

Fall 2012

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Dog 'n' Cruces

Information for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!



To the Rescue! Page 15

Animal Rescue Groups aren't technically superheroes, but they do save a lot of good dogs from bad situations.

A Simple Fix Page 29

The most important action you can take to save furry little lives.

Striking Twice Page 19

NMSU's new tee-retrieving Wonder Dog brings a familiar face to the gridiron tradition.

Page 21 **ASCMV**

Growing to meet the needs of the Mesilla Valley.

Page 12 **Reckless Abandonment**

Jess Williams sheds light on a big problem in Doña Ana County.

PLUS...Rabies realities from Dr. Pirtle...Blue wins a victory in Elephant Butte...Your doggie photos...and more!



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The Golden Rule...My Golden's Rule!

This issue of *DogCruces* shines a spotlight on animal rescue groups (breed-specific and otherwise) that take on the never-ending job of helping abandoned, abused and neglected animals find fresh starts in loving new homes. Of course, this made me think a lot about my own dogs, and just how lucky I've been to have them in my life.

Of the six—wait, seven—dogs we've had, three have been from (very reputable) breeders, and the other four have come to us under different circumstances....

Our first love was *Zimba*, who won our hearts at the Dumb Friends League in Denver and forever ruined us for any breed other than Golden Retrievers—proving “once you go Gold, it never gets old!” It was with *Zimba* that we began our adventures in Search & Rescue.

Coda and *Zoe*, our next two girls, came from a local breeder, and both were SAR dogs. *Zoe*, in particular, had an amazing gift! But all three of our first dogs left us way too soon with different medical conditions—a reminder that pure-bred dogs have wonderful, consistent breed characteristics, but may also be more susceptible to certain weaknesses.

We got *Ruby* from a breeder before *Coda* passed away, and she stepped right into her role as a great SAR dog. We then turned to the internet in search of another female Golden, and came across a dog who had been picked up running the streets of Clovis, and was at the local shelter. As fate would have it, we had a SAR mission nearby in Roswell that weekend,

so I took a detour on the way home and picked up our newest little girl. Driving away from the shelter with this sweet little dog's head on my lap, I looked up at the clear night sky and took *Star* home to meet my wife and *Ruby*.

Our family was set—my wife, me, two great dogs and a cat (long story). We had no more room for another animal. Or so we thought....

Lucy's original mom had terminal cancer and was desperate to find a good home for her precious girl. We initially referred her to a Golden Rescue group, but, yes, *Lucy* is now a much-loved member of our clan. (In fact, *Lucy* was featured in our Winter 2011 cover story, “*On the Town with Fido.*”) There's always more room in the heart for another dog!

And the seventh dog? Well, the Mesilla Valley Search & Rescue team went to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and we came home with a guest—*Buddy*. He swam up to us, covered in grime and oil, and once we cleaned him up he looked like a mini Golden mix. We tried to locate a shelter on our way home, but it was chaos at the time, so *Buddy* came to *Cruces*. He stayed with us for seven months as we posted his picture on petfinder.com and scoured the Katrina pet sites for his owner. Miraculously, we did eventually find each other, and we delivered our little buddy back to his family. Let's just say tears were shed.

I wish every pet story was a good story; sadly, many are not. But, thanks to rescue groups like those we feature in this issue's cover story, more and more animals that have a horrible start in

life can still have a happy ending. Write your own story of rescued love with their help!

You probably noticed we did something a little funky for the cover this time. We took photos that you've been sending since last summer and made a photomosaic (of my *Lucy*). Pretty cool, huh? Grab a magnifying glass and see if your pet made the cover of *DogCruces* this quarter!

One last thing—we recently received a truly heartwarming letter from the TheraPaws Dogs. They wanted to thank *DogCruces* for the story we ran in our last issue about their efforts to outfit all our local firehouses with pet oxygen masks. I'm happy to report they have met their goal. Of course, all thanks go to you, our readers, for making it happen, and especially to Debbie Seavey and all the TheraPaws teams for spearheading the effort. It's amazing what we can do when we come together as a community!

Vic Villalobos

Mayor of DogCruces

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Las Cruces, NM 88005

or email us at:
Vic@DogCruces.com

www. **DogCruces.com** 

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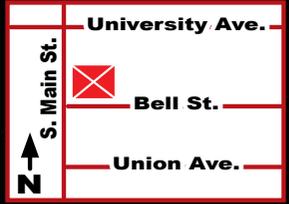


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For a complete calendar of events, visit **DogCruces.com**
List is updated as events are announced

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, September 26
Dona Ana County Humane Society, Inc.
Annual membership meeting, Wednesday, Sept. 26th at 6 p.m., SNAP/DACHS office, 2405 W. Picacho, Ste. 103. Call (575) 647-4808 for more information.

Sept. 28, 2012
World Rabies Day.
Check DogCruces.com for any local events to celebrate World Rabies Day

Saturday, September 29
3rd Annual Charity Run Cruisin For Critters. Sign-in 10am-12noon at Barnett's Harley Davidson. Door Prizes, Raffle, Silent Auction, Live Music by Triple Jack. After Party at The Blue Moon Bar from 3pm 6pm (Riders under 21 must be accompanied by parent to enter patio area at the Blue Moon after party). More info call 575 621-4942. Benefitting ACTion Programs for Animals.

Last full week in September.
Deaf Pet Awareness Week by Petfinder.com. Petfinder celebrates Deaf Awareness Week by showcasing the many homeless pets listed on Petfinder who are available, adoptable, and deaf.

OCTOBER
National Pet Wellness Month.
Adopt-A-Dog Month
Encouraging people to adopt a shelter dog and experience the joy of owning a forever friend.



October 6
Pits for Peace Walk
Celebrating Pit Bull Awareness Month and the loving peaceful nature of all Dogs Walk. Walk is Saturday, October 6th from 10am-1pm at Pioneer Park, \$5 walk entry fee benefits APA's Second Chance Dogs Fund. All well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome! Enjoy food, vendors, prizes, games, raffles.

October 10
National Pet Obesity Awareness Day

Oct. 16
National Feral Cat Day
Help the pet overpopulation by having your cat and dog spayed/neutered

Wednesday, October 17
Yappy Hour: from 6-8 p.m. at St. Clair Winery & Bistro 1720 Avenida de Mesilla with a Halloween Costume Contest. Enjoy Yappy Hour food and drink specials, door prizes, raffle, contests and more! Pooches receive free dog treats and all the attention they can handle. \$5 donation at the door. Hosted by the Spay/Neuter Action Program and DACHS

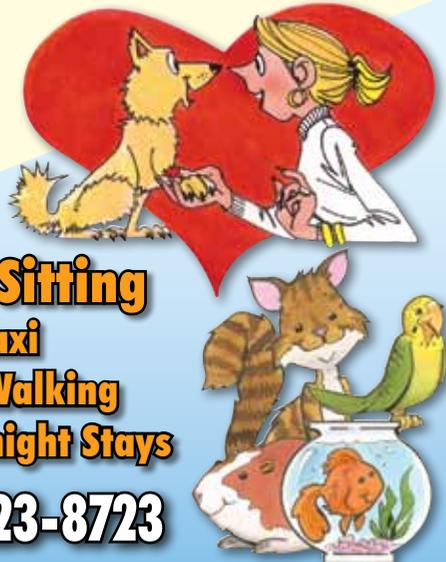


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Dates

Saturday, October 20 *Pit Bull Awareness Day*

Pet Expo (October 20)

Sponsored by New Heights Faith Community October 20, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Young Park in Las Cruces. There will be contests-Best Pet Costume, Owner/Pet Lookalike, and Largest/Smallest Pet--live music, and much, much more. Even if you don't have a pet, please come and have fun with us! Rev. Joe Whitley will conduct blessings of pets. For information contact Melinda, whitleyms@gmail.com, 575-523-0470. New Heights Faith Community is a dynamic, inclusive Christian community of the United Methodist Church.

Saturday & Sunday, October 20 & 21 *Fall Pet Cemetery Cleanup*

8 a.m. until late afternoon; volunteers can choose how long they wish to work. Bring hand tools. Lunch, snacks and drinks provided. Alicia Melgaard Memorial Pet Cemetery, take Weisner Road exit of Hwy. 70 East; turn right at bottom of exit, cemetery is short distance on the left. Call 575-640-0634 for more information.

Saturday October 27

Labyrinth Walk for APA Pet Food Bank at Young Park, Saturday, October 27th, 10am-3pm. Hosted by Las Cruces Labyrinth Walkers. There will be adoptable dogs and cats, animal information booths, donations of cat/dog food will be place on Labyrinth. Dona Ana Pets Alive.

Oct. 28, 2012

Plush Animal Lovers Day

A day that most dogs will be happy to celebrate...as they unstuff them

October 29

National Cat Day!

Not to be confused with Plush Animal Lovers Day.

NOVEMBER

Adopt a Senior Dog Month

National Senior Pet Month

Pet Cancer Awareness Month



DECEMBER **Dec. 2, 2012**

National Mutt Day.

This special event by the Animal Miracle Foundation celebrates the mixed breed dogs in shelters across the US and hopes to place 10,000 dogs! National Mutt Day was created to raise awareness of the plight of mixed breed dogs in shelters around the nation and to educate the public about the sea of mixed breed dogs that desperately await new homes. Mixed breed dogs tend to be healthier, better behaved, they live longer and are just as able to perform the duties of pure bred dogs - such as bomb and drug sniffing, search and rescue and guiding the blind.

December 6

3rd Annual Critter Christmas Gala

at Las Cruces Convention Center from 6pm-9pm on Thursday December 6. Music, dancing, no-host bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres, live and silent auction, live entertainment that includes a popular vote, best dressed dog contest and more. Proceeds benefit DACHS, SNAP and ASCMV for info call 575-647-4808.



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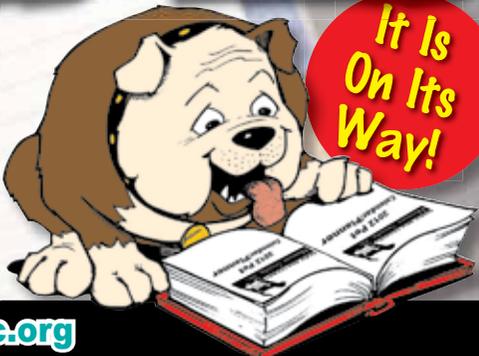
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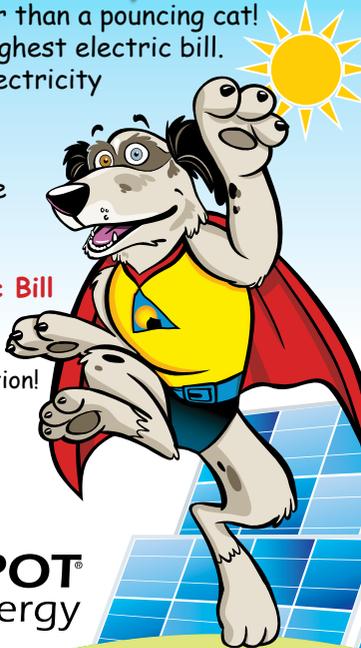
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Giana vom Fruhlingsbach, affectionately known as "Annie," died August 17, 2012. Annie was born November 17, 2001 in Claton, CA. to Tarzan V. Tiekerhook and Cora vom Haus Drexel. In 2002 she moved to San Miguel, NM. where she began training in obedience, agility and Schutzhund. In her agility training (North American Dog Agility Council) she received her Novice Chances, Novice Jumpers, Novice Agility, Novice Tunnelers, Novice Touch and Go, and Open Tunnelers. She was working Elite Tunnelers when she took time off to have puppies.

In 2004, Annie was preparing to return to training when she was diagnosed with Pannus (a condition German Shepherds are prone to that leads to blindness), which made competing at such high levels very difficult. She then came to live with Dr. Carver, where she started her new job of public relations and personal protection, and she excelled in both.

When Annie was young, she loved tug-of-war. She was the first puppy of her litter on the tug, and the last one to let go. At 4 weeks, she was the first puppy to retrieve the tennis ball and return it. She retained these traits all of her life. Dr. Carver recalls several times while she was holding a clinic, Annie would see people playing soccer or basketball and would join in and play. Of course, all the balls "belonged" to her. Her training also helped her beg for anything she wanted. She would sit, in a very ladylike "sit," and watch with her big eyes until you gave her what she wished.

Annie was an ambassador for her breed and her training. She made friends everywhere she went. She is survived by her children; Zacchaeus (aka Pocket), Zev, Zane, Zephyr and Zapata.



Annie was an exceptional friend and will be truly missed by everyone who met her.

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PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM

The Reality of Rabies

As I drove home one night recently, I glimpsed a quick view of one of my favorite wild animals as it scurried through my neighborhood. The quick gait, pointed ears, and long, bushy tail gave it away as a beautiful grey fox. Nocturnal by nature and secretive during the day, many of you may not realize that our city is full of these small canids. In addition, many other wildlife species are plentiful within our city limits. Coyotes, raccoons, bats, and skunks are also present in great numbers, yet their nocturnal habits serve to disguise their prevalence. While I get a thrill out of seeing these beautiful and adaptive creatures living amidst the sprawl of our city, one important factor must be kept in mind about their presence: wildlife serves as a constant reservoir — and therefore a permanent risk — for rabies virus, not only to our pets but also to humans.

Rabies virus is a fatal neurological virus primarily transmitted in the saliva of infected animals. It is capable of infecting *all* mammals, including humans. Worldwide, rabies virus still accounts for an estimated 55,000 human deaths every year. The rarity of human cases of this deadly virus in the United States is a direct testament to the effectiveness of a well-vaccinated domestic animal population. Most human rabies cases are a result of exposure to a domestic animal, not to wildlife. Just this year a case of rabies in a dog in Eddy County, NM resulted in 26 people having to be treated for possible exposure to the virus. Unfortunately, 40 dogs and numerous other domestic animals had to be euthanized due to that specific outbreak. All of this could have been prevented with proper vaccination of the domestic animals involved.

A well-vaccinated domestic animal population makes an effective barrier to minimize exposure of humans to the virus. One rabid fox behaving in an abnormal manner might expose a single person. One rabid dog usually results in exposure of numerous humans and domestic animals. This can lead to persons undergoing the fear and expense of post-exposure prophylaxis to rabies. Thankfully, prompt post-exposure prophylaxis provides an effective treatment against the virus. However, if not treated early after exposure, rabies is a universally fatal infection. This is the reason for strict laws regarding the rabies immunization of our pets, the reporting and handling of dog/cat bites in humans, and what can seem like harsh laws regarding the

handling of unvaccinated domestic animals after possible exposure to rabies virus.

Rabies virus has historically been most prevalent in skunks and bats in the state of New Mexico. In recent years, a strain of the virus that is highly adapted to foxes has been steadily invading from Arizona into the southwestern part of our state. Recently, a dog in the Mule Creek area became infected with the virus after exposure to a rabid fox. Several infected foxes have been found in the Silver City area, and now fox rabies has been found in wildlife in the Black Range south of Truth or Consequences. It seems logical to assume the outbreak will soon reach the wildlife

of the Mesilla Valley, if it is not already here. Adapted strains of rabies virus such as skunk or fox variants are still capable of infecting and killing other wildlife or domestic animal species. The prevalence of large numbers of foxes in our area simply serves as a more efficient reservoir for the virus to spread.

So what can be done to reduce the risk of rabies for ourselves and our pets? Following are some key points to follow and keep in mind....

Make sure all dogs, cats, horses, and other valuable livestock are vaccinated in accordance with state laws. New Mexico law requires all dogs and cats to be immunized against rabies at three months of age. A booster vaccination must be given within one year, and every three years thereafter (as long as a licensed 3-year rabies vaccine has been used). Contact your veterinarian for more information on the proper rabies vaccination for your pet.

Prevent contact of domestic animals with wildlife species by keeping pets confined on leashes or in fenced yards.

Avoid contact with stray or wild animals. Stay away from wildlife that appears sick, suspiciously friendly, or dead.

Any bites or scratches from stray or wild animals should immediately be washed with soap and water, and reported immediately to your physician, an animal control officer, or the public health department.

For more information on rabies, check the New Mexico Department of Public Health website at nmhealth.org/ERD/HealthData/rabies.shtml.

Worldwide, rabies virus still accounts for an estimated 55,000 human deaths every year.

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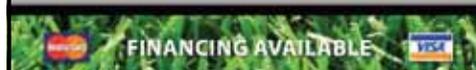
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ABANDONMENT ISSUES



Getting a pet is a big responsibility, but some people don't think about that in advance. The usual victim of a rash decision to adopt an animal is – this should come as no surprise – the animal. Some people surrender healthy but unwanted animals to the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley in hopes they'll be adopted. In some cases, owners simply open the gate and let Fido loose with no intention of trying to bring him back home. In other cases, animals are dumped in the desert to die or driven to "nice neighborhoods" in the belief that "someone will surely take it in."

Let's call it what it is: Abandonment. And it's a huge issue across Doña Ana County.

Let's take each of the situations described above and walk it through to the most probable outcome.

An animal – or a litter – dumped off at the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley stands slim odds of survival. Despite the heroic work done there on a daily basis, the number of healthy animals relentlessly coming in exceeds the number of animals that are successfully returned to the owners or adopted out to new homes. When the number coming in greatly exceeds the number going out, and there is finite space to hold the animals, painful decisions have to be made about who lives and who dies. These decisions have to be made almost every day. By people who love animals.

When a person gives up on a pet and opens the gate, untold dangers lurk. The best probable outcome is that someone else – someone with a heart – finds the animal and cares for it. But most people are decent enough to try to find the owner, and if they're successful in doing so, the odds are that the gate will still be open. A second possibility is that Animal

Control will pick up the animal and take it to the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley, and we already know the animal's chances there. A third possibility is that the animal will run into traffic and be seriously injured or killed. A fourth possibility is that the animal will find others in a feral pack that will either accept it as a new member or kill and eat it because it's weak.

When an animal is dumped in the desert, it becomes instant prey for coyotes, hawks, eagles and other natural predators. And that may be the best thing going for it, because the alternative is a long, lingering death brought on by starvation, dehydration, exposure to extreme heat or cold, or a combination of all of the above. The desert is a harsh environment that a domestic animal cannot be expected

to successfully navigate.

When you abandon a companion animal in a nice neighborhood in the hopes it will be taken in by some kind-hearted stranger, you're really only compounding the possibility of its getting killed in traffic or suffering any of the possible fates of the animal whose gate was left open. The compounding results from the animal's absolute unfamiliarity with the surroundings.

If you have an animal that you can no longer care for, please take the time to find a new home where it will be cared for and treated humanely. If you know of a family who complains about their pet, please help them find a home for it. If you absolutely have to remove an animal from your home, do it in a humane

and responsible way that doesn't invite disaster for an innocent animal that you once thought you could love.

Have a heart. It matters.

*Jess Williams is president of the Doña Ana County Humane Society and serves on the board of directors of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley. His son threatens that if he takes in one more animal, the producers of **Hoarders** will be notified.*

**An animal – or a litter –
dumped off at the
Animal Services Center
of the Mesilla Valley
stands slim odds
of survival.**

Rest in Peace, Reyna

You may have seen Reyna's story on KFOX news in mid-July. She was abandoned at the Sunland Park Landfill and had been living there an estimated two years before being rescued by Anna Juarez and other volunteers at Action Programs for Animals (APA) here in Las Cruces. Reyna was extremely malnourished, and could barely stand. She had managed to keep Frances, her one surviving pup, alive and safe—but her efforts to do so had taken all her strength. The APA did find a new home for Reyna and Frances, but once her pup was finally well-situated, Reyna passed away, a month after being rescued.





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

Saving Lives Is A **SNAP**

Spay Neuter Action Program

Thousands of animals are needlessly put to death in Doña Ana County every year! You can help us **FIX** this community problem by spaying or neutering your pets!

Spay/Neuter your pets! If you need financial help call SNAP! SNAP spayed/neutered **1,133 cats and dogs** in 2011.

Volunteer with SNAP! Help with special events, in our office or even from your home!

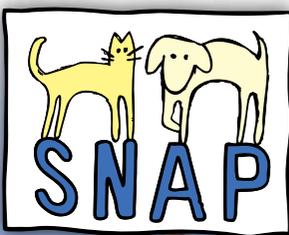
We can do **MORE** but **NEED YOUR HELP** with a contribution of \$5, \$10, \$15 or any amount would help us spay/neuter more in 2012!

To learn more call:

575-524-9265

or check us out online at:

www.snapnewmexico.org





Guapo humors Rosebud into believing she stands a chance at tug-o-war.

Dr. Jana Williams and daughter Cate shower Guapo with love, while son Barrow enjoys a quiet moment with Rosebud.



The Williams clan: Richard, Caroline, 11, Rosebud, 1, Cate, 7, Jana, Barrow, 10, and Guapo, 4.

Guuuuuuuapo!
C'mon boy, over here!
Rooooosebuuuud!
Rosie, Rosie, Rosie!
Let's go jump on the trampoline!

In a flurry of fur and giggles, the two younger Williams children, Barrow and Cate, join their eager canine playmates in the family's child-and-dog-friendly trampoline pit. It's impossible to say who's having more fun, but one thing seems certain—these gentle yet playful Golden Retrievers are the perfect fit for the high-energy, high-volume whirlwind of childhood activity in the Williams' back yard.

They're also both "rescue dogs," who joined the family through the efforts of Golden Retriever Rescue of El Paso (GRREP).

"Our daughter Caroline asked for a puppy for Christmas four years ago," explained dad Richard, a Las Cruces attorney, "so we started to research which breeds were best with children. I met Vic (Villalobos, future Mayor of Dog' Cruces and proud Golden daddy) at a Rotary event, and he had me convinced by the end of the meeting that a Golden was the way to go."

"Around the same time," said mom Jana, a pediatrician, "I met Connie Jimenez, the director of the Golden Rescue of El Paso. It just seemed like everything came together perfectly to point us toward a Golden Retriever."

Guapo, the Williams' male dog, is a gentle giant whose mother was rescued from a barn while pregnant with a litter at the time. All seven or eight pups were placed by GRREP into good homes, with *Guapo* finding his way to the Williams household in time to fulfill Caroline's Christmas wish.



Most rescue groups take great pride in matching pets and people based on compatibility. GRREP requires potential adopters to fill out an application and submit to a screening process before they are matched with an animal. Volunteers conduct interviews to get an idea of a candidate's lifestyle and activity level, then make a home visit to check out the environment first-hand. Of course, existing canine and feline household members are taken into consideration. If the

screening process and visit go well, GRREP will set up a "meet-n-greet" with several rescued Golden Retrievers they determine to be good potential matches.

"I like that the screening process was thorough,"

said Richard Williams. "They want to make sure the dogs and families are right for each other. And because we had already adopted *Guapo*, we didn't have to go through the process again when we were ready for a second dog."

The Williams' weren't ready to adopt a second dog right away, but when they felt they were getting close, they served as foster parents for two dogs. The first, a male Mastiff named *Duke*,

butted heads with *Guapo*, so could not become a permanent part of a family with young children. The second, *Sabio*, another male Golden from GRREP, also just didn't quite click with *Guapo*. "There was no pressure from the Golden Rescue to keep *Sabio*," Richard explained. "They understand not every dog is a good fit for every family, and we were able to return him to GRREP so they could find another home for him. Fostering is a great way to test whether a dog will be a good addition to your family."

At last, *Rosebud*, a petite female Golden, completed the Williams family three years after they adopted *Guapo*. *Rosie* had been loved and cared for, but her owner had accepted a job in New York and asked GRREP to find new homes for her and her brother. GRREP and other rescue organizations receive many of their dogs under similar circumstances, especially from military personnel who are to be redeployed.

Rosebud and *Guapo* Williams hit it off right away, and have been a harmonious, furry pair for almost a year. A truly Golden happy ending!

Not so long ago, if you wanted a Golden Retriever or other specific breed of dog, you would either have to get lucky at your local shelter, or contact

"Fostering is a great way to test whether a dog will be a good addition to your family."

Like the fabled "Twilight Bark" from Disney's 101 Dalmatians, animal rescue organizations answer the call when neglected, abandoned or abused dogs plead...

RESCUE ME!

Rescue organizations are not Animal Control, so they cannot remove at-risk pets from bad situations.

"Oftentimes, we are called when folks report neighbors who are not caring properly for a dog," says Dawn Post, President of Great Dane Rescue of El Paso, "and we will attempt to make contact with the owners and offer help, whether it's food, education, or the opportunity to release their dog into our program."

a (hopefully) reputable breeder to reserve your puppy. Unfortunately, due to mass over-breeding, more and more purebred dogs are being abandoned or surrendered to shelters every day.

In response to this crisis, rescue organizations have been gaining popularity and momentum over the past decade. Because of the heroic and expanding efforts of dedicated networks of dog lovers across the country, many beautiful animals that would have been killed in traditional shelters have instead been rescued, fostered and adopted by loving families and individuals who want a specific breed of dog. We are fortunate to have many such organizations—and many such tireless, wonderful people—in our area.

Golden Retriever Rescue of El Paso is a breed-specific, non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing stray, abandoned or surrendered Golden Retrievers. They provide medical care, social and medical rehabilitation, and nurturing, with the ultimate goal of adopting as many dogs as possible into loving, forever homes, like the Williams'. GRREP receives rescued dogs from local and not-so-local shelters, strays found by people, dogs surrendered by their owners or after their owner's death, other rescue organizations, or a dozen other ways they find their way to the rescue. Last year they placed about a hundred Golden Retrievers and Labradors into permanent homes.

"We work with Golden Retrievers because we love the breed," says GRREP director Connie Jimenez. "The people in our organization are Golden Retrievers through-and-through, and we believe this gentle, outgoing breed makes the world a better place." Connie's dog *Goldie*, who passed away from cancer in 2008, was the inspiration for the founding of GRREP. "Her legacy and spirit live on in every Golden we rescue."

"Fostering plays a *huge* role in our organization," writes Connie, "because we do not own a shelter, and every dog that comes into our organization is placed in a temporary foster home. We're always looking for good foster/permanent homes, so we have a **Foster-to-Adopt** program that allows people to foster a Golden or Lab for two weeks. The foster parents provide love, food, play time and basic housetraining, and we pay the Vet bills." At the end of two weeks, if the foster parents decide *not* to keep their foster dog, GRREP will welcome the dog back and try again until it is successfully re-homed. If the match works, GRREP simply completes an adoption

Many Giant Breeds arrive at Great Dane Rescue of El Paso because people don't realize that...

agreement and rejoices that the lucky dog has a new forever home.

Great Dane Rescue of El Paso is an all-volunteer, breed-specific and Giant Breed, non-profit rescue organization. Their mission is to provide medical care, love, training and permanent placement for abandoned, abused, neglected and owner-surrendered Great Danes and other Giant Breed dogs. They house some dogs at their shelter, while others enjoy the comfort of temporary foster homes until they are adopted. They rescue an average of 200 dogs a year from high-kill shelters throughout New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Texas.

Great Danes and other Giant Breeds are too large for most traditional shelters to accommodate for any length of time ("...they eat and poop exaggerated amounts!"), so it's crucial to get them out as quickly as possible. However, it takes a special kind of person to want to adopt a dog the size of a human being, so the process of matching Danes

to good homes is often a long one. Likewise, it's not always easy to place any very large dog in a foster home unless the household has had prior experience with Giant Breed dogs. This is one

of the reasons for having specific-breed rescue organizations—each breed has its own special needs, advantages and challenges, and the human networks that are built and strengthened over time are worth a Great Dane's weight in gold!

According to Dawn Post, President of Great Dane Rescue of El Paso, "We have several very *awesome* foster homes, but not many of these end up adopting the dogs they foster, because they already have several Giants of their own." Like the Golden Rescue, the Great Dane Rescue has a program to allow adoption applicants to take a dog home on a trial basis to make sure it is truly a good match for their household.

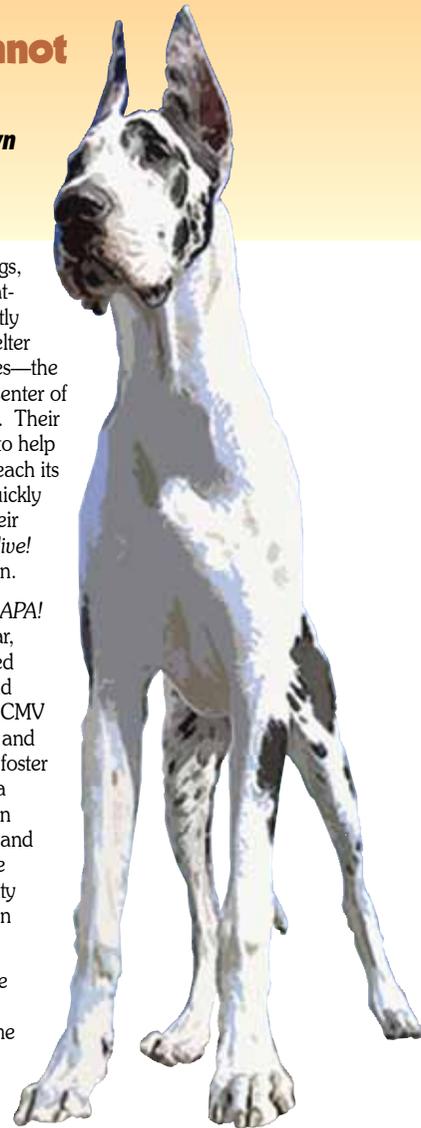
Action Program for Animals (APA) differs from the first two rescue organizations in a few ways: they do not focus on specific breeds, they work with

cats as well as dogs, and they rescue at-risk animals directly from our own shelter here in Las Cruces—the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley. Their stated mission is to help our community reach its No-Kill goal as quickly as possible via their *Doña Ana Pets Alive!* (DAPA!) campaign.

Since founding DAPA! in May of this year, the APA has pulled almost 70 cats and dogs from the ASCMV municipal shelter and placed them into foster homes. Then, via aggressive adoption programs off-site and on-line, they have placed the majority of these animals in forever homes.

"We basically take what the shelter gives us at the time we're ready for our next group of rescues," explains Michel Meunier, President/Director of APA, "and that can include all ages, sizes and conditions of animals."

Once the at-risk animals have been rescued from the shelter, they're immediately placed in special quarantine foster care for 7-14 days. After being cleared by the Vet, they are moved to regular foster homes on the way to being adopted out. The APA relies heavily on a network of foster homes to help care for the rescued animals, and are always in need of more people to become part of that network. In particular, DAPA! needs to expand its capacity to ac-



It takes a special person to want to adopt a dog the size of a human being



One thing all rescue groups have in common is the insistence that rescued animals be spayed or neutered.

The cost of spaying/neutering rescued animals is usually covered (along with microchipping) in the adoption fees, which are normally in the \$50 – \$75 range. “Fixing” your dogs and cats is the most important and effective way pet owners can save lives and stem the overwhelming tide of unwanted animals.

commodate cats, as felines are most at-risk in the municipal shelter, and have the highest kill-rate.

While the APA is not a breed-specific rescue, they do have a soft spot in their hearts for breeds that face unfair discrimination, such as Pit Bull-type dogs. They rescue former abuse-case dogs, many of which are Pittie mixes, via their *Second Chance Dogs* program. “We believe in judging each animal as an individual, and we don’t believe in the old-fashioned idea that some animals are ‘unadoptable.’ If issues arise post-adoption, we are a phone call away and will always take our pets back if an adopter changes his or her mind. But, for all the animals we have adopted out so far, our return rate is relatively low.”

Operating a rescue organization takes an enormous amount of time, hard work, dedication and sacrifice, but most worthwhile things in life usually do. Reward comes in the form of success stories, which each rescue group has in abundance....

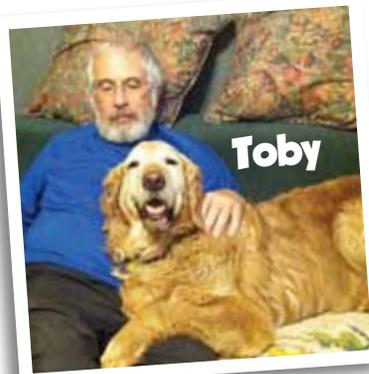
Stella is a 3-year-old Golden mix who was rescued from a hoarding situation in which only three of 30 dogs survived! She was so poorly socialized and fearful she wouldn’t eat for three weeks and would urinate on her tail when taken out of her kennel. Eventually, she was persuaded (with the help of hot dogs) to approach and begin to trust her rescuers. She was placed in a foster home three hundred miles away when an undiagnosed medical condition surfaced: *Stella* collapsed when excited or exerted. Working with veterinary specialists in three states, she was finally diagnosed with a congenital heart condition and prescribed medication to help her circulation. She is still with her foster mom, and lives a very happy life. *Stella* even took a trip to Albuquerque



Stella

recently for a reunion with her rescuers.

Toby is a sweet, senior Golden who was rescued from Animal Control. He had been designated as “unadoptable,” because he was in such poor condition: his coat was matted with



Toby

dirty and grease, he had ticks everywhere and no hair left on his tail. It took more than four days to remove all the ticks and knots in his fur. He must have been in terrible pain, but he never cried or fought. *Toby* also had bruises all over his left side, as if he’d been kicked. He suffered from advanced heartworm disease and an untreated thyroid condition, so the vet started him on treatment for both. Through all of this, *Toby* showed

nothing but love for his human caretakers and canine companions in his foster home. His foster mom started him on a gentle conditioning program following the heartworm treatment, and the hair on his tail grew back as a result of the thyroid medication. *Toby* was adopted by a family with five other rescue dogs, and now, two years later, he runs every day and is the official greeter for his forever home. His new family loves him dearly and is giving this sweet boy the life he deserves.

Charlotte was an 8-month old Great Dane pup when she was rescued from Animal Services. She was so malnourished she looked like a skeleton, and had developed stomach problems that made it difficult for her to keep anything down. *Charlotte* also had some stiffness in her leg joints, but exercising in the swimming pool helped! Despite everything she’d been through at the hands of some not-so-nice people, she was always very gentle and sweet. She grew stronger and more agile playing with the other dogs at her foster home. On a Saturday in August, a family from Las Cruces came to the Great Dane shelter and were instantly impressed with *Charlotte*’s size and grace. They introduced their two Labs, and *Charlotte* was very well-behaved around them. The family liked *Charlotte* so much they took her home with them, and everyone in the household is getting along happily together—even the cat.



Charlotte

Mr. Pickles was a very large, square-headed 18-month-old when he came to the Great Dane Rescue. At one time he had been treated well, but when his original owner gave him away, that changed, and by the time *Mr. Pickles* arrived at the shelter, he was terrified of men and growled and barked angrily at everybody. It took time, but as he grew to trust the volunteers at the shelter, his gentle and fun-loving nature was revealed. Unfortunately, structural leg problems were

also revealed, and *Mr. Pickles* had to have very expensive surgery to repair torn ligaments in both hind legs. El Paso Saddle Blanket sponsored a “*Mr. Pickles Day*” to raise funds for the surgeries and, thankfully, both (in March and June 2011) were successful. *Mr. Pickles* was adopted into an excellent forever home where he is very much loved, and now, at 4½-years-old, he is finally able to run like a big dog should!



Mr. Pickles

Rusty is one of APA’s *Second Chance Dogs*. He is a large, 3-year-old Mastiff/Pit Bull mix who lived outdoors all his life and was regularly beaten with a big chain. Despite this, he is a very sweet dog who holds no resentment toward humans. *Rusty* has some health issues, which include broken and rotted teeth and heartworm. Traditionally, he would have been branded “unadoptable,” because of these issues, and because he “looks too much like a Pit Bull,”—but that’s what *Second Chance Dogs* is all about. *Rusty* turned out to be a shameless attention hog at APA’s off-site adoption events, and it didn’t take long for a family to fall in love with him and offer *Rusty* a forever home. *Rusty*’s bad teeth have been removed, and he’s receiving treatment for the heartworm. His prognosis is good, and his story is a great reminder to give each dog an opportunity to show its true colors before judging its looks or breed.

Rescue organizations do amazing work, and it truly is a labor of love. We’ve only highlighted three groups in this article, but there are many, many more hard at work locally and nationally making sure neglected, abused or abandoned animals are given a chance to become somebody’s faithful companion.



Rusty



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a Blue Story with a



Happy Ending!

Blue, an Australian Cattle Dog, made national headlines this summer as the center of controversy in Elephant Butte, NM. Blue belongs to nobody—and everybody—in the little town, but his freedom-loving lifestyle became an issue when the town passed strict leash laws in response to a vicious dog attack in neighboring Truth or Consequences. This is Blue's story...

Blue was abandoned as a puppy 11 years ago and took refuge at Casa Taco, across the street from where he was dropped. The restaurant's owner allowed Blue to live on the premises, where he was well-known and well-fed by the patrons. When the owner became ill and had to shut his business down, Blue missed the people and the attention, and so found his way down to our place, Butte General Store, where he has become a beloved and permanent resident.

In accordance with City ordinances—and with donations from all Blue's friends in Elephant Butte—we had him neutered and have kept up with his vaccinations and other vet bills. He truly is a community dog (some of his friends even built Blue a heated and air-conditioned dog house!), and is showered with love and attention by everyone who comes to the store.

Sadly, a woman was attacked and killed by three vicious dogs in T or C. In response to this horrifying event, Elephant Butte adopted an ordinance for strict leash laws and "vicious" dog regulations. Blue stays on our property 99% of the time, but he will occasionally cross the street for a change of venue or to walk with other human friends and their dogs.

Last March my partner at Butte General Store, Bob Owen, received a citation for violation of the leash law—even though he is not Blue's owner. We started a petition to make Blue the "EB Mascot," since the community had pitched in for his care and upkeep, and received 1200 signatures—all in favor of keeping Blue free and under ownership of the whole community.

An Albuquerque attorney, Hilary Noskin, who also owns property in EB and loves Blue,

agreed to take on Blue's case pro bono. Judge Bauman gave us time to get a special permit for Blue to be grandfathered in and exempted from the newly-passed laws. However, the Mayor intervened, and we received notice we would be going to trial.

Time to unleash the social media! We started a Facebook page for Blue (*Bluedog EB-Mascot* has over 4000 friends!) on which people have been pouring out support for his plight. The Associated Press made Blue's story public, and on June 13th, Elephant Butte conducted the best-attended City Council meeting in our history—overwhelmingly in favor of Blue remaining free. A *New York Times* reporter was there and provided even more publicity for Blue.

The Council tabled the discussion so that the city lawyer and Blue's lawyer could hammer out a new ordinance that would make everyone happy. The law has now been revised in a way that is much more sensible for EB and not so harsh to pet owners. Hilary Noskin was also able to get all charges against Bob Owen dismissed.

The Albuquerque-based Invisible Fence Co. of NM, owned by Gabe and Irene Trivitz, graciously donated an invisible fence and training so that Blue could remain free within a 1-acre area around the store.

Blue's Facebook friends requested we sell t-shirts to make sure he will always be taken care of, as well as to help other animals in need. To date, we have sold over 100 shirts and have had to place a second order. Now Blue's page is used to bring attention to other animal organizations, and to encourage supporters to share stories and photos of their pets. We have donated to several causes from the funds received from the sale of Blue's t-shirts. All profits from the sale of the shirts will go to help local animal shelters and to individuals who need help with vet bills to keep their pets or abandoned animals healthy.

Article by Janice Conner, owner of Butte General Store & Marine in Elephant Butte, NM. You can read more of Blue's story—in his own words, as told to Hilary and Paul Noskin—at DogCruces.com.



DogCruces Fall 2012

Workin' Like a Dog



Striking Gold on the Football Field!

The sun was shining, the manicured green turf stretched out in every direction, and doggie excitement filled Aggie Memorial Stadium on the morning of August 18. It had been 10 long years since *Smoki the Wonder Dog's* final game, and NMSU was resurrecting the tradition of a canine mascot to retrieve the kicking tee after every Aggie kickoff. Today was tryout day for the opportunity to become the new *Wonder Dog*.

Among the nine hopefuls was *Striking the Border Collie* and his amazing sidekick Steve Stochaj (Stow-Hi)—both veterans of agility contests and Search & Rescue missions. Steve's wife Nancy had alerted the duo to the upcoming tryouts, and training began immediately. There was no doubt in either canine or human mind that this was a job for *Striking the Soon-to-Be Wonder Dog*.

Striking and Steve have been a team for the past three years. They met at an agility match in Colorado, where *Striking's* original owner was looking for a new home for the energetic youngster—and someone who could take the time to challenge the brilliant but unfocused Border Collie to reach his full potential. It was a match made in heaven.

Striking has a real knack for anything fast-paced and fun. Early morning runs, late day Agility, SAR training and Obedience in-between. He can (but won't) boast of many Obedience and Agility titles and is Field Certified in Wilderness Search and Rescue. Still...his competitors on the field that morning looked like they had some serious game....

Replacing the legend that was *Smoki the Wonder Dog* would be impossible. *Smoki's* owner and NMSU Alum, Joel Sims, came up with the idea of a tee-retrieving dog after he witnessed a similar event at a pro football game. He trained *Smoki* for the job and then asked the University to create the position for his dog. *Smoki the Wonder Dog* delighted crowds (and was often the highlight of Aggie games) for the next six years until retiring in 2002. The tradition has remained on hiatus ever since.

The morning of tryouts, *Striking* visualized his upcoming performance from the comfort of his locker room (the portable dog house Steve had brought for him). He watched as the other hopefuls demonstrated varying degrees of success—along with some well-timed comic relief. Then it was *Striking's* turn. As their names were announced over the loudspeaker, Steve showed *Striking* the tee, and, as if he'd been doing this all his life, *Striking* streaked onto the field, snagged the tee, and brought it directly back to the sideline. Steve was there to greet him with an ear-to-ear grin, as proud as any dad could be.

Striking's main competitor was another Border Collie named *Murphy*, a rescue dog well-trained by owner Karen Kendall. It was a tight contest, but in the end the panel of celebrity judges (including *Smoki's* owner Joel Sims), decreed that *Striking* would be NMSU's new *Wonder Dog*.

Steve and *Striking* will now be on the sidelines of every home game, eagerly awaiting an Aggie score so that *Striking the Wonder Dog* can delight a new generation of Las Cruces...and have a ball doing so!



As NMSU President Barbara Couture and Steve Stochaj smile for the cameras, newly-crowned *Striking the Wonder Dog* checks to make sure his name is spelled correctly on the certificate.



DogCruces readers were already aware of *Striking's* star power, as he was the featured spokesman on our Winter 2011 cover.



Striking the Wonder Dog debuted at Aggie Memorial Stadium on August 30. NMSU scored 49 points in its victory over Sacramento State, and *Striking* had a perfect night, retrieving the tee after every Aggie kickoff.

A star is born.

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3rd Annual Charity Run

Saturday, September 29, 2012

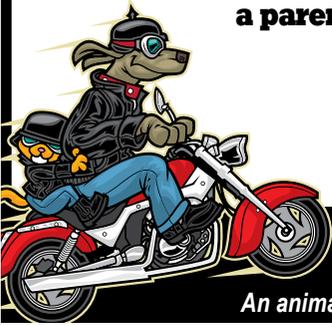
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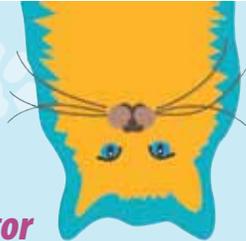
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– Long Time Client, Las Cruces, NM

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Please send in your photos
of your favorite pets to:
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ASCMV Growing to Meet the Needs of the Mesilla Valley

The Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) is the animal shelter located off of Highway 70. It was built in 1985 and was operated by a third party contractor, the Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS), for over 20 years. During that time, the City of Las Cruces (City) and Doña Ana County (County) as well as the supporters of DACHS had been the primary financial supporters of this facility.

On January 29, 2008, the City and County entered into a memorandum of agreement to temporarily operate the animal shelter after DACHS notified the governing agencies it would no longer operate the shelter. The City and County determined that it was in the best interest of everyone involved that the two agencies enter into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to create an independent agency to provide animal shelter and related services. The JPA was entered into by both parties on August 4, 2008. This new public agency was named the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley.

The ASCMV has evolved significantly from what it was on January 29, 2008. It began as a holding facility that placed a few animals in adoptive homes, but has grown into a multi-faceted animal service facility.

1. The facility actively seeks to find the original owners of animals brought to the shelter by Animal Control and others in order

to reunite pets with their families. We scan the pet for an ID microchip and trace any tags that the animal might be wearing.

2. A far-reaching rescue program is in place – we make calls and/or send e-mails to every purebred rescue group when we have that specific breed in the building. We make contact weekly with all non-breed-specific shelters that we have a relationship with (and we're exploring new opportunities/avenues every chance we get) in order to save as many lives as possible. We now have an older bus that we use to transport rescues as far away as Cheyenne, Wyoming.

3. An expanding adoption program helps the citizens of Doña Ana County adopt forever friends. The ASCMV sponsors two to three off-site adoption events every Saturday, as well as special adoption promotions throughout the year.

4. A vibrant volunteer program is now in place with an average of 90 volunteers logging around 700 hours a month. Opportunities for a Volunteer at the ASCMV include: Dog Enrichment, Animal Caregiving, Office Assistant, Off-site Adoption Events, Off-site Animal Caregiving, Animal Fostering, Community Outreach, Laundry Attendant, Groomers, and Veterinarians. We always need and appreciate people who want to share their time and love with the animals at the shelter.

5. We have an aggressive public service program which includes: Affordable Spay/Neuter (\$35 dogs, \$25 cats), Microchipping (\$20), Rabies and other Vaccinations, as well as Euthanasia.

6. We administer the City Pet License program. All dogs, cats and rabbits within the Las Cruces city limits are required to have a license, which must be renewed annually. Fees range from \$5 to \$25, depending on the reproductive status of your pet.

7. Educational outreach – Speaker Bureau. ASCMV staff visit young children at schools to talk in a fun and entertaining way about how to take good care of animals. Older children receive more specific information about spaying and neutering pets, as well as an introduction to the 10-point plan to achieve our goal to become a No-Kill community.

The ASCMV infrastructure has grown in the past four years to allow us to offer many awesome services. We have also done much remodeling within the shelter: we've resealed two stray holding kennels and the adoption kennel; updated the washing room with a commercial washer and the laundry area with a commercial washer and dryer; updated the Medical Wing with refrigerated air and other equipment; upgraded the HVAC System; installed continuous vinyl flooring in all the cat holding areas as well as hallways; and totally renovated the public surgical building as well as the external infirmary better known as Donna's Dream. For a complete overview of the ASCMV please go to our website, www.ASCMV.org, and check out our annual reports.

We have made tremendous progress in our mission to better serve the human as well as the animal citizens of Doña Ana County — and we will continue to make great strides. We welcome the citizens of Doña Ana County to stop in at 3551 Bataan Memorial to visit the facility to volunteer or adopt.

Dr. Beth Vesco-Mock is Executive Director of Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley.



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Traveling With Your Best Friends

by Vic Villalobos

Yes, Doggie Travelers, There's an App for That!

Summer is winding down, and we decided to take one more short trip to northern New Mexico. We were heading up for our great grand niece's first birthday celebration. My first thought was "who would have a party for someone who is one? She won't even remember this when she gets older!" But then I think back to all the invites we've received from people throwing birthday parties for their dogs. So suddenly a party for a one-year-old seemed pretty normal. And lots of relatives were flying in from all over, so, really, it was a birthday/reunion.

Time to load up the old RV (again)! It actually gets much easier each time we do this. We now have items that specifically live in the RV, like dishes, pots and pans, blankets, even some spare clothes. We load up fresh water and hit the road. Santa Fe here we come! Sorta. We stop **A LOT** while traveling, which brings me to the point of this quarter's article: how do we know where to go, where to stop, what to do? Well it's easy if you're a modern, tech-savvy K-9 traveler with an iPhone! It turns out they really do have "apps" for just about anything. **Whole Trader Foods** is a great one. It shows all the *Trader Joe's* and *Whole Foods* stores along your trip route. We always start with an empty 'fridge and then the hit the closest store to stock up with goodies for the trip.

Soon (and often) it's time to let the girls out to play, so we break out one of our favorite apps—**Dog Park Finder**. There are several app choices to help you locate dog parks, and they all seem to do the job. Some even have pictures and user-submitted ratings.

Our first doggie stop was on the north side of Albuquerque (near *Trader Joe's*—we planned it that way!). It was a very clean and extremely well-maintained park. It had a nice, thick wood chip base and lots of shade areas. The girls enjoyed meeting some of the regulars at the park and got nice and tired for the drive to Santa Fe.

We continued north and met up with some of our incoming family. We ate lunch at *El Pinto* in Santa Fe. The great thing about this place (in addition to the food) is they have plenty of shaded parking for RVs. The dogs can't join us in the restaurant, so we keep the generator running and the AC on. It keeps the RV at about 72 degrees. We carry a little remote temperature gauge that we picked up at *Radio Shack*, and it sends out a signal to let us know the temperature *inside* the vehicle. A great investment for \$20!

After lunch, it was again time for a dog park stop (you thought I was kidding about "often") and our handy-dandy app guided us to another near-by park. I should probably mention that I'm *not* doing all this while I'm driving. At this point, *Ruby* has assigned herself the co-pilot's seat next to me, and my wife is in the back on the sofa with the other two girls doing all the searching and navigating.

Dog Park Finder led us to an amazing dog park in Santa Fe. It's called "Ortiz Dog Park," and it's over 300 acres with miles of trails to hike and play on. After only a few minutes at the park, we met other dogs—and it was once again a free-for-all of play time fun! This park is well worth visiting if you're in the area.

We made our way to the KOA just north of Santa Fe. As I've mentioned in previous articles, we really enjoy the KOAs. But if you can't find one near by, I highly recommend the **Allstays Camp and RV** app. It has every RV park and campground in the country, including National and State Parks. The app also has links to

pictures and reviews of the facilities. And on the way home don't forget to use the **Allstays RV Dumps** app to find free locations where you can dump your grey and black water tanks (it's an RV thing).

No matter what you're doing or where you're going, you can find an app to make it easier. Most of the apps I use are free or cost very



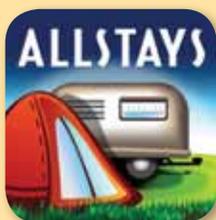
Ortiz Dog Park is the place to meet & greet & scratch & sniff Santa Fe dogs.

little—I like to joke that my \$1.99 **MotionX GPS** app does as much, if not actually *more*, than my \$400 Garmin stand-alone GPS.

We're an *Apple* household, so, unfortunately, I know nothing about *Android* apps. Visit the *DogCruces Facebook* page to let everyone know your favorite animal and/or travel apps, and tell me what I'm missing out on with the *Android* apps!

A few other apps worth mentioning...

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Lyra's Pack

by Lyra Sarai

Cats & Dogs: Frenemies for Life

Cats and dogs. For decades, the antagonistic relationship between the two species has been immortalized in cartoons, whether the Bulldog and Tom in the *Tom & Jerry* cartoons, or the tolerant rivalry between Odie and Garfield. It is a long-held belief that dogs and cats do not mix any better than do cats and mice. However, in my grandparents' home, cats and dogs were always friends. I grew up with animals of great temperament. I had wonderful teachers Allouette the Himalayan cat and Ikey the Poodle Mistake, who were constant companions. They ate together, slept together, played together. I grew up believing that dogs and cats in the same house was a given.

I've learned that each pairing of kitty-brain vs. mutt-mind can lead to entirely different reactions between pets. We have three of each, which leads to many creative encounters. Today, my story is about

Yuki, our eldest cat. A beautiful black-coated Bombay, Yuki is the sweetest thing you could ever possibly meet—she once adopted kittens when we placed their mother in a new home. When we got 8-week-old puppy Miyu, Yuki tolerated Miyu climbing all over her and licking her kitty ears sloppy.

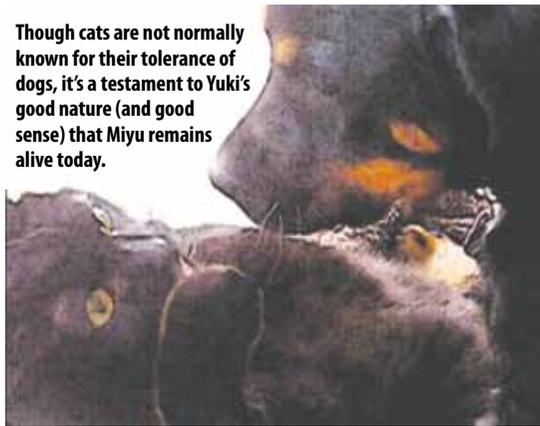
Yuki is a great escape artist. For safety reasons, we don't let our cats outside; however, they are allowed supervised excursions from time to time in the wide-open, but well-fenced back yard—just like prison. Every now and then, Yuki gets a burr up her butt and will purposefully plop herself in the depths of my mom's wisteria and rose bushes, way out of a Yard Warden's reach.

Yuki Removal Solution: Miyu the Guard Dog. From an early age, Miyu loved to herd, thanks to her Heeler blood. Eventually, I trained Miyu to go where I couldn't reach; she would thus herd Yuki back to the house for me. However, this didn't always turn out pleasantly for Yuki. One time, we failed to notice that the back door had closed, and when Yuki came dashing up, she had nowhere to go. She knew she needed to go in, but she was stuck...with a black and tan dog three times her

size piddling all over her in excitement! By the time we got the overgrown pup off of her, the horrified look on Yuki's face and the reeking mess of her coat was enough to make us all break down in laughter. Poor Princess, she was mortified.

Then came Hana, the Schnauzer. Hana is our cat-chaser. The desire to "get it" is strong in her breed. She is the dog our cats totally avoid. No feline goddess enjoys having her fur ruffled, flying around the living room with a grey and white devil close on her heels. And yet, the weirdest things....

Though cats are not normally known for their tolerance of dogs, it's a testament to Yuki's good nature (and good sense) that Miyu remains alive today.



One night, I went to bed nervous. I couldn't find Yuki. She has a tendency to try to slip out on me when I bring the dogs in to their beds at night. I couldn't find her anywhere. Not under beds, not outside, not on the porch sneaking around. I gave up, figuring she had found a really good hiding spot, but I was still wor-

ried. I'd hate to lose my mom's favorite cat.

The next morning, I woke up and went back to feed the dogs. As I went to the back porch, I heard Yuki yowling in an odd tone. I looked around the washer and dryer and the shelves, but I couldn't find her. Finally, I gave up, figuring she was in a spot I couldn't see. However, when I opened Hana's cage, Yuki popped out, safe, but a bit disheveled after spending eight hours in the cage sleeping with the dog she hated. Hana, bless her, did not give chase. What exactly transpired in those long hours of night, crammed in the little cage with a single bed to share, I dare not imagine.

The interactions between our three adopted kitties and our three rescued mutts are fun, interesting, and full of great comedic moments. They have taught me that life can be a blast, especially when you can live in the moment, and not think too much about the consequences (like cat claws up the nose). I know our household would feel empty without its variety of pets. Can you, too, open your home to a rescued animal or two? If so, contact a local shelter and apply to adopt your own cat or dog and enjoy the fun!

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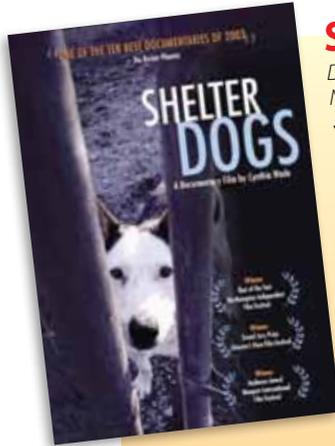
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Media Picks

for Dog Lovers



Shelter Dogs

Directed by Cynthia Wade
Not Rated

Your instinct will probably be to curl up on the couch hugging a fresh box of Kleenex before watching *Shelter Dogs* — but it's not that kind of movie. Yes, there are teary moments, but this is a largely-unsentimental, award-winning documentary about the Rondout Valley Kennels shelter in rural New York and its controversial proprietor, Sue Sternberg.

The controversy stems from Ms. Sternberg's disagreement with the "no-kill" trend becoming prevalent in shelters across the country. Not all no-kill shelters have the means or facilities to offer genuine quality-of-life experiences to their inhabitants...so is it ethical to keep an animal alive if its mind and spirit deteriorate during a lifetime of confinement? Is every animal worth saving? What if a dog has behavioral issues that make it a potential danger to itself, other household pets, or humans? These are extraordinarily tough questions, and *Shelter Dogs*

does not shy away from them—but neither does it answer them. That's left up to you.

Filed over the course of three years, this movie documents several case studies at Rondout; some end happily, some end in death, but all demonstrate the agony and compassion with which decisions are made by Ms. Sternberg (with bountiful, impassioned input from her staff). OK, maybe you will need the Kleenex, but more than tugging at your heartstrings, *Shelter Dogs* will gnaw at your brain and perhaps even awaken your inner philosopher.



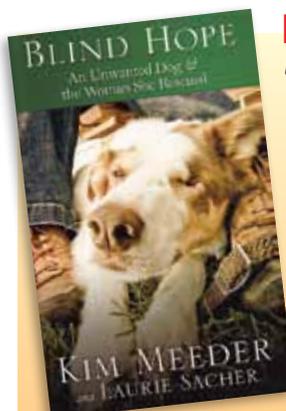
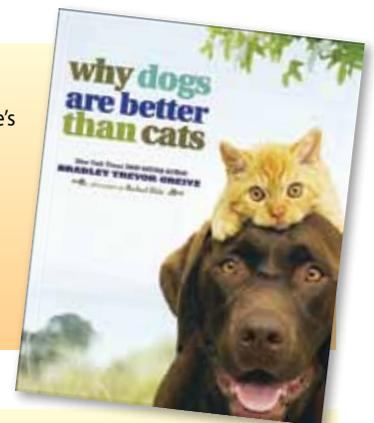
The No Kill Revolution in America is a feature-length documentary advocating no-kill shelters and highlighting success stories from all over the country. It will be released sometime in 2013, and you can watch a 12-minute trailer of the upcoming movie at vimeo.com/48445902.

Why Dogs Are Better Than Cats

by Bradley Trevor Greive • photos by Rachael Hale

"Good hearts love dogs, and dogs love good hearts...cats are nature's way of saying 'whatever.'" This lovely coffee-table book is 200+ pages filled with beautiful photos and truly funny commentary on the differences between cats and dogs.

But before feline fanciers get their fur up, please understand that all cat-jabs are tongue-in-cheek, and the fun poked at kitties comes from a place of love. Besides...cats don't care *what* we think of them, so why not have some delicious, evil fun with it?



Blind Hope

by Kim Meeder and Laurie Sacher

This is the true story of a young woman who has no real purpose or direction in life...until she adopts a scruffy, unwanted dog with bad breath and major medical issues, including blindness. As their relationship develops, the dog's actions and attitude strike a chord within the woman that compels her to re-examine her own life, and her relationship with God, from a fresh perspective.

The book is one long metaphor—or rather, one short metaphor repeated again and again. The prose is very flowery, and the dialogues between the woman and her mentor (the author) seem overly-crafted rather than genuine. But the metaphor *does* work, and this is a fast and easy read that may very well touch your heart.





Kat's by Kat Lacy Korner

A Simple FIX Can FIX the FIX We're In!

Cat overpopulation is a serious problem in our community. Last year, 4,562 cats were killed at the shelter. During the first five months of this year, 1,238 cats have already met the same fate. We cannot begin to FIX this problem until we FIX the human mindset at its root.

A huge number of people in our community set their cats free simply because they are no longer cute little kittens, or because their behavior has become offensive during a heat cycle in an intact female or spraying from an intact male. Economic hardship has also contributed to the problem, as some people decide they'd rather cut their cats loose than cancel cable TV.

It's impossible to know for sure how many stray cats are roaming the streets at any given time, so mathematical models are employed to estimate this number. According to the PetSmart Charities model, Doña Ana County has approximately 13,500 free-roaming cats! This number is largely due to people who "set them free" without FIXING them — often right before these young cats deliver their first litter.

So how can we begin to combat this overwhelming overpopulation problem? Let us count the ways....

1) Spay and Neuter! The obvious solution. We have several organizations in town that assist with sterilization at very low cost (\$25 – \$35). There really is no excuse not to get your pets fixed. Call the Spay/Neuter Action Program (SNAP) at 524-9265 for assistance or drop by their office on Picacho across from the Peddlers' Pavilion. Visit: www.snapnewmexico.org or www.ascmv.org for low-cost spay and neuter options.

2) Adopt Another Cat (or Two or Three)! It only costs about \$1 per day to feed and buy litter for one to two cats. The ASCMV has beautiful, healthy, already-FIXED cats and kittens ready for adoption. Visit www.ascmv.org.

3) Fence Them In! Cat fencing can be very economical for the do-it-yourselfer. You can buy deer fencing online and attach it to your existing fence or porch, creating a roof. Shazam — Kitty is now safely enclosed! Not such a do-it-yourselfer? Not a problem — www.purrfectfence.com has beautiful, easy-to-install products. And if you fence in a large area, you can adopt another cat! They are soooo cute! Fencing not only keeps your cats from getting out, it prevents predators and strays from getting in.

4) Don't Feed the Strays! As cruel as this may sound, it is even crueller to feed stray cats that you are unable to capture and FIX right away. By feeding a stray, you trigger its body into a reproductive cycle and have a larger litter of kittens. Just like wild animals, cats reproduce when the "gettin' is good." All of a sudden you have more mouths to feed; then disease strikes and they slowly die, or bad weather strikes and they drown, or loose dogs or coyotes find the babies and kill them. There are sooo many bad things that can happen to these small, innocent creatures. Please do not let your good intentions contribute to the problem! If you are going to feed a stray, be prepared to capture and FIX it immediately. You'll have won half the battle by doing this.

Unfortunately, there are no cat-specific rescue organizations in this area. Many of the local organizations mentioned in this article work with people on a case-by-case basis, providing guidance and access to resources to help folks foster and/or re-home cats. Many times, though, the shelter is the only avenue. Just keep in mind, the shelter does not kill animals, IRRESPONSIBLE HUMAN BEHAVIOR does!

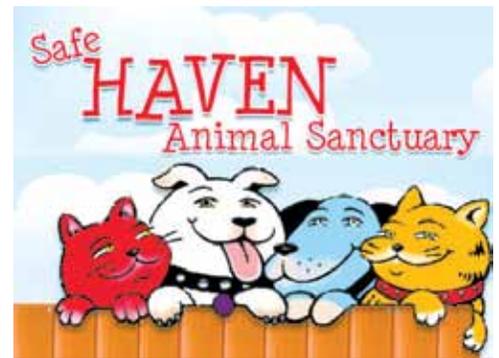
It would be nice to have more local adoption outlets for cats. Until we do, here is a Facebook page you can use to post information on a lost or found animal: www.facebook.com/LostAndFoundPets-LasCruces. If you know of an animal that needs a new home, post it on www.facebook.com/pages/Pets-for-Adoption-Las-Cruces/388670697823685.

If you know people who are — or could potentially become — part of the problem, please give them this article to read, and suggest ways they can address their pet concerns without resorting to abandoning their animals. If folks need help with pet food, refer them to Action Programs for Animals Food Bank: www.actionprogramsforanimals.org.

If you are not part of the problem, please consider becoming a part of the solution by donating to SNAP or ASCMV and/or becoming a foster volunteer. Foster homes are in GREAT need in our community. A foster volunteer can rehabilitate a homeless cat into a healthy, adorable, adoptable feline. It is a most rewarding experience.

There is lots of work to be done! But if we ALL step up to the plate, we can FIX it!

Article by Kat Lacy, Owner, Better Life Pet Foods.
Edited by Shannon Ellison.



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Volunteer Opportunities

Get Involved and Help!!

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 and see which one(s) would be the best fit for you!

Action Programs for Animals

PO Box 125
Las Cruces, NM 88004
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www.actionprogramsforanimals.org

Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV)

3551 Bataan Memorial West
Las Cruces, NM 88012
575-382-0018
email: pdeal@las-cruces.org
or visit www.ascmv.org

Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS)

PO Box 1176
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www.Donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org

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www.nmsu.edu/~fcamp

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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

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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

Outreach/Educational Program

Trap, Neuter & Return: Feral Cat Care

TNR class meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm at Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo Rd., Ste M, at the corner of El Paseo and Idaho.

The classes are free and part of the co-op's ongoing efforts to improve the community. Classes are taught by Joe Miele, as he explains how to trap feral cats for spay/neuter surgery, and how to care for them post surgery and beyond.

The classes have led to over 100 cats being spayed and neutered, thereby reducing the feral cat population and lessening the burden on the county animal shelter, animal control, and the cats themselves.



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