



# Critters

## Our Pets

They fill our lives with unconditional love and wonder and whimsy and devotion. All they ask in return is... Nothing.



## 'Animal huggers' and proud of it

by ELIZABETH STEWART  
staff writer

Just call Ronnie Hawkins and his wife, Libby, "animal huggers."

Their extended animal family includes Zoe, Hope, and Paddles.

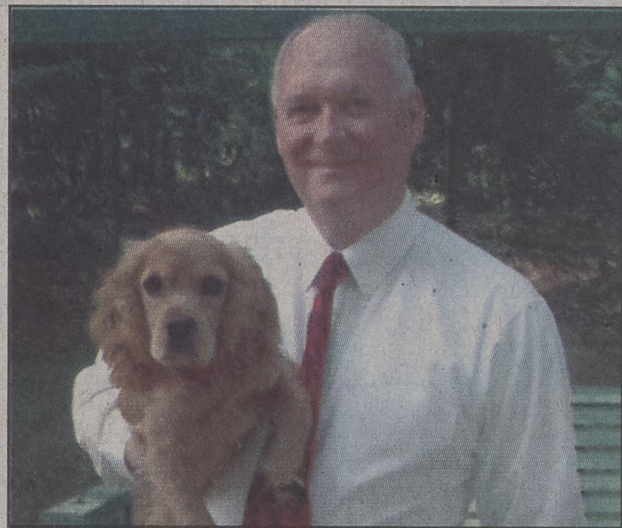
Kings Mountain citizens may recall that "Zoe," a beautiful cocker spaniel now 3, was featured with her master on a billboard in 2008 when Ronnie ran and won re-election to the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. A fourth member of the Hawkins animal family, "Gracie," died at 13 years of age in November.

Every time Ronnie finds a stray he pays for spaying, neutering and shots and places the dog in a foster and/or permanent home. He paid for a 3x5 ad in last week's Herald seeking a home for Lulu (pictured as our Pet of the Month), a male, brown and white Pitt Bull/Boxer and the heading over the ad said volumes. "I don't want to die." He's still looking for a permanent home for Lulu.

Dogs love the Hawkins family. "Dixie", a neighbor's dog, jumps over the Hawkins' back fence on Countryside Drive when it's raining, enters the house via one of two doggie doors and plops on the couch in the sun room until it quits raining. Chaser, a neighbor's Chow, races for the doggie door during a thunderstorm and sits in front of the TV until the storm is over.

"We've seen a lot of abused dogs, including those that have been badly injured, chained up for a couple of years, and we recently discovered six animals in a building in 100 degree temperatures," said Hawkins who is active in both the Cleveland County and Gaston County Humane Societies and also on call from local veterinarians asking his help in finding homes for pets.

A new animal control ordinance passed by county commissioners requires that dogs have collars and if chained



Ronnie Hawkins with Zoe

(tethered) the chain must give the dog 15 feet of maneuvering room. He has photographs to prove abuse of dogs whose tethers (chains, leash) are too tight around their necks. The ordinance, which prohibits cruelty to animals, says that "a tether shall be at least 10 feet long with swivels on both ends, shall not exceed 10 percent of the animal's body weight and shall be attached to a properly fitting harness or collar to prevent choking, strangulation, unjustifiable pain, suffering or risk of death. A tethered animal shall have access to suitable and sufficient clean water, food and appropriate shelter."

Libby and Ronnie Hawkins will be working at the rabies clinic at Kings Mountain High School from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday. Take your pets for free rabies shots.

Animals count on Libby and Ronnie Hawkins as real friends. They give them loads of tender, loving care.

## PET OF THE MONTH



Lulu is a male, brown and white Pitt Bull/Boxer mix. He needs someone who can devote time, attention, and love to him. To find out how you can adopt Lulu you can call 704-472-3605.

## Would you like to see your pet as our Pet of the Month?

Just send us a picture of you and your pet. Tell us why your pet is special or how you & your pet found each other, etc.

Each month we will choose one pet and its person to be featured on our Critters page.

All entries will be included in a drawing at the end of the year for a prize for your pet.

It's easy: Stop by our office, mail it to 700 E. Gold St., Kings Mountain NC 28086 or Email your photo and information to us at [pets.kmherald@gmail.com](mailto:pets.kmherald@gmail.com). Please include your name and phone number so we may contact you.

## Prepare a plan for your pets during summer storms

Make a pet evacuation plan.

- Keep a full list of animal shelters, boarding facilities and motels that accept pets during emergency evacuations
- Identify your pet clearly with a tag and mi-

crochip.

- Put together a pet emergency preparedness kit which includes any special medications your pet may require.
- Make certain you have secure transportation.
- Do not ever turn your

pets out of your home after a severe storm and rain without first determining that the area remain secure.

Some people think that when disaster strikes, the best thing to do for their pets is to turn them loose to take care of themselves.

They are wrong. Pets are unable to survive on their own under such conditions and may be impossible to find when the emergency is over. In the case of fire remove your pets to a secure location such as a vehicle and move the vehicle away

from the home. In an extreme emergency tie your pet to a fence well removed from the area of a fire.

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