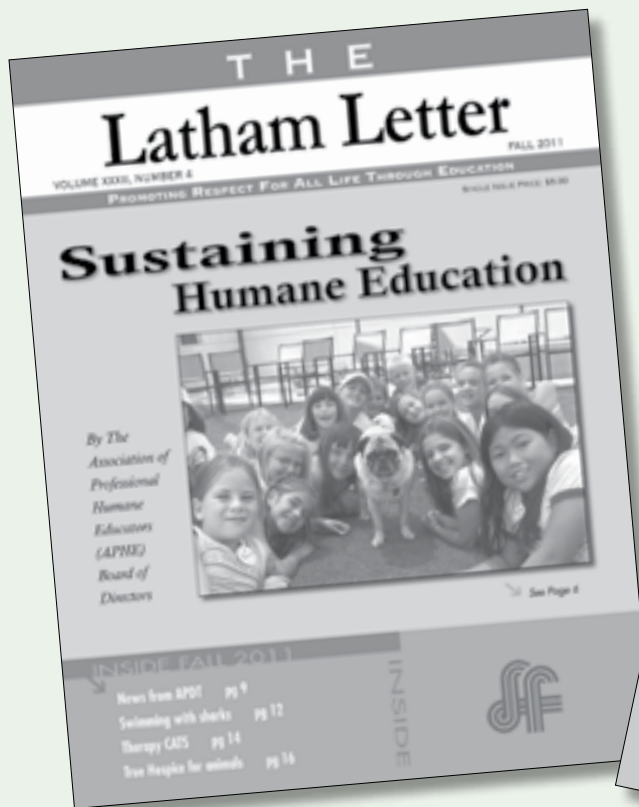
educators, clergymen, public librarians, and others of influence in the foremost ranks of progress.”

Time seems to stand still when you consider the following statement made by an Oakland public school official in 1933: “Probably the greatest fundamental need in the world today is the existence of a true spirit of humaneness. If that spirit really existed and were applied to the art of living, most of our ills – at least those growing out of human relationships, would be eliminated.” (1933, Roy T. Granger, Supervisor in the Oakland schools)

Records such as the ones above from the 1920s and 30s reflect the Foundation’s early success in partnering with local organizations, including a good program adoption rate in schools. Latham humane educators were consultants who visited the classrooms, partnering with the teachers and students. They created student-led Kindness Clubs whose mission was for students to demonstrate humane principles in their classroom, family and community. Classroom assignments often included writing and storytelling about various humane principles – teaching writing, presentation and interpersonal skills – all in partnership with the humane education message.

Since its founding, Latham has used technology to increase its effectiveness. The first classroom presentations were made with flannel boards – cut flannel figures on a flannel background that could be moved and arranged to illustrate a given message – simple but effective. To support the Kindness Clubs at the schools, Latham utilized the power of the press by publishing a newsletter, the Kind Deeds Messenger (1927-1940) with stories of interest, including serialized stories of Brother Buzz who became a ‘spokes-bee’ for Latham’s message. From 1925 to 1964, the Foundation partnered with schools and art institutes around the world to create the International Poster Contest which in some years received more than 10,000 entries.

To reach more communities, Latham partnered with major city newspapers and ran a Hero Animal program, and



the Latham Hero Animal stories were front page news in many cities. I never realized the impact of Latham and the Hero Animal award until I found it included in a movie of that era entitled “Show Them No Mercy” (1935, Cesar Romero, Bruce Cabot). In the very last scene of the movie, the hero dog is presented “The Latham Foundation Hero Animal award” by the mayor and police chief. A happy ending to a dangerous family tale.

Radio was in its infancy as a new technology in the 1920s. Latham adapted the Brother Buzz stories to the radio format, broadcasting the message of humane education into classrooms and homes every week. Together, the newsletter and radio programs brought this message to tens of thousands every year.

As technology changed, television was becoming a prime delivery method for information. Again, Latham adapted, creating a television program in the early 1950s based on the Brother Buzz stories and broadcast live each week. It incorporated the message of humane education and taught the Latham Steps in Humane Education to millions. The Brother Buzz program, Brother Buzz Presents and later the Withit series were on television stations from 1952 until the late 1970s and broadcast over hundreds of local city stations. Once again technology changed and the programs that had been 16mm films

became VHS video films and finally DVDs, making it easy for many agencies to use the Latham educational films in their local programs.

Latham has recognized that being at the forefront of technology can help our outreach. In the early 1980s and 90s, my career was in the telecommunications field. As a Latham member, I recognized the importance of using the internet and developed the Latham website in 1996 – one of the early internet sites. The Latham website continues to provide world wide access to core humane education information, including over 20 years of our Latham Letter magazine, which highlights many successful programs from around the world.

Humane education in 1918 was teaching children the value of understanding animals around us and the importance of showing respect to other living things. The classroom support, home support and society in general were very supportive of teaching values education. Fast forward 95 years to 2013. Humane education is still teaching children the value of understanding animals, showing respect for all living things. The tools we use to do this may have changed over time, but the humane education message is and should remain constant.



How Language Impacts Our Perceptions of Animals

By Cathy M. Rosenthal

Buddy had never caused any problems in his home or neighborhood. He was never off-leash nor barked and disturbed his neighbors. At 4-1/2 years old, he had spent most of his youth in training for his Canine Good Citizenship obedience title and playing with his eight-year-old boy who smothers him daily with affection.

So why was Buddy being asked to leave his family and the neighborhood he grew up in?

Buddy's only crime was that he was an American Staffordshire terrier, commonly referred to as a pit bull terrier.

Ironically, pit bull terriers are not one breed, but a term loosely applied to about 20 breeds of square-headed, muscular dogs. These breeds have gained a negative reputation over the past 20 years because of irresponsible pet owners who abuse or neglect them as well as negative metaphors, language and stories used to describe them. Today, people may say pit bull terrier-type dogs have "locking jaws," which they don't, or call them "land-sharks," which uses a negative reference to further instill fear and anxiety over seeing a pit bull terrier-type dog on the street.

Yet Helen Keller, Fred Astaire, and President Theodore Roosevelt all had pit bull terrier-type dogs. The pit bull was the child-friendly dog made famous on the 1950s television show "The Little Rascals." Pit bulls were also the official mascot for the United States during World War II.

In other words, this breed was once as beloved as Lassie. If you understand this metaphor, then you grew up understanding that "Lassie" represented courage and loyalty. When it comes to animals, the power of our words can transcend generations and keep one dog on a pedestal and the other tied to a chain in the backyard.

Negative language shapes our beliefs about animals

What we say about animals does matter. Negative language can encourage us to develop prejudices that are not based on fact, but myth. Over the past century, negative references of some dog breeds as being "dangerous" and "vicious" have impacted perceptions leading to their abuse, neglect, and even euthanasia. Sadly, unlike the "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," children's rhyme, which was designed for anti-bullying protection, words do have the power to shape beliefs and attitudes about animals.

What does it mean to compare something to a dog? References to dogs are used in the vernacular throughout our language, like "lap dogs" and "ankle biters." Lap dog, which implies a small dog who doesn't do anything but sit on his master's lap has also come to describe a submissive person or "yes man" that is easily controlled. The phrase "ankle-biters" began as a reference to a small feisty dog that was irritating to children, but has expanded to mean any small foe – animal or human – who is persistent and





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relentless, yet still irritating to any process.¹

A *Washington Post* business columnist provided an example of its usage in a modern political scenario. When discussing critics of the people who helped to engineer this little miracle [the financial recovery of the U.S. economy], he writes: “Every crisis generates its own set of leaders willing to take risks, twist arms and even bend a few rules to get us through it. Every crisis also generates its own set of political ankle-biters. It’s not hard to tell the two apart.”²

According to E.O. Wilson’s Biophilia Hypothesis, “We inevitably turn to the animal kingdom for a frame

of reference, to help us articulate our actions, emotions, and values. We do this because humans have a natural affinity for other animals we share this planet with.”³

Sometimes, we do more harm than good

We may have a natural affinity for animals, but some of the emotions and values we articulate can harm the animals we are trying to help. Take, for example, how many people refer to and describe pit bull terrier-type dogs. For more than 20 years, they have been referred to as a “vicious” or “dangerous” breed. Ten years prior to that, there is little reference to any of these breeds at all. In fact, the “vicious dog” of the day was the Rottweiler; and before that, the Doberman; and before that, the German shepherd. Each decade seems to produce a new “vicious breed,” which has no bearing on their behavior, only on the fact that some people get different breeds of dogs and misuse their devotion to people to make them aggressive, be cruel and neglectful, and use them for negative reasons, like guarding and protection.⁴

When a few negative stories about a particular breed are reported by the media, it reinforces misguided beliefs, which encourages people to mistreat a breed and continue to use a breed in a negative way. When a dog is considered “dangerous,” owners are more likely to chain the dog outside, keep them in packs and away from the family, and more likely to forego the training and socializing needed to create a happy dog. As a result, these breeds are more at risk for negative encounters, thus keeping their reputation forever on the wrong side of the tracks (to use another metaphor to demonstrate how both people and animals are stereotyped).

The simple truth is, the words “pit bull” have been used for more than two decades to convey “fear.” The media perpetuates this troubling trend to attract readers. Just look at this headline: “Man flees, leaves toddler with pit bull.”⁵ If you associate pit bull with “fear,” then you immediately read this headline and worry that the child in question was injured or died in the story because he or she was left alone with a pit bull terrier dog.

But this story couldn’t be further from that perception. Police had arrived at this man’s house to arrest him. When they knocked at the door, he ran into the backyard to escape arrest because he was doing drugs in his living room, leaving his pit bull dog in the house with the two-year-old child for about 60 seconds – the time it took for officers to break down the door and chase him into the backyard. It was a non-story, but made the news because the media knows the word “pit bull” makes us read and/or watch the news. In all honesty, the headline should have read (if there were to be any story at all): Man flees arrest, leaving dog and child in harm’s way. There is no reason that this story should mention pit bull terriers at all – and I can assure you, it wouldn’t have been mentioned if it had been any other breed of dog.

The challenge to tell positive stories

These stories don’t help our efforts to change people’s minds and behaviors about animals because they often don’t delve into the reasons a dog might have had a negative encounter, only that the negative encounter was a consequence of being a certain breed of dog. Even though these stories abound in the press,

they often only apply to a handful of people in very specific situations that are unreported in the news, like the dog was poorly socialized, chained and living outside, or lived with cruel or negligent owners. The breed of the dog is simply not a factor in a dog's behavior.

What happens when a pit bull has a loving owner, is properly socialized, and is about to complete the highest levels of obedience work, like Buddy? First, we don't hear about it. Second, you end up with a good dog and a very responsible pet owner, but with a community who still cannot believe beyond the language and stories that have been commonly used to describe them. This is how breed bans are born.

These metaphors dig deep into our psyches and are difficult to shake loose unless language begins to shift. Even well-educated doctors have trouble getting past the stereotypes perpetuated about pit bull terrier-type dogs. In 2010, University Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, released a study on dog bites and attacks. The study's authors argued that pit bull terriers were problem dogs that should be regulated like wild animals. They announced that pit bull terriers attacked indiscriminately and without warning, perpetuating myths that advocates of pit bull terrier-type dogs have been battling for the last three decades.⁶

I understand the intentions of the hospital staff who want to see the end of tragic dog bites. But in Don Finley's *San Antonio Express-News* article, Pit bulls reputation takes new hit (May 9, 2011), Dr. Bonnie Beaver, a professor of veterinary medicine at Texas A&M University and an expert in dog behavior points out the study was flawed. As a former president of the American Veterinary Medicine Association, Beaver has led a national task force on preventing dog bites and testified against breed-specific legislation. Animal experts, like Beaver, know that breed is not a factor in these cases.

"These are serious injuries to humans, and I do not mean to belittle the seriousness of the problem seen at the hospital," Beaver said in Finley's article. "However, the dog-related data is seriously flawed, and are used at will to try to prove a specific point of view."⁷

How can any study claim one breed is more likely to bite when only one breed (which is not actually a breed) is investigated? Because when perceptions



Larry and
Mia

are already formed, sometimes studies and media stories support those points of view rather than challenge them. The cycle continues.

Helping animals through stories and language

So how can we use words and stories to improve the lives of pit bull terriers and other animals in our care?

First, we can begin by changing our language within the field. On many occasions, I have overheard animal welfare professionals use the same metaphors, negative language, and mistaken perceptions to talk about pit

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bull terrier-type dogs. “They shouldn’t be adopted to families with children.” “These dogs can’t be rehabilitated.” “These dogs will turn on you without warning.” If we, in the field, are unable to cross this verbal hurdle, we can not expect others to do so. The public may not be following our lead, but their thoughts and beliefs are being reinforced by our language.

We can take our direction from The Animal Farm Foundation in Bangall, New York. They remind us that, “Every dog should be treated as an individual.”⁸ This simple mantra says it all: don’t judge a book by its cover because when you do, you fail all dogs – and cats, who by the way, face similar challenges in perception from language and metaphors.

Second, we should use and tell good stories about pit bull terriers and other pets. The media likes to use the word “pit bull” in their headlines and stories, so why not feed them positive stories about these breeds of dogs? A positive story on any animal is a first step towards changing public perceptions.

Third, pay attention to the metaphors you use when talking about both domestic and wild animals and stop using any metaphors that don’t deliver positive messages. Don’t refer to small dogs as “ankle-biters” or pit bulls as “land sharks.” Don’t use feline metaphors, like “someone is as sneaky as a cat” or idioms, like “there is more than one way to skin a cat.” Whether you are an educator or kennel staff, you have the power to use language that enlightens people not reinforces old beliefs.

Finally, don’t repeat myths, negative comments or questions in your responses to the public or media. For example, if someone says, “Why are pit bulls such a vicious breed?” don’t say, “Pit bulls are not vicious” because you have just used the words “pit bull”



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and “vicious” in the same sentence and even though you are trying to counter their argument, repeating the words together only serves to reinforce the idea in someone’s mind. Instead say, “We should all be concerned about dangerous dogs and the circumstances that create them.” This sentence addresses only dangerous dogs and reminds people that that breed is not a factor.

It’s not easy changing people’s perceptions and beliefs. But if we want to help animals, we have to stop using negative metaphors and introduce positive language to reflect the uniqueness and individuality of each dog that comes into our care. We can no longer stand by and allow a dog, regardless of breed, to be stereotyped into a category of behavior. We can impact their world and well-being through the power of words.

Cathy M. Rosenthal has been in the animal welfare field for more than 25 years in public relations and education. She currently writes and consults for local and national animal groups and gives workshops for animal welfare professionals at state and national conferences. She has been the pet columnist for the San Antonio Express-News since 2003 and is the author of two children’s books. She is currently working on her next book, “The Power of Words: Helping Animals through Compassionate Language and Story.”

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 The Canine in Conversation, www.metaphordogs.org
- 2 Pearlstein, Steven R. 1009. “Crisis Managers vs. Naysayers.” The Washington Post Newspaper p.6 June 2011. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/11/AR2009061104224.html
- 3 Wilson, Edward O. *Biophilia*. Harvard University Press, 1984
- 4 Delise, Karen, *The Pit Bull Placebo: The Media, Myths, and Politics of Canine Aggression* Anubis Publishing, 2007
- 5 Mason, Aaron, “Man flees, leaves toddler with pit bull,” WIVB.com, Channel 4, Buffalo, New York, November 12, 2010. www.clipsyndicate.com/video/play/1828113/man_flees_leaves_toddler_with_pit_bull
- 6 Rosenthal, Cathy M. “Pit Bull Terriers Still Get Bad Rap.” San Antonio Express-News Newspaper, 11 May 2011. Web. 11 May 2011 www.mysanantonio.com/news/article/Pit-bull-terriers-still-get-bad-rap-1377100.php
- 7 Finley, Don, “Pit bulls reputation takes new hit.” San Antonio Express-News, Newspaper 9 May 2011. Web. 9 May 2011 www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Pit-bulls-reputation-takes-new-hit-1370739.php
- 8 Animal Farm Foundation, www.animalfarmfoundation.org



See page 20 for information about Cathy’s books for summer programs.

Dexter, An Extraordinary Therapy Cat

By Debra J. White

Wendy Panaro wasn't looking for a cat when Dexter entered her life in 2008. A neighborhood couple had adopted the year old gray cat from the Wisconsin Humane Society in 2007. An overseas work opportunity arose a year later so Dexter needed a new home. Panaro stepped in and welcomed the handsome gray cat into her life.

As Dexter settled in, Panaro noticed his laid back attitude and gentle manners. An article about cats as pet therapists grabbed her attention so she called the Wisconsin Humane Society to learn more. She then connected with Pet Partners (formerly the Delta Society) who advised her of local behavior classes. Dexter passed the behavior exam with the highest possible score for a cat and breezed through the bi-annual exam required of all therapy animals registered with Pet Partners.

Dexter started in a reading program called Words for Whiskers, a collaborative effort with the Wisconsin Humane Society and the Milwaukee Public library that is designed to improve children's reading skills. Children with weak pronunciation often feel less threatened and safer reading to an animal such as Dexter. Nancy Anderson, retired librarian at



Wendy Panaro

the Martin Luther King library, says, "Dexter was a star. The children eagerly greeted him when he arrived for each visit and he soaked in all the love." In addition, Dexter and Wendy teach children about kindness to animals. Panaro is excited that a suburban library will offer a children's reading program with "Dexter blazing the trail."

The cat's schedule is busy. In addition to children's reading programs, he is involved in a program called Health Healers. Currently, the patient receives visits from Dexter and a therapy dog. Laura Hey, president and founder, says Dexter is a special creature. "He is loving, patient and calm and has a good sense of humor. It's great to have him and Wendy in our group."

Milwaukee resident George Olwell loves Dexter. Olwell's ex-wife Nancy

with whom he remains close is confined to a nursing home. A life-long pet lover, Nancy cheers up when Dexter visits. Olwell says, "Dexter is one of a kind. He lays there next to Nancy and makes her happy."

Exam time at colleges is stressful. Students fret about scoring good grades. Marquette University recognizes the demands placed on students, so they invited therapy teams from Health Healers to visit. Dexter was available in the student union to calm anxious students. According to Panaro he was a hit among students who were worried about exams and term papers.

For the fourth year in a row, Dexter represented Health Healers at the annual Great Lakes Pet Expo. He served as the ambassador for pet therapy and demonstrated that cats, like dogs, can heal people when they are sick, injured or in crisis. Panaro says visitors are often surprised to see a leashed cat walking among the dogs.

Animal-assisted therapy is traditionally dominated by dogs but that is slowly changing. There are more cats like Dexter in the field. According to Bill Kueser, VP of Marketing for Pet Partners, there are 200 registered cats compared with 10,000 dogs. Why so few therapy



cats? Dianne Decker, the Arizona Animal Welfare League's behaviorist, evaluates animals for Pet Partners. She explains that cats are often not socialized to meet other people and animals like dogs are. "Most cats don't tolerate travel well and many don't like being harnessed or walking on a leash, which are requirements

for pet therapy," says Decker. Despite this, she evaluates about a dozen cats a year and says they often have the outstanding qualities necessary for therapy work.

Meanwhile, Dexter continues to spread kindness and compassion in the Milwaukee area. He just completed his fourth year as a therapy

cat, demonstrating that cats can work alongside dogs at hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, schools, libraries and in many other places to help humans heal. Visit Dexter on Facebook and follow his interesting career.



Health Heelers founded by Laura Hey is a professional pet therapy service that customizes animal assisted therapy to meet specific needs of facilities and organizations in the greater Milwaukee area.

To learn more visit
www.healthheelers.com

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It seems as though there are almost as many philosophies and techniques as there are trainers and behaviorists in today's canine-centered world. While positive techniques are becoming the norm (thank goodness), everybody's gotta have a gimmick. Browse around on a site like Dogwise Publishing and you'll see a myriad of appealing titles – some quite general and some amazingly specific. So many good ideas, so little time!

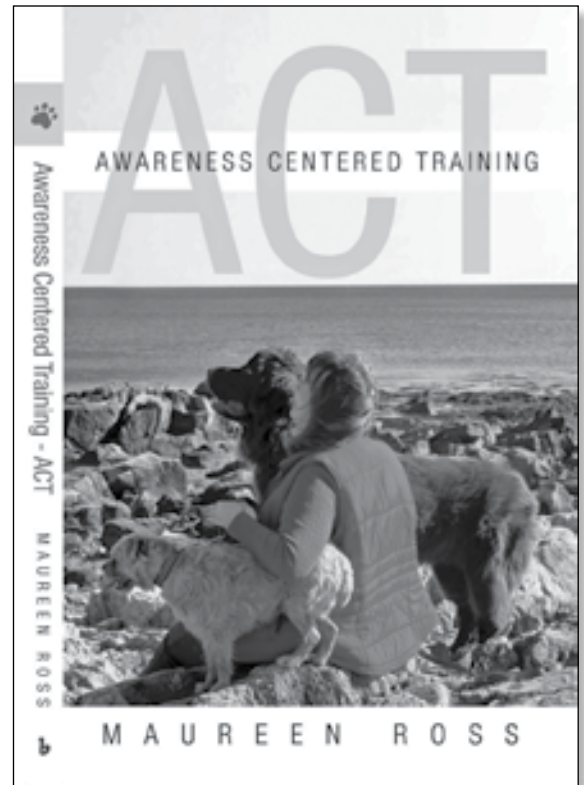
In the midst of all of these choices comes a book that claims dog training can be as simple as breathing, eating, playing and smiling. Maureen Ross's *Awareness Centered Training* (ACT) gives us permission to joyfully and easily train our dogs without fear of right or wrong, to mindfully shape natural behaviors with socialization and manners, to integrate training into normal activities for a few minutes each day, and to connect with our dogs using body language, breathing, and the magic of one's smile.

Too good to be true? I'll soon find out because I plan to incorporate many of Maureen's techniques into life with my new puppy. *Awareness Centered Training* shifts the emphasis from what your dog is or is not doing, to what *you* are doing. Breathe. Balance energy. Let go of what doesn't matter and ultimately, change life for the better with dogs as translators for learning and healing. Sounds good to me!

Many training books urge us to relax so that we can become better observers and improve our timing. *Awareness Centered Training* tells us how and encourages us to enjoy the journey.

Maureen Ross, M.A., presents workshops on dog behavior and family systems and is passionate about pet-assisted therapy. She is the founder of Dog Talk Training and Wellness Sanctuary, LLC and New England Pet Partners, Inc. Both businesses offer a heart-centered approach to family dog training, behavior coaching and well-being for dogs. She is the author of *Train Your Dog*, *Change Your Life* and *Daily Doga Inspirations* as well as many articles on canine-human relationships. She is a member of the National Board of Certified Counselors, the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, and Yoga Alliance.

Reviewed by Judy Johns



"My dog, Bean, can read." OK, maybe it just appears that he can, but the fact that we can wow our friends with this "ability" is thanks to *Mind Games for Dogs*.

Sarah Whitehead, a pet behavior specialist who lives in England, reminds us that just like we humans, dogs need to use their brains to keep occupied, happy, and well-balanced.

The ideas in this booklet are perfect for dogs who can't have as much exercise as they would like (such as when recovering from surgery) and as a foundation for those who are hyperactive or have behavioral problems. Most of all, they are designed to be fast, effective, and fun for dogs and owners alike.

Reviewed by Judy Johns

Mind Games for Dogs

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Ruth Gordon's *Catching Canine Abusers* is an excellent overview of many of the topics that challenge animal welfare today. While it focuses on the connections between animal abuse and other forms of violence and encourages cross reporting and cooperation between animal welfare, social service, and domestic violence agencies, this succinct book also examines the cruelty and criminality of dog fighting, greyhound racing, puppy mills.

One of the best things about this easy-to-read e-book is that it not only exposes crimes and cruelties, it also proposes solutions for preventing them.

Ruth Gordon is the author of four additional books on dogs: *It takes a Dog to Raise a Village* (Willow Creek Press), *Good Dogs: Stories of Benevolence* (Willow Creek Press), *Don't Fence Their Spirit* (Xlibris) and *Follow the Dog: a History of the St. Paul Police Canine Unit 1958-2008* (Pogo Press). Ruth is retired after a long and distinguished career in health care and nursing administration. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Catching Canine Abusers

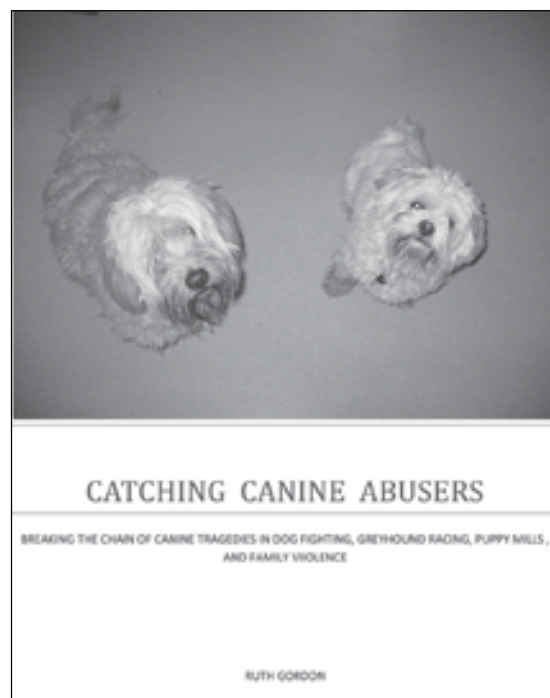
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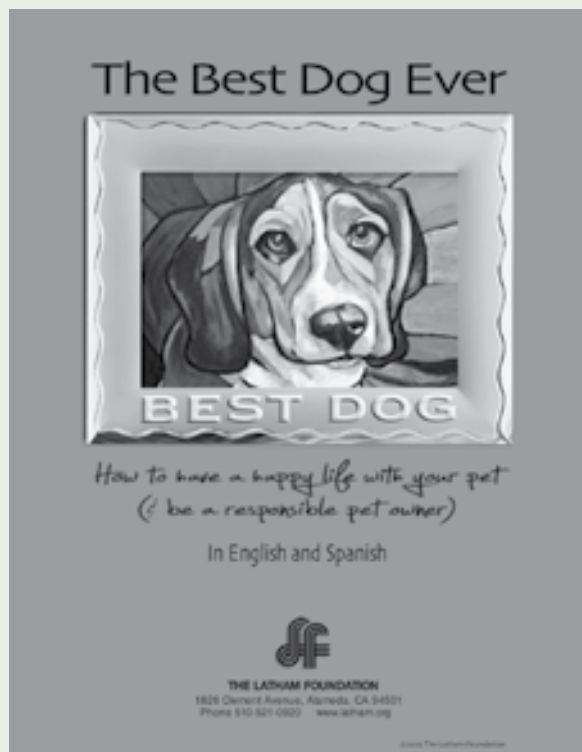
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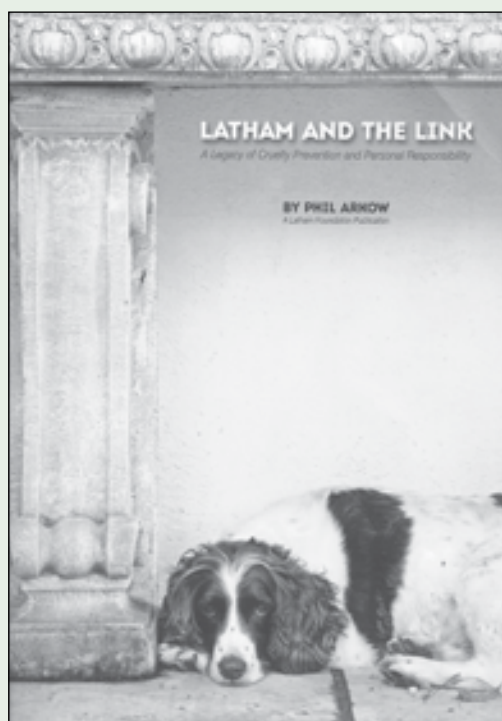
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