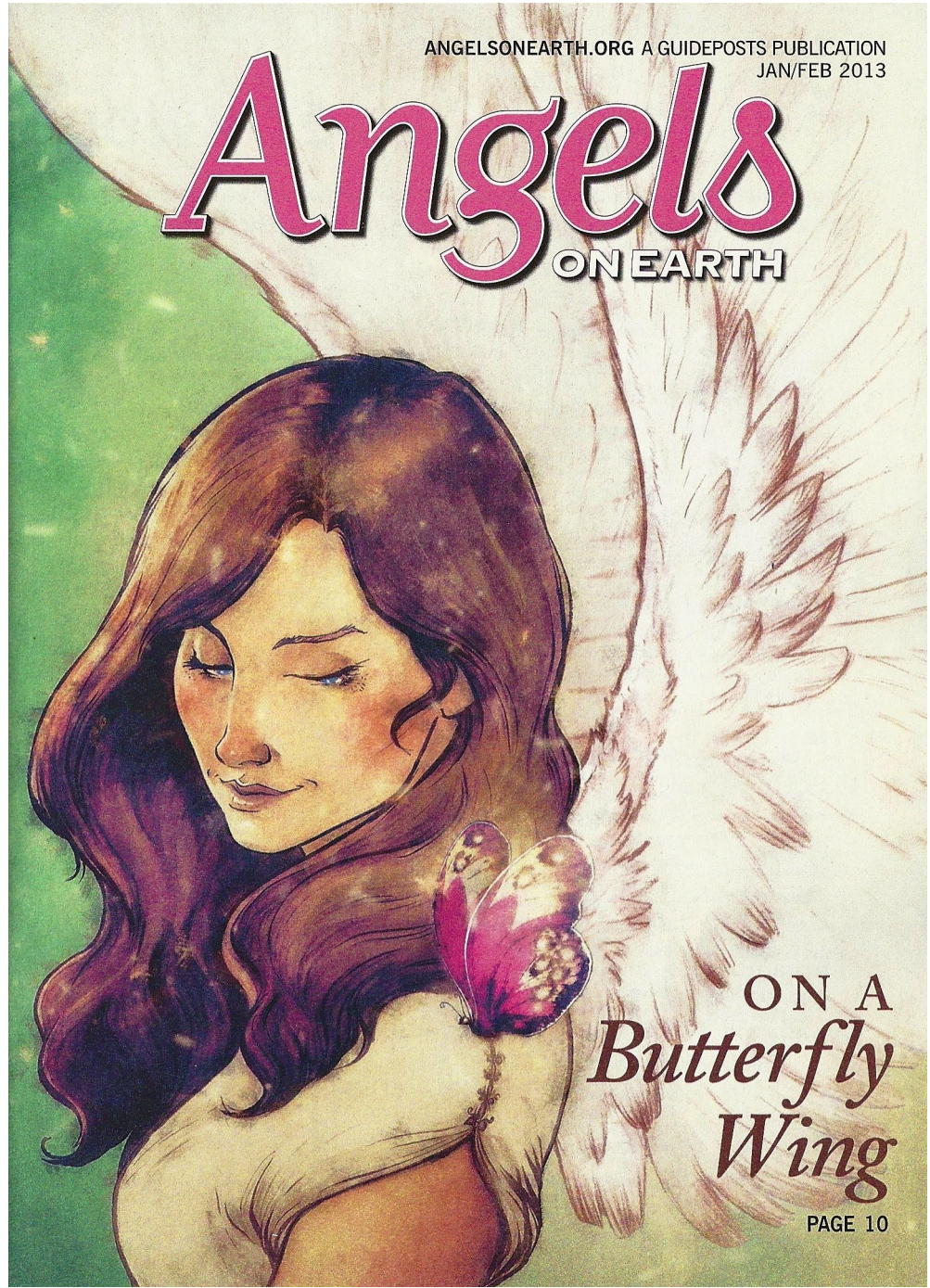


ANGELSONEARTH.ORG A GUIDEPOSTS PUBLICATION  
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# Angels

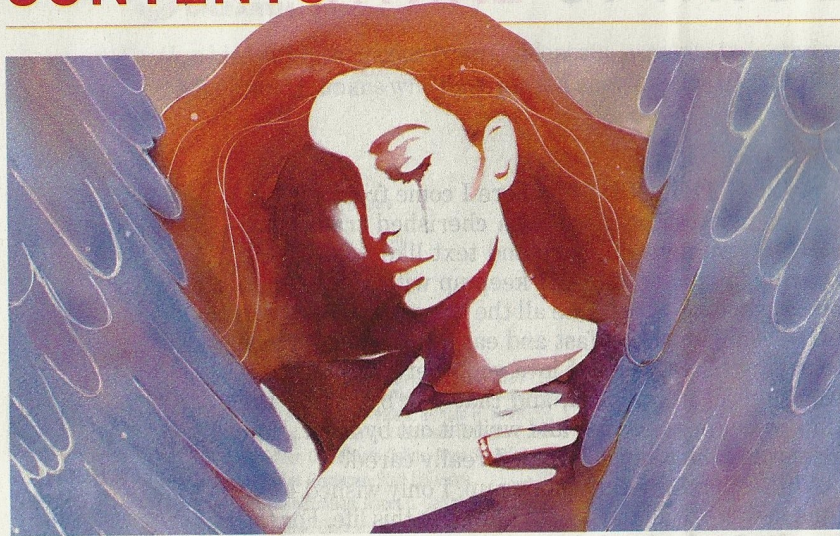
ON EARTH



ON A  
*Butterfly*  
*Wing*

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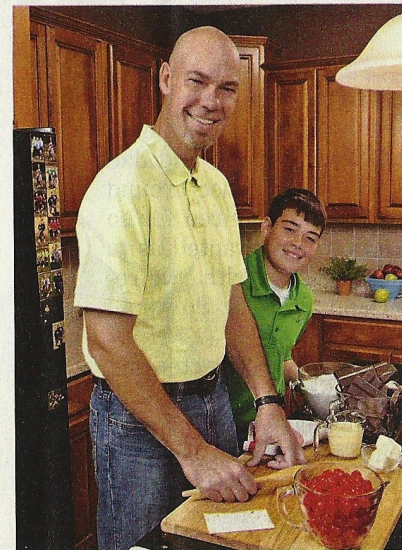
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## What's new online



### E-kisses

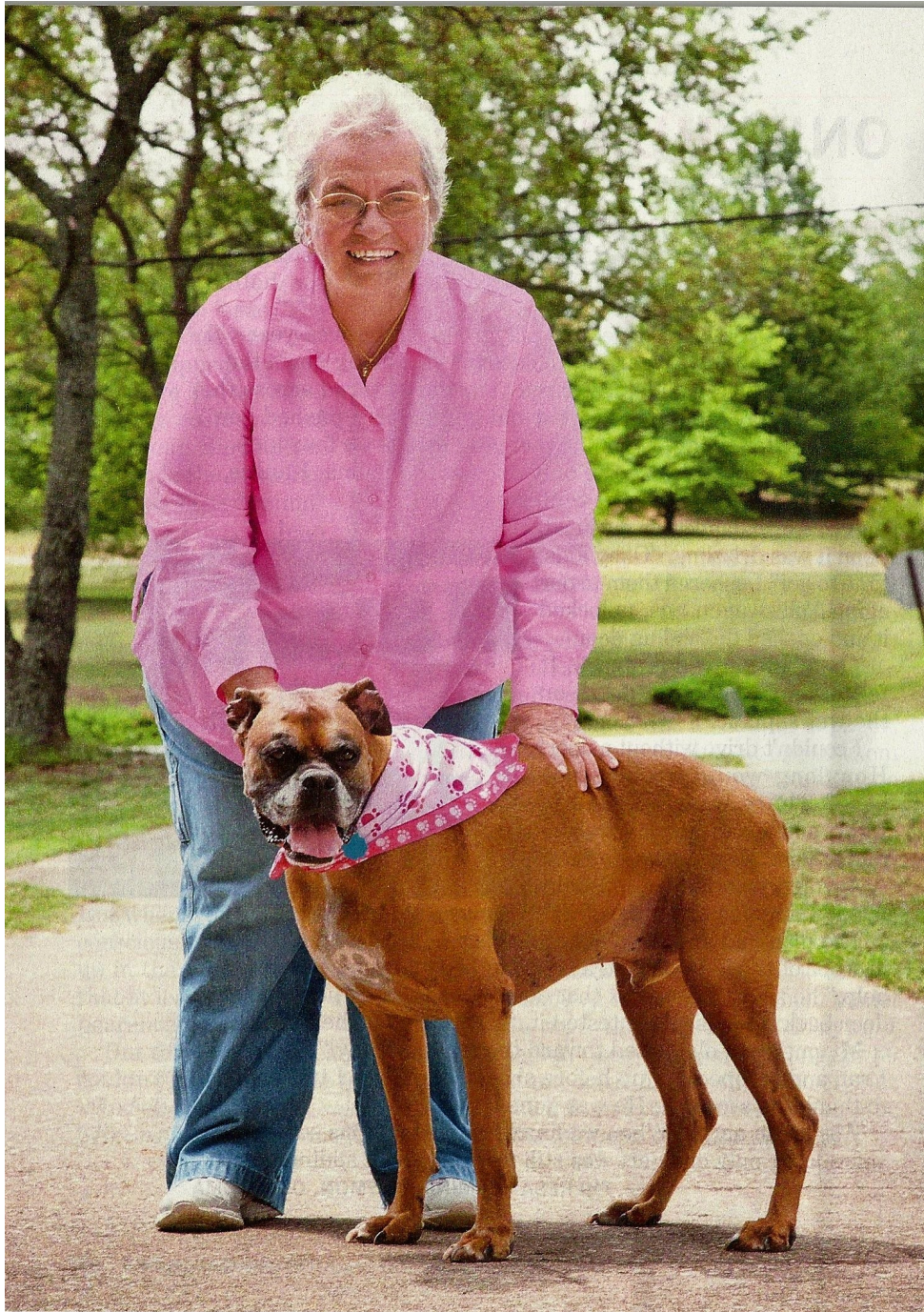
Send our exclusive, animated valentine to everyone you love. It's free at [angelsonearth.org/valentine](http://angelsonearth.org/valentine).

### Amazing Journey

*Proof of Heaven* author, Dr. Eben Alexander, talks with *Guideposts* editor Rick Hamlin about how his near-death experience changed his beliefs on angels and prayer at [angelsonearth.org/ealexander](http://angelsonearth.org/ealexander).

### You've Got Mail

Stay connected to *Angels on Earth* weekly via our free e-newsletter. Enjoy more stories, videos, Colleen's blog and more! Go to [angelsonearth.org/aoenewsletter](http://angelsonearth.org/aoenewsletter).



# good boy, *Floyd Henry*

Dogs were my life. But I never thought  
a dog would save my life

BY CAROL D. WITCHER, WALNUT GROVE, GEORGIA

**d**OGS HAVE ALWAYS HELD a special place in my heart. Where others might just see an animal, I see a part of my family. So when my boxer, Floyd Henry, came up to me one evening while I was sitting on the sofa, I put down my novel and leaned in to give him a hug. “Come here, boy,” I said, holding out my arms. He put his paws up on the sofa cushion and settled into my embrace. But then he reared his big square head. “What is it?” I asked. “What’s got you startled?”

Floyd Henry regarded me with a questioning expression. *This is odd.* Floyd Henry had never given me such a concerned look before. Not in all of the five years we’d been together. He sniffed at my nose and mouth. Then he snapped his teeth in my face.

“Hey!” I yelled. I couldn’t believe what had just happened. Floyd Henry was in no way, shape or form aggressive. And we didn’t ever play rough. I took his head in my hands, gently, but firmly. “No!” I said. “We don’t do that.”

Floyd Henry didn’t back down. Again, he snapped at my face. “Bad boy!” I said harshly, although it pained me to do it. I never had occasion to speak to him that way. I pushed his paws back down onto the carpet. “Go lay down,” I told him.

Floyd Henry trotted off. I picked up my book and settled back into the sofa. But I couldn’t relax. There had to be a logical

explanation for Floyd Henry's behavior. *Was he trying to grab food I dropped on myself at dinner? Was he scared of something?* My loving companion wasn't making sense.

In a way, the very beginning of our relationship didn't make any sense, either. I hadn't been looking for a dog when I bought Floyd Henry. I noticed an ad in the classified section of the newspaper: "Boxer for sale." I flipped the page and sipped my coffee. I certainly didn't need another dog. Since retiring from teaching I'd been fostering boxer dogs in my home. Many came to me with physical limitations and emotional scars. I was determined to help them overcome their problems. When I was a teacher, I taught all of my students that they were special and had a reason to be on this earth. I believed the same for my dogs.

**ONE OF MY** charges laid his chin on my knee as I browsed the rest of the classifieds that day. My mind kept going back to that tiny ad. I turned back. *Boxer for sale.* With so many dogs already counting on me, why was I even giving the advertisement a second thought?

Curiosity welled up inside me. I wanted to know this dog's story. Why was he being sold? Where

would he go? I gave in and made the phone call. A man answered, and we arranged to meet later that day.

I heard barking as soon as I stepped out of my car onto the property. The storm door opened and a puppy ran out, his tail wagging. The man of the house shook my hand. "My daughter brought the puppy home," he explained. "But then she went off to college. My wife and I were looking forward to traveling now that we have an empty nest, and we just can't keep him."

*Looks like I'm getting another dog after all.* For whatever reason, God had put us together. We loved each other—so why was he snapping at me? I watched Floyd Henry settle onto his bed for a nap. I tried to put the incident out of my mind.

But Floyd Henry's odd behavior continued. He furiously sniffed at my breath and snorted loudly whenever I leaned in close to him. Four days after he initially snapped at my face, I leaned in for another hug. He swung his head sharply and bumped my right breast with his nose. Hard.

"Ouch!" The pain was so intense I had to take a breath to get my bearings. Why was my breast so tender? That day I scheduled a mammogram.

"Ms. Witcher," the surgical oncologist said after examining the results, "there's a mass in your right

breast. We can give you a breath test to learn more." All I had to do was puff air into a small cylindrical tube. The organic compounds in my breath were then tested in a lab. I had stage three breast cancer.

The reality of my situation slowly began to sink in. I had to start treatment right away. Thank goodness for that mammogram! Then I remembered why I got it: Floyd Henry had been trying to alert me to the danger he'd smelled on my breath. He had even tried to show me exactly where the tumor was when he bumped me.

After my first treatment, Floyd

Henry greeted me at the door. Like usual, he snorted and huffed at my face. But this time I thanked him. "You're a good boy, Floyd Henry. A good boy, and an angel."

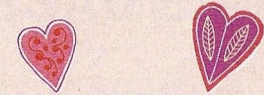
One year of chemotherapy and radiation shrunk the tumor so that my surgeon could remove it. Throughout treatment, Floyd Henry was at my side. I've now been cancer-free for more than three years. My tumor was detected in time for treatment—thanks to the newspaper ad I couldn't ignore. We're all put on this earth for a reason. Floyd Henry was put here to save my life. ■

## AFTERGLOW

A dog's nose is strong enough to detect the scent of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), chemicals associated with cancer, on human breath. In a 2011 study at Germany's Schillerhoehe Hospital, breath-sniffing dogs identified the presence of lung cancer with 71 percent accuracy. But the ability to detect cancer does not mean dogs will soon be joining hospital staffs. Researchers, like the team at the British charity Medical Detection Dogs, use canines to help them pinpoint the biomarkers that create the "smell" of cancer. It is hoped that this information will aid in the development of an electronic nose that will provide patients with early, noninvasive cancer detection.

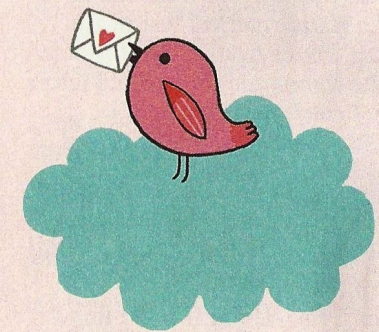
Dogs train to sniff out disease at [angelsearth.org/cancerdogs](http://angelsearth.org/cancerdogs)





"I always  
thank God  
for you"

1 CORINTHIANS 1:4



## Special Delivery

This Valentine's Day, send your love to all the special people in your life. Go to [angelsearth.org/valentine](http://angelsearth.org/valentine) to get our exclusive animated e-card. It's free!

[angelsearth.org](http://angelsearth.org)

*Please join us online every day  
for a lift to your spirit.*

JF-A

ILLUSTRATION BY ANKE WECKMANN