

It's never too late

FOR YEARS, CHESTER Costco member Anthony Dickenson harboured a not-so-secret ambition to be a writer—not-so-secret in that he had been writing articles and short stories. At age 67, he finally started his first novel. Two years later, he had a completed manuscript. Six months after that, it was published.

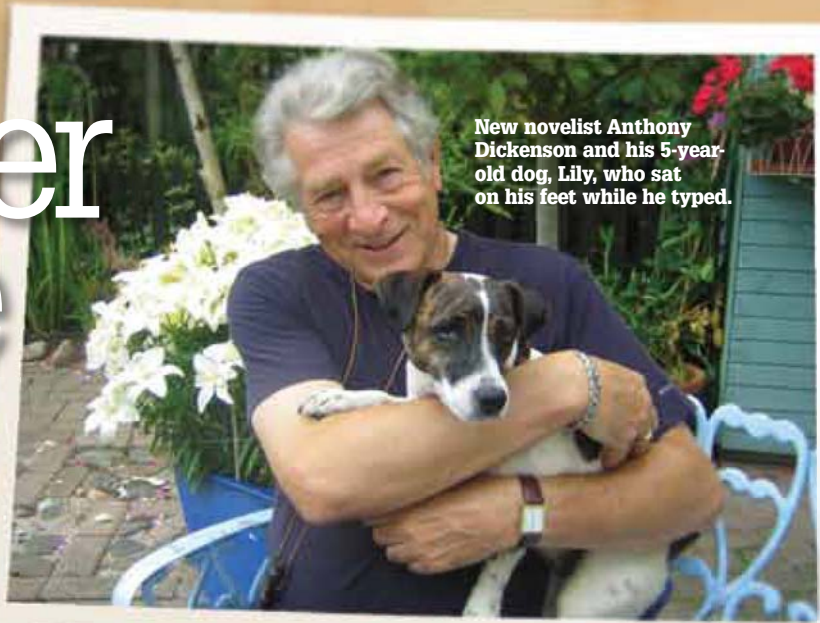
"I've always written for professional journals. Then I started writing short stories for various magazines," Dickenson says. "I've travelled an awful lot, and I've met some fascinating people in the Far East. And the plot formed for a thriller and I kept thinking, 'I'll write that.'" Then it dawned on me one day they were going to put on my grave-stone: 'HE WAS GOING TO WRITE A BOOK.' So I thought I'd actually better get myself in gear and do it."

Surprisingly, after finishing the book, Dickenson waffled on submitting it to publishers. His adult son pressured him, but he didn't want the rejection letters. Instead, he agreed to send the synopsis by e-mail to a literary agent, who, to his surprise, asked to see the

complete manuscript. The rest is history.

The Strangling of Satan (Strategic Book Publishing, 2009) involves a young pilot and medical supplies businessman in a plot rife with international intrigue, exotic Far East locations, terrorists determined to topple the West and mistaken identity.

Dickenson has now completed his second novel, involving the protagonists from his first, and is getting ready to start on a third. He offers this advice: "Let this be a lesson to people. Don't give up just because you're past 60."—Steve Fisher



New novelist Anthony Dickenson and his 5-year-old dog, Lily, who sat on his feet while he typed.

GAIL DICKENSON

We want to hear from you!

IF YOU HAVE a note, photo or story to share (about Costco or Costco members), you can e-mail it to connection@costco.com with "Member Connection" in the subject line, or you can send it to "Member Connection," *The Costco Connection*, Costco UK Ltd, Hartspring Lane, Watford, Herts WD25 8JS. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned.

Accidental entrepreneurs

TEN YEARS AGO, Jennifer Melton and Brennan Johnson adopted an adorable puppy they named Samantha. But they soon discovered the dog had a problem.

"She was constantly itching and scratching," recalls Melton. "She ended up being kind of sickly. I did a lot of research and found that dogs, just like people, could have allergies." The pair of San Luis Obispo, California, Costco members put Samantha on an elimination diet to determine what she was allergic to. Within a month or so, she became healthy and active.

When the two started making their own dog food and sold homemade treats at a dog-shelter fundraising event, they were besieged by calls from people wanting to buy more. Johnson said, "I think we can make a business out of this."

Their company, Cloud Star

Brennan Johnson, Jennifer Melton and their pets.



(www.cloudstar.com), which started in 1999 with just the two of them, now employs more than 100 people.

Cloud Star products are sold at health food, pet supply, grocery and gift stores throughout the UK, as well as online.

Ten per cent of all profits go to organisations that support women, children, the environment and, of course, pets.—SF

Cartoons galore

IN THE LAST issue, we announced a cartoon contest for members. *The Costco Connection* conducted a similar contest for US members, and the funny stuff came pouring in. Featured here is the winning cartoon by Mark Lawler of California, who received a \$500 shopping voucher for his entry. "The cartoon took longer to draw than it took to spend the money," he laughs. Our judges are currently reviewing the UK submissions. Stay tuned: We'll feature them in a future issue.



MARK LAWLER