

Our Sentient Friends

honouring all animals, everywhere

~ Fall 2025 ~

Included in this issue ...

- Luigi, Lost and Found
- Fighting Fire with Love and Facts
- Monarch Butterfly Magic
- World Animal Day 2025



Our Sentient Friends is published quarterly
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Contributions are always welcome. Deadlines are as follows:

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Winter Issue (available December 21): December 1

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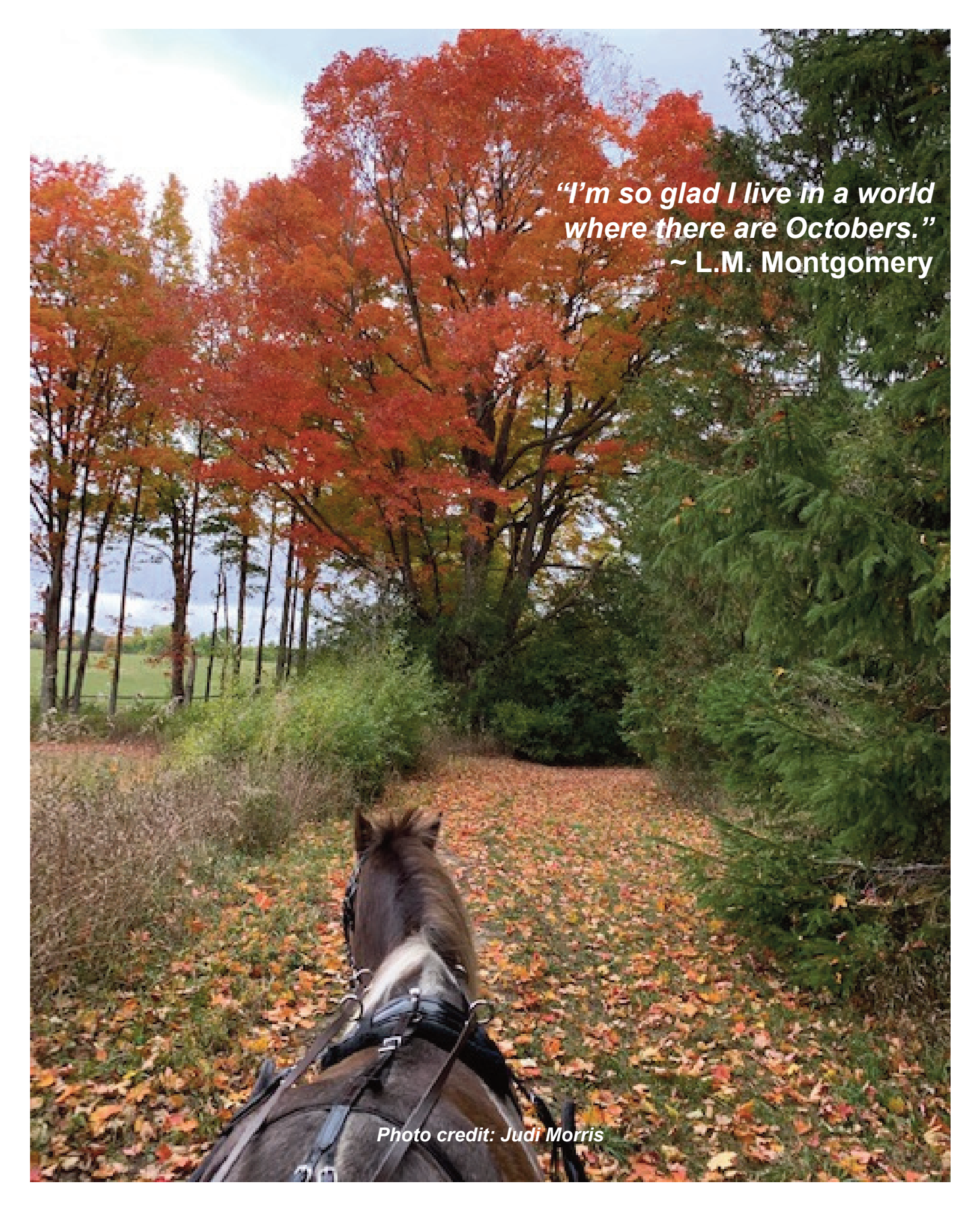
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On Our Cover:

Taiwanese street dogs, mentioned in *Luigi, Lost and Found* (page 3).



*"I'm so glad I live in a world
where there are Octobers."
~ L.M. Montgomery*

Photo credit: Judi Morris

Publisher's Ponderings



I decided to delay the publication of this issue for a few days, so that I could include some information about the World Animal Day Market that took place in Guelph on Saturday, October 4. Such a wonderful day, with animal-loving vendors and exhibitors with items to sell, or information to disseminate. And I was so grateful to see the numbers of people that came through! A huge thank you goes out to all who participated in the market, and all who came out to support us. A special thanks to Guelph Today, my media sponsor, and The Benjamin Project, event sponsor. The photo above shows two of the stunning collages created at the event. (Thank you, Courtney and Fiona!) See pages 20-21 for more photos ... and **mark your calendars, because I'll be doing it again next year, on Saturday, October 3!**

It probably goes without saying, but animal welfare advocacy has become one of my strongest passions. I am reminded of the first few lines of a poem by Walt Whitman ...

*I think I could turn and live with animals
they are so placid and self-contain'd
I stand and look at them long and long*

*They do not sweat and whine about their condition
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins*

In a world that is becoming increasingly, disturbingly hostile and unfair, I take solace in nature. And when I see animals of any kind, my soul is fed, and I feel better.

One of the projects that also feeds my soul is my “For the Love of Animals” collaboration with The Benjamin Project. (See page 36 for details.) We’re always looking for elementary school teachers, homeschoolers, or group leaders who’d like to participate in this project that results in a published book in support of an animal rescue or shelter. Another great learning opportunity for students.

It’s hard to believe that this is the fourth issue of *Our Sentient Friends*. I am grateful to all who have supported this initiative, and especially to those who have submitted articles, stories, or poetry. I would like to see it continue to grow. My hope is to create not only a team of regular contributors (contact me if you’re interested), but also a team of high school students from every province in the country, who can assist in providing content. See page 32 for more information on this initiative.

Beginning with the next issue, I’m changing the submission and publication dates slightly, to better line up with the first day of each new season. So ... **submission deadline for the upcoming Winter issue is December 1, and the magazine will go live on December 21.** Please contact me if you have anything animal-related to say!

Until next time,

Lisa



Lisa Browning has been writing stories for as long as she can remember. She received a BA in English from York University in 1988, and subsequently worked as an editor for a Toronto-based publishing firm for over fifteen years before founding One Thousand Trees in 2010. No matter what she does, Lisa is inspired to make a difference in this world, to empower others, and help them realize their passion, through storytelling and connection. She was honoured as a Community Champion at the Guelph Y’s Women of Distinction event in 2018.



Luigi, Lost and Found

The story of how Taiwanese street dogs touched my heart and soul

by Michael Schram

I was two years into a broken heart, after losing my beloved Seymour. A beautiful soul whom I'd met at a park while on lunch break in Taichung, Taiwan. This tiny, black, adorable puppy sauntered over to me, patches of fur missing everywhere, no promising food, water, shelter, or survival prospects in sight, and just stared at me, while wagging his tail like it was the best day ever. I felt an instant connection to him, came back after work, took him home, and fell in love. I'm grateful for the 6 wonderful years we had together, but the harsh path we took to the end was rough on me. I just miss him, every day.



Then we met Luigi! I hadn't been planning on bringing a new dog into the pack, but this is often how it works. At that point, the only non-human members of the pack were a mob of cats, and occasional foster and rescue dogs.



We were going about our business on the charming Dali old street, doing our shopping in the traditional morning market, when we encountered an adorable group of puppies, 5 of them. My partner Kelly, son Curtis, and I proceeded to name them all, take care of them on the street, and look for homes.

About two weeks later, I found another puppy on his own around the corner, and successfully integrated him into

this pack, mom accepted him. A cute furry 6 pack. We'd turn up every day or two and bring food, and love, and take pics to give updates for potential families.

These pups were 6-8 weeks old when we met them. We took care of them all for the next 3 months.

It was a Friday morning, I was going to work when I spotted Luigi lying next to my scooter. Was he injured? What happened to the others? This had never happened before. However, when we turned up for our regular visits, the entire puppy team would chase us down the street. Driving off on the scooter, and looking in the rear-view mirror, 6 super adorable puppies chasing us, ears and tongues flapping in the wind, is a memory that makes me smile whenever I think about it. Only once did they chase us all the way back to the house.

But once was enough, because Luigi remembered where we lived, where he could be safe. We later found out the reason for Luigi's unexpected visit, the

dreaded dog catcher. We'll never know what happened to his siblings.

I wasn't prepared for a puppy that morning, and had to rush off to work. Upon my return Friday evening, Luigi was still there waiting for me! I'd been thinking about him all day, and was relieved to see him. He was dirty, exhausted and dehydrated, but otherwise healthy. So I took him inside, bathed him, fed him, loved him, and gave him a chance to rest, because when you live on the city streets, and you don't have a family, you never have a chance to just rest, you never feel safe. The humans and the cats bonded quickly with Luigi. He chewed my brand new expensive phone on his second day, but I didn't care. He was our new baby! He would forever be taken care of by, and be part of, our family.

He's just such a joy and an inspiration in our lives. Part of our daily routine involves Luigi greeting us at the door, always with a shoe in his mouth, and wriggling with delight. Whenever tensions rise between the humans, Luigi is there to defuse the situation and offer comfort, he has incredible emotional awareness. It's therapeutic.

Lunar New Year 2016 was upon us. Luigi had just turned 2. We decided to spend it with our friends in Fuli. A tiny aboriginal village in the mountains of Hualien. All is well, people drinking, eating, laughing...then boom, kids with firecrackers!

In an instant our wonderfully bright LNY holiday turned dark and scary. Our precious Luigi had vanished.

We spent the next 3 days looking for him, not a trace. These mountains are treacherous, no place for a sweet soul like Louie. The outcomes one imagines in this scenario are horrifying. There are of course wild animals to contend with, but Luigi is fast and strong. Our biggest concern, we knew the area was littered with grisly baited traps, the uncles who had put them there, told us so. A piece of meat would be tempting for a hungry pup with Luigi's food drive.

With CNY winding down, we had to leave, and get back to work. An 11 hour drive on the best day would be challenging, but doing so in these circumstances was excruciating for us all.

I returned to work the following Monday. My work does not allow me to be just physically present. Teaching is very demanding, emotionally. I couldn't burden my team and students with my struggle. As days turned to weeks, every moment of the day, and night, was filled with negative emotions- fear, anxiety, guilt, desperation, sadness, anger, regret, hopelessness.... But being an optimistic realist, I never gave up hope!

I was determined. I must return immediately and find Luigi. At this point we had flyers and Facebook posts up everywhere offering a reward, and had



mobilized the Fuli community. This community of caring and kind people really provided us with hope. We'll be forever grateful.

We'd received several tips, none of them looked anything like our Louie.

After trains, taxis, and a flight, I arrived at this tiny village in Hualien. I would not leave until I found him. Our Fuli friends set me up with a place and a scooter, so I could search the vast mountains.

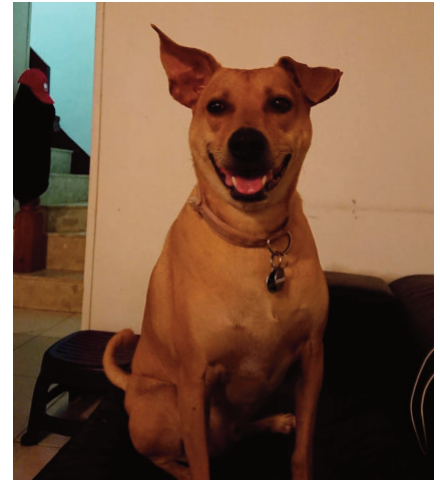
On the second day there, which was 15 days since the disappearance, I received a call, someone claiming to have seen Luigi. I hopped on my scooter and set out. I arrived, nervous. Could he really be here, on the other side of these two huge mountains? Probably just another false alarm. I approached. Is that really him, tied to a pole? Oh my...it is! He can't believe it's me, I can't believe it's him. Heart racing, I shouted "LUIGI!", and ran to him with mixed emotions- disbelief, elation, relief. An unbelievable moment, both of us trembling, and crying, as we embraced.

He had lost some weight, was dehydrated, scared, traumatized, had a limp, and had heartworm disease. It's possible that the heartworm disease happened before this debacle.

The nice family explained that their dog Keke had befriended Luigi, allowing them to secure him for us. Turns out Luigi is incredibly resourceful. The uncles said all the meat from their traps had disappeared, surely it must have been clever Luigi, they thought. We later confirmed his resourcefulness when we found out he had several food sources and stashes in the hood. He's also improved his street cred significantly, and has become a true mountain dog. He only lifts his leg to pee when he's outside the yard though, to keep up appearances.

LNy has now taken on a new meaning, it's a special time to celebrate Luigi, and the journeys

we embark on with our rescued dogs and cats. Cherish those moments daily, and practice gratitude.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Are you interested in writing an article for our Winter issue?

The submission deadline is December 1, and the magazine will go live on December 21.

Email lisa@onethousandtrees.com for more information.

Fighting Fire with Love and Facts

by Mo Markham

(Full-size versions of the images in this article are available on the Waterloo Region Climate Initiatives Facebook page.)

What if we decided to fight wildfires with facts? With science? Mobilized our love for trees and Mother Earth, for the birds, bears and butterflies, instead of eating away at the planet and the future of all the creatures here with us?

For centuries we've behaved as if we're superior, and our needs and wants are all that's important. We've seen non-humans as an 'other' that doesn't matter. Unless we move past our superiority complex, that attitude will take everyone down.

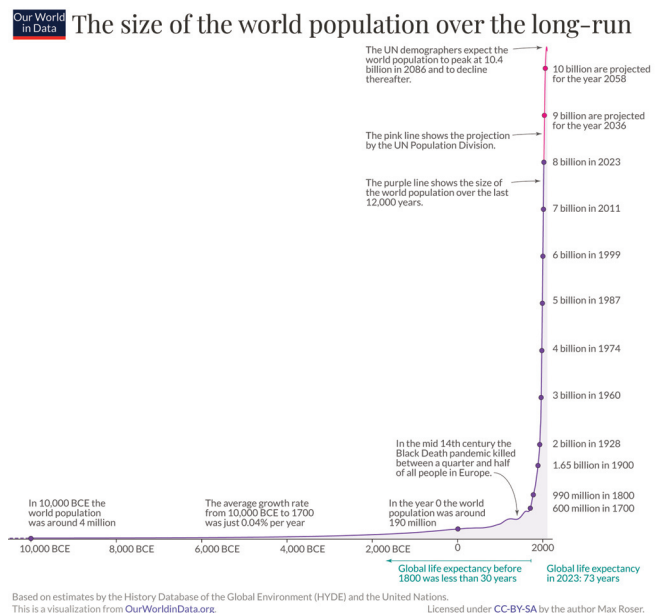
Caring about biodiversity, about our shared Earth, and living our love for the planet and all beings needs to be part of our everyday lives – and it can be. A crucial part we can change is the part that's on our plates.

We may not think what we do with a pig or chicken or cow matters to a bear, eagle or butterfly – or a tree, a family of frogs, a whale, or the reeds in a marsh. But every action we take adds up.

Few human activities have had as extensive and devastating an impact as animal agriculture. We breed over 70 billion farmed land animals, and farm and catch trillions of fish each year. Unnecessarily. We don't need animal products for health – in fact, many chronic health issues can be improved or

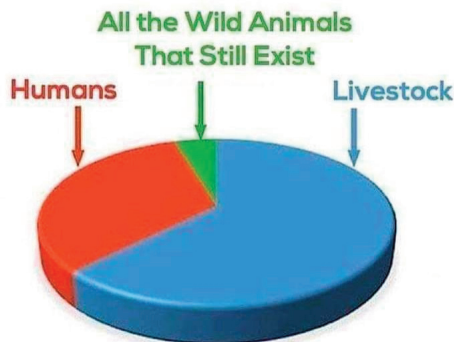
remedied on a whole-foods plant-based diet. Habit and tradition are powerful, but if we allow them to define us, we do everyone a grave disservice.

Since our human population has increased exponentially in the past two hundred years; is 8.2 billion now, and on track to reach 10 billion by the year 2058; and our collective appetite for eating other animals and their secretions has increased, the impact of these population explosions is and will be a significant part of our downfall, and the downfall of our wild friends. Scientists are clear – that downfall may eventually include extinction.



To put our impact on biodiversity in perspective, consider the biomass or weight of the species on the planet. Studies tell us that the biomass of birds is about 70% farmed, and 30% wild. It's even more stark for mammals, with more than 30% of the biomass made up of humans, more than 60% farmed animals, and just 4% wild – everyone from mice to elephants. We did this. We're *doing this*.

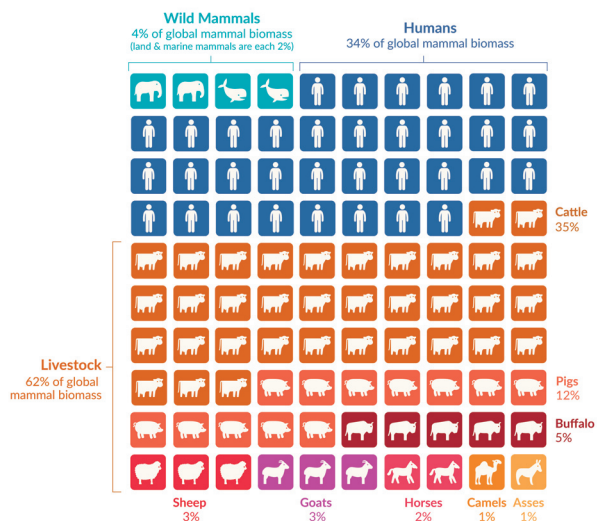
BIOMASS OF ALL THE LAND MAMMALS ON EARTH



Source: Kalahari Lion Research, based on data from *Harvesting the Biosphere: What We Have Taken From Nature* (MIT Press, 2015) by Vaclav Smil.

Distribution of mammals on Earth

Mammal biomass is measured in tonnes of carbon, and is shown for the year 2015. Each square corresponds to 1% of global mammal biomass.



Note: An estimate for pets has been included in the total biomass figures, but is not shown on the visualization because it makes up less than 1% of the total.

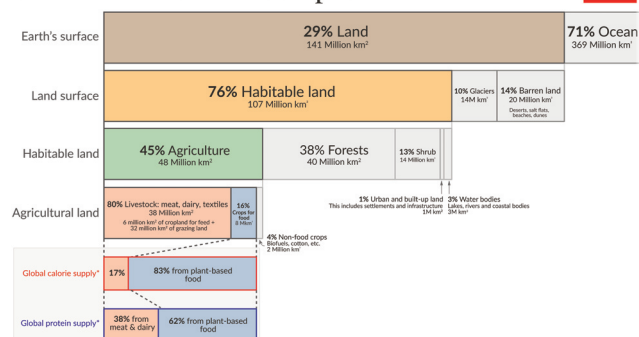
OurWorldinData.org — Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

Licensed under CC-BY by the authors Hannah Ritchie and Klara Auerbach.

Farmers, ranchers and governments also deliberately kill wild animals to protect 'livestock.' In the U.S., hundreds of thousands of wild animals are killed yearly to protect farmed animals. In some parts of Canada people are *paid* for the wild predators they kill, and it's legal in some provinces to kill any animal on your property causing damage.

We're using nearly half of the habitable land on Earth for agriculture, according to the Oxford Food Study, the most extensive study of our food system ever undertaken. More than 80% of that farmland is for grazing animals and raising food for them, though they return just 17% of the calories we consume. If we stopped farming animals, we could re-wild three quarters of farmland.

Global land use for food production



*Includes fish and seafood from aquaculture production, which uses land for feed. If wild fish catch is also included, animal products would provide 18% of calories and 40% of protein. Data source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Ploren and Nemecek (2018). OurWorldinData.org — Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

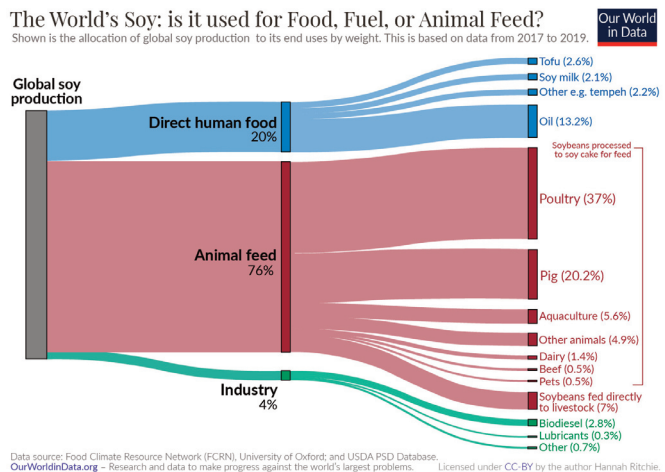
Licensed under CC-BY by the authors Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser (September 2023).

New farmland comes from our ever-dwindling wild places – forests, wild grasslands and marshes. So when we eat animal products, we're displacing wild animals and birds and insects. As our population increases, we'll need more food, and lose more forests. We lose around 10 million hectares yearly – about the size of Ontario – of forests to various industries. Since trees sink / absorb carbon for us, losing them is yet another senseless element of this absurdity.

Animals aren't net producers of food – how could they be if they're eating food for months or years

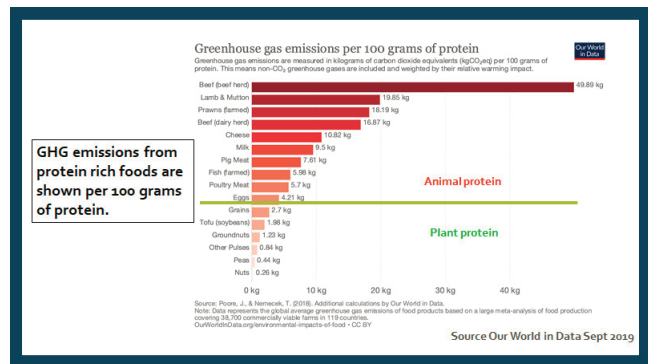
before becoming food? When we eat animal products, we’re *throwing away* several plates of food. And while we’re feeding more than 70 billion land animals each year, and 100 billion farmed fish, 9 million humans die of starvation. That’s more people than live in Greater Toronto.

Cows consume over 30 kilos of feed for every kilo of edible food produced, and release over 200 billion pounds of methane yearly. Methane heats the planet up to 100 times faster than CO2. Even the most ‘efficient’ animals eat several times more food than they produce – and I beg you to question whether chickens, whose excrement produces nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas that heats the planet several hundred times faster than CO2, could reasonably be considered ‘better.’








Methane dissipates about ten times faster than CO2; since about 40% of methane is human-caused, cutting out much of the agriculturally-produced methane would decrease our warming more quickly than many other routes.

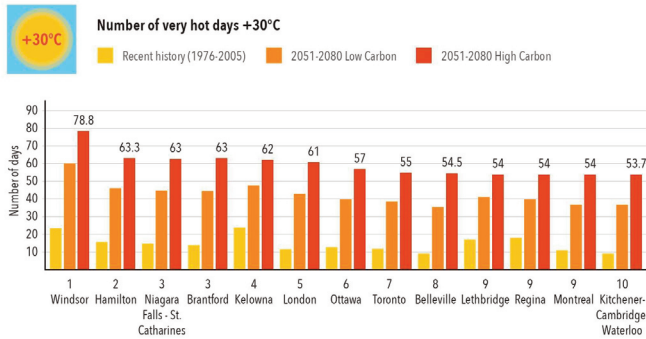
The UN says animal agriculture creates as much GHG emissions as all transportation, so animal-derived food is also contributing to the heating of our planet – for everyone, whether or not they can access shade or air conditioning. We’re also heating the world for wild creatures whose homes are becoming unlivable. Migrations are already taking place from uninhabitable places, or places where food sources have disappeared. Because of our actions.



Nearly every year is deemed the ‘hottest on record,’ and this year was the first in my 60+ years that I remember hearing of wildfire risk in Southern Ontario. Most of the hottest places in Canada are in Southern Ontario. A common myth is that we aren’t creating the warming, but Canada’s per capita emissions are among the world’s highest. And did you know that Canada is heating at twice the global average? Should we wait for someone else to change first?

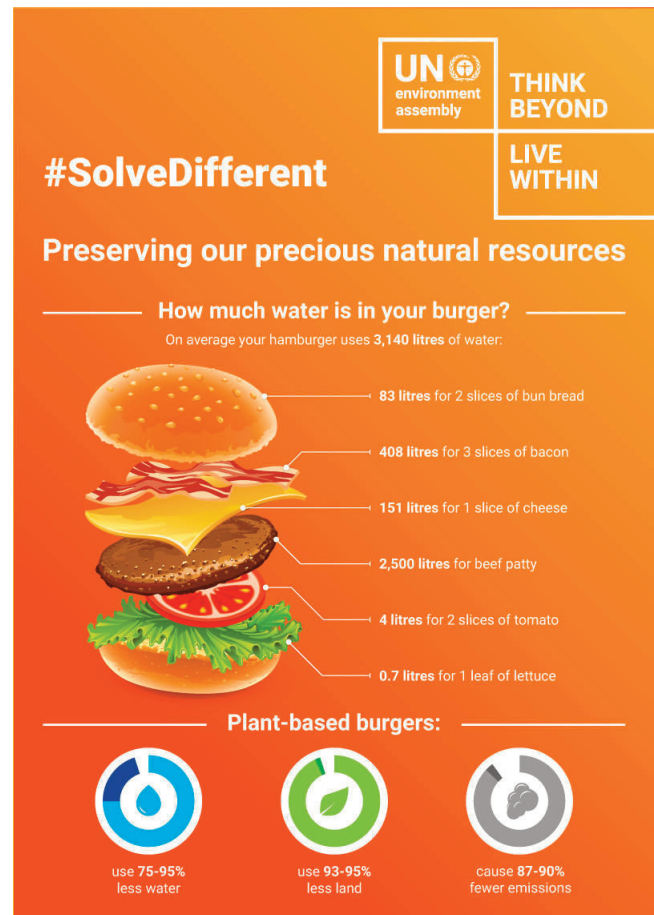
Efficiencies of animal-derived food production ^a					
	 milk	 eggs	 chicken	 pork	 beef
feed conversion (kg of feed / kg of edible weight)	0.7	4.2	4.2	10.7	31.7
protein content (% edible weight)	3.5	13	20	14	15
protein conversion efficiency (%)	40	30	25	13	5

The Intact Centre at the University of Waterloo



If planetary heating seems abstract, remember breathing wildfire smoke, and think of wild animals breathing it. Think of those communities that are burning. Imagine your family and pets fleeing a burning building, or being evacuated because of fire. I started doing climate work after watching BC burning. I've since watched my own home being destroyed by fire, losing my home and community in one day, and didn't know for days if my cats had made it out. I saw our plum tree, once as tall as the building, broken and mangled amidst the rubble of red bricks, grey-green shingles, and twisted bits of balconies, with no more springs in our future where she'd bless me with her fluffy white blossoms. She was just one tree, but one I knew and loved. Fire and its losses aren't abstract to me anymore.

In addition to land and GHGs, we must consider fresh water depletion. Hard to imagine fresh water as finite when surrounded by the Great Lakes, unless we've watched a stream or swamp dry up, and the birds and frogs disappearing, as they did from my sister's pond in the Gatineaus., Whether destined to be eaten by us or animals, crops require water. And water is needed for drinking, cleaning, and for processing the dead bodies in animal agriculture. The UN Environment Programme tells us 2,500 liters of water is required to produce one hamburger patty – *just the patty*. We're allowing this to happen, paying for this, while people and wild animals go thirsty.



There are also unimaginable amounts of water needed to put out fires. I watched water being poured on my building for 8 numbing hours. I stood by a lake in the wilds of BC watching planes scooping enormous buckets of water for a forest fire, breathed the smoke, and waited to see if we'd be evacuated.

I'm cognizant, too, of the huge quantities of chemicals – poisons – used to put out fires that further damage the animals' homes.

You may remember Walkerton, Ontario, where thousands became ill and some died because of the contamination of their water supply from cows raised nearby. Farms are (usually) fined but rarely shut down for contaminating streams and waterways. And they have a lot of waste to deal with

– the average dairy cow produces 63 kilos of waste per day; the average human weighs 62 kilos.

Our oceans and waterways are full of wild friends too. In commercial fishing, huge trawlers pull massive nets across ocean floors; they destroy coral – living beings many sea creatures depend on – and much of the ecosystem. The UN says 1 in 3 fish are thrown back as ‘bycatch,’ or unintended catch; these fish generally die. Animal agriculture is also a leading cause of ocean dead zones (areas where most organisms cannot survive, some larger than PEI), and water pollution.

Where could ‘sustainable’ fish possibly come from? Do you believe we can take trillions of fish from oceans and waterways and have fish recover? And as our human population grows, what will that mean for them?

Farmed fish aren’t a good solution for anyone but those who sell or eat them – wild fish are killed from the chemicals and antibiotics used in fish farming.

Fishing also takes the lives of the sea animals and birds whose lives we’ve been taught matter more than fish. Lost or intentionally abandoned fishing nets, ‘ghost’ nets, kill millions of sea birds, turtles, seals, dolphins, etc. And if we continue taking trillions of fish from the oceans every year, what will the wild birds and whales eat? The solution for some is to kill off the animals eating the fish humans want for themselves – ‘culling’ seals and sea lions etc for fishing.

The multi-trillion-dollar meat industry has made many believe that raising animals in ‘holistic’ or ‘regenerative’ grazing systems will solve all our problems, but this is more industry greenwashing. It makes people feel comfortable eating meat, right? Raising animals this way is nicer for animals, but takes at least twice the land – land that cannot but be taken from the habitat of wild animals. Since

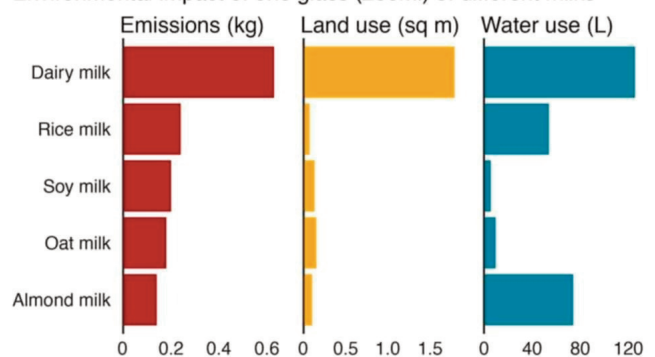
most farmed animals (99% in the U.S., per the USDA) live in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (factory farms), and we’re using more than 80% of agricultural land for animals and nearly half the habitable land for agriculture – how could it possibly make sense to raise even a fraction of animals in any free-range system on our finite planet?

There is some ability for the soil in these systems to sink or absorb carbon, but the Oxford Food Study and others find that this is time-limited, lasting just ten years or so, whereas the animals emit methane as long as they’re on the land. They take longer to reach the weight of factory-farmed animals, so they’re emitting *more* methane over their lifetime.

I realize food is a touchy subject, but feel compelled to present the facts so people can make informed decisions. There are a tiny number of humans subsisting on the land, but most of us are eating animals for entertainment. If we don’t need to eat them it *is* about entertainment and pleasure, right? I’ve been vegan a dozen years, and there are people who’ve lived fifty-plus years – to over 100 – without animal products.

Which milk should I choose?

Environmental impact of one glass (200ml) of different milks



Source: Poore & Nemecek (2018), Science

BBC

The good news is we can make rapid change for everyone if we stop farming animals. Joseph Poore,

the lead researcher on the Oxford Food Study, says the single most impactful way an individual can make change for the planet is to move toward a plant-based diet.

I've revised this piece a dozen times, trying to find the words to inspire you to fight for what you love, who you love. I've cried, because reliving the fires always makes me cry, and because I realize I'm powerless without all of you carrying your own buckets, wielding your own words. I'll have to leave it to you to answer the larger questions for yourselves: What will inspire you to make change, and help others change? Make you fight the fires? Fight for our wild friends and our shared home?

Who do you love enough to make change for?



Monarch Butterfly Magic

by Pamela Gerrand

I have always been someone who feels most at home in a garden or a forest. The numinous beauty of nature, and her mysteries and magic have entranced me since I was a little girl. The magic of the seed that becomes a beautiful flower, the acorn that becomes the oak, and most incredibly, the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly. Metamorphosis is a process of invisible transformation, one that defies logic, and invites wonder and awe in children and adults alike.

Many years ago, when my children were in elementary school, their second grade teacher became my good friend. She had taught a unit on monarch butterflies in science class for years. She was in my garden one day and noticed we had milkweed growing in two different sections of the yard. In those days it was considered a noxious weed and homeowners were supposed to pull it from their yards. My friend knew that milkweed is the only food source for monarch butterflies. She said, "Let it grow, it's not harmful. And, you and the kids can look under the leaves for monarch caterpillar eggs in the summer." So, a summer project with my kids was hatched, pun intended!



We saw a few monarch butterflies flying through the garden in the beginning of July. As my friend had guided me, we lined up the milkweed leaves and looked underneath. To our surprise and delight, we found an egg. Then, the next night, a few more. It became our nightly 'treasure hunt' to look for the tiny, football shaped eggs (less than half the size of a grain of rice, we had to look carefully). The kids were entranced. Their dad built a butterfly enclosure with a wooden frame, screened walls and a removeable screened lid. As the tiny, wee baby caterpillars grew, the kids chose tender fresh milkweed to feed them every day. And every night, we cleaned the 'frass' (caterpillar poop) out of the bottom of the enclosure.

The kids became enthusiastic entomologists over the next few months. They were fascinated as the caterpillars chomped away on the milkweed and quickly grew into chubby caterpillars. Their favourite part of the process was watching the caterpillars crawl up to the top of the enclosure and spin a silk button to hang from (the cremaster). Their caterpillar buddies would hang in the shape of a 'J' for 12 – 24 hours and then the real 'monarch magic' would begin. As I became familiar with the process, I noticed that when the caterpillar was about to go into its chrysalis, their antennae would droop down limply. Soon after, the caterpillar would begin to wriggle and shrug off their striped 'jacket', almost as though they had been unzipped. This transforming creature twists and turns to release the outer layer of their 'skin' to reveal the glimmering, green chrysalis within.

The whole process takes about three minutes, and was captivating to my kids, who were seven and ten at the time. We kept the butterfly enclosure in the back porch, next to our kitchen.

When the kids were in school, some days I would go and peek to see what was happening in the 'monarch magic' world of the chrysalises. The first few times, I missed the big reveal. I would step into the kitchen to wash dishes and it would have happened in my absence. When the kids were home after school, they would spend hours watching to see the 'big moment' when the caterpillar would 'unzip' into their emerald chrysalis. I was happy they weren't spending their time watching TV! This Nature Channel was endlessly fascinating and had captured their imagination. They had to be patient once the chrysalis was formed, as it takes 10 – 18 days for the monarch butterfly to eclose. I'll never forget the joy on their faces when the first monarch eclosed from its chrysalis! It truly is pure magic.

The chrysalis turns black, and then transparent in the days prior to its emergence. The kids would watch patiently, and in the last stage they said it looked like a 'butterfly wrapped in saran wrap'! When the butterfly first slips out of the chrysalis, the

wings are very small and curled up, from being tightly packed inside the tiny chrysalis. They hang on the chrysalis casing, and gently swivel as they pump liquid from their thorax into their wings to 'inflate them'. They hang on the casing for five to ten minutes in this process of pumping liquid into the wings. The wings need to dry and harden before they can fly. This process usually takes several hours. I remember when the first butterflies were ready to be released, the kids let them climb onto their fingers, and they gently placed them on the hollyhock flowers just outside our porch door. The butterflies opened their wings in the warm sunshine, nectaring on the blossoms of the tall hollyhocks. Some of them stayed for an hour, others took flight right away. My kids Carly and Jared watched in delight as their butterfly friends, who had begun as tiny eggs, and then chubby caterpillars, flew up into the summer sky, a flash of bright orange and black in the glinting sun.

My kids are adults now, and after several summers of stewarding monarchs when they were young, I fell away from the practice. In the summer of 2020, when we were all staying closer to home during Covid restrictions, I wasn't travelling for work and was home in my garden more.

Early that July I noticed a monarch butterfly hovering above my milkweed patch. A mama monarch! And she was laying eggs! I found a few eggs that day, and several more that week. I found the old butterfly enclosure in the shed and cleaned it out. I was back in the game. I had so much fun watching the mama butterflies land on the milkweed, and then I would find the eggs.

I always wondered how the monarchs found my milkweed patch, tucked in my backyard, on a city street. When researching the monarch butterfly, I learned that a female monarch can smell milkweed from two miles away.

In the past five years, I have become an avid entomologist, and a passionate advocate for the protection of the monarch butterfly (an endangered species in Canada as of December 2023) and their habitat. Only three percent of monarchs in the wild survive from egg to caterpillar to butterfly. My friend who inspired me to steward the monarch butterflies encouraged me to join the Toronto Entomologists' Association, which I have done to properly follow the protocols of this process. Their organization ensures that 'backyard entomologists' raise no more than 100 butterflies in one season. It is also recommended to replicate the natural environment for the

insects, meaning not to have your habitat or enclosure indoors with artificial light and heating/cooling. I keep my enclosure in the back porch, so the temperature is very close to the outdoor environment, and the windows all around allow for the shift in daylight to evening light, an important cue in their development.

Over the years, I have learned that whole process fluctuates depending on the weather and temperature. The warmer the environment, the faster the eggs and caterpillars mature, and the more quickly the butterfly emerges. When the temperature dips, this slows the process. This year, we had a cold spell towards the end of August and four of my chrysalises took 21 days to eclose. Last year I had 93 butterflies eclose, and this year it will be closer to 75. Many people who raise monarchs reported more deaths in caterpillars (a certain percentage simply don't thrive, as would happen in the wild) this year. The spraying of pesticides is very harmful to these delicate insects, and it has sadly become more widespread, even with research showing the harm of these chemicals to humans, animals insects and our environment.

Every morning in the summer, I can't wait to wake up and feed my 'babies'. It is so fascinating

and fulfilling to witness the monarch in its many stages of growth. These past few summers, at the height of the season, it takes me about two hours to clean the enclosure and feed the caterpillars in their various stages. I have 'nurseries', smaller containers that I use for the tiny newborn caterpillars, and medium size containers for the bigger ones. It has become such a passion that I don't mind cleaning up the frass and tending to the caterpillars when they are in their big growth spurt (more leaves, more poop!).

This summer, my husband Stephen built me a beautiful new monarch butterfly enclosure with twice the space and a hinged door, as well as a removeable lid. It's been fun to evolve as a 'monarch mama' over the years.

I am passionate about being in service to these beautiful winged creatures, and for every monarch butterfly I release in my backyard, I send a thousand prayers that this species thrives and is around for generations to come for children and adults to experience and enjoy.

It has been quite the science project to raise, steward and protect these monarch butterflies. But more than that, it has been a gateway to the ineffable, a spiritual experience for me. I have always felt there is a profound connection between winged creatures and our divine nature. I see 'signs' in red cardinals and dragonflies and butterflies. The monarch butterfly is a symbol of resilience and hope. Many people feel a connection to a loved one that



has passed away when they happen to see a monarch butterfly in a special moment.

My beloved mama Ella passed from this realm on July 31st this year. The day before she passed away we had a tender morning sharing stories and saying all that was in our hearts. Ella was very present that day. It was as though the vault of her heart had opened wide and she was transparent, a prism catching the light to cast her loving gaze on each one of us. I had some time to talk with her one on one. I asked her, "Mom, I'm going to be looking for you, watching out for a message, a sign. How will you come to me?" She said simply, "A butterfly, a monarch butterfly. I'll be the first one you see." She then reminded

me that when my big sister died long ago when she was 22, Ella said Ruth came to her as a monarch butterfly. She said they didn't see many monarch butterflies in Saskatchewan, but when she did, she felt Ruth's spirit.

The day before my mama died, my husband Stephen (who was at home looking after the monarchs for me) said that two chrysalises were dark, looking ready to emerge. Just a few hours after my beautiful mama Ella left this world and got her wings, two glorious monarch butterflies emerged from their chrysalises. Both females. I gasped and then smiled when his text came through with photos of the two female monarchs. My mama Ella

and my sister Ruthie. Stephen opened the enclosure door to let them fly free, and he said one of them stayed on his hand for quite a while. Ella's 'sign' came through loud and clear, beyond space and time, from Stephen's hand to my heart and mind.

Maybe that's why in the past few years, I've been drawn to return to raising monarch butterflies again. To be a part of a magnificent process of magical metamorphosis. To slow down and adopt the pace of nature, and embody the patience and faith that grows all good things. To be as a child again, innocent and wise. To realize that we really never die, we just change form.

To catch a glimpse of eternity.



Care and Compassion: A Coyote Love Story

by David Rankine

Although I have been studying the same pack of coyotes for over five years, I have to admit that at the start, I knew very little about them and what I did know was, like for many people, based on rumours and Warner Brothers cartoons. In the early phases of my study, I saw them as elusive, dark, mysterious and following the First Nations traditions, tricksters. Well, I learned that yes, they were elusive (unless they felt comfortable enough to reveal themselves), mysterious and above all tricksters in their own often humorous way. But I also learned that they are devoted to their young and to their mates and that they have a rich social and spiritual life. The pack is everything to them and they devote a lot of time to simple play and howling – activities that bind them together.

The coyotes' connection to the land they occupy (usually 25 square kilometres per pack) is intimate as is their connection to the Sun, Moon and other planets that wheel across the sky and guide their movements...but that is whole another story (and article).

Over the time of my study, I have managed to build up a relationship with this one pack and there is one thing, I am sure of and that is that these marvelously intelligent wild dogs are sentient. They reason, teach, play and solve problems. They trust me – enough to reveal themselves to me on many occasions, sometimes even coming close enough to brush up against me. I am sure they have a name for me- something like “white bear walking.”

These coyotes are sentient AND civilized – in their own unique way and display ‘good mammalian behaviour’ – the kind of which would put many humans to shame. The best example of this was provided early on by two coyotes, a light grey female I named Windsprinter and her mate – a black coyote that I named Flying Cloud. I was curious about them because they always showed up on my trail cameras walking slowly side by side, instead of in the usual single file trot of most coyotes. This presented a mystery.

I came upon Windsprinter a number of times. She was always standing by herself and when she did see me, she simply walked away. She did not run. I thought that this was because she did not fear me. I came to realize that it was because she could no longer physically run. She was not even capable of a trot, and this was because she had been shot by hunters a few months before I started my study.

I always ask residents of the area that I do my study in if they see any coyotes. The answer is always yes, and they enjoy their presence as they keep the local rodent population under control (a major part of their diet). Many locals spoke of the big black coyote and the light grey one they called “Limpy.” They also told me the tale of how hunters arrived one day and shot and killed three others coyotes. Windsprinter survived. She was badly wounded enough that she could not hunt for herself, so her mate, Flying Cloud hunted for her, for four years!



Many people speak of the law of the jungle and “survival of the fittest,” but these beliefs are based on ignorance and a misunderstanding of nature. Charles Darwin came to understand at the end of his life, that “survival of the collective” was for more important and here I was seeing it in action with these two coyotes. Here I was seeing the “love bond” between mates being tested, and they scored very well.

Through four long and hard winters, Flying Cloud hunted for his mate. He fed her. He could easily have left her to die of her injury and subsequent starvation, but he did not. He doubled his hunting efforts and kept her fed. This compassion, this care for another was also exhibited by a young white female who joined the pair and helped to hunt for Windsprinter in the final year of her life. A pair of coyotes are far more efficient at hunting than one, so Whitey’s (the younger female) inclusion was a great help to Flying Cloud.

This old, injured she-coyote was important enough to the pack and to her mate, to keep alive for as long as possible. Isn’t that what a good mammal is supposed to do? Is that not what some humans are still struggling to enforce with other humans? Why is there still a debate about this? It seems the coyotes have figured it out. No coyote is left behind!

Not only did Flying Cloud keep Windsprinter fed but he walked with her, shoulder to shoulder – beside her, guiding her along and offering support. This became a habit and when Windsprinter finally passed away in June of 2024, Whitey started to walk side by side with Flying Cloud... maintaining a behaviour that was already established. By the Fall of 2024 it was obvious that Whitey was now bounded to Flying Cloud and in the spring of 2025, she gave birth to her first litter, containing a light grey pup and a black one!

Eastern coyotes establish a love bond by the time they are a year (or so) old. They will hunt with their mate even though they may never “mate” to produce offspring. Only one female (the leader or alpha of the pack) in each pack will mate and birth one litter of pups per year. The rest of the pack- all the aunts and uncles and cousins, share in care-taking duties, making sure that above all, the pups must survive. This concentrates effort, makes pup-rearing easier and ensure that they keep their numbers down so that they do not put undue pressure on their food sources.

I am not sure if Windsprinter and Flying Cloud mated to produce a litter, but I am sure that the Windsprinter’s sister Brindle was den-mother twice. She passed a few months before Windsprinter and I found her body lying on the shore of Lake Huron, as if she had crawled out for one last look at the moon. I have found other dead coyotes similarly

close to the lake. I wonder if this is part of their spiritual life? A coyote can get a clear look at all the planets and moon that they use for navigation. Perhaps they seek to join the moon to see where it goes to hunt?

As we have seen, coyotes know love. I have seen them problem solving and collecting toys (sunglasses, pop cans, shoes and stolen dog toys). I have seen where they excitedly greet other and where they joyfully wrestle and toss sticks to each other. I have heard and seen where they do their howls, letting other packs know of their presence and above all for the sheer joy of being alive and with their loved ones. These oft- maligned and misunderstood animals are indeed sentient. They may not build cities or make tools, but they know how to build community, and they know how to take care of each other. They deserve our respect as does every other animal or human.



The Coywolf

by Honey Novick

Coywolf is

You, me, Canadian, hybrid,
underrated, a real thing, google it

one hot, dark night appearing before me
alone, on the road of a Toronto street
a coywolf
larger than a coyote, smaller than a grey wolf
staring at each other, in surprise and wonder
me, protected in a car, it, fearless
sauntered off into the bushes

coywolf, to me, is a mystical emissary
reminding me to stop,
become aware of other living forces like
hybrids
in this world there are many adaptable, cunning
creatures
survivors, smart and beautiful, not aggressive
like me and like me, from mid-eastern Canada

my ancestry is North African, European,
Palestinian, Israeli,
and now Canadian, Torontonion – Toronton-I-AM
I, too, am a hybrid

we are adaptable survivors,
bringing one culture and melding it to another

I had never seen, heard nor been aware of these
canid dogs
until one stopped me on the road
this one was beautiful, sleek,

emerging when needed, reminding me of all my
relations
adaptable
non-threatening

in a world of rapid change
almost invisible, mystical signs appear
reminding me
people see what we want to see
and be who we want to be
A FRIEND

but not being too friendly with a coywolf



World Animal Day 2025

the day in pictures



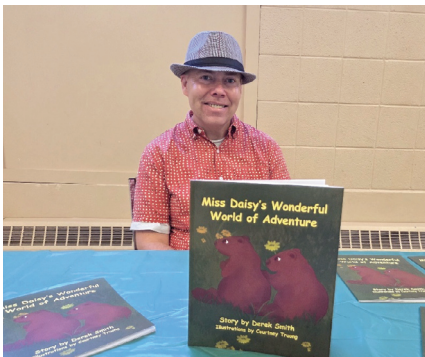
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15

1. All set up!
2. One Thousand Trees - Lisa Browning
3. Collage and Colouring Table - Courtney and Fiona Truong
4. Derek Smith, Author, *Miss Daisy's Wonderful World of Adventure*
5. Judi Morris, Author, *Willing Jumper*
6. Heidi Sydor, Author, *Izzy is Busy*
7. Brenda's Pet Creations - Brenda Brown
8. Season Charms and Gifts - Lisa Murray
9. Sparkles with Diamonds - Sarah Christensen
10. Lillustrations - Lillian Szpeflicki
11. Tumblewood Canine - Kim French
12. Julianna van Adrichem - Conservation and Advocacy
13. Waterloo Region Climate Initiatives - Mo Markham
14. Rain Forest Jewelry Collection - Patty Cuthbert
15. The Benjamin Project - Malcolm Bernstein (event sponsor)



Special guests Izzy (top)
and Tickle (bottom)



THANKS TO GUELPH TODAY, OUR MEDIA SPONSOR

Why I Choose Positive Reinforcement Training

by Kim French

It's surprising how many dog trainers still rely on punishment-based methods, even in this modern era of science-backed animal behaviour. What's even more concerning is that some of these trainers refer to themselves as "relationship-based" or "balanced," when in reality, their methods often include tools and tactics that rely on pain, fear, or intimidation. While I wholeheartedly agree that building a strong relationship with your dog is essential for training success, it's important to ask your-self: *What kind of relationship do you truly want to build with your dog?*

Do you want a relationship based on fear and compliance—or one based on trust, respect, and cooperation? The difference may seem subtle to some, but to your dog, it can mean everything. Dogs, like humans, thrive in environments where they feel safe and understood. A training method that uses physical punishment or intimidation can damage the very bond you're trying to create. Sure, a dog may "listen" under those conditions, but is it really listening—or just trying to avoid the discomfort or fear of being corrected?

We all get frustrated sometimes. It's completely human to feel overwhelmed when our dog doesn't respond the way we hoped. I understand the appeal of wanting quick fixes and instant results. It can be tempting to reach for a method that promises fast obedience, even if it means using harsh corrections. But we must ask ourselves: *At what cost?*

I choose to be a positive reinforcement trainer because I believe that dogs, just like people, should be motivated by a desire to cooperate—not a fear of punishment. When a dog listens to you because it wants to, not because it's afraid *not* to, that's when the true magic of training happens. It's not just about achieving a well-behaved dog; it's about cultivating a lifelong relationship rooted in mutual trust and respect.

Positive reinforcement training focuses on rewarding the behaviours you want to see more of. When a dog performs a desired action—whether it's sitting calmly, walking nicely on a leash, or coming when called—and that action is followed by something the dog enjoys (like a treat, praise, or play), the behaviour is more likely to be repeated. It's a simple yet incredibly powerful concept rooted in behavioural science.

Yes, this approach may require more time and patience, especially at the beginning. It demands consistency and a clear understanding of your dog's capabilities, so you can avoid frustration and adjust your training goals accordingly. However, the benefits are well worth the effort. Dogs trained with positive reinforcement tend to be more confident and eager learners. They're not afraid to try new things and are far less likely to develop behavioural issues related to fear, anxiety, or aggression.

Contrast that with punishment-based methods, which often suppress behaviour without truly



addressing the underlying cause. A dog may stop barking after being yelled at or jerked on a leash—but is the behaviour *really* resolved, or has the dog just learned to avoid showing the behaviour out of fear? Often, these suppressed behaviours resurface later in more severe or unpredictable ways. Fear-based training can erode trust and even increase the risk of reactivity or aggression.

Setting our dogs up for success should be the foundation of any training approach. This means creating environments where they can make good choices and rewarding those choices consistently. It also means being proactive—anticipating challenges and teaching alternatives before problems arise. Instead of punishing unwanted behaviours after they happen, we can focus on teaching our dogs what we *do* want them to do.

This shift in mindset—from reacting to mistakes to reinforcing successes—has a profound impact on the human-dog relationship. It builds a partnership rather than a power dynamic. It encourages communication rather than control. And perhaps

most importantly, it fosters a deep sense of mutual trust.

At the end of the day, our dogs are not robots. They're living, feeling beings who look to us for guidance, comfort, and companionship. The way we choose to train them reflects the values we hold about relationships in general—whether those relationships are with animals or with people. Do we lead with compassion, patience, and empathy? Or do we rely on force, fear, and domination?

The choice is ours, and it matters.

By choosing positive reinforcement, we're not just teaching our dogs how to behave—we're showing them that they are safe with us, that they can trust us, and that they are valued members of our families. That kind of relationship takes time, but it's worth every moment. In the end, the goal isn't just obedience—it's connection. And there's nothing more rewarding than that.

Izzy the Therapy Dog: A Warm Hug in Fur

by Heidi Sydor

How one Cockapoo is changing lives with kindness, cuddles, and community care

I knew there was something special about Izzy the day we brought her home as a puppy. Although she bounced around, constantly played, and chewed everything in sight, her gentle eyes and calm demeanor caught my attention. She quickly became a part of our family, and we fell in love with her charm.



My husband, our two children, and I began training her with simple commands. She quickly learned to sit, lie down, stay, jump, twirl, and give kisses.

Cockapoos—a cross between Cocker Spaniels and Poodles—are known for their intelligence, affectionate nature, and hypoallergenic coats, all traits that make them ideal therapy dogs. We decided to get started with this journey.

At one year old, Izzy passed her therapy dog certification with flying colours—not because she followed every command perfectly, but because of her friendly and affectionate personality. Her ability to read people, sense emotions, and respond with gentleness and care seemed to come naturally. And so began Izzy’s new role: greeting people with a wagging tail, a smiling face, and a gentle snuggle. She earned a red bandana and a special pin to let people know she is a community therapy dog. Shortly after, Izzy completed her second therapy dog certification allowing her to visit with both adults and children. Izzy started her volunteer role visiting patients in a hospital with me as her handler. I worried she wouldn’t do well, but when the first patient reached out with trembling hands and whispered, “You’re just what I needed,” I knew she belonged. Izzy isn’t just a dog—she’s a quiet kind of magic. The kind that changes everything just by being there.

I noticed right away how much warmth she offered when visiting patients in their rooms—providing friendship, companionship, and helping to reduce isolation and loneliness. Time with Izzy helped patients focus on their health and recovery by improving their mental and physical well-being. Nurses and doctors noticed Izzy too, often pausing for a break during their busy day. It was clear that Izzy brought something special, evident in the smiles on people’s faces and the joy she added to their day.

Now, at four years old, Izzy can be found visiting many different places in her community. She sits

with children while they read to her at school, visits classrooms where students gather around her in a circle, cuddles with those studying at the library during exam time and she shows off her tricks at summer camps. Young people enjoy spending time with Izzy because she offers a calm space—even in chaotic environments. She provides connection and non-judgmental interactions. She is a friend to all. Izzy seems to sense when someone is anxious, sad, or overwhelmed, and she responds with quiet companionship or playful distraction. She is patient, kind, and a wonderful listener.



Izzy also visits families residing in shelters and adults in early recovery from substance use. She offers comfort, attention, and companionship—helping people feel loved and supported.

Lastly, Izzy enjoys visiting elderly residents in retirement homes. She walks the halls and visits those who invite her into their space. Residents

smile and light up when they see her. Most know her by name and look forward to her visits.

Unlike service dogs, therapy dogs don't perform specific tasks for one person. Instead, they interact with many individuals of all ages and walks of life—uplifting spirits, reducing stress, increasing energy, and offering unconditional love. These interactions help develop empathy and foster healthy relationships. For most people, being around a dog is joyful and comforting. It simply feels good. Therapy dogs bring fun and engaging energy to any environment.

Izzy is truly special. She always seems to know just what to do—when to cuddle, when to play, and when to simply sit and stay. I would best describe Izzy as a warm hug in fur. Cuddling with her on my lap, feeling the warmth of her body and hearing the steady rhythm of her breath, is truly one of the most calming experiences in my day. Her eyes, looking into mine, always tell me that she understands me—and that she cares.

Although she is a friend to everyone, Izzy is my best friend. She has taught me so much about the power of simple acts of kindness and the importance of community. She gives so much of herself and asks for so little in return. She is a true example of unconditional love.

While Izzy looks forward to visiting friends in her community, she also cherishes time with us, her family. She can often be found snuggled in her cozy bed or chewing on her favourite bone. She loves running at the park and playing fetch. She'll do anything for a treat or belly rubs—but she's happiest when she's busy. And Izzy sure is busy, making a difference in the world one visit at a time.

To learn more about Izzy's adventures, visit izzyisbusy.ca or read about her in a new series of 6 books available for purchase. (See page 31.)



Spotlight on Lions Foundation Guide Dogs

(The information below has been reprinted with permission from The Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides media kit. For more information visit www.dogguides.com.)

Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides (LFCDG) is a national charity whose mission is to empower Canadians with disabilities to navigate their world with confidence and independence by providing Dog Guides at no cost to them and supporting each pair in their journey together. To date, LFCDG has matched more than 3,000 Canadians living with a disability to a Dog Guide. The foundation receives zero government funding, and relies on support from service clubs, corporations, foundations and individuals from across the country in order to continue to meet its mission.

Dog Guide Program Information

Each program trains Dog Guides to meet the different needs of people with various disabilities. Breeds commonly used are Labrador Retrievers and Standard Poodles (for people who are allergic to dogs) and Golden Retrievers. The training for a Dog Guide is an intensive four to eight month period, training one-on-one with a qualified Instructor. Once fully trained, the dog is matched with a client who spends approximately one to three weeks at the Oakville training facility, learning how to handle, trust and bond with their new Dog Guide. Following is a summary of the types of dogs trained/provided by The Lions Foundation:

1. CANINE VISION

Canine Vision Dog Guides assist Canadians (14+ years) who are blind or visually impaired. These Dog Guides are trained to safely navigate obstacles typically found on daily routes.

2. HEARING

Hearing Dog Guides assist Canadians (16+ years) who are deaf or hard of hearing, and are unable to detect important sounds. These Dog Guides have been taught to distinguish specific sounds, and alert their handler.

3. AUTISM ASSISTANCE

Autism Assistance Dog Guides assist children (ages 3-12) on the autism spectrum. These Dog Guides provide safety, companionship and unconditional love.

4. SERVICE

Service Dog Guides assist Canadians (14+ years) who have a physical or medical disability. These Dog Guides are trained to retrieve objects, open/close doors and appliances, and get help by barking or activating an alert system.

5. SEIZURE RESPONSE

Seizure Response Dog Guides assist Canadians (16+ years) diagnosed with intractable epilepsy. These Dog Guides are trained to bark for help or activate an alert system in the event of a seizure.

6. DIABETES ALERT

Diabetes Alert Dog Guides assist Canadians (16+ years) who have type 1 diabetes with hypoglycemic unawareness. They are trained to detect sudden drops in their handler's blood sugar, and alert them.

7. FACILITY SUPPORT

Facility Support dogs are for professional agencies that assist individuals in traumatic situations. These dogs are trained to provide on-scene support when requested to those most vulnerable in the community.



**Your Urgent
Donation
is Needed!**

*Our Dogs are
Ready to Work.
But our Future
is in Jeopardy.*

Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides is launching the most urgent fundraising campaign in its history to address a \$20 million shortfall that has paused construction on Canada's largest Dog Guide training school and put the organization's future at risk.

Donations can be made at: www.dogguides.com

Tuffet

an interpretation by Jane Bell

Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet eating her curds and whey,
There came a great spider who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet,

customarily a nice little playmate to Jack and Jill and habitually kind to Mary's lamb and reputedly well-mannered with the other Jacks Horner and Sprat and his wife for whom Time schedules a massive coronary

but with this little hairy creature who's not at all great her senses in a slivered split-second recall such primal creeping that in the next slice of that same second liquid fear splashes through her common sense and magmas of terror flood her fingers

dropping the bowl splaying cheesy mush across the tiles

*her hands grab tuffet two opposable thumbs and eight fingers clutch tuffet's legs
slamming it down crashing down*

*the spider flees this way and that way from this monster oh the three blind mice
know all about such heinous fury trying to hide looking for a crack in the corner a hole anything anything
at all to survive with his life intact*

his dear life his precious life

*escaping slam after slam until the final so perfectly angled expels from one segment his viscera sideways
from its skin with such force the guts hit the wall far,*

Away.



Bandit

by Cynthia Bragg

Years ago a young man about 5 years old named Andy sagely predicted that I would never marry but would have many cats in my life. His unexplained prescience was remarkably accurate. My oldest cat named Annie lived to be 24. All my cats have freely gone outside but I supervised and strictly interfered should they catch a bird. Greycat lived to be 18 and Riley, whom I'll introduce below, to 12. Bandit is curled up on my bed still alive and well. And I have never married and am now 79.

About fifteen years ago my neighbour across the back lane "ditched" two cats to fend for themselves. I used to see one of them running down the road with a mouse in his mouth. Riley, as I came to call him, had the habit of hanging out on my picnic table. As November became chillier the owners gave beautiful long haired Lucky to the humane society and I feared they would put her down. I could not stand the thought of them doing the same with Riley. I invited him into my house. Initially he hated to be confined and tried to find a window through which to escape, but eventually succumbed, although I never confined him to the indoors. He was free to go out. He was a very smart and vocal tabby with a voice like a Siamese. Over the years we became very close. He would meet me whenever I came home, jumping up to rub his arched back against me. But after about ten years he was unfortunately diagnosed with diabetes and kidney failure and stopped eating. A vet persuaded me to let him go. I have been unable to forgive myself for complying at that time. For at least two years I told my housemate whenever we came home from somewhere how much I missed him. Riley's absence left a big hole in my life and eventually I found

myself going to Petsmart to look at other cats available for adoption. Most were kittens and went to homes with children. But there was an older cat about 5 who had big green eyes. He had lost the tips of his ears and the end of his tail to necrosis from frostbite in North Bay and seemed very affectionate. He stole my heart. I brought him home and called him Bandit.

He disappeared in my house the first day but was found way behind a drawer under my bed. He hid under my green velvet couch in the living room for days and whenever he came out he would be very skittish and just sit and stare watching my every move. He started stretching right out long and letting my housemate, who loves animals, give him belly rubs. I have never seen a cat resist her approach. She seems to have a magic touch. Eventually he felt safe enough to mingle with us in the house.



Bandit is very sweet and affectionate. He puts his paws up on the edge of the kitchen table and turns his big pleading eyes on me and I can't resist. He loves those commercial pet snacks called Greenies and I find myself over and over throwing some up the staircase while he bounds up and down capturing them. It is our favourite game.

The traffic in front of my house has become terribly busy and I worry that if I let him out, Bandit will be hit. So far I have let him go out the back door to eat grass but he watches me closely and catches any momentary distraction on my part to bolt down the yard, especially to chase a squirrel, and disappear into the back lane. I walk up and down the lane calling, "Bandit, Bandit" over and over, but nothing works. And while I fret, he makes his way home when he is good and ready, sometimes hours later. This has become his pattern. He is boss.

But once he is home, I melt. I love him so much and he knows it. He is a purr machine while I rub under his chin and behind his ears. He often lies right beside me on the bed and we fall asleep side by side. After an escape attempt, he is tired and falls dead asleep but usually awakens at five a.m. and starts to walk up and down on the bed rubbing against me to try to get me up. After several minutes I give in and

go down to feed him. He has never been very keen on cat food so lately I have picked up raw chicken livers which he devours enthusiastically, and he is loving eating them raw. A true carnivore. He also loves sharing a can of rice pudding with me, eating mostly the creamy sauce off of my fingers. And occasionally he loves to eat a few pieces of old cheddar cheese.

I have to supervise him carefully when I open the back door as he is always on high alert watching for a chipmunk. He will always perk up and stay stark still if he spots a chipmunk or squirrel. Then he bolts and tears down the yard in chase. I don't think he has ever caught one but the squirrels sit on the fence squawking in protest and warning each other if he is outside.

At night Bandit sits on the windowsill of my open bedroom window and watches intently whatever is out there, which often includes many cars rushing past on Edinburgh Road. And sometimes he spots a dog being walked by its owner down the sidewalk and he stays focused until the two of them pass.

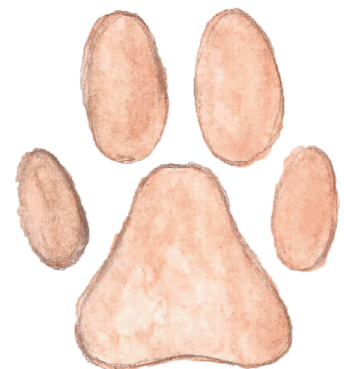
He is a very loving cat and he loves to be pet but what he mostly wants to do is go outside and have his own adventure. Staying inside would crush his spirit. That I can tell.

I know many people would tell me to keep him in for safety reasons and he would get used to it but I guess I love his freedom loving self and so risk letting him outside sometimes and trusting his highly intelligent and intuitive self to keep him safe.

The bottom line is I really love him and I guess if you love someone or something you stay open to learning what makes them happy and offers them a fulfilling life.

I hope Bandit has many years ahead of him. I worry that I will pass before him and he will not have a happy life. So I try to take care of both of us so we can enjoy each other now.

There is always more to learn about each other as there is in any relationship and God willing we will have years together before fate intervenes and takes one of us to the great beyond.



Tony Soprano by Diane Lyndon

Only just a bird you say...
I knew him from an egg!

He woke me from my sleep each day
With his happy little chirps.

"Hi pretty birdie he'd say to me
And "kisses" he would give.

My home is silenced now.



Wanted: provincial representatives for magazine production team



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- *interviewing*
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The Bookshelf

The following books (and calendar), all published by One Thousand Trees, are related to some of the articles in this issue, and are available from the One Thousand Trees online bookstore at www.onethousandtrees.com. Click on the QR codes for direct links.



Therapy dogs, service dogs, guide dogs, facility dogs ... there are so many different types of “working dogs” that it can get confusing! *Whose Paws Are These?* sheds some light on the situation by telling the story of five different working dogs, and the differences between them.

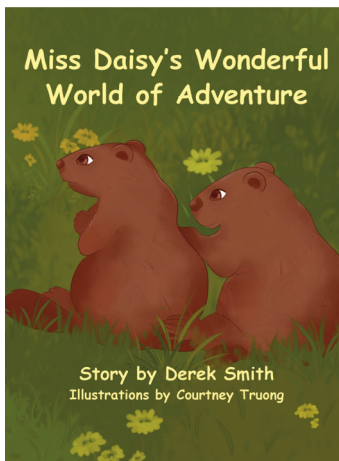


This 100% true story is for people who enjoy horse stories and reading about the relationship between a high-spirited, precocious equine and its owner, who knew precious little about horses. Breezy made up for his lack of conformation with his immense heart and will. He outperformed well put-together horses and many people's expectations. Breezy did not suffer fools—he knew who people were immediately and did his utmost to prove them both right and wrong. His tremendous will brought him through two serious accidents. If you threw your heart over a jump, his heart would take you over it—every time. It will make you laugh, cheer and cry.





Izzy is a therapy dog, a specially trained dog that helps people feel good. Together with her handler, Heidi, Izzy visits many people and places, to spread love and joy. There are six different books in the *Izzy is Busy* series, each telling tales about her adventures in various locations.



In the summer of 2023, a groundhog appeared at Derek Smith's patio door. Thus began a relationship that has lasted over two summers. Derek named the groundhog Miss Daisy, and he wrote this book after being inspired by that relationship. It is a story of the adventures that Miss Daisy and her babies have had while exploring and making new friends along the way! Through all these adventures, Miss Daisy's babies learn valuable lessons about listening to Mom's rules, as well as the joy of caring and sharing with others.



A Window to Your Soul



A Window to Your Soul features 12 stunning photographs of wildlife, also taken by Focus on Nature students. Again, we asked poets to select a photo by number only, and then write a poem in response. This book is the beautiful result.



Poetry and Photographs
inspired by our sentient friends

Benjamin's Building Blocks



You Can Make a Difference!

In 2023, Malcolm Bernstein, founder of The Benjamin Project and Lisa Browning, publisher at One Thousand Trees teamed up for a unique project in collaboration with elementary school-aged children, to produce books to raise awareness of specific animals, and to raise funds for animal welfare organizations. They published 5 books in their first year. By publishing *Benjamin's Building Blocks*, which talks about the project, their hope is to inspire groups of children across Canada to take part in this life-changing project.



The first in a series, *Did You Know?* features colouring pages of the following members of the animal kingdom: alpaca, beaver, butterfly, coyote, donkey, honey bee, horse, orangutan, rabbit, and turtle. Also included are fun facts about each featured animal, and a pages on which children can do their own drawings.



Do you have a story to tell?



ONE THOUSAND TREES

empowerment through storytelling and connection

For the Love of Animals a partnership in action



A collaborative project pairing elementary school aged students with a humane society or animal shelter in their area. Students are responsible for writing the content, and drawing accompanying illustrations. Books are published by Saplings (the children's publishing branch of One Thousand Trees) and made available for purchase, with all net proceeds going to the partnering humane society/shelter. In partnership with The Benjamin Project (www.thebenjaminproject.ca).

A unique opportunity for ...

- elementary school students
- home-schooled students
- groups (guides, scouts, 4H, etc)

Become a published author, and help animals and your community!



Want to get involved?

Have your teacher or group leader email lisa@onethousandtrees.com.

This month's contributors ...



Jane Bell (*Tuffet*)

Jane has taken several leaps in her life, from country to country (Peru to Canada to the U.S. to Turkiye and back) and through several careers (graphic designer, drama teacher, corporate training specialist, technical writer). She continues to explore writing, painting and drawing when she's not too tired from her day job as customer service rep extraordinaire. She lives in Waterloo, ON.



Cynthia Bragg (*Bandit*)

Cynthia is a retired school teacher, reflexologist and teacher of reflexology, and worked as a sales rep and manager in the health food industry for 22 years. She trained for 6 years as a medical herbalist with the School of Phytotherapy in England and she wrote for the Guelph Mercury for two years as part of their Community Editorial Board. She is passionate about the health and protection of all animals including wildlife. One of her greatest joys has been growing her own vegetable organically every year at Ignatius farm in Guelph.



Kim French (*Why I Choose Positive Reinforcement Training*)

Kim is the owner and head trainer at Tumblewood Canine, where she offers positive reinforcement group classes, private lessons, and behaviour consultations.

For more information or to contact Kim visit www.tumblewood.ca



Pamela Jane Gerrand (*Monarch Butterfly Magic*)

Pamela is an ardent and acclaimed poet, songwriter and spoken word artist. She has performed on stages across Canada and the U.S., and at festivals in the U.K., Sweden, France, Costa Rica and India. In October 2016, Pamela performed at the 1000 Goddesses Gathering in Washington, D.C. In May 2017, Pamela was a speaker at the Women Economic Forum in India, where she received the 'Iconic Woman Making A Difference In The World' award. Pamela's poems have been published in several magazines, including One Thousand Trees. She released her first collection of poetry in the fall of 2023, entitled *Wild Echo*. Pamela has a passion for nature and all sentient life. She has been raising monarch butterflies for over three decades, and revels in the magic of witnessing their metamorphosis. For more information visit www.pamelajanegerrand.com.



Diane Lyndon (*Tony Soprano*)

Diane is a storyteller. With Irish and Welsh in her bloodline and a maiden name of Bard, there was no escaping it. As a photojournalist, a reflexologist and a wedding officiant, Diane has access to many people and loves to seek out a good story. Diane's writing has also appeared in the 5th Sharing anthology, published by One Thousand Trees. A grandmother to six, she resides happily in a village called Frankford on the Trent River along with her lovebirds.



Mo Markham (*Fighting Fire with Love and Facts*)

Mo has been an activist since she staged her first protest in Grade 8. She's a main facilitator of Waterloo Region Climate Initiatives, a non-profit that focuses on education and activism around our food system and climate / environment. Mo created VegFests in Kitchener-Waterloo for 7 years; helped create the Waterloo Region Climate Collaborative, the Plant-Based Cities Movement, and other collectives; worked on local, provincial, federal and international climate, social justice and animal campaigns; has had articles and letters-to-the-editor published on a variety of issues relating to animal agriculture and climate; co-hosted a public radio show; and screened environmental and animal rights films for, and spoke at, universities and high schools around Southern Ontario. A writer and retired social worker with five plant-based cats, she's been active in women's, LGBTQ+, social justice, and environmental movements. She went vegan and began doing climate work 10 years ago after seeing the effects of climate in BC.



Honey Novick (*The Coywolf*)

Honey is a singer/songwriter, voice teacher and poet, and a member of the League of Canadian Poets, Writer's Union of Canada, and Poetry in Voice. She was nominated for Poet Laureate of the Province of Ontario, and her poetry was published by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. For more information visit www.honeynovick.com.



David Rankine (*Care and Compassion: A Coyote Love Story*)

Through his original music, art, writing and teaching, David explores the nature of creativity and its place in healing, and in the development of consciousness and search for self. He lives and works in rural Huron County and spends much of his time at Inverhuron, watching the ever-changing skies and lake. Over a period of 4 years, David has walked thousands of kilometres on coyote trails learning first hand about the behaviour and ways of the Two Bays coyote pack. Exciting face to face encounters, howls and many trail camera photos have led David to a greater understanding of himself as a human being and a deeper understanding of these magnificent creatures.



Michael Schram (*Luigi, Lost and Found*)

Michael is a Canadian and has lived in Taiwan for over 20 years. At 50+ he retains a spring in his step and a twinkle in his eye, by staying constantly curious and full of gratitude. An explorer who wears many hats: teacher & student, writer & reader, dad, entrepreneur, activist, philanthropist.... with a perpetual hunger for new knowledge, experiences, challenges, and adventures. A refined roughneck who often prefers the company of animals and nature.



Heidi Sydor (*Izzy the Therapy Dog: A Warm Hug in Fur*)

Heidi lives with her husband, two daughters and Izzy in Burlington, Ontario. She is a Child and Youth Counsellor who works in education. Always an animal lover, she dedicates much of her time volunteering at animal rescue shelters and animal sanctuaries. She loves her volunteer role with Izzy and feels very passionate about the support of therapy dogs.