

Fall 2013

FREE!

Dog Cruces

Information for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!



Bad Dog/Good Dog

Is Obedience Training the Difference Between the Two?
Page 15

DOCLC Page 21

The Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces offers more than just basic training.

Pure Trouble? Page 10

Dr. Pirtle draws attention to health issues which disproportionately affect purebred dogs.

Page 19 **Hahn Solo (and Thor)**

Rick Hahn is not-so-single-handedly making his mark as an animal advocacy hero.

Page 28 **Walter's Lunchbox**

A new column by canine gourmand Walter Dubbin debuts!

PLUS...Can Cats Really be Trained — Really?...Striking the Wonder Dog's Season Schedule...Good Dogs and Circus Seals

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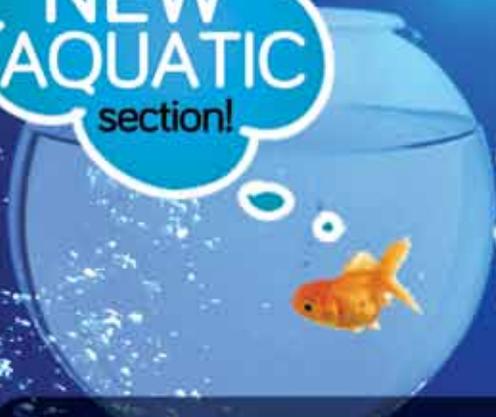
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Fallin' for Autumn!

Fall is upon us...ugh. I already miss the summer—especially the humidity of monsoon season. Before long our harsh 65-degree winter will be here, and we'll be digging the fleece out of storage. But, for some reason, the dogs seem to love autumn's perfect weather, which brings longer walks and cool outdoor seating at local restaurants. I can't wait to accompany them!

There's a common theme running through several of the stories in this issue of *DogCruces*: Training and Obedience. And the one thing all seem to have in common is that everybody's experience is unique. That makes sense when you think about it—we're all different, our dogs are all different...why on earth would anyone expect training to be a one-size-fits-all deal?

Our cover story provides three perspectives: Phyllis Wright, Karen Kendall and I each occupy a different spot along the continuum of doggie behavior, from Phyllis' free-spirited *Punkin*, to my independent-minded Golden Girls, to Karen's model-citizen Brittany Spaniels. You may wonder how my buddy Steve and I can both teach classes for the Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces, but one of us ends up with *Striking the Wonder Dog*, while the other shares his home with *Ruby the Sock Bandit*. I wonder that myself.

Speaking of the DOCLC, Nancy Chanover has written a great article about the Club; and our office dog, *Penny*, has graduated from Puppy Manners Class as well as Beginning Obedience Class.

Kat Lacy claims it's possible to train your cat—

that's right, I said *cat*—but Jess Williams...well, Jess, as usual, has a completely different take on the whole concept of dog obedience.

We profile Rick Hahn in our "Workin' Like a Dog" section on page 19. Two years ago, Rick met tiny, mighty *Thor*, whose mistreatment at the hands of a disturbed young man inspired Rick not only to rescue the terrier mix puppy, but to become one of the most dedicated and tireless animal advocates we have here in the Mesilla Valley.

We welcome *Walter "Wingman" Dubbin* to our family of columnists! He (and mom Margaret) are bringing their popular blog, *Walter's Lunchbox*, to the printed pages of *DogCruces*, and we're very excited to have them. The first two recipes look delicious, and I can't wait to have someone—anyone—bake a batch of Chicken Cheddar Cookies and bring me some. Or I suppose I could try to do it myself....

I'd like to send a shout-out to *Smokee the Singing Chihuahua* (and mom Lori English) whose years of volunteer service and fundraising were acknowledged this summer with an official Proclamation from Governor Martinez! We hope everyone enjoyed their ***Smokee the Singing Chihuahua Service Days***, June 18th and 19th, 2013. It's a well-deserved honor—good work!

Take your dog outdoors and take full advantage of this beautiful fall season—the best time of year here in the desert. Of course, any season is the best time of the year when you have your best friend at your side!



Vic Villalobos

Mayor of DogCruces

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DogCruces Magazine
 580 S. Valley Drive, suite 100
 Las Cruces, NM 88005

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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, Margaret Dubbin, Karen Kendall,
 Kat Lacy, Charissa Paskowski, Dr. Scott Pirtle,
 Vic Villalobos, Jess Williams,
 Phyllis Wright, Jenifer Woods





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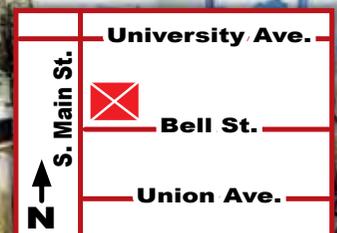
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calendar of events, visit
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List is updated
as events are announced



Doggie



ALL FALL

**Sept. 25th, Oct. 30th,
Nov. 27th 6:30pm - 8pm**
Red Brick Pizza Fundraisers, last
Thursday of every month.

No Kill Doggie Dates

Every last Thursday of the Month. Join
ACtion Programs for Animals (APA) for one
evening per month at the Branigan Library's
Roadrunner Room to learn about our Doña
Ana Pets Alive! (DAPA!) campaign, working
toward making Las Cruces/Doña Ana County
the first community in New Mexico to reach a
No Kill status. These meetings also serve as
volunteer orientations and training sessions.

Low-Cost Vaccination Clinics Every Last Saturday of the Month

At various locations in the city and southern
part of Doña Ana County. Check out
dogcruces.com and Facebook for details.

September

**Saturday September 21 and 28,
10am-3pm**

September Smiles

Adoption Promotions at PetSmart 2200 E.
Lohman (next to Ross)

Saturday, September 21, 11am-3pm
Spay/Neuter Surgical Clinics

Held at the SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho,
LC. You must pre-register and qualify.
Surgeries will be provided by Paws N' Hooves
Mobile Clinic of Anthony, NM. For more
information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

October

Thursday, October 3, 5:30pm-8pm
Cruces Canines "Howling
Halloween" Event

Andele's Dog House (1983 Calle Del Norte
in Old Mesilla). People invited to attend with
their well-behaved, leashed dogs for social-
izing and a chance to mingle with other
animal folk. Proceeds benefit APA and
HSSNM. More info call 575-522-2529.

Friday, October 4

St. Francis of Assisi's Feast Day / World Pets'
Day / World Animal Day

Saturday, October 12

Annual Crusin' for Critters Bike Run

To benefit APA, sign in is from 10am-12noon
at Las Cruces Motor Sports (2125 S. Valley
Dr.). After party at Blue Moon Bar from
3pm-6pm, live music at 5pm. For more
information call 575-521-4942

Saturday, October 12

MADD dash at La Llorona Park

Walk like MADD and Dogs are allowed to
participate with their humans. Sign up at
www.walklikemadd.org/LasCruces or call
505-255-2955.

Wednesday, October 16, 6pm-8pm.
Yappy Hour

Last Yappy Hour of the year at St. Clair
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Dates

Saturday, October 19, 11am-3pm *Spay/Neuter Surgical Clinics*

SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, L.C. You must pre-register and qualify. Surgeries provided by Paws N' Hooves Mobile. For information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

Saturday, October 19, 12pm-6pm *Dog Wash*

The Country Dog Salon (951 S. Solano Dr., Ste A), benefiting Safe Haven a "no kill" shelter for dogs and cats. There will be a pet adoption event, raffles, snacks and beverages. Leashed dogs only. Sponsored by The Country Dog, Blue Ribbon Pet Sitting LLC, and The Las Cruces Petsitters Guild. 575-526-1904.

Saturday, October 26

National Pit Bull Awareness Day 10am-2pm
2nd Annual Pits for Peace Walk Celebrating Pit Bull Awareness day and the loving peaceful nature of all dogs. Saturday, October 26th from 10am-2pm at Young Park (bandstand area). Walk starts at 12noon. \$5 walk entry fee to benefit DAPA! and Second Chance Dogs Fund. All well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome! There will be food vendors, raffles, dog adoption and live music.

November

Thursday, November 7, 5:30pm-8pm *Cruces Canines "Wishbones & Whiskers" Event*

At Andele's Dog House (1983 Calle del Norte). People invited to attend with their well behaved, leashed dogs for socializing and a chance to mingle with other animal folk. Proceeds benefit APA and HSSNM. More info call 575-522-2529. Dress up your pet to match theme (optional).

Saturday & Sunday November 9 & 10, 10am-4pm

Pet Photo's With Santa at the SNAP Office

2405 W. Picacho. Proceeds benefit Spay Neuter Action Program. Doggie Treats, Refreshments and Raffle Prizes!

Saturday, November 23, 11am-3pm *Spay/Neuter Surgical Clinics*

Will be held at the SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, L.C. You must pre-register and qualify. For more information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

December

Saturdays, December 7, 14 & 21, 11am-4pm

Pet Photo's with Santa at PetSmart
2200 E. Lohman (next to Old Navy). Use your "Pets Perk" card for a discount. Proceeds benefit HSSNM, call 575-523-8020 for more information

Thursday, December 12, starts at 5pm *Critter Christmas at the Las Cruces Convention Center*

Saturday, December 14, 11am-3pm *Spay/Neuter Surgical Clinics*

Will be held at the SNAP Office, 2405 W. Picacho, L.C. You must pre-register and qualify. For more information call SNAP at 575-524-9265.

**Happy Holidays from
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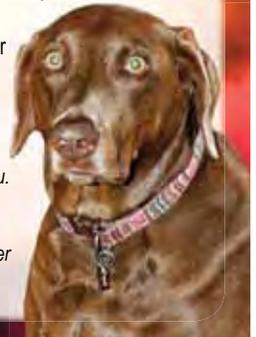
There is a bridge connecting Heaven and Earth. It is called the Rainbow Bridge because of its many colors. Just this side of the Rainbow Bridge there is a land of meadows, hills and valleys with lush green grass. When a beloved pet dies, the pet goes to this place. There is always food and water and warm spring weather. The old and frail animals are young again. Those who are maimed are made whole again. They play all day with each other.

There is only one thing missing. They are not with their special person who loved them on Earth. So each day they run and play until the day comes when one suddenly stops playing and looks up!

The nose twitches! The ears are up! The eyes are staring! And this one suddenly runs from the group! You have been seen, and when you and your special friend meet, you take him or her in your arms and embrace. Your face is kissed again and again and again, and you look once more into the eyes of your trusting pet.

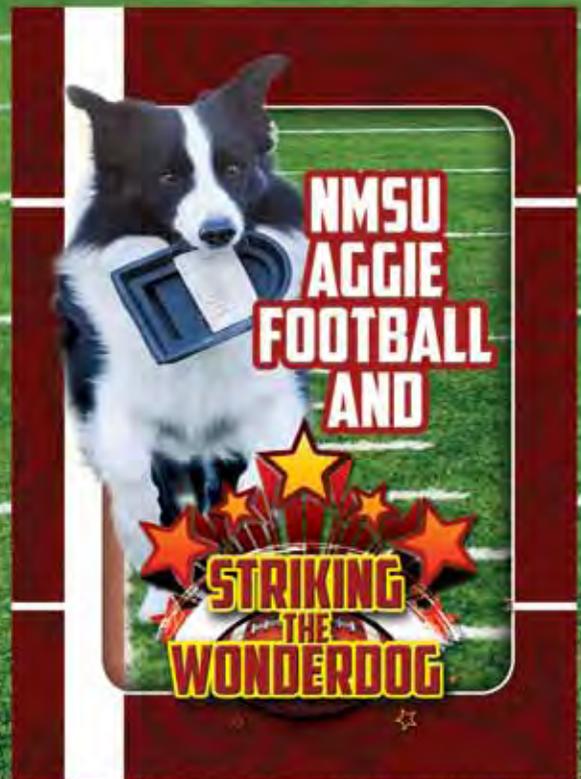
Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together...
— Author Unknown

"Stephanie—Angel led such a long, happy life with you. You were an amazing friend, and she passed away happy and loved. She was a true Angel in every way!" She will be truly missed and always remembered by her loving owner, Stephanie Yeager!



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- Nov. 30:** Idaho Vandals



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Prone to Problems—Potential

I purchase reference books from time to time, usually after perusing them while at a major veterinary conference. The amount of information available on very specific subjects within the field of veterinary medicine is staggering to me. One rather small and seemingly unremarkable paperback I recently purchased has proven to become one of my favorite resources. The book lists the vast number of health conditions prevalent within specific purebred dogs. While some may wish to argue, it is widely acknowledged that purebred dogs are considered “less healthy” than mixed breed dogs, or “mutts.” Before I make anyone defensive, let me say that I have owned purebred dogs most of my life. I have a fondness for Labradors, as many of you have a favorite breed of your own. I’m not here to attack purebred dogs—because I love them myself. But it’s fascinating to examine why purebred dogs may be more prone to some medical conditions.

I'm not here to attack purebred dogs — because I love them myself. But it's fascinating to examine why purebred dogs may be more prone to some medical conditions.

There is a principle in the field of genetics called “hybrid vigor.” The idea behind this is that a broader genetic pool leads to more disease resistance and overall superior health, whether in plants, livestock, or in our case—dogs. The opposite principle would be “inbreeding depression,” implying that a narrowed genetic pool without crossbreeding leads to less vigor and more health problems. Now don’t get me wrong, genetics is an incredibly complicated and elegant

biological power, and exceptions to most ideas do exist. But by and large, these principles are widely held to be valid. So how does this apply to breeds of dogs?

Consider this remarkable situation: Chico, the three pound Chihuahua is the exact same species as Newman, the one hundred and sixty pound Great Dane! They hardly look anything alike, do they? Off the top of my head, I can’t think of any other species of animal that dis-



**That's right—
Chico and Newman
are the exact same species.**

The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM

Health Issues of Purebred Dogs

plays as much difference in their phenotypes, or physical genetics, as dogs.

So how does this happen? Well, the answer lies in the manipulation of the species by man. We have developed dog breeds in order to specifically display certain physical and behavioral characteristics. This required long periods of breeding dogs with similar genetics until those dogs repeated themselves physically in future breedings. In other words, after generations of breeding dogs that looked alike, genetic lines were developed that came to be recognized as a "breed." Much of this took place hundreds to thousands of years ago, with certain breeds having been regarded as more ancient in their origins than others. Many breeds of dogs were developed for specific reasons—to hunt, herd livestock, guard royalty, or just to be companions.

More recently, lineage within a breed has become increasingly important, and has resulted in careful documentation of the "best of the best" within a breed. At some point, one specific individual, or a small number of individuals within a breed becomes notorious for demonstrating the best characteristics of that breed. These individuals or their offspring become desirable for carrying on the best characteristics of the breed, and so the genetic pool within a breed becomes even more narrowed by propagating a restricted group of animals within that breed.

This habit is reinforced by dog shows and field trials or other competitions that glorify the physical appearances or sometimes the behavioral abilities (intelligence, trainability) of specific individuals. We all like winners, so winning dogs become desirable, just like winning racehorses. We attempt to repeat the winning recipe by breeding winners. It doesn't always work out—Secretariat failed to produce winning offspring in proportion to his own vast talent. But more often than not, like produces like.

Ok, so what is my point with all of this? First and foremost, dogs are amazing! The variation

we see among the breeds is a testament to a unique animal and its unique relationship to man. No other creature comes close to usurping the dog's status as man's best friend. Our fondness, dedication and close association with the species goes back tens of thousands of years. At some point, primitive man coaxed a wild version of our current pets into the cave to share his space, and the rest, they say, is history.

For everything we love about a breed – their beautiful coat, inquisitive personality, fierce loyalty, strength and speed, or love and devotion – there is a possible genetic trade-off in some potential health condition.

However, intervention by man has not only led to an incredible variety of breeds of dogs, it has also narrowed the genetic pool of the species, therefore leading to more health problems. The list of known conditions that could potentially affect my beloved Labs is long! (Hip problems are already starting to manifest in both of mine, who are seven and nine years of age). Now of course, mutts have plenty of health issues, too. But there are certain conditions that are so prevalent within certain breeds that the genetics are an absolute factor. For example: tracheal collapse in Pomeranians, congestive heart failure in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, cancer in Boxers and Golden Retrievers, and the list goes on and on and on!

So what is the takeaway from this discussion? Nothing more than this—when it comes to purebred dogs, we must take the good with the bad. For everything we love about a breed – their beautiful coat, inquisitive personality, fierce loyalty, strength and speed, or love and devotion – there is a possible genetic trade-off in some potential health condition.

I believe the coming years may lead to even greater numbers of genetic tests that may make it easier to start eliminating certain health issues within some breeds. Along with the common genetic tests to determine which breeds make up a mixed-breed dog, more genetic tests are being developed to detect carriers of specific health conditions. This may serve to help decrease some of the medical issues within some breeds. But it will take untold years of responsible breeding by dog lovers that are committed to improving not just the appearance of a breed, but their overall health, as well.



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Sit, Ubu, Sit! GOOD DOG!

When former Albuquerque Mayor Marty Chavez took a job in Washington, D.C., he needed to find a furever home for *Duke*, a dog large enough to warrant his own ZIP code.

Marty knew that finding a home for *Duke* presented a challenge

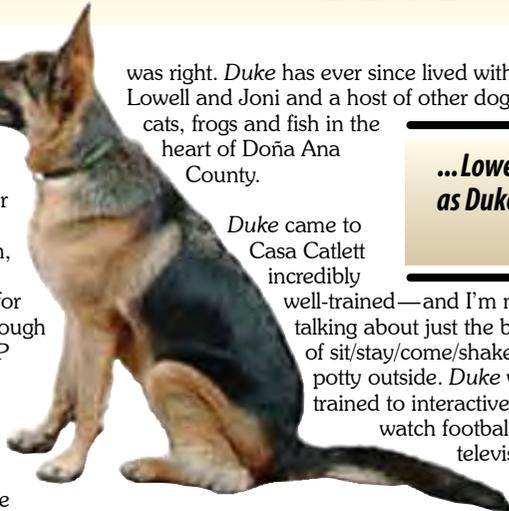
almost as large as the dog, because it is not just anyone who has both the room and the personality to care for a walking horizontal refrigerator with fur. He also needed to find someone with healthy upper legs who would not buckle, bruise or sustain a broken femur whenever *Duke* was happy enough to wag his fuzzy baseball-bat tail (which is almost always).

Having experience with running a major American city had taught Marty a thing or two about navigating a difficult problem, so he applied all of his analytical skills to the situation, and he crafted a course of action likely to achieve the desired outcome in the least amount of time with the fewest chances of complications or push-back.

He called Lowell Catlett, a man whose genetic makeup is such that he can regularly mesmerize large corporate crowds with wildly imaginative—but also completely plausible—futuristic predictions about life, academics and commerce. Unless there is a dog in sight, in which case Lowell sits on the floor and makes puppy noises to the exclusion of all human interaction. (I suspect he also has a tail.)

Calling Lowell guaranteed that *Duke* would have a home, Marty reasoned. And Marty

was right. *Duke* has ever since lived with Lowell and Joni and a host of other dogs, cats, frogs and fish in the heart of Doña Ana County.



Duke came to Casa Catlett incredibly well-trained—and I'm not talking about just the basics of sit/stay/come/shake/potty outside. *Duke* was trained to interactively watch football on television and to

bark violently at the screen when he recognized certain team logos. When he wasn't involved with broadcast commentary, you could point your finger at him and say, "Bang!" and he'd flop over as if he were dead, the flop registering on the Richter scale as far away as Singapore.

Duke came to Casa Catlett incredibly well-trained—and I'm not talking about just the basics of sit/stay/come/shake/potty outside.

Duke is a great example of how easy it is to train a dog if you're patient about it and willing to exercise a regimen of positive enforcement to achieve realistic and important goals. My assignment was to write about

how to train a dog, so we're finally getting to the subject matter. Contain your enthusiasm, and—if you're interested—contact a certified trainer. There are several in and around the Las Cruces/El Paso area.

If you're serious about it, and if having a dog who will consistently obey and do tricks is important to you, then I strongly encourage you to make the call now, ideally without reading the rest of this article, because I'm going to write more about Lowell, and why he is my personal hero (dog-training-wise).

Approximately six months after *Duke* came to live at Casa Catlett, I was there for a social gathering, and *Duke* was socializing to beat the band, shattering people's knees with his

tail and scarfing down dropped Doritos at every opportunity. At one point, *Duke* happened by the clot of people that included me and Lowell, and someone said to Lowell, "Make him play dead!"

...Lowell's words hung in the air as Duke lumbered along toward his next victim...

Lowell took a drink of his beer, then looked over his glasses in that way that United States senators look over their glasses when they're about to interrogate a person of questionable character, such as an Enron executive or one of their colleagues. Eventually, Lowell cleared his throat and spoke, and what he said was the most profound thing I have ever heard.

"*Duke* is a dog, not a [very bad word] circus seal," Lowell said. "Look at him! He's happy!"

All eyes turned to *Duke* at almost the exact moment that his tail made a valiant (if unintentional) effort to bat Mike Ellis into Luna County. Mike has good legs, but still, Lowell's words hung in the air as *Duke* lumbered along toward his next victim, tail wagging menacingly and people making way, chucking their Doritos eight feet or more away from their actual plates in an effort to steer the giant dog toward people playing somewhat less attention.

All of this is to say that trained dogs are very important to a great number of people, many of whom are probably also fascinated by circus seals and United States senators. As far as Lowell and I are concerned, it's not that big a deal. I've consulted *Toby* (whose tail couldn't wound a lame gnat) about this, and he heartily endorses the Futuristic Catlett Model of Dog Obedience.

The choice is yours to make, although if you live within Doña Ana County you should certainly be grateful to Lowell that *Duke* is no longer playing dead, because when he fell over it was probably rattling your windows and compromising the integrity of your home's foundation.

Jess Williams serves on the board of directors of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley.

PETS of Dog Cruces

Please send in your photos of your favorite pets to: photos@dogcruces.com

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The Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces (DOCLC) is a great place for training and building your relationship with your dog, but it's by no means the only one! For a list of trainers and training options in our area, visit DogCruces.com.



We love to talk about our dogs. Efforts to train our furry friends provide endless stories of frustration and failure, canine craziness and owner error, and—hopefully—success and wisdom gained along the road to a lifetime of good doggie behavior. Phyllis, Vic and Karen share their experiences and insights on the wide-open topic of dog obedience....

SLIGHTLY EXAGGERATED MEMORIES **OF A CANINE ESCAPE ARTIST** *by Phyllis Wright*

My mother was a worker of quiet and mysterious miracles. I never saw her clean her house, for instance—I have memories only of beautiful full skirts and immaculate white blouses, each ensemble a magazine ad for the can of Pledge in her manicured hand; yet, our house was spotless. I don't remember much cooking, either, but dinner was always served within five minutes of my father's evening entrance. And I never saw her train *Cuddles*, or *Cud*, as we called our mixed-breed playmate, the most brilliant dog in that Midwestern county.

Cud barked only at potential intruders, always heeled attentively without having ever met a leash, sat on the curb when cars approached, and never accepted food from strangers, despite her repertoire of dexterous treat feats, including triple rolls across the floor, highlighted by Olympic-like finale pirouettes.

I inherited many things from my mother for which I'm very grateful, but her preternaturalness was not among them, nor was any natural ability to train a dog. My first dog as a young adult was *Punkin*, named after my father's childhood Beagle. *Punkin* was a tiny miniature Beagle with whom I bonded instantly at the shelter. She weighted twelve precious pounds, and I was putty in her paws. It's not that I didn't try to train her, but her will was stronger than mine—and I lacked my mother's magic.

This, then is the story of how I learned never to take a well-trained pet for granted—and that I needed training help! *Punkin* was a jumper. Had I know about Agility Trials, I'd like to believe I would have had a champion—but I lacked both knowledge and any control over when and what she jumped. Her favorite hurdle was the fence. My neighbors, watching me chase her up and down the street, were convinced I was negligent in closing the gate—or something worse. One would cry out from her seat on the porch—"can't you buy a real lock?" Another rotated disclaimers and threats like, "You can't sue me if she breaks a leg over here" and "You'll have to pay for a landscaper if she comes near my roses," as *Punkin* dashed between the bushes. I could hear the

judgments resounding through the neighborhood: "Why can't she train that dog?"

Obviously, I hadn't lived in my new adult duplex long enough to make any friends, and it was too late. No one was interested in hearing the story of how twelve pound *Punkin* could clear the fence in a single bound—all five feet of cinderblock. She didn't scramble up it, either, clinging to the extrusions of concrete in the corner where the fence met the house. She didn't even run at it—she bounced. From a standing position, she could lift herself vertically, like fast-forward levitation, until she could land on the top block. Then, with equal litheness, she could leap down, and be off for the chase, the best game in the world.

If only *Punkin* and I could have agreed on some commands. "Stay" would have been perfect! "Stop" would have been a great back-up. "Come here" would have helped, and even "I have treats" might have spared me the rose thorns, the sprinkler-soaked hair, the derision of young children, and the suspicion of the neighbors.

When it came to be rumored that I purposefully encouraged little *Punkin* to run amuck so that I could creep around on private property (as if I could have trained her that well!), I took action. I raised the fence. My first-job budget suffered, my boyfriend gave up on me, and my landlord was skeptical of my abilities with a trowel, but I was sure I had finally wrested control from little *Punkin*. I experienced the perfect bliss of accomplishment and relief—for the two hours before she cleared the new wall.

I added more cinder blocks—and then more—and then more, living on jello and ramen, noticing from my stepladder that neighbors were also using ladders—to peer into my yard to see what suspicious things I might be con-

cealing, convinced there was no way my tiny little Beagle could be the real reason I needed a seven-foot wall. I became vaguely paranoid, closing the blinds on my back porch, feeling the sting of prying eyes, and noticing that no one would meet my glance, even as I carried out innocuous tasks like taking out the trash—I suspected they were checking it.

**I ADDED
CINDERBLOCKS
UNTIL MY WALL
LOOKED LIKE
CASTLE RAMPARTS,
BUT
PUNKIN WON**

I added cinder blocks until my wall looked like castle ramparts and my desperate landlord made threats, but *Punkin* won. She proudly cleared every new cinderblock row, and her dismount rivaled *Cud*'s athleticism.

It should have been my epiphany—if something doesn't come naturally, a person can avoid facing the truth, try to build around it, or take positive action, in this case, find an obedience class—but I was still very young. I moved.

Punkin and I eventually trained each other—and took up jogging. We didn't have a fence at our new home in the county, but that's not the point. This is a study in the dramatic extent to which untrained pets can wreak havoc in the lives of loving owners, friends, neighbors, and, most especially, the trusting puppies, themselves, who must find it perpetually disheartening to break rules they don't know exist. Good training enhances quality of life—for everyone!



Let's shake on that!

*Phyllis Wright is a
Contributing Editor
for DogCruces.*

A TALE OF TWO TRAINERS

by Vic Villalobos

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. That pretty well describes the experience of any first-time dog owner who falls in love with an adorable puppy but has no idea how to train her.

This is a story of two dogs. Actually, it's a story of two trainers with many dogs. Truth be told it's a story of two friends who train dogs... many dogs.

Years ago, my wife and I adopted our first puppy, a Golden Retriever we named *Zimba*. *Zimba* had been left at the Denver Dumb Friends League in Denver, Colorado because she was too rambunctious for her first family to handle. She was a three-month old Golden—of course she was rambunctious! But we didn't know that at the time. We quickly came to understand what that word truly meant. Two sofas and many, many pairs of shoes later, we realized that we needed to train this little girl. Because we had no idea what we were doing, it took us *years* to figure out even remotely how to train her.

A few years later we moved back to Las Cruces from Denver, and by now *Zimba* was a little better trained—and I emphasize a *little*. My wife and I both joined the Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue team, and decided we might have an interest in training *Zimba* for the SAR K9 team. This is where I met my friend, who is very modest and does not like the limelight. As a matter of fact, I think if he could he would spend all of his time with his wife and dogs and leave the human world behind. So to keep his privacy intact, we will call him Stefan

Stowhigh. Steve—I mean Stefan—is a great trainer who has a real talent for communicating with animals.

We started working with the K9 team in SAR training and obedience, and *Zimba* excelled. I don't know if it was the structure, or the excitement, or the focus—but it worked so well we decided to bring a new pup, *Coda*, into the family and the training process.

THE STRENGTH OF THE BOND YOU FORM WITH YOUR DOG IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW YOU FORM IT

We also joined the Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces at this time—in which Stefan and his wife (let's call her Chancy Nanover) were already members. Before long we were all teaching basic obedience classes for the club on a regular basis, but something wasn't right—my dogs were never quite as advanced as Stefan's. What was the difference? I read the same books, I listened during class, and I was motivated to learn. I also really enjoyed teaching the classes, and my students seem to leave the class with a new found love for a pet that they thought was untrainable. Could it be that Stefan has a genuine *gift*, a Dr. Doolittle-like supernatural talent for communicating that is visible only to animals?

Yes, Stefan does have a gift—unbelievable patience and unrelenting desire to have his dogs perform to a higher standard. I get it now, I was the one that needed more training if I was ever going to achieve Stowhigh-like results. It takes a lot of patience and unwavering devotion to train a dog to higher and higher levels of accomplishment—and it's not for everyone.

Our dogs won't all be like Stefan's star pupil (we'll call him *Stryker the Super Dog*). Back in the early days with *Zimba*, I would have been happy if we could've just trained her to understand that my work shoes were *not* chew toys or that the seat in my truck was *not* more comfortable with all the stuffing pulled out.

My first three Golden Retrievers have long since passed away and so has Stefan's first Lab, but both of our animal families continue to grow. We have continued to improve and refine our training methods, although my results always seem to lag just behind Stefan's. With each year that goes by we learn new methods and adapt old ones to our needs.

But I'm never going to reach perfection, or probably even Stefan's level of excellence. My current Golden Retrievers are just as keen on my feet as *Zimba* was, though they are fixated on socks instead of shoes. And even though I know I *could* put forth the effort to train them not to eat my socks, the enjoyment they get from killing and devouring the oh-so-deadly footwear is fun to watch. I found it easier to train *myself* to buy only the exact same color and style of sock all the time—this way if one lucky sock is able to survive, it might have a chance of finding another sock survivor to team up with and carry on. As I said, we adapt.

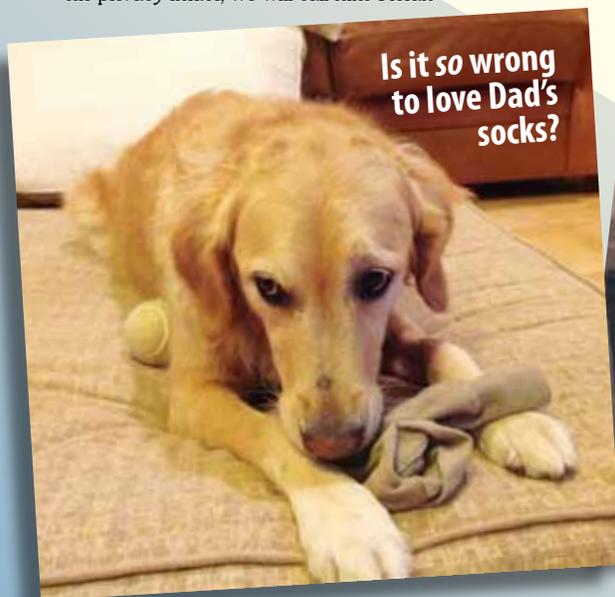
What I have learned over the years is that not all dogs learn at the same pace or respond to the same training methods, and not all trainers advance at the same pace, or are as effective at shaping behavior with the same methods. Every dog and every human is unique—which is why the strength of the bond you form with your dog is far more important than how you form it.

Stefan always starts his classes with a joke:

"What can two dog trainers agree upon? That what the third trainer is doing is wrong." While I disagree on starting the class this way (imagine that!), it's funny because it's true!

Whatever course of action you decide is the best way to train your dog, be patient, be loving and be consistent. Always remember that your dog is trying to understand you every bit as intently as you are trying to understand her—so never give up, and never stop trying new ways to make your relationship with your best friend better and better.

Vic Villalobos is Mayor of Dog'Cruces. His Dickensian genius for creating fictional names amazes all who know him.



UNDERSTANDING DOG LOGIC

by Karen Kendall

Dog obedience training and religion are two subjects that sane people do not discuss with strangers. Both have gone through many different interpretations over the years, and every canine trainer has his or her own way of getting into a dog's brain.

My method of training is that of common dog logic. If you want to train your dog, it helps if you understand dog behavior: they are pack animals. Just because we take them from their pack (the litter they are born into) does not change the fact that they are dogs and have natural instincts to act like dogs.

In the dog world, someone must be the Alpha animal. In the litter the pup is born into, the mother is the Alpha. She starts training her pups from the moment they're born. A snap here, a growl there—it's all training by the mother. When you take your puppy home, the mother's training must continue. If you take a dog into your pack, or family, and you do not assume the Alpha role, the dog will be happy to take that position. That is a dog's nature. If the pup will not listen to its human, it becomes a source of trouble for most families. Usually one of two things happens at this point: the dog is either banished to the backyard—destined never to be a family member—or the owners realize they need to seek out a trainer for help.

A dog should be a blessing in your life. It should not be a challenge, or problem. All people want the same basic behaviors from their dogs: no barking, no jumping on humans or the furniture, to come when called, and to sit or lie down when told. And—number one—to *not* be dragged around by their dog when they are out for a walk. All of these misbehaviors stem from one problem—lack of respect for the owner.

Who is the Alpha now, you or the dog? The dog often feels it is in charge, so why should it do what the owner is expecting? Normally, the dog has not been told in terms it understands that his behavior is unacceptable. This is where a good trainer comes in handy. A good trainer talks to the student in a manner which he or

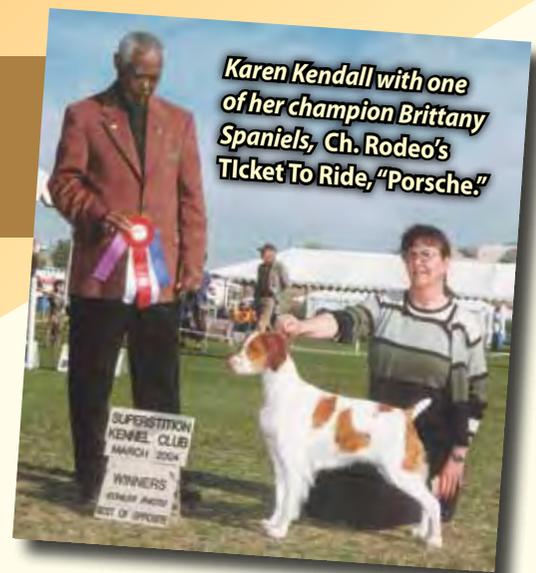
she understands, regardless of the method the trainer uses to train. Your trainer should be able to explain dog behavior and why the dog does certain things that the owner does not understand. An owner should be taught how to read the dog's body language and what the dog is trying to tell the owner. From all of this comes a happy couple called: dog and owner.

Obedience training is nothing more than the molding of behaviors. Some dogs are soft tempered and respond simply to the owner's voice and praise. Others are headstrong and need a different approach to training. Not all dogs train the same. Different temperaments in dogs require different training approaches.

When is the best time in a dog's life to start training? **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!** Puppies start learning the moment they are born. Unfortunately, most owners wait until the puppy is over six months old to take it to a class. I often hear, "Our puppy was so cute when it was younger. I thought it would outgrow this behavior." Bad behavior left uncorrected only intensifies and gets worse. Once an owner is given direction on how to correct bad actions by the dog, the dog almost always falls into the correct behavior easily. It is then the owner's lifelong responsibility to keep the dog on the right path.

After a basic obedience class you should have a dog that you can take out in public. A class for obedience will not only teach your dog the basic commands, it will also make your dog a more social animal. Your dog will be exposed to and learn to handle strange people and dogs. Obedience makes going to the veterinarian's office easier. Not only will it handle being in the reception area with strange dogs, but being handled by the veterinarian will be less stressful as well.

Just because your dog has completed a training



Karen Kendall with one of her champion Brittany Spaniels, Ch. Rodeo's Ticket To Ride, "Porsche."

course does not mean that its learning curve has stopped. Learning for a dog is a lifelong adventure. There is so much more that you and your dog can do together! Obedience should be the cornerstone of your dog's life. But that is just a start for you and your dog. Basic obedience can be a foundation for the sports of Agility, Rally, or even on to competitive obedience. Who knew that a few simple commands could be so life-changing?

When considering training with your dog, do your research. Just because your neighbor swears by a certain trainer, that trainer's method may not work for you and your dog. Do some reading on different training methods. Go watch trainers and their classes. Ask the trainer where they gained their experience. If you're not comfortable with a trainer, keep looking. You shouldn't be afraid to ask your trainer to explain the method by which he or she trains. Don't forget—the method you choose to train your dog will stay with it the rest of its life.

Obedience training should be a positive experience for both owners and dogs. Find a trainer and method that works for you. Have fun training your dog. Most of all ... go teach your dog something. You both will benefit from obedience. Happy Heeling!

Karen Kendall, of Karen's Animal House, has been an Obedience trainer since the late '70s. Many of her students have gone on to compete successfully at all levels of Obedience and Rally.

IF YOU DO NOT ASSUME THE ALPHA ROLE, THE DOG WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE THE POSITION



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- Insect Bites & Stings
- Snake Bites
- Heat & Cold Injuries
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Pet First Aid Classes: (4 hours)
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October 20, 2013 • 1pm - 5pm

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- Canine & Feline CPR
- Choking Management
- Bleeding & Shock Management
- Assessing Pets Vitals
- Pet First Aid Kits
- Insect Bites & Stings
- Snake Bites
- Heat & Cold Injuries
- Seizures

PetSavers Class is \$100 plus Tax

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The classes include a PetSaver handbook and a wallet size certification upon completion of the class. Also available to Pet Professionals is an 8 1/2 x 11" size Certificate for \$5, both are good for two years.

To sign up for your chosen class Please Call: (575) 523-8853



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4th Annual Charity Run

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Workin' Like a Dog



Dynamic Duo Takes Action for Animal Causes

Sometimes a horrible event can become a compelling catalyst for change: Bruce Wayne's parents are murdered, Peter Parker is bitten by a radioactive spider, a small puppy is broken in a senseless act of rage...

Back in August of 2011, Rick Hahn was a mild-mannered machinist and proud papa to *Nixon*, a mixed terrier. But today Rick has transformed into one of Las Cruces' Super Animal Advocates, fighting cruelty, apathy and ignorance on behalf of the animal world. And it's all because of *Thor*.

Thor—then only eight months old—was being walked by his previous owner when Rick first saw the pup and noticed he was not putting any weight on one hind leg. Rick struck up a conversation with the woman and learned she was not in a financial position to seek veterinary care for *Thor*, whose leg had been injured the week before when her roommate threw the puppy across the room at a metal bed frame, then slammed him to the floor.

Rick was horrified, and convinced the woman that *he* could provide the care *Thor* needed. "She handed me his leash. I took him...to my apartment and made a [same-day] appointment with the vet." When the Police arrived, both Rick and the woman gave statements which resulted in the arrest of 20-year-old Cody Carmack for extreme animal cruelty (a felony in New Mexico). Later that evening, after determining two bones had been broken and the joint completely destroyed, Rick's veterinarian amputated *Thor's* hind leg just below the hip.

Rick's life changed from that day forward. "About a week [later], Channel 7 News shows up at my door and wants to interview me—with *Thor* in his Elizabethan collar and stitches where his leg should have been. I...got a knock on my door a few days later, and it was most of the board members of the Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS)." They invited Rick and *Thor* to be special guests at the upcoming Yappy Hour, where Rick told his story and was honored for his efforts.

It could have ended there. Rick could have just done his good deed, enjoyed a few accolades, and returned to his life with *Thor* and *Nixon*—but that's not what real heroes do.

Rick's life as an animal advocate had officially begun, and in the past two years he has built quite a resume. He is now a member of the Advisory Board for DACHS, where he runs **Thor Corps**—an education program in schools and community

centers teaching children about the humane treatment of animals. Rick and *Thor* visit classrooms and talk to kids about the joys and responsibilities that come with having animals in our lives.

Rick has volunteered for SNAP (Spay/Neuter Action Program) by providing education about controlling the animal population. He helps with fund-raising efforts, passes out pamphlets and talks to pet owners about spaying or neutering their animals.

There is also The Coalition for Pets and People (Zero in Seven) for which Rick has taken a leadership role on the Bulldog Team. The Coalition's goal is to end the shelter's euthanasia of healthy animals in the county within seven years. They're a year-and-a-half into the program now, and making good progress.

In his spare time, Rick heads the photography team at the Animals Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV). They photograph adoptable animals to post on the internet so potential adopters can fall in love. A good picture can make the difference between life and death for a shelter pet. "There was a little black poodle/terrier mix at an off-site adoption event....I took his picture. The following week, I asked what had happened to *Huggley*, [and] was told a woman from Taos saw his picture online and drove all the way down to the ASCMV and adopted him!"

Sometimes you'll see Rick—clipboard in hand—speaking to every person at an animal-related event somewhere in town. His latest cause: the TNR petition, which would legalize a Trap/Neuter/Return Program for feral cats. This would allow the legal trapping of free-roaming cats and provide spay/neuter surgery before releasing them back into to their habitat.

Rick offers this advice about getting involved with animal causes: "The next time you see, or hear...or read something concerning animals that makes you angry—make a phone call, send an email to any one of a dozen animal organizations in the county and ask what you can do to fix the [problem]. If you want to end the killing of healthy animals at the shelter, this is what you can do: spay or neuter your animal! Call SNAP, call ASCMV, call the Coalition and set up an appointment. Get your animal micro-chipped. One in three animals will get lost in its lifetime, 90% of those without ID will never make it back home, many of those are killed in shelters. Love your animals, get them



off the chain and keep them current on vaccinations...You already do this? Great! Now get others to follow your lead!...If you can't adopt or foster, then donate and volunteer!

Rick Hahn's initial act of kindness for *Thor* has become a blessing for our entire animal community. A single event really can change many lives in ways that may not be immediately apparent. Of course, Rick is far from the *only* Super Animal Advocate in the area—we are lucky to be loaded with heroes here in the Mesilla Valley, all making superhuman efforts to make the world a better place for our furry friends. We've featured articles by them and about them in every issue of *Dog'Cruces*. But the best way to get to know these super humans is to join them on their quest.

Cody Carmack's extreme animal cruelty case never went to trial. According to Rick, "after two years and two court continuances, the prosecuting attorney, on his own, elected to drop all charges against Carmack. The case was dismissed without prejudice." And without any justice for *Thor*. Maybe this is that something that will make another person like Rick Hahn angry enough to step up, take action and make some changes.

Charissa Paskowski is a Senior Editor for *Dog'Cruces*.

HALLOWEEN Pet Costume CONTEST

Dress up your pet and we'll take a picture and post it on our Facebook page.

The entry with the most shares/likes, combined with a small independent panel of judges, will determine the winners! Winners will be announced Monday, November 4th.

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3rd Place: \$150 Better Life Pet Foods Gift Certificate



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Dogs in the Workplace

Lightning Computer Systems

Lightning Computer Systems has been serving Las Cruces since 1996—but its two newest office upgrades make it even more fun to visit the store at 1067 N. Valley Drive: two toy Chihuahuas! *Bella*, three, and *Mookie*, one, (*Bella* is tan and *Mookie* is sporting the Technicolor Dream Coat), are sure to greet you as soon as you enter the store.



Liz and Marc De La Torre, owners of Lightning and guardians of *Bella* and *Mookie*, say *Bella* rules the roost, even at home with

their two Boxers. *Bella* even herds the big dogs back to their pens when it's time for her and *Mookie* to go to work. The two tiny assistants accompany Liz to the office every weekday, where they entertain themselves in a wrestling match that looks more like two mini sumo wrestlers—on their hind feet and all!

If you turn back as you leave Lightning Computers, *Bella* will be up on the glass, almost as way of saying “bye” and “please come back and visit us!”

Art Glass

Next time you want a clear view of two happy dogs in the workplace stop by Art Glass at 2393 N. Mesquite Street. This family-owned business specializes in both residential and commercial glass products and has been a part of our community since 1969!

When you walk in the door you will be greeted by owners Amy Carra-Little and Jesse Carrera, whose parents, Art and Jane, started Art Glass more than 40 years ago. And following close behind will be *Bonham*, the large black Lab, and *Cyrus*, the Chihuahua /Dachshund mix. Both dogs have been regulars at the shop since they were pups.

Don't worry about what treats to bring, because neither *Bonham* nor *Cyrus* is very finicky—in fact, I'm told *Bonham*'s favorite food is trash can chicken. *Cyrus* is happiest getting a good rub down while lounging in the lobby chairs—so come by and indulge him when you're in the neighborhood!





Come, Sit... Stay!

The Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces (DOCLC) was founded in 1973, making it the oldest continuously-operating dog obedience organization in the Mesilla Valley. Licensed by the American Kennel Club, the DOCLC is a volunteer, member-driven organization dedicated to the advancement of all breeds of dogs and to the strengthening of the canine-human bond in the greater Las Cruces community.

Although the DOCLC has its roots as an AKC-sanctioned club, it is no longer limited to purebred dogs. The club's obedience classes have always been open to dogs of all breeds, ages and skill levels. Furthermore, when the AKC recently began allowing mixed-breed dogs to compete in events such as Agility and obedience competitions, the DOCLC immediately followed suit, allowing both purebred and mixed-breed dogs to compete.

Training Classes

The DOCLC has been offering dog obedience classes in Las Cruces since its inception. Instructors are all volunteers, and are educated through an apprenticeship program where newer instructors shadow more experienced instructors. DOCLC trainers keep current in the most up-to-date dog training methods, using positive reinforcement and encouraging praise rather than harsh corrections. These classes are designed to help people and their dogs become effective obedience teams and to teach dogs to become better family members. The class sessions include discussion, training practice, one-on-one attention and feedback, more discussion, more practice, and finally homework assignments for people to practice with their dogs before the next class session. The class also includes a textbook: Patricia McConnell's *Family Friendly Dog Training*.

The DOCLC also offers classes in Agility, which is a lively sport that involves sending dogs through a doggie obstacle course. Dogs need to have a solid foundation in obedience before trying

Agility, since all obstacles are performed off-leash. Interested in giving it a try? The DOCLC offers several beginning dog obedience and agility classes during separate six-week sessions throughout the year. See the DOCLC web site for class registration information: www.dogobediencelascruces.org.

Trials

The DOCLC hosts two AKC-sanctioned competitions per year: one in obedience and Rally obedience, and the other in Agility. Rally obedience is another form of competitive obedience where, instead of waiting for a judge to give a handler instructions on what skill to perform next, handlers proceed around a course to various stations labeled with different performance tasks. Both traditional and Rally obedience are events where each dog/handler pair is scored on its performance. Dog/handler teams can earn a qualifying score if they perform all of the tasks at or above a certain standard, and three qualifying legs lead to titles, which allow the teams to advance to a greater level of difficulty. The DOCLC obedience/Rally trial is held in conjunction with a trial hosted by the Rio Grande Obedience Dog Club in El Paso, resulting in a combined 4-day long weekend of obedience and Rally obedience on Martin Luther King Day weekend in January.

The DOCLC Agility competition is typically held the weekend after Thanksgiving, again making for a long weekend of fun and canine companionship. The Agility trial is held at the tee-ball fields near the Meerscheidt Recreation Center. Competitive obedience and Agility take these doggie sports to a whole new level, and people come from all over the southwestern US to participate in the DOCLC events. Dogs are taught to perform very refined skills, such as retrieving dumbbells while going over jumps, performing fancy footwork synchronized with that of their handlers, climbing over an A-frame, and much more. If you would like to come and see what it's all about,



A volunteer receives a polite and sincere "thank you" for helping out at DOCLC's annual Dog Wash at Caliche's.

spectators are always welcome!

Community Service and Education

In addition to offering dog training opportunities, the DOCLC performs community service through participating in dog-related events and supporting local animal welfare organizations. Recent events where you may have seen DOCLC representatives include Strut Your Mutt or local Pet Expos. The DOCLC also holds an annual Dog Wash at Caliche's, where people can stop by and have their dogs bathed... and then reward them with poochie cones afterwards! All proceeds from the Dog Wash are donated to local animal charities. Some of the DOCLC members are also members of Therapaws, the local therapy dog organization in the Las Cruces area. Occasionally the DOCLC also hosts seminar speakers—nationally recognized dog trainers and published authors—who come to Las Cruces to share their insights on modern dog training methods. DOCLC members are committed to sharing their love of dogs with the greater Las Cruces community and to promoting animal welfare and happy pets!

Want to know more?

Please visit the DOCLC web site (address given above) or email doclc@me.com. The DOCLC meets on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm at St. Andrews Episcopal Church (518 Alameda Blvd.). Visitors and well-behaved dogs are always welcome!

Nancy Chanover is a member of and instructor for the DOCLC, and is a member of the Mesilla Valley Search & Rescue K9 team.



Laura Bays is a DOCLC instructor, and also competes in Agility trials with her Boston Terriers.

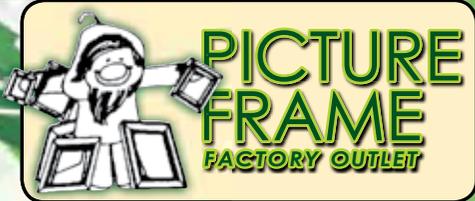
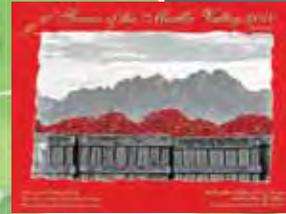


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Traveling With Your Best Friends

by Vic Villalobos

Another Dog-Inspired Renovation to the RV...

A couple of columns ago, I wrote about re-flooring our RV with antibacterial, antimicrobial, waterproof material. The good news is the floors are holding up well and we are staying pretty dry after a swim in the lake. The bad news... I constantly sweep sand out of the RV. But given the choice between sweeping and having the old carpet back, I'll continue to sweep. We have since added waterproof liners to our mattress and sofa, as well.

Next up...sleeping arrangements. At home we let The Girls sleep in bed with us. Throughout the night they get up and down a bit, but for the most part they stay on the bed—a king size bed. Let me paint you a picture before I go any further: I get 16 whole inches of this king size bed to claim as my sovereign territory. At times I do battle with Ruby over my territory and—for the most part—I win. Now let's move into the RV... the dogs don't understand that this bed is a full size bed and not a king—they think they should still get the same amount of room, while my area is reduced to a six-inch wide strip that requires me to brace a leg against the wall to keep from falling out of bed.

Sure, we have choices: 1) I sleep on the sofa, 2) I sleep over the cab, or 3) the dogs sleep on the sofa. For some reason, the dogs don't comprehend that last option, and I'm not fond of the first two. My wife thinks the first two are just fine, though, since she gets to cuddle with The Girls.

A few months back, friends of ours (I'll call them Paul and Liz) got an RV and refurbished it. When we got The Tour of their impressive new vehicle, one of the first things I noticed was the bed—it was originally a full size bed, like ours, but now it spanned the whole width of the RV! Paul is a phenomenal woodworker, and he had expanded the bed platform and added more temper mattress material to the sides. This was the answer to my prayers of a good night's sleep! The land of Vic could be reclaimed again!!

After just a little prodding by me, Paul agreed to help me expand my turf. First, Paul built the new platforms (I did very little at this stage of the project). I then found a temper mattress that was four inches thick, so we could cut it into segments to match the eight-inch temper mattress we currently have. All the pieces came in, and Paul finished the new bed extensions. He then came over to "help" with the install (I did very little during this phase of the project), and we now have a bed—a little larger than a king—that we all fit on!

We took the RV out for a long weekend in Cloudcroft, everybody slept well and, most importantly, I got to sleep in my own bed. Victory is mine!

Now we have a new problem: every time we go out in the RV, we come back wishing we had more room. We got our current "starter" RV to see how we would like it. We altered it to accommodate our lifestyle with dogs, buuuut... it's getting a little cramped on long trips. Our RV is 30 feet long, but it has no "slideouts" (sections of the vehicle that literally slide out to expand the sides and provide a lot more interior space). Slideouts are really, really nice.

Of course, as I say this I get a little twinge of guilt thinking about our other friends (I'll call them Steve and Nancy) who have an even smaller RV with no slideouts. They sleep over the cab and travel with five dogs, one cat, two hamsters and a goldfish... ok they don't have the hamsters or the goldfish, but you get the point—they're doing just fine in a smaller space.

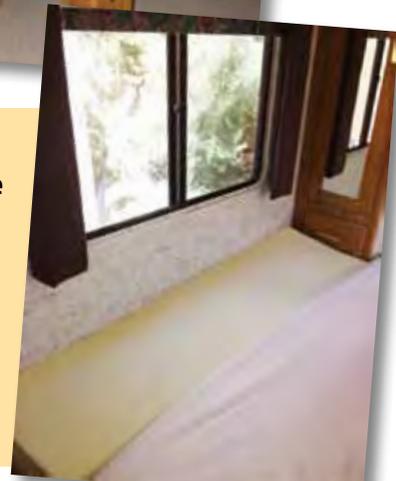
Am I being unreasonable—or spoiled? Should I just be happy with what we have? Or do we take the next step to another RV? Adding to our dilemma...we've come to the conclusion we need a tow vehicle behind us. It's very difficult to set up everything around the RV, put up jack stands and then discover that: "We should go get pie in town." Forty-five minutes later, after taking everything down and retrieving pie, all must be set up again. Having a car and RV would sure make it easier to explore (and get pie) wherever we find ourselves on the road.

I guess what I'm saying is that I would like some advice from more experienced people on this subject. Let me know your thoughts! My next travel tip may be on buying a bigger RV.

Or will it?



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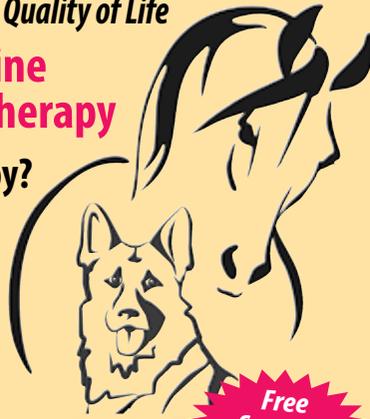
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Penny for your Thoughts

by Jenifer Woods

To Love, Honor and OBEY!

I had forgotten what it's like to have a puppy in the house—a thundering herd of one, cutting a swath of destruction through every room of my home like a tornado made of slobber and pee. Luckily, Penny is young, smart and very trainable. Sadly, I am old, slow and very set in my ways. Someone's gotta give, and—sigh—it's gotta be me.

I don't have the best track record when it comes to well-behaved dogs. Bacchus was, quite possibly, the least-intelligent animal that ever drew breath. It seemed pointless and almost cruel to expect anything of him. Zia was very well-trained when I got her, but for some reason gradually lost the will to obey. And Luna was a whip-smart, street-savvy, Deming stray who relegated me to Beta status the moment I brought her home. "Dog Obedience" has been my personal oxymoron, so I really need to correct my past mistakes and get Penny the structured start in life she deserves....

Off to Puppy Manners Class we go! It's the essential beginner's course offered by the Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces, meeting once a week for six weeks at Hermosa Park. The class focuses on socialization, positive reinforcement and strengthening the bond between human and pup—but really, it's all about training Mom and/or Dad to be the household Alpha and raise well-mannered, obedient kids. Perfect.

The best thing about Puppy Class? Puppies! Most were small-breed pups who were a little wary of Penny's lumbering overtures of friendship, but Kona was about her same size and build, so they became instant BFFs. We kept them apart during class (to avoid having a Tasmanian Devil-like whirling dust cloud of puppy parts to untangle), but afterwards they got to play until we all went home—where Penny would collapse into a post-Puppy-Class coma 'til morning. Thank you, Kona!

The second best things were the treats. A glorious smorgasbord of meaty, cheesy, bite-size nuggets of goodness. All the pups excelled at earning treats. At first, they were rewarded simply for knowing

Penny and Kona demonstrate their magnificent sitting skills for their Puppy Class instructor.



their own names—then, eventually, for sitting, lying down, shaking hands, staying, and coming when called. We were encouraged to give them treats frequently, and to occasionally "jackpot" them with a whole handful. By the end of every class, Penny was just letting treats drop from her mouth to the ground, left behind for the next day's lucky scavengers.

Penny breezed through Puppy Class, and we enrolled in DOCLC's Beginning Obedience Class. Puppy buddies Maya, Nathan and Mikey also made the leap, and we were excited to see familiar furry faces on the first day of school. But the philosophy for this class was different—dogs were not allowed to socialize. Training required more focus from both of us, and learning to ignore distractions is a cornerstone of grown-up doggie behavior.

We still have a ways to go—the learning never stops, after all. But these classes reinforced what I already knew: Penny is a naturally good-natured, intelligent and loving dog who will make sure I learn plenty of new tricks for years to come.

Jenifer Woods is a Senior Editor for DogCrucis.

"Penny Come!" works pretty well when she knows you have a pocketful of hot dogs.



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DogCruces Fall 2013

Walter's Lunchbox

by Walter Dubbin
(as told to Margaret Dubbin)



Join Me For Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner!

Hi there guys & gals! It's me *Walter*—*Walter "Wingman" Dubbin* that is! Besides being a fantabulously handsome chic magnet; I'm a rescue doggy, a Canine Good Citizen, and a food blogger. Yep, that's right! I got my own blog! Pretty cool, huh? With my Mom's assistance, I started my blog called **Walter's Lunchbox** because, well, I LOVE TO EAT, I love to explore new places, and I wanted to share my adventures with others!

Luckily for me, my Mom loves to cook and spoil me rotten. She's been cooking homemade entrees, snacks and treats for dogs for almost twenty years now (WOW! That makes her kinda gettin' up there in the human years!). Consulting with our veterinarian (who specializes in both eastern and western veterinary medicine), Mom's cooked some PAWsome holistic grub for all her fur kids with special dietary needs (from low-protein kidney diets and low-fat pancreatitis diets to my protein-rich, wheat-free diet). Best of all—the delicious treats she makes for me have nothing but the finest human-grade ingredients. Yep, I'm one lucky dawg—I even get fancier meals than Dad does!

So, how did *Walter's Lunchbox* come to be? On days that I get to go to doggy day care, Mom packs my lunch in my cool Spiderman lunchbox. I get her to take a pic of my lunch and share it on my personal Facebook page, where I was also sharing local dog-friendly happenings, local missing/found pets, doggy news and important doggy-related information. Pretty soon, friends were starting to ask me and Mom: "What's in *Walter's Lunchbox* today?" We started getting more requests for recipes and even some orders for cookies and cakes by those peeps who didn't want to bother with the cooking part. Finally, someone said to Mom, "*Walter* eats better than I do, he should have his own food blog."

In addition to eating (my most favorite pastime—after sleeping and before pooping), I also love to travel and enjoy grand adventures with my human peeps (and my little bro *Buliwyf*, or as I prefer to call him, *Butthead*). I've made it my mission to discover and explore dog-friendly places in and around Las Cruces, and share those experiences on my blog, too! So, check out my blog at www.walterslunchbox.com and like me on Facebook—I'll keep you posted on Mom's new recipe ideas to spoil your fur kids, my thoughts on local doggy-friendly restaurants and places to go, and my all my travel adventures!

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

Here's a couple recipes you can find on my blog; REMEMBER to ALWAYS consult with your pet's veterinarian regarding ingredients, serving sizes, & special dietary requirements prior to changing your pet's diet.

Wheat Free Chicken & Cheddar Cookies

- 2 C Brown Rice Flour
- 1 C Ground Flax Seed Meal
- 1 C Chicken (cooked & finely diced; you can also substitute browned ground turkey or chicken)
- ½ C shredded cheddar cheese (or for a lower fat option use cottage cheese drained of any excess liquid)
- 1 egg • 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 Tbsp. fresh parsley (finely chopped)

Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine flour and flaxseed meal in large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl mix together oil, egg, & parsley. Mix thoroughly the wet ingredients w/ the dry. Fold in the chicken and cheese. Knead thoroughly until all ingredients are well distributed and the dough has a nice consistency. Divide dough in half. Between 2 sheets of parchment paper, roll dough flat to ¼ inch thick and cut shapes w/ cookie cutter. Place cut shapes onto lined cookie sheets and bake for 20 – 45 minutes or until firm depending on the size of the cookies. Turn off the oven, but leave cookies in the oven until they are cooled completely. This allows the dry air in the oven to help them get good and crunchy!



Pumpkin & Apple Oatmeal Cake

Wet Ingredients:

- 2 C Water • ¼ C Pumpkin Puree (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 1/8 tsp Vanilla • 1 Egg • 2 Tbs Honey

Dry Ingredients:

- 2 C Brown Rice Flour • 1 C Rolled Oats
- 1 C All Natural Dried Apples (diced)
- ½ Tbs Baking Powder

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix with hand mixer all wet ingredients. Add in dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Pour batter into a greased cake pan. Pop it in the oven for approx. 45 minutes (or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean). Place on wire rack to cool. Turn out cooled cake onto a cake board and decorate that puppy up with a dog friendly cream cheese frosting. Makes 1 small 9" bone-shaped cake, double or triple recipe for larger or multiple cakes.





Kat's Korner by Kat Lacy

Cat Obedience: Not an Impossible Dream!

"I had been told that the training procedure with cats was difficult. It's not. Mine had me trained in two days." - Bill Dana

We all love our feline friends, but sometimes they can be a bit of a hassle. Cat training is often thought of as difficult—if not impossible—but you can train your cats to stop their annoying or destructive habits with a little creativity and a lot of patience. You can even teach them to do cute things like sit, heel, or even use the toilet as a litter box! Just remember: training—especially with felines—is a matter of repetition and consistency.

If your cat scratches up your furniture, drape a throw of springy fabric or netting over the damaged area. This will keep kitty from seeing her old handiwork and wanting to scratch there again. And the springy fabric will catch in her claws and deter her from scratching that area. Cats do *need* to scratch to remove worn sheaths from their nails, so be sure to provide safe outlets to do so—tall cat trees throughout the house or trees the height of your couch in front of old scratching-territory will keep your cat from ruining your furniture.

Because cats often act like children, the same battle-cry applies to both: NEVER GIVE IN. If your cat wakes you up earlier and earlier every morning for breakfast, or if she yowls uncontrollably before dinner, ignore her until meal time—eventually she will realize that being obnoxious doesn't work. Giving in *even once* will reinforce the rude behavior.

It's important to balance both positive and negative reinforcement. Cats have long memories—our cat *Bubbles* saw a snake *ten years ago* and will still jump at hoses or twigs to this day—so don't frighten your cat unless she is in the act of doing something wrong. Never hit, throw, or physically punish your cat, and especially do not punish her *after* the fact—shaking your cat over a pile of urine or vomit and yelling “bad kitty” will not help. She is more likely to associate the big, scary, angry sounds with *being held* than with peeing on the floor.

If you do need to punish your cat, you must catch her in the offending act and scare her to all hell. Water bottles are great for this, and if you haven't honed your python-hissing skills (see previous articles), try clapping or stomping your feet. If you have a bean bag or a rattler, you can throw that near your cat so all the big, scary, angry sounds happen in conjunction. If the timing is right, your cat will learn very quickly what is off-limits.

But training shouldn't be limited to stopping bad behavior—try teaching kitty something fun, like learning to heel! Tie a feather toy or piece of string to your ankle while encouraging your cat to chase it, and reward her with a treat or attention every four to six feet you travel. As your cat becomes used to following you around, gradually reduce the length of the toy until it dangles just behind your ankles, and then not at all. Feed your kitty treats as she follows, and eventually, you won't even need them! When you're confident your cat will follow you on command, you can try taking her outside for walks!

Now for the ultimate: kitty potty training! Again, gradual changes over a period of time is key, and remember: **never move on to the next step until your kitty is completely comfortable with the last**—otherwise you run the risk of a bathroom meltdown, and nobody wants that.

First, place kitty's litter box beside the toilet, and let her get used to its new location. Gradually elevate the litter box until it is the same height as the toilet. Then—again, gradually—move the litter box to the side until it is on top of the toilet seat (one inch a day is a good speed to make sure your cat hardly notices the transition). Next, get a training box; these are litter boxes that look like toilet seats. They are made to sit just inside the toilet, and they have interchangeable bottoms so you can gradually introduce your cat to the idea of doing her business into a larger and larger hole (with scary water at the bottom).

Eventually, kitty will not need the training box at all, though you can sprinkle flushable litter into the toilet for a visual cue—just in case. By the way... don't teach your cat how to flush! It might seem like a good idea at the time, but kitty may decide it's all sorts of fun and start gleefully wasting water. The training process may seem like a lot of work, but flushing a few times a day is a nice alternative to scooping litter—and it eliminates the smell!

Many cats become destructive or obnoxious because they don't get enough attention. The best way to keep kitty calm is to play with her at least fifteen minutes a day; feather toys or long toys with strings are great to help her stay active—and too tired to cause trouble. Cats who get a lot of attention from their owners are less destructive, healthier and happier. Shower your cat with love and she'll reward your good behavior with some of her own!

Article by Shannon Ellison with Kat Lacy, owner of Better Life Pet Foods.

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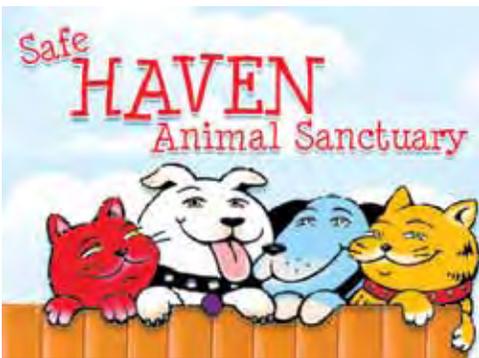
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Volunteering is good for the soul, and the Las Cruces Animal Community includes many fine organizations that always need good people to join their ranks. Check out the groups below to see which one(s) would be the best fit for you!

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www.actionprogramsforanimals.org

Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV)

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575-382-0018
email: pdeal@las-cruces.org
or visit www.ascmv.org

Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS)

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575-647-4808
www.Donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org

Feral Cat Management Program (fCaMP)

P.O. Box 3912,
Las Cruces, NM 88003
575-639-3036
email: fcamp@nmsu.edu
www.nmsu.edu/~fcamp

Humane Society of Southern NM (HSSNM)

PO Box 13826
Las Cruces, NM 88013
575-523-8020
www.hssnm.org

Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition

PO Box 11345
Las Cruces, NM 88013
575-312-1741
www.lcdogpark.com

PetSmart/HSSNM Cat Adoption Center

Contact Evelyn at 575-650-6746
EvelynRanma52@aol.com

Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary (SHAS)

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www.snapnewmexico.org

Therapaws

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www.therapydogs.com (parent organization)

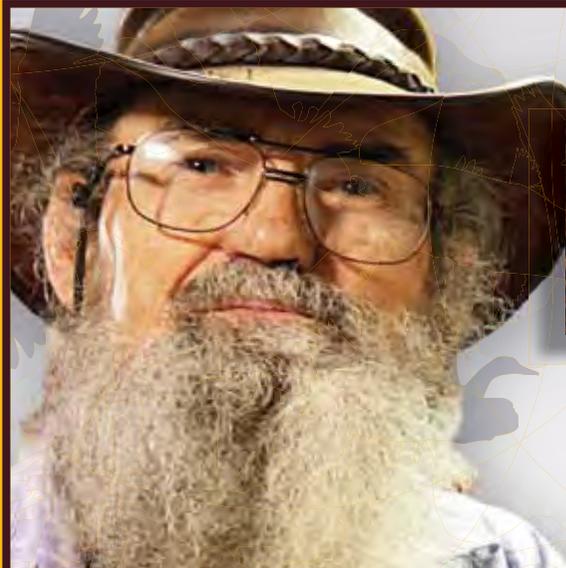
If your organization has volunteer opportunities available and would like to be included in our next issue, please email us at info@dogcruces.com

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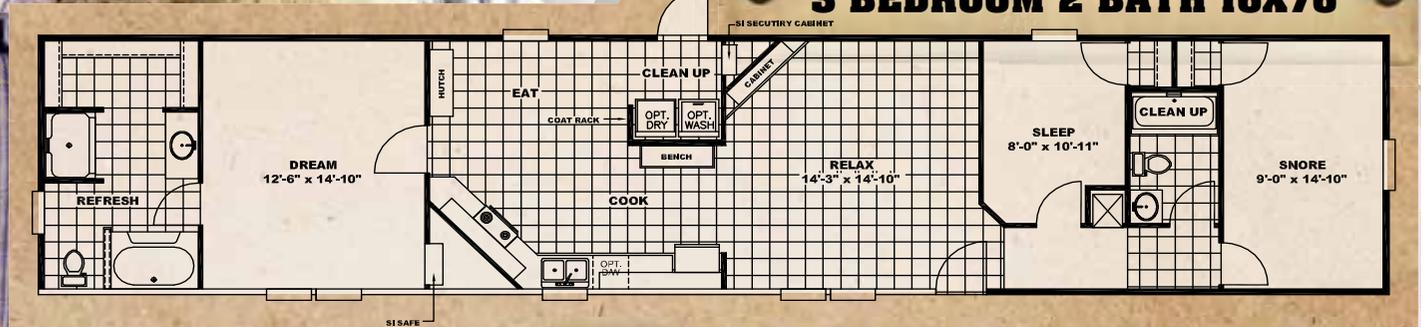
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