

Northwoods Humane Society – Nancy Douglas, NHS Recording Secretary

When you lose an especially beloved dog or cat — or any other kind of animal, I imagine — I think the emotions can be so deeply in your mind that no representational memorial is even bearable. For instance, those little dog figurines with angel wings for your Christmas tree just make me shudder. Some places make memorial tiles and I've done that but it's not quite enough. In Southern California, there is a pet cemetery I often drove past; I'm glad I didn't bury a pet there then move to Wisconsin.

It would be nice to come across a photo of them in their prime sometime, but the vagueries of replacing cell phones and no longer making physical albums makes that a problem. And so many of the best events were not even photographed. I'll never forget driving through "Der Weinerschnitzel" with my darling mini Schnauzer Guido as passenger, and the man at the window asking, "and what will the little gentleman be having tonight?"

Then there was the time long before cell phones when I went to a shelter to adopt a cat. As I sat on the floor cuddling the gray tabby boy who was to become Remington, his matching, fluffier brother (Russell) crawled up and draped himself around my neck. Those two boys were the sweetest and funniest ever, and Russell would not live long after Remington died.

Pet lovers sometimes consider the "Rainbow Bridge" as a way of hoping we'll all be reunited in the future. I recently saw a video online "narrated" by a jumping spider that I really found remarkably touching. It's on the Facebook Mini Robopuppets, where all the pets that have gone before us are healthy and strong and waiting all together for us to show up on the Rainbow Bridge. I imagine Russell, Remington, Guido, and all the others in between and those on my bed today.

But when you want to demonstrate that love now, many of us do it through donations to our local no-kill shelter or humane society. You don't have to do it formally, "in memory of" a particular pet; for me it's just part of what I'm thinking when I give a donation to the shelter or the thrift store. And many people make cash donations at the same time as they purchase something at the thrift store, plus the fact that the money they spend is going back to the cats and dogs.

I hope these recollections of my amazing guys will bring thoughts of your own precious pets to mind.

Note: 'Our Pet Tales' project is an opportunity to celebrate our pets, to honor or memorialize them. It is an opportunity to share that special moment, the history or the sadness in saying goodbye. We all have a story or two that we share with friends or strangers about our pets.

For 'Our Pet Tales' pet owners can write a short story 200 words or less and send it in with a clear photo of their pet. The tales will be selected by a committee of three. The committee will not know who the author is or see a picture of the pet. Twenty tales will be selected. Irene Farone, a pet portrait artist will do a pencil portrait of the pet. This portrait will then be framed and exhibited, along with the story, at Out of The Woods Winery in October 2025. The portraits and stories will be made into a booklet and into note cards. We are asking that the stories and pictures come to us by December 29 along with an application. The application may be picked up at the NHS Thrift shop on 3rd Street and Dakota, at the Shelter on High 77 East and O'Brien Hill Road or on our website: northwoodshumanesociety.org. The story and photo may be submitted digitally or by mail – NHS - PO BOX 82 – Hayward, WI 54843. Stories that are not selected will be shared through our articles and website.

Thank you to all that attended our Volunteer and Staff party Wednesday night at Out of The Woods. Holiday music was provided by 'volunteers Randy Schwartzhoff, Pete Heisler and Mike Persson and the Board provided the appetizers. I had a special surprise – guests Julie and Pat Quarve came to volunteer. Pat offered to work on the recycling cans project! He had heard the plea for a volunteer on one of my radio interviews and he read it in an article and he too said 'I can help with that!' He also volunteered to help with some of the Rice Lake Transfers. Yeah!

Dates to remember:

Month of December – Matching Gift Challenge of \$31,000

December 29 – 'Our Pet Tales' deadline for submissions.