

GRAPHIC ARCHIVES

THE MAGAZINE • AUGUST 2020

For the
Love of
Dogs!





"In Living Color"

A Photograph of me with Rex, my Jack Russell Terrier in which I saturated the colors except for Rex. Only well-trained eyes will notice the subtle difference between true color in reality and an altered image. Primarily white with black features, the color is most notable in his ears and feet. What is real and what is fantasy was a theme that led to much of my mindset during a time in which I couldn't recognize the differences.

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The Rundown



A Tail of Two Dogs

Sasquatch and Mandy were two dogs with differences, yet found harmony together.



Arts & Culture

Dogs Playing Poker



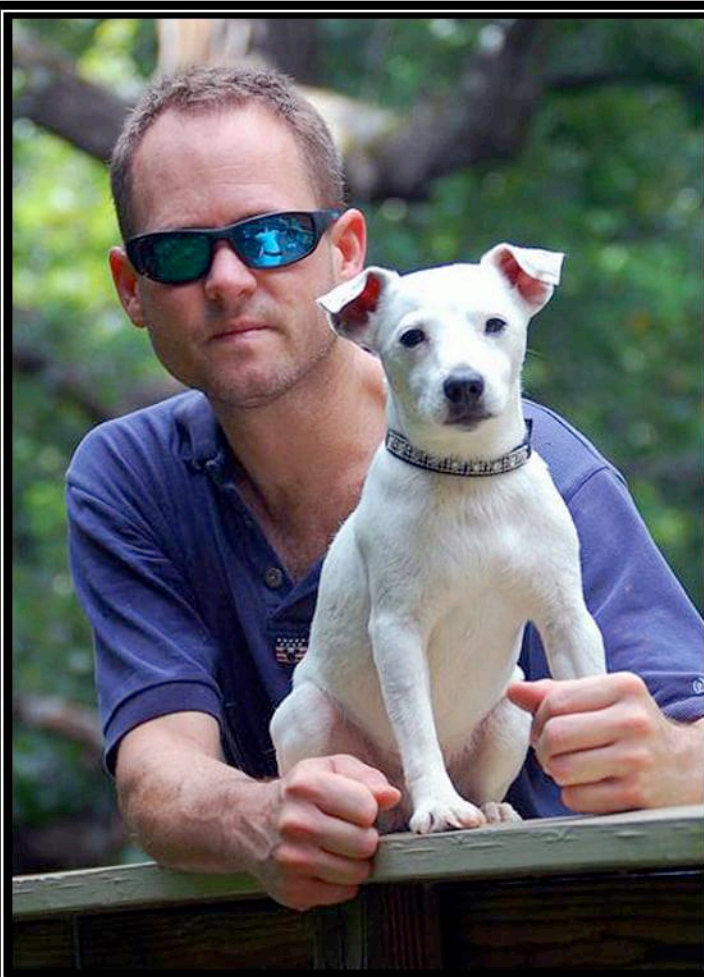
Dog Days of Summer

Inside the inspiration for a novel ambition.



Saved By the Devil

True story from childhood.



Rex sits patiently as we both pose for a memorable photograph characteristic of the day from the nearby McDaniel Farm Park.

Cover: Rex superimposed on a painting I created that was inspiring to me as a graphic representation of how an iconic symbol of love has so many abstract and unpredictable lines and shapes to form something greater within a canvas of chaos.

- 2: Barking Out Loud!
A few words where the bark is louder than the bite.
 - 14: Gallery of Friends
Snapshots of Friend's dogs.
 - 20: Pet Peeves
Those annoyances related to our pets.
 - 21: A Dog's Purpose
Inspiring Film about the true spirit of dogs.
- Back Cover: Rex licks my chin in front of a straw moose in Blue Ridge, Georgia.



The Rainbow Bridge

Another novel designed more for my own therapeutic needs as there is never an end to a story as much as a new beginning.



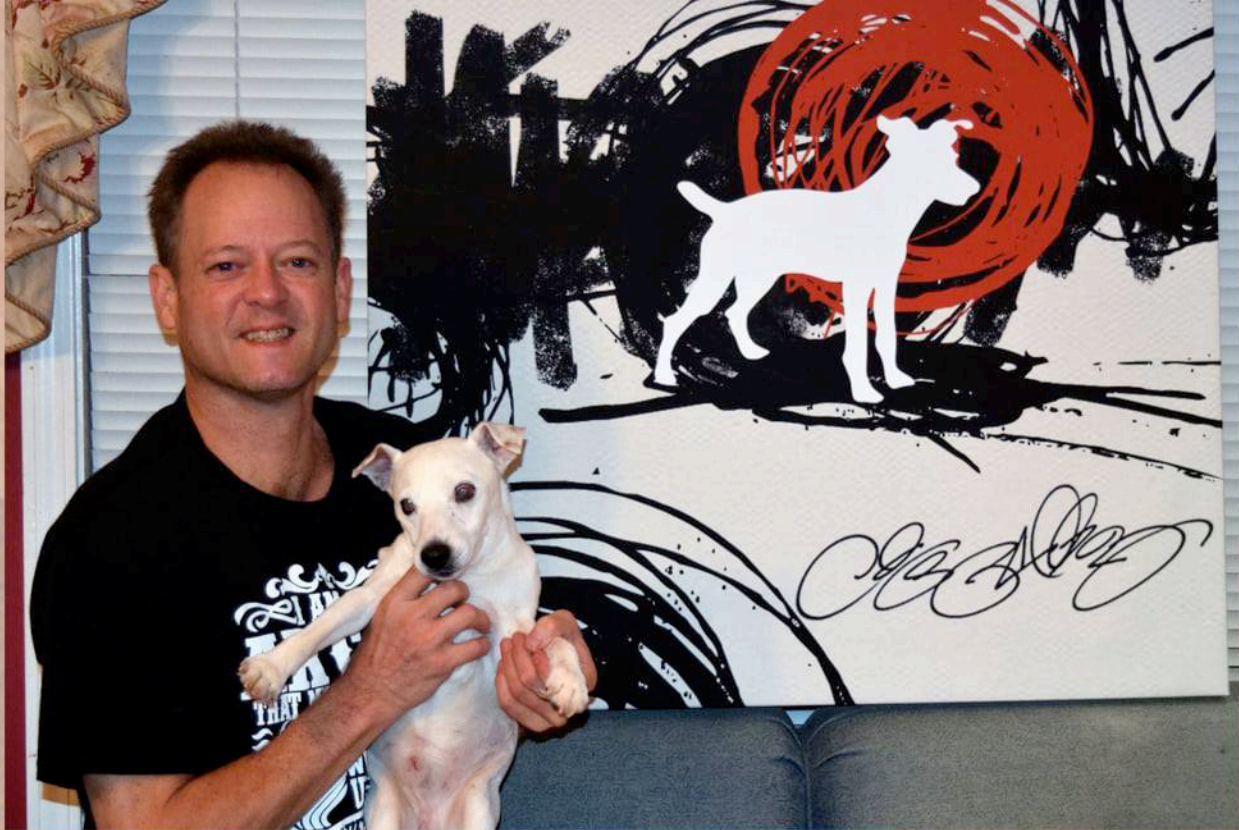
Gidget's Adventures

A Series of artistic exploration in the works that encourages responsibility with pets.



Let's Play!

BONUS FEATURE!
A short childrens book created to highlight the daily actions of my late Jack Russell Terrier, Rex.




This month's issue of "*Graphic Archives Magazine*" features Man's Best Friend... Dogs, which often becomes part of family no matter what gender takes the leash. Pets of all kinds are inspirational and instill a sense of responsibility, compassion, love and ambition. At least those are just a few of the things I have discovered over a lifetime of having dogs of many breeds, sizes, and different personalities.

Their devotion and unconditional love cannot be measured by any scientific metric in which the true value of the heart and soul becomes symbiotic with the simple needs that are essential to happiness. Dogs provide an outlet for entertainment, a sense of control, a distraction from other concerns, and help their owners better understand themselves through trials and tribulations in life.

This issue is also a tribute to many of the dogs from my past that have guided me through life's challenges on many levels. Their stories are as much mine in helping me to break through barriers and turn new corners on a creative level as my dogs have always been a cornerstone of inspiration. I hope you enjoy the stories and segments here that are designed to build a theme to honor our canine family and those that are friends that bring both wonder and joy to all!

Love and Wishes!



A Tail of Two Dogs



Sasquatch and Mandy following my steps around my parents home.
An early black and white print I developed for a photography course in college.

As an only child, I was never alone because I always had dogs that filled the void of companionship that helped distract me from feelings of loneliness. Their company gave me an inner strength with responsibilities in providing a symbiotic relationship that became a bonding of basic needs along with unconditional love.

Having numerous dogs growing up, Sasquatch and Mandy were most prominent during my developmental years from Middle School through College. Looking back, the two were extremely different in personality and life experiences, yet found a partnership that could be an animated series for a dog's version of "The Odd Couple."

The contrast between the two was even more ironic from those who were not familiar and could only judge them by their surface features. Complete opposites from how they appeared, their 'juxtaposition of disposition' or polar extremes made for an interesting life of differences which found harmony together.

Mandy was a Black Labrador Retriever trained to become a K9 Police dog, yet was not selected for official duty. The previous owner moved and could not keep her, so we took her in to simply give her a home with plenty of space to roam free. Containment, however, became an issue as Mandy demonstrated unique skills climbing fences of all types as she had earned several degrees, numerous papers, and certifications to prove she could escape from so many barriers in life. Indeed, Mandy was the most highly-educated member of the family!

We discovered a Knoxville Utilities Board member shouting one morning after checking the meter. Mandy wasn't too thrilled with the bill and her teeth were convincing enough for the meter agent to climb on top of his van.

"I've tazed that dog numerous times!" He claimed as it was unnatural for a dog to continue aggressive behavior after so many incidents. Mandy had been trained to protect property and would sacrifice herself in situations that seemed threatening with intruders.

Another incident involved a Jehovah's Witness solicitor in which a father had his young daughter with him as he knocked upon our front door. The interesting thing to note is that my parents home has a railing built upon the walkway that leads to the front door. Mandy barked several times to attract attention while showing her teeth to the unexpected party. Fortunately, my father heard the commotion and quickly resolved the fears they had as Mandy had been trained to protect and serve.

The fact that the man had his young daughter probably saved them both as Mandy understood that children were not a real threat.

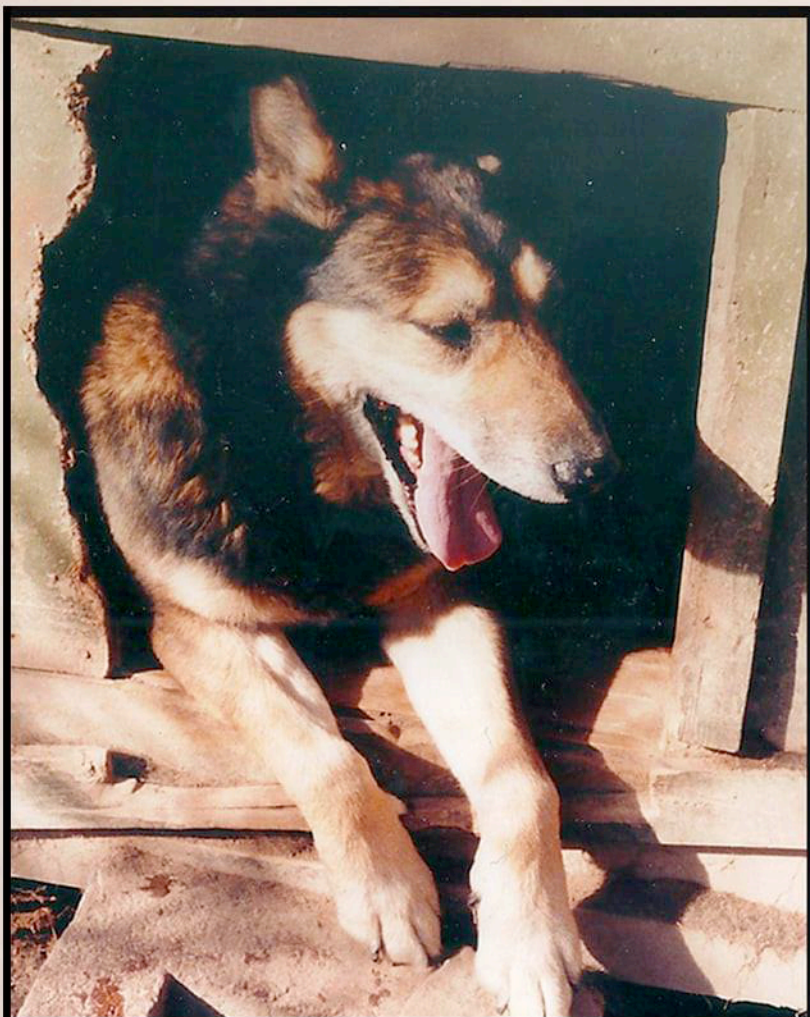
CL was a neighborhood friend to all as everyone knew him well. Having some form of paralysis, he never looked for sympathy and was determined to earn for himself to help neighbors with a variety of landscaping ventures. He was walking down Sunflower Road with a dog on a leash and began talking to my dad.

"I call him 'Bigfoot'" stated CL as he pointed down to the dog's feet. He was in no condition to keep the dog and was wandering through the subdivision to find someone who might be interested.



"Mandy"

A Black Labrador Retriever with numerous degrees and certificates earned through K9 training.



"Sasquatch"

A German Shepherd Husky Mix that looked menacing on the surface, but wouldn't harm his own fleas! Happy-go-lucky loving companion.

"Do you want another dog?" my father turned to me as if I were to make the final decision. An impressive German Shepherd Husky mix that was already half my size as a pup seemed like a monster task for a commitment, but both dad and I sensed something special about the dog.

"We'll call him 'Sasquatch!'" he stated as we introduced him to Mandy. "It's the Indian name for 'Big Foot!' He grew to full size fast enough and was perhaps the most menacing-looking dog you could ever imagine, but the truth was Sasquatch was the most loving dog ever. He might lick you to death, yet the entire neighborhood was afraid of him based on his looks while Mandy was the one that was a lethal weapon despite her adorable appearance.

It's hard to judge a book (or a dog) by its cover! They had their moments and made adjustments living together as an odd couple, but both found peace and harmony as they found respect for each other.

Not necessarily a match made in heaven, but both dogs learned the freedoms they had that far outweighed their differences as they began to share the commonalities of living long and healthy lives. They had an impact upon each other and Mandy could climb the wired structure of the pen as well as the chain-linked fence around the yard... run to the nearby apartment complex and climb their 12 foot chain fence surrounding their pool each morning at 6 o'clock in the morning to cool off before the heat of another summer day! It was a mystery to us all how she was so wet in the mornings as she would be back inside her pen before most alarm clocks sounded. I didn't believe it until I witnessed it for myself as I followed her early one morning. Both dogs were so much a part of my world and there's not enough space here to tell more of their story, but they were an integral part of my childhood into college years and a significant factor in development.



"Poker Game" by Cassius Marcellus Coolidge
Oil Painting on Canvas, 1894

Dogs Playing Poker

Few paintings reach a status of popularity in fine art, yet "*Dogs Playing Poker*" as a series created an ironic twist that the human condition needed something to laugh about. "*Poker Game*" was the initial spark of an idea in which Cassius Marcellus Coolidge painted the first image in 1894 for the tobacco industry which took notice and commissioned Brown & Bigelow Advertising to create an entire series based on the idea in which dogs mimicked human behavior to sell cigars and alcoholic products.



"A Friend in Need" by Cassius Marcellus Coolidge
Oil Painting on Canvas, 1903

Considered part of the Kitsch movement in the arts intended to be throwaway home decor canvases more for conversation pieces than fine art, the series began to howl generations afterwards. Indeed, such a ridiculous idea portraying dogs with the same entertainment as humans seemed more iconic than any classic culture from history!

The series became such a phenomenal sensation and can be seen as decor on the walls of numerous films, television shows, and theatrical productions. As a result, it begs the question if life imitates art or vice versa. No criticism about artistic style can ever be defined as the popularity of the series was one that defied all the principles that broke through the barriers. "Poker Game" sold for \$658,000 at an auction in 2015 as fine art has become a business enterprise.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogs_Playing_Poker



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

Truth is often stranger than fiction and the “*Dog Days of Summer*” became a novel idea within my own mind to articulate words just as expressive as putting paint onto a canvas. The challenge for me would be more of a commitment to test my endurance with a story that contained more than a few thought balloons to tell a story. Writing is relatively natural for me, but I had only written in short form or in a series presentation, yet wanted to eventually complete a body of work to prove something to myself that I could work through the process of a literary attempt.

It took a tragic experience in life for me to eventually turn something that went horribly wrong in reality to write a fantastic tale of adventure. Rex, my Jack Russell Terrier ran away and was missing for several days. The circumstances surrounding his departure and my efforts to find him were the key components that led me to become more passionate about life and fight through the turbulence with persistence as we don’t realize what we have until it’s gone.

The true story began in late June 2012, but it took a couple of years for me to go through the process of reflection, develop the story I thought valuable of my time, sacrifice, and the energy it would take for me to work through such an ambitious idea. Like most creative projects, it begins with an excitement with possibilities and oftentimes leads you in directions you weren’t expecting. Creativity is an ebb and flow of ideas amorphous through conceptualization that takes you through various layers and different planes of thought that differs from simply following a pre-existing template built for those without the skills for enhanced problem-solving solutions.



MISSING



White Jack Russell Terrier named REX

The flier I designed, printed and posted throughout the subdivision and took to Veterinary Clinics throughout Gwinnett County. Rex was returned by an unknown source to a vet clinic near Suwanee, Georgia.

Determined to see the story through to the end, it became as much an epic challenge within my own ambitions as much as a fantastic story I hoped would inspire readers. Articulation is a rare quality and one that tests boundaries of structures with the building blocks of self-confidence. All I needed was some

reassurance as I stretched out my legs onto the floor underneath my computer as Rex would stir at my feet with approval. Introspective throughout, "Dog Days of Summer" was as much a personal challenge as well as a project in which helped me discover new realms of creativity.

Inspiration is always key to creative efforts and there was enough imagination based on realistic circumstances that encouraged me to spend so much of my time to write a complete novel.

As an artist I draw more from visual communication, yet have always felt words can be as expressive through literature as visualiazation is to the arts. I often toggle between the two and that may be why I am such a fan of Sequential Art. Both forms are respectful to an audience that appreciates either one or both. More information about the book and the first draft can be read on my website as I often go through the story and update from time to time as it was written in as much haste as I wanted to find Rex in the end. Thank God for Small Favors that became a Huge undertaking that worked out in the end.

https://graphicasyllumweb.com/Dog_Days_of_Summer_Main.html



SAVED BY THE **DEVIL**

Forgive me if you've heard this story before, but those sins from my past were protected by some beast of burden and it's the truth. "Devil" was the name of my parents German Shepherd when I was barely able to crawl. I was too young to remember, but big enough to crawl out of my baby crate into a whole new world of curiosity.

So, I was ambitious! It's not my fault that I had an inner desire to explore the world around me. I blame my parents for not securing me at such a pivotal time in my development (LOL!) Yet I was determined to go beyond the boundaries set before me even as a child and soon found a way through or over the baby crate to begin crawling along the floor to new destinations.

Selfish, perhaps...but if you were cooped up in a confined area all day, wouldn't you want to see what opportunities awaited? Rules were meant to be broken and I found my inner rebelliousness to challenge those that wanted me to become a slave to some system of containment.

The back door had a screen and I was crawling as fast as I could because I could easily penetrate those weakened wires of resistance. Even as a baby, I was an unstoppable force to be reckoned and my determination was building with every inch I crawled along the back hallway.

"BARK!"

I was distracted by some noise from behind me.

"BARK! BARK!"

I couldn't understand human words at that point, let alone a dog's language, but I had a good sense of the 'warning' tone. That didn't stop my objective of just a few more spaces to crawl to freedom.

Mom was busy multi-tasking in the kitchen with cooking dinner and washing dishes. Unaware I had escaped from the crib as her focus was on other priorities, she suddenly felt a nudge from behind.

"Devil!" she shouted from the sudden distraction accompanied by a few more barks. "Shoo! Go lay down."

As mom returned to her kitchen duties, Devil grabbed her belt with his long snout and began to pull her towards the next room. Tugging fiercely, mom soon was led to discover the empty crib.

The willpower of a baby is just as strong as others as I had made it through the back door and just beyond the house ready to explore the vast wonders of the world. Fortunately, I had not gone too far as Devil took the lead to show mom where I had crawled.

I was quickly recovered and placed back into my crate once again. No harm, no foul, right? I was then scolded for my outlandish behavior as I had no idea coyotes were prominent in the wilderness while living in Athens, Tennessee.

I've heard the story told back to me through the years as if I could remember, but I have no recollection of the event at such a young age. Yet, if the truth is told, I was saved by the "Devil!"

Gallery of Friends

Gidget and I are enjoying life together during a worldwide pandemic, and although we stay active and busy...we miss our friends from near and far away. So here is a gallery of friends to honor those that are blessed with pets that help get them through the challenges!



“Roo”

Powell, Tennessee



“Oakley”

Norris, Tennessee



“Summer”

Atlanta, Georgia



“Pongo”

Powell, Tennessee



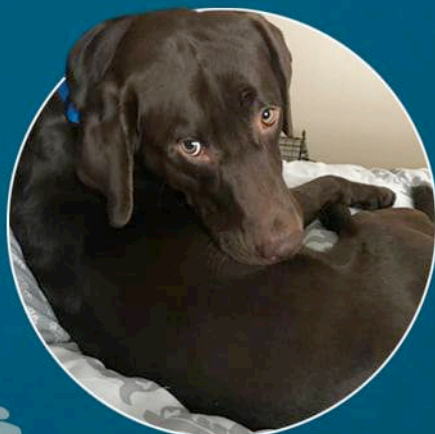
“Vincent Von Jefferson”

Knoxville, Tennessee

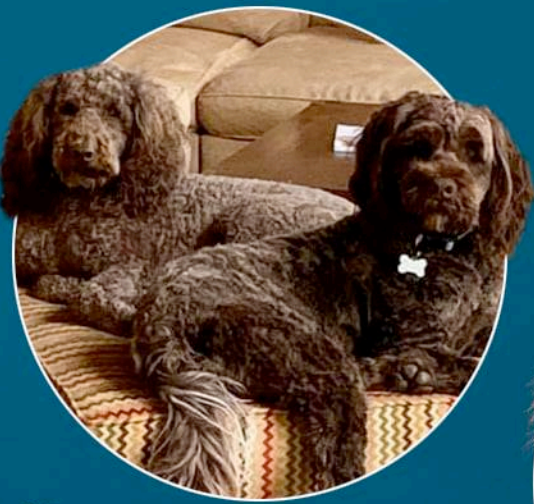


“Laynee”

Knoxville, Tennessee




“Raider” Murfreesboro, Tennessee



 "Brodie and Winston"
Powell, Tennessee




 "Leo"
Atlanta, Georgia




 "Shiloh"
Knoxville, Tennessee



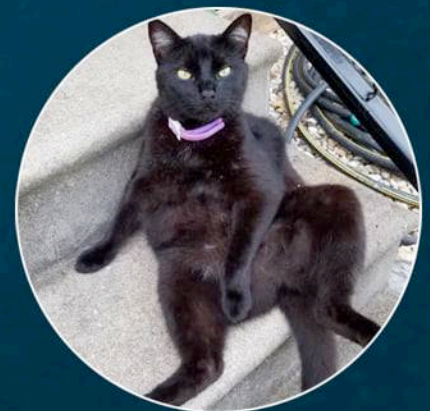
 "Gracie and Jeb"
Powell, Tennessee



 "Milo and Daisy"
Powell, Tennessee



 Pearl, Lucky, Rosie, Tazer, and Holmes - Tennessee



Hey! Waitamminute! This is a dog special...Who let the cat in?



Hope for the best, yet prepare for the worst are the extremes in life that follow a pattern of color along a spectral trail that comes full circle. "The Rainbow Bridge" is often relative to a pet passing from earth to Heaven, yet I believe we only see half of the reality in nature. The spirit of the soul must contain energy which is transformed from one to another. At least, that's how I imagine inspiration becomes a factor as there seems to be a continuous cycle that manifests within our soul to propel through time in a variety of colors and emotions.

Rex, my Jack Russell Terrier had lived a life of 17 years through so many challenges and it became a matter of reflecting upon what those years meant to us both. Honestly, it was a book based on so many fond memories that I would dry my tears each night thinking how special and blessed I was to have a companion that meant more to me than anything else. We shared so many triumphant victories and had to face obstacles and disappointments in which life becomes a dramatic affair. Dog years are multiplied by human standards and we are lucky to have pets that reach our own, yet Rex carried so much of the weight that he lifted off my shoulders with so much joy during the most difficult times and I felt compelled to write a book to honor the time we shared. Each chapter followed a color from the rainbow to represent the colors that continued to spin and build in a clockwise forward progression.

Rex was such a life force for me in that he inspired me to keep chasing my dreams no matter what obstacles were in my path. Nothing ever stopped him from returning with the ball that I would throw for him to chase!

I designed the novel as if each chapter of our life together were a color from the rainbow. As a color artist and one who understands the psychology of color intrinsic to how it relates to human emotions, the book turned more philosophical as I made my way through, but I wanted to keep the story simple as if each chapter had its own dynamic hue of distinction.

I was writing a memoir novel at a time when I knew Rex would no longer be laying at my feet. It was hard to imagine, but I was preparing for the worst and hoping for the best as the memories flooded my mind with the full spectrum range of emotions that colors could create. I must admit to the tears that ran down my face as I wrote so many words to best describe my feelings. Perhaps the most heartfelt story I've ever written, but it was more therapeutic for me to release my efforts through such a creative process before I could cope with the reality that I would need to unleash him and allow him to chase colors along the rainbow bridge.

The Rainbow Bridge is a metaphor for a cycle of life that leads to pet heaven. I think the colors of the rainbow go through both heaven and earth as we can only see half of the full circle that is in continuous motion throughout life's existence. The design is Rex in the middle of the two worlds as a blessing to both worlds while the colors appear to cycle through in motion.

Rex loved to chase balls, no matter what color as we are all chasing something in life. Where did it go? Down the hill and into the creek...or into the woods...or did that ball go beyond where expected? There was never a ball I threw that Rex never recovered as it became its own metaphor. Chase that ball or dream until you find it!

We both matured together along the way as more responsibility was added. I was at my peak as an artist as opportunities for us both led to great adventures and new opportunities. We shared more joy than sorrow as Rex was not one to allow any excuse to become a barrier to his determination. Trust me when I tell you I tried my best to contain him!

Life is majestic and full of colorful observations through the eyes of pets. My Jack Russell Terrier knew me better than I knew myself. He would already be at the door of where I intended to go. "How did he know THAT?" I would often wonder.

Hope for the best and prepare for the worst in life. Inspire and go for your dream. That's what Rex trained me to do. I guess I was his pet more than he was mine.

https://graphicasylumweb.com/The_Rainbow_Bridge.html



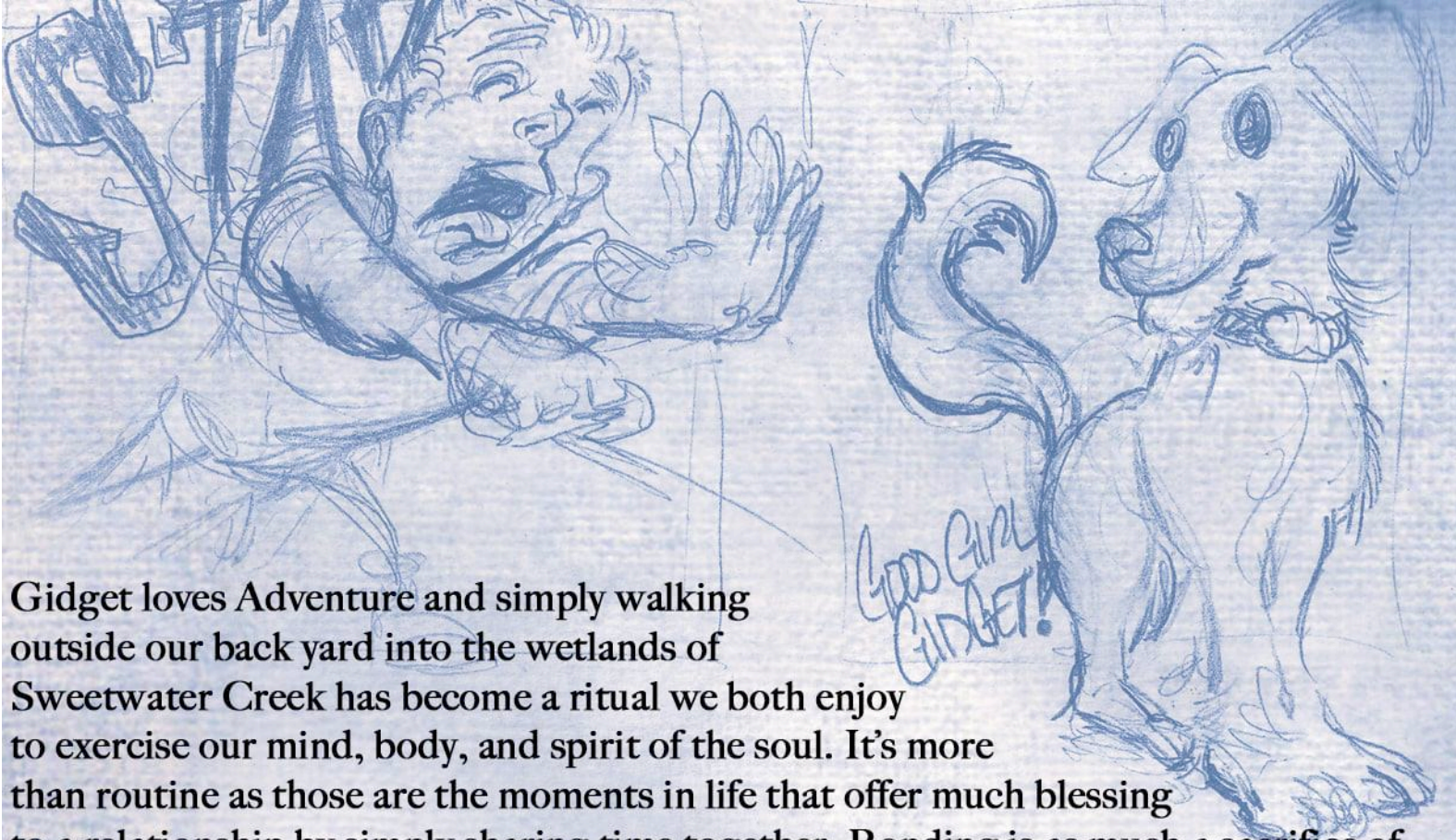
Gidget's Adventures

Gidget continues to inspire my creativity with a new series of childrens' books I have ideas to create for such a time when I can devote more attention. It began as a simple story that grew into larger context as my latest dog quickly kickstarted my heart after a few years of turmoil. She will be going through many fantastic adventures through art, literature, and companionship, but her real story is one that any dog may find inspiring.

At the age of 98, my grandmother passed away just last year as she had Gidget and a few cats to comfort her in her late years. I had just been down to visit her months before she died when I noticed Gidget...or rather she noticed me and jumped onto my lap. Time is never certain to any degree and it wasn't long before I lost both my grandmother and my dog.

The memory of Rex was still prominent on my mind as his 17 years were a blessing. I wasn't quite certain I was ready for another dog when my cousin asked if I wanted Gidget. I took a few minutes to consider as the conversation continued with legal issues concerning my late grandmother. As if the spirits of the earth spoke, I broke the train of thought and accepted the proposal. I had a new dog.

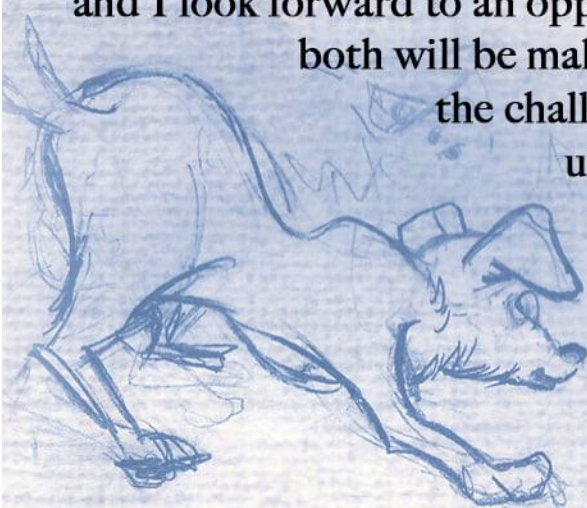
Decisive moments come unexpectedly and there's not enough time to really consider the consequences beyond your own imagination as I made a commitment to ensure she would be given a home and life of fulfillment. Gidget soon took my world to a new level as if she shook the ground beneath my feet wanting to explore.



Gidget loves Adventure and simply walking outside our back yard into the wetlands of Sweetwater Creek has become a ritual we both enjoy to exercise our mind, body, and spirit of the soul. It's more than routine as those are the moments in life that offer much blessing to a relationship by simply sharing time together. Bonding is as much a sacrifice of time than a discipline of commands and our adventures go beyond the forest of our backyard woods that takes us both to the limits of our imagination.

Freedom becomes a theme in that Gidget often learns the sacrifices she must make to earn those rewards. A simple story that contains a lesson that parents and children will enjoy. Gidget's Adventures will mimic classic literature with a twist on how the story comes full circle from her perspective in finding freedom in a variety of ideals that support moral decisions.

At this stage I am still developing the stories and have only a few sketches to share as the initial spark became a flame of ambition. Creativity is a sacrifice of time as well and I look forward to an opportunity to develop the idea further. Meanwhile, we both will be making our own adventures in life and working through the challenges we face that will ultimately lead us to new and unexpected directions.



Below is a link in which I hope to have available to showcase the project as I intend to pursue the progress. It will also contain photographs taken on our explorations as references.

graphicasylumweb.com/Gidgets_Adventures.html

PET PEEVES!

“Pet peeves” are particular annoyances that we as a society understand to be a personal argument in which there are things we dislike but are forced to accept. The phrase itself is my own “pet peeve” as dislikes should not be attached to our pets. The world needs a new expression to consider. How about, “Off the Leash” or “Rabid thoughts!” At this point there’s literally something to offend anyone looking for something critical and it’s hard not to jump on the bandwagon of opinion.

But here’s a story that I experienced in which altered my mindset in how pet peeves can turn one’s pattern of thinking. I was so proud of Rex as I had trained and taught him so many commands and he was incredibly disciplined on his own that I never used a leash when taking him to the public park. Clearly, there were signs posted that I simply ignored because I could justify my own decision to allow Rex to roam free. There were never any issues and he was a child and chick magnet everytime I paraded him through the public park that was shared by so many people with a variety of interests.

One morning as I walked around the lake area in which joggers could calculate their running abilities, a woman stopped in her tracks to chastize me for not having my dog on a leash. Our very brief conversation may have had a few vulgarities thrown in for good measure, but the result was something that had more distance and endurance than I could see at the time.

I had become arrogant in thinking I was special not to obey the rules of society as Rex was such a disciplined pet. I then had interactions with other pet owners that had no control over theirs and began thinking more about the jogger that had no idea about another’s judgement. It makes sense to keep your pet on a leash more for others’ benefit of security than your own sense of judgement.

From that point on, I kept Rex on a leash in public places simply because I finally understood the shared nature of public property and that not every owner has the right to make exceptions. Indeed, After teaching Rex so much in life, it was as if he was taking me to school as a responsible pet owner!

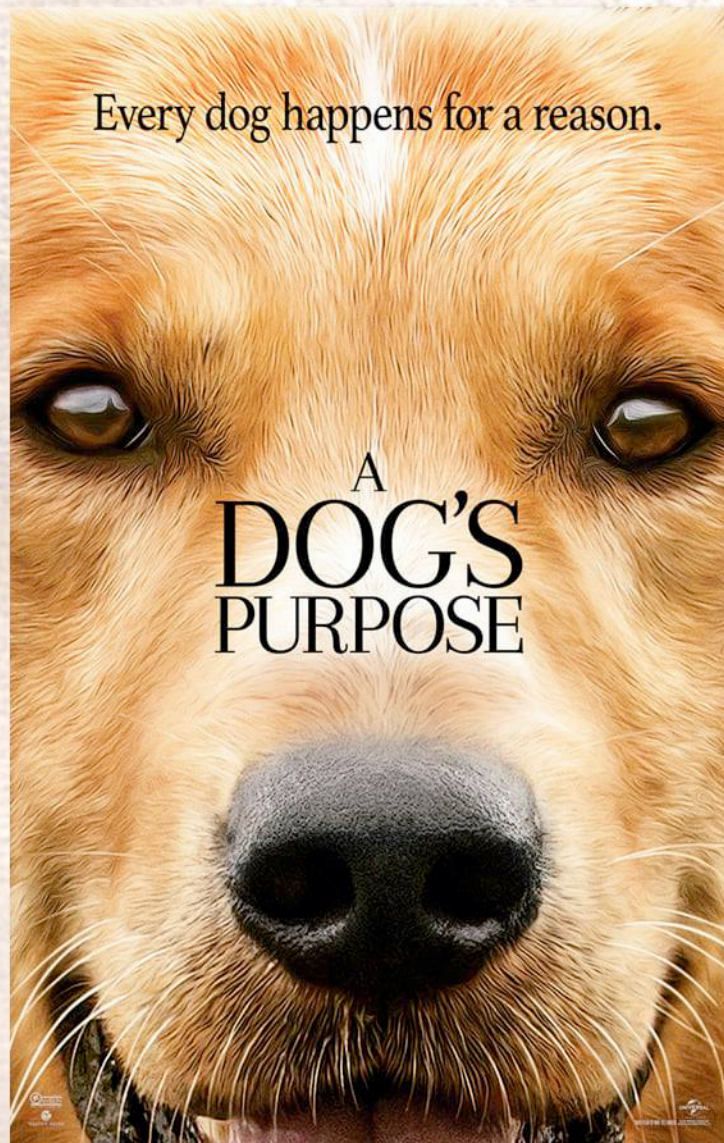
A DOG'S PURPOSE

Everyone loves a good family movie in which a dog is the star, but this one stands out in that it was created as a story to heal those suffering from the loss of a dog. The book's premise comes from true-life circumstances in which the author became heartbroken from the death of her dog. In an effort to lift her spirits, her fiancée explained that dog's were spirits themselves and roamed from one to another, which ultimately led to the best-selling novel on the New York Times and became a movie with a sequel and other similar titles.

On a personal note, the movie was suggested for me to watch as I knew Rex was no longer living a life of convenience. Although he was cognizant and active, he was blind and had other health issues that would become more painful with age. This movie helped me get through that psychological fear of not having my companion that had been so prominent in my life for 17 years. It was the toughest decision I've had to make in life to even consider putting him to rest.

Our last years together were special and helped to spark much of my own creative efforts. "My Dog Skip" was another movie we both watched together as it highlights a Jack Russell Terrier changing a boy's life into a man of responsibility. Dogs do have a purpose for those that are willing to give them the time and attention they deserve and allow life to propel forward despite the challenges and setbacks.

Pets in general are there to comfort us and keep us company as well as a convenient distraction from other stresses in which they remind us how special we are when nobody else gives credit to our worth. It's a small sacrifice to share a life with a pet because they become majestic and provide inspiration to those that understand a dog's purpose.

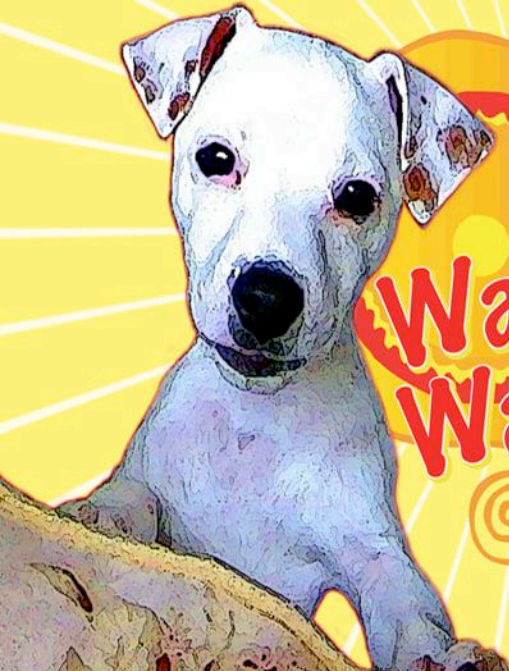




Let's Play!

STORY AND ART
BY
CHRIS BALLARD





**Wake Up!
Wake Up!**

It's the Start of a Brand New DAY

Wake Up! Wake Up!

It's TIME for ME to PLAY

OPEN the Blinds, Get out of BED

You're Laying there like a SLEEPY HEAD

Wake Up!



Get Up!

Get UP!

It's TIME for ME to EAT

Get Up!

Get UP!

Now FILL my BOWL with TREATS



I'm Looking around for Something to CHEW
- But all I have is this Leather Shoe

Get Up!



**LET'S GO!
LET'S GO!**

OPEN UP the DOOR

**LET'S GO!
LET'S GO!**

TAKE ME for a STROLL



I Want to be OUT in the SUN
The DAY has ONLY Just Begun

LET'S GO!



Let's Play!
Let's Play!
With Squeaky Little Toys
Let's Play!
Let's Play!

With All the Girls and Boys

Throw the **BALL** as Far as You Can
and I will **FETCH** again and again



Let's Play!



Let's RUN!
Let's RUN
And Chase the Setting Sun

Let's RUN!
Let's RUN
Until the Day is Done

Over the Mountains and through the Hills
As Fast as We Can, Like Spinning Wheels

Let's RUN!



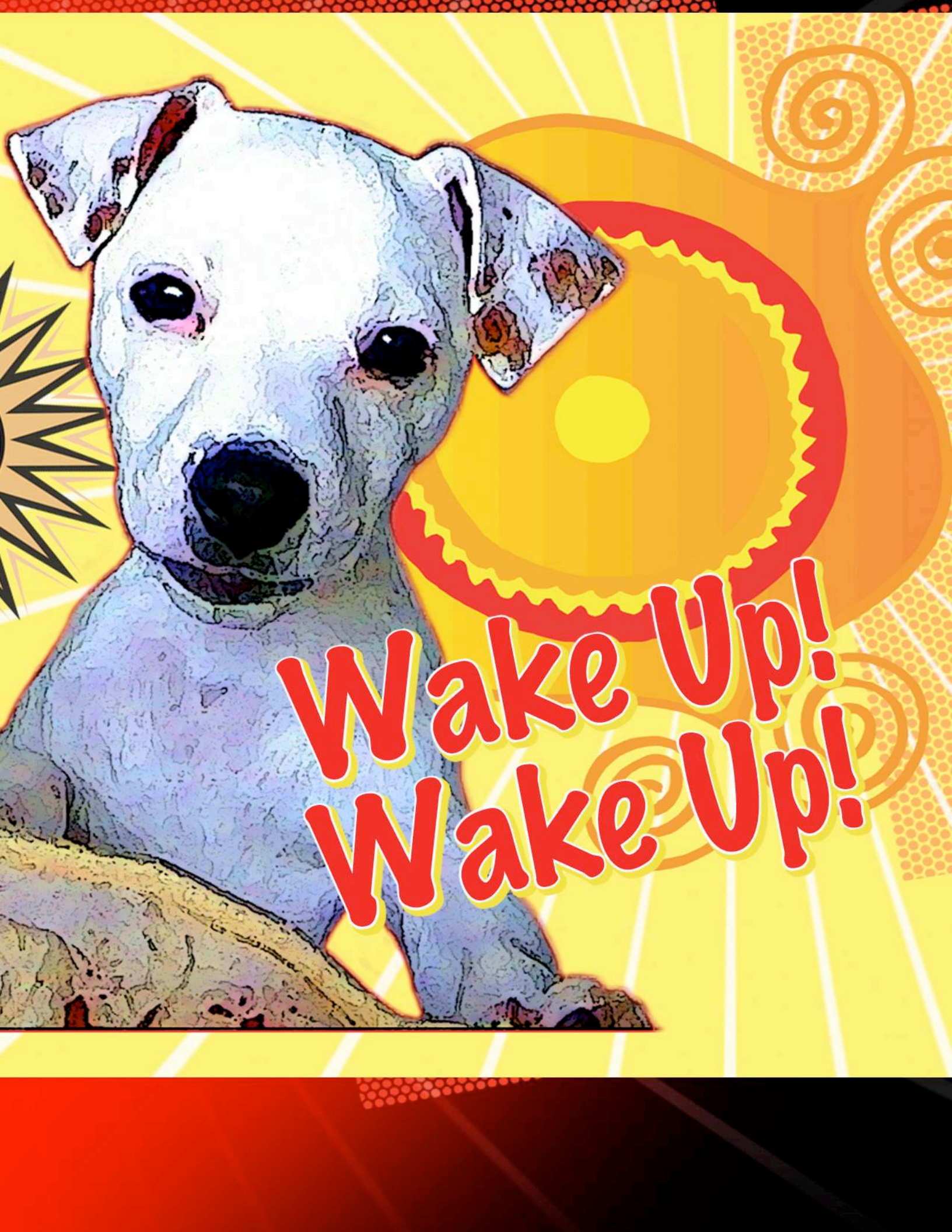
To Sleep
To Sleep

It's TIME to go to BED



To Sleep...To Sleep...
To Rest my Weary Head

I'm Tired from all the Exercise
I Just need to Close my Eyes
To Sleep...



**Wake Up!
Wake Up!**



This issue dedicated to Rex
and ALL DOGS for the LOVE
and JOY they bring
and wishing
HAPPINESS
to those that spend
time devoted to
our PETS!