

Winter 2015

**FREE!**

# Dog & Cruces

Information Las Cruces Dog Lover!

## Visual Assistants

Local high school students help raise and train service dogs for the visually impaired.

Page 19

## Over-the-Counter Overdose

Using human OTC medications to treat dogs without consulting a vet is gaining popularity — and causing real problems.

Page 10

## The Fix is In!

The Doña Ana County Big Kitty Fix mobilizes against our feline overpopulation epidemic.

Page 21

# SERVICEMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Military Working Dogs are devoted comrades-in-arms both on and off the battlefield.

Page 15

PLUS... How Low Can It Go in Arizona?... Grain-Free Quiche for Fido You'll Want to Taste For Yourself... Upcoming Doggie Dates... and More!

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# Bienvenidos a 2015!

**H**appy, happy New Year, Dog'Cruces! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season (and I know most of you probably spoiled your furry kids as much as you did your little humans). I'm writing this from my seat in the RV on a very cool, crisp morning in Arizona—but you can read about that later on in this issue....

Phyllis and I took a much-anticipated field trip to Fort Bliss for our cover story on Military Working Dogs and their soldier-partners. Whenever we do a story about working dogs in a federal, police or military setting, I'm never sure what to expect when it comes to how the dogs are trained. But, once again, I was so happy to see a progressive style of reward-based training using positive reinforcements like food, toys and tons of great praise. I think you'll be proud of the work our soldiers—both human and canine—are doing for the country. *Go Army!!*

Mayfield, Centennial and Las Cruces High Schools are participating in a very cool new program in conjunction with Guide Dogs for the Blind, a 501(c)3 that raises and trains special dogs to assist visually-impaired people across the country. Student guest-authors Katie Garrison and Hailey Peck give us a first-hand account of what it's like to be part of the new Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol in our "Working Like a Dog" section on page 19.

The Doña Ana Big Kitty Fix is our featured non-profit organization this issue. It is a project of the Coalition for Pets and People (Zero in 7), and is focused on helping to control the County's feline overpopulation epidemic by providing low-cost spay/neuter services from a

mobile vet clinic. Read about their good work and plans for the future on page 21.

We received a lot of positive feedback on the "Hiking With Hounds" story we did last time—it looks like many of you have already checked out some of the trails with your dogs! But we also got some well-deserved criticism from those who noticed that all the photos we included featured dogs *off-leash*, despite the article's insistence that "Both safety and etiquette remind us to keep our dogs on-lead at all times!"

First of all...*busted*. It was inconsistent to say one thing and show another, and we will make sure to do a better job in the future. But let me offer some clarification...the BLM requires all dogs to be "under control" at all times, for the reasons we listed in the article. This doesn't necessarily mean "on-lead" (our mistake)—just that you must have an exceptionally well-trained and obedient canine if you are going to hike off-lead on public land. Almost all the dogs featured in the photos are members of the Mesilla Valley Search & Rescue Dog Team, and we always have their leashes close at hand should we come across other hikers on the trail. Still, we should've known our readers were too sharp to miss the fact that we weren't exactly practicing what we were preaching. Thanks for keeping us honest.

I would like to commend the Las Cruces City Council on finally passing the "TNR" (Trap-Neuter-Return) for feral cats. Yes, it took another three hours of bickering to get it done—but don't get me started on that subject. They did the right thing this time.

Finally, I know many of you read my post on Facebook about the wonderful, older Golden Retriever that was abandoned at the ASCMV one night in November. I named her *Daisy* and worked with a whole chain of people, including Connie Jimenez of Golden Rescue of El Paso, to help place her in foster homes so she wouldn't have to become a shelter resident. The *Sun-News* asked me to expand on my post, and *Daisy's* story was featured in the paper and on their website.

Not long after that, *Daisy* was adopted into her forever home, where she will be loved and cared-for for the rest of her life. She even attended and was introduced to applause and tears at Critter Christmas.

This is what it's all about, folks. This is why we all do what we do, and this is why our animal community thrives.

I look forward to a great, productive, successful 2015—in a new location! Stay tuned....

## Vic Villalobos

Mayor of Dog'Cruces

Write to us at:  
**Dog'Cruces Magazine**  
151 S. Solano, Suite E  
Las Cruces, NM 88001

or email us at:  
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### Dog'Cruces Magazine

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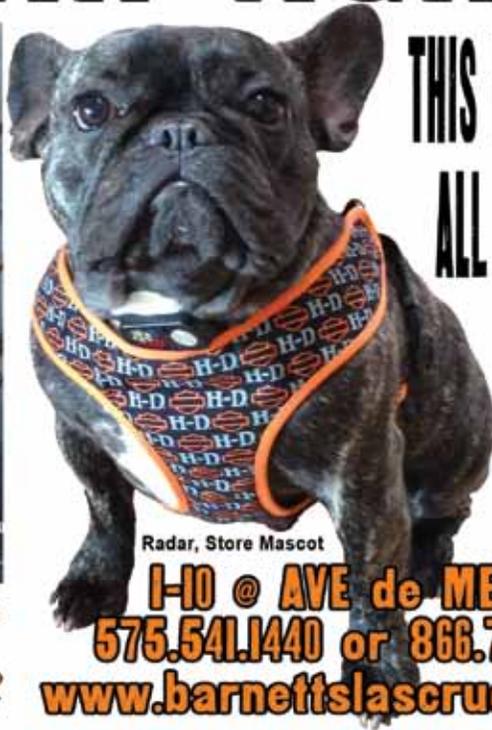
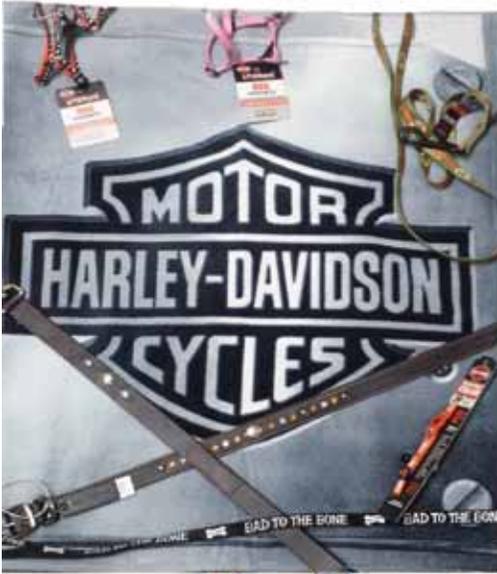


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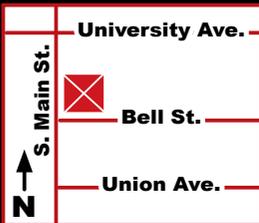
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**RECURRING & ONGOING EVENTS WINTER 2015**

*Vaccination Clinics*  
See a full list on page 8

*Happy Tail Adoptions*

**Every Saturday**  
PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman from 10am-4pm. Contact Frank Bryce at 575-647-1416 or email fbryce@hotmail.com for more information.

*Red Brick Pizza Monthly Fundraiser for HSSNM*

**Thursday, January 29th,  
Thursday, February 26th  
Thursday, March 26th**  
Visit Red Brick Pizza, 2808 N. Telshor, from 11am-9pm. Mention "HSSNM" when placing your take-out or dine-in order, and 15% will be donated to the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.

*APA Furrever Home Adoption and Education Center*

Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

from 12noon to 5pm and Wednesdays and Friday evenings from 5pm to 8pm.

*APA Adoptions*

Every Second and Last Sunday of the month at PetSmart ( 2200 E. Lohman) from 10am-3pm and every first and third Sunday of the month at PetCo (3050 E. Lohman) from 10am-3pm.

*SNAP Drawing*

**Drawing on July 1st**  
All pets spayed/neutered entered in drawing to win 42" flat screen TV.

*SNAP Spay Neuter Clinics*

**February, 21st  
March 21st**  
Various locations and times. Information and vouchers available at SNAP's office, 2405 W. Picacho, 575-524-9265.

*Mobile Spay Neuter Clinics in Chaparral*

**Tuesday, February 3rd  
Tuesday, March 3rd and  
Tuesday, April 7th**  
Call Trish for appointment at 915-626-8258

**JANUARY**

*National Train Your Dog Month*

**Saturday, January 24**

*Change a Pet's Life Day!*

*SNAP at PetCo*

SNAP will be at PetCo from 11am-3pm. Spay/Neuter Vouchers available, \$35 dogs, \$25 cats. All pets spayed/neutered entered in drawing to win 42" flat screen TV.

**Saturday, January 31st**

*Low-Cost Pet Microchip Event at Better Life Natural Pet Foods*

HSSNM will hold a low-cost pet microchip event at Better Life Natural Pet Foods from 10am to 3pm. The event will be at the new BLPF store, located at 315 Telshor Suite C. (behind Whataburger). The cost of the microchip is \$6.35. What a deal!

*For a complete calendar of events, visit*  
**DogCruces.com**  
*List is updated as events are announced*



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# Dates

## **FEBRUARY** *National Spay Neuter Month*

### *Pet Dental Health Month*

This is the American Veterinary Medical Association's annual effort to remind pet lovers to care for their pets' teeth like they do their own. Pet guardians are encouraged to take steps to control plaque on their pet's teeth and see their veterinarian for dental checkups.

### **Week of February 7th-14th**

#### *Have a Heart for Chained Dogs Week*

Education can and does work! Learn how you can help. Visit [dogsdeservebetter.org](http://dogsdeservebetter.org)

### **Saturday, February 14th**

#### *Restaurants for Rescues Fundraiser*

Enjoy a beautiful, elegant, romantic evening on Valentine's Day at Picacho Hills Country Club. Dinner and Dancing! Anyone wishing to attend should call 575-373-0159 for reservations.

### **Tuesday, February 24**

#### *Spay Day USA*

Annual campaign to shine the light on cats and dogs who need to be spayed or neu-

tered. Otherwise they might be euthanized in shelters or killed on the street.

## **MARCH**

### **Wednesday, March 18th**

#### *Yappy Hour*

Yappy Hours the third Wednesday of each month from 6pm-8pm outside on the patio and lawn at St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla. Music, games, prizes, and free treats for the pooches. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. Food and beverage menu available. \$5 admission benefits the DACHS and SNAP. 575-642-2648 for more information.

### **Week of March 20th-26th**

#### *National Poison Prevention Week*

There are definitely things to which our pets should never have access. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Read our Vet's View for tips.

## **APRIL**

#### *Go Orange for Animals throughout the month*

Raise awareness for ASPCA causes. Help spread the word and volunteer to stop animal cruelty.

### *National Pet First Aid Awareness Month*

This event is an effort by the American Red Cross to draw attention to the need to know specialized pet first aid.

### **Saturday, April 11th**

#### *National Pet Day*

A day to celebrate the joy pets bring to our lives and create public awareness about the plight of many different kinds of animals awaiting a forever home in shelters and rescues.

### **Wednesday, April 15**

#### *Yappy Hour*

Third Wednesday of each month from 6pm-8pm outside on the patio and lawn at St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla. Music, games, prizes, and free treats for the pooches. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. Food and beverage menu available. \$5 admission benefits the DACHS and SNAP. 575-642-2648 for more information.

### **Week of April 12th-18th**

#### *National Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Week*

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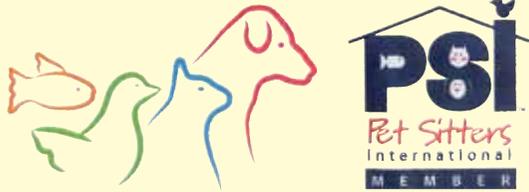
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## WHERE

Anthony Animal Clinic  
Dona Ana Feed Store  
Moongate Water Co.  
Talavera Fire Department  
Radium Springs Fire Dept.  
Anthony Animal Clinic  
Arrey School  
East Picacho Elementary  
Garfield  
Hatch City Hall  
Mayfield High School  
Mesquite Fire Department  
Rincon Water Co.  
Dona Ana Ben Archer Health Center

## DATE

Saturday, January 24  
Saturday, January 24  
Saturday, January 24  
Saturday, January 24  
Sunday, January 25  
Saturday, January 31  
Sunday, February 1

## TIME

8:30am-11:30am & 1pm-4pm  
11am-3pm  
12pm-3pm  
10am-3pm  
10am-3pm  
8:30am-11:30am & 1pm-4pm  
3:15pm-4pm  
8am-3pm  
2pm-2:45pm  
10am-12:30pm  
10am-3pm  
8am-4pm  
10am-3pm  
10am-3pm

## WHO

Anthony Animal Clinic  
Animal Hospital of Las Cruces  
Jornada Veterinary Clinic  
Wolfgang Veterinary Services  
Wolfgang Veterinary Services  
Anthony Animal Clinic  
Schumacher Veterinary Clinic  
Schumacher Veterinary Clinic  
Schumacher Veterinary Clinic  
Schumacher Veterinary Clinic  
Wolfgang Veterinary Services  
Mesquite Animal Vaccination Clinic  
Schumacher Veterinary Clinic  
Wolfgang Veterinary Services

## VETERINARIANS IN LAS CRUCES

Animal Hospital of Las Cruces	575-541-6610	3171 N. Main St., Las Cruces NM	Mesquite Animal Vaccination Clinic	575-650-2000	575-650-1021 or 575-650-9500
Anthony Animal Clinic	915-886-4558	Anthony, TX	Paisana Mobile Animal Clinic	575-523-7606	565 Carver Rd.
Arroyo Veterinary Clinic	575-524-0900	825 S. Walnut, Las Cruces NM	PetCare Express	575-526-4200	1440 W. Picacho Ave., Las Cruces NM
Calista Animal Hospital	575-525-1000	1889 Calle de Ninos, Las Cruces NM	Schumacher Veterinary Clinic	575-524-2894	701 S. Valley, Las Cruces NM
East Lohman Veterinary Clinic	575-523-5654	1700 E. Lohman, Las Cruces NM	Solano Animal Clinic	575-526-1672	537 N. Solano, Las Cruces NM
El Abrigado Animal Clinic	575-589-1818	900 Country Club Rd., Santa Teresa NM	Wolfgang Veterinary Clinic	575-647-4900	call for appointment
Jornada Veterinary Clinic	575-523-7606	2339 Saturn Circle, Las Cruces NM			



Dog Cruces ❀ Winter 2015

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## Over-the-Counter

I don't believe a single day goes by that our practice isn't asked some version of the question, "Can I give (insert medication name) to my dog?" Just as often, I'm faced with a client who admits to me that he/she has already been giving a human, over-the-counter (OTC) medication to his or her pet. Because this practice is so prevalent, I usually make a point of asking clients if they medicate their pets with human drugs—but many will not admit to doing so. This situation is no different for a veterinarian than it is for your own doctor. It is imperative—primarily for the safety of your pet—that you consult with your veterinarian before you administer any medication to your dog.

I remember the mantra being drummed into our heads in veterinary school—"Cats are *not* little dogs." The point of this instruction was to remind us that cats are a completely different species and could respond to, metabolise, and experience different side effects than their canine counterparts. The same analogy applies to our canine companions—dogs are *not* little humans! Just because a medication is sold OTC for use in humans does not mean it is safe for use in dogs. And even if a medication is relatively safe in dogs, there are big differences in body size and dosages with which to contend.

The recent explosion of OTC "pet" medications and supplements on the market just serves to further the problem. Just because a product features a dog on its label, or claims to be safe for dogs, doesn't necessarily mean it is. Always check with your veterinarian before giving any medication to your pet. I'd even advise checking on the safety of dietary aids and supplements, as well—particularly if your dog is already on a prescription medication.

The NSAID medications are a great example. NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) are a cornerstone of treatment for multiple musculoskeletal and pain conditions in humans and dogs. There are large numbers of these medications for humans in both prescription and OTC forms

(including aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen). We also have several of these in prescription form for dogs. In general, they can be very safe medications, but side effects are still possible. I always say that if we gave every person in our city a dosage of a "safe" OTC NSAID tonight, someone would end up in the emergency room with a reaction of some sort. The point is—*no* medication, prescription or OTC, is perfectly safe. We must weigh the risks with benefits anytime we choose to administer a medication.

**...no medication, prescription  
or OTC, is perfectly safe.  
We must weigh the risks  
with benefits anytime we choose  
to administer a medication.**

Some of the NSAIDs that are available for humans can be dangerously toxic to dogs. Remember—dogs are not little humans! I have seen three dogs in my career that died from a single dosage of a popular OTC NSAID medication. If a *single*

*dose* can be toxic, imagine the damage giving some of these medications multiple times over days or weeks could do to Fido!

NSAIDs that are safe in people are often dangerous in dogs due to variations in species metabolism, proper dosing, or other factors. Yet people do this all the time without consulting their veterinarian about the safety of a specific drug. Even if you just want to give your dog something to offer relief until you can take him to the veterinarian, you may be tying your vet's hands regarding which prescription medications can safely be administered to your pet. Changing from one NSAID to another often needs to be done after a "wash out" period which allows one drug to be cleared from the body before another is given. Other anti-inflammatory medications like corticosteroids are not safe to give along with an NSAID.

# The Vet's View

by  
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM

## Meds and Your Dog

Again, the emphasis here is on asking first. If your veterinarian is not available at night or on a weekend, the internet can be a source of information on this.

Emphasize the safety issue in a drug search, not a dosage for a drug you want to give your dog. And check multiple sites instead of trusting just one. Always err on

the side of caution and, if at all possible, avoid giving *anything* until you consult with your veterinarian.

If you're thinking this is a "never give OTC medications to your dog" lecture, let me just clarify that we *do*, frequently, advise our clients to use certain human medications for their pets. There are a number of medications that can be inexpensive and useful to treat myriad ailments in dogs. Antacids and antihistamines come to mind as drugs I often advise my clients to use. Some topical ointments or eye medica-

tions can be useful as well. But again, unless your veterinarian has advised it, wait until he/she says it's ok, and check the dosage against

your dog's weight. Then double check that the medication is what you think it is. There are so many medications with similar names, or so many variations/combinations/dosages of the

same drug, that it's easy to get confused.

If your dog is on one or more prescription medications, don't hesitate to take them with you next time you go to your veterinarian. Take any and all OTC medications you are using, along with any supplements, dietary aids, and topical medications. Have your veterinarian double check the proper doses for each prescription and confirm that you are giving the right dosage,

***I have seen three dogs in my career that died from a single dosage of a popular OTC NSAID medication.***



and ask him/her about any potential conflicts with other products your dog is using. Your dog's health and safety are paramount, and we all want what is best for your pet.

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# Ranger's Girls

by Jess Williams

I met John "Ranger" Keith in a bar a couple of decades ago. Within 10 minutes of having been introduced and exchanging pleasantries, he told me that I only had two things going for me: "I like that you were in the newspaper business, and I like that you have dogs. Other than that," he said, "you appear to be mostly useless." Then he smiled a half-crazy smile and bought me a beer.

From that first interaction grew a friendship grounded in inky veins, hair-covered clothes and a battle of seeing who could hurl the raunchiest insults at the other. I was mightily outgunned in that last regard. To say that Ranger was salty is an understatement of biblical proportion.

On March 13 of 2011, Ranger drew his last breath on Earth and proceeded, I'm certain, to go lecture St. Peter on his many shortcomings as Heaven's gatekeeper. Heaven help St. Peter if he's not a dog person; that lecture might still be underway.

John was the sports editor at the *Las Cruces Bulletin*, and on the Friday after he died, the front page of the sports section was blank where his weekly column had traditionally run. His death left a hole in the staff of the paper, and he was eulogized by many as both a sports fanatic and a curmudgeon of the highest order. *Bulletin* Editor Todd Dickson said that Ranger made it clear on a regular basis that he liked dogs more than people.

In the days that followed his death, the issue of Ranger's adult dogs arose on social media. They needed to find a home, and they needed to stay together, and it all needed to happen fast.

You can see where this is going. Samantha and Roxanne will always be Ranger's dogs, but I

have the distinct privilege of sharing my space with them until such time as Ranger whistles for them from across the Rainbow Bridge.

Samantha is a black Lab who was at least 40 pounds overweight when she waddled into her new yard for the first time. Bounding ahead of her—like a bullet train—was Roxanne, a border collie whose internal organs are clearly able to synthesize kibble into plutonium. If Roxanne had opposable thumbs and language skills, she could develop the Warp Drive.

Because I have a large yard and other dogs to pester her into a semblance of exercise, Samantha has lost about 25 pounds since she came to live at Casa Jess. Even so, she is in no immediate danger of being described as lithe. She habitually carries something in her mouth: a stick, a shoe, a dog dish, a Frisbee fragment—something. She refuses to come inside voluntarily, even on the coldest of nights. She prefers to pack herself into one of the dog houses, with just her nose peeking out.

Unless the forecast calls for temps in the teens, I let her have her way, but on the truly bitter nights, I force her to stay inside with the other dogs. She likes to reward me in creative ways that show off the full abilities of her massive digestive system. While I clean up my malodorous gifts, she winks at me, with one or another of my ruined dress shoes clenched happily between her saliva-slicked jaws.

Roxanne, on the other hand, is happy to come inside, because my bed is inside, and she thinks it's FANTASTIC. Sometimes she lets me sleep in it, too. But some other times, she makes it clear that I should utilize the guest room, along with the smaller (and, in her mind, auxiliary) dogs who—like me—don't leave enough room for her to properly sprawl on the master bedroom's California king-size bed.

In the yard, Samantha lies by the south gate and chews things. Roxanne plays with the small dogs as if there were no size difference between them. Her favorite playmate is Willie, a four-pound Chihuahua. They all howl at passing trains. And when one or more humans venture into the back yard to interact with the canine population, Roxanne first comes darting over for attention. Then she leaves to bark at and chase birds. FLYING birds. She barks and runs beneath them as they fly overhead. Even the other dogs—who are not usually judg-

mental—give her a look that says, "What the hell, girl?"

Samantha is showing her age more than Roxanne, displaying signs of hip dysplasia. I worry about her this winter, but she still comes to

both breakfast and supper sporting her silly grin and the object du jour of her persistent oral fixation.

Pope Francis recently said that all companion animals have a place in Heaven, and we will meet up with them again. I'm not a very religious guy, but I'm with the Pope on this one. There's a day coming when Ranger and I will be drinking wine at The Afterlife Cantina (House Rule: Check your halo at the door.), insulting one another, picking dog hair from our wings, and watching our dogs play together atop the clouds.

When that day ultimately comes, I suspect Roxanne will bark downwards at the passing birds. I feel sorry for any life form passing underneath Samantha's cloud while she is displeased about something.

Jess Williams is chairman of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley Board of Directors. Toby approved this column, with minor edits. John "Ranger" Keith would have done a better job writing about his dogs, and Jess will surely hear about it. If you have a pair of dress shoes you no longer need, donations are being accepted for the upcoming cold nights. If you are certified at cleaning up toxic waste, a contract could be worked out for post-cold-night mornings. Do you ever get the idea that some columnists will do just about anything to pad the word count? If so, you are cynical. Ranger would advise you to mellow out and get a dog.



# PETS of Dog Cruces

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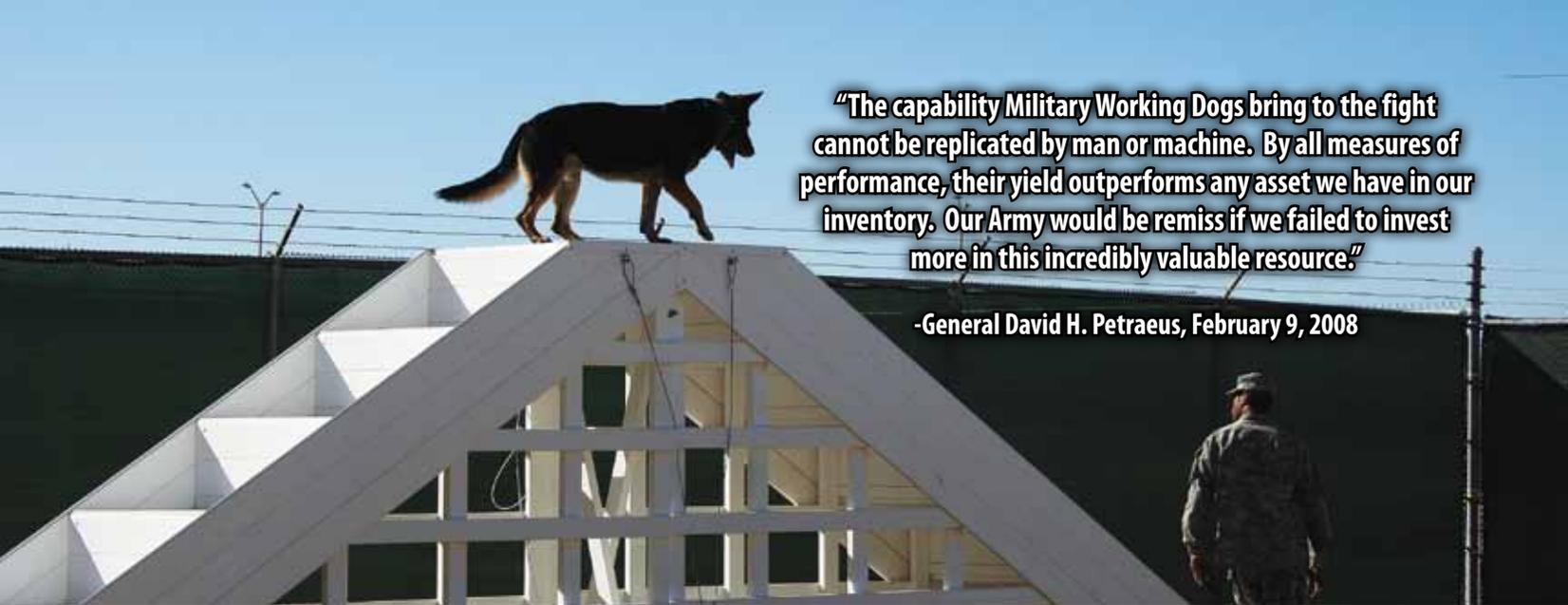
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**Spc. Paco, and other Military Working Dogs trained for aggression and protection, are described as “retractable bullets,” and play vital roles in the Army’s missions around the world — as well as on base and at home.**



**“The capability Military Working Dogs bring to the fight cannot be replicated by man or machine. By all measures of performance, their yield outperforms any asset we have in our inventory. Our Army would be remiss if we failed to invest more in this incredibly valuable resource.”**

**-General David H. Petraeus, February 9, 2008**

**F**ocused, athletic and handsome—the prototypical military hero—Specialist (Spc.) *Paco* was engaged in some very impressive maneuvers as Vic and I arrived at the 513th Military Working Dog Detachment, 93rd Military Police (MP) Battalion at Ft. Bliss, Texas. From a crouched position, he crept stealthily forward, practicing a building entry with his partner, Private 1st Class (Pfc.) Carlos Wade . . . watching every movement, ready for anything or anyone . . . slowly, carefully . . . right foot raised, left foot down, left foot raised, right foot down—or more accurately, right *paw* raised, left *paw* down. Spc. *Paco* is a beautiful German Shepherd, a ranked Military Working Dog, and a productive and experienced member of the 93rd MP Battalion.

As a Patrol Explosive Detector Dog (PEDD), trained for the field, Spc. *Paco* had completed a 93-day program at the 37th Training Wing, 341st Training Squadron at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, and in Yuma, Arizona before landing his assignment at Ft. Bliss. The Lackland program puts its dogs through a training assessment to be sure they have the right temperament and potential to become working dogs; when confirmed, they are trained in patrol, detection, narcotics, or explosives. Staff Sergeant Brandon Sanford told us “It’s the dogs’ Basic Training.”

Ft. Bliss has its own puppy program and breeds some of its own K9 soldiers, but most of the dogs in the 93rd were bred in Europe or imported from “a host of breeders all over the world,” as they have been for 40 or 50 years. The European dogs may have had some training in the *Schutzhund* dog sport even before their training at Lackland AFB. *Schutzhund* training tests character traits such as intelligence, courage, potential for bonding, and trainability. Still, with all their testing and training, Staff Sgt. Sanford says “when we get the dogs from Lackland, they know enough to keep themselves alive, but the rest is up to us.” *Paco*’s mimicking of Pfc. Wade’s every step, postural nuance, gesture, and glance is the result of an exceptional training relationship.

We noticed that Spc. *Paco* was instantly responsive to Pfc. Wade’s commands *without* immediate praise or reward. He was apparently motivated by the job, itself, not by the timing of his reward. Sure enough, Military K9 training, like the Border Patrol, Sheriff, and Police K9 programs we’ve featured previously, is based on

positive reward and feedback, but with a significant difference. A Military Working Dog *cannot* expect immediate reward while on duty—patrol, protection, detection, or in a combat zone.

Accordingly, their training rewards are progressively delayed. First, they perform one task for positive verbal feedback, then two tasks before they receive the feedback, then three, and so on, until the dogs develop the all-important instinct both to want

the praise and to wait for it. They must be able to perform without *any* reward except their handler’s respect and praise—a critical behavior in the field.

Once certified, military K9s like *Paco* can conduct missions attached to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) anywhere in the world. The dogs stationed at Ft. Bliss have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bahrain and can “support anyone down-range,” where they are potentially under fire. A Military Working Dog will live with his or her handler in a combat zone—but that’s the only time the dogs do stay with their handlers. Even

**...SPC PACO WAS INSTANTLY RESPONSIVE TO...COMMANDS WITHOUT IMMEDIATE PRAISE OR REWARD. HE WAS...MOTIVATED BY THE JOB, ITSELF, NOT BY THE TIMING OF HIS REWARD.**

**GI \* I D O G**

**BY PHYLLIS WRIGHT, WITH VIC VILLALOBOS**

in Kuwait, dogs board in the kennels because it is no longer a combat zone. Why the kennel housing? Military dogs are actually assigned to an installation, not a specific handler. Dogs at Ft. Bliss, for instance, have been assigned to Ft. Bliss, and they live in the kennel, except when they are deployed. Their handlers

work with them every day, though—all day, and even in their personal time, at night, and on weekends. The bond is extraordinary.

At Ft. Bliss, these K9 heroes serve as law enforcement when they are not training. They work patrol at the installation gates and the interior of the base, as well

as searching for controlled substances or explosives. Sergeant First Class (Sfc.) Warren Bias, 513th

Military Working Dog Detachment Kennel Master, suggested that for hunting and sport dogs, military tasks are easy adaptations of natural behavior. Ft. Bliss K9 soldiers also support agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and Secret Service and can be assigned to the Department of State to protect dignitaries, chiefs of staff, political candidates, or foreign presidents—“anyone who comes with a personal security unit,” according to Sgt. 1st Class Bias. They can even be assigned to a plain-clothes detail.

Human soldiers hoping to join a K9 unit must request the assignment to what the soldiers described as a “small, tight-

knit, select group.” It’s a coveted assignment, for which there is always a waiting list, even though K9 programs are in a constant “state of growth.” First, candidates take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), a series of tests that helps the Army identify strengths and interests. Among the qualities under consideration are the candidate’s history, patience,

independence, ability to make quick decisions, ability to interact with people, and physical fitness. The first question at the interview stage is what in educational terms might be called an *essential* question: “Do you like dogs?”

It’s a double-edged question, really, because despite the imperative of connecting with the dogs to which soldiers are assigned, “they have had to get used to viewing their dogs as assets, as equipment.” Talk about valuable equipment! And not only do these officers *like* dogs, they’ve dedicated their careers to working with them. Once in the K9 program, “it’s their job until they retire.”

Military Working Dog handlers accepted to the program attend 18 weeks of Advanced Individual Training (AIT) on caring for, handling, and training a Military Working Dog, but they never quite catch up to their canine counterparts. Every military dog has rank, always one rank *higher* than his or her handler, in fact—and well-earned.

When soldiers take their SSD K9s downrange into combat zones, they both must be “validated” upon their arrival, to confirm their readiness for a successful transition to their new environment. Staff Sgt. Sanford and his K9, Sgt. 1st Class *Ux* and fellow 93rd Military Police Battalion team Sgt. Burton and his K9, Staff Sgt. *Rascal*, spent their two weeks in training at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan before they “pushed

**TASKS ARE ASSIGNED BASED ON THE DOGS’ NATURAL BEHAVIORS, RATHER THAN THE BEHAVIORS BEING FORCED OR REPRESSED TO ACCOMMODATE TASKS.**



**Staff Sgt. *Rascal* is wholly focused on Sgt. Burton’s every movement. Military Working Dogs and their handlers depend on each other when on duty “downrange” — as these two were when deployed to Afghanistan.**

**And yet, *Rascal* is still a Lab and frequently acts like one—periodically getting distracted by his favorite toy.**



**Dog Cruces • Winter 2015**



**Though the 513th Military Working Dog Detachment, 93rd Military Police Battalion at Fort Bliss is currently an all male unit (with the exception of one), women do serve as K9 Military Police domestically and abroad.**



out” to Special Forces. Sgt. Burton described the comfort, as well as the exigency, of having had *Rascal* with him in Afghanistan. They depended on each other. *Rascal* literally “had his back” as they slept at night, and welcomed attention from other soldiers, too, who appreciated the chance to pet him and share a moment of warmth and normalcy in their stressful environment. Most of the elite members of the 513th MWD Detachment, 93rd MP Battalion have been deployed abroad and served downrange with his K9. Each of them can speak to the roles their K9s have played as soldiers in our military.

Are you picturing these brave and skilled Military Working Dogs, the German Shepherds, the Dutch Shepherds, the Belgian Malinois, the Weimaraners? Well, don’t forget the Labrador Retrievers and the Springer Spaniels! Vic and I were pretty amazed! Dogs are trained according to their natural aptitudes, personalities, and character. Sgt. 1st Class Bias describes dogs trained for aggression, like Spc. *Paco*, as “retractable bullets,” but we

watched Staff Sgt. *Rascal*, a not-exactly-slender Labrador Retriever, amble through his agility paces, distracted periodically by his toy. Yes, this is the same dog who was with Sgt. Burton in Afghanistan. Sgt. Burton proudly put *Rascal* through his training paces for us, recognizing that *Rascal*, a Specialized Search Dog (SSD), was doing a great job acting like a Lab and was perfectly suited for his job. Sgt. 1st Class Bias told us “It’s all about the attitude of the dog and how it handles training.”

Tasks are assigned based on the dogs’ natural behaviors, rather

than the behaviors being forced or repressed to accommodate tasks.

It would have been easy for us to focus on heroism and training and strength and bravery, but Vic and I talked all the way home about the humility we witnessed in these patriotic young men and the touching conclusion to our visit. The soldiers had gathered for a picture in front of a simple metal cabinet, utilitarian in its martial austerity, until we noticed the incongruous little floral boxes in perfect alignment on top. They were the urns of all former Military Working Dogs who had served the in 93rd Military Police Battalion. They were all still there, on-base, among the soldiers with whom they had served, remembered every day in their place of honor, not quite out of reach, one rank ahead forever.



**Spc. *Paco* and Pfc. *Wade* took “TOP DAWG” honors at the 2nd Annual Christopher Diaz Memorial War Dawg Weekend last September, competing in obedience, detection, aggression, and endurance categories against other branches of the military and regional law and border enforcement.**

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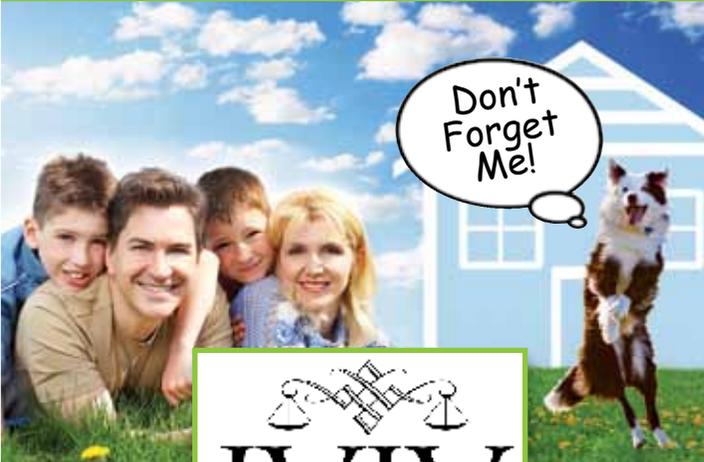
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Dog Cruces ❀ Winter 2015

# Workin' Like a Dog



## High Schoolers Have High Hopes for Paw Patrol

**L**as Cruces welcomed eight new furry friends into our community on November 9th, 2014. These black and blonde Labs can be seen roaming the mall, local businesses and restaurants with their new trainers from Las Cruces, Centennial and Mayfield High Schools. Sooo...what's so special about that? This group of outstanding young people and their mentors are on a mission—to provide the basic training and socialization these Labs need in order to become guide dogs for the visually impaired. They are the newly-formed Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol.

The three high schools took on this unique learning adventure through the Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters at Mayfield and Centennial and the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) organization at Cruces High. The students have become official “puppy raisers” for **Guide Dogs for the Blind** (GDB), a non-profit organization based in Oregon and California. GDB's puppy raising program is active in ten western states and complements many FFA, 4H, home school, high school and college programs.

The Las Cruces Labs began their training and socialization at Lemoore High School in California, where FFA members (and experienced GDB puppy raisers) worked with the pups until they were six months old. Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol met up with them in Phoenix last November and took responsibility for the continuing education of these loveable projects. Lemoore student Paige Cloye, black Lab *Yahtzee's* first trainer, says “I hope *Yahtzee* changes your lives like he changed mine!”

The amount of work required by both dog and student trainer is massive—from the moment they wake up till it's time for the dog to retire for the evening. But the work is rewarding, and MVPP students take great pride in what they're doing. Mastering basics such as sit, stay, wait, “do your business” (the command to relieve), and “let's go” (used only to have the dog begin walking) may seem like simple commands, but if the Lab cannot carry these out, it fails to become a guide dog. Knowing this, the puppy raisers take these simple commands very seriously and work with their dogs every day.

Students receive plenty of guidance from the headquarters for Guide Dogs for the Blind. They get answers to their questions and crucial information about how to improve their dogs with training. The time and effort that GDB employees put into making sure these dogs are trained correctly is amazing. They fly from school to school to make sure—in person—that each dog is up to speed in every area of its training, and they teach the student handlers proven techniques to train their Labs. The MVPP student handlers take in every bit of information and work hard to perfect each command.

Socializing the Labs is what almost every MVPP trainer considers

the most fun—taking them into pre-approved stores, shops, restaurants and schools is exciting for both the raiser and the dog. But it is also one of the most important exercises the future guide dog can undergo. In order to be Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Labs must be accustomed and adaptable to every sound and scenario, so taking them on walks down busy streets, or to a class full of loud children is exactly what the dogs need so as to not be frightened by all the different sights, smells and noises. This is the main goal of the student handlers—to prepare these dogs for the world around them. When the Labs are 13 to 15 months old, they will return to GDB to complete their formal training as guide dogs.

Just like with kids, it truly takes a village to raise a guide dog puppy. MVPP has had enormous support from the Las Cruces community. Tractor Supply donated crates for the puppies at home and at school, Jornada Veterinary Clinic donated first aid supplies and neutered all eight pups, local Lions Clubs have made multiple donations, and many businesses have invited and welcomed the dogs into their establishments.

Making sure these special dogs are the best they can be is what every puppy raiser wants. The Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol is striving for perfection every day, and hopes this is the first of many years for this exciting new program.

Article by Katie Garrison, LCHS  
and Hailey Peck, MHS



*Yahtzee* is one of eight Labrador Retrievers being trained to become guide dogs by the new Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol. High school students, acting as “puppy raisers,” take the dogs to school with them as part of the program.



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Zip is a regular fixture at almost all of Ned Tutor's job sites, and from the time you first meet with Ned to discuss your plans for a custom-built home or remodel, Zip is most likely at his side.

Nearly all of Ned's sub-contractors know Zip's familiar furry face, and most have learned to bring him a treat or two. But if they happen to forget that treat, don't worry about Zip going hungry—he will always manage to sneak a bite from a burrito or unattended snack.

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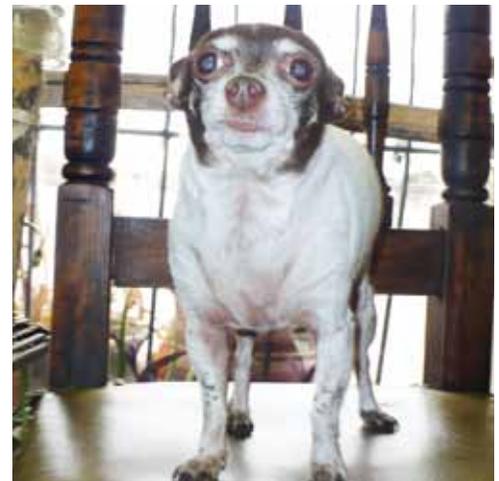
### Leather Company of Las Cruces

Rocky is a trusted, punctual, permanent co-owner of Leather Company of Las Cruces. Rocky is usually the constant companion of Teresa Amezcua (the other owner), although at the time of this article was with his caretaker, Oscar. Rocky belonged to another family member, when that family member went off to school, Teresa was happy to share her home and business with Rocky.

Rocky and Teresa have always had a special connection, even when Teresa was just visiting him. He would start talking/singing when his intuition told him she was near. Rocky is Teresa's "extension of joy." Besides being her co-partner, his duties include keeping Teresa on schedule, being her sounding board when making decisions, and most of all being her constant companion. He has his own cubicle at the Leather Co. behind the counter and alerts Teresa to help customers when the door opens.

Visit Rocky and Teresa Monday through Friday

at Leather Company of Las Cruces, 745 E. Lohman Ave., 575-523-0388 for all your leather goods, leather services and such.



# FIXATED ON FELINES



The Doña Ana County Big Kitty Fix is a project of the Coalition for Pets and People—an organization formed in the Fall of 2011 with a singular goal: to ensure that Doña Ana County/Las Cruces becomes a “No-Kill” Community by December 31, 2018—thus the organization’s mantra of “Zero in Seven.” Big Kitty Fix is focused on helping our community stop and reverse its severe feline overpopulation problem.

A cat can become sexually mature at six to eight months and, in our mild climate, can produce three to four litters per year! The numbers can get out of hand within just a couple of generations, so it is crucial for cat owners to take the initiative to spay or neuter their felines BEFORE they start having kittens. Big Kitty Fix makes this easy and affordable by sponsoring feline-only spay/neuter clinics throughout the year.

Big Kitty Fix hosted its first clinic in April of 2012, and completed seven by year-end, resulting in 184 cats having been spayed or neutered and vaccinated for rabies. In 2013, 351 surgeries and vaccinations were performed during 14 clinics, and a microchipping service was also introduced. In 2014, Big Kitty Fix hosted 16 mobile clinics for a total of 381 felines having been spayed or neutered, vaccinated and

microchipped. Add to these numbers a few more clients who, through Big Kitty Fix, had their cats fixed by local veterinarians, and we have helped to sterilize nearly 1000 cats in our first three years!

Big Kitty Fix is a small, but efficient operation. Most surgeries are performed by Dr. Amy Starr, who owns and operates Paws ‘n Hooves mobile clinic out of El Paso, TX. She and her Technician, Martin, are a well-oiled team who have facilitated thousands of surgeries for both cats and dogs in the Southern New Mexico and West Texas areas. Thanks to the generosity of the Spay Neuter Action Program (SNAP) folks, Big Kitty Fix is able to use the SNAP office on West Picacho for the majority of its clinics.

The Big Kitty Fix “trio” is comprised of Anne Markman, Ann McCarthy and Michelle Corella. Together, these ladies handle client scheduling, morning intake and afternoon outtake, and all of the paperwork associated with the clinics. They make reminder and follow-up calls and, as needed, and work with the clients to overcome any post-operative issues with their cats. Now that both the County and City have included some form of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) in their animal ordinances, Big Kitty

Fix will work with colony caretakers and other TNR advocacy groups to provide spay/neuter services to as many community felines as possible, in an effort to continue to reduce the number of cats being impounded and killed at our animal shelter.

Over the past 25 years, more than 100,000 cats have been killed at the shelter, at taxpayer expense. Even at a very conservative estimate of \$50 per cat, this amounts to \$5,000,000 in taxpayer dollars spent to kill cats, with virtually no impact on actually reducing the feline population in the community. Sustained, high-volume spay/neuter is the answer to the feline overpopulation problem in Doña Ana County, and Big Kitty Fix is part of that solution.

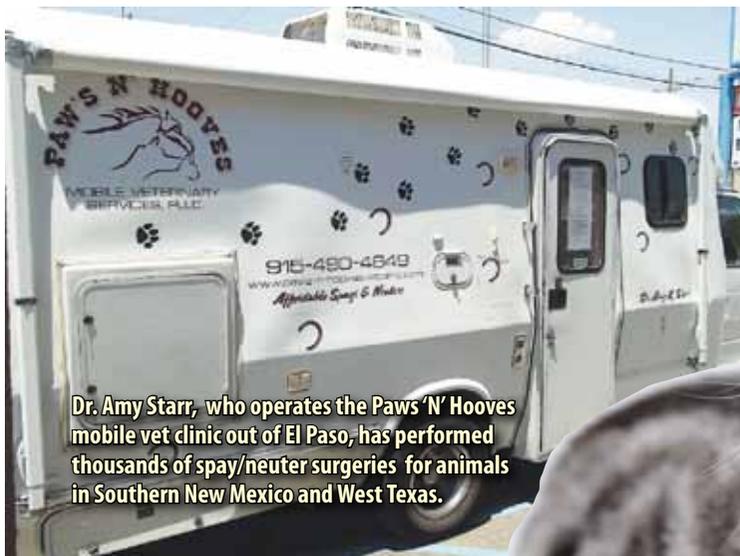
Big Kitty Fix will host its first clinic of 2015 on Saturday, February 28th. As long as they are able to financially sustain the clinics, they will host one clinic per month in 2015, starting in February. The cost of these clinics is approximately \$1600, and they try to spay or neuter 25-30 cats per clinic. A copay of \$45 includes the spay/neuter surgery, a rabies shot, a left eartip (for TNR cats), and a registered microchip. If you do the math, you will realize that, even with the client copay, Big Kitty Fix must subsidize a portion of each clinic.

Like so many other advocacy organizations, we depend on grants and private donations to survive, and 2015 will be no exception. We are always searching for grants to help us continue our work, but with none on the horizon at the present time, we are looking for caring individuals who would like to fund a clinic (or even a portion of a clinic) and enjoy a tax-deduction in the process. We are a Special Project under the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, so all donations are tax-deductible. And every penny you donate will go to these clinics. If you would like more information about sponsoring a clinic, please contact Anne Markman at 575-993-8840. Thank You!

[facebook.com/BigKittyFix](https://www.facebook.com/BigKittyFix)

Michelle Corella is co-director of Big Kitty Fix.

**Big Kitty Fix will host its first clinic of 2015 on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>**

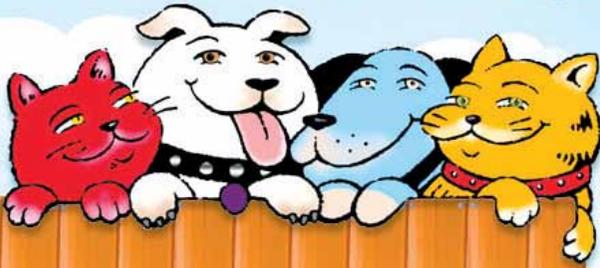


Dr. Amy Starr, who operates the Paws ‘N’ Hooves mobile vet clinic out of El Paso, has performed thousands of spay/neuter surgeries for animals in Southern New Mexico and West Texas.



## Doña Ana County Big Kitty Fix

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PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

# Traveling With Your Best Friends

by Vic Villalobos

## Chillin' in 'Zona for the New Year

**W**e had never done any RVing in really cold weather before, but as the holidays were drawing to a close, my wife and I decided to take one last, week-long trip in 2014. We'd always wanted to tour Kartchner Caverns, near Benson, AZ, but had never done so because it requires reservations in advance—and you know my record when it comes to planning ahead (I'm all-too-familiar with “camping” in Walmart parking lots). But...2015 Vic makes reservations, so before we took off I had secured a cavern tour and RV spaces at state parks all over warm (*not!*), sunny (*right!*), Southern Arizona.

### Days 1&2, Kartchner State Park

We packed up our girls, gear, and holiday leftovers and hit I-10 to Kartchner State Park in Arizona—about a two-hour drive with good weather and no traffic. We were greeted by the camp hosts and shown to our spot, which was just a two-minute walk over to the Visitors Center for the caverns. The caverns, themselves, were beautiful (we took the “Big Room” tour) and well worth the trip and price (about \$25 each). The park also has some great hiking trails around the caverns, which the dogs really enjoyed. We stayed two nights. Overnight temperatures: about 37°F.

### Days 3&4, Catalina State Park

After two nights at Kartchner, we packed up the “rig” (that's what RVers call their RVs... I figure I'm seasoned enough by now to use the lingo) and moved a whopping 55 miles to Catalina State Park, just north of Tucson. We had stayed at this park before and enjoyed the area, so we were looking forward to exploring the many hiking trails they have to offer. But there was a problem when we arrived—the park rangers saw our three dogs in the RV and handed us a pamphlet highlighting all the places we *couldn't* take our dogs. A project to introduce Big Horn Sheep had begun since the last time we were there, and by the looks of the new “off-limits” map, we would be confined to hiking one small loop trail—and the parking lot. Who knew that dogs and sheep were such enemies!?

Luckily we had two things that proved invaluable—our “toad” (tow vehicle) and our iPhone app for finding dog parks. After a short “hike” around the Catalina parking lot we headed out in search of a dog park. The great thing about the Tucson area is that almost every people park includes a dog park with it! Five minutes later the dogs were frolicking at a nice park. We stayed two nights at Catalina but probably won't go back

again until sheep and dogs learn to get along. Overnight temperatures, about 33°F.

### Days 5-7, Tucson KOA

We had planned to move to another state park at this point, but a cold front and the high winds accompanying it had other plans for us. Unfortunately, Catalina was full by this time, so we had to find somewhere else to stay. Luckily for us the KOA in Tucson had room, and we were once again on the move. We always enjoy KOAs

because they have nice amenities and great little dog parks.

When we arrived (on December 31st), we found out they had a full restaurant and bar at this location, and they had a fancy dinner and live music celebration scheduled for New Year's Eve. We were in!! Our campsite (which included an outdoor patio set, grass, and a tree loaded with oranges we were encouraged to pick)

was directly across from the restaurant. We had a great prime rib dinner, listened to music and rang in the New Year—at 10pm. Turns out KOA folks aren't ones to stay up too late.

By now the weather had taken another turn for the worse, so we extended our stay in Tucson while rain mixed with some light snow moved in. The only bad part about the KOA is that its dog park also serves as the ponding area for rain. Rather than sleeping with a bunch of dogs soaked from swimming in the KOA pond, we consulted the iPhone and found another dog park to explore. Tucson really is a great city when it comes to the dog parks—Las Cruces could learn from them!

We enjoyed our extra days around Tucson, did a little shopping and even headed about an hour south to the tiny town of Tubac. It's an Artist Community with lots of shops and a few restaurants. There was even a nice little dog park where our girls met two other Golden Retrievers.

By this time, we were pretty much ready to head home. It was Friday night, we were running out of clean clothes, and it was getting colder by the hour. We stopped to grab dinner and take one

final trip to a dog park before heading back to the RV around 8:30pm.

Remember when I said we'd never RV'd in cold weather before? We had been running our heater pretty much non-stop the entire trip, and...well...I hadn't checked our propane status. No propane means no heat, and this was going to be the coldest night yet—27°F! When we went to bed, my wife and I looked like Arctic expeditioners wearing all the cold weather clothing we could find, with



a dog on each side of us (also under the covers) and every single blanket piled on the bed.

Star and Lucy like to curl up and snuggle in for the night—good girls! But Ruby tends to toss and turn, and this night was no exception. When she turned, I'd lose a blanket. When she tossed, I'd lose a blanket. By morning I was in a fetal position just trying to stay warm. There was ice—not frost, but ice—on the interior window by our heads! I looked over at my wife and Ruby, who between them had the equivalent of a Target store full of blankets. Lesson learned! Always check your propane!! I'd love to take one trip where I don't learn a valuable life lesson....

We all survived the night, and headed back home the next morning. We'd had some fun, learned a few things, and even given the “rig” a new nickname—“The Crampers.” We had never spent so much time *inside* the RV, and we quickly realized how confining it can be. At one point we even discussed how this trip could turn into *The Shining*. But “all's well that ends well, and we're already looking forward to our next big adventure.

In the summer.

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# Penny for your Thoughts

by Jennifer Woods

## Much Ado About Nothing

It's been almost two years since Penny and I found each other in the parking lot, and there's been plenty to write about since. We've attended obedience classes (more than once), had her DNA tested (a unique mix of noble breeds!), thrown a canine office party for her first birthday, frequented Yappy Hours and doggie daycare, obsessed about her extreme fear of all things, mourned Luna, then fostered and adopted Summer. It's been a full couple of dog-years!

But as I sat down to start my Winter column I realized...I have nothing to write about. We did nothing special over the holidays, and there's nothing terribly important or significant on the horizon—so, basically, I have nothing to report.

So with a nod—and apologies—to *Seinfeld*, this is a column about nothing....

Nothing makes work feel less like work than having a dog or two at the office all day. They are both energizing and calming—and often hysterical. Summer's constant, high-intensity quest for food and fun complements Penny's low-key contentment to curl up at my feet and just "be." They add so much, and demand so little, that I can't help but think more businesses would benefit from allowing canine co-existence in the workplace.

Nothing's better than having my dogs with me almost every day, but when I do leave them alone (even if just to run a few errands) nothing makes me happier than the distinctive sounds of doggie dancing on the other side of the door when I arrive back home.

Nothing is a more effective home alarm system than an alert dog. Most of my pups have been excellent warning bells for whatever the goings-on in my neighborhood—Luna, in particular, made me feel safe and secure both at home and while working late nights at the office. On the other hand, nothing is more useless at guarding the homestead than a chicken-dog. Even before there's a knock at my door, Penny has left the building—fleeing to the far corner of the back yard, where she'll

remain (sometimes for hours) until she feels safe enough to return. Nothing breaks my heart quite like this.

As a result, nothing worries me more than Penny's paralyzing fear of the human world—although there are signs that her fears are beginning to recede, if only just a little. Strangers still terrify her, but she is starting to accept and even approach people she sees on a regular basis. Nothing makes me prouder or more hopeful than watching Penny begin—ever so gingerly—to emerge from her shell. I credit Summer, who loves all humans and fears none, with much of her sister's progress. The rest of the kudos belong to my very patient, dog-lovin' co-workers and to Penny's human friends at Karen's Animal House. She still has a loooong way to go, but we'll get there eventually.

Nothing is more repulsive than a flatulant Golden Retriever. Well, that's not quite true—my dear Dalmatian, Bacchus, could clear a room with his sudden, silent bursts of pungence. More than once, I saw grown men cry tears of blood trying to escape putrid waves of invisible toxicity. But Bacchus crossed Rainbow Bridge long ago and no longer poses a threat to humanity—so his stinky crown now belongs to my Golden Summer, and she wears it proudly.

Nothing warms my heart like watching my two girls play together. It seems strange to me, but none of my other dogs ever became real buddies with each other. They co-existed peacefully, and would occasionally romp in the back yard, but none shared the bond that Penny and Summer appear to have forged. They've been good for each other, and I can't believe how lucky I am to get to watch them grow old together.

Nothing makes me more grateful than having two healthy, loving, wonderful dogs entrusted to my care. Sure, we may be in a bit of a rut right now—but it's a happy little rut, and we're all in it together.

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# Walter's Lunchbox

by Walter Dubbin  
(as told to Margaret Dubbin)



## Breakfast of Champions

**H**appy New Year, Peeps!! I hope you and your pups had a fabulous Holiday Season filled with fun, family, friends, and FOOD!!!!

*Butthead* and I had some grand adventures here in the LC. We hiked Aguirre Springs with a professional camera crew (hope they got my best side!). We also got to tag along with Mom and Dad at deer camp, and I was forced to experience camping in the bitter NM cold up in Cloudcroft. Mom brought along my entire wardrobe of cold weather gear, but despite having layers of fleecy vests, wearing a head gator, being wrapped in a blanket, tucked into Mom's 0°F sleeping bag AND sleeping inside a camper—I was not at all a "Happy Camper!" I normally LOVE camping, but not when it is brutally cold and gets down below 50°F at night! After all my suffering, not a single one in the hunting group slayed a deer... bunch of amateurs!

Thankfully, the Elk hunt fared much better. First because *Butthead* and I got to stay at home, and second because Mom and Dad were successful in slaying a cow elk each! That was eight—count 'em, eight—Elk hooves for me and *Butthead* to gnaw on all winter!! Waahoo!!! It also means elk liver treats, elk bones, elk heart jerky, elk kabobs, elk creole, elk gumbo, pan-fried, deep fried, stir-fried.... Wait—what was I talking about? Oh yeah, Elk, it has to be the most glorious thing I have ever tasted. Besides cat poop, that is.

Sooo, yeah, I have this fetish with cat poop. Mom has caught me on a number of occasions trying to scarf down the random cat truffle I find while out on our walks. I can usually get at least part of an offering down before Mom has a chance to pry it out of my mouth. This often happens in the early morning light when she really can't see what I'm trying to hide until she brings it up close to her face to get a good look. I find it entertaining to watch once she realizes what it is, pulls it out of my mouth, freaks out, and starts yelling at the deaf dog in the middle of our neighborhood. Hahaha! I love her, but she sure is fun to mess with.

I've obviously gotten off topic. Back to my Holiday Season. Besides the hunts, the camping, and the hiking, *Butthead* and I spent the rest of our time supervising Mom at the office, running and barking at the neighbor dogs, playing with our buds at Karen's Animal House, and working with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to get some of my "Walter's Lunchbox" treats analyzed and registered with the state. Yep, that's right, Mom and I got busted and almost hauled off to the clink by the dog treat police for offering our

baked goods to the public. Mayor Vic tried to tell them that Dog'Cruces was out of their jurisdiction, but for some reason they weren't buying it! It's all cool though—they have been very helpful and informative working with us to get all of our ducks in a row, and we will have some of our products registered in 2015. We'll update y'all on my blog when we're ready to rock-n-roll!

Anyway, these two recipes were inspired by my love of both elk and cat poop. I hope your pups enjoy them as much as *Butthead* and I do....

### Grain-Free Quiche

- 1 C Ground Meat of Choice  
(elk, turkey, lamb, beef, venison)
- 1 C Carrots (diced)
- 1 C Celery (diced)
- 4 Medium New Potatoes  
(boiled, cooled, and thinly sliced)
- 4 Eggs
- 1 C Low Sodium Beef or Chicken Broth  
(or homemade bone broth)



Preheat oven to 425°F. Layer sliced potatoes in a greased pie plate starting from the center and overlapping the slices, forming a "pie crust." Bake the potato crust for approximately 10 min. Meanwhile, brown ground meat with carrots and celery until meat is cooked through. Evenly distribute meat mixture over the potato crust. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs with broth. Pour egg mixture evenly over meat mixture. Layer remaining potato slices over pie filling and bake at 425°F for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°F and continue baking for 35-45 minutes until center of quiche sets. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely before serving.

### Cat Splatz

- 4 Ripe Bananas
- 1 ½ C Gluten-Free Oatmeal
- ½ C All-Natural Apple Sauce
- 1 Tbsp Carob Powder
- ½ C Flax Seed Meal
- 1 Tbsp Dry Milk Powder
- 1 Egg



Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix thoroughly with hand mixer. Drop by Tablespoon onto greased or parchment-lined cookie sheets and flatten with the back of a spoon so cookies are of relatively even thickness. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes or until firm on outside. Leaving cookies in the oven, turn off oven and allow to cool completely. Cookies will be soft and chewy. Store in an air tight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.



Dog'Cruces ❀ Winter 2015

NOTE: ALWAYS consult with your veterinarian regarding ingredients, serving sizes and special dietary requirements prior to changing your pet's diet.

# Chronicles of Vash

by Shannon Ellison & Kat Lacy



## New Home, New Friends

**O**n a warm spring day a week after the Butt-Sniffing Incident, Mama and I went for a drive. I sat on the front seat, neither frightened nor particularly curious, and watched the wild colors of the outside world speed by. I sniffed a thousand smells and anchored myself deep into the plush leather seat with my claws.

I'd been part of the world for a couple of months by this time. I was small for my age, but with a personality big enough and fur long enough to more than make up for it. I was a spunky, dark grey fluff ball with huge gray-green eyes and long, needle-sharp fangs like a vampire. I was the cutest thing ever to have existed.

We arrived at a bustling, brightly-lit building—my new home! It smelled like wet dog, a thousand different people and their animals, and best of all—food. Every inch smelled delicious. Stacks of dry food, rows of canned food, hanging lines of tasty snacks, and the intriguing, musty smell of crushed green leaves from a bag hanging somewhere high overhead. Someday, I would find that bag and knock it down—but that's a different story.

Mama cried when she left me. I tried to tell her it would be okay, that this place smelled like magic! She nuzzled my face with hers, I batted her nose gently with my paw, then she left.

My new home was a giant cat-condo, with a tree so tall I couldn't reach the top. I was too small to jump from step to step, so I would latch myself onto the plastic mesh of the condo and ninja-climb my way up. I usually did this screaming at the top of my lungs. Sometimes a bushy-haired redheaded girl would come and pluck me from where I hung. I would lie in her cupped hands, head lolling, eyes closed, purring while she carried me from place to place, petting me all the while.

The best part of the day was evening, when the bushy-haired girl would arrive with not only crunchy dry food, but a wobbling, oozing, fishy pile of wet food. I could literally eat the whole pile in four seconds, and when it was over, I obsessively looked forward to the next four seconds of bliss the entirety of the following day.

One day a new kitten joined me in my condo. She was older than me, mostly white but with geometric splotches of black across her head and face like a *Batman* mask. She was afraid of everything, and left me pretty much alone. She spent her days cowering behind the hooded lid of the litter box, and she never yowled for attention.

Once the other kitten arrived, Bushyhair would leave *two* piles of wet food instead of one. My favorite four seconds of the day became my favorite eight seconds!

One night when the people were gone and all was dark and quiet, the new kitten came to me, sniffing hesitantly. She was older and larger than me, and I learned this was *her* second home, too—her first home had been loud and scary. One day a small human had tried to touch her, and she'd scratched him with as much force as her terror could muster. After that she'd been stuffed into a small, dark cage and moved from place to place to unfamiliar place. She'd spent half of her short life in darkness, hissing at anyone and anything that came her way. Her name was *Britney*.

We quickly developed a routine. I would eat her portion of food then go to sleep. She would stay below, crammed into the dark behind the litter box, smelling of exhaustion and low, constant fear. One evening, Bushyhair came by with the two piles of wet food. I catapulted down from the top where I'd been sleeping, careening off the condo walls, still half-groggy but utterly determined to reach the deliciousness below as quickly as I could.

I wolfed down the wet food. *Nomnomnom*. Two seconds. Three. I finished the last of it with one mighty gulp. Four!

I lowered my nose to the second pile, opened my mouth wide... and stopped.

*Britney* was still crouching behind the litter box. I'd never seen her anywhere else, except the one time she'd crept out to sniff noses with me. Before I could change my mind, I latched myself to the side of the cage, and climbed slowly back up to my bed at the top. It was still warm. I immediately fell back to sleep.

Later, I felt something rustling the air. I opened one eye half-way. It was dark and quiet. All the people had gone home for the day. *Britney* was stepping tentatively onto my platform, carefully extracting each claw from the plastic mesh before placing it down. She slunk over to me, lightly sniffing my tail, my back, then—so gently I hardly felt it—my nose. Her breath smelled faintly of wet food.

I scooted over. *Britney* lay down and curled herself up against me, folding so her tail wrapped all the way around to cover her face.

Just before I fell back to sleep, I felt a deep, steady rumble. She was purring.

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## WHY DO DOGS HOWL AT THE MOON?

by  
Ruff Barkhard  
January 2015



Why do some dogs like to howl at the moon?  
They do it all year, not only in June.  
They seldom give riotous concerts at noon –  
So why do some dogs like to yelp at the moon?

We've all seen them bay in a slapstick cartoon  
Where they sound like a chorus of off-tune bassoon.  
At times their lament is more like a lampoon,  
And often they swoon like a canine platoon.

Why do these barkers continue to croon  
Long after sunset, even in a monsoon?  
It's enough to compel one to hit the saloon,  
And some folks get tempted to hurl a harpoon.

Now, perhaps hungry foxes are chasing raccoon,  
Or a cunning coyote howl causes a swoon,  
And it's nice when dogs serenade sunsets maroon.  
But why do they sing 'neath a late-at-night moon?

Please understand, I'm not here to impugn  
A pup who is up 'neath the rise of the moon,  
But it sounds even worse near a doggie commune.  
Can someone explain this yip-yappy typhoon?

From dog howls at midnight we aren't immune.  
It's just part of life near a Las Cruces dune.  
Given all the world's ills, these barks seem picayune;  
No need for a cop or a canine dragoon.

It's an unanswered question, but hopefully soon  
We'll welcome this canine cacophonous croon.  
Meanwhile, a reward of fifty doubloon  
If you can explain why dogs bark at the moon!

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Get Involved and Help!!

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email: mail@apalascruces.org  
www.actionprogramsforanimals.org

#### **Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV)**

3551 Bataan Memorial West, Las Cruces, NM  
575-382-0018  
www.ascmv.org

#### **Animal Village NM**

7246 Hwy. 54/70, Alamogordo, NM  
575-415-8310  
email: animalvillagenm@gmail.com  
www.animalvillagenm.com

#### **Cat's Meow Adoption Center**

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575-386-6938  
www.catsmeowlascruces.com

#### **Cherished K9 All Breed Rescue**

575-496-6085  
email: cherishedk-9s@hotmail.com

#### **Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS)**

575-647-4808  
www.Donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org

#### **Doña Ana County Big Kitty Fix**

phone: 575-993-8840  
email: corella@zianet.com  
www.bigkittyfix.org

#### **Humane Society of Southern NM (HSSNM) /PetSmart Cat Adoption Center**

575-523-8020  
email: mail@hssnm.org  
www.hssnm.org

#### **Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition**

PO Box 13345, Las Cruces, NM 88013  
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www.lcdogparkers.com

#### **Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary (SHAS)**

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email: safehaven@nightfury.com  
www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.net

#### **Spay/Neuter Action Program of Southern NM (SNAP)**

2405 W. Picacho, Las Cruces, NM 88005  
575-524-9265  
www.snapnewmexico.org

#### **Therapaws**

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www.therapydogs.com (parent organization)

### Featured Group

## Spay/Neuter Action Program (SNAP)

SNAP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that focuses on sterilizing pets to reduce pet overpopulation—thereby lowering unnecessary deaths at the local shelter. They offer low-cost spay/neuter procedures for those who qualify as low-income households in Doña Ana County.

You can, first and foremost, help SNAP's efforts by having your own pet(s) spayed or neutered. You can also help by donating to SNAP so more low-income households can take advantage of their services; by educating yourself and others about the benefits of spaying/neutering pets; by volunteering to work at the SNAP office or at scheduled events (especially the monthly spay/neuter clinics); and by attending fundraising events.

To help make a positive impact on Doña Ana County's pet overpopulation problem, visit SNAP's office at 2405 W. Picacho Suite 103, in Las Cruces (across from Peddler's Pavilion), call **575-524-9265**, email [snapnm@zianet.com](mailto:snapnm@zianet.com), or visit [www.snapnewmexico.org](http://www.snapnewmexico.org).





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