



Paw Prints

A Newsletter for the Friends
and Supporters of
The Animal League
of Green Valley

Vol. XXXIX Issue 1 Spring 2025



A Cautionary Tale

Meandering With Mr. B

By: Linda Moser

Several years ago, I adopted two cats from TALGV to provide companionship for each other. But, when Mr. B (aka Benny, Boo Boy, and BB), lost his feline playmate, I decided that he needed a new “enrichment” activity, and thought I’d come up with the perfect solution. What better way than to combine a heretofore forbidden taste of the outdoors with some sun time reading on my part. The best of both worlds: he’d be safe on a harness and leash in my yard, and I could relax and enjoy a good book.

Challenge #1: Harness + Leash

OK, I should have known that with a cat, it wasn’t going to be easy. The first task was getting the harness ON. Next was attaching the leash and letting him walk around indoors to get the feel. We had many arguments, but after two weeks, amazingly, Mr. B accepted his new gear.

Challenge #2: The Real Outdoors

I purchased a 30-foot tie-out leash, envisioning my sitting in a chaise while he spent time bird watching and safely wandering the yard. The problems were many. There are myriad bushes and trees in my yard, and since walking in a straight line is anathema to cats, much of my time was spent untangling the leash. Also, “the grass is greener” mindset reared its ugly head, and a beeline to the fence (and the end of the leash) made peaceful relaxation impossible.

So...to avoid the entanglement problem, I thought: let’s use a shorter leash, and with me in the driver’s seat, traverse the outside perimeter of the house. My

rationale was that, should he ever escape the house, he would be familiar with his surroundings and always able to find his way home. It worked only too well! But as with most critters (humans included), the pull of “greener grass” is always in play, and so we wandered further afield into the more natural, ungroomed parts of my property.

Note that I have not used the word “walk.” Mr. B doesn’t *walk*, he meanders, he sits, he freezes in hopes of catching a bird (never happens!), or he sometimes just plops down to watch the world go by.



Challenge #3: The Commitment

Unlike most felines, Mr. B is not particularly active at night, but come sunup and sundown, he’s ready for his outing. Having had many dogs in my life, I’m used to the twice-a-day walking ritual, but dogs are more understanding if it doesn’t happen *exactly* on time. Not so with Mr. B, whose internal clock doesn’t miss a microsecond. When I resisted, he insisted. It took him time and some

serious caterwauling, but he’s happy now that I’ve finally been trained. I would still prefer to take these strolls on *myschedule*, but Mr. B has had me wrapped around his paws for a long time, so I acquiesce.

The Verdict Is In

Would I do it again? Yes and no. For both pet and walker, spending time safely outdoors, even on a leash, presents challenges for dogs and cats, especially in Arizona. You

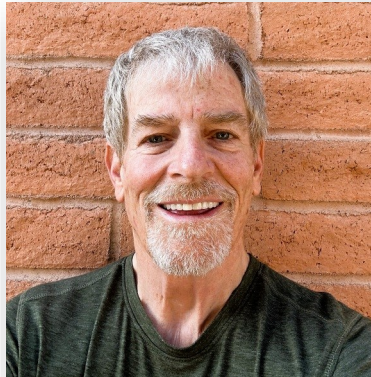
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Meet TALGV's New Board Member

David Messick

I began volunteering at The Animal League in 2010 after moving from Minneapolis, where I had spent 15 years as a nursing home administrator and two years as a realtor. While working in Green Valley as a realtor, I volunteered to be a Sunday dog handler. When I transitioned into full retirement during the COVID-19 pandemic, I deepened my involvement with TALGV.

In March 2021, I adopted my third TALGV dog, Joker (AKA Ollie), a 4-month-old puppy. His dog-reactive behavior led me to connect with TALGV's training team who introduced me to the value of positive reinforcement training. From Joker's socialization with other dogs at Anamax



Park, I realized that most of TALGV's dogs labeled "high energy" or "dog reactive" needed opportunities for off-leash play as part of their training. Motivated by this, I advocated for the creation of an off-leash play area; and its importance was confirmed when

a generous benefactor funded TALGV's Cochran Dog Play Yard.

Today, I hold several roles at TALGV: Dog Care handler and coordinator, Canine Good Citizen (CGC) trainer, Play Group's Wrangler, and Training Team member.

Beyond direct care, I am working to strengthen TALGV's relationships with the other businesses in Duval Commerce Park and the community at-large, to ensure that we remain a model of responsible dog handling and a source of pride for Green Valley. TALGV is a vital resource for this community, and I am committed to supporting its future success.

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Dogs Playing for Life™

For several days last December, pandemonium reigned at TALGV's Cochran Dog Play Yard.

Dogs filled the yard-- romping, barking and wrestling, while runners hustled back and forth to the kennels to switch out the animals. Play yard handlers kept calm control over the doggie participants-- leashing some, encouraging others, spritzing water as a deterrent when necessary. Groups of volunteers watched the action, pointing out their favorites and laughing at the dogs' antics. What was going on?

It was a three-day training session with Dogs Playing For Life (DPFL), a national organization that helps shelters like TALGV implement daily playgroups for their canine residents. Their "Every Dog, Every Day" seminar provided exciting out-of-kennel play sessions for the dogs and a wealth of information for participating volunteers and interested observers.

What Does DPFL Advocate?

Founded in 2009 by Aimee Sandler, Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL) believes in giving shelter dogs a better quality of life through play time and social interaction with other dogs. Group play can increase physical, emotional and behavioral health, which helps each dog become more adoptable.

DPFL research shows that for most canines, behavior deteriorates the longer they remain at the shelter; and many dogs react to the stress and isolation of life in a kennel by behaving aggressively. Especially for large dogs, this behavior may block their chance to show their true personalities and makes their adoption difficult. Dogs in playgroup, however, reveal their personalities more accurately than they do at the intake process, while kenneled, or during formal evaluations. Accurate assessments result in better adoption matches and more dogs finding forever homes.

Playgroups also maximize the time spent out of the kennel. DPFL estimates that 20 to 30 minutes playing with each other is the equivalent

of two hours of walk time per dog. After playgroups, dogs return to their kennels tired, calmer, less stressed and ready to engage in individual training for a specific behavior or to meet with potential adopters in a relaxed, positive manner.

Working With TALGV Volunteers

TALGV's play yard dog handlers—we call them "Wranglers"—have been managing playgroups since 2022, but this was their chance to learn from the experts.

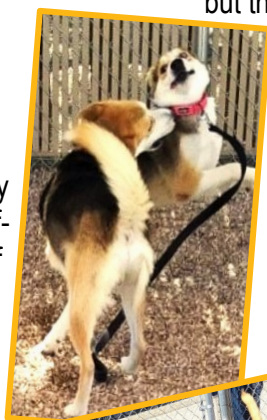
First, the DPFL team demonstrated safe and effective playgroup skills. Dogs have different play styles, and successful playgroups must accommodate that. For added group safety, the DPFL team kept leashes attached and/or used muzzles made of loose lightweight nylon for more aggressive dogs. Frequently, these restraints were removed once a dog showed cooperation with the trainer and the other canines in the playgroup.

Then, the Wranglers had their techniques evaluated by the DPFL team. Our Wranglers were already adapt at forming playgroups, but found that they could handle up to 10 dogs in each group with less staff (two or three) rather than one person per dog, as previously thought. Larger play groups give the dogs more chance to interact and learn from each other.

Potential dog fights were addressed, too. Wranglers learned effective techniques to manage altercations—cuing commands, interceding at the right moment, disciplining the offender and restarting the play session for the group.

Effective playgroups require cooperation from all volunteer staff, not just the Wranglers. DPFL met with other volunteers to discuss concerns about risk, canine communicable diseases, workload, time management, and other apprehensions that accompany the implementation of any new program.

(Continued on page 6)





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(Continued on page 6)

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Meandering... (Con't. from page 1)

must continually be alert for threats—cactus, rattlesnakes, bobcats or javelina. I always carry pepper spray and happily have never had to use it, but I've sometimes beaten a hasty retreat, with no objection from Mr. B, after spying a threat in our path.

On the plus side, it is good for me to get out for a walk (however stop and go it is) and take time to enjoy the sunrises and sunsets. More important, though, is the chance for Mr. B to behave like a cat. It's a great joy to see him scamper part way up a tree in hopes of catching an unsuspecting lizard—you forget how doggedly patient and immobile cats can be!

So, yes, I guess I'd do it all again, because complain as I might, the indoors just doesn't have all the fascinations of the great outdoors. And, after all, isn't the happiness of our beloved companions what pet guardianship is all about?

Dogs Playing for Life

(Continued from page 3)



Are Playgroups Beneficial?

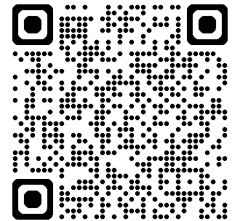
TALGV is always exploring ways to improve our pet care, provide a better environment, and increase our adoption rate. Playgroups can be one of the paths toward reaching these goals.

- ◆ Playgroups provide a more accurate picture of the dog's behavior and lead to better matches with adopters.
- ◆ Playgroups promote the dog's physical and mental health by lowering stress and increasing socialization.
- ◆ Playgroups maximize the efforts of volunteers by using fewer staff members to handle more animals.
- ◆ Playgroups boost our image—volunteers and visitors alike stop to watch the dogs at play, and they always walk away smiling.

DPFL and our Wranglers have shown that playgroups **WORK** and benefit dogs, humans, and shelters alike. We have the play space, we have the staff, and we have the commitment.

Let the Dogs Play!

Want to know more about Dogs Playing For Life? Visit their website at www.DPFL.org or use the QR code to download their training manual. They share fascinating info, delightful pictures and informative videos.



DONORS (Continued from page 5)

Fern adds, "Wanna play?
You're **THE BEST!**"



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\$1 To \$99

An additional 540 donors—
and TALGV appreciates
the support from
each of you!

TALGV does not
sell, lease, or share
your contact
information with any
other organization.

TALGV Highlights from 2024

AWESOME DONORS



▪Received support from **1375 loyal and generous donors**. Thanks to them, TALGV continues to help the animals.



THE ATTIC THRIFT STORE

▪Raised **\$226,299** for animal care from Thrift Store and Estate sales.



AT THE SHELTER

▪Loved, fed, housed, and provided vaccinations + medical care to **945 animals—566 cats and 379 dogs**—including 32 pets transferred in from other animal rescue organizations.



ADOPTIONS

▪Found forever homes for **819 animals—502 cats and 317 dogs**.



VOLUNTEERS

▪Worked **133,838 hours**, the equivalent of **69 full-time employees**.



AWARDS

▪Voted 2024's "**Best Non-Profit Organization**" and "**Best Thrift Store**" by readers of the *Green Valley News* & *Sahuarita Sun*



LOST ANIMALS

▪Reunited **55 pets—41 dogs and 14 cats** with their worried owners.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



▪Provided low-cost spay/neuter services for **594 cats and dogs**.
▪Assisted **449 pets** owned by low income families with emergency medical care and euthanasia services.

IMPROVEMENTS

▪Installed a permanent heavy-duty awning over the outdoor yard, enabling our dogs to play in the shade during the summer months.
▪Re-organized The Attic and installed upgraded shelving and new display racks.
▪Purchased a van for Attic transport.



That mouse was **THIS BIG!**



What? It looked big as a **CAT** to me!

All DONATIONS ARE **Big** TO US

THANK YOU FOR GIVING



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PAID
TUCSON, AZ
PERMIT NO. 541

A Home For Every Pet

1600 W. Duval Mine Rd.
Green Valley, AZ 85614



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The Animal League of Green Valley

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TALGV is a 501(c)(3)
Not-for-Profit Organization

TALGV KENNELS

OPEN FROM 10AM TO 2PM DAILY

Appointments for adoptions & intake
provide more personalized service.

THE ATTIC THRIFT STORE

Open 5 Days Every Week

THURS, FRI, SAT, SUN & MON

WINTER HOURS (THRU APRIL 30) ~ 10AM TO 2PM

SUMMER HOURS (MAY-SEPT) ~ 8AM TO NOON

Merchandise donations accepted **ONLY**
on the 1st Sunday of each month.

TALGV's Kennels & The Attic Thrift Store
1600 W. Duval Mine Rd. Green Valley, AZ 85614
Kennels/Office (520) 625-3170 Attic (520) 625-2189

Email: info@talgv.org Website: www.talgv.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TALGV

To donate on-line, go to www.talgv.org

