

Arts

WELCOMING A NEW PUPPY

The first day of spring, followed closely by the observances and fun rituals of the Easter holiday, turns our thinking toward new life and renewal. What better way to rejuvenate your spirits than with a new puppy? I know, I listen to the objections from those of you who come in to buy senior pet food or investigate remedies for the problems of aging pets. It goes something like this: "After this, I'm through. No more pets for me. It's (a) just too heartbreaking to say goodbye, (b) too much work, (c) I want to enjoy my freedom from responsibilities, or (d) I just can't go through this again."

All true statements, to be sure. Because we typically outlive our pets, experiencing all their life stages, I'll be the first to agree that it can be a daunting journey. I can certainly relate, with a household and shop now replete with geriatric pets. But that's a topic for another week, and if I were a betting person, for most of us, soon the gap will widen enough to need to be filled. After all, there is nothing more fun than a new puppy.

Of course, we get to see new puppies all the time at the shop; this is one of our major perks. But it's our newest addition at Geronimo's, Diesel, the now 4-month old French Bulldog, that has us in closer touch with the joys and challenges of puppyhood. Diesel belongs to our Office Manager, Kristina, and he perfectly underscores what is just so special about connecting with a companion animal. Just looking at him makes you laugh. His expression is perpetually quizzical and his demeanor bounces between macho and goofy. His vocal range is incredibly amusing because he makes sounds unlike any canine I have



ever heard before. As a first-time puppy owner, Kristina is doing it right. She has heeded advice and is using the right tools to help her new puppy grow into a well-mannered adult.

If you have never had a new puppy, or if it has been a long time since you have had a puppy, you might have forgotten just how much

work is involved in raising them. In fact, you should start your preparations before your puppy even comes home. And many of you do. Just the other day, a young man came into the shop to purchase a crate, collar and leash, toys, new dishes and food before he picks up his new puppy. Another new customer, a single, mature woman who hasn't had a puppy in years, has been in at least three times, gathering supplies, asking questions and finding out about training classes.

Getting basic supplies and planning for training are very important steps in new puppy parenting, but there are also other areas you need to consider. You should think about your regular schedule and how you will manage your puppy's needs and your new responsibilities. Puppies need to be fed, groomed, played with, trained and taken outside. The entire family can participate in these activities, but arranging a schedule in advance so that everyone knows their responsibilities will help.

Of course, feeding is crucial, and your breeder or the vet can advise about preferred formulas and feeding. Usually a small puppy requires meals three times a day for the first four months or so. Your schedule should include a lunch time visit to handle this needed meal, including time for a potty break.

One of the most important tasks will be house-training. Young dogs and small dogs need to have

several potty breaks during the day. A general rule is to plan on outings every two to three hours, and probably once during the night for the first few months. Plan scheduled breaks just after waking up in the morning or after naps, following a play session, after eating and before bedtime.

Getting your puppy off on the right foot medically is important too. Investigate your options for veterinary care and schedule an appointment to see the vet of your choice before you even bring your puppy home. A vet appointment within the first few days of your new pup's arrival is helpful to check for health problems, set up a vaccination schedule, answer any of your questions and familiarize your puppy with the vet.

Puppies are expensive, from the food they need to essential supplies, toys and health care. If you need to think about how your family's income will accommodate these increased demands on its dollars, plan a budget so these costs won't come as a surprise.

Finally, puppy proof your home. A crate is invaluable, not only for purposes of training, but as a place to keep your puppy safe when you can't watch him. Just like little children, everything is novel and goes into the mouth. Clear out the hazards and the valuables so that puppy will stay out of trouble.

Before you know it, your puppy will be beyond that puppy stage, but your preparations and hard work will assure a delightful and loving addition to your family life. ■

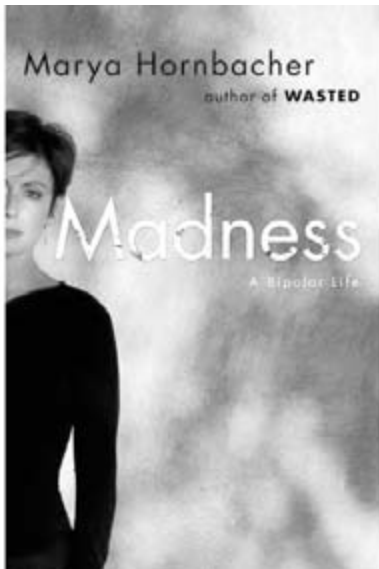
Jan Jaeger is owner of Geronimo's, Ltd., Nantucket's pet supply and gift shop and is a member of Dog and Cat Writer's Associations of America (DWAA and CWA). Her pets at home are Junior, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever and two cats. At the shop are the cats, Messrs. Fish and Chips, Flower Bunny, Millie guinea pig and two budgies. Send e-mail to jan@geronimos.com.

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MITCHELL'S BOOK CORNER
54 Main Street, 228-1080

"Madness: A Bipolar Life"
by Marya Hornbacher



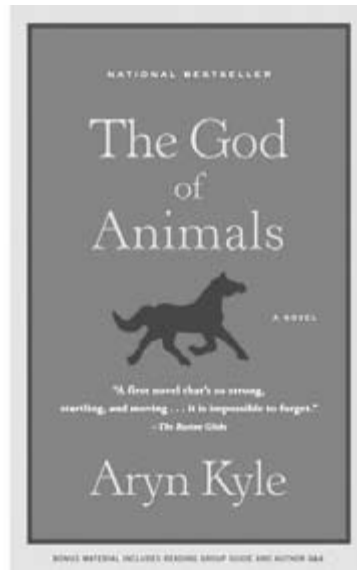
barring her life once again to introduce us to the issue behind the symptom: she is bipolar. Marya lets us in to hear her private thoughts, her feelings of confusion because she cannot control her life and her fight to live with bipolar illness. As a young girl she was considered unruly when manic and difficult when depressed. She refused to allow the illness to control her, however, and her battle reveals a strength of character and stubbornness that has helped her live life one day at a time. For anyone who is bipolar, or anyone who has a loved one who is bipolar, this memoir will bring the subject out in the open so that it can be understood. The appendix contains bipolar facts, like 5.8 million American adults have bipolar disorder, as well as a list of helpful websites. Marya's courage is a wonderful step in the right direction in this country's discussion on mental illness.

—Lucretia Voigt,
Mitchell's Book Corner

NANTUCKET BOOKWORKS
25 Broad Street, 228-4000

"The God of Animals"
by Aryn Kyle

For the excitement of discovery and the hope they can give us, good first novels rule. Aryn Kyle's debut has a charming narrator in Alice Winston, who tells us the story of her lonely thir-

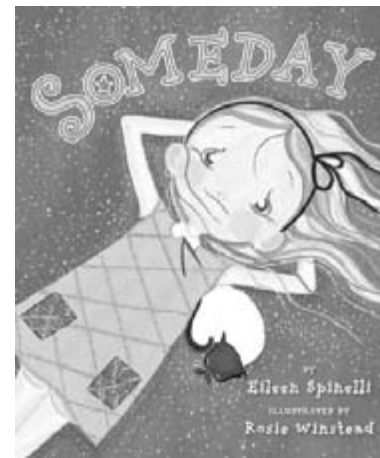


teenth year. She feels abandoned by her older sister Nona, the family star, a beauty and a riding champion, who has run off and married a young cowboy. Her father is distracted, scrambling to find riding students and horse boarders to keep their family stable going. Her mother can offer little help: mysteriously traumatized, she retired to her bedroom when Alice was a baby and has stayed there pretty much ever since. And the ghost of a drowned schoolmate looms over all of Alice's attempts to solve the puzzle of her family and to claim her own life. It's a good story.

—Dick Burns,
Nantucket Bookworks

NANTUCKET ATHENEUM
1 India Street, 228-1110

"Someday"
by Eileen Spinelli,
illustrated by Rosie Winstead



A young girl dreams about her future, "someday," and contrasts these dreams with her current reality, "today," on alternating pages. While the present features humble everyday activities, such as feeding her fish, it takes only a small leap to see the connection with her big plans, in this case swimming with dolphins. In poetic descriptions, Spinelli's first person narrative invites us to share a little girl's large dreams, while Winstead's watercolor and cut-paper illustrations have their own pastel, dream-like quality. Recommended for ages 4-8, and a good read-aloud and discussion-starter about kids' own "somedays." ■

—Maggie Head,
Nantucket Atheneum