

# MESSENGER JOURNAL

SECOND SECTION

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## 'Crazy Critter Lady'

Kelly Meister shares her healing process through passion for critters in a new book

1981 Perrysburg High School graduate Kelly Meister is a writer, a photographer, a potter. But most importantly she is a survivor—a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. And through her passion for critters, the PHS alumnus has found healing and health.

Recently, Ms. Meister published her first book, "Crazy Critter Lady" in which she tells of her trials and tribulations over the past 12 years with critters.

"The main theme of the book is the animals," said the author. "And the secondary theme is that I am a child sexual abuse survivor. I've mainly made a career of trying to get sane and healthy. I did not have pets growing up. And then 12 years ago, I met a cat named Macavity which began my animal focus."

The all-white, deaf cat was diagnosed with kidney disease and given three months to live. Ms. Meister moved the cat in with her and gave him love, attention and treatment. Macavity lived for more than a year—beating the three month prognosis.

"That is what got me started on my passion for critters. That was the snowball that started down the mountain," she said. "It was an incredible experience caring for the cat. He knew I was trying to help him and he trusted me and that was a first—actually, there were a lot of firsts with Macavity. Of course it was devastating when he died, but it also gave me a lot of energy and a focus. That was the beginning of my journey with critters."

Missing her cat, she went to the humane society just to look, but not only ended up adopting a cat that same day, she decided to volunteer for the animal rescue organization. She has rescued five cats over the years.

"Then there were incidental things," she added. "I found a chipmunk out in my driveway who was injured and I brought him in the house and rehabbed him a bit and released him. There were things that happened randomly like that. I found a bird on the side of the road who was laying there—injured but not dead. I got him some

help."

And then there are the ducks. Ms. Meister recalled living in a tiny, dark apartment years ago in the Three Meadows area. While taking walks by Three Meadows pond, she would notice people feeding the ducks and became intrigued by this—"they would come right up to the people and take food."

"So I started feeding them and the more I fed them, the more they got to know me," she explained. "And the more they got to know me, they would surround me while I would sit on the ground. They would greet me and they still do to this day. They see me getting out of my car and come over quacking. That started 10 years ago."

The critter lady is a constant advocate for the Three Meadows ducks—making sure they are fed proper food, educating the community on proper duck care and even assisting injured ducks.

"I didn't go looking for any of this—it just happened," said Ms. Meister. "When you have an animal that is injured, I believe you are kind of morally obligated to do something."

She also added that she keeps a shovel in her car trunk to move deceased animals from roadways.

"When I pass a three-dimensional dead animal, I will scoop him off road. I just put it off to the side of the road—just to give the animal some dignity," said the critter lady. "We take so much of their habitat, and we don't care about them and we never give any habitat back that this is the least I can do. I can't save them from the horrible death, but I scoop them off the road and let them be peaceful."

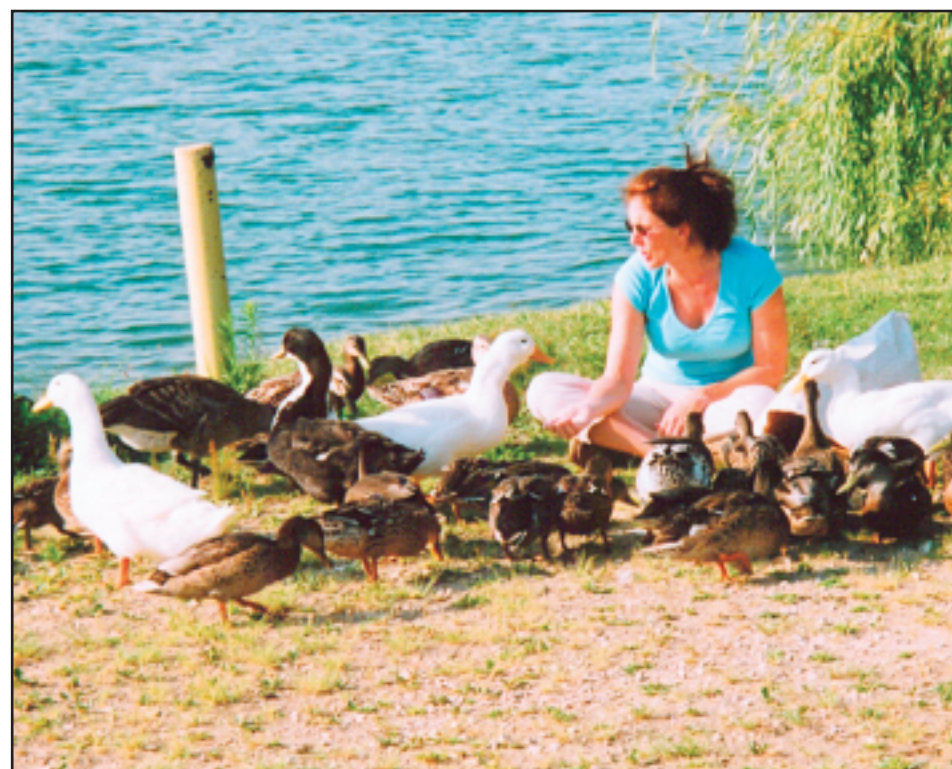
Writing the book was a labor of love for Ms. Meister.

"I actually set out and wrote 98 percent of it by hand with a pen and paper—it was a labor of love because it truly was a lot of labor involved in the writing of it," she said. "And some of the stories were so tough to write that I would have tears streaming down my face. Then a friend offered their com-



Perrysburg High School graduate Kelly Meister recently had her first book, "Crazy Critter Lady" published.

Ms. Meister, who created the Luckey Duck Fund, is known for her care and support of the ducks at Three Meadows Pond. Anyone who would like to contribute to the fund is welcome to stop at Luckey Farmers, 11330 Avenue Road, and purchase a bag of cracked corn which will be set aside for Ms. Meister to use for the ducks



puter and it was a horrible crash course but I actually managed to transcribe it from pen to type."

The author explained that the Three Meadows ducks are a common thread in the book—a recurring theme along with her feline friends.

A favorite story in the book is about Winky, a 3-year old cat that the author taught to walk on a leash. Another story tells of life

lessons from a retired horse and other stories tell of lost frogs, injured birds, mice and chipmunks.

"The message I want to send with my book is the importance of kindness to all animals. I feel strongly that we have an obligation as the stewards of the earth to take care of and respect all of God's creatures—no matter what God you happen to worship," she said. "I believe that one day we

will all have to answer for our actions or lack thereof, and I don't want my God asking me, 'why didn't you help that squirrel of mine?'"

The Crazy Critter Lady book is available on Amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com. For additional information visit Ms. Meister's Web site at [www.crazycritterlady.com](http://www.crazycritterlady.com).

-Deb Buker