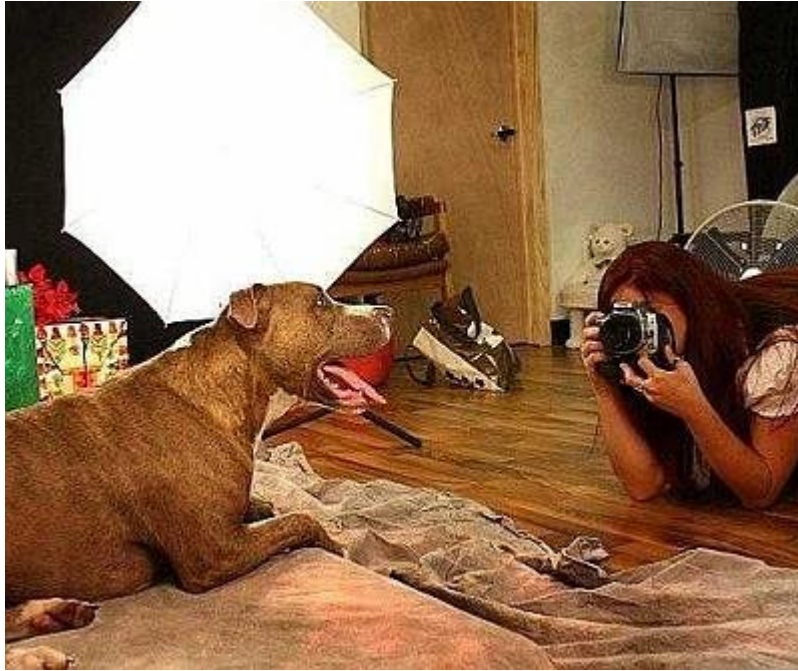


Candace Zynda

Pet photographer

October 27, 2008



Candace Zynda, owner of Pink Parrot Photo in Naperville, photographs Mosley, an 11-month-old pit bull-mix that belongs to Steven and Amanda Riester of Joliet during a session Friday. Corey R. Minkanic / Special to The Sun

Ever since she shot her first picture with a disposable camera as a child, Candace Zynda wanted to become a professional photographer.

At the age of 25, she is living her dream. Six weeks ago, she opened the Pink Parrot Photo studio in Naperville, catering to a special clientele - animals.

A Naperville native, Zynda grew up in a household of pets, including a ring neck turtle dove, goldfish, hamsters, hermit crabs, parakeets and dogs. After graduating from Neuqua Valley High School in 2001, she took classes in photography and other subjects of interest at College of DuPage.

Top five

Favorite movie: "Citizen Kane"

Favorite TV show: "Family Guy"

Favorite restaurant: Lusha's Restaurant and Lounge

Favorite city : Boston

Favorite guilty pleasure: Shoes She made her living as a bartender at Miss Kitty's Saloon in Naperville and as an assistant for an international commodities trader. On the side she took photo portraits of friends. When she wanted a picture of herself with her two dogs and green wing macaw, she was unable to find a photographer who shot animal portraits. So she set up her tripod and did it herself. She used that picture for her Christmas card. The response from recipients was so enthusiastic she decided to open her own studio and specialize in animal portraits. She takes pictures of people, too.

A member of the Professional Photographers of America, the National Association of Press Photographers and the National Association of Women Business Owners, her other interests include cooking, music, art, bike riding and nature photography.

1. How long have you wanted to be a photographer? I think my entire life. ... I was probably about 10, no, maybe 13 years old. We were taking a vacation and I hung my head outside the truck as we pulled up the side of the road to look at a rattlesnake. My brother and my sister were hanging onto my legs, my parents are screaming with fright and I'm hanging out there with the camera. I'm getting a really great shot. I think that was the pivotal moment I knew that's what I was going to do.

2. What kinds of animals are brought to your studio to be photographed?

You'd be surprised at some of the animals that come in here. We get snakes, lizards, they'll come in with their gerbil, their rat. I've got a girl coming in next week with her pet tarantula.

3. You got your pets from rescue organizations. Why is that important to you? I donate 10 percent of my proceeds to animal welfare and rescue organizations. ... There are plenty of good animals out there that need homes, that came from good homes, some of them. Some of them came from good, some of them came from bad. Whatever the case, the foreclosure market, animals are ending up on the list to be euthanized.

They need homes too, whether they came from good or bad families. I think people need to remember and think about the fact you don't know what you're getting from a pet store. You don't know what you're getting from a breeder. You don't know what you are getting from animal rescue. So why not give an animal a second chance that they might not have had?

4. What do you do to get an animal to pose?

It can be quite challenging. I try not to pose the animals as much as try to capture their personality and their expressions. If you try too hard to pose an animal, it looks posed. I give them 10 minutes to sniff around the studio area and calm down and relax and familiarize themselves with their surroundings. And then it's also important that the parents are interactive with them, bringing a couple of their favorite toys and treats with them. Then you really start capturing the expressions and the personality. That's really what's important. My job is to take the right angles and really try to capture that. The posing part looks too sterile.

5. What is your personal philosophy?

Live, love, laugh, learn, and live each day like it's your last because one day it will be.

FYI

For more information about Pink Parrot Photo, visit: www.pinkparrotphoto.com