APLB CREATES NEW LEVEL OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

LATEST HAPPENINGS

In preparation for our upcoming conference in September Dr. Sife has completely reorganized the design and purpose of our in-person training classes that he traditionally gives there. At this early time his innovative new approach is meeting with strong approval and praise, from pet professionals, of all kinds.

There is a strong unmet need for consultants who serve newly bereaved owners at their workplaces. We are proud that nowhere else has this kind of training ever been considered or provided. This new class will certify its students as crisis intervention specialists.

Until now, there were only trained counselors – or inexpert staff who want to help but have been limited in their ability to do that. This opens up a new level of emergency help for bereaving pet owners. For more information see Page 3.

This is the first time that we have extended our conference to three full days. Registration is now open, which at this time offers a bonus "Early Bird" discount. We need you, our membership, to help us spread the word about attending this new conference.

Our January five-week counselor training course did very well, as expected. We had some wonderful students, there, again from all over the world. Three from this class are now interested in moving upward with us, to train as Chatroom Interns. After completing that additional guided instruction they will be assigned as Assistant Chatroom Hosts.

As you can see, we have also been working very hard and long on our new website design. Our "old" webmaster, Ed Floden, has been with us for many years, but he is now changing his lifestyle by starting a new job. From what he says, this is very good for him, professionally, and he is earning a lot more money than before. We thank Ed, and wish him the best! He is working close-in-hand with our new webmaster, Mike Ramos. Later, if you have any constructive suggestions how we can make this even better, please contact Joe Dwyer at joedwyer1207@gmail.com

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

In 2010, my life changed dramatically when I decided to walk away from an executive position after 10 years at the same company.

The first thought I had, only days after leaving, was to attend the APLB Conference and take the counselor training. At the time, the Conference was held in Newark, New Jersey. I was so impressed with the content of both the conference as well as the training class. Even more so, the connection I was able to make with the APLB staff and other attendees was heartwarming. I was actually still processing grief from the loss of my "brother" Fritz. As I reflect back on this experience, I was processing many changes in my life, most of which I thought were incredible challenges.

Only seven years later, I can attest that the first APLB conference and training gave me such confidence to learn more about pet loss and brought healing I never imagined over the loss of Fritz. I was inspired to share my knowledge and help others deal with the loss of their pet.

Today, I am proud to be the President of the APLB and to inform you of some upcoming changes!

Our conference in September 2018 will be our best ever, with a new agenda that include special sessions for pet parents and professionals. In addition, our training class offered at the conference will also be improved upon, focusing on some new and important aspects of pet loss. There will be a track for pet parents and a separate one for professionals, to assist everyone in their pet loss journey.

How about joining us and spreading the word to experience some positive changes that will lead to adding value to your life and to others that you never imagined possible!

You can see the new schedule in this edition.
In Memoriam

Our Honor Roll of Beloved Deceased Companion Animals
These are new names, added since the publication of our last newsletter. All are now permanently posted with their photos, on our website’s Hall of Fame pages.

To permanently add your pet’s memorial to this registry and Honor Roll, send $25 with up to 25 words and a clear color photo. This is a one-time charge. New listings will appear in every edition of this newsletter. Multiple family memorials are also posted, at no additional cost.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Baby                           ?/03/61 – 05/15/69
Dear little bird, you loved me more than anything else. I knew you were dying but I had to go to work that day, and my heart was broken. Now, so many years later I still weep for you.
— Your loving Daddy (Dr. Wallace Sife)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Charlie M                      10/11/08 – 01/07/18
Your larger-than-life personality brought a smile to our hearts every day. We were extremely blessed to have you in our lives. Miss you so much, and love you forever.
— Mommy & Daddy (TJ & Brian) and the Pups

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Cuqui                           ?/1996 – 05/02/17
Cuqui, sunshine of my life. You are now in heaven with Mommy. May God allow me to reunite with both of you soon. Thank you for the 21 years of joy.
— Your daddy who loves and misses you, Johnny

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Gracious Sunrise (Gracie Bear)  12/17/03 – 01/17/18
Angel entwined on my heart.
— Mom (Bonnie Patrick)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Kiki N.                        06/2006 – 12/06/16
Dearest Kiki, you continue to live on in our hearts! You are so loved and deeply missed.
— Until we met again, Dad & Mom (Bryan & Nukhet Hendricks)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Kitty N.                       11/24/16 – 02/16/18
You were the light of my life and filled my heart with undying love. To the little birdy who never left my side...I will cherish you forever!
— With the deepest love, your mom, Raven

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Oliver (Ollie)                 03/11/02 – 02/10/18
Good night sweet prince. And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! My darling boy, love forever.
— Your Momma (Nancy Kelly)
Training Primary Care Specialists
To Work With Newly Bereaved Pet Owners

The APLB has redesigned this conference workshop for the many different kinds of professionals who work with pets and their owners. That includes veterinary staffs, aftercare workers, adoption personnel, pet workers, and so many others. We now train primary care specialists to serve at their workplaces as emergency first responders, dealing immediately with newly bereaving pet owners. They will be crisis intervention specialists.

This course is a ten-hour in-person workshop offered only at our biennial conferences. It teaches the basics of how to assist those who have just lost a beloved animal companion. Those completing this training are awarded a special diploma, as certification to work as an emergency bereavement specialist in our relatively new field. These credentials can be framed and proudly displayed where you work. Again, this is to be a primary care specialist, not a counselor.

However, to train to be a full-fledged counselor the APLB provides two separate five-week online seminars — one, every January and the other in August. This is intensive counselor training — but not everyone is proficient enough to study or serve in that capacity. Those who successfully complete that course are awarded a different diploma, certifying them as qualified counselors in pet loss and bereavement. See the notice posted below.

The armed forces train special people to act as medics to deal on the battlefield as emergency first responders. Then, if needed, patients are sent to doctors for follow-up care and treatment. However, in very many cases, that early assistance is sufficient, and further treatment is not necessary.

Having a pet loss first responder on staff is a major asset in the veterinary profession. There is so much death involved in their work. Veterinarians and their personnel are not trained how to help these clients. But now, they can have the assistance that is needed. All the many other pet-related professions would benefit from this, as well.

At our upcoming conference we now train and certify candidates to act as emergency ‘medics’ for bereaving pet owners. If necessary, they can then refer clients on to certified professional counselors, for follow-up help. This new specialty fills a very important empty place, in dealing with and easing the suffering of newly bereaving pet owners.

NOTICE

This is not a professional counselor training course. That special instruction requires a great deal more time and intensive study. The APLB offers it twice yearly, online, in five-week in-depth workshops. For more information go to the APLB website and click on the Training link.

— Page 3 —
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY
— Dr. Wallace Sife

As it has been written, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” And then it is also said, “For now we see in a glass, darkly.” That speaks of man’s imperfect reflection of reality, and how individuals see and interpret love and God. It is a fitting caution for man, from then as well as now. We create a wide spectrum of love that we can too easily distort or “darken”. In the name of some holy image and perversion of love, we have endorsed sacrifice, ethnic cleansing, jihads, witch hunts, crusades, holocausts, mob mentality – down to psychopathic hearing of holy voices telling us to kill or destroy.

We are taught, and instinctively know that the greatest of man’s virtues is love. Unfortunately, history shows that has not always been wisely practiced. In today’s families we can also see many kinds of love. Some is pure and open and blessed with care and compassion, and some is so fraught with its own fears and weaknesses that it becomes a flawed kind of love – inflicting permanent emotional scars on children. But they still claim to be expressions of love.

Although some have wisdom, the others, unfortunately, are a means for selfish expression. Some parents practice hard love, such as “This will hurt you more than it does me.” too many never consider their children as thinking, deeply feeling little people who will forever keep the painful memories of their upbringing. They inflict their own harsh upbringing and repressive love, passing it off as how parents should act. But that is always kindled by some suppressed anger. Painful spankings can never improve how children think or remember things.

Parenting is not always easy. There is no rule book or user’s manual that comes with it. Paternal and maternal love should be overflowing with empathy and care for children as developing little people who will live on after us, with their happy juvenile memories. The best of parents open up their hearts, feeling blessed by being with them.

The age of the autocratic patriarch and subservient mother should be over – but it isn’t. Too many still think that “children should be seen, but not heard”. As a result, when a child loses a beloved pet, it is often trivialized or given inadequate or no attention from some parents. Children are our greatest blessing, and in their innocence they look up to us, with the purest of love and trust, as their exemplars. By our actions they know us, and that sets the patterns in their minds that will never be forgotten. As adults, we tend to become too involved with our own world of complexities and stratagems. As a result, we tend to lose perspective on how children think. They need our guidance to be better able to understand and cope with the loss of their beloved pets.

Too many loving parents often presume that it is advisable to shelter them from this “grown-up” experience. But that is absolutely the wrong approach. If youngsters are old enough to have some intuition or reason, then they sense very accurately when they are being left out of important discussions. The death of a child’s beloved pet is always of great significance in his young life. Again, how this is handled at the time will remain with the child for the rest of his life.

One of the greatest loving gifts to pass on to them is to step out of the restrictive mold that we ourselves were reared in. We need to put aside the ingrown fear and avoidance from our culture’s fearful responses to death. Our loving bond and obligation should help begin their experience and knowledge of death in a constructive manner that is not as evasive and euphemistic as that which we ourselves probably grew up and lived with. Too often, parents are not aware that each child, depending on his individual level of development, should be allowed to experience his own natural feelings of bereavement without being overprotected – or worse. Some parents exclude important things, and invent euphemisms and evasions, hoping for the best. But children sense this, and are always affected. This avoidance, despite our best of intentions, leaves permanent emotional wounds in their still-developing young minds.

Surely, you have heard the more recently created expression: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Unfortunately, that is more than a clever aphorism. In trying to avoid this, many good parents are self-motivated to change for the better. They benefit by reading about and discussing the loss of a beloved family pet. They also learn from interactive conversations found in pet loss chat rooms or support groups. Peer advice, shepherded by trained counselors can help parents avoid the same grievous mistakes they had themselves lived through as children. There is a child within each of us, that still cries out – despite all our gradually acquired outer layers that have long concealed this.
If our love also has wisdom we realize that children do not respond to death as adults do – and should learn to work from that perspective. Keep in mind that despite not knowing how to deal with this they always look to us for leadership. And they are very intuitive, very likely to sense when things about a pet’s death are being kept from them. Their age and maturity must be carefully considered when trying to explain these things. Sadly, parents make mistakes with this.

Too many of us have painful memories of parents “fibbing” to us about a beloved pet’s disappearance or death, when we ourselves were very young. That is when children first began to understand that parents can lie, and perhaps do hurtful things. Those repressed dark feelings never go away, unless they are properly addressed. Also, this is usually the first experience they have with death. Sadly, mental health practitioners too often, later have to deal with this very personal unresolved lifelong problem. They know it can begin the secret, long and painful slippery slope that results in suppressed bitterness – or even estrangement from parents. This is another view of us, and how we create that dark reflection.

Death is a subject that most people, even the best of parents, fear and want to avoid thinking about. As a result they too inadvertently pass that anxiety on to their children, causing bewilderment and fear that becomes internalized and suppressed. And it stays with them for the rest of their lives. Children adore their pets, and secretly share all their tears and inmost confidences with them. They are their private security, to hug when sad, and cling to when being punished.

Most others in the family do not grasp the intensity of that very private bond and relationship. When it is shattered by the pet’s sudden illness or disappearance many bad things can start to happen, according to each child’s immature way of seeing and feeling things. It is natural for them to wonder if their own naughty behavior may have somehow caused the pet’s death or disappearance. Now there are many who understand and have trained to become expert counselors, for when a child’s beloved pet dies or needs to be euthanized. Compassion, euphemisms and “warm fuzzies” are not enough. As mentioned earlier, there are many kinds of love.

Children do not respond to death as adults do. Their normal reactions are much more natural, curious and varied, until that is changed by the “darker glass” reflections from our adult world. How the child responds will depend on the strength of his bond with the pet, as well as his age and developmental stage. The general subject of death is not unknown to him. Children read fairy tales, watch movies and television, and they hear reports from schoolmates and friends. And they pick up on whispered conversations they were not supposed to hear. You may be surprised at how much your child knows or senses, even if you have kept that from him.

As mentioned, the death of a pet is often a child’s first experience with death. They how that is handled from total immersion in the home environment. You can’t protect them from this painful reality. They know you much too well. Guide them to share your own bereaving feelings – but according to their individual maturity and ability to understand. This will help them realize that grief is normal and is acceptable, in whatever loss they are experiencing. Teach them that ultimately, all life is change and growth. That can be a sad lesson to learn, but a necessary one. By watching us they learn to understand that tears in a loving and understanding closeness can help them get past the worst of the sadness. Through family love and active inclusion they will find a way to cope with this. And they will feel secure in knowing that parental love and strength is always there for them.

But keep in mind that they are not interested in detail or logic, when parents try to explain some things about the loss of a beloved pet. If what you say is above their level of comprehension they will easily become disinterested – or frustrated. Unfortunately, the wrong explanations about death are too often given to them. Their developing awareness requires more simplistic and age-appropriate answers, suitable to their early stages of life.

We teach this in our unique counselor five-week intensive online training classes. And it is also included in *The Loss of a Pet*. Passing this important knowledge on to pet families is part of our purpose and commitment. And we are proud to be the pioneers and ongoing leaders in helping and teaching about pet bereavement.

When I was a child I thought like a child. But now, comprehending this helps make the difference. That opening biblical quotation refers to man’s propensity to see things from a depressing point of view – a dark mirror’s reflection, or a drinking glass that is half empty. However, with our darling companion animals bringing their unique kind of love to their families, we can find new joys and wisdom – and need no longer look through that glass, darkly.
Some Thank You Notes

“Thank you so much, the extra personal direction you provided was incredibly helpful. Thank you again.”

“I find this course challenging and inspiring, and I am learning so much more about who I am, in this process.”

"I really enjoyed tonight’s chatroom closing session! I think it is healing to try to focus on more upbeat and joy we had with our babies."

“The APLB’s five weeks of online training was challenging, and I am thankful to you for that opportunity! Now I breathe better knowing I get to support others through their journey."

"I just wanted to say thank you for all your wonderful support and advice for me during the chat session. I really do appreciate it! You helped me make it through a difficult time." 

"18 years, to be exact!! I can still remember talking to you on the phone when my dear girl passed away - how utterly grief stricken I was. You were my lifeline. My husband at the time, who I now know had many issues, was unavailable for me and you were there as was the group. You are a blessing. I hold you in my heart always."

"Thank You So Much for your condolences. This is indeed such a difficult time, but feeling the love from you is very comforting. I really know you understand the meaning she had to me."

"I am in deep gratitude for this unforgettable training experience - thank you. You created all this in the memory of your beloved Edel, and it is going to continue making a difference even beyond any of us can measure. I will gladly stay in touch."

"I believe you all are helping even more than my local therapist. I'm so glad I found you all!"

"I got some great ideas from you all on this chat, and have acted on many of them. I feel like this chat is the only place I've found where people truly understand my pain and grief."

"I’m grateful for this safe place to talk about our pets."

"My little dog healed many of my sad places and disappointments. Now, without her it is going to be a slow process, but I believe you all helped me to begin it. Thank you again."

APLB Corner

We are all in this lifeboat together. Each of us must do whatever can be done to help anyone else who is in bereavement for a beloved pet. Caring is so necessary in this wondrous encounter - which we all take part in during our own brief span, here. And what we learn and then freely offer to others immeasurably enriches every giver, as well as the living memory of our pets.

That’s what the APLB is all about. We want to share your experience, and grow with the input only you can provide. Reservoirs are filled by one raindrop at a time. Come, work with us, and help make the difference.

Did You Know?

There are approximately 900 memorials hosted on our website, and they keep on coming in!

The APLB now has had 40,000 people visit our chat rooms since the beginning of The APLB. This total includes our Anticipatory Bereavement and Pet Loss chat combined!

Member Discount

Turner Publishing is offering APLB Members who are vets or pet care professionals a 50% discount on bulk orders of “The Loss of a Pet”, Fourth Edition. Shipping is extra, and they are non-returnable.

Contact Angela Premoe at apremoe@turnerpublishing.com or call her at (615) 225-2665 Ext. 107

Newsletter Password

Our password/username for the newsletters and send-a-card is changed periodically. Please note that our most recent username is whiskers (all in lower case) and the password is whiskers2017. Make note of this, and remember to enter it as written. This is for APLB members, only.
MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION UPDATES

Since the publication of our last newsletter, many individuals have joined or renewed their existing memberships in the APLB. We would like to thank everyone for supporting our much needed work. We want to express our special appreciation to those who have donated at the Platinum Angel, Gold Angel, Silver Angel, and Patron Angel levels, as well as those who gave Additional Donations.

Please see our website’s Join Us Page for more information on these categories.

NEW MEMBERS

Silver Angels
Romberg, Eddie Ontario, Canada

BASIC MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Ambrosio, Carmen
Cheshire, Cathy
Crawford, Tania
Durnye, Vicky
Gaffin, LaVonne, DVM
Greenwood, Erica
Henderson, Heather
Juber, Mary
Lukic, Lisa
Noel, Raven
Romberg, Eddie
Schuh, Sara
Silverman, Bonnie, DVM
Wallace, Kelly
Watson, Scarlet
Wolfe, Janice
Ziegler, Jacqueline

Ambrosio, Carmen
Cheshire, Cathy
Crawford, Tania
Durnye, Vicky
Gaffin, LaVonne, DVM
Greenwood, Erica
Henderson, Heather
Juber, Mary
Lukic, Lisa
Noel, Raven
Romberg, Eddie
Schuh, Sara
Silverman, Bonnie, DVM
Wallace, Kelly
Watson, Scarlet
Wolfe, Janice
Ziegler, Jacqueline

Dublin, OH
Westlake, OJ
Bend, OR
Brick, NJ
Merchantville, NJ
Wichita, KS
Jacksonville, FL
Ledyard, CT
Rutherford, NJ
Centreville, VA
Ontario, Canada
Howards Grove, WI
Westminster, MD
Dallas, TX
Petersburg, TN
Wycoff, NJ
Laramie, WY

Basner, Shannon
Cortner, Elizabeth
DeFurio, David
Epstein, Carol
Gavan, Melanie
Hadzic, Sarah, DVM
Heuerman, Daniel
Krost, Melissa
Mareno, TJ
Philpott, Elizabeth
Schaeffer, Jay
Shun Lei, Leung
Smith, Sarah
Watson, Lorraine
Williams, Lynda
Wright, Gayle Parker
Zinna, Patricia, DVM

Anchorage, AK
Port Angeles, WA
Madison, AL
Belmont, CA
Pleasanton, CA
Chicago, IL
Phoenix, AZ
Avondale Estates, GA
Diberville, MS
Armada, MI
Boulder, CO
Hong Kong, China
Buford, GA
Thousand Oaks, CA
Carrollton, TX
Hillsborough, NJ
Hazlet, NJ
RENEWING MEMBERS

Platinum Angel
Rudderow, Ruth Carlisle, PA

Silver Angels
Axelson, Barbara Conyers, GA Goldstein, Ira Bayside, NY

Patron Angels
Bens, Cynthia Cincinnati, OH Johnson, Sophia Reno, NV
Kitterman, Krisin Santa Clara, CA Patrick, Bonnie Waddy, KY

Additional Donations
Flore, Kristy Dickson City, PA Howie, Ann Olympia, WA
Kimbrough, Mona Salt Lake City, UT Rosemore, Dr. Evelyn Plano, TX
Wanerka, Glenn East Patchogue, NY Zimmer, Marsha Kawkawlin, MI

BASIC MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Arbitter, Heide New York, NY Axelson, Barbara Conyers, GA
Bailey, Liz Hingham, MA Barton-Barrett, Tracie Garner, NC
Bens, Cynthia Cincinnati, OH Best, Richard Williamsville, NY
Bowen, Sarah Rhinebeck, NY Bralliar, Suzy Loveland, CO
Brooks, Summer San Diego, CA Burr, Kathleen Addison, TX
Butterworth, Kelly Gloucester, MA Cooney, Kathleen, DVM Loveland, CO
Crotty, Donna Bayonne, NJ Cubeta, Katie Newton Square, PA
Donovan, Karen Glenside, PA Cuban, Frederick Torrington, CT
Duncan, Nancy Grove City, OH Douglas, Barbara Dickson City, PA
Foulkes, Deborah Creedmoor, NC Fiore, Kristy Marysville, OH
Gerard, Paula Crochrane, CA Galeck, Frederick Boothbay Harbor, ME
Glaeser, Brian Inglewood, CA Glazer, Lois Bayside, NY
Graiff, Brad Westville, OH Goldstein, Ira New York, NY
Gregorich, Penny West Chester, CA Grant, Vivian Harleysville, PA
Hedges, Patricia Drexel Hill, PA Grossman, Lon Olympia, WA
Jennings, Kathryn Salt Lake City, UT Howie, Ann Reno, NV
Kimbrough, Mona Cedar Lake, IN Johnson, Sophia Santa Clara, CA
Klar, Connie New York, NY Kitterman, Krisin Felton, CA
Lang, April Gautier, MS Kuty, Maria, DVM New York, NY
Lohmeier, Lynn Castro Valley, VA Leonard, Laurie Stamford, CT
Ma, Tiffany, DVM Duncan, BC, Canada Lopez, Jodi Clark North Bergen, NJ
Mansell, Denise Philadelphia, PA Mandel, Jeffrey Islamorada, FL
Marks, Phyllis Oakland, MN Margulies, Jenny Channahon, IL
McComas, Rebecca, DVM Charleston, NH Martin, Michael Reston, VA
Milana, Myrna, DVM Pawleys Island, SC McConnell, Cynthia Deceased
Morton, Barbara Houston, TX Mingo, John Beacon, NY
O’Hare, John Williamsburg, VA O’Donnell, Katherine Mesa, AZ
Pare, Pamela Waddy, KY Olsen, Eric Toledo, OH
Patrick, Bonnie Shawnee, OK Parsons, Dawn Silver Springs, MD
Ramsey, Margaret Jane Soquel, CA Petrukalikis, Elaine Spokane, WA
Ravina, Gabrielle, DVM Plano, TX Rode, Patricia Hudson, NY
Rosemore, Dr. Evelyn Mill Valley, CA Schwartz, Caryn Needham, MA
Seerley, Holly Maple Park, IL Simpson, Christy Atlanta, GA
Simson, Diane Gaylord, MI Smith, Bridget New York, NY
Snow, Pamela Rankin Park, Australia Solz, William Mineola, NY
Sparkes, Diane Brooklyn, NY Starnick, Kathleen Fort Walton Beach, FL
Suarez, David Weatogue, CT Swire, Monica Province, IL
Trevor, Nancy Zisch, Rebecca Las Vegas, NV East Patchogue, NY
Home Again!
— Taken From the Internet

It had been two years since one pet owner had last seen his cherished dog. So when rescuers found the animal alive and well, he had no idea if he would even remember him. And yet as soon as the dog heard his master’s voice, his reaction was mind-blowing.

In January 2014, Bill Ballato lived in Westerly, Rhode Island, with his beloved dog Bosco—who was a nine-year-old beagle mix. Ballato’s neighbors knew them well. So when the dog went missing that month, they appreciated how devastated his owner was.

Bosco had been in the yard when he managed to escape from his collar and disappeared. In a bid to find the dog, Ballato recruited his friends in the small town to help. The concerned owner also posted missing posters and made contact with the police and local animal shelters. But he was nowhere to be found. All this heart-broken man could do was continue his search in the hope that he would somehow find his buddy. But a few months later, when Ballato moved to Colorado, he almost gave up hope of seeing his beloved dog again.

As Ballato was settling into his new life, his old friends back in Westerly continued to keep an eye out for Bosco. And although there were some sightings, no one was able to bring that dog in. He remained missing, possibly living as a feral, out on the streets. Then something potentially disastrous happened: three enormous snow storms rocked Rhode Island in quick succession. So if Bosco was really on the streets, the odds would surely be stacked against him. But Ballato still refused to give up hope.

A long time later he received a Facebook message from a Rhode Island cop. The officer said that he had spotted Bosco wandering in a nearby parking lot. Naturally, the news delighted Ballato. But being so far away, the dog’s owner had no way of retrieving his lost pet. That’s when Ballato sought special help, and found Sheilah Graham. She is a Department of Homeland Security employee, working as a pet detective in her spare time. After Ballato contacted Graham on Facebook, she began hatching a plan to catch Bosco.

"Bosco played a good game of chess," Graham said. "But I love, and am good at that game, so it was just a matter of narrowing down his possible moves." And thankfully, in March 2016, this remarkable pet detective was able to outwit the dog, finally luring him into the trap.

With Bosco secured at last, Graham couldn’t wait to get home and tell Ballato the good news. She called him right away, but before she could get a word in, Bosco interrupted her. It seems that on hearing his master’s voice, the dog began howling at the phone. Ballato said, "I answered the call, and the first thing I heard was Bosco howling. He never had a bark or howl or growl; it’s kind of all three together. You recognize it right away."

"Now, all that was left for Graham to do was reunite this loving pair. But with nearly 2,000 miles standing between them, that wasn’t going to be easy. Luckily, though, that’s when Ballato’s old friends in Rhode Island stepped in. They set up a crowdfunding campaign to raise money to deliver Bosco to his rightful home. One of Ballato’s childhood friends told the Daily Camera, "We recruited our friends, our neighbors, dog lovers, total strangers,". "People that I hadn’t heard from in 30 years bellied up money."

So in April 2016, two years after Bosco went missing, Graham and two of her friends made that long 36 hour drive to Ballato’s home in Colorado. That arduous journey was worth it just to see their reactions when they set eyes on each other, again. "My real payday is seeing lost pets reunited with their families," she said.

But initially, the reunion was something of a strange experience for Ballato. He said, "I didn’t know how he was going to react. The first couple of minutes, with strangers all around, taking photos, he was like, "OK, who the hell is this guy?"" Then Ballato remembered the old nickname he once had given him – "Dude." And as he called it out, the dog looked him straight in the eye. "Everyone sensed this. From that point, everything changed fast." Obviously, That triggered long-lost happy memories. You could see it in his eyes and furiously wagging tail. And if Ballato also had one, it would be wagging, too.
MARK YOUR CALENDAR, NOW!

APLB’S Ninth International Conference on Pet Loss and Bereavement
“The Journey of Those Who Care for Their Pets”
Wednesday, September 26 through Friday, September 28, 2018
At Bally’s Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ

Continuing Education credits will be given with AAVSB (RACE) approval as well as by NASW (National Association of Social Workers)

This year starts the APLB’s 21st year of operations. At our latest conference we will be expanding our coverage and reaching out more to vets and their staffs, pet hospice personnel, and all other pet-related professionals. That is in addition to our usual help for individual pet owners. On Wednesday, as the all-day emergency care for bereavement class is in session, two special workshops will be given in the afternoon. Details will be announced in early January. A day-by-day schedule of all events will be also posted on our website.

And a completely new kind of training will also be included: a four-session class on Animal Chaplaincy by President Joe Dwyer. The first two hours on Thursday, and the final two on Friday. A special certificate of training will be awarded to those who complete this course.

Emphasis will be placed on honoring the deceased pets of those attending, and a special “Wall of Honor” will be set up for anyone to affix pre-prepared memorials and photos. As before all these names will also be listed in the Conference Catalog.

Complimentary continental breakfasts will be offered on Thursday and Friday mornings, just outside the main meeting room. Admission will include lunch and dinner on Thursday, this year.

A registration page for the conference will be set up on our website in early January.

The APLB has bargained with Bally’s for special rates for a block of the best rooms for these dates. Because we must guarantee a minimum for each day, we ask that you do not seek room accommodations from any discount online providers. (The rates will be the same.) That undermined us at our last conference, and the APLB lost a lot of money that had to be paid for unused but guaranteed rooms. For your convenience, Bally’s will set up a special direct reservation page on our website, early in the year.

Special presenters and renowned specialists will be sitting at an open roundtable, discussing all new developments, and answering any questions. This will be the perfect venue for anyone in our rapidly developing field to network and break bread with all of us.

Reduced rate “Early Bird” rates and discounts for students and seniors will be available. And as at all our conferences, time will be set aside for anyone in bereavement to have a private session with our counselors.

For more information contact President Joe Dwyer at joedwyer1207@gmail.com or Dr. Sife at sife@aol.com
APLB CONFERENCE AND TRAINING REGISTRATION FORM

September 26-28, 2018
At Bally’s Hotel
Located at Atlantic City

LAST NAME                              FIRST NAME

STREET ADDRESS

TOWN/CITY                                      STATE/PROVINCE                                      ZIP CODE

COUNTRY                              TELEPHONE

E-mail/URL

Counselor Training Workshop

Wednesday, September 26 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Thursday, September 27 10:00 AM – Noon
The APLB Certificate of Training and 10 NASW and AAVSB (RACE) Veterinary continuing Education Credits (CEs) are also awarded for the successful completion of this workshop. A one-hour written exam will be administered on Wednesday. It is based on chapters in The Loss of a Pet, Fourth Edition, and the lecture. To pass, the book must be read, beforehand, and brought with you to the class. The workshop and full conference must be taken together. Certificates of Training will be distributed on Friday, after 12:00 PM. They will not be mailed out later.

2-Day Conference

Thursday, September 27 7:30 AM – 4:40 PM and Friday, September 28 7:30:00 AM – 4:30 PM. Registration includes new membership in the APLB. Breakfasts on Thursday and Friday are included with registration – at no extra charge.

Indicate here if you require:                  (     )  veterinary RACE Continuing Education credits, or
(     )  NASW Continuing Education credits

Substantial Early Bird discounts are offered through May 31. Regular Rate applies after that. Additional

REGISTRATION

Workshop and Conference                         Early bird: $450  after May 31: $480  $________
Conference alone                               Early bird: $200  after May 31: $230  $________
One Day of Conference for all others           Saturday ( )  Sunday ( )  $115  $________

Less $25 APLB Member discount. – $25  $________
Less $15 Student, Senior, Disabled discount (only for the conference) – $15  $________
(Proof must be faxed or Emailed within one day of receipt.)

Total Charges  $________

discounts are also available for APLB members, Students, Seniors, Disabled.

THREE EASY WAYS TO REGISTER: Mail / Phone / Online
Go to www.aplb.org
APLB PO Box 55 Nutley, NJ 07110 / (718) 382-0690 / fax:(718) 339-3592 /
Payment: Check or Credit Card. Make Checks/Money Orders Payable to APLB.
Checks not in US Funds will be returned. A charge of $30 will be applied, if returned for insufficient funds.
Credit Card: # ____________________________ Expiration Date:
Signature (only required for mail or fax) ____________________________ Date: __________
If payment does not accompany your registration it will not be processed.
THE APLB NOW PRESENTS

A NEW APPROACH TO EMERGENCY PET BEREAVEMENT ASSISTANCE

At our September 26-28 conference at Bally’s in Atlantic City
This has been greatly needed.

In keeping with our history of leadership, we have designed a pragmatic 10-hour workshop to train the many different kinds of professionals who work with pets and their owners. That includes veterinary staffs, aftercare workers, adoption personnel, and so many others.

This prepares and certifies them as primary care personnel, to serve at their workplaces as emergency first responders. They will be commissioned as crisis intervention specialists, to work with newly bereaving pet owners. They will also reconcile occasional baseless anger at the vet and staff. 10 CE credits authorized by NASW or AAVSB (RACE) are also included.

At this Ninth International Conference on Pet Loss and Bereavement we will also be teaching a new 4-hour workshop in Inter-Faith Animal Chaplaincy. Special certificates of training will be awarded.

Noted experts in our rapidly growing field will be teaching classes specifically designed for veterinary workers. Important sessions for pet owners and bereavement counselors will also be included.

This is the perfect setting to meet and network with prominent authorities, as well as colleagues in many related professions.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR PET LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT

For more information visit our website

www.aplb.org

or call (718) 382-0690
My Race Story — Connie Starr

This is very long, but there's no way to describe a 100-mile dogsled race in a few words. I'll try to recount the experience as best I can. It was epic. It was beautiful. It was fun. And it was torture. We arrived at the start at Fergi Ski Area before 9:00 AM to unload and pack sleds, feed dogs, visit the porta-potty (multiple times) and fidget. I was working on my sled when I heard a ruckus on the other side of the truck. By the time I got there telling it was over. Healer had shown interest in Topaz's empty bowl and she nailed him in the front leg. I had the vets look at it and we all agreed it was superficial and he could run. With my start time of 12:27 approaching I harnessed dogs, hooked them up and with the help of handlers and an ATV holding us back, we headed for the start line.

"Five! Four! Three! Two! One!" and we were off. The start chute was a combination of ice and slush and bare ground and I was terrified I would crash on the first turn, right in front of the crowd. We navigated it successfully and headed up into the trees and onto the trail. Finally all those training miles were going to pay off!

For the first several miles the trail was awful. Light snow cover made for the horrible sound of sled runners screeching over gravel, dirt and pavement. I hopped off and ran behind the sled to lighten it and save my runner plastic. Climate change is real, folks.

The Eagle Cap Extreme is appropriately named. The vertical feet each musher has to navigate is daunting and if you weren't given a trail map with the elevations before you left you would swear the entire course is uphill. The trail is also technical, in that you have to actively drive your sled and your team to keep from crashing into trees, drifting into a ditch or falling off a cliff. About 15 miles in I experienced my only mishap, on a tight turn in soft snow where many other mushers also flipped their sleds. The trail was littered with stuff that had fallen out of sled bags - water bottles, Snickers bars...it was somewhat comforting to know I wasn't the only one.

The weather was not cooperating either. It was snowing, but it was warm, which made for one soggy musher. I wasn't cold, but it was miserable. The dogs were doing great and I snacked them every two hours. It was a time where I could give them their snack, pet them and scratch their ears, kiss them and tell them what a great job they were doing.

Darkness fell and I fished my headlamp out of my pocket. For the next few hours the only view I would have would be of the dogs, illuminated by my lamp. We weren't out there alone, however. The trail sweeps, two fellows on snowmobiles were behind us. They would pull up until they spotted us then turn off their engines and wait for a half-hour or so, then do it again. On we went, mile after mile after mile. Eventually we came around a corner and spotted a highway sign, "Steep Grade Next 11 Miles." That meant we were nearing Ollokot, the checkpoint where we would rest for 6 hours, turn around and run the next 50 miles. And it was downhill!

We arrived in Ollokot at 9:30. I was met by volunteers who helped me park my team. Race officials checked that I had all the required equipment and I signed in. I was given an orange slip that told me when I could leave the checkpoint. Shortly a cadre of veterinarians came to check the dogs. They saw that Healer was favoring his bitten leg and it was quite swollen. There was no doubt that he was staying in Ollokot. I had to leave my best dog behind and it felt like we barely made it with 8 dogs. How were we going to make it back with only 7? Both Jake and Will were favoring their front legs also so I fastened wrist wraps (neoprene wraps fastened with velcro that reduces swelling) and bedded them down. Will took his off. I put them back on. He took them off again. Oh, Will.

The first order of business for a musher at a checkpoint is to care for her dogs. I was given a bale of straw and I walked up and down the gangline, dropping straw on each dog for insulation and warmth. They scratched in the straw until they formed a nice nest and curled up to sleep. Mushers use a contraption known as a "cooker" to heat water to feed their dogs. A large metal bucket with a pan at the bottom holds HEET that you light with a match, then you insert a stock pot full of water into the larger bucket. Ollokot has water which is preferable to melting snow in your cooker which can take forever. I followed the "WATER" sign to the river bank and looked down a steep, slippery trail. How was I going to get down there, fill up my pot and get back up? I walked up and down the bank, thinking, "This has to be a mistake. There has to be an easier way to get down there." There wasn't. This was it.

I picked my way, side-stepping down the hill, crawled over a log and filled my pot. Then I looked up and realized I had to climb back up with a pot that needed to be held with both hands. Crying was not an option. I made it back up by setting the pot down ahead of me and walking up a few steps at a time. On top I headed back to our campsite, trying not to slosh water all over myself. Then my back spasmed. I set the pot down, stretched, picked it back up and kept going. Spasm. Set pot down. Stretch. Pick it up and walk a few more steps. Repeat. I finally made it and started the cooker to heat water for their dinner.

(Continued on next page)
With the dogs fed it was time for me to try to rest. Ollokot has a mushers tent where you could get some sleep for a few hours but I'm a light sleeper so decided to bed down in my sled. I unpacked everything, unfolded my foam pad and rolled out my sleeping bag. I snuggled in, zipped up my sled bag around me and let out a huge sigh of relief. I was warm and cozy. I set my alarm for one hour before I was to leave the checkpoint.

My alarm went off at 2:50 AM and I started the cooker again to give the dogs more water and food. Then I saw Christina and asked why she was still at the checkpoint. She arrived well ahead of me and should have been on the trail by now. "I'm waiting for morning so I don't have to run in the dark." Hmmm...that sounded like a REALLY good idea. I asked her where the "Ollokot Hilton" was, the tent where a musher could get some food, warm up and dry out their gear. Once there I tried to eat a bowl of soup but my stomach was in knots. I grabbed a cookie and sat and chatted with other mushers for awhile before deciding to go back to my campsite and sleep in my sled again. I also didn't want to be too far away from my dogs.

I woke up at 6:30, much later than I planned. I wanted to be on the trail by 7:00 but that was not going to happen. I walked each dog around to gauge how they felt and Will was limping. He was not going with us either. I found a vet and took Healer and Will to the Dropped Dog lot and got them settled. Will would not let anyone touch him so his diagnosis was "lameness." It broke my heart to leave them but took comfort in knowing they were together and would be well cared for. The vets at ECX are incredible. I signed the necessary paperwork and was told they would be transported back to Fergi in 3-4 hours.

We left the checkpoint at 8:10, the dogs at a full run with tails up. I was glad I gave them the extra rest. They needed it. So did I. Since the course is uphill both ways, we started uphill. With only 6 dogs and a fully loaded sled the going was slow. Something like molasses in January comes to mind. But we ticked off the miles, one by one. The sun was out and the trail was gorgeous. On we went, the trail sweeps behind us again. At one point I asked them if they had some crossword puzzles to keep them occupied while they waited. I was so happy they were there.

Darkness fell again as we were navigating Hass-Owl loop. We were less than 20 miles from the finish! I knew we could do it. Then the dogs slowed down. Then they slowed down some more. I was trying to keep my tone positive, being both coach and cheerleader. "Almost there! Let's go home! Let's go see daddy! Who wants a hot dog? Chicken soup! Chicken soup!" They would pick up the pace briefly but then settle back to a slow trot. But they kept going. They didn't quit on me. And I didn't quit on them.

We passed Salt Creek checkpoint and I threw my tag at a volunteer. Mushers were given a small tag with their bib number to prove they passed the checkpoint and to let the race officials know they were close to the finish. Eleven miles to go! And all downhill! Not!

Since it was dark, it was difficult to tell that what I remembered of the trail being all uphill at the start was a cruel lie. It was a rolling trail and I apologized to the dogs numerous times. Then I saw a landmark, a barbed-wire fence and knew we were close. We would finish!

The last part of the trail is like a roller-coaster, steep and winding and the dogs took off. They knew we were close too. "Easy! Easy!" I yelled as I stood on my drag mat, trying to slow them down so they wouldn't kill me. We could hear whooping and hollering and I started to cry. We made it!

We crossed the finish line at 7:29 PM to hugs and high-fives and a warm welcome from race officials, veterinarians, volunteers and friends. I felt so blessed. The dogs were happy with wagging tails and bright eyes. I was so incredibly proud of them. At my truck I was reunited with Healer and Will and saw that they were both fine. Friends helped me load dogs and sled and drove us back to our rental cabin where we celebrated an epic 31 hours and 24 minutes on the trail with my amazing dogs. We discovered that anything is possible with enough grit, determination, training and attitude!

Here are some videos and photos, too.


Connie Starr lives in the Cascade Mountains in central Washington with her husband and seven rescued huskies. She discovered the sport of dog mushing after letting her first Siberian husky (and heart dog) pull her on roller-blades. She participates in several dogsled races in the northwest, regularly placing last, but her motto is, "You can't finish if you don't even start". She works as a sled dog tour guide in the winter and travels with her husband and dogs in an RV in the summer. She is an APLB Chat Host and facilitates a pet loss support group at the Seattle Animal Shelter.