

Nugget columnist publishes first book

By Helen Schmidling
Correspondent

Jodi Schneider McNamee has fond memories of her first family dog — a black standard poodle named Suzie.

It was the late 1950s, and Jodi was growing up in the rural countryside of Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. She and Suzie rambled through their backyard into a forest of red oaks, maples and dogwood. A path led to a small pond where Suzie helped Jodi forage for pollywogs and salamanders. Her dog, the deep woods, and the world all seemed vast to Jodi.

“I was one with nature and that’s where my compassion for animals began,” she says.

She still has that compassion, and a great curiosity about animals and their people.

Since 2012, Jodi’s heartwarming animal stories and sensible pet advice columns have entertained and informed readers of *The Nugget*. Now she’s gathered them into a new book, “Raising Rover: Positive Pet Parenting Solutions for Your Pooch.”

And while she’s written mostly about pets and covered other goings-on in Sisters for *The Nugget*, the timing of this book “is just serendipitous,” she said. “Last fall, during the Chamber of Commerce Harvest Faire, I came across the Sisters Authors’ booth. I met Edie Jones and she

mentioned self-publishing, and that was my inspiration” for the book.

“It has everything to do with this community,” she said.

Topics ranging from who’s smarter — dogs or cats — to leashing (or not); dogs riding in the back of pickup trucks (a pet peeve); picking up dog poop; and dealing with anxious dogs and dogs that bark incessantly have been collected in a one-stop volume that’s both resourceful and entertaining.

“I want to help people improve their life with their pets,” she said.

From a very early age, Jodi said, she wanted to work with pets. When she moved to Southern California around 1980, her first job was working in a veterinary clinic. In those days, veterinary assistants did not require certification, and mostly trained on the job. Jodi helped with surgeries, including spays and neuters. At another veterinary clinic, she worked as a receptionist before pursuing other jobs that included teaching art, directing recreational activities for senior citizens, and taking photographs. She ultimately pursued certification as a veterinary assistant, and interned at LaPaw Animal Hospital in Bend.

“Now I get the chance to write and photograph animals (for *The Nugget*) and I’m doing what I really love!” she exclaimed. “Dogs understand

us, and we need to take the time and make the effort to understand them.”

Nugget Editor Jim Cornelius appreciates that. He says, “Jodi has a passion for animals, and for helping people and animals have the best relationship possible. Her ‘Paw Prints’ column is a well-loved feature of *The Nugget*, because it helps folks better serve their canine and feline family members.”

In the introduction to her book, Jodi writes: “Dogs are such a part of my life that I can’t imagine being without them. I appreciate the animal mind and learn something new about the incredible canine every day.”

She has three rescue dogs: Oliver, Mia, and Autumn; two rescue Siamese cats: Jasmine and Tinkerbelle; and one rabbit. Over the years, she’s had countless other dogs and cats, as well as chickens, lizards, hamsters, gerbils, even snakes.

“I’m a dog person — and a cat person,” she says.

She’s also a loyal volunteer with Furry Friends Foundation. She does pet photographs on commission, and has other photographs and watercolor paintings available at Sisters Gallery & Frame Shop.

Jodi’s first story for *The Nugget* was about Marlene Baldock’s alpacas.

“Jodi is just amazingly talented, and has a gift with animals,” Marlene said. “She

is truly caring about animals and their welfare.”

Her first canine feature was about Dale Coats and his golden retriever, Buddy, trained by Dale as a therapy dog. That was in November 2012. One story always leads to the next, with ideas coming from everywhere: people on the street or in the coffee shop, online, books, her own pet peeves, and bits and pieces. Remember her feature on Corduroy, the World’s Oldest Cat? Jodi is working on turning Corduroy’s story into a book.

“I love it when people give me ideas,” she says.

Not long ago, Jodi wrote about Gayla Nelson’s heroic 22-pound mini poodle, Louie, who faced down a coyote and saved his canine sibling, Zoe, a tiny Yorkshire terrier.

“I think Jodi’s just amazing,” Gayla said. “She does so much extra research and makes her stories interesting and informative.”

Sadly, Louie went missing over the Christmas holiday, while he was being boarded in Tumalo. While losing him has left a huge hole in Gayla’s heart, she is happily bonding with a new rescue kitten.

Louie’s story is one of many included in the final section of the book, “True Pet Tales to Warm the Heart.”

Eventually, Jodi intends to compile a similar book all



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jodi Schneider McNamee.

about caring for cats, and she has ideas for a longer volume on the KISS Dogs rescued several years ago from a farm in Prineville, as well as two children’s books.

“Raising Rover” is available at Paulina Springs Books in Sisters, where Jodi will do her first book reading on February 6 at 6 p.m. She will also sign books at PetSmart in Bend on February 12-13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the first-ever book signing for that location. The book is also available online through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and the publisher, Author House.

If you have suggestions for pet-related features, just drop Jodi an email at trueanimaltales@yahoo.com.

YEAR-ROUND FIREWOOD SALES
KINDLING
SISTERS FOREST PRODUCTS
541-410-4509
SistersForestProducts.com

The locals' Choice for Service with a Smile!
Your Barber Shop!
The Hair Caché 152 E. Main Ave. / 541-549-8771
Jeff, Theresa, Ann, Jamie, Shiela, Terri, Shantyl, Brittany

WE'RE NOT JUST TIRES! *We do...*
Alignments, Brakes, Shocks, Struts, CV Joints, U Joints, Axle Shafts, Drivelines, & Tire Siping
...not only cars, but trailers, too!
DAVIS TIRE 541-549-1026
Saving Sisters Since 1962
188 W. Sisters Park Dr. In Sisters Industrial Park across from SnoCap Mini Storage

Winter Fun Headquarters!
We rent... Downhill & Backcountry/ XC Skis, Snowboards, Snowshoes, Fat Bikes!
We sell Sno-Park Permits! Craft Beer on Tap! Bottles, too!
EUROSPORTS
Open 7 days a week
Corner of Hood & Fir Sisters
541-549-2471

SISTERS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
Thrift Store
Wedding and Valentine's Day are out and looking lovely!
Come down for that special someone.
541-549-1740
141 W. Main Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, 12-4 p.m.
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ReStore
50% OFF ANYTHING THAT OPENS
You know you're curious, open it up already!
541-549-1621
254 W. Adams Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Closed Sundays
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

THE GALLERY RESTAURANT AND BAR
Hot off the griddle!
Serving the best Rancher Breakfast for over 35 years.
Fresh Grits!
Cooked up every morning!
Breakfast & lunch 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Full-service dining in the bar nightly until 10 p.m. (21 & over)
171 W. Cascade Ave., Sisters | 541-549-2631