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Spring
2014

DOG & CAT Cruces

Information

for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!



CAT PEOPLE / DOG PEOPLE

Can't we all just get along?

Page 15

CHRONICLES OF VASH

Page 29

The debut of true-life cat tales from *Vash the Stampede*.



COMICUS ABSURDIUM

Words fail. You'll just have to see this for yourself.... Page 20

HERE KITTY, KITTY

Page 19 A new Trap-Neuter-Return program hopes to control Doña Ana County's feral cat population.

PLUS...Traveling with Kitty...Introducing Fluffy to Fido...Cat Treat Confusion..."That's Not a Toy!"...and MORE!



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Kitties Galore!

We have truly gone to the cats—at least for this issue of *DogCruces*!

Fans of felines approach me all the time with requests for more cat coverage in the magazine, so we enlisted *Beckham the Cruces Cat* to stage a kitty coup this spring so we could bring you this special edition of—that's right—*CatCruces*!

Beckham is the lovely and talented spokesperson on our cover. He braved enemy territory (*DogCruces* Headquarters) for the photo shoot, and was a real professional. Well, maybe he was a little aloof when *Penny* wanted to play, but—hey—he's a cat.

And that's the point: cats are different from dogs. They have their own needs, interests, attitudes, quirks and issues. I found out from reading Dr. Pirtle's article that cats actually outnumber dogs as the country's favorite pet. Who knew? I also discovered that cats receive far less medical attention than dogs—often simply because feline personalities make it difficult to determine when something is wrong.

Maybe the fact that cats tend to have more complex, reclusive personalities than dogs is one reason abandoned kitties are even more numerous than dogs at the Animal Services Center. Our Winter 2014 cover story focused on canine overpopulation at the ASCMV, but healthy, adoptable cats are an even larger part of the overpopulation problem at the Center. It's a tragedy, and it's preventable. You know the mantra, Folks: spay/neuter, spay/neuter, spay/neuter! And adopt, adopt, adopt!

Speaking of spaying and neutering...Michelle

Corella provides a first look at the new TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) Program for feral cats in Doña Ana County. Cat advocates have been working for a long time to decriminalize this practice, and have recently succeeded in changing the County ordinance. Now the real work can begin!

In honor of the TNR launch, Wayne and I (with the help of our wonderful graphic artists) did a comic-book parody: **To Catch a Kitty**. Please view this with the tongue-in-cheek spirit in which it was created. We are certainly not advocating cartoon violence against grown men dressed up as tigers—DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME! No cats were harmed during the process, although Wayne's pride may be a little damaged from wearing the *Tigger* costume for three days straight. (I'm not sure why—the photo shoot only lasted three hours).

We're introducing a new column the quarter: **Chronicles of Vash**. The mother/daughter team of Kat Lacy and Shannon Ellison will chronicle the life of *Vash the Stampede*, Better Life Pet Food's resident feline. In the first installment, we meet tiny, newborn *Vash* and his littermates behind a metal dumpster...

We never quite know what to expect when we ask Jess Williams to write his column. I think I'll just leave it at that, and go curl up in a fetal position for awhile.

Also in this issue: *Walter "Wingman" Dubbin* offers his own take on homemade cat treats; some tips on introducing a new cat or kitten into your dog's world, and how to enjoy traveling with your cat.

Our cover article doesn't *really* pit Dog People against Cat People—after all, we're all just Animal People at our core. It's no secret we love dogs here at *DogCruces*, but many of us adore and care for cats as well. Our Senior Editors knew which side of the Cat Person vs. Dog Person fence they occupied—or *thought* they did, until Cat Person Charissa met her beloved dog, *Nacho*, and Dog Person Jen was selected by *Nickel* the office cat to be his lifelong servant.

I need to make one correction before signing off: in our ASCMV article last issue, we stated that ACTion Program for Animals (APA) worked with the shelter to take "specific dogs, 40 pounds and under." In fact, APA does not place limits on the size of the dogs it rescues. Sorry for the misinformation.

We hope you enjoy this cat-centric special issue—and maybe consider adding a feline friend to your family. We'll be back for the **dog** days of summer in July. WOOF!

Vic Villagatos
Mayor Pro Tem
of CatCruces

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Las Cruces, NM 88005

or email us at:
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Publisher
Marla Honeycutt

Managing Editor/Mayor of DogCruces
Vic Villalobos

Senior Editors
Charissa Paskowski, Jenifer Woods

Contributing Editor
Phyllis Wright

Graphic Artists
John Connell, Andie Fierro, Jenifer Woods

Advertising
Charissa Paskowski, Wayne Sinclair,
Michelle Sullivan, Donna Taylor, Vic Villalobos

Contributors
Nancy Chanover, Michelle Corella, Margaret Dubbin, Kat Lacy,
Charissa Paskowski, Dr. Scott Pirtle, Evelyn Ranma,
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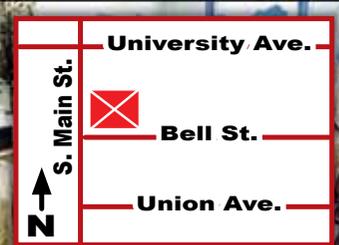


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as events are announced

Doggie



April

Thursday, April 24

Red Brick Pizza Fundraiser for HSSNM
11am-9pm. Mention "HSSNM" when making your purchase, take-out or dine-in. 15% will be donated to HSSNM.

Friday, April 25

Project Save-a-Kitten Spring Fling
5pm-7pm at MVS Studios (535 N. Main St., Las Cruces). Silent auction, art, entertainment, food, drink, music, fun!

Saturday, April 26

Mutt Show
10am-1:30pm at NMSU (corner of Jordan & University, in the grassy area behind Barnes & Noble). All dogs must be one year or older, fully vaccinated, and on a leash w/ owner. For safety, please NO PUPPIES or CATS/Kittens. Educational booths, vendors, demonstrations. Raffles throughout the day, raffle tickets on sale now through April 26 till noon. Sponsors: The College of Agricultural, Consumer, Environmental Sciences in partner with the Animal Science Department. For more information contact: jwright@las-cruces.org.

Sunday, April 27

Dog Wash to benefit SHAS
11am-4pm at Better Life Natural Pet Foods (365 Avenida de Mesilla). Raffle Prizes, food and doggie supply vendors.

May

Go Fetch! Donate Food to Your Favorite Pet Charity Month!

Chip Your Pet Month!

Thursday, May 1

Cruces Canines
5:30pm-8pm at Andele's Dog House (1983 Calle de Norte). Door prizes, raffles and fun. \$5 admission. Benefits HSSNM.

Thursday, May 8

4th Annual Wineing for the Animals
5:30-8pm at Amaro Winery (402 S. Melendres, Las Cruces), benefiting SHAS. Silent auction & Raffle. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres, a glass of wine and live music by Tuco John with every ticket. Tickets can be purchased at Amaro Winery, SHAS Thrift Store or via PayPal online at www.shaspets.com. You must indicate "Amaro Event" when purchasing online. 575-522-1044.

Friday, May 9

Paws and Purrs Gala benefiting Animal Village NM
6pm-10pm at Tulie Cafe in Tularosa. Cocktail

Attire, Silent Auction, Plated Dinner with Wine, Cash Bar, Hunks & Hounds Bachelor Auction, After-Dinner Dancing. Register online www.animalvillagenm.com/events.aspx.

Saturday, May 10

Big Kitty Fix Clinic
Get your kitty spayed or neutered. Spay/Neuter surgery, rabies shot (if needed), registered microchip. For more info or to reserve your appointment, email corella@zianet.com, or call 575-639-3036. bigkittyfix.org.

Saturday, May 17

SNAP Clinic
11am-3pm at 2405 W. Picacho, L.C. You must pre-register and qualify. For more information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

Wednesday, May 21

Yappy Hour
6pm-8pm at St. Clair (1720 Avenida de Mesilla). Food, drinks, door prizes and more! \$5 admission. Benefits SNAP and DACHS.

Thursday, May 29

Red Brick Pizza Fundraiser for HSSNM
11am-9pm. Mention "HSSNM" when making your purchase, take-out or dine-in. 15% will be donated to HSSNM.

Friday, May 30

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Dates

Saturday, May 31

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June

Adopt a Cat Month!

Thursday, June 5

Cruces Canines

5:30pm-8pm at Andele's Dog House (1983 Calle de Norte). Door prizes, raffles and fun. \$5 admission. Benefits HSSNM.

Saturday, June 14

Big Kitty Fix Clinic

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Wednesday, June 18

Yappy Hour

6pm-8pm at St. Clair (1720 Avenida de Mesilla). Food, drinks, door prizes and more! \$5 admission. Benefits SNAP and DACHS.

Friday, June 20

Take Your Dog to Work Day!

Saturday, June 21

SNAP Clinic

11am-3pm at 2405 W. Picacho, LC. You must pre-register and qualify. For more information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

Thursday, June 26

Red Brick Pizza Fundraiser for HSSNM

11am-9pm. Mention "HSSNM" when making your purchase, take-out or dine-in. 15% will be donated to HSSNM.

Saturday, June 28

2nd Annual Mulligan Fore Mutts Golf Tournament and Fundraiser

Picacho Hills Country Club. For more info call APA at 575-644-0505.

Big Kitty Fix Clinic

Get your kitty spayed or neutered. Spay/Neuter surgery, rabies shot (if needed), registered microchip. For more info or to reserve your appointment, email corella@zianet.com, or call 575-639-3036. bigkittyfix.org.

July

Thursday, July 3

Cruces Canines

5:30pm-8pm at Andele's Dog House (1983

Calle de Norte). Door prizes, raffles and fun. \$5 admission. Benefits HSSNM.

Saturday, July 12

Chain-Off Campaign

9am-1pm, location to be determined. Educate the public with anti-chaining signs/messages in observance of Dogs Deserve Better "Chain-Off." For more information, contact HSSNM by email: jigilbert@zianet.com

Big Kitty Fix Clinic

Get your cat spayed or neutered. Spay/Neuter surgery, rabies shot (if needed), registered microchip. For more info or to reserve your appointment, email corella@zianet.com, or call 575-639-3036. bigkittyfix.org.

Tuesday, July 15

National Pet Fire Safety Day

Wednesday, July 16

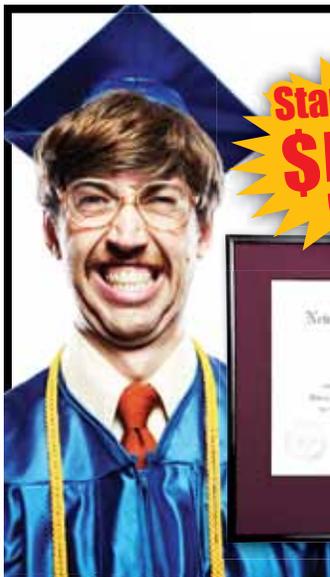
Yappy Hour

6pm-8pm at St. Clair (1720 Avenida de Mesilla). Food, drinks, door prizes and more! \$5 admission. Benefits SNAP and DACHS.

Saturday, July 19

SNAP Clinic

11am-3pm at 2405 W. Picacho, LC. You must pre-register and qualify. For more information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.



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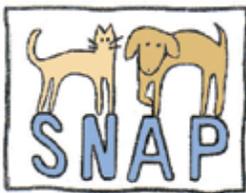
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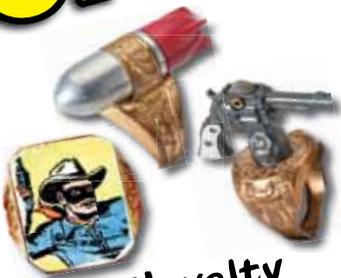
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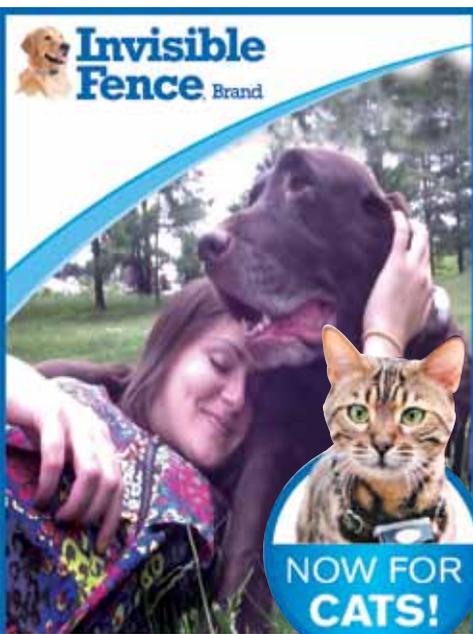


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Don't Let Them Fool You—

I love the unique department in *New Mexico Magazine*: **One of Our 50 Is Missing**. It takes a humorous look at the many ways in which the state of New Mexico is overlooked by individuals throughout

the United States. It reminds me that it's easy to overlook something that everyone should know about. We should all know there are fifty states, right? Well, evidently not. Conversely, the same might apply to our overlooked and ignored pets—our cats!

While cats outnumber dogs as pets in the United States, when it comes to veterinary care you might conclude that they don't exist.

According to 2012 statistics by the American Veterinary Medical Association, there are 74.1 million cats in the United States, and 70 million dogs. More households (36.5% vs. 30.4%) own dogs over cats, but cat

owners are more likely to have multiple pets than dog owners, with an average of 2.1 cats owned vs. 1.6 dogs.

And yet, *DogCruces* is a quarterly magazine, while *CatCruces* is only a special issue. Why?

When it comes to overall pet spending, cats play second fiddle to dogs.

And this extends to spending on veterinary care, as well. Despite outnumbering dogs as the most popular pet in the United States, cats receive much less medical attention than our canine companions. Cats receive an average of only 1.6 veterinary visits per household every year. Only 55% of cat owners make at least one visit to their veterinarian annually. This contrasts greatly with the

2.6 visits per household for dogs every year.

What are the reasons behind this disparity? It's hard to pinpoint all the factors, but I think two things may play the biggest roles.

Despite outnumbering dogs as the most popular pet in the United States, cats receive much less medical attention than our canine companions.

First, well, they're cats. Let's be honest—cats are wired differently than dogs. If your dogs are like mine, it's pretty much impossible to do anything without one or all three of them underfoot and basically in the way. It can be annoying,

but it's also part of what we love about them.

Most cats are significantly lower maintenance and more aloof. They sleep in some hidden spot all day. They disappear when company visits. They get up and eat and play and do cat things at night, while we are asleep. Their very nature makes them harder for us to read. It's easy to miss a medical problem due to their reclusive behavior.

Let's be honest—cats are wired differently than dogs... their very nature makes them harder for us to read. It's easy to miss a medical problem due to their reclusive behavior.

And when they are sick, cats often become more withdrawn and quiet, but this can be so subtle we end up missing the cues. This doesn't mean cats don't get sick as often as dogs, because they do. Most owners are just

better at knowing when something is wrong with their dogs.

Second, it seems there is more knowledge among pet owners about dogs and their various diseases, dis-



DogCruces Spring 2014

The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM

Cats Need Vet Visits, Too!

orders, and conditions. Cats certainly aren't "small dogs" when it comes to their medical diseases. They are unique and different from their canine counterparts. Their diseases and treatments can prove more chronic and challenging in many cases—even for a veterinarian. If they challenge us Vets, surely their owners can have trouble knowing and understanding when their cats are ill until things are quite advanced.

What is a veterinarian's advice to the cat owning public? Don't be a stranger! Come see us on a regular basis. I advise at least an annual check-up with appropriate immunizations based on your cat's lifestyle and activities.

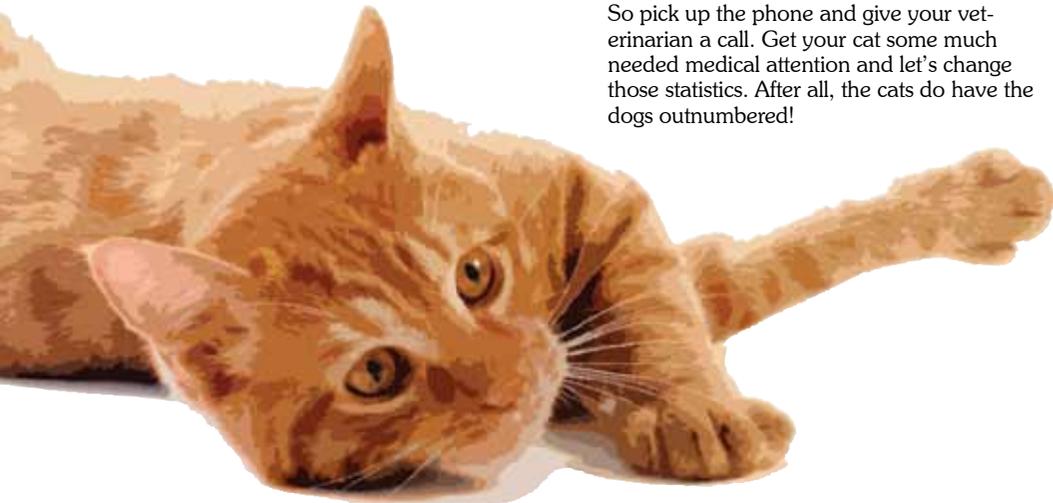
Once your cat reaches middle age, say 6-8 years old, twice yearly visits aren't a bad idea. Included in these

visits should be a complete physical exam and a discussion with your veterinarian of any issues or concerns you have—including diet, activity, weight, dental health, episodes of vomiting/diarrhea, and water consumption/litterbox habits. This is an age where most cats are still thriving and acting young, healthy, and otherwise normal.

[Feline] diseases and treatments can prove more chronic and challenging [than those of canines]—even for a veterinarian.

However, monitoring some baseline blood tests beginning in middle age can sometimes alert your veterinarian to potential problems before they become serious. Earlier diagnosis can allow earlier intervention, hopefully increasing the quality and duration of your cat's life.

So pick up the phone and give your veterinarian a call. Get your cat some much needed medical attention and let's change those statistics. After all, the cats do have the dogs outnumbered!



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STORY



Woody Meets Adonis

by Jess C. Williams

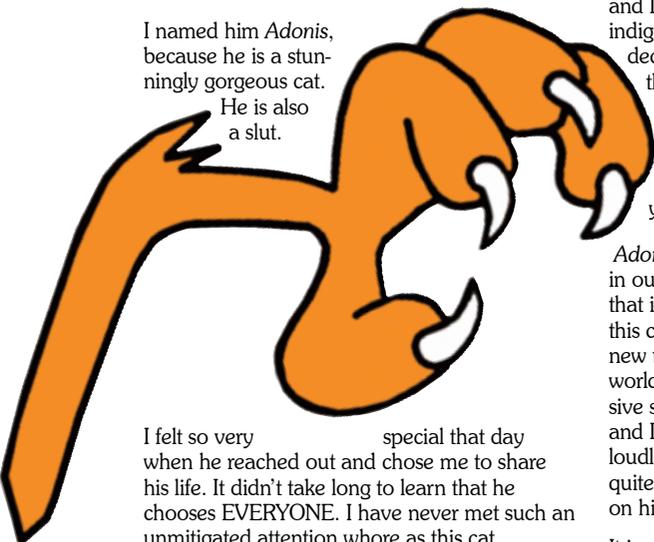
On Sunday, Oct. 2, 2002, during lunch, my sister announced that she wanted to adopt a Chihuahua before sunset. Announcements like this do not shock anyone in our family; we just roll with critter procurement.

But being the manipulative and bossy brother that I have always been to her, I commanded that she look first at the animal shelter, and only if there were no suitable Chihuahuas available could she peruse the classifieds—in which puppies for sale can be heard sadly barking with nearly every turn of the page. She agreed, on the condition that I accompany her. I had no heavy plans, so off we went.

The shelter had exactly zero Chihuahua puppies, which I found astonishing. More astonishing was the fact that a large cat with blue eyes reached its long arm out from its cage and snagged my sleeve. The cat did not let go, and so our family left the shelter not having adopted the puppy we came for, but still (inevitably) accompanied by a new critter.

I named him *Adonis*, because he is a stunningly gorgeous cat.

He is also a slut.



I felt so very special that day when he reached out and chose me to share his life. It didn't take long to learn that he chooses EVERYONE. I have never met such an unmitigated attention whore as this cat.

Visitors to my home get about two minutes of cat-free time before *Adonis* senses their presence and appears – all 23 pounds of him – and proceeds to pester them with head butts, paw slaps, lap invasions and other time-tested strategies designed to elicit head skritches and back

rub. People who protest that they are allergic fall victim to his charms long before their eyes begin to itch.

Adonis was an adult cat when he was adopted in 2002, and Dr. Schumacher estimated that he was approximately three years old. That means he is around 15 years old now. You wouldn't know it to watch him leap around the house to reach whatever surface—at whatever height—is closest in proximity to the lucky person he wants to head-butt.

You also would not guess his age from his kitten-like fascination with shoe boxes, in which he insists on sitting, even though most of him DOES NOT FIT. He is adorably dim-witted in this regard.

But enough about his mind. Let's talk about his corpus.

Adonis came equipped with four sets of claws, and I was once one of those people who indignantly lectured others who have their cats declawed. I have changed my tune about that, and I'm not afraid to tell you why. I have persuaded many people that I am right, because you cannot know this story without agreeing with me on a cellular level that makes your toes curl each time you think of it. It does mine.

Adonis sleeps on my bed. One morning early in our cohabitation, I woke up with a condition that is not unfamiliar to men. *Adonis* noticed this condition before I did, and thinking that a new toy had been magically delivered to his world, he delivered a few powerful claw-intensive swats to the toy. The toy bled quite badly, and I awoke quite suddenly, screaming quite loudly, which caused *Adonis* to leave the bed quite quickly, which was a really good decision on his part, considering my mood.

It is an abiding testament to my enduring love for animals that *Adonis* is still alive. He is, however, no longer equipped with 4-wheel-drive. I am not sorry.

For these two reasons—his love of all humans and his lack of front claws—*Adonis* is strictly an indoor cat. If he were to be allowed out, he'd



simply wander up to the first human he saw and pester her until she took him home, where he would devise a cunning, feline way to inflict lasting injury. Not that I dwell on this.

Because I do not like the smell of litter boxes, I cut a hole in my house and installed a large cage against the outside wall, where *Adonis* can bask in the sun on top of the table in the cage and conduct his business in the box underneath the table. The parrots and the parakeets also have indoor-outdoor cages, which makes my back patio somewhat zoo-like, especially when all six dogs are out in the yard.

Not long ago, a woman rang my front doorbell and told me—somewhat panicked—that she'd been walking down the alley and saw a mountain lion in a cage next to my birds. She deemed the lion's proximity to the birds unsafe, and advised me to take immediate remedial action. We had a long talk. *Adonis* soon appeared, and he head-butted her until she fell in love with him and summarily dismissed her previous threat assessment. (I didn't tell her *The Toy Story*.)

So you should definitely get a cat. That's my point. I recommend you go to the shelter in search of a puppy and see what happens to you in there. The next several years will be interesting, as well. Never let the cat on your bed.

Jess Williams is chairman of the board of directors of the Animal Services Center of the Mescalita Valley. He is not allowed to write a whole column without mentioning Toby. Hi, Toby!



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Ever the considerate cat, Bleu has scored the new sofa's arms to provide better traction...

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Doggie Drool softens the new leather.



Chocolate or Vanilla?... Coffee or Tea? ... Clooney or Pitt?

There are no *wrong* answers to these and many other fundamental life questions, but one topic in particular—**Cat Person or Dog Person?**—often elicits strong opinions by devotees of both pets. Our Senior Editors examine their own prejudices, and relate how a special furry friend of the opposite clan forced them to open their minds.

Nacho, Nacho Man!

by Charissa Paskowski

For years I was strictly a Cat Person, but over time I evolved to where I now love both dogs *and* cats. This is my journey, on which I eventually was able to add “Dog Person” to the “Cat Person” already on my life resume.

I have always been fond of Siamese cats (and Siamese mixes). I don’t know if it is their sleek, regal features, their crossed eyes, or their tendency to “talk” a whole bunch—but I have lived with four Siamese cats during my adult years. I’ve collected kitty paraphernalia like figurines, stationary, coffee mugs, photos, etc., because, well, you can never have enough cats. Life was simple—I am a Cat Person, which means I exist to serve my cats.

I believed having a dog would be utter chaos! After all, dogs require middle-of-the-night potty breaks, frequent baths because they are dirty and stinky, and constant vigilance against their scooting butts on my rugs. *Plus*, a dog would surely eat me out of house and home, vet visits would be frequent and expensive, my furniture would be in constant danger from a dog’s destructive nature, and...what would the cats think?

But about six years ago my opinion changed quickly when an adorable, mixed Pit Bull puppy entered my world. *Nacho* won me over with his sweet demeanor, abundant affection, unwavering loyalty and the fact that he is overjoyed to see me after being apart for five minutes—unlike my cats, who rarely notice if I leave for days as long as they have food, water and plenty of uninterrupted nap time. Having a dog has made me second-guess my decision to have three mischievous devil cats this whole time while never, until now, allowing a dog in my household/heart.

The fact is, my *cats* have done just about every single thing I was afraid a dog would do—and more! I was completely blind to their faults until the dog came along. My cats are little *turds*, and have, in fact, made me question my whole felines-are-superior-beings philosophy. I love all my furry babies, but which *really* reigns supreme—my cats or my dog?

Nacho is a good sleeper, and only on rare occasions will he wake me to take him outside in the middle of the night. He always looks so guilty, and he doesn’t mess around—it’s pretty much go out, take care of business, get back. The cats, on the other hand, are jerks with no boundaries. They will run across my bed and body no matter *what* time of the night it is, and the next morning will *screeeech* (just beyond arm’s reach) to be fed. They make exactly zero effort to adapt to Daylight Savings/Mountain Standard Time changes.

Advantage: Dog.

Nacho has only had one “accident” inside—and it was when he was sick and really couldn’t avoid it. Even so, he was thoughtful enough to use the rubber mat outside the cats’ litter box, which made for easy clean-up (though not so much for happy cats). You might think having a litter box means cats are low maintenance when it comes to potty habits—but cats can be disgusting (and maybe a little hateful). My oldest cat, *Zippy*, is very set in her ways. When I recently upgraded to a fancy, expensive litter, she expressed her displeasure at the change by peeing in my purse. This reminded me of a dear, nameless friend of mine, whose cat, *Cleo*, was unhappy with her litter situation and *pooped* on her sleeping guardian to protest. Another friend had her cat announce a bladder infection in much the same fashion.

Advantage: Dog.

And then there is bath time. *Nacho* has never really fought being given a bath. He doesn’t *like* them and would much rather play in the cold sprinklers and mud rather than take a nice, warm bath—but he allows me to bathe him just because it pleases me. The cats, on the other hand, will rip your arm off rather than submit quietly to bath time. Once, my boy *Bleu* had gotten

into some kind of mess and was in desperate need of a bath. He wailed and carried on like we were torturing him—“*whyyyyyyy meeeeee, noooooooo!*” Well, *Punky* must’ve thought *Bleu* was actually being attacked. *Punky* jumped on my boyfriend’s back and began pulling his hair out with her teeth. Once I’d stopped laughing, I realized my cats don’t care at all if they please me (but sometimes they do so without trying). By the way, wet cats smell just as bad as wet dogs. **Big Advantage: Dog.**

I always thought dogs would eat anything and everything they could get their paws on. *Nacho* certainly has a healthy appetite, and I *may* indulge some of his whims from time to time, but he never takes food off the table—even the coffee table—if I tell him he can’t have it. He is not food-aggressive, and when I give another dog a treat in front of him, *Nacho* sits and waits patiently for his turn. While out on walks, *Nacho* never tries to eat found food off the ground. In contrast, *Zippy* once helped herself to a lobster tail off my plate while my boyfriend and I were in the kitchen getting drinks—then had the nerve to come begging for the remaining tail after she’d finished the first. Cats have no shame! **Advantage: Dog.**

Feeding three cats that total 30 pounds together (one accounting for more than half) can be expensive when they’re all on different diets. But keeping 60-pound *Nacho* in premium dog food and treats is definitely more expensive (except when the cats eat my lobster). **Advantage: Cats.**

Brushing a pet’s teeth is not pleasant under the *best* circumstances, but if those teeth are attached to four clawed feet all trying to flee the room—well, we’re all lucky to still *have* teeth.



Resistance was futile. Even the most committed Cat Person would have fallen in love with Baby *Nacho*.

The Cat Cabal keeps Nacho and the humans in line.

Nacho remains calm—he lets me brush his teeth, no fight, no reaction. He just watches TV 'til it's over. The cats, of course, are another story. Brushing requires that I first catch them as they take off in different directions. Then *Punky* and *Bleu* have to be swaddled up in towels. The actual brushing can only begin when a cat meows and I am fast enough to get the brush into its mouth—and there's never a guarantee I'll avoid being bitten in the process.

Advantage: Dog.

Dogs are much more destructive than cats, right? Well, not in my house. When *Nacho* first came home with me, I put everything I thought he might chew out of sight, or out of reach, or in a separate room he couldn't access. One day, I had planned to wear my lace-up boots—but where were the laces? "Bad puppy!" I thought. But when I opened the closet, I found *Bleu* eating the heel off another shoe while lying atop the chewed boot laces.

My cats have knocked lamps off tables, destroyed vases, attacked flowers, stripped Christmas Trees and, basically, limited the nice things I can have around the house. They chew paper, tissues and toilet paper for the pure enjoyment of being wasteful little creatures. And even though I try to take precautions, two of my cats chew on electrical cords. *Bleu* will snap

a cord in half, even if it is plugged in and I am two feet away. It scares me to

We still don't know how this happened.



death. To date, I have had to replace three laptop power cords, nine phone chargers, five curling irons, three flat irons, two clothes irons, one vacuum cord...and a partridge in a pear tree. Just kidding—I would *never* bring a bird into the house.

Three days after saving for and purchasing a new couch, it had already been marred by racing, leaping, zooming cats as they used it for traction to catapult themselves across the living room (we call these "run-bys"). *Nacho* will destroy one of his own toys in a heartbeat but doesn't touch my shoes, clothes, or anything that hasn't been designated as his. **Advantage: Dog.**

When I was still exclusively a Cat Person, my biggest concern about bringing home a dog was the effect it would have on my cats. Wouldn't a dog torment, hurt, or stress-out my kitties? Once again, the exact opposite proved true. While still a puppy, *Nacho* did chase *Punky*—but only once. He figured out (more quickly than I did) that the cats rule the roost, and *Nacho* is often a victim of the nightly "run-bys" while sleeping (he now must be covered when he sleeps). *Bleu* loves to sneak-attack *Nacho* with playful biting. *Zippy* sends *Nacho* running when she hisses and smacks him when he is sleeping in a spot she wants. I have come home to find *Nacho* hiding under covers when the cats have knocked some heavy item off a shelf or broken a glass object in the house. I

Nacho must cover up to protect his delicate exterior from rambunctious kitty acrobats.



believe these are scare tactics used to keep *Nacho* in line. They work. **Advantage: Dog (though he might disagree).**

Looks like an overwhelming victory for the Dog People when you tally everything up—but, of course, this doesn't tell the whole story. My cats have many positive attributes, and *Nacho* isn't quite perfect. They're just very different, and all add color to my life that I would miss terribly if they were gone. *Punky* will play fetch and actually give me the retrieved toy (*Nacho* doesn't), and the cats don't drool puddles around the house (*Nacho* does). My cats are welcome on my lap, and all three will fit at once—while *Nacho's* 60-pound bulk is a bit much to handle.

My cats bring love and laughter (in addition to noise and chaos) with their cold weather cuddling, contented purring and love pats with their small, soft paws. Even their generous offerings of gifts (bugs, lizards, boot laces) are appreciated...to some degree.

All my animals are precious to me and I wouldn't trade them for any amount of scratch-free furniture, clothes without pet hair, complete pairs of shoes, lobster dinners—or even sleep. **Advantage: Me.**

That Darn Cat.

by Jenifer Woods

The tiny orange puffball caught everyone off guard. "What? We have an office cat? How did that happen?"

Our publisher and her young daughter had run across an adoption event at the Mall and fallen in love with the kitten. Not wanting to disturb their domestic tranquility, however, they decided "Nickel" would brighten our work environment.

A cat? *Why?* Cats are pointless! I liked them well

enough when I was young, but then—suddenly—I found myself in the emergency room with a severe allergic reaction to them. Years later—during forced proximity to a feline hoard—I discovered I was no longer allergic. It led me to believe that cat allergies were every bit as capricious as cats themselves. What if the tide had turned once again and this dander-lousy cat would be the death of me?

It was a false alarm. And thank goodness for that, because that ridiculous little kitten clawed his way

How much personality can you pack into one cat?

We did our best to avoid The Cat's judgement.

You displease
me.

into my heart and bound me in servitude for the better part of a decade.

When *Nickel* was very young, he spent much of his time in the front office endearing himself to customers. (Ironically, he would be banished years later due to his...um...indelicate behavior around those customers). When he wasn't making friends up front, he often jumped onto the back of my chair and began the long climb to the top. I could hear squeaks of exertion interspersed with the sound of tiny claws catching and releasing until he reached the summit—where he collapsed atop my head for a well-deserved nap. I was not able to move my head or look away from my computer screen until *Nickel* was rested and ready to resume his activities. Once awake, he would slide to my shoulder (oww!), jump onto the keyboard (hey!), then flop gracelessly to the floor in search of his next adventure.

Our work lives revolved around the cat. Vic built a carpet-covered, multi-level cat condo, and Wayne created a lovely, two-story cardboard pueblo. (Subsequent efforts at a cardboard RV were less successful). Marla purchased a zebra-print cat sofa for His Highness, which we eventually moved outside—after we had fenced-off our side alley, built a small brick patio and sodded the remaining real estate. I know, I know. But it seemed reasonable at the time. A few of us took *Nickel* home for a trial weekend or two to see if he could thrive in the outside world, but those experiments ended badly. This cat was an office dweller, so we made his environment comfortable.

In many ways, *Nickel* was a typical cat. He could be spontaneous and playful one minute, aloof and inert the next. He could also be calculating and vengeful. Certain co-workers would play more roughly than *Nickel* appreciated. He wouldn't retaliate immediately, preferring to hide, pounce, and exact his revenge in blood before retreating.

In other ways, though, *Nickel* was strange. His horrible, gravelly purr was far louder than his softly whispered meows. When he wanted something, he never asked—he simply jumped in front of my monitor, used

a paw to stay my hands... and stared, unblinking, directly at me. *Nickel* controlled me with his mind. As a result, I began every day thinking about how best to please the cat. It was not always easy.

I'm not going to sugar-coat this: *Nickel* was gross. He was never good at grooming himself, so his initial kitten cuteness gave way to an adolescence and adulthood that were just plain disgusting. As early admirers dropped by the wayside, fewer of us were willing to tend to his needs—or even to spend any time with him. He left a trail of hair, drool, claws, teeth and a special substance we called “kitty pâté” everywhere he went. Even now, I know there's enough of *Nickel*'s DNA in the nooks and crannies of the office to have him cloned should we ever desire it.

I will skip over the ringworm epidemic he spawned, and ignore all bath time horrors.

Nickel did not exactly age like a fine wine. He developed numerous medical conditions, many of which required timely administration of pills, liquids, ointments and expensive, special foods. I took the weekend shifts to make sure his medicine remained on schedule, and also to keep him from getting too lonely. Ultimately, *Nickel* had his own category in the company's annual budget to account for his vet expenses.

I know what you're thinking—how could nine years of *Nickel* make a Cat Person out of someone who used to be ambivalent? It defies logic! I really can't explain why I loved him so much. Maybe the effort it takes to earn a cat's decidedly-conditional love makes it that much more precious once bestowed. I just know that when Vic and I took *Nickel* to his final vet visit, we returned to a strangely-empty office that has never been quite the same since.

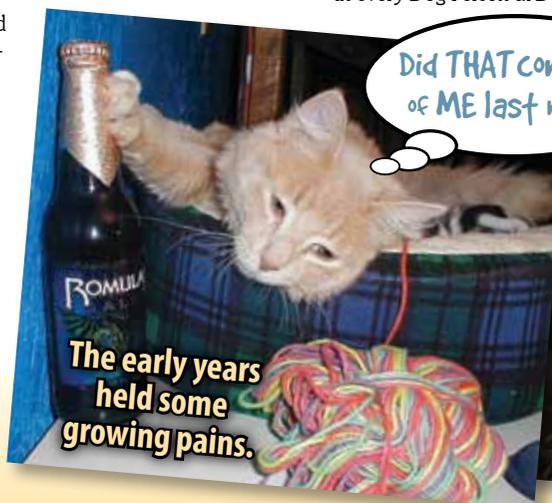
My dog *Penny* now fills the role of office pet, but as much as I adore her, she simply can't compete with the sheer force of *Nickel*'s personality. *Nickel* remains with us even now—his ashes rest in his favorite spot, basking in the warmth of my desk lamp, encircled by his hot pink feather boa.

Those who were here during the *Nickel* Era still gather spontaneously from time to time and laugh ourselves stupid remembering that darn cat. He's the reason there's at least a little bit of Cat Person in every Dog Person at *DogCruces*.



Nickel affected us all. One loyal subject honored him with a series of home microbrews—including the limited edition Hibernation Hooch.

I'm ready for my closeup, Mr. DeMille.



The early years held some growing pains.



Later, things got weird.

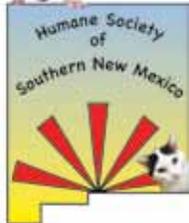
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Workin' Like a Dog... errr...Cat



Feral Cat Trap-Neuter-Return Program Launched!

Something historic happened in Doña Ana County this January. The County Commissioners voted to modify the Animal Control Ordinances, thereby decriminalizing the practice of feline TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) for managed colonies of community cats, and clearing the way for an official TNR Program in the County to begin.

The goal of TNR in Doña Ana County is to humanely reduce the number of free-roaming community cats.

Local feline advocates applaud this action, which will enable us to replace the decades-long practice of Trap-Remove-Kill with the humane practice of Trap-Neuter-Return. **The old system resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 cats at our local shelter—at taxpayer expense—with no appreciable decline in the number of free-roaming cats in the community.** The new TNR program will allow us to begin to manage the estimated 15,000 to 45,000 feral cats in Doña Ana County.

Concerned individuals and animal advocacy groups came together in support of TNR for managed feline colonies. Volunteer Colony Managers (individuals who care for the cats on a daily basis)

will work with spay/neuter advocacy groups, participating veterinarians, our local Animal Shelter (ASCMV) and the County Animal Control Officers (when and where possible). **It is important to note that this program will be privately funded.**

The process is fairly straightforward. Volunteers who wish to participate in the program by becoming Colony Managers need to contact a Program Coordinator. The Coordinator can answer questions, address concerns, arrange for the loan of TNR-related equipment, and supply Colony Managers with medical vouchers for their cats. The cost of each voucher will vary, depending on where each Colony Manager wishes to take his or her cats (mobile spay/neuter clinics, the ASCMV, or a participating local veterinarian).

Initially, Colony Managers will pay for the vouchers out of their own pockets, although some accommodations can be made for interested individuals who qualify as low-income. In the future, it is anticipated that TNR-specific grants can be used to subsidize these expenses.

Every cat in a managed colony must be spayed or neutered, vaccinated for Rabies, micro-chipped, and eartipped (the pointy tip of the left ear is removed for easy identification as a “managed” community cat). Any tame cats or kittens in the colony must be removed and adopted into homes. Any colony cats who exhibit illness or injury must be dealt with promptly—including being euthanized, if necessary.

Colony Managers who participate in the program and adhere to the guidelines will, over time, successfully stabilize both the size and the health of their feline colonies. **In turn, the nuisance behaviors associated with community cats in managed colonies will decline. It is a win-win situation for everyone concerned.**

The speed at which success is achieved will be dependent on the number of volunteers who choose to participate by becoming Colony Managers. Ideally, county residents will work together to manage the cats in their neighborhood.



There are as many as 45,000 feral cats residing in Doña Ana County



Humane traps will be loaned to Colony Managers so they can provide feral cats with veterinary care and Spay/Neuter surgery.



Cats who are trapped, neutered and returned to their managed colonies have the tips of their left ears removed to make future identification easier.

In doing so, they will accelerate the process, and the resultant success.

Stay tuned for details, including contact information, for the Doña Ana County TNR program!

Michelle Corella is a native New Mexican who has lived in Las Cruces since 1978. She began working in animal advocacy in 2002, when she became a volunteer with the NMSU Feral Cat Management Program (FCaMP). She has served as Director of that organization since 2007. Since then, she also has become involved with the Coalition for Pets and People, and within the Coalition, helped to start a project called the Doña Ana County Big Kitty Fix, which facilitates monthly high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinics for Doña Ana County felines.

TO CATCH A KITTY!

with...



Wayne
(Costumius Ridiculus)

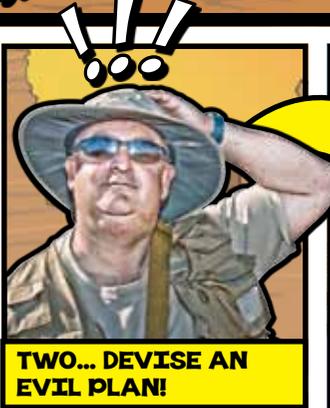
Vic
(Mayorius Victorati)

Controlling the feral cat population. A parody.



ONE... FIND THE KITTY.

HISSSSSS!

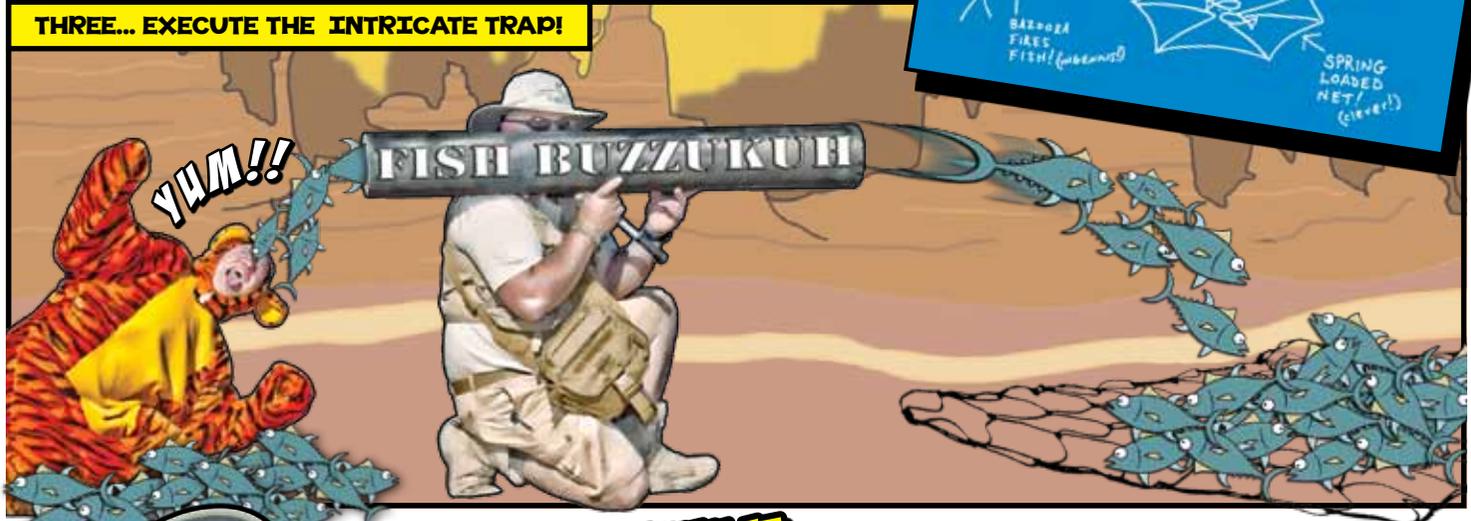


TWO... DEVISE AN EVIL PLAN!



HA HA!

I'M JUST TOO SMART FOR THIS KITTY!



THREE... EXECUTE THE INTRICATE TRAP!

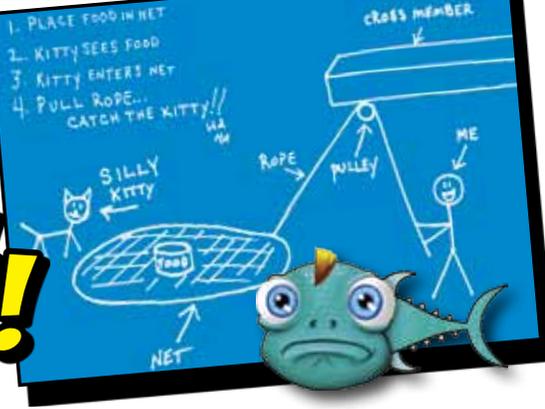
YUM!!



WHAT THE HOO-HAY???

WHEN AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED TRY, TRY, AGAIN!!!

FOUR... CREATE SIMPLER EVIL PLAN!



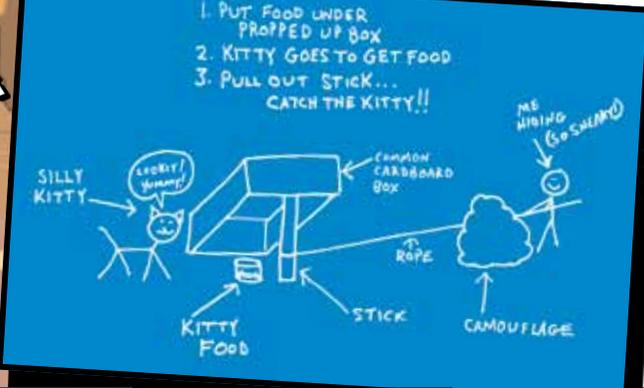
1. PLACE FOOD IN NET
2. KITTY SEES FOOD
3. KITTY ENTERS NET
4. PULL ROPE... CATCH THE KITTY!! HA HA



FIVE... BAIT THE TRAP!



SIX... GRRRR... YET ANOTHER EVIL PLAN!

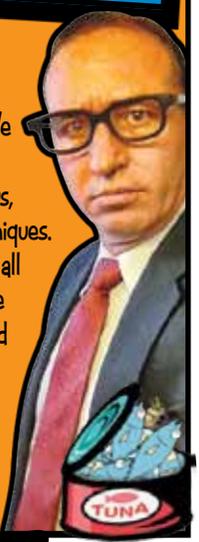


SEVEN... ONE MORE TRY!



AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR ATTORNEY...

No cats, real or imagined, were harmed during this photo shoot. We do not, in any way, recommend or condone the use of our fictitious, copyrighted cat-catching techniques. Furthermore, we hope any and all people, real or imaginary, who are reading this, completely understand this is meant as a spoof. We would also like to make it understood that Wayne only wears the cat costume for special occasions or when paid to do so.



THERE JUST HAS TO BE AN **EASY** WAY TO...

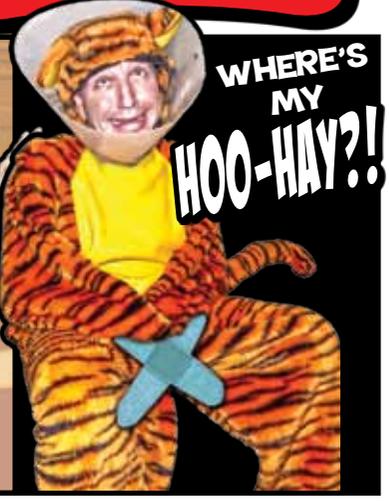
CATCH A KITTY!



I'M A GENIUS... ALL IT TOOK WAS AN **EMPTY BOX!**



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PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

Traveling With Your Best Friends...and a Cat!

by Nancy Chanover

The Purrrrrfect Vacation

Many of you dog-lovers out there know what happens when *Rover* begins to sense an impending road trip. While leashes, dog food, bowls, blankets, etc. are being loaded into your vehicle, your dog begins to prance around the house excitedly. “A road trip, a road trip, we’re going on a road trip!” You can practically hear him singing for joy. But what about *Fluffy the Cat*? Many of you cat-lovers might assume that your cat would rather run and hide under the bed than go on a road trip—but I can tell you from experience that traveling with your kitty can be just as fun and rewarding as a road trip with *Rover*!

Admittedly, cats have a wide range of personalities, from being highly interactive and engaged with your family to being very aloof and wanting to be left alone. If your cat prefers “me-time” to “family time,” then perhaps she would

not enjoy a road trip, and there is no sense trying to force the issue. But if your cat enjoys being around you and being stimulated by sights out the window, then you may want to consider bringing *Fluffy* along the next time you hit the open road.

Traveling with any animal takes some additional consideration and planning, and these are some things to keep in mind as you prepare to embark on a purrrrrfect vacation:

Food and Water: Naturally, you will need to bring familiar food, water and treats for your feline travel companion. Introducing new food to *Fluffy* while on the road could have unpleasant effects on his digestive systems, so it is best to bring enough food from home to last for your entire trip (if possible). Some animals have more sensitive

tummies, and for them it might also be better to bring enough water from home to last your entire trip rather than rely on local tap water. In short, go with what works for you at home and don’t change too much while on the road!

Medication and Vaccination Records: It’s always advisable to travel with copies of your cat’s shot records and microchip information in case something bizarre happens (e.g. a border patrol agent boards your RV to look around, frightens *Fluffy* and suffers a scratch!). And it goes without saying that if your cat is on medication, you

should bring enough on your trip so that the course of treatment does not get interrupted.

Containment: People who travel with cats have wide-ranging opinions on where the cat should be (within your vehicle) while

you are sailing down the highway. Some people let their cats ride loose in the vehicle, which is fine if all *Fluffy* wants to do is curl up and go to sleep in the passenger seat. But a free-range *Fluffy* can prove dangerous if he likes to explore the nooks and crannies of your vehicle, especially the foot well where the gas and brake pedals are located! Some people keep their cats contained in a soft- or hard-sided crate while driving, which is definitely the safer option, but could lead to lots of meowing if your cat isn’t used to or happy with riding in a crate. We are lucky that our cat *Tux* is crate-trained (at home as well as in the RV), so riding in a crate is second nature to him.

Litter Box: Probably the biggest hassle about traveling with a cat is where to put that darned litter box. If you’re driving in a car or truck, litter boxes sometimes fit nicely on the floor of the back seat. If that’s the case, you might consider either using a small covered litter box (to avoid having kitty litter kicked all over your vehicle), and/or keeping a pan litter box in a giant trash bag and only taking it out when you are stopped. If you are riding in a motor home, you could place the litter box someplace out of the way (in the bathroom? in a corner?),



Tux the Traveling Cat has seen more of the Western United States than most Americans!

and I have even seen fancy cut-out RV cabinets where a floor-level storage cabinet was converted to a kitty litter cubby. It’s not the most pleasant aspect of kitty travel, but it’s a necessity.

Activities: Finally, you should consider what your cat likes to do and bring along some toys or activities that *Fluffy* will enjoy. If your cat is an outdoor kitty, it is still not advisable to let him out to “check out the neighborhood” when stopped for the night. He will be unfamiliar with the surroundings and local wildlife, and he may get into trouble or have difficulty finding his way back to you. If your cat is trained to walk on a leash, you can help him explore his surroundings by taking him for a little walk once you stop for the night. If your kitty is frisky and likes to play with toys, bring them with you! If he likes to scratch on a scratching post, bring a small one with you! If *Fluffy* likes to nap in the sun and watch the birds out the window, make sure he has a “room with a view!”

Our cat loves to look out the RV windows and watch the wildlife (birds, squirrels, etc.) when we’re parked. He also has a favorite toy that we break out when he starts getting mischievous in the RV: it’s a burlap mat with a cloth border that is stuffed with catnip. It’s perfect for scratching, rolling, and overall enjoyment. We call it his “crack mat” because it gives him a real kitty high whenever we bring it out!

We’ve been lucky enough to have cats who have enjoyed traveling with us and our dogs. They have traveled all over the western US, including to Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Our current feline companion, *Tux*, settles into the RV lifestyle as soon as we hit the road, and he enjoys being with us. We have taken him on trips lasting as long as three weeks, and he manages to stay occupied and happy in our RV.

By ensuring your kitty’s health, safety, and enjoyment, you too can soon be traveling with your feline companion and avoid a trip that becomes a CATastrophe!

Nancy Chanover is a member of and instructor for the Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces, and is a member of the Mesilla Valley Search & Rescue K9 team.

Probably the biggest hassle about traveling with a cat is where to put that darned litter box.



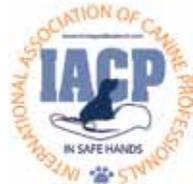
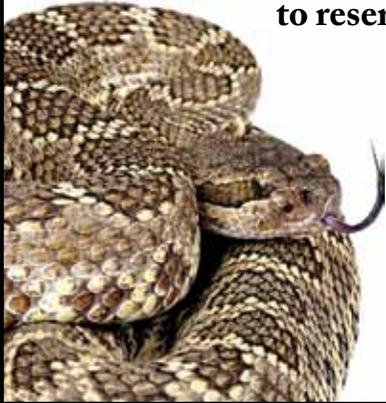
When Tux gets bored or restless on the road, we break out his “crack mat”—a burlap scratch pad bordered by catnip-stuffed padding.

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TABBY LOOKING for roommate to share home. Everything is mine, but I will share on occasion and may even cuddle—eventually. Can be cat or dog, must be able to play independently. Also, the humans are mostly mine when I want them.

Fido, Meet Fluffy

Whether you are introducing a cat/kitten into your dog-occupied home, or adding a dog/puppy into your “cat home,” it requires patience, consistency, supervision, love and understanding on your part. Animals—especially cats—don’t necessarily like change, and whether they are being moved from one household to another, from a shelter into your home, or being forced to welcome a new pet to THEIR house, a major life change awaits all those involved. And, in case you weren’t aware, it is *their* house and *their* territory.

Cats are not pack animals, and they don’t seek out contact with other cats—and certainly not with dogs. It can take *Fluffy* over eight months to develop any kind of friendship with a new cat and even longer to develop a trusting, mutual agreement to coexist with a dog. So her introduction into new surroundings or to a new pet must be gradual. Your patience and understanding during this time can also encourage your cat to bond more deeply with you.

When bringing a cat into your “dog home,” restrict *Fluffy* to one room of the house for the first 24 to 48 hours. Provide her with a litter box, bed (this may discourage her from sleeping on furniture), food and water. While your new cat is separated from other pets, spend several hours with her so she becomes accustomed to you and her new surroundings. Your sensitive, gentle handling of the initial transition will ease *Fluffy* into her new environs. Always attempt to interact with the cat when you’re in the room—at first it may just be speaking to her in a low, soft, reassuring voice. If the cat allows you to approach, do so slowly by offering a wrist (palm-upward) so the cat can pick up your scent. If she hisses or appears fearful, withdraw your hand until the next time.

You will want to take steps to cat-proof the rest of your house while *Fluffy* is confined to her room. Tuck away electrical cords, block nooks where a cat could go to hide and get stuck, secure door and window screens, and remove poisonous plants and pesticides.

During the next few days—if you feel the cat has calmed, is eating well and is using the litter box—start leaving the door to the room open so *Fluffy* can come out and begin to explore her new home. By leaving the door open, you allow the cat to return to her safety zone if she feels frightened. If

you move food, water, bedding or litter box, make sure the cat knows the new location.

Introducing *Fluffy* to *Fido* can be tricky, but here are a few tips to facilitate the process:

- Trim *Fluffy*’s claws to keep any interaction safe for your dog. One well-aimed cat paw with claws extended can cause serious injury.
- Teach your dog some obedience skills.
- Practice the “leave it” command with *Fido* so he understands to leave the cat alone when she becomes agitated or frightened. Interrupt any chasing, barking or agitated behavior by using a leash to move your dog away.
- Exercise *Fido* by taking long walks or playing, so he can work off energy that might otherwise be directed at *Fluffy*.
- Use a leash to control your dog. Do not allow him to chase or corner the cat—even out of playfulness or curiosity.
- Refocus *Fido*’s attention on you if he over-reacts to your cat. Use treats to reward him for his fabulous obedience.
- Let your cat set the pace—never force interactions. Allow *Fluffy* to go to where she feels safest (as long as it is, in fact, a safe place).
- When you are not around to supervise, keep your dog and cat separated until they become accustomed to each other.

Additionally, your dog should *not* have access to your cat’s litter box. It is stressful for the cat to have to look over her shoulder when trying to relieve herself, and she may decide to spray elsewhere if she doesn’t feel safe and comfortable at her litter box. Also, your dog may eat the litter and feces if he has access. To prevent your dog from eating cat food, consider moving your cat’s food to a higher surface.

Allow your animals to accept one another in their own time, but don’t leave them alone together until this is accomplished. Never force interaction. Many cats and dogs will eventually become companions and playmates while others will simply tolerate each other.

Information compiled from ASPCA (Introducing Your Cat to a New House, Introducing Your Cat to a New Dog), Humane Society of the United States (Introducing Your New Cat to Other Pets), American Humane Association (Introducing Dogs to Cats), and local cat guru Evelyn Ranma.



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DogCruces 🐾 Spring 2014

Walter's Lunchbox

by Walter Dubbin
(as told to Margaret Dubbin)



I Suppose You Have to Feed Cats, Too

During one lazy Sunday nap, I lay dreaming in the sun shining through the French doors off the kitchen. Mom and I were on our usual early morning run, when out of the corner of my eye I caught the sudden movement of what appeared to be one of them elusive and annoying creatures called CATS. I darted after it...but something was holding me back.... I lunged, again and again, until the restraints holding me back broke loose. I ran as fast as a cheetah chasing down a gazelle. Then I slowed to approach the creature in the golden early morning light, cautiously inching closer and closer. I smelled a strong, pungent odor, and....

I bolted straight up from my warm comfy spot in the sun, alert and awake. What IS that delightful SMELL?! I saw Mom in the kitchen grinding up some smelly, meaty liquid in the blender. I stretched, then strolled over to inquire what Mom was up to. It is our usual Sunday tradition for her to be in the kitchen slaving away on yummy dog treats or supplemental meals for me, so naturally I was ready to offer my expert advice. I gave her my "whatcha doin' Mom?" look, and she replied... "I'm making cat treats, my handsome!"

PAWSOME!!! Mom is an amazing huntress—she captured a CAT and is making it into some really tasty treats for me! She is so thoughtful and always wants the best for me! I wagged my tail with delight, but she said, "No, silly little man! I'm making treats for cats!" I thought Mom had been rolling in the cat nip. But she explained that there are many humans out there who love and spoil those cat creatures just as much as the dog lovers like to spoil us—and they make yummy special treats for their feline kids too! Huh? Since Mom and Dad are both severely allergic to cats, we don't have any at our residence—and it never, ever occurred to me that people could love those feline critters as much as us canines.

Then I remembered that little grey and white baby cat that Mom rescued just outside our home last year. It was a rainy Sunday afternoon and this emaciated kitty wandered into my courtyard. I of course sounded a subdued rodent alarm. But Mom jumped up and ran outside and scooped up this pathetic little creature in her arms while I helplessly watched in disgust behind the glass doors! Putting 2 + 2 together, I realize that my Mom is, in fact, a TRAITOR, and despite her allergies she also likes them feline critters.

I must now question my entire world view. Do you peeps realize how difficult it has become to trust "Mom's" intentions? I'm going to have to observe

her closely for months before I know if I can ever trust her again. CATS!?!? Cat'Cruces? What absurd nightmare is this?!

My existential pondering was short lived, as I fell victim to the overpowering heavenly smell of chicken livers and salmon skins...mmm, mmm, mmm! Cat or no cat, I am still Quality Control Supervisor of **Walter's Lunchbox**, and I quickly decided that cat treats are just as yummy as treats made for us doggies—and I suppose cats, too, deserve the love and affection of our humans.

Much to my consternation, these treats have also been tested and approved by kitties. It is my hope that your feline and canine kids enjoy these treats as much as you'll enjoy making them.

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

Salmon Mousse

- 1 Can Salmon, 7.5 oz. (w/ skin & bones, rinsed & drained)
- ½ Cup Cottage Cheese
- 1 Pkg Gelatin (unflavored)
- 1 Tbsp Fresh Parsley (chopped)
- 1 Tbsp Tomato Sauce (for color)
- ½ C hot water

Combine all ingredients, except water and gelatin, in blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Dissolve gelatin in hot water. Add salmon puree to gelatin mixture and stir completely. Pour or spoon mixture into silicon molds or ice cube trays and refrigerate 2-3 hours. Store in refrigerator until ready to serve.



Liver and Cranberry Cat "Bait"

- ½ Cup Brown Rice Flour
- 1/3 Cup Ground Flax Seed Meal
- ½ Lb. Chicken Livers (raw)
- 1 Cup Fresh Cranberries --- 1 Egg ---
- 2 Tbsp. Fresh Parsley (finely chopped)

Preheat oven to 375°F. In blender or food processor, mix together livers, cranberries, egg & parsley. Combine flour and flaxseed meal in separate mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly the wet ingredients w/ the dry. Mixture will be slurry-like. Spoon liver mixture into jerky gun or pastry bag with a wide flat tip and extrude jerky like strips of mixture onto a parchment lined cookie sheet. Alternatively, pour entire mixture onto a well-greased or lined cookie sheet with at least a ¼ inch lip. Cook approx 10-12 minutes until texture is firm yet pliable. Turn oven off, but leave "bait" in until cool to touch. Remove treats and cut into ¼ inch squares for cats and small training treats, or leave in jerky sized strips for larger critters. Store in an air tight container in the refrigerator.



Margaret Dubbin is the owner of one of the very few Bona Fide Woman-Owned Engineering & Construction Companies in this region.

Chronicles of Vash

by Shannon Ellison & Kat Lacy



In the Beginning...

I was born in the wet dark space between a large metal dumpster and a stone-and-concrete wall. My mother was too young and too thin for the five baby kittens she produced; there was not enough room against her belly for us all, so we battled for the spot closest, warmest, and with the most delicious milk. I was small, but already infused with a sort of regal fearlessness, a deeply ingrained sense of entitlement that would someday make me the great cat I was to become.

I found a nipple and would not let my siblings wrestle me from it no matter how they tried. In the morning three of them were still, never to rise again. It had stopped raining and the sun made the scattered puddles fracture and shine. My mother was exhausted and starved, but she dislodged me, grabbed my remaining sister by the scruff, and carried her into the relative safety beneath the dumpster. I mewled fiercely as I was similarly carried and deposited, quieting only when I was latched again onto the life-giving milk.

Time passed. My sister and I huddled together, no longer battling for space. She was larger than I and could easily have pushed me aside, but instead we shared our little home and became a family. Mother licked us constantly. I stared out at the brightness beyond, not afraid to leave, just content to be where I was.

Mother left. Sister and I screamed as loud as we could for her to come back. The world was too large and new for us to go out on our own. Eventually she came back. We flung ourselves at her, desperately glad she had returned, terrified she might leave again.

More time passed. Mother left another two times. The second time, I saw a bright, spastic thing scurry and buzz on the concrete beyond the dumpster. I wanted to step on it. I began to totter towards it. Sister cried piteously. I stopped, and she moved to huddle near me again. I watched until the scurrying thing buzzed away again.

The sun fell towards the horizon. Shadows slanted across the desert; the concrete around us cooled, and our shade beneath the dumpster went from warm to very, very cold. Sister and I lay entwined, shivering. I cried for a while, wanting mother back, wanting to not be so hungry anymore. Sister only shivered.

The night was impossibly long. Things barked and growled far away. Mother did not return.

I woke because the sun was sparkling. I immediately began to cry—for Mother, for food, for anything. Sister lay still and would not get up. I couldn't carry her as Mother had, and so I left her beneath the dumpster and crawled, mewling desperately, into the sunlight.

There was a lot of loud noise, grumbling and rumbling, but I knew I couldn't go back beneath the dumpster. A shadow fell. The rumbling grew until it was shaking the world, shaking the ground I clung to, until the air was full of some heavy, putrid scent I had smelled before only from a distance. I screamed, not out of fear, but so the world would still hear me over that madness. "I'm here! I'm alive! I'm here!" The rumbling stopped. I continued to scream. It was all I could do.

Crouching on the concrete, I struggled to look up. Above me, standing impossibly high, was a colorful creature that looked painfully stretched. Its paws were white, had no toes, and were larger than my entire body. The creature leaned closer with its giant, flabby, hairless face. I screamed at it.

And then I was lifted up, up, flying through the air much too high, much too fast. My screams became cries of fear and I squirmed wildly. My sister, still beneath the dumpster, was suddenly farther away than I could ever travel.

The great hairless thing held me gently. Brought me up so we were peering at each other, eye to eye. I grew still.

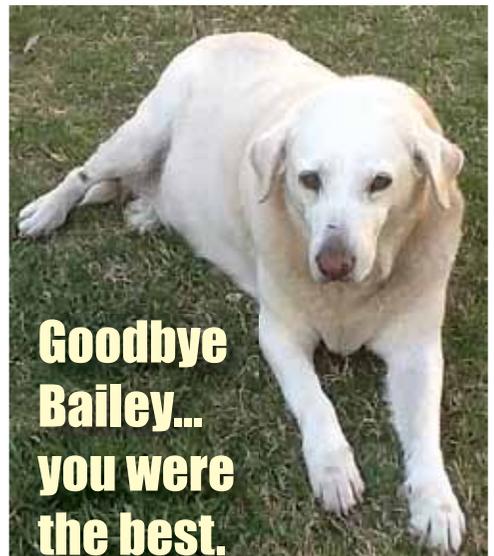
"Oh baby, baby." It whispered. "Poor baby. Don't worry. I'll take care of you."

For a brief moment, I felt a tingle of warmth—kind of like when I was with my mom and sis—run through my bones as I peered into its eyes.

To be continued.

Vash the Stampede earned his name (from an anime cartoon) by stampeding like a herd of buffalo through the Lacy home and Better Life Pet Foods, where you can meet him today. Chronicles of Vash will recount the everyday adventures of this once-homeless kitten.

I was small, but already infused with a sort of regal fearlessness, a deeply ingrained sense of entitlement that would someday make me the great cat I was to become.



Goodbye Bailey... you were the best.

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

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They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....



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www.ascmv.org

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**Doña Ana County Humane Society
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www.Donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org

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Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary (SHAS)
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Featured Group

The Cat's Meow

The Cat's Meow, a new non-profit committed to cat adoptions, will be opening its doors in May 2014 (at the latest): **The Cat's Meow** will be located in the Mesquite District in Las Cruces. They will be able to house 20-30 cats in need of finding forever homes. Hours of operation are yet to be determined. Stay tuned for details, including a web site where potential adopters can get to know the feline friends available for adoption, as well as make tax-deductible donations online! To donate or volunteer, please call Michelle Corella, 575-639-3036 or Ann Markmam, 575-993-8840.



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The Dona Ana Big Kitty Fix is a Special Project Fund under the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. As a fund within the Foundation, it falls under their 501(c)(3) status.



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