# The CAGDU Barker

January 2022 Issue

## From the Editor

### Greetings and Woof!

I hope this new year has started in a positive manner for everyone. I know we would all love to experience healthier times for us and our furry friends. The knowledge that my guide and I can count on our CAGDU friends to be there to provide advice, support and fellowship is a great comfort to me during these challenging times. Perhaps some parts of this newsletter will provide a smile or 2.

### Thank You!

I want to take a minute to thank all those dog lovers who contributed articles to this newsletter. Without their support, this would be a scanty collection of articles. I appreciate all the informative and touching submissions. Keep them coming!

### A New Addition to the CAGDU Barker

It occurred to me that many of us enjoy reading as not only a way to learn something new, but also as a form of entertainment. AS a guide dog user, I personally enjoy reading about the training and adventures of guide dogs and their handlers. As someone who just loves dogs, I’ve enjoyed reading several books about dogs including fiction and nonfiction works. With al this in mind, I thought it might be a good idea to include reading recommendations in this newsletter. Of course your recommendations would also be welcome as well. I encourage you to contribute your book suggestions for this part of the newsletter. If you have a book or story about dogs whether they be pets, guides, or other service dogs, please send me the title, name of the author, where the book can be found, and a description of the contents. I know I am always looking for something new to read. So, I’m looking forward to receiving some new suggestions for dog related reading material.

Meet the CAGDU Board

Last October, SAGU elected it’s board. For the next 2 years, these dynamic individuals will lead and support the California Association of Guide Dog Users members as they work to improve the lives of guide teams through advocacy, education, legislative activities. The board positions and respective members follows.

President: Shannon Dillon

Vice President: Rachel Grider

Treasurer: Robert Stigile

Secretary: Roger Oberholzer

Board Member: Brookelyn Kelly

## Tango: Adventuring, Bonding and Traveling through the World:

## A Touching Tribute to a Beloved Guide and Loyal Friend

*By CAGDU Secretary Roger Oberholzer*

Tango was my hard working, loyal and always positive guide dog for over 10 years and 9 months. Tango was matched with me at the Seeing Eye in October/November 2010 and from the beginning we both knew that we would have an amazing time together.

When Tango was placed with me, I knew that we would travel quite often and that locations we would visit and explore would include Switzerland, Hawaii, Germany, and multiple States in the USA.

One of the trips I remember well is a trip we took to Switzerland in 2013. My four best Swiss friends and I decided that it would be time to go skiing in Zermatt, Switzerland. While we were in Zermatt, Tango guided us through skiers, pedestrians and he continued to be focused while he had to deal with this all-new unfamiliar environment and snow. Tango loved the snow and one of my best friends, Alain, kept on throwing snowballs for Tango during Tango’s leisure time. When the snow fell near the church and the Kindergarteners came out to go to their homes, Tango would jump in the air and try to catch the falling snow. We had such an awesome and happy time and my friends loved Tango right away. They saw that he was a dedicated guide dog but retained some of the Golden Retriever playfulness and that he was a perfectly matched companion for me. He became friends with a 120lbs. female Saint Bernard named Nana.



St. Bernard Nana on left, Roger in center, and Tango on right

Back home in the USA: After a day of guiding me through busy streets, patiently waiting by my side while I was sitting in classes I attended at universities and dealing with the various moods of other pedestrians, Tango would still have the energy to try to dismantle/hunt for the squeaker inside very wild toy snakes to protect his handler.



Tango The Independent Snake Hunter

When I had to say goodbye to Tango on July 26, 2021, it was the hardest decision I ever had to make because of my love for him. But, it was my love that gave me the strength to not let him suffer. I consider myself extremely fortunate that I could hold him while he was passing on. I am certain that we will meet again and have even more fun together. The love I have for Tango is eternal. He stayed by my side through fun, tough and sometimes dangerous situations. He never left and guided me safely for over ten years. I love you forever “Tango.” You are my Golden Retriever boy.

## Help Orchid Get Better

Below is a request for assistance from an NFBCA, SD chapter and board member.

Hi everyone! My name is Elizabeth and my guide dogs name is Orchid! Orchid is a five year old black lab golden retriever cross that has cancer and is currently in treatment. It’s starting to get really hard for us to keep up with the vet bills and I’m reaching out for help to continue getting Orchid treated. I made a page on Facebook, a group on Facebook and a GoFundMe. I will put links below. All of these have more info on what’s going on with Orchid. Please donate to the GoFundMe and if you can’t donate please share her GoFundMe and other links with friends and family! Thank you in advance!

GoFundMe:

<https://gofund.me/da3016cb>

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Orchid-A-Guide-Dogs-Journey-Fighting-Cancer-110407174765433/>

Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/434319624716251/?ref=share>

## Shame on Walmart.

### **An Excerpt from Facebook**

### **Lindsey Anne is ￼feeling angry**

I just saw a post about Walmart now selling service dog vests. PLEASE NO. This is DANGEROUS. Some people might not realize how it’s dangerous, so let me explain.

Service dogs go through hundreds, sometimes thousands of hours of specialized training in order to behave appropriately in public and to assist their disabled handlers. By selling these vests in Walmart, shoppers are encouraged to buy these and put them on their untrained pets, and possibly bring them into public establishments as an attempt to pass off their pet as a legitimate service dog. Not only is it illegal to falsely represent a pet as a service animal, but it can present a very real danger to legitimate service dog handler teams.

Let’s talk about why it's dangerous:

1. Allowing untrained animals in public accommodations is a liability. They could potentially urinate or defecate in an inappropriate area and pose a health risk or damage merchandise and cause hardship to the store. Additionally, they often cause disruptions by barking and having poor leash manners, running up to strangers, etc.

2. Even the most friendly pet can become defensive and bite out of fear in an unfamiliar place surrounded by unfamiliar people. Not to mention its unethical to put a pet through this kind of situation that they haven't been trained for and cause them unnecessary stress.

3. Untrained pets and fake service animals in public have become so common that many businesses have developed a negative view of service animals and people who utilize legitimate service dogs in order to live an independent life are facing discrimination as a result.

4. Untrained pets posing as service animals often bark, lunge, or growl at legitimate service animals as they pass and this can be dangerous in multiple ways, even if the pet never comes into direct contact with the service animal. Distractions like this can cause medical alert service dogs to miss life-saving alerts, as well as cause mobility or guide dogs to lead their handler into danger or cause the handler to fall and become injured.

5. Unfortunately, attacks on legitimate service animals by pets are not uncommon. In many cases, a service animal that has been attacked can become traumatized and forced to retire from their work. There have also been several instances of service animals being killed by pets in public. This is devastating for obvious reasons.

Walmart is one of the most common non-pet friendly places to witness shoppers bring their pets inside. At most locations, it is clearly posted outside the front doors that only service animals are allowed. I'm SHOCKED that Walmart is now selling these vests, making them easily accessible to pet parents everywhere.

If you see these vests being sold in your local Walmart, I encourage you to have a conversation with the manager of that location and request they be taken off the shelves in order to protect legitimate service dog teams.

Please don't purchase one of these vests.

On a personal note…

## An Insider’s Guide to Finding Superior Dog Food Brands,

*(From The dog food advisor Website)*

*(Article Submitted by CAGDU Member, Sammie Shipman)*

These days, there are lots of dog foods on the market. So, finding a good one can be overwhelming.

After all, on The Dog Food Advisor website alone, there are now:

* Over 950 dog food reviews
* Hundreds of product lines
* More than 4,100 recipes

So, how can you find a good brand? Here are 9 tips to help you find a superior food for your dog.

Tip #1: Check the Label

Pet food labels are loaded with lots of valuable information. Yet they can also be difficult to read. So, save yourself a lot of time and effort and…

Favor dog food brands that include multiple product lines with higher ratings.

That’s because lower rated recipes are more likely to contain:

* Less meat
* More by-products
* Controversial preservatives
* Anonymous meat ingredients

Tip #2: Consider the Company

Many dog owners tend to distrust larger pet food companies. They mistakenly believe smaller brands are more likely to make better and safer products.

However, the facts tell a different story.

Consider this: 93% of all pet foods sold in the U.S. are produced by just 3 companies — Big Heart, Mars and Purina.[1](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/choosing-dog-food/brand-guidelines/#fn-31025-1)

Yet 73 of the 88 [recall events documented on this website](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/dog-food-recalls/) during a recent 5-year period[2](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/choosing-dog-food/brand-guidelines/#fn-31025-2) are linked to products of smaller brands.[3](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/choosing-dog-food/brand-guidelines/#fn-31025-3)

In other words…

Even though smaller companies account for just 7% of the pet food and treats sold — they’re responsible for an eye-popping 83% of the recalls.

In addition, after conducting hundreds of interviews, it’s become apparent that…

A significant number of dog foods are not likely to meet the claims of nutritional adequacy printed on their labels.

That’s because many smaller companies have willingly admitted to us that they make no effort to verify the nutrient content or the safety of the foods they sell.

And there’s no law requiring any pet food company to do so, either.

The truth is, the smaller the brand, the less likely the company has the financial ability to perform all the steps needed to ensure the quality of its products.

So, although there are always exceptions, it’s important to keep in mind that larger companies are far more likely to:

* Employ real food scientists, animal nutritionists and other veterinary professionals to design their products
* Test raw materials for impurities and nutrient content
* Conduct regular safety and quality control procedures
* Own and operate their own manufacturing facilities
* Verify finished goods before they are shipped
* Maintain in-house testing laboratories

So, what should you do? Are dog foods made by larger companies better?

No, larger companies may or may not be better. However…

The smaller the dog food brand, the more critical it is for you to look beyond its label.

Tip #3: Identify the Manufacturer

Most dog owners assume their pet food company actually makes the products they sell.

However, today, many companies use third-party co-packers to manufacture some — or all — of their foods.

Yet others make their own.

In any case, whether or not a company makes its own dog food is neither good or bad. What’s more important is to…

Know the identity of the manufacturer of any brand you feed your pet.

Otherwise you’ll never be able to track its recall history or judge the safety of its products.

Tip #4 Question Product Design

What may surprise you is that there’s no legal requirement that a pet food be formulated by an animal nutritionist or any other veterinary professional.

In fact, over the years, we’ve uncovered a shocking number of dog foods that have been designed by amateurs.

So, to ensure the nutritional health of your pet, you should…

Contact each brand you’re considering and determine who actually designs its products.

By the way, just knowing who formulates a product is not enough. You’ll also want to know what qualifies that person to do so.

Tip #5: Confirm Nutrient Testing

It’s also important to know how the company can be certain each formulation is [nutritionally complete and balanced](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/frequently-asked-questions/aafco-nutrient-profiles/).

And how often nutritional content testing is actually performed.

Does the company conduct laboratory analysis? Or do they run feeding trials?

Surprisingly, we have found many (mostly smaller) companies that never do any testing at all. That’s why it’s so important to…

Find out what a company does to test each product to be sure it actually meets [AAFCO nutritional guidelines](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/frequently-asked-questions/aafco-nutrient-profiles/).

Tip #6: Investigate Ingredient Sources

No dog food can ever be magically better than the ingredients that were used to make it. Yet labels reveal little about the quality of the raw materials actually used to make the food.

Some ingredients are purchased from commodity brokers on the open market — from the cheapest bidder. Others can come from [countries known to have inferior food quality standards](https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/dog-food-industry-exposed/dog-food-chin/).

However, superior companies tend to source their ingredients only from established local or regional suppliers they do business with on a recurring basis.

What’s more, Federal law does not currently require any pet food company to disclose country of origin — or any other sourcing information — on its label.

That’s why it’s so important to…

Know the source of all ingredients that are used to make any dog food you buy. Avoid brands that will not share this information with you.

By the way, imported ingredients aren’t necessarily bad. In fact, many can be of exceptional quality. For example, some vitamin and mineral supplements are pharmaceutical grade and can actually be superior to those sourced from the U.S. or Canada.

Tip #7: Demand Transparency

Some pet food companies work hard to conceal critical information about their products.

For example, we’ve actually stumbled upon a number of companies that attempt to create an artificial sense of customer support by using voice mail to take messages. Yet no one ever returns the calls.

Some brands don’t even maintain a product website.

And others resist being questioned by independent websites like The Dog Food Advisor.

These companies make it difficult (or impossible) for us to get important answers — while blaming their own unwillingness to cooperate on the fact we are not veterinarians.

Think about it. Are there any questions presented in this article that would require the knowledge of a veterinarian to answer?

Obviously, hostile or defensive companies like these are the ones that most likely have something to hide — and should not be trusted.

For all these reasons…

Never buy any dog food made by any company that is not transparent about its products or its manufacturing practices.

After all, you have a right to know.

Tip #8: Verify Quality Control

At the time of purchase, all pet foods are at risk for containing:

* Disease-causing pathogens (Salmonella, Listeria)
* Mold toxins (aflatoxin, vomitoxin)
* Environmental pollutants
* Unsafe nutrient levels

And although many pathogens can be killed (pasteurized) during cooking, deadly toxins can remain in the food throughout the manufacturing process.

What’s worse, re-contamination can occur anytime living germs from uncooked food accidentally come in contact with a finished food product.

That’s why you must…

Never buy a pet food from any company that ships finished goods before obtaining negative test results for any form of contamination.

Some companies are more diligent about this safety measure than others. A few test every batch while others test only randomly. And yet some never test anything at all.

In any case, even for us, it can be extremely difficult to determine just how carefully any brand administers its own quality control program.

Tip #9: Study the Recall History

Dog food recalls can provide some valuable clues about a brand’s manufacturing habits.

Pet owners tend to misunderstand and overreact to dog food recalls. And they’re inclined to overvalue the real significance of these events whenever they occur.

They forget that when it comes to any process involving human beings, errors are inevitable. Accidents are going to happen.

And that’s what makes dog food recalls so unpredictable. In fact, trying to forecast any pet (or human) food recall has proved to be impossible.

Just the same, even though no pet food company can completely prevent a recall, it can control how it responds to such an event when it does occur.

Unfortunately, while some companies work hard to prevent a recall, others work even harder at covering them up.

For example, some misguided brands have been known to conduct silent recalls — informing only their distributors about an event. And not the public.

Or they withhold the news about a recall and only release that information at the very end of the business week — just so they won’t have to deal with consumer questions.

Avoid buying dog food made by any brand that makes any attempt to hide recall events from the public when they occur.

Remember, most recalls typically involve only a limited number of product runs and batches. Just because a particular recipe has been recalled doesn’t mean the entire brand is defective.

So, please don’t make the same mistake made by so many other well-meaning pet owners. Don’t overreact and exclude a quality food just because of a few isolated events.

In the end, your dog could be missing out on some of the very best canine diets out there.

The Bottom Line

Of course, no system can possibly guarantee your dog’s food will never be recalled — or that your pet will approve of your choice.

However, any time you find a product that meets the majority of these guidelines, you can feel confident you’re likely to have found a superior dog food brand.

## Recipe of the Season

## Pumpkin peanut butter dog treats

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 40 minutes

### **Ingredients:**

• 2½ cups whole wheat flour

• ½ cup canned pumpkin

• ½ tsp salt

• 2 eggs

• 2 tbsp peanut butter

• ½ tsp ground cinnamon

### **Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.

2. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, eggs, pumpkin, peanut butter, salt, and cinnamon.

3. Add water as needed to help make the dough workable, but not too much as the dough should be dry and stiff. Roll the dough into a ½-inch-thick roll. Cut into ½-inch pieces.

4. Bake in preheated oven until hard, about 40 minutes.

## A Book Recommendation from Alley

The following book description is taken from the NLSBARD website. It is the first in a series that I have enjoyed reading for the last few years. The topic of this series is not guide dog related, but I thought I’d share it with my newsletter readers. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

Top of Form

- Automatically add new items in the series 'Chet and Bernie mystery' to my wish list.

Bottom of Form

#### Dog on it: a Chet and Bernie mystery DB68453

* Quinn, Spencer. Reading time: 8 hours, 5 minutes.
Read by Michael Scherer. A production of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress.
* Mystery and Detective Stories
* Animals and Wildlife

After flunking out of police school, canine Chet becomes partners and roommates with private investigator Bernie Little. Though easily distracted, Chet is a good sleuth. He describes Bernie's latest case--the disappearance of fifteen-year-old Madison Chambliss--and his own frustration when trying to communicate clues. Strong language and some violence. 2009.