

## PARENTS TALK BACK

# When Mother's Day hurts

It's impossible to escape Mother's Day.

While the intent is to show some love for the first person with whom we are wired to bond, it can be a painful day for many. It's an occasion touched with grief for anyone who lost a mother too young, and for women who struggle with infertility or who have lost a child.

But there's another group rarely discussed around the commercial celebration of motherhood: those who were raised by unloving, abusive or narcissistic mothers.

Across cultures, a mother is considered synonymous with selfless love: a child's natural protector. In the wild, a mama bear is the ultimate fierce guardian. For those who grew up with this kind of loving, protective mother, it's hard to imagine what it's like being raised by someone so broken she leaves lasting scars.

Rayne Wolfe, author of "Toxic Mom Toolkit: Discovering a Happy Life Despite Toxic Parenting," is familiar with dreading Mother's Day. The run-up to the holiday can be crushing for those who grew up in an abusive family, she said.

"I was neglected. I was literally not fed. I was exposed to sexual abuse and abused by my mother's second husband," she said. Wolfe remembers trying to wake up her mother, passed out from drinking, as a child when she was hungry.

Her mother would ask to see her hands.

"If my hands weren't shaking, she wouldn't feed me," she said.

Making things worse, young victims tend to be ashamed of what they have experienced, and often hide their parent's abuse or neglect.

Mother's Day isn't the only holiday that can be a trigger point for emotional wreckage — Valentine's Day is rough after a breakup, as is Christmas without a loved one.

But there's an added terribleness when even the premise of the holiday taunts you.

Mother's Day is a major commercial event, with total spending projected to reach \$21.4 billion this year — outpacing Valentine's Day by nearly a couple billion. The bombardment in store displays and advertisements is matched by the outpouring of social media tributes. Public adoration flows through our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram timelines all weekend. I enjoy publicly celebrating my own phenomenal mother, but the day is fraught for those who had to seek refuge from a mother, rather than turn to her for protection and support.

Wolfe, who said she went through a lot of therapy to understand what happened to her as a child, advocates self-protection: In some cases, it makes sense to limit, or even end, contact. Emotional abuse is just as traumatic as physical abuse.

When her mother was dying, a social worker from the hospital called Wolfe and suggested it might be time for her to "bury the hatchet."

Wolfe asked the social worker if she had ever met Wolfe's mother. She suggested spending some time with her, and then calling Wolfe back if she still believed she needed to be there.

"I never heard from her again," she said.

As an adult, she has nurtured an online community of those who have suffered from toxic relationships with their mothers. She asks them to start planning, six weeks out, what they will do on Mother's Day. She gives her readers permission to skip family events that leave them feeling worthless or sad. She encourages them to see their parent with adult eyes.

"It's disheartening when you are a good person, and you don't have a loving mother figure in your life," she said. Those who were not mothered can feel very isolated.

Fortunately for Wolfe, her father remarried when she was 16. She describes her stepmother, whom Wolfe cared for as she aged, as a beautiful and lovely person.

"There was a part of me that could never trust an older woman," she said. Her stepmother helped heal that part.

Proving that it takes a lot more than biology to be a mother.

**Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.**



**AISHA SULTAN**  
Parents talk back

# A CLASSIC LOVE TAIL: Man rescues dog, dog rescues man

By **LEANNE ITALIE**  
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It's a classic love tail: Broken man meets broken dog and together they make life good again.

Colin Campbell was a regular guy living a regular life in 2008. He had a nice job, a nice house and a beautiful wife until, as heartache often happens, he returned from a business trip to learn his beautiful wife didn't want to be married anymore.

"I really struggled" is Campbell's short description of what went down. "I was shocked. There were no second chances. No discussion about it."

Living in Toronto, working hard as he always had, Campbell's friends grew concerned, suggesting he do something that he had never done before: get a dog.

Rambling around his house alone and depressed, he went online to a pet rescue site and found about as much dog as any human might bargain for, the kind-faced George, a 140-pound Landseer Newfoundland, though he was a mere pup, just over a year old, at the time.

George, too, was in need of saving. He had been abandoned. There was evidence of abuse and neglect. He was wary of men in particular, including Campbell, and had trouble with trust.

Together the two healed, and a move a year later to Los Angeles worked some magic of its own.

Newfoundlands are water dogs, though George had never had the opportunity to experience the ocean. When Campbell went surfing, George swam right out and hopped on his board, earning accolades over the next three years from the surf crowd at Hermosa Beach and competing a couple of times in a doggie surf competition that raises money for pet rescue.

"I don't think he had ever swam before, but he just instinctively knew how to do it," Campbell said. "He had balance and he had



In this May 2 photo, George, a once neglected and homeless 140-pound Newfoundland Landseer, stands with his owner, Colin Campbell, after an interview in New York. Campbell is on a nationwide promotional tour for his new book, "Free Days with George."

AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

an affinity for it and he did really well. So George went from homeless in Canada to surf champ in California."

All of this, it turns out, made for a great book, "Free Days with George," out this month from Anchor Canada, an imprint of Penguin Random House. The title, Campbell said in a recent interview — with the fluffy, white George at his side — comes from something Campbell's grandfather used to say, having saved from drowning three Allied comrades on D-Day as they stormed Juno Beach at Normandy.

He, Seymour Wylde Howes III, considered all good days spent doing something you love, with people who love you, free days. "That's a good day," he'd say. "That's a free day on Earth."

That's how it felt for Campbell, surfing with George, loving George, sharing George with all of his admirers.

"He went out of his way to try and make things good," Campbell said of his gentle giant of a friend.

"As he moved on and got better, he really taught me how to do the same. We were both at a really dark place. When we moved to California and he swam in the ocean, it was like a baptism. Like he really discovered his purpose and all the DNA for Newfoundlands who were bred to save people in the water, he figured it out. He came out of the water and he goes, I know what I'm supposed to do. He had a confidence that he never had before."

George continues to be a feel-good ambassador for all who meet him. Campbell and George are on a cross-country bus tour promoting their book, stopping at animal shelters along the way to drop off donated bags of food and help raise awareness of the need to rescue homeless pets.

Over six weeks, starting from New York this week, the two will visit 26 cities in their tricked-out luxury bus, the title of the book and George's black face and mostly white fluff across each side.

They hope to return to Cali-

fornia for a little surfing later this month. By Newfoundland standards, George is up in years at 8. Campbell wasn't sure whether he'd be quite as enthusiastic about a surfboard.

Looking back, the 54-year-old Campbell recalled how helping George took some time. A meandering bus trip seemed fitting.

"It was a rocky start at first," Campbell said. "I had to take him through obedience and gradually socialize him. It took about a year for him to trust and to recognize that I was somebody who was helping him."

The takeaway, for Campbell and George, is an obvious one.

"I really credit him for saving my life," the human said.

As for George, he did what dogs do, as the two began their media tour Monday. He licked the face of one new fan, rolled over for a tummy rub by another. There was no surfboard on this visit, but as Campbell said:

"He's a little older. I'm a little older. That's OK."

## OUT OF THE VAULT

## Reporter faces fears to brave bee swarm

**B**ees. Just the word gives a lot of people the creepy-crawlies. But for some people bees are a living. In May of 1967, an intrepid *East Oregonian* reporter braved a swarm of bees to get a story about a local beekeeper and his business, despite his natural inclination to scream, swat and flee.

Reporter Bob Woehler was on the scene May 3, 1967, when Riverside-area beekeeper Closson Scott worked his magic on a swarm of honeybees that had taken up residence on the rear bumper of a car behind Hamley's Western Store in downtown Pendleton. "I've never seen so many swarms of bees so early," said Scott. "This is the third swarm that I've picked up in the back of Hamley's in less than



**RENEE STRUTHERS**  
Out of the vault

two weeks." He pointed to the top floor of the building with his homemade smoker. "They live up there."

As Woehler went in for a photo of Scott, he was immobilized by a bee walking across his hand,

stopping periodically to clean itself. Beads of sweat appeared as Woehler waited for the bee to move on, wishing fervently for a telephoto lens, or that he'd given the story to a different reporter. "They won't sting you if you don't handle them much," Scott said, which was helpful until a couple of bees began to saunter across the back of Woehler's neck.

And his subsequent attempts at getting a photo were obstructed by bees walking across the camera lens.

Scott explained that the bees were just looking for a new home. When a colony gets too big, usually the older workers and the old queen are forced out to find new quarters, while the younger set keeps the original hive location. When bees swarm they send out scout bees to look for a new home and return to the swarm to report their findings. "You can probably hear them buzzing inside the hive I brought. They are probably telling the ones on the outside that this is the place."

As more bees began buzzing around Scott and Woehler, the reporter began to feel a little panicked. But he checked

himself when Scott mentioned that waving your arms doesn't frighten bees at all. "They won't hurt you," Scott said, clutching a horde of bees in his hands and extending them out to Woehler. "Here, look at this." Woehler managed to screw up enough courage to stretch his neck out for a peek. Sure enough, the bees were behaving beautifully, content to roam instead of sting.

Scott ushered the rest of his foundlings into the hive, then packed up his truck. Another swarm, this time at Helen McCune Junior High School, was waiting.

*Renee Struthers is the Community Records Editor for the East Oregonian. See the complete collection of Out of the Vault columns at eovault.blogspot.com*

## ODDS &amp; ENDS

### It takes a village to corral a loose llama

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — It took a village and two hours to corral an uncooperative llama named Ethel who escaped from her pasture in rural Colorado and wandered near some busy roadways.

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office tweeted a wanted poster with a photo of the wayward animal and the hashtag #LlamaOnTheLoose. It's an amended version of the one made famous by a pair of Ethel's elusive brethren, whose romp through a Phoenix-area neighborhood stole the national spotlight last year.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Carrie Haverfield says Ethel's owner called Tuesday asking for help to get the llama home after she wandered into another pasture. An animal control officer and a deputy tried to wrangle Ethel, but she proved difficult to capture and more help had to be called in.

At one point, passers-by formed a human fence. She was ultimately herded back into her pasture.

### Duck leads ducklings on annual waddle through school's halls

HARTLAND, Mich. (AP) — A duck has grown attached to a Michigan elementary school's courtyard, returning each year to



Matthew Jonas/Daily Camera via AP

**A Boulder County Sheriff's Deputies works to get a llama named Ethel out of an alfalfa field Tuesday near Niwot, Colo. It took two hours to corral the uncooperative llama, who escaped from her pasture and wandered near some busy roadways.**

lay her eggs before walking the hallways with her ducklings to get out.

The *Livingston Daily Press & Argus* of Howell reports the duck named Vanessa has appeared at Village Elementary School in Hartland for the past 13 years. Ruth Darrah, now a retired teacher, makes sure the duck gets a helpful welcome each year.

The newspaper reports the duck flies into the closed-off courtyard, crawls under a specific shrub, digs out her nest and lays her eggs. After the ducklings hatch, Darrah and others tape black construction paper along the walls, creating a clear path for

the ducks to get to a nearby pond.

This year's hallway waddle took place Thursday.

### Man charged after cop helps find his lost pot

ALLIANCE, Ohio (AP) — An Ohio man who got a police officer's help to find a bit of marijuana lost in his yard has been charged with misdemeanor drug abuse.

The patrolman's body camera video shows an intoxicated man admitting he lost the drug. The Alliance officer says he doesn't want children to find it and then locates it in the grass.

The man asks if he'd throw it back on the ground. The officer refuses.

Police say the officer had found the man stumbling along the road and tried to get him home safely.

Some commenters suggested the man has an alcohol problem and criticized Alliance police for sharing the video on Facebook.

Capt. James Hilles tells the *Akron Beacon Journal* it's just a light-hearted example of silly things people say to officers.

### 19 lab monkeys escape, all recaptured

YEMASSEE, S.C. (AP) — Nineteen monkeys made a break from a compound on the South Carolina coast, but freedom was fleeting.

Local media outlets report the monkeys escaped from the Alpha Genesis center Sunday afternoon and six hours later all had been recaptured.

Alpha Genesis operates two facilities near Beaufort, South Carolina, where it has 5,000 monkeys, many sold for medical research.

Yemassee Police Chief Gregory Alexander says a broken or a loose cage door led to the escape. Alexander says it's not the first time it's happened, but generally the monkeys return to the compound because they know that's where there's food.