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Cover: Courtney and Joe Kundmueller of Westlake with their rescued senior gals, American Bulldog Roxie and Pit Bull Sky

Photo: Love Is All You Need Photography



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Valarie Ross Smith: *Ask the Trainer*  
Amanda Roush: *Dogs in the City*

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Nancy Brown (with Montana)

# ..... ASK THE TRAINER .....

By Valarie Ross Smith

## What is Positive Reinforcement Training?

Even before earning my MBA and becoming a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, I loved reading about animal behavior and watching TV shows about it. But what I saw didn't sit right with me. I knew there had to be a better way. I loved my dog, and didn't see her vying to be the Alpha female. She was just a silly dog! She was content to sleep under the bed, eat some treats and go for walks.

I have an inquisitive nature, so I decided to do research canine behavior. Dominance or Pack Theory training was based on a study done in the 1970s by Dr. L. David Mech using a group of captive wolves. With further research, I found other behavior experts that disagreed with Dr. Mech's studies. And guess what? He now does, too, speaking out against punishment-based methods of training and the idea we need to cause pain or assert dominance to train any dog -- even "difficult" breeds like German Shepherds, Malinois or any of the Pitbull-type dogs out there.

Science to the rescue! It was a very validating process since I had been subscribing to a method I had an internal objection to. Now I needed to find a training method which "fit" me. Enter Positive Reinforcement Training.

Positive reinforcement training is just like it sounds: we add something reinforcing to the dog's life. In most cases this is food, but we often use

play and life rewards, as well. If I ask a dog to sit, I say, "Yes!" or "Good!" or click a clicker, and give him a small piece of food. Once a dog learns what gets him that piece of food, he is going to repeat it. A lot. If he "fails" at something, we just withhold the food. No punishment needed.

Positive reinforcement theory says if a dog is afraid of something: a person, another dog or a vacuum, you give him the space he needs away from the scary object, and then do things that make the dog feel good -- provide comfort or affection, treats, play and praise... make it rain love and food. I have never seen a dog trained with positive reinforcement in distress due to training.

Dog training is an unregulated industry. Anyone can call him/herself a trainer, even with little or no dog training education. Please do your research and choose wisely.

.....

*Valarie Ross Smith is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer -- Knowledge Assessed and owner of Sits 'n Wiggles Pet Care 'n Training. She has been training all kinds of animals her whole life, and professionally for the last five years. She has more than 1,000 professional hours of training and 300 hours of Continuing Education Units. She shares her home and business with Wife Hannah; Pitbulls Gracie & Phoenix; tortoisés Blanche, Dorothy & Stan; Chameleon Stevie Nicks; and Crested Gecko Fluffy.*

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# OPERATION CHINA DOGS:

## Saving 99 Golden Retrievers from the dog meat trade

By Nancy Brown



Ninety-nine Golden Retrievers will be rescued from China in early July -- saved from the dog meat trade -- thanks to RAGOM, a nonprofit organization that rescues the breed from around the globe, and Northeast Ohio's own Golden Treasures Rescue.

The dogs will arrive via a donated, private charter plane flight, with touchdown at Chicago O'Hare International Airport. The aircraft carrier, which wishes to remain anonymous, only asked that the fuel charges be covered, which is about \$268,000. As of late June, that goal had been reached, with donations still coming in to cover additional expenses the rescue mission will incur.

Ten American and four Chinese rescue organizations are involved with the mission, and the Golden Retrievers will be divided up among several American rescue groups, with Golden Treasures Rescue committed to placing up to nine of the China dogs. These Goldens will be transported to Cleveland for veterinary evaluation and grooming, placed into foster homes for evaluation, and then adopted into forever homes. Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is coordinating efforts with the rescues to ensure the dogs are disease free and vetted, according to Lynn Asdell of Golden Treasures Rescue.

When COVID-19 broke out in China, there was misinformation about dogs spreading the virus, and as a result, many dogs were abandoned by their owners or confiscated by

*Continued on pg. 18*

# From the Cage to the Couch

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Kaylee was starved and dumped on the eastside of Cleveland before members of the Cleveland Police Department picked her up in June of 2019. She was taken to the Cleveland City Kennel, where she was pulled by Mutts in a Rut rescue. The 3-year-old Pitbull mix was emaciated and had a severe case of kennel cough. She weighed half of what her body weight should have been.

Through it all, however, she gave kisses to every human she met. It was other dogs she did not like. Abbe Moen of Affinity Canine stepped in to foster Kaylee, up for the challenge of getting her healthy -- physically and emotionally.

Kaylee was gaining weight and feeling better, but still very intense and growly with other dogs, even standing over them. Moen worked with her to teach Kaylee how to properly interact with other dogs. After more than four months of care and training, Kaylee was adopted into a home with two other dogs, and she is now thriving.



From the Cage to the Couch concept contributed by Partners With Paws of Lorain County, Inc.

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# ..... PICK OF THE PACK .....

BY JENNIFER BAKER

## WATER TOYS!

After a chilly spring, summer is finally here! If you have a dog that loves the water, we have some great toys that would make water play more fun. Whether you're headed to a dog-friendly beach, one of the local dock diving facilities or a kiddy pool in your backyard, there's a toy for that.



For dogs that like to water retrieve, the Kong Wubba is the classic toy. They float high enough in the water so your dog can see it while they're swimming out. These also work well at the beach or if you take your dog to a dock diving facility.



One of the best water games at the Baker house is bobbing for toys in the kiddy pool. Planet Dog makes some great balls that are perfect for this game. They float just at the water's surface for a bit of a challenge, are durable enough to hold up to chewing -- yet soft on your dog's mouth -- and because there are two holes in the ball, they drain quickly when the games are over.



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*Jennifer Baker is owner of The Grateful Dog Bakery, an all-natural dog and cat supply store featuring an in-store bakery. She is the proud dog mom of Golden Retrievers Beau, Ophelia and Magic and Standard Poodle Dash. To contact Jennifer, email [news@gratefuldogbakery.com](mailto:news@gratefuldogbakery.com) or follow [@gratefuldogbakery](https://www.instagram.com/gratefuldogbakery) on Instagram.*



# Dog Trapping 101

*By Linda Slusser*

Patience,  
night-vision goggles  
and KFC

*Photos courtesy of Anna Merriman*

# R

ider was a dog on the loose for two years until recently, when Ramona Hartleben of JJ's Ruff Roads successfully trapped him. He's now living in a loving home, bonded with a 7-year-old autistic child. Bubbles and Bronson were on the loose for more than a week near a Cleveland

Metroparks reservation until Anna Merriman trapped them one at a time. The captured duo is now up for adoption with Merriman's Mutts in a Rut rescue.

Engineering happy endings for lost or stray dogs defines the mission of dog trapping, which, according to Lisa Kime of Golden Retrievers In Need (GRIN), requires "a talent and a skill." For Hartleben and Merriman, dog trapping is also about passion, to which they selflessly devote their time and energy. Both dog trappers agree patience is key, as well as "determination and knowing how to read a dog's behavior," according to Merriman, and "common sense, experience and creativity," according to Hartleben.

Successful trappers may use similar equipment, but each has her own secret "lure" for attracting doggos the lam. Traditional equipment includes cages of varied types and sizes (up to a 6-foot by 10-foot Ketch Kennel for the most skittish dogs); night-vision goggles; trail cameras; Google maps; camouflage clothing and a net "gun," while secret "lures" can range from KFC chicken to the scent of a female dog in heat.

Dedication to their shared passion has resulted in many success stories. Merriman shares two "easy" cases. She observed Piglet, a black and white Pit Bull running loose on the east side of Cleveland,



*Piglet at the time of trapping (left) and in her current home (right).*

until he settled into an area where she placed a trap. She drove around in the dark and was rewarded when he entered the cage within five minutes. Piglet was adopted into a wonderful home.

Crocker, an emaciated mixed breed "missing a ton of fur," had been in the Columbia Station area for four months. A homeowner had been feeding him and letting him sleep in a barn, but couldn't get close to him. Merriman set the trap near the barn and rigged up a trail camera, and saw him go into the cage the next evening. After a vet visit and socialization with a trainer, Crocker was put up for adoption.



*Crocker when trapped (left) and at adoption time (right).*

Hartleben describes two "difficult" cases. Beagle girl Adventurine had been rescued from a hoarding situation. Unfortunately, she escaped while at a vet clinic, and was on the run for six months. After watching her travel pattern with night vision, Hartleben managed to trap her. Jacob, a 70-pound Pit Bull had been a stray near Route 8 in Summit County for more than 11 months, surviving a harsh winter. He had been fed by a kind man, but eluded a dog warden's multiple attempts to catch him. It took Hartleben creativity, ingenuity and four months to trap this pooch. She put two cages together to make one long cage, and attached the food bowl so Jacob couldn't eat the food outside the crate. On many days Hartleben would "hide" near the trap, just close enough to pull the rope to close the cage door. Finally, one morning at 6:25, she watched the elusive canine emerge from the woods and enter the cage. She pulled the door shut just in time, and got help to "sled" him, still in the cage, to her vehicle. Not a candidate for adoption, Jacob has been a permanent member of Hartleben's furry family for five years.

Neither trapper charges for her services. When asked why they spend so much time on their passion projects, both replied humbly, "Quitting isn't an option when a dog is in danger," Merriman said. "The rewarding feeling of helping a dog is an addiction," Hartleben added.

Dog trappers like Merriman and Hartleben may be the unsung heroes of the dog community, bringing happy endings to lost dog tales.

---

*Linda lives with two Shelties and has been published in Heart of Ohio's Focus issue and The Bark.*



# Including your dog in your big day

By Susan Spisak

Emma and Mike Royan of Cleveland included their American Bulldog mix Ulyssa in their wedding

***Congratulations! You're engaged and preparing for the big day. You want it to be unique, memorable and reflective of you, which includes having your fur bestie by your side.***

You're not alone. More and more Northeast Ohio pawrents are including their fur kids in their nuptials. CLE DOG sat down with several area brides to find out the dos and don'ts for including dogs of honor in your "I dos."

Dog Life in the CLE blogger Amanda Roush, a medical technologist at the Cleveland Clinic, got engaged earlier this year to Alex Papp. They're set to marry in January of 2021, and are including their Boxer-mix girls, 5-year-old Bella and 3-year-old Mia, in their nuptials. "Our dogs are a family," Roush said. "This is a big moment in our lives that we get to share with friends and family. It just makes sense that our dogs have to be a part of it, too."



Amanda Roush and Alex Papp with Bella & Mia

Photo: Mariya KB Photography

the pandemic.) Regardless, Roush said she'll include the "dogs of honor" in the photos, and at the reception with signature drinks and look-alike "Fathead" cardboard photo booth props if they can't attend in person.

This rescue advocate booked the historic Ariel Pearl Center in Old Brooklyn since in the past the center has allowed leashed, well-mannered dogs for ceremonies. (At press time, the venue is unsure if that will change due to

Courtney and Joe Kundmueller of Westlake (on this issue's cover) had their rescued senior gals, American Bulldog Roxie and Pit Bull Sky, as "flower-dog-girls" when they exchanged vows in May of 2012. Even though the ceremony was outside at Miller Road Park in Avon Lake, the officiants were uncertain about including the dogs. Roxie and Sky shined, thrilling the officiants.

Kundmueller, who works for RAM Sensors in Westlake and is now mom to the couple's 5-year-



Top: Sky's purple paw-pedi  
Bottom: Dog dress by Debi Leobich

old son, Jonathan, said seamstress Debi Leobich made the dogs' beautiful dresses and collars, and the girls were treated to paw-pedis complete with purple nail polish. Connie Field, director of Love-A-Stray dog rescue of Avon Lake, was the flower girls' handler. The couple advocates for Love-A-Stray and has fostered more than a dozen dogs for the nonprofit.

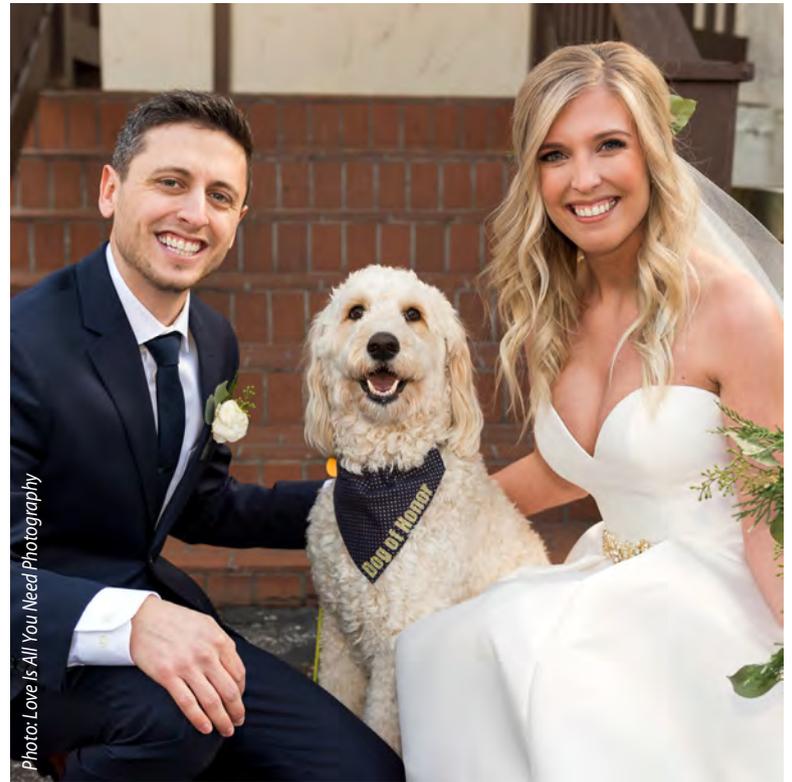
Field offered her home for the post-wedding photo session, and watched the dogs as the couple and their attendants went off to Tom's Country Place in Avon. "Our friends and family were ecstatic, as you can imagine, since we

married after eight years of dating, and the party reflected that joy," Kundmueller said.

Kristen and Alex Orosz of Strongsville tied-the-knot last December at the Columbia Hills Country Club in Columbia Station. The longtime sweethearts adopted their now 3-year-old Goldendoodle as a puppy and wanted her in their festivities. "Elsa is our fur baby and we really couldn't imagine our lives without her, so it meant a lot to include her in our wedding day," Orosz said. "Honestly, I think our guests would have been shocked if she didn't make an appearance knowing how much of a part of our lives she is."

Elsa wasn't welcome in the facility, so the couple arranged for Elsa's dog walker and sitter to bring her to the club so their "dog of honor" could join their grand exit. Initially overwhelmed by the streamers, bells and the large gathering of people, Elsa relaxed as she recognized faces and then happily greeted everyone.

Elsa posed for outdoor photos, then went home with her sitter. The wedding party and guests celebrated at Savas Event Center in



Kristen and Alex Orosz with Elsa



Broadview Heights, but their Doodle was with them in spirit. Orosz, a campus recruiting team lead for Union Home Mortgage, crafted a "sweet treat" donut table, complete with napkins that read "I do too! ~ Elsa, Dec. 7, 2019." They also had signature beverages, including "The Elsa."

Emma and Mike Royan of Cleveland included their 3-legged American Bulldog mix Ulyssa in their wedding as "dog of honor" when they married in May of 2017. Royan searched for a venue that would allow the pooch they fostered, nursed to health post-amputation and then adopted through the Summit Humane Society. She discovered Pine Lake Trout Club in Chagrin Falls, and was thrilled Ulyssa could be with them all day and overnight -- they also rented a dog-friendly cabin.

The small ceremony was held outdoors, while the reception was in an event room with an adjacent patio so Ulyssa could dine with them al fresco. Royan, a special needs teacher and tutor for the Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City School District, said her dog knew the guests and was comfortable being handled by her husband and father-in-law. The only hiccup was when the couple went off for pics -- Ulyssa barked at her folks. Royan knows the now senior Bulldog was content to be a part of their big day. "To this day, I am so grateful that she was there with us on our special day."

Continued >



*The Royans with Ulyssa*

Want a casual dog-friendly destination wedding? Drive to a beach town to marry like Rachel and Paul Holzheimer of Grafton did in March of 2012. Holzheimer, a branch manager for U.S. Bank, said the couple wanted laid-back nuptials to match their casual engagement -- he proposed via a text and she typed back, "Sure." They agreed their pampered Saint Bernards, Bella and Brutus, had to be by their sides. "They're our buds," Rachel said.



*The Holzheimers with Bella and Brutus*

They rented a pet-friendly home in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and Rachel hired a local officiant that advised her about off-season dog laws and ceremony spots. She emailed details to a handful of friends and family ahead of time so they could reserve hotel rooms.

The ceremony was a 10-minute, oceanfront affair with pictures following. The reception was held at the rental home, and their pooches mingled with the guests. True to the newlyweds' casual style -- take-out pizza, assorted beverages and a cake rounded out the fare. As their guests trekked back to Northeast Ohio the next morning, the couple went surf fishing with Bella and Brutus nearby -- their perfect beach honeymoon.

## I Dos for including your Newfie in your nuptials

- 🎉 Including well-behaved and obedient dogs in weddings is trending, so plan ahead to make sure your day goes off without a hitch.
- 🎉 Check into non-traditional venues and sites that may allow your doggo to participate. Think rustic barns, farms, gardens and wineries.
- 🎉 When screening photographers, ask if they've worked with pets.
- 🎉 Notify guests your dog is in the wedding party (some may be allergic), by adding a line to your save-the-date card.
- 🎉 Assign your pooch a handler for the big day. Make sure it's someone your dog likes, and can transport him to and from the ceremony. Make sure this hound handler has necessities like food, water, bowls, treats, poop bags, etc.
- 🎉 Dress your dog festively, but smartly. After you pick your wedding colors, shop for a coordinating outfit or simple collar bow. Do a dry run to make sure the outfit doesn't hinder movement or breathing. And don't forget to schedule a grooming appointment.
- 🎉 Consider an intimate backyard ceremony if you want to marry quickly. Sites are often booked far in advance. Your own backyard allows your small group to social distance, and your canine will be more comfortable. To amp up the happiness factor, invite others to participate virtually. Once you say "I do" they can toast you from afar.

### Some advice from dog mom brides who included their dogs in their "I Dos"...

"Exercise your dog more than usual the week leading up to and the morning of the wedding. Exercised dogs are less excitable and easier to manage, especially in a large group of people. Leave her out of the wedding if she's skittish or barks. As special as it is having your dog part of your big day, you don't want them to upstage you the whole time." ~ Courtney Kundmueller

"I just want to encourage others who may want to involve their fur babies in their big day. You may just need to get creative in how you do it." ~ Kristen Orosz

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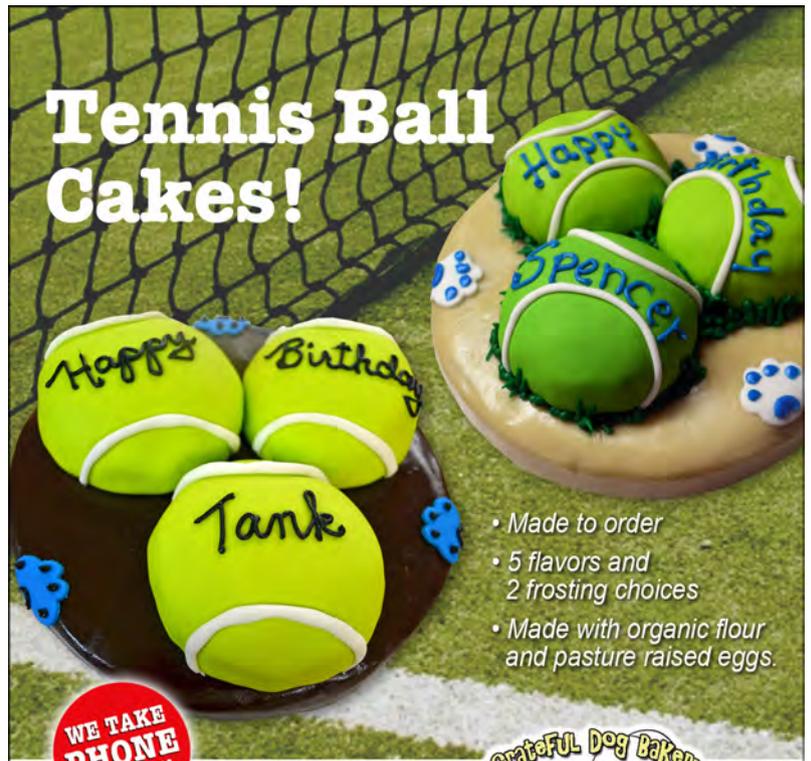


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# DOGS IN THE CITY

BY AMANDA ROUSH, BELLA & MIA  
from *Dog Life in CLE*

## Farmers markets are a popular scene during the summer months.

They're a great place to walk around, enjoy the weather, and shop from local farmers and makers. Many farmers markets allow dogs to join you, including Tremont Farmers Market and North Union Farmers Market at Crocker Park and Legacy Village. Some also have dog food/treat vendors to buy locally

made products for your dog. Going to these events can also be great for socialization and working on basic leash and obedience training. While attending local farmers markets with your favorite pooch, please follow these dog-etiquette tips to make the experience great for you, your dog and other patrons:

1. Keep your dog on a leash, and be aware of your dog and surroundings. If other dogs are around, ask permission before letting your dog greet them.
2. Don't let your dog jump on people or put her paws on the vendor's table while picking out your produce. It's a good idea to bring someone with you to hold your dog while you are shopping at a table.
3. Be aware of your dog's behavior. Understand when your dog is showing stress or anxiety from crowds.
4. Bring poop bags! Be courteous to others attending the market and pick up after your dog.

*Editor's Note: Due to COVID-19, some of your favorite farmers markets may have different hours, sites or rules, so please check before heading out. For a complete list of Northeast Ohio's farmers markets, [click here](#).*

*For more tips and resources, visit Amanda's website [www.DogLifeinCLE.com](http://www.DogLifeinCLE.com)*



Bella and Mia at the BayArts Farmers Market



# HELP!

## MY DOG RAN AWAY; NOW WHAT?

### TIPS TO GET YOUR DOG HOME SAFELY

*By Ann McDonald*



## AS A DOG OWNER, it's your worst nightmare. In the blink of an eye, your dog gets loose and within seconds you have no idea where he went.

When it happened to Westside resident Jennifer Cotterill, she realized an important thing every dog owner should know -- any dog is capable of running away.

Arrow, the family's 9-month old Golden Retriever was lost for 36 hours after being scared off by construction work being done at the house. Arrow was tethered to a light post in the front yard when Cotterill stepped away for just a minute to speak to the construction crew. "When the workers got out of the truck and shut the door, Arrow got scared and pulled the post out of the ground and dragged it down the street as he ran off," Cotterill said.



The family ran after him into a nearby park, but soon he ran through a busy intersection and off into another neighborhood, and they lost track of him. Luckily, the light post dropped off soon after he started running, but he still had his soft tether attached to his collar. Cotterill's first step was to call some friends in the dog community to assist. One of those contacts was Connie Field of Avon Lake-based dog rescue Love-a-Stray, who advised her to call her local police department, as well as the police in neighboring towns. Soon a search group was organized, and flyers were put up all over

town. Cotterill also sent out a text to all her local friends with Arrow's picture, and asked them to share it with their friends in the area.

Nearly two days after he had gone missing, she got a call that a family in her town had found him in their backyard. Thankfully, they'd remembered seeing a text about the dog, so they were able to contact her. "My advice is to use the power of social media," Cotterill said. "Our town has a special Facebook page with a lot of followers. Our neighbor asked if they could post a photo and info about Arrow missing. Within the hour, there were hundreds of people concerned, interested and looking for him."

### STEPS TO TAKE

"You have to be a detective and think like a scared, disoriented dog," said Nancy Brown, animal advocate and owner of local pet-sitting business Hot Diggity Dog.

Brown said there are a few important steps to take early on to ensure the best outcome.

- Inform all local police departments and animal clinics.
- Share info on social media sites and apps, including the NextDoor App and the Sam the Parrot Facebook page (a well-known page that posts lost dogs throughout the Northern Ohio area with a large following of engaged users who share posts and help with area searches).
- Text friends in the area to ask them to spread the word.
- Walk or drive around the area often.
- As silly as it sounds, put your unlaundered socks in the area the dog was last scene. He'll pick up your scent and hang there. Go back to that site often and hope a reunion is imminent.
- "Using another family dog can also help to catch them or flush them out," Brown said. "I also know families who have engaged the help of local Bloodhound owners to aid in the search."

Brown said proof of ownership is also very important, as people may hold on to dogs and ask for proof to get the dog back. Ensuring that your dog is licensed with your county, and the tags are kept updated, is very important. It's also a good idea to microchip your dog and keep that updated. Often when a dog is found, he is taken to a police station, dog warden or a vet who will check to see if the dog has a microchip that can be used to locate the owners.



The Cotterill family, including Arrow

As Cotterill mentioned, ultimately the power of social media is one of the best tools to use to get your dog safely home. The Northeast Ohio dog community is a great resource, as she learned through her experience. "The community response and the response from the local police department was astonishing! Strangers were out looking for our dog," Cotterill said. "Everyone we spoke to knew who Arrow was and that he was missing. It felt like the entire town was looking for him along with us."

*Ann McDonald is a writer, dog foster and dog mom to two rescue dogs. You can find her writing about her dogs, dog-friendly activities and dog rescue at [dogsinthecl.com](http://dogsinthecl.com).*

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Continued from pg. 6

## OPERATION CHINA DOGS:

local authorities. Now Chinese rescuers are in crisis with private shelters and foster homes over capacity and the dogs stuck in cramped conditions, potentially for years. To make matters worse, the rescue mission is up against the Yulin dog meat festival timeline. Chinese rescuers can save some of these dogs from slaughter, but only if space is freed up at the overcrowded shelters. Getting these 99 dogs out will spare them and make room for others who need safe sheltering.



Now that the charter plan fueling funds have been secured, the mission team is focused on the remaining preparations and permissions needed to allow the dogs to travel. A mission team representative said this has been the most challenging rescue mission they have ever undertaken, and they are working to ensure every detail is met.

To read more about the rescue mission or to consider fostering or adopting, visit [goldentreasuresrescue.org](http://goldentreasuresrescue.org) or its Facebook page.

RAGOM is a non-profit operating out of Minnesota and other surrounding states that is dedicated to rescuing Golden Retrievers from all over the world. They are focused on saving dogs from China, specifically those caught in the dog meat trade. People in China are relinquishing their dogs because of Covid19 fears. There is however, no domesticated animal to human link of the virus according to the American Veterinary Association.

*Nancy Brown, owner of Hot Diggity Dog, Inc. pet care services, has been a Westshore-area professional pet sitter for more than 20 years. She's an active animal rights activist, and supports and advocates for lost, found, homeless and injured pets. Nancy is a founding member of The Friends of The Bay Village Kennel, and is a member of Pet Sitters International and several other civic organizations.*



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# RESIN DOG TAGS

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A photograph of a dental procedure in progress. A dentist in a white coat and mask is working on a patient's teeth. A dental assistant in a dark uniform and mask is assisting. A large, fluffy brown dog wearing a red harness with "THERAPY DOG" written on it is sitting on the patient's lap. The scene is set in a dental office with a sink, counter, and various dental equipment visible. A sign on the wall reads "Please Like and follow us on Facebook and get \$500 off your next dental treatment today!".

# Going to the dentist

*By Linda Slusser*

## **Dogs at a dental office? You betcha!** Therapy dogs are part of the patient support team at Strongsville Dental and Laser Aesthetics.



# is fun with therapy dogs by your side

Some studies show that up to 75% of Americans experience some level of dental-related fear, with many of those patients requiring sedation. Twenty percent of the population may even avoid dental care altogether because of that fear.

Dr. Chris Theodorou of Strongsville Dental and Laser Aesthetics decided to embrace a wonderful alternative, becoming the first dental practice in the Cleveland area to include a certified therapy dog on staff. Research, plus a little help from Angela Pierce of Paramount Dog Training, led him to choose Goldendoodles for their trainability, compassion and hypoallergenic, no-shed coats.

Two-year-old Laser began visiting the office at eight weeks, getting accustomed not only to the busy pace and the people, but also to the sounds, smells and noises of the dental office environment. Mercury, now almost a year, is also assisting and will soon take his therapy dog test. The Doodle duo boys do not perceive a demanding "job," but a fun way to use their therapy dog powers to provide comfort and alleviate patients' fears. According to client testimonials, being able to "ruffle the dogs' fur" and being given "puppy kisses and cuddles" calms better than a weighted blanket.

Laser and Mercury are an integral part of Dr. Theodorou's dental team, even joining in the "daily morning huddle." They stay in the doctor's personal office behind a gate that

allows them to be seen by all patients. And when specifically requested, they may be placed on the legs of several patients a day to offer more direct comfort. Laser and Mercury are especially helpful with young patients.

According to Dr. Theodorou, positive effects of the Goldendoodles' presence include getting phobic patients into the office and decreasing anxiety and blood pressure. The dogs also bring smiles and stress relief to the staff. The happiness of Laser and Mercury is always a top consideration. Dr. Theodorou's office is equipped with cozy beds and favorite toys, and the boys are given frequent walks. If not needed chair side, they simply "hang out" in his office before going home with him each day.

These "hams for attention" love being petted, and are adored by patients and team members alike. They do take occasional days off and never work on Fridays (smart dogs!).

When asked if there are any negatives to having Laser and Mercury in the office, Dr. Theodorou said, "None whatsoever! How could there be? Look at those cute faces."

**To book your next dental appointment with the dog-loving team at Strongsville Dental & Laser Aesthetics, please call 440.238.1300. To learn more, visit [dentiststrongsville.com](http://dentiststrongsville.com).**

.....  
*Linda lives with two Shelties and has been published in Heart of Ohio's Focus issue and The Bark.*

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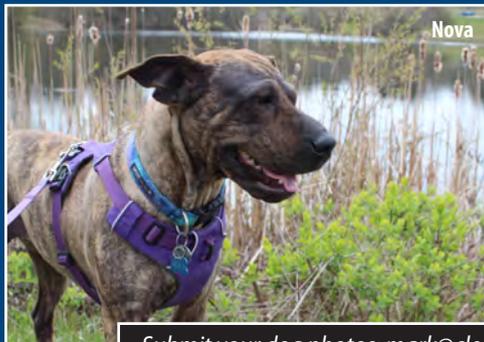


Charlie

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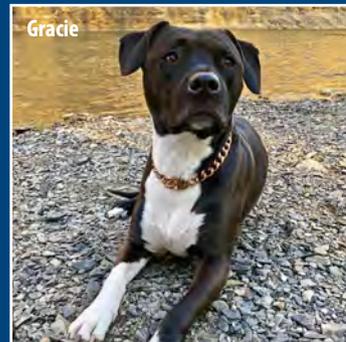
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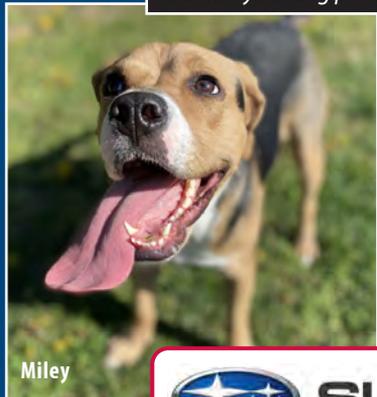


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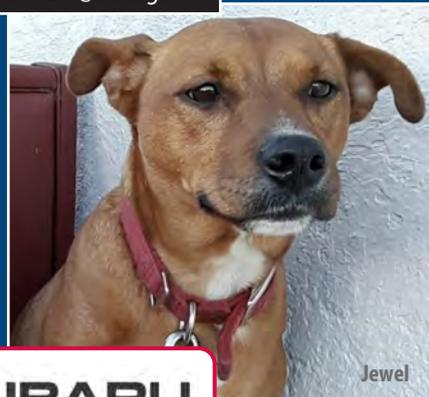
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