

Lifestyle

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Reynolds and Fisher honored with humor, music and dance

39



A cosplayer dressed in a colorful costume waits in one of the exhibition halls during the Manga-Comic-Con at the International Book Fair in Leipzig, Germany, Saturday. Numerous visitors discover the world of illustrated stories at the fourth Manga-Comic-Con. — AP

Dig deeper before mocking 'crazy' pet parents

It's easy to jump directly to "crazy cat lady" or poke fun at "stay-at-home dog moms" when describing intense relationships between humans and their pets. But for some who spend the bulk of each day with their animals, it's more like a two-way healing labor of love. Amy Hunter, 51, stayed home in Indiana with her three kids when they were little. Years later, she took a work-from-home job after the death of her son, Jake, piled on the loss of another son who had earlier drowned.

Now her daughter is about to graduate from college and Hunter is home full time with two dogs, a brown mix rescue named Apollo, who weighs in at about 90 pounds, and a black Labrador retriever, Rubi. "I've become very, very,

very in tune with them," said Hunter, who lives in Indianapolis. "We got Rubi as a puppy after my first son died. She's been my emotional savior."

Her husband works outside the home, as a plant manager, so it's just mom and dogs during the day. "After my second son died I cried a lot. I was anxiety ridden," Hunter explained. "What I found was how much I could communicate with my dogs." Coleen Balent, 43, understands.

Requiring help

She stays home with her two kids, ages 10 and 8, as her husband works as a computer network engineer for US Navy hospitals outside their home. They've been stationed around the world and have been in the US island territory of Guam, in the western Pacific, for nearly a year. Rounding out the family are three rescue dogs, including one, 13-year-old Paolo, who has serious health issues. She and her husband found him years ago in Sicily, in a boat yard with his mouth taped shut. He had been hit by a car.

"The vet told me he wouldn't make it through the night. I took him home with antibiotics and a nebulizer and he survived," Balent recalled. "Several years later, Paolo broke his back while we were living in Charleston, South Carolina." The accident left him paralyzed, but after \$6,000 in surgery and three months of rehabilitation, he can hobble along, requiring help going up and down stairs and on and off beds. Three years ago, Paolo was diagnosed with diabetes so Balent injects him with insulin twice a day, checking his glucose levels often. "We can barely afford it, and it's a pain," she said. "I can never go anywhere for the day. I'm quite sure everyone thinks I'm crazy. Some people have flat out told me, but Paolo has seen me through two pregnancies, two severe postpartum depressions, an autoimmune disease and three moves to three different countries and continents."

For Hunter, each pet enriches her in different

ways. Her black lab got her off the couch. "She gets me moving, she gets me going. There's no sitting anymore." She even feels her long hours alone with the two have heightened their ability to communicate. It's Apollo who tells her when it's time for breakfast. He's the vocal one. Both dogs comprehend about 250 of her words. Apollo can differentiate between ball, stick and his favorite toy, a Teddy bear. "And they know what shoes I wear. If I put on running shoes, they're staying home. They don't move. If I put on just normal tennis shoes, we're walking and they go find their leashes. If I put on boots or dress shoes or something, they're not going. They know this. It's so funny," Hunter said. "I'm not the crazy dog lady. I know they're not my children, but I just feel very close to them." Stay-at-home writer Kat Faitour, who lives near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is not a "crazy" dog mom. She's a "crazy" cat mom. Faitour worked in the health care industry for more than 20 years, including her last five in a complaint department. "It was draining. The negativity finally got to me," she said. "In the midst of that, my mom became ill and passed away from ovarian cancer in 2013. I didn't have much to give after my mother died and my husband was super encouraging me to stay home and write." With her all day, every day, Faitour said, are "my boys," two nearly 8-year-old cats, including one with "100 health problems."

He's a shaggy, white-haired looker with blue eyes, and he's deaf. The product of an amateur breeder, Conan (named for Conan O'Brien) also suffers from knee and hip dislocations and two herniated discs in his back. Conan requires pain medication in the morning and steroids at night. Higgins, her large gray Norwegian forest cat, is "healthy as a horse," said Faitour, who with her husband is childless by choice. "I've got my boys," she laughed. "They're always with me, always in the room with me. That's how we roll." — AP



In this provided by Amy Hunter, John and Amy Hunter are pictured with their dogs, Apollo, left, and Rubi, a black Labrador retriever, in Brown County State Park south of their home in Indianapolis, Ind. — AP

9-inch marble statue could sell for \$3 million at auction



In this photo provided by Christie's is the 9-inch-tall marble sculpture, called the Guennol Stargazer. — AP

She's small but mighty - and she could be worth more than \$3 million. Christie's announced Friday that a 9-inch-tall marble sculpture, called the Guennol (gwehn-AHL) Stargazer, will be auctioned on April 28 in New York. The statue of a female idol from ancient Turkey dates to around 3000 to 2200 BC. It's thought that the idol was related to fertility.

About 15 nearly complete idols survive. The auctioneer says this one - like most - has a neck injury, suggesting it was ritually "killed" at the time of burial. It has button-like eyes; a vertical, carrot-shaped nose; a pear-type torso; and no discernible chest. The work, from a private collection, has been on loan at The Metropolitan Museum of Art at various times. — AP



This undated photo released by RR Auction shows a portion of a diary written in 1945 by young John F. Kennedy during his brief stint as a journalist after World War II. — AP

JFK diary written in post-World War II Europe up for auction

A diary kept by a young John F. Kennedy during his brief stint as a journalist after World War II in which he reflected on Hitler, the ambitions of the Soviet Union and the weakness of the United Nations is up for auction. The diary was written in 1945 when the 28-year-old Kennedy was a correspondent for Hearst newspapers, rubbing shoulders with world leaders and traveling through a devastated Europe. Boston-based RR Auction says the diary is expected to fetch about \$200,000 at auction April 26.

The 61-page diary, mostly typed but including 12 handwritten pages, was given by Kennedy to Deirdre Henderson, a research assistant in his campaign office in the late 1950s. "What's remarkable is what he foresaw about the future of a world he would lead 16 years later," said Henderson, who lives in the Boston area. The experiences and reflections in the diary undoubtedly influenced Kennedy's presidency, auction house officials said.

"This exceptional diary sheds light on a side of John F. Kennedy seldom explored and confirms America's enduring sense that he was one of the most qualified, intelligent and insightful commanders in chief in American history," said Bobby Livingston, RR's executive vice president. In the diary, Kennedy reflects on his time in a gutted Berlin. "On some of the streets the stench - sweet and sickish from dead bodies - is overwhelming," he wrote. He even saw

Hitler's bunker, speculating that he was not killed. "There is no complete evidence, however, that the body that was found was Hitler's body," he wrote. "The Russians doubt that he is dead." He wrote that Hitler "had in him the stuff of which legends are made." But Henderson said that should not be misinterpreted as sympathy for the German dictator.

"He said that in reference to the mystery surrounding him and not the evil he represented," Henderson said. Kennedy witnessed the territorial ambitions of the Soviet Union in negotiations to rebuild a post-war Germany and the role the US should play. "Yet, if we pull out, we may leave a political vacuum that the Russians will be only too glad to fill," he wrote. Kennedy also expressed doubt about the effectiveness of the fledgling United Nations.

"In practice, I doubt that it will prove effective in the sense of its elaborate mechanics being frequently employed or vitally decisive in deterring war or peace," he wrote. Kennedy, the 35th US president, served from January 1961 until he was assassinated in Dallas on Nov 22, 1963. The information in his diary has been published before. Henderson said she is selling it in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of Kennedy's birth this year and so it can be properly preserved. "This diary is a great testament to what he could have been as president had he not been killed so young," she said. — AP