

Spring 2015

FREE!

Dög 'n' Cruces

Information for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!

A cartoon illustration of a brown dog with floppy ears, wearing a white shirt and a red collar with a gold tag. It is positioned behind the main title.

Horrible Service

Not all service dogs are created equal. Unscrupulous businesses exploit those in need by providing expensive, poorly-trained animals that do not meet ADA requirements.

Page 19

Miss Jada Takes a Bow

The inimitable Bulldog is officially recognized for her tireless service as a therapy dog.

Page 23

Bark in the Park

NMSU's new, dog-friendly events were a big hit in their first season.

Page 21

Making a Splash!

LCCHS grad Letticia Martinez and her guide dog *Philly* are training with the US Paralympic Swim Team and working together to create an extraordinary life for them both.

Page 15



PLUS... Dr. Pirtle Takes Questions... Jess Turns the Page... Vash's Wild Night... WE'VE MOVED!... and More!

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Springing Forward

I just celebrated another birthday and realized something scary—the older I get, the faster time goes by. How is *that* fair?! I found myself wondering—yet again—where the heck does all the time go?

In this case it's not just a rhetorical question... time really *did* jump ahead one hour. Thanks, Daylight Savings Time—it's not already hard enough to get up in the morning! Plus no one told our dogs, so they still want us to do everything on *their* time schedule. In fact, more and more, I find myself working around our dogs' schedule... "Wanna meet up for dinner?" "Let me check, we were planning to take the dogs for a walk." "How about brunch next Saturday?" "Only if the restaurant has outdoor seating for dogs—and if they're not too tired after the Farmer's Market." Don't get me wrong, I love doing it, but I think it's funny how much of a Doggie Daddy I've become over the years.

Despite the semi-annual time warp, Spring is a pretty great season here in the desert. Time to wake up from hibernation and take advantage of the mostly-mild weather before the screaming hot Summer months arrive. Both Yappy Hour at St. Clair Bistro and 'Cruces Canines at Andele's Dog House have started up again—always great dog events to schedule your life around! Check out "Doggie Dates" on pages 6 and 7 to see what else is happening this Spring!

For our cover story, Phyllis Wright profiles LCHS grad Letticia Martinez and her guide dog, *Philly*. They are both up in Colorado Springs training with the the US Paralympic Swim Team! Letticia and her mom, Lila,

opened up about Letticia's journey to become an internationally-competitive swimmer, and how her life has changed since getting *Philly* about a year ago. I know you'll be impressed by this amazing young lady.

As a companion piece to the article about Letticia, we decided to dig a little deeper into the world of service animals in our "Working Like a Dog" section on page 19. As with anything, there are good guys and bad guys out there, so please take time to learn all you can before investing time and money with folks who don't necessarily have your best interest at heart. Many, *many* thanks to Dr. Gaylene Fasenko for her last-minute heroics in helping me with this article.

I don't know anything about baseball, but when I heard that the Aggies were having a "Bark in the Park" event at Presley Askew Field (well-behaved, leashed dogs were welcome to attend the game), and that my buddy *Striking the Wonder Dog* was throwing out the first pitch, well, I had to check it out. I still don't know much about the game, but we had a great time, and there were more people in the stands *with* dogs than without them! NMSU's Jimmy Sanchez keeps us in the loop about Bark in the Park and other dog-friendly events at NMSU—if you hurry, you can still catch the last one of the season on Saturday, April 18th.

We have a lot of other great articles in this issue, but I'm running out of room to tell you the big news—we've moved into our new location on Solano! We held an Open House on March 27th and proudly showed off our new office



to all who attended. *Penny* and *Summer* were front and center as *Dog'Cruces* ambassadors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Well, *Summer* was front and center, *Penny* was neither, but at least she survived the ordeal. If you didn't make it to the Open House, stop by any time and we'll be happy to show you around. See you on Solano!

Vic Villalobos

Mayor of Dog'Cruces

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151 S. Solano, Suite E
Las Cruces, NM 88001

or email us at:
Vic@DogCruces.com

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Dog'Cruces Magazine

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Dog'Cruces ❁ Spring 2015





Wet·N·Wild Water World June 6, 2015

Introducing Perro Palooza!
A series of dog competition events including a major event called "Splash Dogs" where dogs compete by jumping in large body of water for distance. Categories also include:
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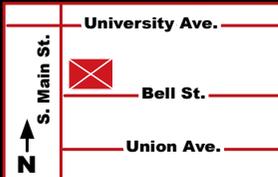
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Doggie

RECURRING & ONGOING EVENTS SPRING 2015

Happy Tails Adoptions Every Saturday

PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman, from 10am-4pm. HSSNM features many wonderful rescue dogs and cats seeking a loving home from HSSNM's foster program and other authorized individual and groups. Contact HSSNM at mail@hssnm.org or 575-523-8020.

Red Brick Pizza Monthly Fundraiser for HSSNM

Thursday, April 30th
Thursday, May 28th
Thursday, June 25th

Visit Red Brick Pizza, 2808 N. Telshor, from 11am-9pm. Mention "HSSNM" when placing your take-out or dine-in order, and 15% of the proceeds will be donated to HSSNM. Social time for eat-in is at 6pm.

APA Adoption Events

Sundays

APA-PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman, from 10am

to 3pm each 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. PetCo's APA Adoption Event, 3050 E. Lohman Ave., from 10am to 3pm each 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month.

Yappy Hours

Wednesday, May 20th
Wednesday, June 17th
Wednesday, July 15th

St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, from 6pm to 8pm. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. Music, games, prizes, free treats for pooches, and a way for humans and dogs to socialize. Food, beer and wine available from menu. \$5 admission benefits HSSNM and SNAP.

Cruces Canines

Thursday, May 7th
Thursday, June 4th
Thursday, July 2nd

People and Pet Social at Andele's Dog House, 1983 Calle del Norte in Old Mesilla. Special guests and entertainment, door prizes, pet awards, raffles, good times, good menu. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. \$5 admission benefits HSSNM.

APRIL

Saturday, April 18th

Twilight 5K Fun Run

Twilight 5K Fun Run, benefiting the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley. People of all ages plus dogs are welcome! The run will be around 9 holes of the Red Hawk Golf Course. Post-run cook-out with music and karaoke from Star Entertainment DJ, plus games for the kids. Register for the race at active.com. Questions? Call Jennifer at 575-373-8100.

Saturday, April 18th

Adoption Event

APA Adoption and Education Event at Sam's Club from 10am to 4pm (adoption facility will be closed this date).

Saturday, April 18th

Spay/Neuter Clinic

SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, Las Cruces. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265.

Saturday, April 25th

Mutt Show

Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley's annual Mutt Show at NMSU. Times and more details to follow. If you wish to participate as a sponsor, contact Jwright@las-cruces.org.



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Dates

MAY

Sunday, May 3rd
Street Legends Superfest Car Show and Animal Adoption Event
 Southern New Mexico State Fairgrounds from 11am-4pm.

Tuesday, May 12th
Spay/Neuter Clinic in Chaparral
 Coquilt Community Park, 625 Paseo Real, Chaparral NM. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265 for more information.

Saturday, May 16th
Adoption Event
 APA Adoption and Education Event at Sam's Club from 10am to 4pm (adoption facility will be closed this date).

Saturday, May 16th
Spay/Neuter Clinic
 SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, Las Cruces. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265.

JUNE

Tuesday, June 2nd
Spay/Neuter Clinic in Chaparral
 Coquilt Community Park, 625 Paseo Real, Chaparral NM. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265 for more information.

Thursday, June 4th
Hug Your Cat Day

Saturday, June 20th
Spay/Neuter Clinic
 SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, Las Cruces. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265.

Sunday, June 21st
National Dog Party Day!!
 Celebrate your dog(s) with a paw-tee, whether it be big or small, celebrate the people-pet bond and don't forget to include donating, volunteering or adopting. Support our shelter and dog rescues!!

Friday, June 26th
Take Your Dog to Work Day



Saturday, June 27th
Mulligans Fore Mutts
 3rd Annual Mulligans Fore Mutts Golf Tournament at Picacho Hills Country Club. More information: 575-373-0159 or fundraising@apalascruces.org.

JULY

Saturday, July 11th
All American Pet Photo Day
 Update your pet photos, and while you're at it, email us your pet photo to photos@dogcruces.com (we may even have a contest if we get enough entries). Please write Pet Photo Day in the subject line.

Wednesday, July 15
National Pet Fire Safety Day
 Take preventative measures to keep your beloved pet safe, such as adopting flameless candles, installing stove knob covers, and extinguishing open flames. Keep pets near entrances when away from home. Make sure they're wearing collars and that their leashes are close and ready. Consider using smoke detectors that are connected to a monitoring center so emergency responders can be contacted when you're not home. Affix a pet alert window cling (and update your number of pets on the sticker).

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



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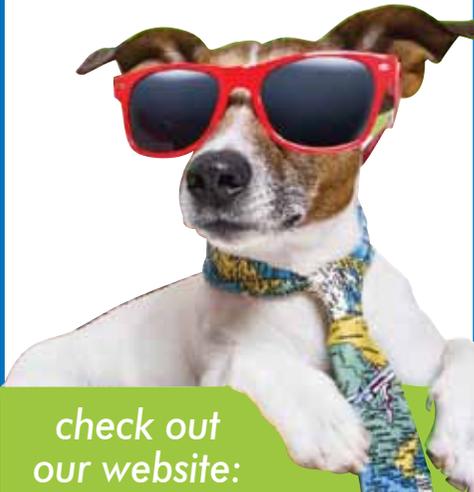


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The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM



What Do You Want to Know?

We asked Dr. Pirtle to take a different approach for this installment of *The Vet's View*, and provided him questions our readers and Facebook friends have posted. Please let us know which questions you'd like us to ask for the next issue. Of course, you should always consult your own veterinarian about any conditions that need immediate medical attention.

Recently my dog hurt his knee and has been on light duty, taking Rimadyl. He is improving, but how long before he can resume normal activities (play with other dogs, run, etc.)?

That depends on what your dog actually did to his knee. Knee injuries can vary, but strains to complete tears of the cranial cruciate ligament are extremely common. Strains may improve with several weeks of rest, but in most cases they will come back to cause the dog problems later on. Many strains progress to complete tears, which definitely need surgical treatment. Follow your veterinarian's suggestions but hedge on the conservative side and limit activity for several weeks—definitely well beyond when the dog seems to be back to normal.

I've heard mixed feedback about dogs traveling in airplane cargo. Is airplane travel safe for dogs? Additionally, how can I make travel less stressful for my pet?

I would say generally that airplane travel is fairly safe. I've never heard of any big problems from anyone—but I'm sure people have horror stories. I would certainly avoid shipping your pet in very hot or cold weather. Airlines frequently ask for a letter of acclimation from your veterinarian along with a health certificate. These health certificates need to be completed within 10 days of travel. At that visit you can talk to your veterinarian about possible tranquilizers to help your pet travel with less anxiety. Getting your dog used to a travel crate ahead of time should help to decrease stress as well. The bottom line is some dogs travel with ease more than others—just like people.

I have noticed that in the spring my dog gets a runny nose and watery eyes. Do pets get allergies just like we do? Is there anything I can do about it?

It is Spring right now in Las Cruces and

the pollen counts from Mulberry, Pecan and other trees are through the roof. These pollens can certainly irritate your dog's eyes and respiratory tract. Allergic reactions to pollens and other environmental allergens in dogs typically manifest themselves as more of a skin problem—rashes and itching/chewing of the feet, body and ears. People tend to react more frequently with respiratory reactions, the dreaded "hay fever." Whether truly allergic or just irritated by the dust and/or pollen, your dog could be reacting to the environment in which we live. Consult your veterinarian for some possible treatment options if your pet exhibits symptoms.

I noticed my dog's teeth are getting a little nasty looking. I was told dogs' teeth need be cleaned just like humans. Is this true? If it is, should this be done daily?

Yes, brushing your dog's teeth on a daily basis is a great way to slow down the accumulation of plaque, which will progress to tartar/calculus, and then to periodontal disease. Many people assume they can remove existing tartar with a toothbrush, but that is really not going to do the job. In addition, the various chews available may help some, but heavy tartar will need to be removed with a professional cleaning. More importantly, most dogs with tartar additionally have periodontal disease—which is the *real* cause of odor and dental disease. Much of this condition is below the gumline and not readily visible to your eyes. Periodontal disease is the most common health condition affecting dogs—most dogs who are at least a few years old already exhibit some evidence of periodontal disease.

Most dogs require regular dental cleaning with other treatment as indicated by a complete oral exam. People don't like it, but this entails general anesthesia and treatment by a veterinarian. Scaling or cleaning of tartar by a groomer or other non-veterinarian performed without sedation or anesthesia is considered inadequate and should be avoided. Even we vets have to do this in-office—my dogs are going with me to work one day this month because they need a cleaning. It might be time to schedule an appointment with your veterinarian to have your dog's teeth checked to see if the same is true for them.

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TOBY: A Prescription for Stress

In 1973, Bob Seger wrote a song titled “Turn the Page.” The song is a sometimes angry and sometimes exhausted reflection on life as a long-haired rock star always on the road, and my favorite verse is this one:

*Most times you can't hear them talk
Other times you can
And it's the same old cliché
"Is that a woman or a man?"
And you always seem outnumbered
So you don't dare take a stand.*

Back in 1973, I was 14 and struggling—like most teens do—with issues related to self-identity, and I always seemed outnumbered, and I was scared to death to take a stand. So I built some walls around myself that I didn't tear down or even peek around much for another six years. I wore out Mr. Seger's record during that time.

Flash forward to 2011, when a therapist was working with me on some issues that—believe it or not—harkened back in some ways to those dark teen years. Toward the end of one of our sessions, she leaned in close and asked, “What makes you feel consistently happy and safe?”

“My dogs,” I said, instantly. “Particularly Toby.”

We spent some time on the significance of that answer, and then she did a remarkable thing that changed my life for the better from that moment on: she wrote an actual prescription. I still carry it in my pocket everywhere I go:

“Allow Mr. Williams to bring his Yorkshire terrier with him, as this is a therapy dog.”

She advised me to register him online and get some credentials and a vest, but she said the prescription was really all I'd ever need. She was mostly right. I've been able to take him with me ‘most everywhere—even on airplanes—and he sits quietly in my lap: my silent, little, warm, loving companion. Six pounds of pure, therapeutic bad-ass.

***I've been able to take him with me
'most everywhere... and he sits
quietly on my lap... Six pounds of
pure, therapeutic bad-ass.***

But he also attracts attention, much like Mr. Seger's long hair back in the day. And much like Mr. Seger had to endure taunting questions about his gender, Toby and I regularly endure icy stares and hateful comments just within earshot:

“Why is that filthy dog allowed in here?”

“I'll never come to this place again if they allow dogs inside.”

“It's bad enough to fly with babies on board. Now we have to put up with dogs?”

Usually, the remarks are directed at me and Toby, but sometimes they are directed toward restaurant owners, shopkeepers, flight attendants, etc. These people are consistently more diplomatic than I tend to be.

My stock answer to anyone looking to pick a fight is, “You don't get to ask, and I don't have to tell you, and fortunately, I don't give a flying flip what you think.”

The people who have to defend Toby in their workplaces patiently explain that he provides a service for me, and they've either seen his paperwork, or they know me well enough to know I have the paperwork on me. Then they educate the complainer about ADA laws as they pertain to reasonable accommodation.

On the other end of the interaction spectrum are the really nice, dog-loving people (usually women; Toby is a chick-magnet, which is ironic in its own way) who assume they're welcome to pet Toby or even try to hold him. He puts up

with petting reasonably well, but he doesn't one bit like to be held by other people, and he can hurt both himself and the person who makes a grab for him in his desperate and energetic efforts to get back to me.

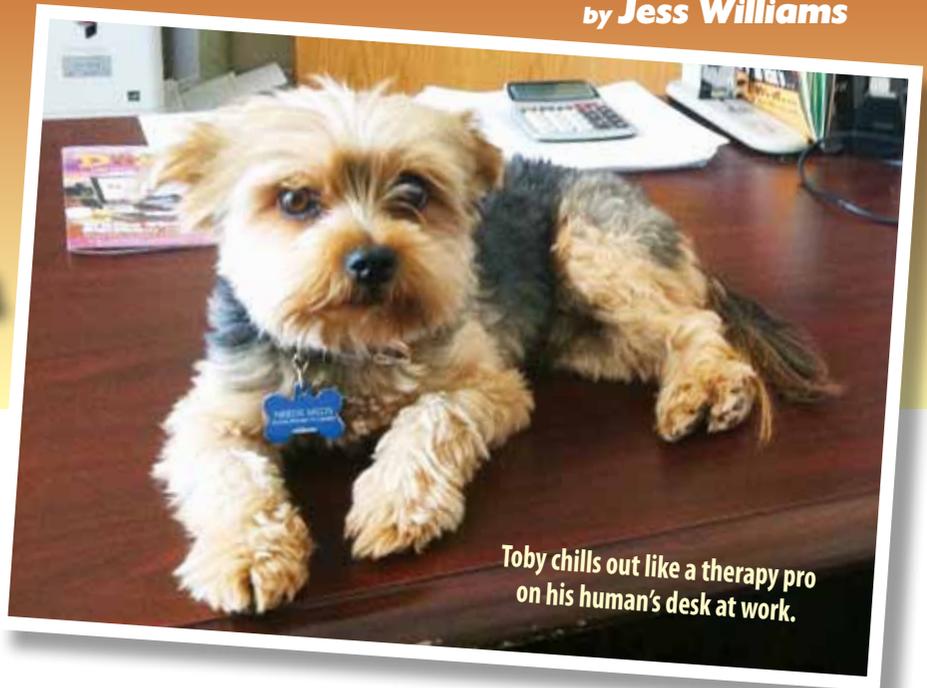
My sister quips that she's never really sure whether Toby is my therapy dog or if I am his therapy human. At the heart of that joke is the simple truth that Toby and I truly love being together. It makes us both feel happy and safe.

That should be the end of it, but it too often isn't, and then I find myself humming a rock legend's 1973 anthem as I try to turn the page.

Jess Williams is chairman of the board of directors of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley. Toby is registered, and his picture is on a nifty ID card, but he adamantly refuses to wear the vest. (Apparently, in Toby's opinion, Orange is NOT the new black). Toby is not filthy; he is regularly bathed and groomed. The general rule when you see someone with a critter in a public setting is this: Check your assumptions and judgments at the door, then approach respectfully, and always ask if it's OK before you touch the animal. Thanks to Mr. Google, anyone who wants to educate themselves about service/therapy animals can hop on the Internets and procure all kinds of informational and entertaining articles, anecdotes and pictures. The best version of “Turn the Page” is on the 1976 Bob Seger album titled “Live Bullet,” featuring the legendary Silver Bullet Band. The next-best song on the album is “Beautiful Loser.”

P.S. The actual word I use may not always be “flip.”

Editor's Note: “Travelin' Man,” “Katmandu,” and “Ramblin' Gamblin' Man,” could all be considered for the honor of second best song on “Live Bullet.”



Toby chills out like a therapy pro on his human's desk at work.



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**Lila and Letticia Martinez,
with Letticia's Guide Dog,
Philly, are an incredible team.**

**Though she spends half
her life in the water, this is
Letticia's— and Philly's—
first time at the ocean.**

**Photos courtesy of
Lila Martinez**

Guided by Love



sighted people experience. Her experience is pure.

Leticia was born prematurely, seven weeks early. We were blessed that she didn't have any complications. She didn't require any serious medical attention. Her general development was normal. At about nine months, though, she began displaying some neurological ticks, and we began a long two year search to identify the cause. Leticia was diagnosed, eventually, with a retinal eye disease, Leber's Congenital Amaurosis, a degenerative eye disease.

Everything we had planned for our daughter changed. We realized we had to plan differently. It was difficult and painful at first, but we didn't have time to feel sorry for ourselves. Early intervention became our family game plan. Leticia has an older brother, Estevan, and he became a big part of Leticia's support system. We would all attend preschool and therapy as a family. Leticia began to receive early intervention through TOTS Tresco as she prepared to live her life in the dark.

She had begun receiving pre-Braille training, as well as orientation and mobility training by the time she was three years old. Orientation and mobility training is vital to independent travel and defines independent living for the blind. Leticia began her orientation and mobility training with the Las Cruces Public schools at three years of age and continued until her high school grad-

uation last year. She was fortunate to have a great team of specialists with whom she has worked consistently throughout her academic career. Orientation and mobility students learn cane skills and to navigate in a sighted world by developing critical thinking skills that will accelerate as the individual blossoms into independence.

We had begun to think about the prospect of a service dog even when Leticia was in preschool. We had always talked about the someday when she would have a service dog. Characteristically focused, as she was losing the last of her sight in middle school and expecting to attend college independently, Leticia began to plan for a service dog when she graduated from high school. This process was a great learning experience for our entire family. I think her experiences in 4-H were a great foundation, one of the first steps, for her training to become a sensitive and successful dog handler. Leticia has been fortunate to benefit from great leaders and mentors through the Desert Clover 4-H program and FFA at LCCHS. She learned how to care for animals and to consistently implement leadership and great posture when handling and presenting herself in the arena of life. She has been a great example of transferring her learning experiences into all aspects of her life. She is a great listener and learns from her mistakes. She has been developing this awareness since a very young age. Her life is defined by discipline, and she thrives in environments that demand it.

So, when Leticia was a junior in high school, the actual

This is a story of love and empowerment, and the newest member of a remarkable family. I'm pleased to introduce Lila and her daughter Leticia Martinez, with whom I've spent some time in conversation and exchange of ideas. Lila is a diagnostician for the LCPS, and Leticia is a recent graduate of Las Cruces High School, currently studying at NMSU and training as an internationally competitive swimmer. They share their journey in their own words.

Lila

I can remember Leticia's first day in preschool—I thought I would come to observe her first day at McArthur Elementary. I caught her during recess, and as I approached the playground, I could see her climbing on the monkey bars, adorable and so tiny. As she climbed higher and higher, I held my breath until my three year old was hanging from the top bar and yelling, "Get out of the way!" I was speechless, and proud. She was fearless then, and from that moment forward, she has been setting her own pace with focus, discipline, spirit—and no excuses! She has taken on many challenges in her life with a heroic attitude. I have learned from her how to live life! Her vision for life is not cluttered with things that



Leticia was a member of Team USA at the 2012 London Paralympics.

by Phyllis Wright

“Dogs are not our whole life, but they



Philly assists Leticia in many aspects of her day-to-day life, and Leticia returns the favor by comforting Philly during her manicure.

memory. The dog has been specially raised and trained for this moment all its life. Leticia had been training for this moment since she was three years old and received her first cane, so the epic moment and experience of embracing her first service dog was full of emotion. As a mother, it filled my heart with love and answered prayers. I cried when I saw them together for the first time because I knew that it was a life-changing occasion.

Leticia's dog's name is *Philly*, “*Phillipa*,” and she is a blond Labrador Retriever. Her puppy-raisers shared a family photo album with us of her journey to becoming a service dog. *Philly* passed all the tests to prove herself a wonderful service dog. Many times a dog will go through the training and may not pass some of the intense requirements to becoming a service dog. The quality of training is evident in first meeting the dog. I can remember the first days we spent with *Philly*—she was perfect. She carried herself with supreme manners and responded to Leticia's handling skills with grace. The communication bond was instantaneous.

Leticia and *Philly* just recently celebrated a year together, and they are a superb team. Leticia's traveling skills have developed and matured to a level of independence that has brought happiness to her and to her family. She can travel with more confidence with *Philly* by her side, and *Philly* has given Leticia the ability to go wherever she wants to go, and when. She doesn't have to wait until someone picks her up or drops her off—*Philly* is always ready to go.

A good service dog highlights their handler and the handler's independence. Guide Dogs for The Blind was a perfect fit for Leticia's needs. The level of training and quality of breed is evident in the *Philly's* performance and in their relationship. *Philly* has traveled the world with Leticia. Leticia is a competitive swimmer, and recently, she and *Philly* traveled to Canada for the World Championship Trials. Leticia will be representing Team USA at a Paralympic swim meet this coming summer in Germany. She is also planning to travel to Glasgow, Scotland for World Championships #Glasgow2015. And *Philly* will be by her side everywhere but in the competition, itself! Leticia is currently training at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO. She is a residential athlete training for Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, clas-

sified as a S11 blind female swimmer. Leticia also competed at the 2012 London Paralympic games. She is also taking online classes from New Mexico State University as a communication major, and would like to become a Sports Psychologist to support athletes in reaching their potentials. She is an example of an independent blind female.

Leticia has been fortunate to benefit from a service dog, and her life has been and will be full of great memories with *Philly* by her side. ●

I remember, when I was teaching English at Las Cruces High, seeing Leticia from a distance in the vast and populated halls at school, though I didn't have the honor of teaching her. I think we exchanged hellos at intersections or doorways once in a while. Occasionally, I saw her at the NMSU pool, but one of us was always in the water, so we never had the opportunity for conversation. I didn't fully realize until interviewing both Leticia and her mother, Lila, what opportunities I had missed—and what Leticia had missed in my having not made more decisive overtures. How could Leticia have known how much I admired her grace, her academic pursuit of advanced course work, her ever-present smile? According to her mom, Leticia, herself, has always been comfortable socially, but she's had to adjust to a measure of isolation, unable to read body language and dependent on others to acknowledge her presence, to call out a friendly hello—or not. She has felt the disappointment of knowing that acquaintances were close but walked past her quietly, as if her heart were also blind.

Now, with Philly by her side, Leticia not only has an enhanced sense of others' presence, but people are drawn to Philly. She describes what she calls “drive-bys,” people who walk close enough to pet Philly, through they never say a word as they continue on their way. But there are also people who stop and initiate conversation, perhaps opening with something about Philly and moving on to the everyday things friends discuss.

Here, in Leticia's words, are the many ways in which Philly has changed her life.

search for a service dog began. We began with research and explored several service dog schools. We called and interviewed at least four different schools. We eventually filled out applications and met the requirements for two different schools. Two of the imperative requirements for applicants are independence and good cane skills. Leticia had been working on both most of her life. The applicant needs to be able to demonstrate that he or she can travel a route independently, as well as demonstrating specific skills like crossing a four-way stop with and without lights, all the while orientating him or herself and monitoring traffic. There is no room for error. The applicant must perform with 100% accuracy. Leticia was ready.

As the interviews progressed, Leticia decided that Guide Dogs for The Blind was the best fit for her and her goals. The experiences that led to that decision provided a positive and supportive adventure. When a candidate is planning for a service dog, the dog school will train him or her as the handler. Most schools will schedule a one month, intensive training program, during which the handler learns how to care for and train his or her new service dog; essentially, they train the handler how to train the dog.

When both are ready, there is a ceremony to celebrate the exchange and to honor the training involved for the puppy and the blind handler. The moment of exchange is a special and unique

y make our lives whole.” – Roger Caras



Letticia is currently in Colorado Springs training as a member of the US Paralympic Team—while also taking online courses at NMSU—with Philly by her side every step of the way.

Letticia

Philly is her name. She is small, loving, athletic, and too smart for her own good. She's always taking care of those she loves, and lets people know that she is around.

No, *Philly* is not a human—she is my guide dog, and she has changed my life drastically. She not only keeps me from running into walls and poles, and from falling down flights of stairs, but she guarantees that I won't walk off my chosen path, and she comforts me when I am stressed, as well.

Before I had this charismatic friend, I had to travel with nothing but my senses and a cane. I went out into the open world all by myself. I know people think that having a guide dog means that she takes me where I need to go. In reality, though, I have to give *Philly* directions and tell her where to go. Her job is just to get me to my destination safely.

Although I can teach her how to find poles, chairs, water fountains, and anything tangible, *Philly* will warn me if I am going to walk down stairs. She takes me around people as well as poles. So she saves me lots of time—she is so much more efficient than a cane. Before her, I often got lost around my college campus because there were so many intersecting sidewalks, and the landscaping

isn't designed as a grid or even at straight angles—things seemed off-center.

Once I got *Philly*, she was able to recognize the path I was telling her to take, and she takes me to the right place every time! I don't always know where I can find a chair, but she can always find one, wherever I ask her. *Philly* also allows me to walk faster, because I don't have to worry about running into anything—she steers me clear of everything. She gives me the independence of a normally-sighted person.

I travel quite a bit, and I'm a better traveler now that I have my companion with me. When I travel with her, I feel like I can go anywhere and everywhere. I know with her I am safe, and I'm never alone. She literally goes everywhere with me, even to the bathroom. She is truly my best friend. She always makes sure I am safe and happy—she is such an important part of my life now! I honestly don't know how I lived my life without *Philly*.

Having *Philly* by my side also helps me to have more friends than I would normally. I get to meet so many people because I have her. Random people just come up to me and talk to me about my dog, and then we become friends. She is wonderful! She has opened so many doors, and

presented me with so many opportunities that I would not have had without her.

Philly, I love you bunches, and you are awesome! ●

May I add, Letticia, you are awesome!

Many thanks to Letticia and Lila for sharing their narratives of courage and triumph and introducing us to Philly and the contributions a service dog can make to an independent, accomplished person's life. We'll be cheering for Letticia this summer—and hope you'll check for updates on our Dog'Cruces Facebook page, as we stay in touch with this remarkable young woman!

Phyllis Wright teaches AP English at Alma d'Arte Charter High School, and is a Contributing Editor for Dog'Cruces Magazine.

Many thanks to both Letticia and Lila for their insight and their candor—and for the reassurance that a person in need of a service dog shouldn't have to spend tens of thousands of dollars, but instead needs to be in touch with established, reputable agencies whose interests lie with handlers and their dogs.

Guide Dogs for the Blind (welcome.guidedogs.com), which raised, trained and delivered Philly to Letticia at no cost to the family, is a prime example of a legitimate, transparent, non-profit organization. Philly's worth in dollars is inestimable—she is priceless to Letticia and her family, and Lila explains that “the time and money Guide Dogs for the Blind invests in developing a service dog is a philanthropic endeavor.” They rely on private donations to function and thrive.

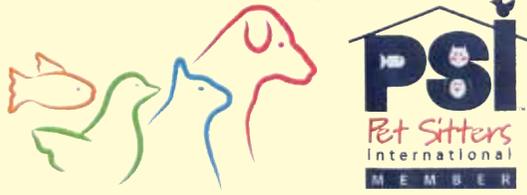
Guide Dogs for the Blind was established in 1942 by Lois Merrihew and Don Donaldson who “recognized the need to help wounded servicemen who would return from World War II without their sight” and who “believed in the potential of dogs to serve as guides for the blind.” It has since grown into a respected and effective organization dedicated to improving quality of life for those who are visually impaired.

Currently, they “have a group of more than 1,000 volunteers who raise and socialize puppies . . . and support more than 2,000 graduates across the entire country and Canada.”

Dog'Cruces featured an article on the “Mesilla Valley Paw Patrol” in our Winter 2015 issue. It was written by local high school students who are serving as “puppy-raisers” for Guide Dogs for the Blind—so some of these amazing animals will be raised right here in Las Cruces before becoming life-changing guide dogs for people throughout the Northern Hemisphere!

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Workin' Like a Dog



Beware of Dog Fraud

Modern society has recognized the valuable jobs that service animals can perform for human companions who have a variety of disabilities. Where once we only thought of service dogs as guiding the blind, there are now a variety of important tasks that service animals can be trained to do.

Many breeds of dogs can be trained as service animals to assist persons with mobility, medical, or psychiatric disabilities. Mobility issues could include cerebral palsy, or paralysis due to injury. In these cases, the dog can assist with balance, pick up dropped items or retrieve items, or pull a wheelchair. Dogs can be trained to alert people who are deaf or to remind a person with Alzheimer's to take prescribed medications. While dogs can be trained to assist people who have seizures by seeking help, staying with the handler, or retrieving a phone to get help, dogs have not yet been formally trained to detect seizures. Medical alert dogs are being trained to alert Type 1 Diabetes patients to low blood sugar.

Psychiatric service dogs can assist handlers who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One of the symptoms of PTSD is that people feel a constant sense of danger and are always on high alert, never able to relax. A service dog can assist a handler with PTSD by peeking around a corner when they move from room to room, or alerting the handler to an oncoming person if the handler has his or her back turned. These dogs should NOT be trained to "guard" or protect their handlers, but simply to alert and provide a level of comfort by providing another set of eyes to alert a handler before someone approaches.

A true service animal is trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability, and is trained to a very high level of obedience. If an animal simply provides emotional comfort to its handler by being present, it is not considered a service animal under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). These animals are called Emotional Support Animals, and do not require special training. They do require a letter from a mental health provider stating the owner needs the dog's assistance for his or her mental health or disability treatment. (www.ptsd.va.gov/public/treatment/cope/dogs_and_ptsd.asp).

Many people are desperate for a service

animal, and this need has created an environment in which unscrupulous businesses claiming to train and/or certify service dogs are springing up all over the country. If you need or are seeking a service animal, be cautious—and do your research! Illegitimate business promise quick training of service animals that perform multiple tasks. They charge a lot of money for training that can only be described as advanced obedience—not true service dog training. Service dogs typically undergo hundreds or even *thousands* of hours of difficult, specialized training. They are working dogs—not pets—who perform very important jobs for their handlers. Dogs who have *not* gone through this rigorous and specific training, can actually put their handlers in danger.

The United States does not currently require certification for service dogs or for the people training them. So, basically, anyone can come to town, open a facility, and credit it as being a "service dog training facility." They often charge people ***tens of thousands of dollars*** for a so-called service animal, which, in reality, does not even come close to meeting that standard. Most service dog training organizations (like Guide Dogs for the Blind) operate as nonprofits. Though not required, many reputable organizations *are* certified through Assistance Dogs International (www.assistancedogsinternational.org/) or the International Guide Dog Federation (www.igdf.org.uk/). Most legitimate operations have been in business for many years, and their trainers have years of experience and have completed intense, specialized training to become experts in their field.

Unfortunately, the rise of unethical businesses—with the help of the internet—has resulted in an increasing number of fake service dogs. In addition to the illegitimate "service dogs" being turned out by unprincipled training facilities, it is easy, now, to purchase official-looking IDs, certificates, vests, leashes, patches and other paraphernalia to allow any pet to impersonate a service animal. This may seem harmless, but it can have serious repercussions for genuinely disabled people who have legitimate service dogs. Poorly-trained dogs posing as service animals might exhibit inappropriate or aggressive behaviors in public venues—which would never happen with a real service dog. Such behavior can cast undeserved suspicion on

real service dogs and result in discomfort for their disabled handlers.

It is extremely disturbing that some people are taking advantage of the non-specific nature of service animal laws. If a person enters a business with an animal, the owner can only legally ask two questions under ADA guidelines: 1) Is that a trained service animal? and 2) What task does the animal perform? If the animal is misbehaving, the business owner *does* have the right to ask the handler to remove the animal, and return without the animal or return when the animal is under control. Under the New Mexico Animal Assistance Act ((28-11-3-NMSA 1978) (www.animallaw.info/statute/nm-assistance-animal-assistance-animalguide-dog-laws)) someone who knowingly tries to pass off an animal as a service animal to gain access to public places with their animal is subject to fines up to \$1,000.

There is a lot of uncharted territory in the world of service dogs, and navigating it can be confusing. The bottom line is that this is still shaky ground, and so be very careful. Scammers are out there in abundance, some looking to take advantage of those who are disabled—and others who don't respect the law and just want their family pets to have access to places they're typically not allowed to go. Both make a mockery of and cause harm to people who are legitimately in need of these animals.

Regulation is almost inevitable sometime in the future, but until then—please do your homework!! There is *plenty* to read online, but here are a few links to get you started....

www.anythingpawsable.com

www.iaadp.org/welcome.html

servicedogcentral.org/content/fake-service-dog-credentials

www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-31646970

Vic Villalobos, Mayor of DogCruces

*Dr. Gaylene Fassenko, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor, Companion Animals
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DogCruces Spring 2015

Dogs in the Workplace



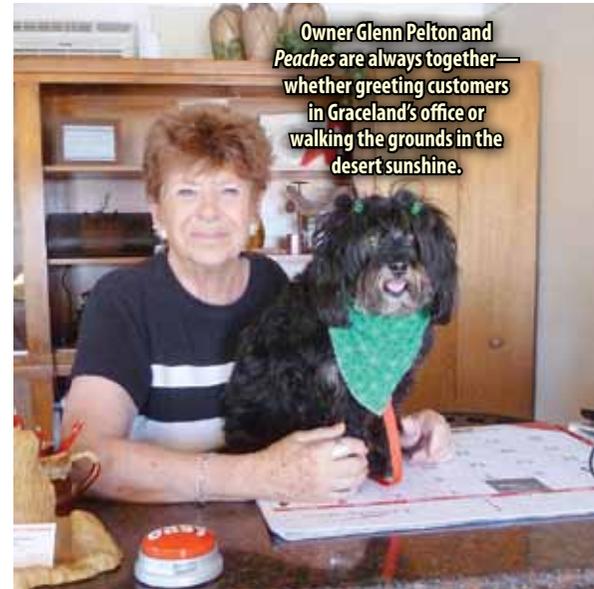
Graceland Portable Buildings of Deming

When you enter Graceland's cozy office (directly across from the Deming Walmart), you will most likely be met with a bark and a wag of the tail by *Peaches*—a 10-year-old Poodle/Terrier mix, who takes her duties as official greeter very seriously. Please don't take being barked at personally—Manager Lonnie Rincon gets the same treatment every day...unless he remembers to bring food he's willing to share with the alert little girl.

Peaches' mom, Glenn Pelton, owns Graceland Portable Buildings of Deming, which was Graceland's #3 Top Performer for January 2015. They've been in the same location for five years, and have satisfied customers all over the country. One Illinois man has purchased several buildings during his travels along I-10. He always brings treats, as well as his own dog, *Hazel*, who plays with *Peaches* whenever they return to the area.

Though always a desert dog, *Peaches* is not a Deming native. About seven years ago, Glenn logged onto **petfinder.com** and found a little white Poodle at the shelter in El Paso. When she went to meet that doggie, though, she was greeted, instead, by an adorable black Poodle/Terrier who jumped up in her cage and begged to be taken away. *Peaches* had just been returned to the shelter (she had been there before) by a woman whose husband had horribly mistreated the precious little dog, and Glenn decided she had just met her new best friend.

As Glenn drove home from El Paso, *Peaches* climbed onto her lap and exhaled a huge, audible sigh of relief—she knew she was going to her forever home. It wasn't long before she was accompanying her new mom to work, as well.



Owner Glenn Pelton and *Peaches* are always together—whether greeting customers in Graceland's office or walking the grounds in the desert sunshine.

Peaches rarely misses a day at the office—and never two days in a row. She simply has too much to do. Every morning and afternoon, *Peaches* and Glenn patrol the perimeter, both for exercise and to make sure everything is in its proper place. With so many portable buildings, playhouses, steel buildings and Coast-to-Coast carports to keep track of, it's definitely a two-person (or one-person/one-dog) job! *Peaches* doesn't personally arrange the free delivery and set-up or in-house financing, but she may have been behind Graceland's decision to forego all credit checks and security deposits. We may never know... But one thing is for certain—she will *always* give you a great deal!



If you've been following the "Tiny House" movement sweeping the country, you're not alone. The Graceland crew has already received inquiries about adapting their portable buildings for this purpose, and are working toward meeting this need in the near future.

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Lonnie Rincon
575-202-6347
Se Habla Español



AGGIE ATHLETICS HAVE GONE TO THE DOGS!

Have you ever attended a sporting event and thought “The only way this could be better is if Fido were here with me”? Well, NMSU’s Aggie Athletics is making it happen! In a new initiative by the NM State Athletic Department, the Aggies are inviting their furriest fans to a great promotion that has tails wagging across the Mesilla Valley.

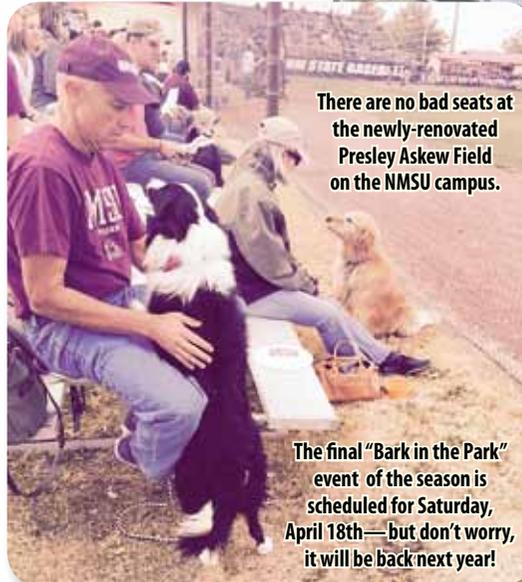
“Bark at the Park” events have been gaining popularity in professional and collegiate sports venues for years. In its inaugural year at NMSU, the Aggies’ Bark in the Park promotions have welcomed over 100 dogs (with their humans) to Women’s Soccer matches in the fall and to Aggie Baseball and Softball games in the Spring. We make special arrangements for our canine fans including their very own seating section, treats and goodies (courtesy of Better Life Pet Foods), available drinking water, and cleanup stations—and maybe even an appearance by NMSU’s own *Striking the Wonder Dog*.

Dog owners and Aggie fans across the valley have responded so over-

whelmingly to Bark in the Park that we have added a fourth event on Saturday, April 18th at 6 pm, when NM State Baseball takes on Grand Canyon at the newly-renovated Presley Askew Field (located on the NMSU campus). Bleacher seating along



Can I chase the ball now, please?



There are no bad seats at the newly-renovated Presley Askew Field on the NMSU campus.

The final “Bark in the Park” event of the season is scheduled for Saturday, April 18th—but don’t worry, it will be back next year!

Missing the Aggies’ Bark in the Park already? The El Paso Chihuahuas won the 2014 Minor League Baseball Award (MilBY) for Promotion of the Year for their Bark in the Park event on August 3rd. This was due, in no small part, to the special one-time-only game jerseys the players wore—then auctioned off—to benefit the Humane Society of El Paso.

How do they top THAT this season? With *three* Bark in the Park nights at Southwest University Park! Get your tickets and take your pups to the April 12th, July 12th or August 2nd games, and be prepared for a great time. Play ball!

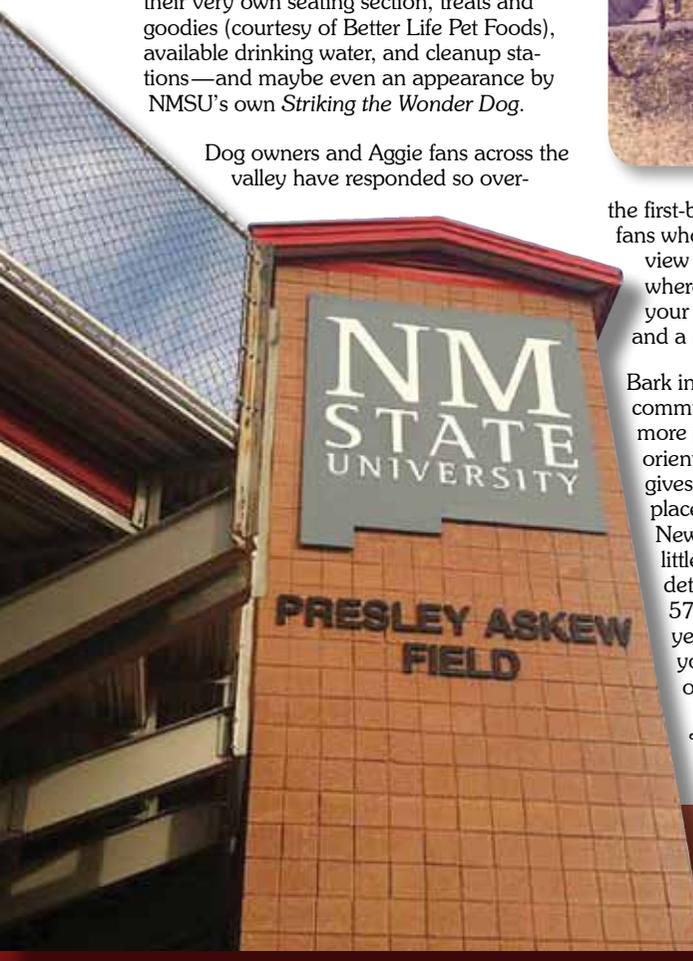
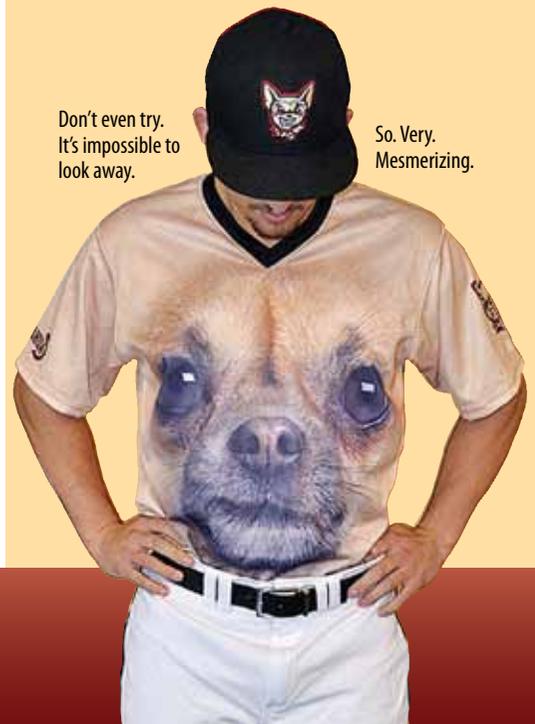
the first-base line is reserved exclusively for fans who bring their dogs. You get a great view of the game and players, grass areas where you and your buddies can stretch your legs and play, clean water, goodies, and a cleanup station—all for just \$5.

Bark in the Park has already become a true community activity that not only brings more people out to the fun, family-oriented events at NM State, but also gives dedicated dog people another place where they can enjoy the great New Mexico weather with their furry little friends. For more information and details about the April 18th game, call 575-646-8052. We’ll be back next year with even more opportunities for your canine family members to cheer on the Aggies at home.

Jimmy Sanchez is Assistant Director of Marketing & Promotions for NMSU Athletics

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The Distinguished Miss Jada

Miss Jada is a ubiquitous member of our local animal community. The American Kennel Club recently awarded Jada its highest Therapy Dog honor—the title of Distinguished Therapy Dog—for completing more than 500 therapy visits as a member of a recognized therapy dog organization. The program is open to all dogs (purebred or mixed breed) that are registered or listed with AKC. The following is Jada's story, as told to her Mom, Debbie Ketcherside....

My name is Jada Hannah Joseph—but my friends call me “Miss Jada.” I am a proud, but typically stubborn, English Bulldog.

My story begins on January 20, 2006 when I was born and my four-legged mother died. When I was old enough, I went to live with a wonderful young couple, Roberta and Tony. They gave me a great life, teaching me how to be a well-behaved bullie girl. Back then, I lived with four dogs—three of us elegant bullies and a Yorkie—here in Las Cruces. After about three years, Roberta and Tony decided to move to Phoenix, but they knew that I would not be able to breathe in the terrible heat there. So they put an ad in the paper: “English Bulldog Retired Mom looking for Grandparents.” Mommy saw the ad and called about me.

Mommy came to meet me and fell in love with me right away. She sat on the floor rubbing my belly and telling me how beautiful I was. She was not the only one looking at me, though—three other families wanted me! Roberta and Tony took me to each of their homes to see how we interacted, but Mommy won the coveted prize—me! So in October of 2009, I said good-bye to my old family and began my new life with my new Mommy!

We bonded immediately. I let Mommy sleep in “my” queen size bed (I have stairs to get up and down), and we go everywhere together—to grocery stores, restaurants, Walmart and even to her doctor appointments. We've been inseparable from the very beginning.

One day, a nice lady knitted me a sweater, and I loved it so much I never wanted to take it off, so Mommy decided that I should have a vast and fabulous wardrobe. I enchanted everyone with my delightful outfits, and Mommy began to think that I would make a great therapy dog. She did some research to find out how to put me to “work.” She said I had to do *something* to earn my keep.

After reading up on what it takes to be a ther-

apy dog, Mommy was afraid I might be “too stubborn” to pass the behavior test. She spoke to a lady named Sandra who was a tester/observer of potential therapy dogs, and the two of them arranged a time when we could meet.

Sandra had all of her dogs out in the yard when we arrived, so that I could meet her inside without any distractions. I was all brushed and looking really beautiful that day. She petted me and loved on me—so I loved her right back! One by one, Sandra brought each of her dogs into the house to meet me so she could observe how we acted together. I had no problems with any of the other dogs, and Sandra assured Mommy that I would do just fine on the test. Sandra made such an impression on me that I now consider her my “Other Mother.” She babysits me, loves me and has turned me into a lap dog!

I passed all tests with flying colors, and was eager to begin my career as a therapy dog. What fun! I get to dress up in my beautiful outfits and meet so many people! We visit Las Cruces Public School classrooms for developmentally challenged students on Tuesdays, Memorial Medical Center on Thursdays, Mesilla Valley Hospice on Fridays, and various nursing homes and rehab hospitals on Saturdays. It's a full and fulfilling life.

Mommy and I have worked up quite a routine for the folks over the years—she asks me “Do you want to show them how smart you are?” (well, duh, of course), and I turn on the charm: waving (yup, I can *wave!*), saying my prayers, circling right, circling left, and then walking all the way around Mommy and high-fiving her! And yes, I do know my right from my left! If Mommy wants to go right she says so, and I go to my right. Likewise, the left.

I've been a Therapy Dog for five years now. Mommy went through her old calendars and realized that I'd had more than 500 official visits as a therapy dog—well over the number of visits required by the American Kennel Club (AKC) for their highest award of Distinguished Therapy Dog (THDD). She filled out some paperwork, and soon I received a certificate and a new, “Distinguished Therapy Dog” AKC patch for my Therapy Dogs, Inc vest. They even gave Mommy a Gold AKC THDD medal. Really?

A gold medal for the chauffeur? Everybody knows that this bullie is the one that does all the work. Oh, well, I guess she does deserve some of the credit. According to the AKC, only 168 dogs have earned the “distinguished” title, and I am the *only* Bulldog on that list!

I have so many good memories of my work as a therapy dog—but one really sticks out in my mind. We were at the Surgical Waiting Room at Memorial Medical Center when we noticed a family in back that had obviously just received distressing news. There were eight to ten people hugging each other and crying. When Mommy dropped my leash, I knew what I was supposed to do. I went right up to the family, cleared my throat to get their attention...and waved at them. They were startled and stopped crying. I performed my entire repertoire for them, and received lots of love in return. For a short time that day, I turned their tears into smiles. Titles and medals are great, but nothing is better than that!



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Penny for your
Thoughts

by **Jennifer Woods**

New Digs!

January 31st marked the final day at our old office on Valley. I will miss the constant threat of the light post out front being knocked over by an illegally-turning tour bus (I think it happened four or five times right after the station popped up across the street). I will miss the feng shui of the indoor water features we enjoyed in every room during every rain, and the myriad opportunities we had to experience neighboring business' restrooms whenever ours were—for whatever unknowable reason—out of order. I will most certainly miss the botanical wonderland that surrounded the building.

Walking *Penny* and *Summer* at the old place was all kinds of fun. We would head out behind the building and take a right onto Vagrant Lane, strolling past Poo Alley and Bum Plaza, down to the place where I found the crack pipe—at which point we'd turn around and head back on the other side of the road. Monsoon season was especially delightful, as the unpaved roadway dissolved into the nearly-un-navigable Skeeter Lake for two whole months. We would *never* go left on Vagrant Lane, 'cuz that was the scary end.

Our new office on Solano, nestled snugly between church and hookah lounge (no, really—it's *not* a metaphor) presents fewer challenges. In fact, it's AWESOME. *Penny's* upgraded Lair of Solitude is even cozier than before, with the comforting addition of a wall and a brand new doggie bed. *Summer* rarely uses her bed—she's too busy exploring all the nooks and crannies of her new environment. There are two long hallways perfect for playing fetch, and I don't even have to leave my computer when one of the girls brings me a ball—I just toss it out the doorway and let it ricochet down the hall as one or both of them gives chase. Mayor Vic added a back door to his office so the dogs on our side of the building can visit him for treats and love—and efforts are already underway to train *Summer* to respond when he summons her via intercom. It's a doggie paradise!

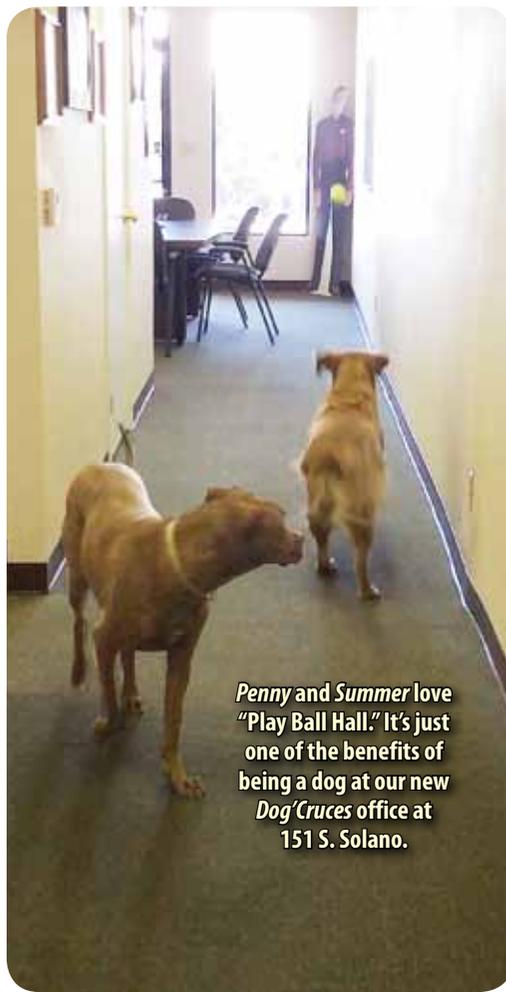
But the best feature of our new place might just be *Nacho*. No, not the deliciously cheesy bar food we all know and love, but the delightfully *cheezy*, ridiculously pampered Pit Bull we all know and love even more. *Penny* worships *Nacho*, but he was only an occasional visitor to the old office. Now that Auntie Charissa and all the

salespeople have walls instead of cubicles, *Nacho* has become our neighbor.

Unfortunately, due to a recent injury, *Nacho* has been confined to his mom's office. He and *Penny* want so badly to play—but all they can do is stare at each other through *Nacho's* glass-paneled door and whimper. We found out that the boy needed surgery on his hind leg, so he'll be just out of reach for a while longer—but at least we know he'll be as good as new soon. Then we'll finally have three free-range doggies roaming the premises and stirrin' up trouble. Can't wait!

Walking the girls around our new neighborhood carries less risk than before, but what we've lost in low-level danger we've made up for with high-octane yard dogs who come out to greet us along the way. I haven't settled on names for any of the new landmarks yet (though Goathead Trail is an early contender for one section), but I don't expect they'll be quite as colorful as those we left behind.

Good.



Penny and Summer love "Play Ball Hall." It's just one of the benefits of being a dog at our new DogCruces office at 151 S. Solano.

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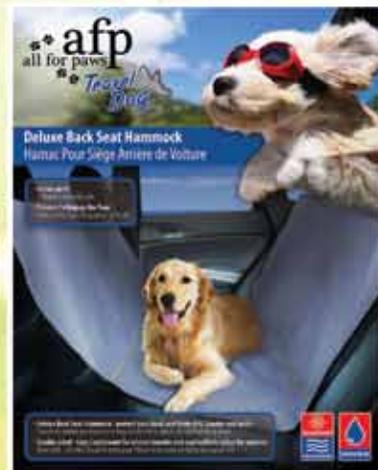
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Walter's Lunchbox

by Walter Dubbin
(as told to Margaret Dubbin)



Thaw Out and Chow Down!

Hooray!! Spring is finally here! No more itchy sweaters and sub-arctic temperatures! The whole desert is springing to life—from just-hatched baby birds to flowering plants and trees—and our Windy Season can wreak havoc on flora and fauna alike!

Sometimes the havoc brings good things to us canines—other times, not so much. The ferocious New Mexico winds often blast innocent little hatchlings right out of the safety of their nests down into our yard—where they become a tasty midday snack! (Hey, don't judge—I am a dog, after all!) But the mighty winds also shake clouds of yellow/green pollen out of the trees and blow them around *everywhere*. The minute the Mulberry trees bloom there is a layer of yellow/green film floating across the swimming pool, cloaking the vehicles, and covering the window screens.

To keep allergens *outside* as much as possible, Mom wipes me and *Butthead* down with baby wipes every time we come in from wrestling in the yard. Because we are bigger doggies, it can take several wipes before most of the dirt and pollen is off our fur. Mom seems to think this routine helps keep some of the pollen out of the rugs and furniture. I have no idea if it actually helps or not, but I really *hate* smelling like a baby's behind—or at least what you people think a baby's behind is supposed to smell like. Truth is, a baby's behind smells like any other behind—just ask a dog.

Speaking of doggie sniffers—*Butthead* decided to shed more than fur this spring and completely freaked out Mom in the process. Apparently, he's developed some sort of auto immune disorder. We don't know what triggered it, but one day, all of a sudden, the fur and skin on his nose blistered up and fell off! It was *gross!* He kept sticking his nasty, oozing nose into everything—my face, people's crotches, the table, my *food!* Disgusting!

At first we thought he might have been bitten by a deadly Brown Recluse spider. It is springtime, and all the creepy crawlies are starting to emerge from their winter hideouts, after all. But he didn't have any other symptoms of a spider bite—just the skin falling off like he was some sort of leper or one of the Walking Dead! I told Mom we needed to ship his butt off to some deserted island immediately—before he infected *me*.

I mean, seriously, what if something as hideous as a flesh eating bacteria happened to my handsome face?! My career would be over! I would no longer be the "Wingman!" But Mom, being the sap that she is, said that we can't just banish him. Not sure

why—it sounded like a perfectly good plan to me. Sometimes, I don't think she really thinks some of these things through completely.

Anyway, she got him to the vet as soon as possible and, luckily, they got this under control before his nose fell off completely.

Well, after you shake the nasty image of *Butthead's* nose sloughing off, I hope you and your pups can enjoy these two recipes. The Cucumber Chicken Salad bites are yummy party YAPPetizers, and the Pizza Snax are great anytime. Both recipes are also adaptable for humans. Imagine my irritation when I saw Mom using *half* of the Pizza Snax dough to make herself a gluten-free flatbread pizza—next time make a double batch!

Wheat-Free Pizza Snax

- 2 C Brown Rice Flour
- ½ C Corn Meal
- ½ C Flax Seed Meal • 1 Egg
- 2 Tsp Coconut Oil (*melted*)
- 1 Tsp Dried Basil
- 1 Tsp Dried Oregano
- ½ C Low Sodium Tomato Sauce
- ½ C Shredded Parmesan Cheese



Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together wet ingredients until thoroughly blended. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix until a stiff dough forms. Knead dough until all ingredients are thoroughly distributed. Divide dough and roll out sections to a 1/4" thickness, between pieces of parchment paper or on a floured surface. Using cookie cutter, cut out shapes and place onto parchment-lined cookie sheets. Brush with tomato sauce and sprinkle with shredded cheese. Bake for 30-45 minutes or until center of cookie is firm. Leaving cookies in the oven, turn off the oven and allow cookies to completely cool.

Cucumber Chicken Salad YAPPetizers

- 2 Large Cucumbers, peeled
(use smaller cukes for smaller dogs)
- 2 C Rotisserie Chicken (*shredded*)
- ½ Apple (*cored & diced*)
- ¼ C Dried Cranberries (*minced*)
- 2-3 Tbsp Plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 Tsp Fresh Parsley (*minced*)



Combine shredded chicken, diced apple, minced cranberries and parsley with yogurt. Slice the cucumber into 1" sections. Using a grapefruit spoon or melon baller scoop out 2/3 of the center of the cucumber sections making little cucumber cups. Fill cucumber cups with the chicken mixture and serve immediately or store in the refrigerator up to two days.



DogCruces • Spring 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



A Little 'Nip in the Air

When we last left Vash, he was settling into his new home at the pet food store, and had finally made a friend of the timid new kitten, Britney....

I was lounging across the top bed of my tree one day when someone came by with a wooden crate full of toys. Britney and I had a few toys already, but she was always too frightened to come out and play during the day anyway, and the toys were only fun if there was a human around to wiggle them. There were little pompoms and plastic mesh balls with bells inside. There was a feather that the humans would wave around in front of the condo. If I was in the right mood I could ninja catch it by launching off my tree, latching onto the wire walls, and swiping furiously through the holes. But it was always pulled away from me again, and after a few ninja-attacks, I got bored.

The rest of my days were spent sleeping, bothering Britney, yowling for attention, and waiting for food.

And then the crate arrived.

The person who brought the crate plopped it down and left. I was immediately intrigued. Emanating from it in soft, silent waves was the most haunting thing I had ever smelled. It didn't smell good, exactly, in the way canned food or liver treats smell good. It smelled like earth and wind and some kind of heady spice. It smelled like something I must have immediately.

I spent the rest of the day with my paw shoved through the wire, my face and shoulder pressed against it, fur sticking out in all directions. I swiped at the crate, over and over, catching it barely with the edge of my claws. It was difficult, but not hopeless. The enchanting smell was coming from a small bag at the bottom of the crate, which I could just see through the crate's narrow wooden boards. I just...had...to snag it...!

Britney came by and sniffed my butt, and then my ears. I flicked them furiously and kept swiping. She wanted to know what was going on. I told her I was on very important business and could not be disturbed. She headed back to her spot at the top of the tree, tail lashing.

Hours passed. The light dimmed from bright to

dark. The electric lights overhead went off. The people left. All was silent.

The tip of one of my claws tore through the ragged mess I had made out of the corner of the bag. I froze, then pulled tentatively. The bag wiggled. Carefully, slowly, using all the patience I could possibly muster, I pulled the bag out of the crate, across the inch or so between it and the condo's wire walls, and through the wire as far as it would go. It stuck there, one corner inside with me, the rest flopped out on the ground.

I nearly swooned. This was the smell for sure. I'd gotten it! I'd won!

There were a few crushed and dried green leaves at the bottom of the corner I had pulled through. I shoved my face against the bag and started chewing.

It didn't smell good, exactly, in the way canned food or liver treats smell good. It smelled like earth and wind and some kind of heady spice. It smelled like something I must have immediately.

The bag ripped. A few green leaves fell on the floor. I sniffed maniacally, getting the leaves all over my face and nose. I tugged on the bag with my teeth. It came a little farther into the cage, and more leaves fell on the floor. I pressed myself against them and rolled, wiggling them into the fur of my back. This spot on the floor was the best spot on any floor—ever. I chewed at the bars. They tasted like candy.

I spotted the pompom watching me insulantly from the corner. How dare it look at me like that! I shot across the cage, ricocheting off the walls, slamming into the pompom with all four paws and tossing it high into the air. It'd never look at me like that again!

The next morning, one of Vash's people came by his condo to see how he was doing. The condo was a mess. Bowls turned over, blankets half-fallen, pellets of litter scattered. The kitten was sprawled out on his back, legs splayed, mouth open. His grey fur was patched and matted with wet clumps of saliva. His entire chest and face was sopping wet with drool.

Beneath him lay the tattered remains of the catnip bag. It was completely empty.

The human stared at him a moment, then grabbed the crate full of catnip toys and moved it far, far away.



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www.ascmv.org

Animal Village NM
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email: animalvillagenm@gmail.com
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Cat's Meow Adoption Center
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575-642-5239
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

**Coalition for Pets and People
(Zero in 7)**
www.zeroin7.org

**Humane Society of Southern NM (HSSNM)
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email: mail@hssnm.org
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Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition
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Featured Group

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