

# Book Reviews: For Your Client's Library

## LapDog Therapy: My Journey from Companion Dog to Therapy Dog

Reviewed by Linda Goodloe, PhD



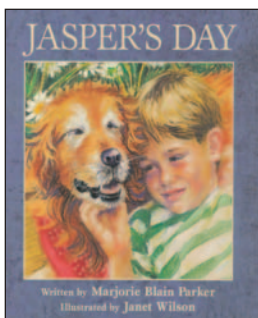
Mickey (a Boston Terrier) along with his partner Minnie (another Boston Terrier) regularly visits a continuous-care facility for elderly people and describes his experiences in becoming a therapy dog. The format is reader-friendly with blocks of text and quotations set apart and accompanied by photographs, pleasant illustrations, and some delightful cartoons.

*LapDog Therapy* provides information for just about anybody interested in or involved with therapy dogs, including people new to the concept and those considering their companion dogs as potential candidates. Owners of newly certified therapy dogs get useful information on how to negotiate introductions and fit the dogs into activities within an eldercare facility. For those already involved with therapy dogs, there is a lengthy list of useful resources.

Given that this is an attractive and useful book, some improvements are possible. The stated purpose of the book is to provide information about therapy dogs, but the focus occasionally drifts toward education about eldercare facilities, putting excessive strain on the conceit of Mickey as narrator. Some photographs are redundant; most are of Mickey (or Mickey and Minnie) beside or in the lap of an elderly person, which leads young readers who leaf through the book to conclude that Boston Terriers are dogs for elderly people. A section on Mickey's canine friends working in other contexts, such as hospitals or with children, would have provided needed variety and a more inclusive picture of therapy dogs without stealing the show from Mickey.—By Mickey & Anne B. Nock. 50 pages; illustrated. PickMick Publishing Co, PO Box 296, Onancock, VA 23417. ISBN 0-9724880-0-6. 2002. Price \$19.95.

## Jasper's Day

Reviewed by Sherry R. Carpenter, MS



In *Jasper's Day*, the author has succeeded wonderfully in capturing the soft beauty of an older dog, Jasper, in the pastel colors of the sunset of a dying dog. First, Jasper and his family share a last day reliving memories. There are moments when a young Jasper resurfaces to remind the family of what once was, and at other times, there is the deep sleep of

the aged, the stiff body, and a hint of pain. The compilation of pictures of Jasper's life as a memorial is also excellent.

However, for many children, pet loss can be their first experience with death. This is a time when important impressions are formed. There are questions that children need to have answered. In the case of Jasper, they need to know more than "...the veterinarian is going to give Jasper a shot. It will be quick and gentle. It will be just like going to sleep. He won't be asleep, though. Jasper will be dead."

Although there has been much written about not comparing euthanasia with sleep so that a child is not frightened to go to sleep, my problem is not with what is written but more with what is not written and what is not pictured. There are pictures of everyone in Jasper's family, but there is no picture of the veterinarian who plays such a vital role in Jasper's last day. It is the veterinarian who has played a role in giving him a long and good life and helped him live with the pain of cancer.

Unfortunately, *Jasper's Day* also fails to communicate the comfort and compassion that are part of a veterinarian's role in euthanasia. The late veterinarian Dr. Leo Bustad said, "When I get to heaven, I expect to find animals there." Sometimes, all of us—especially children—need the comfort of heaven and, of course, angels.—By Marjorie Blain Parker. 32 pages; illustrated. Kids Can Press, 2250 Military Rd, Tonawanda, NY 14150. ISBN 1-55074-957-9. 2002. Price \$15.95.

## Grieving the Death of a Pet

Reviewed by Barbara Brewer Welsch, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, DACVECC



*Grieving the Death of a Pet* is a book about the "experience of grief for beloved companion animals" written by a professional who has served as a pet-loss counselor for 20 years and experienced the intense and lingering pain and the life-changing possibilities of pet loss. With a foreword by author Susan Chernak McElroy and glowing editorial reviews by notables in the arena of healing, such as physician and author Bernie Siegel and veterinarian and author Allen Schoen, I was not surprised to find myself in awe of the depth and breadth of the pet-loss trauma reactions captured in the 5 chapters of this beautiful and accepting book.

The author presents a poignant collection of the remarkably varied experiences of love and loss through which animal owners walk. Using the candid words of her clients, she validates the experiences of those who have grieved pet loss in a world that often diminishes the depth and duration of such losses. She honors the

spiritual union we humans often have with our pets, whether hamsters, horses, dogs, cats, or birds. She connects those going through the grieving processes of disbelief, anger, and guilt with others facing similar pain, perhaps creating a support group for those who do not have such a group available.

Chapters provide information on the connections between human "pet parents" and their animals, preparing for a pet's impending death (or dealing with sudden, unexpected illness and loss), the pain and guilt that is involved as owners struggle with choosing euthanasia and the time to euthanize a pet, the experience of grief, and hope for healing. Moving personal stories are told, and it is clear that the author affirms that all experiences, including after-death connections, are valid. The chapter on grief is extremely thorough and well written and could stand alone as a reprint.

As a veterinarian for more than 20 years, I have participated in many death-loss and euthanasia experiences. I have done my best in these circumstances and felt content with my work around these issues. Like many of us, I have sent cards and made follow-up phone calls, receiving thank-you notes and presents of gratitude for my caring and concern. This book makes me acutely aware of how little I have really attempted to understand and empathize with my clients' highly varied, individualized, and possibly lengthy grief experiences and how little attention I have devoted to their healing process.

With a discount of up to 20% available from the publisher or Amazon.com for bulk orders, this book would make an invaluable, yet inexpensive, gift that veterinarians could provide to grieving clients in lieu of the time and empathy we might prefer to offer but that we cannot realistically provide. I highly recommend this book for pet owners seeking self-help, veterinarians, students in veterinary school classes, counseling professionals, and particularly those who haven't personally experienced the depth and beauty of

the human-animal bond.—By *Betty J. Carmack*. 128 pages. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, PO Box 59304, Minneapolis, MN 55459-0304. ISBN 0-0866-4348-X. 2003. Price \$12.99.

## The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery

Reviewed by **Randall Lockwood, PhD**



*The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery* is a remarkably comprehensive guide to preventing and responding to the loss of animal companions of every kind, including dogs, cats, ferrets, birds, reptiles, and many others. The emphasis is on prevention through proper identification, housing, and care, including attention to meeting

behavioral needs to prevent an animal from wanting to wander off. Other chapters provide useful advice on transporting and traveling with pets. Because searches initiated within 12 hours of when a pet disappears result in nearly 90% of those pets being recovered, detailed and effective strategies are offered for responding quickly when animals are lost or found.

The book contains up-to-date information, and the authors provide a wealth of detailed descriptions of resources on the Internet, including their own excellent Web site ([www.lostpetfoundpet.com](http://www.lostpetfoundpet.com)) as well as other resources. Every companion animal veterinarian should have 1 or more copies of this book on hand to provide useful guidance to clients in need.—By *Joseph Andrew Sapia & Patricia Sapia*. 210 pages; illustrated. El Jebel Press, PO Box 288, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. ISBN 0-9718336-0-5. 2002. Price \$23.95.



### Books Received

*Angel by My Side: The True Story of a Dog Who Saved a Man...and a Man Who Saved a Dog*. By Mike Lingenfelter & David Frei. 189 pages; illustrated. Hay House, 2776 Laker Ave, Carlsbad, CA 92008. ISBN 1-4019-0021-6. 2002. Price \$23.95.

*Biology of Growth of Domestic Animals*. By Colin G. Scanes. 300 pages; illustrated. Iowa State Press, 2121 State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300. ISBN 0-8183-2906-2. 2003. Price \$79.99.

*Crocodiles: Biology, Husbandry, and Diseases*. By F. W. Huchzermeyer. 337 pages; illustrated. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016-4314. ISBN 0-85199-656-6. 2003. Price \$175.00.

*Diseases of Small Domestic Rodents*. By V. C. G. Richardson. 2nd ed. 248 pages; illustrated. Iowa State Press, 2121 State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300. ISBN 1-4051-0921-1. 2003. Price \$39.99.

*Equine Color Genetics*. By D. Phillip Sponenberg. 2nd ed. 248 pages; illustrated. Iowa State Press, 2121 State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300. ISBN 0-8138-0759-X. 2003. Price \$59.99.

*External Fixation in Small Animal Practice*. By Karl H. Kraus, James P. Toombs, & Malcolm G. Ness. 320 pages; illustrated. Iowa State Press, 2121 State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300. ISBN 0-632-05989-3. 2003. Price \$127.99.

*Pills for Pets: The A to Z Guide to Drugs and Medications for Your Animal Companion*. By Debra Eldredge. 256 pages; illustrated. Kensington Publishing Corp, 850 Third Ave, New York, NY 10022. ISBN 0-8065-2436-7. 2003. Price \$14.95.

*Handbook of Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine*. By Peter Cockcroft & Mark A. Holmes. 208 pages; illustrated. Iowa State Press, 2121 State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300. ISBN 1-405-10890-8. 2003. Price \$32.99.