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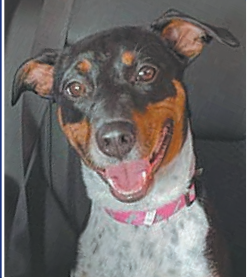
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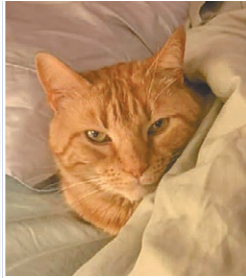
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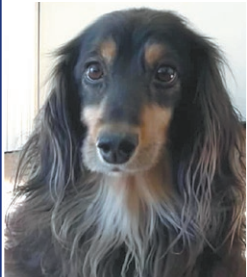
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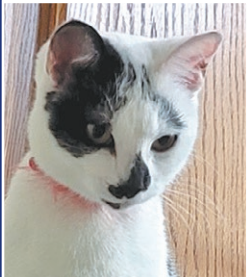
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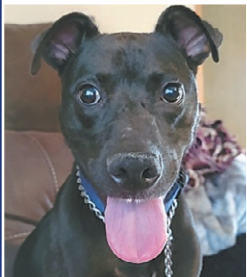
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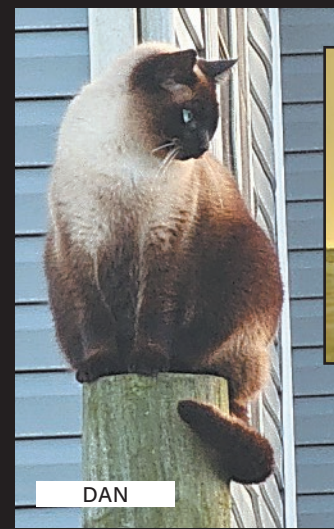
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Thank you to all the local pet parents who contributed photos of their precious pets!



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Canine characteristics



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Dogs have been faithful companions to humans for hundreds of years. Dog owners know their canine companions can be friendly, affectionate and entertaining. Dogs also are quite intelligent and can perform various jobs that help them stay focused and healthy.

Anyone considering bringing a dog home might be wondering which dog is best for them. Every dog is unique, and a breed that is a perfect fit for one person or family may not be the right choice for another. The following are five characteristics to consider when searching for a new dog.

1. Energy level

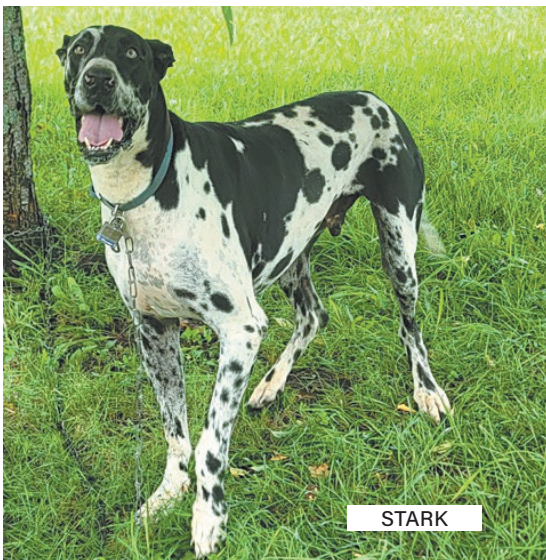
Dogs require different levels of exercise and are sometimes classified

by how much energy they are likely to exert. A working breed like a German shepherd, for example, may need more exercise than a dog that is known to lounge more often, such as a basset hound. Talk through exercise expectations and be realistic on how much time can be devoted to walks and play sessions before narrowing down breeds.

See **CANINE** on Page 8



MILLIE



STARK



IVY

Common health issues that affect aging pets

Pet owners' devotion to their companion animals is evidenced in the lengths modern pet parents go to keep their furry friends happy and healthy. A recent survey from GOBankingRates found that 70 percent of pet owners spent between \$600 and \$1,200 on their pets in 2023, which underscores how important companion animals are to the people who take care of them.

Millions of pet owners might admit there's no limit to what they would do to protect their pets, but even the most devoted dog owner or cat caregiver recognizes that age can catch up to companion animals. Much like humans can't stop their own bodies from aging, pet owners have little recourse against Father Time when it comes to caring for their pets. The American Veterinary Medical Association notes that cats and dogs are living longer now than ever before, so it's good for pet owners to familiarize themselves with common health issues that can affect older pets.

Senior pets

The AVMA notes that cats are generally considered "senior" after 10 years of age. It's a little harder to pinpoint when dogs enter their golden years, as the size disparity between breeds affects their senior status, or lack thereof. The AVMA notes small or toy breeds (less than 20 pounds) acquire "senior" status between eight and 11 years of age; medium-sized breeds (20 to 50 pounds) between eight and 10 years of age; large breeds (50 to 90 pounds)

See AGING on Page 10

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Cats are more than just furry friends!

Cat owners have a tendency to be especially devoted to their feline friends, and research indicates cats return the favor by providing a host of health benefits to their owners. The Human Animal Bond Research Institute reports that cat ownership can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and improve heart health. In addition, the HABRI notes that cat ownership can help to alleviate social isolation and feelings of loneliness and even reduce stress.



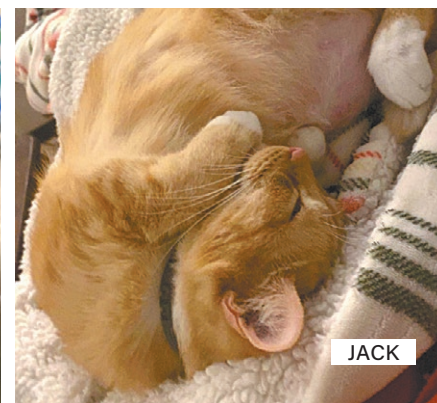
DOLLY



JIMMY DEAN

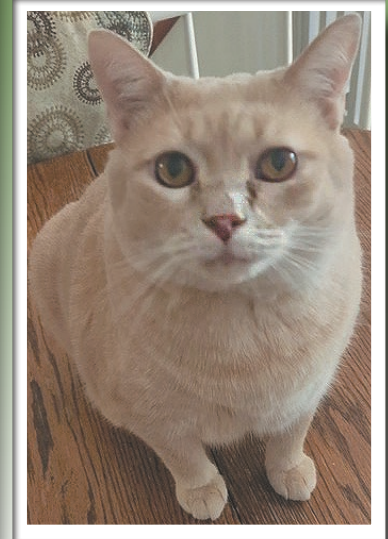


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RIP AND BETH

Canine

From page 4

2. Size

The larger the dog, the more indoor and outside space the animal will require. Larger dogs also will need more food and larger toys and sleeping spots. They also may be more difficult to walk if they are particularly large and strong compared to the individual doing the walking. Some people may want a dog that can be easily transported in a carrier when traveling. Therefore, size is an important consideration when looking for a new dog.

3. Health predispositions

Though predisposition to certain health issues may not be too great a concern with mixed-breed dogs, purebred animals are another story. For example, RSPCA Pet Insurance says pugs and bulldogs, as well as other brachycephalic (flat-faced) dog breeds, may experience overheating because they have trouble panting to cool off. Some brachy dogs are predisposed to skin, eye or oral health conditions. Other dogs may be more prone to allergies or hip dysplasia. It's important to do your homework on breeds and identify potential health issues a given dog may be predisposed to.

4. Grooming needs

Coat will determine how often or how much grooming a dog will require. Dogs with double coats may need to be brushed regularly to avoid matting and to help with the shedding process. While certain dogs are billed as hypoallergenic, this really isn't a thing. Allergies often form from exposure to dog dander or the oils on their skin, so reduced propensity for shedding will not remove the chances for allergic reaction entirely.

5. Personality

It is important to read the breed standards on dog disposition. While personality will be affected by breeding and how the animal was raised, inherent traits may make some dogs act a certain way across the board. Dogs bred to be watchdogs may be more aloof or weary around strangers. Dogs that are bred to do jobs like herding may be more independent. Other dogs are family-oriented and bigger lovebugs, which is why Golden retrievers are so popular among families. Speak with a qualified breeder or veterinarian about which dogs will best fit a particular lifestyle.

Various characteristics merit consideration when shopping for a new dog.



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- Blankets & Towels**
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- Leashes**
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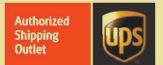


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Sweet doggy dreams?

It can be disconcerting to new dog owners when they discover their pooches whimpering, shaking or seemingly crying in their sleep. Although there may be some rare instances when this behavior is linked to pain and distress, by and large it is a natural response in many animals when they doze off. Although there is no exact way to measure what is going on in the pup's mind, experts like Dr. Bonnie V.G. Beaver, DVM, author of *Canine Behavior Insights*, says the main reason that dogs produce noises in their sleep is that they are probably dreaming during the REM phases in their sleep

cycles. Dogs, just like humans, have the potential for vivid dreams while sleeping, as evidenced by looking at dogs' brain waves during REM sleep. During these phases, dogs may show movement like wagging their tails, twitching their paws, fluttering their jowels, or making noises like whimpers. In some cases, dogs also may bark while sleeping, says PetMD. Pet owners should rest assured that very likely these vocalizations and movements are completely normal. However, if they are new behaviors, it could be worth a discussion with a veterinarian. Also, new pet owners should know that a dog who makes



noise while napping, may also do so during the night, and should not be overly concerned if they are woken from bed by pet noises. The general

consensus is to simply let the pooch be as he or she works through those REM stages.

Aging

From page 5

between eight and nine years of age; and giant breeds (more than 90 pounds) between six and seven years of age.

Cancer and senior pets

The AVMA reports that cancer is the cause of death in roughly 50 percent of all dogs and around one-third of senior cats. Cancer in pets may produce a variety of symptoms, including:

- Abdominal swelling
- Bleeding from the mouth or nose

or other body openings

- Difficulty eating or swallowing
- Breathing difficulties
- Lumps, bumps or discolored skin
- Sores that will not heal
- Persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- Decreased appetite or body weight
- Swelling, heat, pain, or lameness that cannot be explained

Additional issues affecting aging pets

Though cancer is responsible for a significant percentage of deaths among senior cats and dogs, it's not the only issue that can affect aging pets. The AVMA notes a number of common health problems affect pets

as they age, including:

- **Heart disease:** The Animal Medical Center, a New York-based nonprofit organization, notes degenerative valve disease, dilated cardiomyopathy and heartworm disease are common types of heart disease in dogs. Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a common heart disease found in cats.
- **Kidney or urinary tract disease:** The Veterinary Diagnostic Library at Michigan State University notes that chronic kidney disease affects up to 10 percent of aging dogs and 35 percent of aging cats.
- **Liver disease**
- **Diabetes:** The AVMA reports

that diabetes is most often diagnosed in dogs between the ages of seven and 10 and in cats older than six years of age.

- **Joint or bone disease**
- **Overweight or obesity**
- **Vision or hearing loss:** The AVMA notes senior pets can develop cataracts that affect their vision and may not respond as well to voice commands as they did when they were younger.

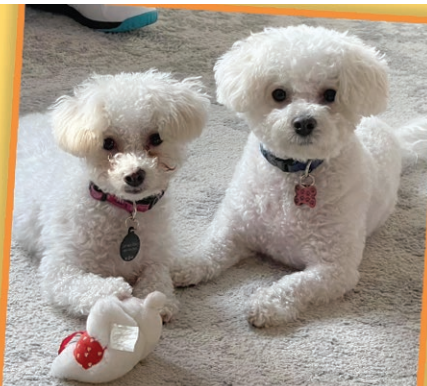
Cats and dogs are living longer. Pet parents can prepare for their pets' golden years by learning about common ailments that affect aging animals.

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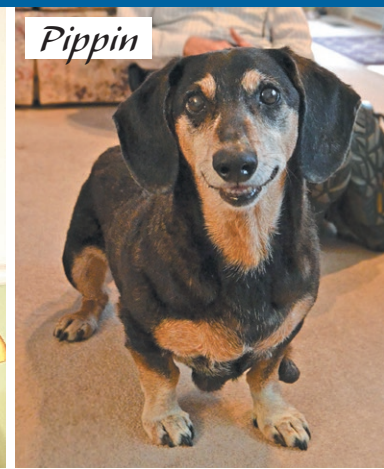
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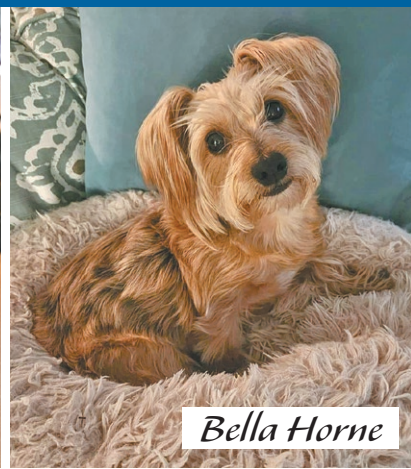
Wrigley



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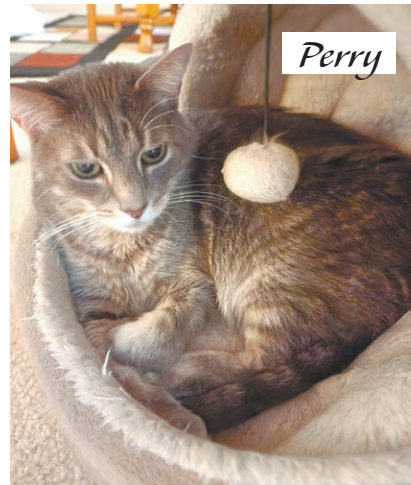
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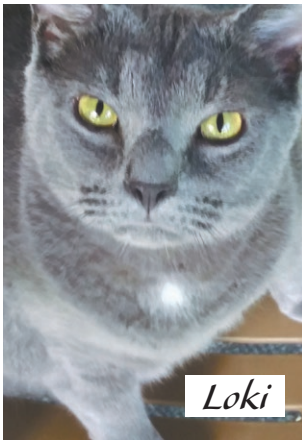
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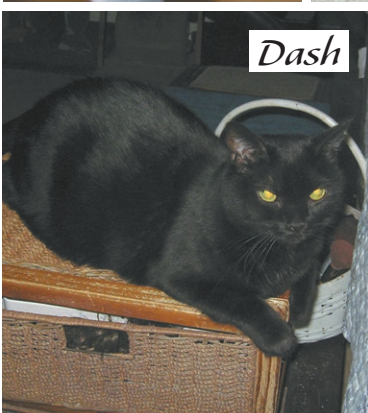
Scout



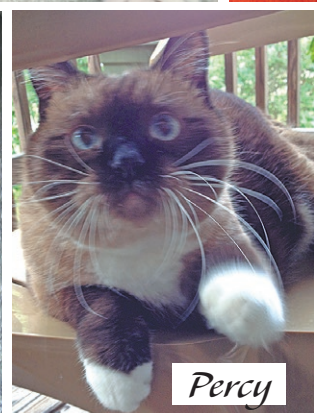
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