The Good Companion

A Pet Lore Journal

Submission Guidelines

Issue No. 01: Service Animals, Care, and Companionship

For our first issue, The Good Companion is seeking thoughtful work related to service animals, assistance animals, therapy animals, working partnerships, disability, medical support, care, training, access, grief, identity, animal welfare, and the emotional lives of people and animals in service-centered relationships. We welcome polished submissions, strong pitches, and early ideas that may benefit from editorial guidance. You do not need to be a professional writer to submit.

Submissions open **June 10, 2026, and close July 20, 2026.** Selected contributors will be notified by early August. Issue 01 is scheduled for publication in **September 2026.**

General Submission Requirements

All submissions should include:

- Contributor name and email address
- Submission category (see below for this issue's categories)
- Pitch, outline, early ideas, or completed submissions
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links, such as a website, portfolio, LinkedIn, Instagram, organization page, or previous publication
- Disclosure if the work has been previously published or is currently under consideration elsewhere
- Confirmation that you have permission to share any images, materials, people, organizations, or stories included

Previously published and simultaneous submissions are welcome, but please disclose where the work has appeared or where else it is under consideration. For images involving identifiable people, private spaces, organizations, or working service animal teams, please confirm that you have permission to share them.

A note on language: For this issue, we generally use terms such as service animal, assistance animal, therapy animal, working support animal, and service animal team. We recognize that terminology varies by country, community, legal context, and lived experience. Contributors are welcome to explain the terms that best fit their own story, role, animal, or organization.

1 – Cover Art

We are seeking original visual art (painting, drawing, illustration, photography, collage/mixed media, digital art, etc.) that conveys the theme of Service Animals, Care, and Companionship. One selected artwork will appear as the official cover for Issue 01. Up to three additional works may be named Cover Art Honorees and featured inside the issue. The selected cover image should be image-only. Please do not include titles, captions, slogans, logos, or designed text within the artwork. A small artist signature is fine. AI-generated images are not accepted for cover art.

Image Requirements and Preferred Quality

- Your work should fit a vertical 8.5 x 11 portrait layout
- High-resolution image
- Vertical/portrait orientation
- JPG, PNG, TIFF, or PDF
- Ideally 2550 x 3300 pixels or larger, if available
- 300 dpi preferred for print-quality layout

Suggested Length and Materials

- Artwork title
- Artist name and bio, 75–150 words
- Brief artist statement, 100–250 words
- Up to 3 relevant links
- Note whether the work has been previously published or is currently under consideration elsewhere

2 – Featured Lore: Personal Essay from a Service Animal User

First-person essays from people who use or have used a service animal, assistance animal, therapy animal, or other trained support animal. We are especially interested in pieces grounded in personal history, lived experience, and the real bond between person and animal. Possible angles include:

- Your journey with a current or past service animal - or memories, patterns or lessons across multiple service animals
- Moments when training, instinct, or partnership provided critical support
- The funny, unexpected, or ordinary realities of life with a service animal
- What people misunderstand about service animals or their handlers or what you wish the public knew
- Access, discrimination, accommodation, or community support
- Well-meaning behaviors that can make things harder
- The future of service animals and public understanding

Suggested Length and Materials

- 1,200–2,500 words
- Title and optional subtitle; headings/subheadings encouraged
- Up to 5 photographs, with captions and credits
- 2–3 optional callout quotes, insights, or sidebar notes
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

3 – Featured Lore: Personal Essay from a Trainer, Handler, or Puppy Raiser

First-person essays from people who train, raise, support, or work professionally or voluntarily with service animals, therapy animals, assistance animals, or working support animals. Possible angles include:

- What led you to this work
- The species or types of animals you work with
- Your role as a professional trainer, volunteer raiser, handler, foster, evaluator, or organizational staff member
- What it takes to train or prepare a service animal: the hardest, funniest, meaningful, or unexpected parts of the work
- How the work has changed your life, outlook, or sense of service
- Common misconceptions about training or what people should do when they see a service dog in training
- Challenges in the field, including shortages, standards, quality, access, burnout, or support for trainers and volunteers

Suggested Length and Materials

- 1,200–2,500 words
- Title and optional subtitle; headings/subheadings encouraged
- Up to 5 photographs, with captions and credits
- 2–3 optional callout quotes, insights, or sidebar notes
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

4 – Research-Informed Articles

Research-backed articles on service animals, assistance animals, therapy animals, human psychology, animal behavior, access, training, welfare, public policy, or the human-animal bond. These pieces should be understandable to general readers while grounded in research, credible sources, professional knowledge, and/or lived experience. Possible angles include:

- Human psychology and service animal partnerships
- Dog behavior in service animal work
- Animal welfare before, during, and after placement
- Service animal access and public understanding
- Promising research, data, or trends
- Therapy animals and emotional support contexts
- Disability, independence, and care
- Ethics of training, placement, retirement, or public expectations
- A layperson-friendly version of a previously published academic or professional article

Suggested Length and Materials

- 1,500–3,000 words
- Title and optional subtitle; headings/subheadings strongly encouraged
- 2–3 callout boxes, diagrams, charts, or key takeaways encouraged
- Sources cited through links, footnotes, endnotes, or a short source list
- If adapted from a previously published journal article, please include the original citation or link
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

5 – Art & Photo Stories

Visual, image-led, or mixed-media storytelling related to service animals, care, training, disability, access, companionship, or working partnerships. Possible angles include:

- "Day in the life" of a service animal team
- "Day in the life" of a trainer, raiser, or handler
- Visual story of a retired or memorialized service animal
- Behind-the-scenes look at training, care, equipment, routines, or public access
- Personal objects, tools, documents, or keepsakes connected to the story

Suggested Length and Materials

- 5–12 images for photo stories or visual series
- 300–800 words of accompanying text
- Captions for each image
- Credits and permissions for all images
- Creator bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

6 – Field Notes

Short, focused pieces that capture a meaningful observation, ritual, interview, community perspective, habit, question, or moment related to service animals and care. These pieces can be reflective, practical, documentary, interview-based, humorous, or observational. Possible angles include:

- A small moment that revealed the depth of a service animal partnership, such as notes on transition or trust
- An interview with a handler, trainer, family member, or caregiver
- A community perspective, such as a public access encounter
- A ritual, routine, or training detail
- An unusual habit or hidden skill of service animals, their human, or trainer
- A practical insight others may not know

Suggested Length and Materials

- 300–900 words
- Title and optional subtitle
- Orient the reader at the beginning: who, where, what, and why it matters
- Up to 3 images, optional, with captions and credits
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

7 – Community Resource Materials

We welcome selected community-facing materials related to service animals, access, disability, care, training, grief, or advocacy. These may include:

- Infographics
- PSAs or short videos
- Slide decks or presentation excerpts
- Social media campaigns
- Educational, awareness, and advocacy resources
- Training or public education materials

Please include a short writeup describing the goal of the resource, its audience, message, where or how it was used, any results like reach, lessons, or community response. Please only submit materials you created or have permission to share.

Suggested Length and Materials

- PDF, PNG, JPG, MP4, or slide deck
- Original video file preferred when possible (links may be included, but please submit the actual file when available)
- 250–600 words
- Contributor or organization bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

8 – The Final Chapter

Short tribute pieces honoring any pet, service animal, working animal, or companion animal who has died at any point in your life. These pieces may read like a short obituary, tribute, reflection, prose piece, or personal remembrance.

Suggested Length and Materials

- 100–700 words
- Title required
- Up to 3 photographs with captions and photo credits
- Contributor bio, 75–150 words
- Up to 3 relevant links

Creative prose is welcome, but pieces should remain grounded in a real animal and real memory.

Possible prompts

- What do you most want people to remember about them?
- What role did they play in your life?
- What small habit, ritual, or detail still stays with you?
- What did they teach you?
- What changed after they were gone?

A Note on Fit

The Good Companion is primarily a nonfiction and documentary-style journal. We are not currently seeking fiction, poetry, or highly experimental literary work.

Submissions may be personal, visual, reflective, humorous, tender, unusual, or emotionally honest, but they should be grounded in real animals, lived experience, research, memory, care, or pet owner culture.

Editorial Review

Selected pieces may receive editorial support with structure, clarity, framing, narrative flow, captions, headlines, or refinement.

The Good Companion is also supported by a small circle of volunteer editorial advisors, including subject-matter experts and creative professionals across areas such as animal behavior, service and therapy animals, psychology, medical care, visual art, and literary craft. Advisors may be invited to offer perspective on selected pieces when specialized context would strengthen the work, clarify sensitive themes, or help ensure responsible framing.

Contributor Payment, Rights & Permissions

At this launch stage, accepted work is unpaid, and there are no submission fees. Our goal is to introduce contributor honoraria as the journal grows through readership, partnerships, sponsorships, grants, and aligned support.

Contributors retain copyright to their work and grant The Good Companion permission to publish accepted pieces online as part of the journal and related issue materials.

Published contributors will be credited and may be featured across Pet Lore's social media channels. Contributors may also receive personalized sharing assets to help promote their work on their own platforms.

How to Submit

Please review these guidelines, then submit your pitch, outline, early idea, completed draft, or visual work through the submission form.

Completed drafts are welcome, but acceptance is not automatic; selected pieces may still go through editorial review before publication.

Thank you for contributing to The Good Companion!