

New Book Focuses on the Benefits of Therapy Dogs

Successful Tails, released last month, is a book about the benefits of therapy dogs.

Although author Patricia Wheeler had been a therapy dog handler for three years with her dog, Lawrence, the Livermore Lab, she was really struck at how beneficial his work was one day at the VA. A veteran, who would not leave his room on his own, said to Wheeler's dog, Lawrence, that his doctor had told him that he needed to walk to the nurses' station each day. As soon as Lawrence heard the word "walk," he was going to make sure that this veteran walked. And the veteran did, with Lawrence at his side, all the way to the nurses' station and back, for the first time.

Wheeler didn't think much of what happened until she saw the looks on the faces of staff members. Their jaws were dropped, their eyes were wide open, tears came down their cheeks. Lawrence seemed not only to know that this veteran could tack the walk, but also how to motivate him to do it and make sure he did it. This became the first story in Wheeler's

book.

The book also contains bios and photos of the 51 therapy dogs featured in the book, all certified by Valley Humane Society, and bios of the 46 handlers.

Upcoming book signings in the Tri-Valley include—

- Saturday, Nov. 10, 1:00 PM, Cooleykatz, 1959 Second Street, Livermore

- Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:00 AM, Towne Center Books, 555 Main Street, Pleasanton

She started collecting stories from other therapy dog handlers and testimonials about the benefits of the therapy dogs from veterans, residents, students, educators, librarians, staff, family members, civic leaders, and others. Some veterans wrote poems about the dogs. Wheeler also started collecting photos of the dogs at work.

Congressman Jerry McNerney wrote the Foreword for the book. Livermore Mayor John Marchand, authored the Foreword for the chapter on the VA.

Susy Flory, co-author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller, *Thunder Dog: The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and*



Pictured on the cover are Albert and a girl at Shepherd's Gate. He became a special friend to her.

the Triumph of Trust at Ground Zero, writes, "*Successful Tails* is a heartwarming collection of stories and photos of therapy dogs at work. I predict you will enjoy getting to know these extraordinary dogs and the people who love them and, perhaps, even fall in love with them. I know I did."

Congressman McNerney says, "The stories and testimonials contained in these



Pictured are Lawrence, the Livermore Lab, on the left, Patricia Wheeler, and Albert. Photo by Dawn Schubert

pages will open your eyes to the world of therapy dogs and how beneficial they can be for people. The services that therapy dogs provide are far-reaching and can be life-changing."

Livermore Mayor John Marchand writes, "The therapy dogs help us to see something other than just the world around us. They help all of us to see that, in this world, there is a gentler side. They help our veterans to navigate the dark land-

scapes, which are the memories that followed our service men and women home. These therapy dogs offer a world of uncompromising acceptance and affection, a silent understanding when someone looks into those big tender eyes."

The book covers facilities and programs throughout much of the East Bay. Livermore sites and programs include Camp Arroyo, Camp Erin, Emma C. Smith Elementary School,

Easy Living Care Home (five sites), LARPD's now closed Friendship Center, Livermore Manor (formerly Golden Manor, now closed), the Livermore Public Libraries (Civic Center and Rincon branch), Marilyn Avenue Elementary School, Shepherd's Gate, and the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (PAHCS) Livermore Division.

Pleasanton sites include Alisal School, The Parkview, and the Pleasanton Public Library. Other sites include CARH in Castro Valley, the Castro Valley Library, the Danville Library, Merrill Gardens in San Roman, the Orinda Library, and Los Perales Elementary School in Moraga.

The therapy dogs have also participated in many events which are covered in the book including numerous Welcome Home Celebrations for troops in 15 communities throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties; parades in Livermore and Pleasanton; concerts in the Sacramento area, San Francisco, and San Ramon; and Veterans Day ceremonies in Danville and Pleasanton.

The book is available from the publisher AuthorHouse (call 1-888-280-7713 or visit www.authorhouse.com), from local booksellers, and through online retailers. It is available in soft cover (ISBN 987-1-4772-6474-4), hard cover (ISBN 978-1-4772-6471-3), or as an electronic book (ISBN 978-1-4772-6475-1). For more information, visit www.phwheeler.com.

Wheeler says she hopes that the book sparks interest in therapy dog programs, both for sites and programs interested in offering therapy dogs for their clients, and for individuals who might want to be therapy dog handlers. "The book is a tribute to man's best friend and an unforgettable glimpse into to the lives these dogs have touched."

Ladies of the Poisoned Pen Present Program at Livermore Library

Authors Carole Price and Staci McLaughlin present their program *Ladies of the Poisoned Pen* at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 11, 2012 at the Livermore Public Library Civic Center, 1188 S. Livermore Avenue. The two authors will celebrate their debut novels, *Twisted Vines* and *Going Organic Can Kill You*.

There is no charge for this event. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Twisted Vines is the first book in Carole Price's *Shakespeare in the Vineyard* mystery series. It is inspired by Livermore and its local Shakespeare festival. Crime

Analyst Caitlyn Tilson Pepper inherits a vineyard and two Shakespearean theaters in a northern California town from a mysterious aunt and becomes a target for murder. Cait's investigation into the life and death of her aunt Tasha forces her down a road paved with familial lies, devastating secrets, and multiple murders. Marcus Singer, a convicted felon and also Tasha's secretary, and Rachel Cross, a neighbor and Shakespearean actress, resent Cait's inheritance, but with the help of Royal Tanner, a Navy SEAL, Cait is able to uncover the lies beneath the murders.

"Mystery writing has

been a labor of love since retiring from a national laboratory over ten years ago," says Carole. "In my research for my writing endeavors, I traveled to Martha's Vineyard, England, and Scotland, and for my new series I spent a considerable amount of time exploring Ashland, Oregon, home to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where I fell in love with the Bard. But with our very own Shakespeare festival and an exciting setting right here in Livermore, California, I only need to go as far as my own backyard to find inspiration for my novels."

Staci McLaughlin's cozy *Going Organic Can Kill You*

takes place at the O'Connell Organic Farm and Spa in the fictional town of Blossom Valley, CA. It features marketing maven Dana Lewis, former Blossom Valley resident and unapologetic junk food connoisseur—and soon to be sleuth. As Dana readjusts to life back home with her recently widowed mother, her latest career move isn't exactly a piece of cake. In fact, it's all tofu fish sticks, stuffed squash blossoms, and enough wheat grass shots to scream bloody murder—especially when Dana discovers the body of Maxwell Mendelsohn, Hollywood producer and opening weekend guest,

deader than a yoga corpse pose. While Dana pens the Spa's blog and balances the attentions of the local police and reporter Jason Forrester, her escalating job duties now include finding clues, motives and suspects.

Staci graduated from the California State University, East Bay before becoming a technical writer for a number of years. Now she is a stay-at-home mom and a cozy mystery writer in her spare time.

The Friends of the Livermore Library have underwritten this program as part of the Friends Authors and Arts Series. For additional events, go to www.livermorelibrary.net.