

# Animal **LIFE**

VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL



## Inside

Greyhounds find homes on the beach

Harkin's secret adoption agency is no secret any longer

Newfies... a whole herd of Newfies!



# AnimalLIFE

The two words “animal” and “life” share the “L” because—just like our pets—they are a seamless part of our lives.

## Celebrating the human-animal bond

**A**nimals are a wonderful part of our world and an important part of our lives. They teach us to warmly greet people we like, to be protective when needed and to be happy and enjoy the moment we have been given.

Companion animals enrich our lives and touch our souls. In the few months that I have been privileged to serve as the marketing and development officer for the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH), I have had opportunities few non-veterinarians ever do. I've hauled equipment around a zoo (on a blustery January day) as veterinarians transported a white tiger to the on-site hospital, hugged a new friend in the hospital lobby who trembled with relief when tests confirmed her cat was in remission and attended the wake for a friend's dog whose life was cut short by cancer.

It is because animals are a part of our lives that the VMTH magazine is named, “AnimaLife.” The two words “animal” and “life” share the “L” because—just like our pets—they are a seamless part of our lives. In essence, it's an attempt to visually quantify something I have come to learn a great deal about in a short time, the human-animal bond.

I hope that you enjoy our magazine, which is filled with stories. Thank you for choosing the VMTH for your pet's medical needs, and feel free to contact me if you have a story you'd like to share.

Sincerely,



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Editor, Patrice Scott and Clyde

### SEEN & QUOTED

Good friends  
are good for  
your health.

Irwin Sarason

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**About the cover**

Aubrey Alfaro, senior veterinary student, holds one of nine Newfoundland puppies at the VMTH for an appointment with cardiologist Dr. Barret Bulmer. See page 15 for the story.

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## View



**Dr.  
Roger  
Fingland**

**W**elcome to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at Kansas State University. This is an exciting time for us because you are holding the first edition of “AnimalLife,” a publication intended to celebrate the human-animal bond and showcase advances in clinical medicine in our hospital. Whether your animal is a new patient, a life-long patient, or a recent referral, we are honored that you and your referring veterinarian have trusted us to be a healthcare provider.

You see, we’ve been preparing for you and your pet. We have been teaching and learning, learning and teaching for nearly 100 years. The VMTH is a committed group of veterinary educators, researchers, clinicians and students. Your pet is reaping the benefits of our experience in treating hundreds of thousands of animals over the years. Our clients expect us to do it all—from high quality routine healthcare to state-of-the-art therapy for the most critically ill animals. Our caregivers exceed these expectations...every day.

Many of the patients we see are referred by local practitioners; in many cases, the person who has provided care for your pet for many years. We want to acknowledge the tremendous contribution these doctors make and we want you to know how important they are to our success. In many ways, we are here to help them, help you.

You probably already know that our veterinarians are highly regarded and the medical technology in our hospital matches and in some cases exceeds that available in human hospitals. What you may not know is that we are driven by our deep appreciation for animals, we honor the human-animal bond, and we know that your pet is really a member of your family. That’s the same status our pets hold in our lives.

Something else you may not know is that we have 55 veterinarians on staff. When your pet or production animal requires a specialist, we have an experienced and highly educated staff of experts—the best of the best—available on-site for consult. And when routine medical care is what your pet needs, our general practice veterinarians are among the finest in the profession—without exception.

This issue of “AnimalLife” will showcase our commitment to improve the lives of animals. “Caring People Caring for Animals” is more than our motto, it defines our approach to veterinary medicine. In the truest sense, the stories in the following pages are not really stories at all, they are simply examples of what happens in our hospital dozens of times each day.

We thank you for taking time to visit the VMTH through the pages of this magazine. I hope it gives you a better understanding of who we are, what we do and why we are committed to animal health and welfare. We exist simply because of our commitment to teaching and healing. This has drawn you and hundreds of thousands of people just like you to our hospital; you want the best care available. That is exactly what your pet deserves and that is exactly what we provide.

Thank you for supporting our hospital and thank you for caring about animals.

Warm Regards,

**DVM, MS, MBA, Diplomate ACVS  
Associate Dean for Clinical Programs  
Hospital Director • Professor**

# Dr. Mary Bagladi-Swanson • Dermatologist



## Your Pet's Vet

Photo credit, Dave Adams

by Patrice Scott

**D**r. Mary Bagladi-Swanson changed the complexion of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. More accurately, she changed it for patients...for the better.

Dr. Bagladi-Swanson is a board-certified dermatologist. She thoroughly enjoys her specialty and freely admits that she smiles when she sees a patient scratching in the lobby because help is on the way. "I find myself drawn to animals that others may shy away from," Dr. Bagladi-Swanson says. "Skin problems can produce sores, odors, and severe itching. I really want to help these animals."

Dermatology is a specialty that allows doctors, patients, and clients to form relationships because chronic skin diseases often require frequent rechecks. "I like working with the patients and clients and being able to follow through on cases," Dr. Bagladi-Swanson says. "The best part is when someone sends a picture of their pet with hair. When a client calls or writes, you really feel like you've done something special."

There is a certain detective quality to dermatology, and she finds that aspect fascinating. Dr. Bagladi-Swanson treats an array of skin diseases, but the most common are allergies, infections, parasites, ear problems, and hair follicle disorders. "When people have allergies, they often sneeze. But in animals, allergies cause itching, which leads to scratching, hair loss, and skin infections," Dr. Bagladi-Swanson says. "Sometimes it requires skin

testing and the process of elimination to determine the exact allergen."

Her dedication, energy, enthusiasm, and hard work have attracted attention. In January, Dr. Bagladi-Swanson received the KSU Distinguished Service Award from the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association at the group's annual conference in Topeka, Kan. "I was really surprised," she says. "It is a wonderful award to receive, and I feel honored."

Dr. Bagladi-Swanson, husband, Rory, and daughter, Anna, live in Manhattan with the family's cat, Pedro, an Oriental short hair, and Nibbles, a black rabbit. You can contact Dr. Bagladi-Swanson at 785.532.5690. 🐾



Top: Pedro strikes a pose.

Above: Ernie, her faithful companion for 15 years, was with her throughout her veterinary education and start of her career.

- 1989 DVM, Kansas State University
- 1989-91 Private practice
- 1995 Completed dermatology residency at Cornell University
- 1997 Instructor, Iowa State University
- 1998 Joined faculty at K-State



# A Greyhound takes to the road

by Patrice Scott

A 5,000-mile journey turns out to be the trip of a lifetime for a retired Greyhound.

**Question:** What is a blood donor dog?



**Answer:** These canines provide the necessary blood for other dogs who are undergoing surgery. Their blood is also used for research purposes to cure disease or other disorders to help all kinds of dogs live longer, healthier lives.

**I**t's hard to imagine driving 5,000 miles to adopt a dog. But that was something an Oregon couple felt driven to do.

John and Mary Horrillo packed their RV, two small dogs and one young grandson and headed east to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at Kansas State University. That's where they would pick up Timber, a retired racing Greyhound they had fallen for.

Four-year-old Timber raced until an eye injury forced him into retirement. For many racing Greyhounds, once their career is over, so is their life. The VMTH rescues six retired Greyhounds a year and enrolls them in a 12-month blood donor program where they receive nutritious meals, medical and dental care, are spayed or neutered and enjoy daily play time. Additionally, the Greyhounds are socialized to prepare them for adoption.

Dr. Lisa Moore, section head of small animal medicine, oversees the blood donor program. She says the Greyhounds typically find homes with K-State students,

## Adoption?

faculty and staff. Potential adoptees are screened through applications and interviews, which concludes when Dr. Roger Fingland, hospital director, approves the adoption. K-State's goal is for the Greyhounds to have a life—a good life—after racing.

The Horrillos wanted to give Timber a new life and that started with a new name, Kula. It means “the plains” in Hawaiian. Their trip to Kansas, which included a jaunt to visit family, was filled with excitement, anticipation and sometimes, uncertainty.

John and Mary talked, wondered, worried and hoped as they approached Manhattan.

“Will he like us? Will he get along with our dogs and cats? Will he be OK with our grandchildren?”

Mary remembers the first time she saw Kula. He was carrying a big teddy bear. It was their 19-month-old grandson, Matthew, who walked the placid Kula to the RV.

The 5,000-mile journey that started with a single step came to a screeching halt when they arrived at the stairs of the RV. “It’s like his hind legs didn’t know what to do,” Mary says.

Once inside, Kula’s legs—powered by his natural curiosity—carried him to the back of the RV where he immediately jumped on the bed. “I just looked at John and said, ‘I don’t know where you’re sleeping tonight, but I know where he’s sleeping.’”

Stepping into his new house for the first time was quite a shock...for the cats.

“There were nine cats in that house,” Mary says. “When we came home and they saw THAT guy, cats were flying everywhere.”

Since the initial jolt, the cats now nuzzle around the gentle giant at naptime. When he’s not vacationing around the country in RV parks, Kula’s day is spent playing and napping at the couple’s Florence, Ore., beach house.

While Kula once won races, today he is winning hearts. Not only the hearts of his four-legged family members, but that of his two-legged best friend, John. “This is his dog,” Mary says. “This dog and John have bonded; Kula whines when John leaves. He is so proud and tickled and enjoys every minute with Kula. He even had to buy Kula a coat to keep him warm.”

Kula has a warm and loving home thanks to a chance meeting with Dr. Suzanne Barstow. Shortly after the Horrillos moved into their new house in the fall of 2001, one of their cats became ill. Mary took it to Oceanside Veterinary Hospital where she met Dr. Barstow.

They discovered their Kansas connection when Dr. Barstow said she had earned a DVM degree in 2001 at K-State and Mary’s mother was from Ellsworth, Kan. In the quiet coastal town, their conversation drifted to Dr. Barstow’s dogs, Shy and Martha, who were blood donors at the VMTH. Mary was fascinated by their story. “When I heard about the program, I felt a little more emotion because of what the dogs have done,” Mary says. “I really wanted a blood donor dog. This is a special and wonderful thing.”

Through research, Mary discovered no other nearby university had a similar program. Dr. Barstow called Dr. Rose McMurphy, associate professor and anesthesiology section head, who was in charge of the blood donor program then. Dr. McMurphy emailed photos and descriptions of the Greyhounds available for adoption.

“Perfect!” Mary thought upon seeing his picture and reading about him. “There was a certain look on Kula’s face that made him look so gentle and sweet yet very alert.”

The couple had to wait nine months, a familiar timeframe, for their baby. Kula had only been in the blood donor program for three months when John and Mary chose him for adoption.

Photo credit: Dave Adams



Christy Hastings and Scooby

Bring a dog like Kula home:

Any loving home can adopt a blood donor dog. Dr. Lisa Moore says adoption is a wonderful way for these hard-working professionals to enjoy retirement and discover the pampered life as a pet.

These graceful canines are gentle and mild-tempered, yet love attention and plenty of outdoor activity.

Learn more about adding a Greyhound to your family by emailing Patrice Scott at [psscott@vet.k-state.edu](mailto:psscott@vet.k-state.edu).

### Greyhound genealogy

Country of origin: Egypt

Life span: 10-15 yrs.

Coat color: any solid color or a combination of several

Coat type: Short hair, velvety-smooth and sleek

Weight & height: 60–80 pounds; 24” to 27”

Personality type: Gentle, gregarious. Good with other dogs, cats and children

Racing speed: Up to 40 MPH

# In Mary's eyes, Kula is a **champion** for other animals.

Greyhounds' friendly nature makes them a good addition for many kinds of families. Here, Kula poses with John and the couple's other dogs and grandson.



Mary is an advocate for the blood donor program because she has witnessed tragedies for years as a volunteer for the Humane Society. In fact, the two dogs that made the trip to Kansas for Kula were abandoned and three of their nine cats are foster pets. That's why she understands the need and is proud that Kula has saved lives.

In her eyes, his biggest victory is post-racing as he is a champion for animals. "These Greyhounds are being rescued then they get to rescue other dogs," Mary says. "It's a great way to spend a year so they can go on to a doggie life. And that's what we want to give him, a doggie life."

Dr. Barstow wholeheartedly agrees. The transition from professional athlete to pampered pet is something they deserve. "It makes you feel really good because these dogs have never been pets." Dr. Barstow says. "They had a career, and they are just so appreciative of the life you give them."

Life as a working professional may not have always been a picnic for Kula, Shy and Martha. Thanks to the VMTH blood donor program and loving owners, life has become a day at the beach.

If you would like to adopt one of these magnificent Greyhounds or would like more information regarding how you might help support this program, please email Patrice Scott, VMTH marketing and development officer, at [pscott@vet.k-state.edu](mailto:pscott@vet.k-state.edu). 🐾

## Blankets for the donor dogs

Dr. Lisa Moore and members of the senior class pose with the current roster of Greyhounds. For their class project, seniors donated \$600 worth of wool blankets for the Greyhounds.



Photo credit, Dave Adams



# SHE'S NOT JUST SARAH'S PET.



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# 'Harkin' a calling for cats

Dr. Ken Harkin, Nancy Raleigh with Emory, and Steve Lee with Eleanor.

The couple's four cats are all strays. Not shown are Evan, who had concerns at having his photograph taken, and Ellie who resides at the couple's office.

by Patrice Scott

**W**hile many people may hearken to a professional calling, one special veterinarian took that calling to heart and turned it into a mission.

Dr. Ken Harkin, assistant professor of internal medicine, adopted the simple motto of "finding great homes for great cats" for his cat adoption agency that specializes in finding new homes for adult felines. Since its inception, Dr. Harkin has found loving homes for all 175 cats that have leaped into his life. At a flawless 100 percent adoption rate, he must be doing something right.

The Ken Harkin Cat Adoption Agency was established in 1998 to match cats with new owners because their current owner was no longer able to care for them. Situations range from an owner passing away, to a child in the home developing an allergy, to an owner moving into a retirement community.

All too often, life changes for a pet owner can translate into a death sentence for pets. "It's so sad," Dr. Harkin says when owners put a healthy animal to sleep because they couldn't care for it.

This is particularly troublesome because, as he points out, it is unnecessary.

# The Ken Harkin Cat Adoption Agency “finding great homes for great cats”

Emil, a Manx who lived to the ripe old age of eighteen, was one of Dr. Ken Harkin's long-term patients. The care he received from Dr. Harkin and the entire hospital staff inspired his owners to assist in the Ken Harkin Cat Adoption Agency project.



When Steve and Nancy learned of his cat adoption agency and that he was paying for it himself, they decided to make monthly donations. It was one way to thank him and to memorialize Emil, who lived a full and happy 18 years.

“Older cats can be harder to place just because kittens are so cute,” he says. “But the advantage to adopting an older cat is that they already have an established personality and you can match them to people quickly.”

## Takes Two to Tango

One such pairing involved Danielle Bayliss, senior veterinary student, who knew that her grandmother, Marlene Lasswell, needed a cat for her birthday. After working for 40 years as a florist in Commerce City, Colo., the grandmother of two had retired and was adjusting to her new routine. “She had so much free time on her hands. She had worked all of her life, and she had no outlet,” Danielle says. “My grandpa was working all of the time, and she was lonely.”

Enter Ebony, a six-year-old domestic longhair, who came up for adoption when his elderly owner could no longer care for him. He was a mellow lap cat who didn't need to be litter box trained. In other words, he was perfect for Marlene and her husband, Harold.

“I try to describe the cat's personality and what its home environment was like,” Dr. Harkin says. “It's like the description triggers a certain emotion in a few people and they feel like this is the right cat for them.”

Whatever his methodology, it works. Danielle's grandparents decided to adopt two “Harkin cats,” as she calls them. While waiting for new homes, Ebony bonded with a spirited three-year-old named Tango, who was rescued from the parking lot of an electronics store in Topeka, Kan.

Danielle said it has been a perfect situation because Ebony is her grandfather's “soul mate” while Tango snuggles with her grandma. “It wouldn't have been nearly as ideal if they hadn't gotten both cats,” Danielle says. Her grandmother agrees.

“When we heard that they had another cat that really needed a home, we said we'd take it as long as they were both adults,” Marlene says. “Maybe it's my age, but I would much rather have an adult cat because I don't have to baby them.”

Some cats aren't as lucky as Ebony and Tango. It took Dr. Harkin nearly three months to find the right home for one cat. However, that cat was never in danger of being homeless again—and this is the secret to his perfect adoption rate—Dr. Harkin pays for each cat's boarding and care until he finds the right home. “Every



Ebony is a six-year-old lap cat.



Photo credit, Dave Adams

**Ebony and Tango:  
A success story from the Ken  
Harkin Cat Adoption Agency**



Danielle Bayliss, senior veterinary student, and Dr. Ken Harkin with his cat, Skye. Sometimes, as in Skye's case, Dr. Harkin adopts a cat that comes into his life via his adoption agency. This only adds to his perfect adoption rate.

# The Ken Harkin Cat Adoption Agency

## “finding great homes for great cats”

“It’s so sad,” Dr. Harkin said when owners put a healthy animal to sleep because they couldn’t care for it. This is particularly troublesome because, as he points out, it is unnecessary.

“Older cats can be harder to place just because kittens are so cute,” he said. “But the advantage to adopting an older cat is that they already have an established personality and you can match them to people quickly.”

cat is tested to make sure it is free of disease,” he says. “Some cats get spayed or neutered if needed, and vaccines are given if the cat isn’t current. I take care of all of that.”

### Help from a friend

Dr. Harkin’s concern for cats coupled with the quality care he provided to a patient at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) has resulted in a much needed boost to his adoption program.

Steve Lee and Nancy Raleigh brought Emil, a 16-year-old Manx, to the VMTH to manage his diabetes. Emil, along with all of the Manhattan couple’s cats, received lifelong primary and specialty care at the VMTH.

Emil’s visits became more frequent to regulate his insulin levels, and Steve and Nancy developed a deep appreciation for Dr. Harkin, his expertise and his compassion. “He would take Emil and kiss him and handle him like he was his own cat,” Nancy says. “He just went way above and beyond what you would expect.”

When Steve and Nancy learned of his cat adoption agency and that he was paying for it himself, they decided to make monthly donations. It was one way to thank him and to memorialize Emil, who lived a full and happy 18 years. “Nancy and Steve’s generosity will help find loving homes for cats that may have never been given a chance,” Dr. Harkin says.

He emphasizes that he is not trying to duplicate the work being done by the Humane Society for strays, abandoned or other unwanted animals. Rather, he’s trying to fill a void—a niche market per se—for cats

whose chances of adoption are negligible. “If I never had to find a home for another cat, I would be thrilled to death because that means that everything is being taken care of,” Dr. Harkin says. “I want to encourage people to spay or neuter their cat and realize that getting a cat is a lifetime commitment.”

Nancy echoes that sentiment because, sadly, there is no shortage of unwanted animals.

“All four of the cats we have now are strays or walkups, as a friend likes to call them,” Nancy says. “In a perfect world there wouldn’t be a need for Dr. Harkin’s Cat Adoption Agency. It’s heartwarming to know that these cats are getting a second chance and a chance to make someone really happy, too.”

Danielle concurs with Steve and Nancy. Her family is living proof that adult cats can fit into a new household, a new life and encourages people to consider adopting a “Harkin cat.” She’s somewhat a subject expert on “Harkin cats” because her grandparents, her grandfather’s best friend and her aunt have all adopted them. “For some reason, everybody who ends up with a ‘Harkin cat’ is so happy,” she says. “It’s amazing.”

If you would like to make a difference in the lives of cats by supporting this program through adoption or by making a donation, please contact Patrice Scott, VMTH marketing and development officer, at 785.532.4046. Or, send her an email at [pscott@vet.k-state.edu](mailto:pscott@vet.k-state.edu). 🐾

# Referring Vets

An important part of the K-State team



Photo credit, Patrice Scott

Dr. Bill Skaer has spent 33 years providing excellent veterinary medical care to his patients in the Wichita area. When patients require treatment by a specialist, Dr. Skaer and his daughter and partner Dr. Christen Skaer, refer to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at Kansas State University.

by Patrice Scott

**W**hen a referring veterinarian (RDVM) sends a patient to K-State or any specialty clinic, the experience essentially becomes an extension of that veterinarian's clinic. The RDVM expects patients to receive exceptional care, for clients to have a strong understanding of their pet's medical situation and to receive follow-up information about the case. And the RDVM needs to know the client had a good experience. "That's everything to us," Dr. Bill Skaer says. "That's what we must have."

Dr. Christen Skaer, affirms that a clinic's reputation is at stake when making a referral.

"If our clients are happy, we're happy," she says. "I would say that 95 to 99 percent of my clients are very happy with K-State," she says. "They are thankful that we sent them there and thankful that we have such a facility in Kansas. In fact, one of my clients refers to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at K-State as 'The Mayo Clinic for dogs.'"

In addition to quality care, the Skaers refer cases to K-State to support the educational mission of the college and to support their alma mater. "Clients really like the teaching aspect of K-State," Dr. Bill Skaer says. "They enjoy getting calls from students and we often hear more about the student than the doctor."

As a recent graduate, Dr. Christen Skaer believes in supporting the education of future veterinarians. "The more cases the students see, the better," she says. "Hands-on is the only way you can really learn and be prepared for general practice. I think it's just invaluable, and that's one of the reasons I refer clients to K-State."

Dr. Bill Skaer graduated from K-State in May 1969. He decided to become a small animal veterinarian one cold January morning as he prepared to shovel out the barn at his family's dairy farm in Augusta, Kan. "That was the job for the youngest in the family," he says.

In May 1999—on the 30th anniversary of his graduation—Dr. Skaer watched as his youngest daughter graduated from K-State earning her DVM. She had worked in her Dad's clinic starting at age nine cleaning cages. Today, she comes to work at the clinic everyday, only now it's as his partner.

"Once Christen joined us, we quickly outgrew our old office," a proud Dr. Skaer says of his daughter. "In the five years she's been with me, we've doubled our business."

The Skaers built a new clinic three years ago at 404 S. Edgemoor to accommodate growth. At a time when his peers are slowing down, Dr. Bill Skaer is speeding up. That's wonderful news for clients and patients in Wichita who, with the talent of Dr. Christen Skaer, can look forward to another generation of quality veterinary care. 🐾



# New found LOVE

by Patrice Scott

It took nearly 10 percent of the senior veterinary class to shepherd the Newfies through the VMTH. Bobbi Hafer, front row, far right, receives extra credit for handling two puppies. Each weighs between 18 and 20 pounds.

A strapping Newfoundland named Josh won best in show at the Westminster Dog Show. However, it was nine newborn Newfies that stole the show at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH).

In what appeared to be the monochromatic version of “101 Dalmatians,” the eight-week-old Newfoundlands were hand-carried single file by senior veterinary students to and from their appointment with cardiologist Dr. Barret Bulmer.

He explains that Newfoundlands are susceptible to a heart problem called Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis or SAS. Other breeds at high risk for being afflicted with SAS are Golden Retrievers, Boxers, German Shepherds and Rottweilers.

Beth Rice, owner of Fiann Kennels in Peculiar, Mo., believes that visiting a cardiologist is part of being a responsible breeder. “I brought these little lives in to the world, and it’s my responsibility to make sure that they are happy for the rest of theirs,” Beth says. “I screen their parents to be certain they are healthy, I screen the puppies and I screen their future homes. That is all part of being a good breeder.”

Dr. Bulmer commends her decision to bring them to a veterinary cardiologist. “It’s nice to have a baseline evaluation before these puppies are placed in their new homes,” he says. “This is important because it may be a key factor in determining which dogs will be show dogs and which ones will become pets.”

Beth and her husband, Randy, have bred Australian Shepherds for 11 years and chose to breed Newfoundlands in addition because they are impressive in terms of grace, beauty and structure. Being impressed is also why she chose K-State for their medical care.

“My friend first recommended K-State so we brought in the puppies’ mom, Titania, to certify her heart,” Beth says. “We had such a great experience that we decided to bring the puppies to K-State.”

How was this experience? “Absolutely outstanding,” Beth says. “I am an RN (registered nurse), and I loved the way Dr. Bulmer spoke intelligently to me. The students were very bright, asked insightful questions and interacted well with the puppies. And, quite frankly, it was a great deal of fun.” 🐾

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