

Summer 2011

**FREE!**

# Döög 'Cruces

Information  for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!



## Mesilla Valley Search & Rescue

Search Dogs can make the difference between life & death in the high desert  
page 15

**Plus...** A kid's perspective on care and training.  
Hot products for your cool dog. Book & movie picks and more!

## Snip SNAP

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you and your dog won't want to miss  
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# Welcome, Dog Lovers!

**We certainly do love our dogs here in Las Cruces!**

And the City of Crosses is a great place to be a dog — with lots of sunshine and wide-open spaces, dog-friendly restaurants and businesses, a great network of veterinary professionals and pet-care experts, a veritable army of devoted volunteers, as well as a huge community of, well, people who just love dogs.

A few years ago, we created the DogCruces.com website to serve as a local Grand Central Station of pet resources, bringing together different animal organizations under one virtual roof. Among its many functions, the website has helped reunite lost pets with their families, has enabled abandoned and orphaned pets to find loving homes, has connected willing volunteers with organizations that need help, and has allowed people to keep up with dog-related news and events in the area. It has also attracted a large and loyal following on Facebook.

**We're proud now to introduce DogCruces Magazine!**

This new publication will allow us to explore different dimensions of the Las Cruces dog community. We will be bringing you feature stories that go into depth about local animal organizations: in this first issue, we profile the Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue Dog Team, and the

Spay/Neuter Action Program (SNAP). We will have features and columns to help you care for and have fun with your dogs. There will be contests, photos, news and information about all aspects of pet ownership in the Mesilla Valley. We'll even have a Cat Corner for our feline friends.

We want this magazine to truly serve Las Cruces dog lovers and to be something you look forward to reading every quarter. So we need your input and feedback to help us make it an indispensable resource for all your pet-related needs.

Together, we can strengthen our community and celebrate the special relationship we have with our best friends.

LET'S GO FOR A RIDE!!

**Vic Villalobos**

Managing Editor

Write to us at:

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

or email us at:

**Vic@DogCruces.com**



## CONTEST

The DogCruces doggie needs a cool name!  
Submit your ideas to [photos@dogcruces.com](mailto:photos@dogcruces.com)  
Winner will get our eternal thanks AND a gift certificate from Better Life Foods!

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Information  for the Las Cruces Dog!



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### DogCruces Magazine

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575-528-8505

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# Doggie Dates



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

## JUNE

**Wednesday, June 15**

**Yappy Hour 7pm to 9pm**

On the patio of Andele Dog House, 1983 Calle de Norte in Mesilla. \$5 donation at the door; cat and dog food donations accepted for APA. There will be a special Yappy Hour Menu, Dog Treats, Raffles, Door Prizes. Please bring your well-behaved pups on a leash. Proceeds to benefit DACHS and SNAP.

**Friday, June 24**

**Take Your Dog to Work Day**

Let's see if they really let you — just try it!

**Saturday, June 25**

**Canines & Cocktails**

5pm to 7pm at the Azul Bar patio at Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces.

**Sunday, June 26**

**Black Box Theatre Benefit 2:30pm**

Proceeds from ticket sales support the Humane Society of Southern NM programs serving homeless/rescued animals, our pet help line, and work in humane education. A Tony Award winning musical comedy titled *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* will be the feature show for this matinee. Tickets are \$15 available through HSSNM members and at the door. Please call coordinator Jean Gilbert at 575-522-2529 or HSSNM office at 575-523-8020 to purchase tickets and for information. Play is rated PG.



**June is Adopt-a-Cat and Adopt-a-Shelter-Cat Month**



**The second week of June is Pet Appreciation Week**



## JULY

**Friday, July 15**

**Take Your Dog to Work Day**

**Wednesday, July 20**

**Yappy Hour 7pm to 9pm**

On the patio of Andele Dog House, 1983 Calle de Norte in Mesilla. \$5 donation at the door; cat and dog food donations accepted

for APA. There will be a special Yappy Hour Menu, Dog Treats, Raffles, Door Prizes. Please bring your well-behaved pups on a leash. Proceeds to benefit DACHS and SNAP.

**Sunday, July 31**

**Mutt's Day**

## AUGUST

**Wednesday, August 17**

**Yappy Hour 7pm to 9pm**

On the patio of Andele Dog House, 1983 Calle de Norte in Mesilla. \$5 donation at the door; cat and dog food donations accepted for APA. There will be a special Yappy Hour Menu, Dog Treats, Raffles, Door Prizes. Please bring your well-behaved pups on a leash. Proceeds to benefit DACHS and SNAP.

**Friday, August 26**

**National Dog Day**

## SEPTEMBER

**Saturday, September 24**

**Canines & Cocktails**

5pm to 7pm at the Azul Bar patio at Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces.

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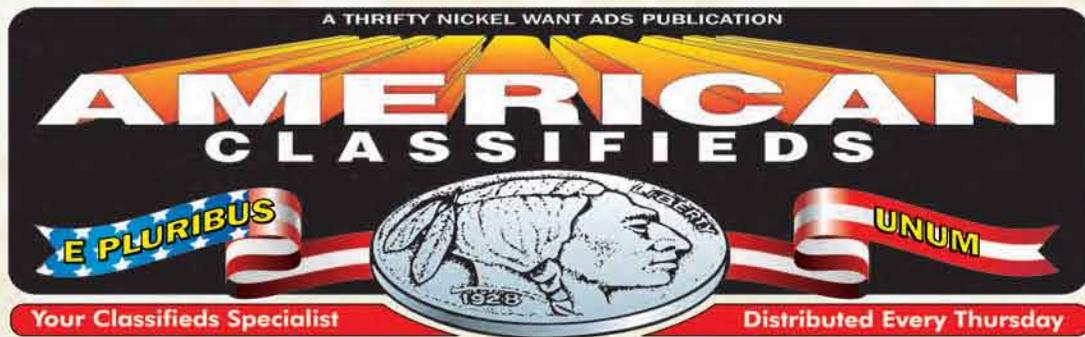
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Information for the Las Cruces dog!

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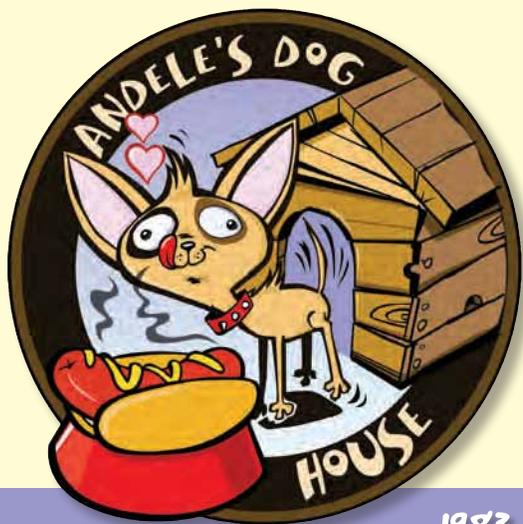


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Come in and try our **DOG HOUSE** menu or enjoy a meal off the full **iAndele! Restaurante** menu

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# Canines & Cocktails

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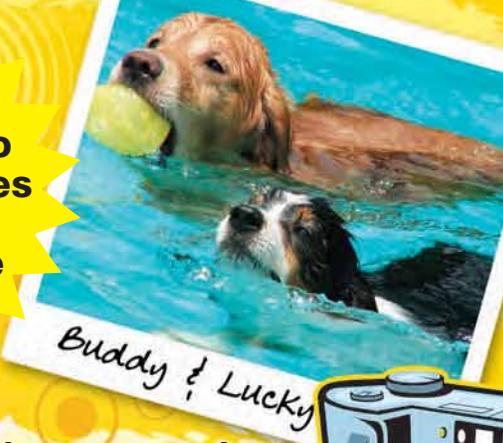


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having  
summer time  
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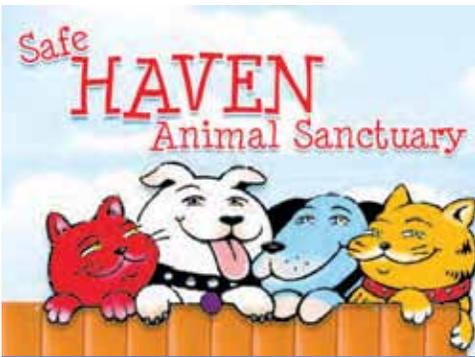


Buddy & Lucky

Winner to be announced  
in our Fall issue.

[PHOTOS@DOGCRUCES.COM](mailto:PHOTOS@DOGCRUCES.COM)





# Volunteer Opportunities

## Get Involved and Help!!

**HELP**  
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 work by  
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 Call for an appointment  
 & directions to  
 Safe Haven  
 Animal Sanctuary  
 575.805.5338

www.SafeHavenAnimalSanctuary.net

**V**olunteering 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  
 575-644-0505  
 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  
 Las Cruces, NM 88004  
 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)**  
 If you would like to donate your time to SHAS, you may call 575-527-4544, email preciouspaws6@yahoo.com or visit SHAS website at www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.net

**Spay/Neuter Action Program of Southern NM (SNAP)**  
 2405 W. Picacho  
 Las Cruces, NM 88005  
 575-524-9265  
 www.snapnewmexico.org

**Therapaws**  
 575-524-2026  
 therapaws@gmail.com  
 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](mailto:info@dogcruces.com)



### Featured Group

## THERAPAWS

Therapaws, a local therapy dog group, seeks friendly dogs and their handlers to bring cheer to nursing homes, schools and hospitals. Dogs may be large or small, purebred or mixed breed and must be at least one year old. Qualifications include a loving disposition (toward humans and other dogs), and the dog must be easily controlled. For more information call please send your contact information to [therapaws@gmail.com](mailto:therapaws@gmail.com) or call Charlene Curry at 524-2026.



# The Vet's View

by  
Dr. Scott Pirfle, DVM

## The Heartbreak of Heartworms

If you could prevent your dog from becoming infected with foot-long worms in his heart for only a few dollars a month, would you do it? The answer might seem easy, yet many dog owners in Doña Ana County don't have their pet on heartworm preventative medication. After 25 years of practicing veterinary medicine in this community, I can attest to the fact that not only is heartworm disease here in Las Cruces, it is extremely common, even with the convenience and effectiveness of once-a-month preventatives. Whether it's human nature or just a lack of education, too many dog owners are taking the risk of their pet acquiring heartworms, thus potentially facing a difficult and expensive treatment; or worse yet, fatal heart failure and pulmonary disease.

Heartworms are a parasitic worm that lives in the chambers of a dog's heart, and especially in the arteries that communicate from the right side of the heart to the lungs. These adult worms, about the diameter of a pencil lead, can be as much as 10-14 inches in length. Although a small number of worms may cause no obvious symptoms, larger numbers of worms or long-standing infections may start to cause significant inflammation and damage to the heart, heart valves, and the lining of the pulmonary arteries. Initially a dog with heartworms may have no symptoms whatsoever. With time though, coughing, difficulty breathing, weight loss, fluid accumulation in the abdomen, or other less specific symptoms may develop. In advanced cases, permanent damage may develop and become so serious that a dog develops complete heart failure, pneumonia, or aneurysms. In these cases treatment for heartworms may not be possible and the dog may succumb to the complications.

Adult heartworms usually produce microscopic larva or baby heartworms that circulate in the dog's bloodstream. These larva are spread from infected dog to healthy dog via mosquitoes; they develop in the dog's tissues through multiple larval stage changes and migrate through the dog's body until they finally arrive in the heart as young adult heartworms. This process will generally take a minimum of five months, sometimes longer. Until heartworms have reached the adult stage in a dog's heart, they cannot be detected by current heartworm testing. Veteri-

narians can find the larva in an infected dog's bloodstream, or they can detect the presence of adult worms in the heart. Migrating, tissue-stage larva cannot be detected. So infection will not be detectable until approximately six months after the dog acquired the infection.

Monthly heartworm preventatives kill the early stages of larva right after a mosquito infects a dog. Once these larva have reached a later stage of development, the preventative medications are no longer effective in killing them, and they will still develop into adult heartworms. The heartworm lifecycle is complicated; therefore two tests, six month apart, will usually be recommended when initiating preventative care. Testing for heartworms is a simple procedure. Your veterinarian will obtain a quick blood sample and perform a ten minute test in the clinic,

**Doña Ana County is a very favorable environment for heartworm disease in dogs.**

usually while you and your dog wait. Once a negative test result is obtained, it is time to start your dog on one of the many monthly heartworm preventatives available today. Which heartworm preventative is best? The one that gets in the dog! All of these monthly preventatives are very effective as long as they are given regularly at one month intervals. Lapses in prevention should be discussed with your veterinarian, and a plan will be developed. Usually, additional testing may be needed, either immediately, or often six months later. The best way to avoid concern is to be consistent and diligent with monthly administration of the preventative. Many companies provide different reminder systems with their preventatives including calendar stickers, email, or even smart phone apps.

Doña Ana County is a very favorable environment for heartworm disease in dogs. With our farmland, irrigation systems, the river, landscaping and sprinkler systems, as well as our warm climate and a large population of domestic dogs and wild canids such as foxes and coyotes; heartworm disease will always be a looming threat for our pets. Thankfully, for only about \$10 a month or less, your dogs can be tested for heartworms and start on a very safe and highly effective program to prevent them from acquiring this dreadful disease. If your dog is not on a preventative, call your veterinarian right away to schedule a heartworm test. We are diagnosing cases of heartworms on a weekly, if not daily basis. Don't let your dog be one of them.

## Taste of the Wild



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Made with real roasted meats and supplemented with fruits and vegetables, these grain-free formulas provide a superior taste sensation, highly digestible energy and natural antioxidants to support a healthy immune system and overall health. Your dog craves a taste of the wild. Go ahead and give them one.

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**No Grain** - Natural grain-free formula with vitamins and minerals offers your pet nutrition for health and vitality.

**All Life-Stages Nutrition** - Formulated to meet the nutritional needs of your pet throughout all stages of life, from puppy to senior years.

**Protein Blend For Optimal Amino Acid Profile** - Amino acids are the building blocks for a healthy body. Multiple protein sources ensure that adequate building blocks are available to meet your pet's needs. Ocean fish meal provides the added benefit of marine source omega-3 fatty acids, important for a healthy immune system, healthy skin and a shiny coat.

**Digestive Support System** - Dried chicory root is a natural fiber that helps support a healthy digestive system. Fermentation products and extracts also contribute to healthy digestion and overall good health.

**Antioxidants** - Antioxidants protect your pet's body from damaging free radicals. Fruits and vegetables provide natural antioxidants and guaranteed levels of zinc, vitamin E and selenium help support optimal cellular health.

**Omega Fatty Acid Blend** - Omega-6 and Omega-3 fatty acids work together to help maintain healthy skin and a shiny coat as well as overall good health.

**Fruits & Vegetables** - Rich in dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, iron, calcium and beta carotene and antioxidants to help keep the body healthy as the days go by.



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DogCruces Summer 2011



# DEADLY SERIOUS

**T**hink of 8,347 dogs and cats in one room. Imagine now that the room they're in is the last room they will ever see. Imagine a hypodermic needle slipping silently into a vein of each animal. Soon, a powerful barbiturate stops the heart. The animal gasps a few times, and its life is over.

Do the math. Because of irresponsible people in Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces, the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley had to choose death for 8,347 animals in 2010. That translates to nearly 23 animals per day, every day, including holidays. That's 160 innocent animals a week.

Now comes the shocking news that 2010 represents the third consecutive year that the killing rate has actually *decreased* at the Animal Services Center. In 2007, 60.5 percent of animals per 1,000 people in the county's population were killed. In 2008, the rate fell to 51.9 percent. In 2009, the rate fell further to 46.7 percent. And in 2010, the shelter staff had reduced the rate to 39.9 percent.

The national average of euthanizations as a percentage of human population is 10.2 percent, which means we (the people) still have a long way to go before we can get anywhere near calling ourselves responsible stewards of our companion animals in Doña Ana County.

Much anger and consternation gets aimed at the shelter staff for the appalling numbers, but the fact is that the shelter staff cannot control the intake to the facility; they can only control what they do about it. They do their jobs with compassion and dedication, trying to save as many animals as humanly possible before space restrictions, health issues or behavioral problems force the killings.

Part of their live-outflow strategy has been a huge push to get animals adopted into loving homes. In fact, they were able – through aggressive adoption campaigns both on- and off-site – to increase adoptions by 7.8 percent from 2009 to 2010. That sounds great until you consider that only 2,584 animals were adopted from the shelter in 2010, which shows once again that not nearly enough people are stepping up to the plate to provide homes for animals that otherwise face the grim visit to the euthanization room.

The shelter staff also has energetically partnered with local and regional rescue groups to get adoptable animals out of the shelter and into protective environments run by people with a passion for specific breeds. Shelter staff regularly transport animals to rescue groups as far away as Denver.

Still, the animals keep coming in. The shelter's intake in 2010 was 14,961 animals. Let's do some more arithmetic. That translates to 41 animals a day, including holidays, that find their ways to the shelter – 287 animals each week. Until the flood of animals coming in is stanchied, the killing rate will remain high. And no one can reasonably blame the shelter staff for that reality.

At the end of the day, the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of people who

For a sobering look at all the facts and figures, visit the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley website at [www.ascmv.org](http://www.ascmv.org) and look at the 2010 Annual Report link on the right side of the page. It presents a comprehensive snapshot of where we are and the great work being done to take us where we need to be.

The shelter staff is not alone in their mission to drive down the killings and achieve a higher level of adoptions to good homes. There are many great organizations in Doña Ana County whose members dedicate themselves to animal welfare, and their important work assists the shelter both directly and indirectly. These organizations rely on membership dues and donations to survive and thrive. They need people willing to work and dollar donations that can be put to work to benefit Doña Ana County's animal population.



**8,347**  
**homeless animals in**  
**Doña Ana County were**  
**put to death last year.**

ACTION Programs for Animals (APA) is a food bank for pets. APA's members also provide outreach, advocacy and resources for Doña Ana County pet owners. APA can be reached at (575) 644-0505.

The Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS) operates the Alicia Melgaard Memorial Pet Cemetery on the East Mesa, and it also provides annual grant funding for animal-welfare work throughout Doña Ana County. DACHS can be reached at (575) 647-4808.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) facilitates pet adoptions (136 in 2010), operates a pet help line, and does educational outreach in the community. HSSNM can be reached at (575) 523-8020.

refuse to have their animals spayed and/or neutered, which results in the tidal wave of puppies and kittens (and rabbits) that wash up each week at the shelter's doors.

Some people argue that they can't afford to have their pets sterilized. For low-income people, there are many options through the Spay/Neuter Action Program (575-524-9265) or through the shelter itself (575-382-0018).

Every animal that gives birth in Doña Ana County pushes the animal population up. Even if every animal in every litter finds a good home, that's a home that is not likely to adopt from the shelter, and until the shelter becomes THE place to adopt a pet in Doña Ana County, the killings will inevitably continue at higher rates than the national norm.

Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary (SHAS) is a no-kill facility that operates a thrift store on El Paseo Road in Las Cruces, proceeds from which facilitate adoptions and provide a pleasant environment where a few lucky animals get to live out their natural lives. SHAS can be reached at (575) 527-4544.

Much is being done. Much remains to be done. Please answer the question honestly and compassionately: Are you doing everything you can?

*Article by Jess Williams. Jess is the Doña Ana County Director of Public Information/Special Projects, and he serves as a member of the board of directors for Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley.*



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Your Partner in Progress



-  Doña Ana County encourages and enforces humane and responsible animal ownership.
-  Please spay/neuter your pet. Please provide fresh water, food and shelter.
-  Please don't chain dogs.

*Working together, we can make life in Doña Ana County better for everyone.*

For animal control services, please call  
**575-526-0795**

# Saving Lives Is A **SNAP**

Thousands of animals are put to death or suffer unnecessarily in Doña Ana County Each year! You can help us solve this community problem by:

**Spay/Neuter your pets!** If you need financial help call SNAP! SNAP has helped with over 1,418 spays/neuters in 2010.

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

**Join the 5-5-5 Club!** If 500 people donated \$50 a month in the next 5 years we can substantially reduce the numbers of dogs and cats that are needlessly put to death in Doña Ana County each month.

To learn more call:

**575-524-9265**

or check us out online at:

[www.snapnewmexico.org](http://www.snapnewmexico.org)





*Ruby successfully tracks and locates "The Subject," Emerson, during a training session.*

## Four-Legged

# HEROES

## of the High Desert

### The Call

Brian and Thea Kavanaugh are in their early thirties with two boys under the age of four. Every once in a while they get a call in the middle of the night to take their dog Reese out to look for lost people. Brian is a slim man, whose quiet voice conceals a loud laugh, and good sense of humor. His wife Thea, a brassy Recreational therapist for the public schools, possesses the sort of no-nonsense kindness that is typical of people whose job it is to encourage others to try new things they have never done before. Last month we sat together at their kitchen table, as their boys played noisily in the living room, and they told me about one of their recent searches with Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue (MVSAR).

"We used to keep the cell phone next to the baby monitor," Brian said. "When you wake up in the middle of the night it's either the baby or someone who's gotten lost."

When the phone rang in the middle of the night last November, it was Nancy, the team leader for MVSAR's dog team. She told them that two young boys had gone missing in the desert north of Las Cruces. Nancy requested that Thea bring Reese, their certified search and rescue dog, to help look for the boys. "We had to go," Thea said. "I can only imagine how terrified we'd be if one—much less both—of our boys went missing."

The MVSAR team responds to calls issued by the New Mexico State Police to search for lost people. After a brief police investigation to ensure that no foul play or criminal activities are associated with the missing person, a search is initiated. The Field Coordinator organizes the search, and determines which assets will be needed. Frequently the Field Coordinator calls in dog teams, which bring search dogs (and their handlers) who are trained to find people in a variety of terrains and conditions. Reese is one of these search dogs.

Reese is not an impressive-looking dog, compared to the ones that win ribbons at the Westminster dog shows. She's a mutt—probably some Labrador Retriever mixed with a smaller breed—with the kind of rat face that only dog lovers love. She likes to chase empty soda bottles around the backyard, and lick the food off the faces of the Kavanaugh's youngest son, Jaxon. When it comes to finding lost people, though, there aren't any dogs in southern New Mexico who are better at it.

"We were encouraged to start training her for Search and Rescue by the instructors at our obedience classes," Thea said. "They recommended Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue because they have a respected search dog team. She was still pretty young—about 6 months—but Reese was a natural search dog from the start."

The Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue Canine, Horse, & Ground Team has been in existence since 1994. The team is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization consisting of roughly 40 members who are subdivided into specialty teams such as the ground team, the ATV team, the communications team, and the dog team. The dogs on MVSAR belong to the individual handlers, and are first and foremost their pets. They are trained in basic obedience skills as well as search and rescue techniques, and they must complete a certification process before being permitted to participate in a state-mandated search. The training process is long and rigorous, typically taking between one and two years to complete. Being a search dog is a major time commitment for both the dog handlers and their four-legged companions, and in the end not every dog has the drive and aptitude to become a search dog. Reese, though, consistently

demonstrates the necessary skills to search for lost people.

Like all good search dogs, Reese is hardy and eager to work, but still independent enough to follow her nose when she catches the scent of the missing person. That ability to find the scent and alert Thea would make all the difference for a worried family and their two young boys lost in the cold desert that night.

**"When you wake up in the middle of the night, it's either the baby or someone who's gotten lost."**

### The Search

That night the search area was a desert arroyo on the north side of Las Cruces, in the open spaces, dense with vegetation, between housing developments. The MVSAR dogs respond to searches all over Southern New Mexico. Sometimes the teams have to drive for hours into the remote Gila wilderness, equipping their packs with the gear to withstand the extreme temperature swings that are a part of New Mexico searching. Other times the dogs search in more urban areas, like when the levy



**K-9 Water Cadaver Training is all in a day's work for MVSAR dogs.**

# MESILLA VALLEY SEARCH



**Ruby picks up a scent and is off on her mission.**



**Visiting schools is a fun part of the job!**



**Splash stands ready for action during State Police Dive Training.**

broke outside of Hatch, flooding apartment buildings, filling them with as much as five feet of mud. But tonight was clear and cold.

“You never know what to expect on a search,” Thea said. “There are searches where we search through a trailer park in the middle of the day. Other times we’re hiking through dense forest, making noises to scare off the bears and the mountain lions.”

Because the conditions in which a search can take place are so varied, searchers are required to have a significant amount of gear in order to go in the field. Some items are for safety and survival (food, water, compass, flashlight, safety blanket, first aid kit), while others are modern conveniences that most searchers won’t leave home without (a GPS unit, safety goggles, spare socks). Even the dogs have their own gear (booties, vests, water, food), but their handlers carry the dogs’ equipment in their packs, leaving the dogs unencumbered and free to squeeze through low bushes and dense vegetation. Searchers can be deployed for up to 24 hours at a time, often having to hike through very difficult terrain, so both human and K-9 members of MVSAR must be in tip-top physical condition.

This night, the searching began shortly after midnight. Although the search area was close to two housing subdivisions, it was dark and cold and the desert shrubbery was dense enough to make it difficult for searchers to see very far.

“Every search area has its own challenges,” Thea said. “This one was strange because it seemed like a hard place to get lost. It seemed possible that the boys were probably staying at a friend’s house or something. But you never

know, so it’s important to stay focused and optimistic.”

The searchers gathered around the field coordinator to be divided into teams and get their field assignments. ATV teams were sent off to the east and ground teams to the west. Thea, Reese, and Sean, the navigator, waited for their assignments. The Field Coordinator asked

Thea what would put Reese in the best position to find the lost boys.

“There was a breeze coming from the north so I determined that I wanted to work into it from the south so that Reese would have the best chance of catching the scent of the missing boys,” Thea said.

**“You never know what to expect on a search. (Sometimes) we search through a trailer park in the middle of the day. Other times we’re hiking through dense forest, making noises to scare off the bears and mountain lions.”**

## The Find

It was cold outside, but once Thea, Reese and Sean started walking, the exertion warmed them under their layers of clothing. Thea cracked a glow stick and attached it to Reese’s search vest so that she could keep track of her as she searched through the dark shrubbery. She told Reese to search, watching the dog closely as she made broad zigzags across the arroyo. Their flashlights shone on the bushes and the ground, lighting little circles in the nighttime. Reese was little more than a neon green rectangle barreling through the dark arroyo. Sean, as navigator, made sure that the team didn’t miss any portion of the search area—you can’t assume that whomever you’re looking for is responsive.

“As team navigator, I have to be very disciplined,” Sean said. “After searching an area we have to be able to quantify how well we’ve covered it. Thea’s watching Reese so I have to make sure that we don’t overlook any nook



**The MVSAR K-9 team is a good-looking group!**

# SEARCH & RESCUE DOG TEAM

or cranny where the boys might have taken shelter.”

All members of the MVSAR team learn general skills associated with wilderness survival, including navigation, shelter building, first aid and CPR, map reading, radio communications, packaging and carrying subjects who have been immobilized, search techniques, and the policies and procedures of searching in the State of New Mexico. In addition to the above skills, the dog handlers must also learn about the mechanics of wind and scent and K-9 first aid. The MVSAR dog team practices together weekly (although individuals are expected to work with their dogs at home nearly daily), and trains with the other specialty teams of MVSAR once a month. It is important that everyone learns how to work with each other. Having a skilled navigator paired with a dog and handler is critically important for covering a search area effectively.

Over the next two hours, Thea used hand signals to direct Reese into areas where it was difficult or dangerous for the humans to investigate. Since search dogs cover considerably more distance than the humans, Thea stopped every fifteen minutes or so to give Reese water. Hydration is essential because a dog's ability to detect scents is strongest when it has had plenty of water.

“Reese loves searching, and works really hard,” Thea said. “I have to make sure to water her often, otherwise she'd just keep on going.”

When Reese found the boys, they were huddled up together against the freezing cold. She whined and ran back to Thea, putting her two front paws on her to let her know she had found them.

“They were freezing cold,” Thea said. “They'd been out hiking and it got dark and they lost their way, even though their home was less than a mile away.”

Sean radioed in to base camp that that they'd found the boys safe and sound. Soon, the ATVs picked the boys up and returned them to their relieved parents. The boys were delighted to ride on the backs of the four-wheeled machines.

The training that we do every week with

Reese is a real commitment of both time and money,” Thea said. “Happy endings like this one remind me that all the work we've put in over the last four years was really worth it. There's nothing more gratifying than reuniting those boys with their family.”

*Article by Nick Voges and Nancy Chanover.*

*Nancy, the MVSAR Dog Team Leader, has been involved in canine search and rescue for 15 years. She trained her first Labrador Retriever, Phoebe, for tracking and trailing. Her current dog, Trixie, is in training as an air-scenting search dog.*

*Nick is a writer and dog trainer in Las Cruces. His search and rescue dog, Annie, is smarter than he is.*



**Reese enjoys a well-deserved treat from owner/trainer Brian Kavanaugh.**

**Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue (MVSAR) is comprised of a Ground team, K-9 team, ATV team and Communications team.**

**The team travels statewide and has been involved in hundreds of Search and Rescue Missions in New Mexico, as well as deploying to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.**

**MVSAR is entirely a volunteer organization; team members donate their time and shoulder all the costs of equipment. Members can be called at any hour of the day or night to go help those in need. The typical mission can last from 8-24 hours and some even longer; members must be able to be self-sustained for a minimum of 24 hours in the field. Missions can be anything from a lost or injured hiker, lost child, Alzheimer patient or drowning victim.**

**MVSAR is proud to be able to serve our Community and the State of New Mexico.**

*For more information about search and rescue in New Mexico, visit the following web sites:*

*Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue*

**[www.mvsar.org](http://www.mvsar.org)**

*New Mexico Search and Rescue Council*

**[nmsarc.org](http://nmsarc.org)**

*The MVSAR team meets monthly, on the second Thursday of the month, at 6:30 pm at the AMR Ambulance office, 920 South Valley Drive. Prospective members are welcome to attend a meeting and learn more about search and rescue in southern New Mexico.*



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DogCruces SUMMER 2011

# Workin' Like a Dog



## A Heart Full of Love, A Life Full of Energy

**B**efore being formally introduced to Charlene Curry, I had the pleasure of observing her at dog-friendly social events with her lovely Rhodesian Ridgeback, Dancer. She was charismatic and had a calming and caring demeanor with people and dogs alike. When I was given the opportunity to interview Charlene, it was evident that my assessment of her was correct, but also that there is so much more to Charlene Curry—she is a dedicated advocate for Las Cruces' four-legged community.

Throughout her years in the Mesilla Valley, Charlene has been actively involved with numerous animal organizations, where she shares her knowledge, experience and time with other dog lovers. Charlene is a former member of the Dog Obedience Club of Las Cruces (DOCLC) where she taught Puppy Manners & Rally Classes. Her Rhodesian Ridgebacks have all taken part in events that allow them to show off their training and potential. They boast Champion Show Dogs among their ranks, and participate in agility, rally, lure course, and other competitions.

Every dog has its own personality and sense of purpose. Charlene learned this early on with her first empathetic Rhodesian Ridgeback, Dagger, and it led her to Therapaws, a canine volunteer group that visits hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities to promote the animal-human bond as therapy. Dagger showed great patience with people in need and was always willing to comfort them. She was a Therapy Dog with a purpose to comfort. Dagger is no longer with us, but Charlene has continued her involvement as a tester/observer for the past 15 years. She is accompanied by ten-year-old Promise and three-year-old Dancer, both Ridgebacks who share Dagger's love of calm, gentle interaction with people. Though always busy with their competitions and events, when Charlene receives a call for one of her dogs to help through Therapaws, she promptly gets Dancer or Promise ready, into her vehicle, and on their way to the people who need them most (email: therapaws@gmail.com).

Charlene is also on the board of Spay/ Neuter Awareness Program (SNAP) in Las Cruces as the Veterinarian Liaison. SNAP raises public awareness about the over population of animals

in our community. Through the fund-raising efforts of its volunteers, grants, and the participation of local Vets, it offers financial assistance to those in need so they can spay or neuter their cats and dogs.



*Charlene Curry and her Rhodesian Ridgeback, Dancer, have a bit of fun at the Canines and Cocktails gathering at Hotel Encanto's Patio Azul in March*

Charlene is a member of the Mesilla Valley Kennel Club and is registered as an American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen examiner/tester. This program is open to any dog regardless of age or pedigree and ensures that your dog can be a well-trained and respectful member of the community. Certified examiners/testers are required to put dogs and their owners through 10 areas of obedience tests.

As a member of the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States (RRCUS) and as a volunteer for the local Ridgeback Rescue, at times Charlene is asked to drive to surrounding areas to rescue a Ridgeback on the verge of being

turned over to a shelter. Often the Rhodesian Ridgeback network has placed rescued dogs with an adoption candidate before Charlene has even returned home with the pet. Of course, each dog has a wellness check before being placed in a new home, then the RRCUS network works to transport the dog to its new family, even across the United States.

Charlene takes being a member of the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States very seriously. She

seldom breeds her dogs (once in the past 10 years), but feels there is a place for responsible breeding. To Charlene, a responsible breeder strives to meet all medical and temperament requirements that would give the best chance for a healthy, well-socialized litter. She requires any person wanting one of her puppies to have home visits, to answer a questionnaire, and to explain any plans for the future. They are required to sign a contract stating if for any reason they cannot keep their Ridgeback, the dog is returned to her. She keeps in touch with all owners of the puppies she has placed and gets updates regularly. Charlene vows, "I am responsible for everything I bring into this world for its lifetime." She believes it is important to spay/neuter your dogs if you are not involved with a responsible breeding program.

Charlene's commitment to the Mesilla Valley Animal Community requires time, patience and perseverance. When asked why she felt it important to be so involved in these different organizations, she stated simply, "It gives me a sense of volunteerism." Charlene volunteers an enormous amount of her time and expertise, and does so gladly and with an open heart—never expecting anything in return. It takes dedicated individuals to help make a difference in our community, and Charlene Curry is definitely making a difference in the Mesilla Valley.

*Article by Charissa Paskowski, Director of Internet Development & Public Relations for DogCruces.com. She serves the animal community through volunteer work, media relations and networking, and is the proud human mother of three cats and one very special dog, Nacho.*

**"I am responsible for everything I bring into this world for its lifetime."**



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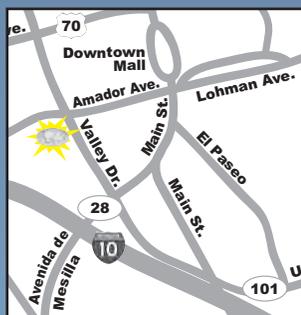
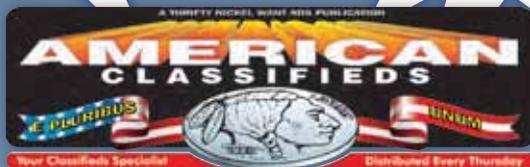
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# Takes Action!

education, outreach, publicity and spay/neuter subsidies; and (3) broadened community participation in the spay/neuter effort.

A

coordinated effort is more important than ever. Multiple animal welfare groups have attempted to come together over the past five years in Doña Ana County, but governmental support has at best slowed and at worst actually reversed direction.

The picture is not entirely bleak. The Las Cruces Housing Authority has helped SNAP immeasurably by subsidizing office space, and the city and county does now have a supervisory board for the Animal Services Center. The city and county will soon be considering new proposed changes to existing animal ordinances. Currently, not only is the full-time chaining of dogs permitted, but also households are allowed as many as five litters per year (with litter permits), an

*Big-hearted bikers ride to benefit their furry friends at Blue Moon's "Cruisin' for Critters"*



year, the Calista Animal Hospital donated a free clinic to SNAP—where an astonishing total of 55 cats and dogs were spayed or neutered in one day! Calista Animal Hospital is planning to repeat this generous donated clinic in 2011 for SNAP.

The Blue Moon Bar and the Southern New Mexico Bikers Coalition made the entire valley rumble with the sound of hundreds of bikers "Cruisin' for Critters" in a combined effort for SNAP, Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary, and Action Program for Animals.

The community has been broadly supportive of fund-raisers like "A Critter Christmas" and the SNAP Annual Rummage Sale.

However, there are still many volunteer needs and opportunities. The SNAP office is only open from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and would love to extend its hours and open days, which can only happen if volunteers will commit to answering phones, checking qualifications, completing applications, and issuing vouchers. Fund-raising efforts typically depend on the same hard-working dozen or so supporters; volunteers for just one event a year could make a major difference. Volunteer board members have broad opportunities to participate in projects suited to their skills.

*SNAP's Annual Rummage Sale attracts happy bargain-hunters and provides much-needed funds*



**A**mong the many hard-working animal welfare organizations in the Mesilla Valley, the Spay/Neuter Action Program (SNAP) holds a key position. Its focus on sterilization impacts our animal food banks, city/county ordinances, and especially our animal shelters. The Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV), for example, is forced to euthanize over 8,600 dogs and cats each year - more than 70% of all animals received there. Manhattan, NY, with a population of 1.6 million humans, euthanizes fewer than 3,000 animals annually. The 2010 Census shows we are growing and nudging the 200,000 human population mark, but a comparison of animal death numbers dramatically illustrates the scope of the problem we face.

Working at the very heart of this problem, SNAP is a 501c3 non-profit organization committed to reducing pet overpopulation and the resulting unnecessary deaths of healthy, adoptable animals. Since its founding in 1998, SNAP has facilitated over 8,800 sterilizations through affordable pet "birth control" for qualifying, low-income households. Its methods are modeled on successful means-tested programs used throughout the United States. This program has demonstrated how targeted spay/neuter assistance programs can reverse the trend of pet overpopulation. Statistical goals from these programs indicate that the Mesilla Valley should be sterilizing a minimum of 450 animals per month, but as of this writing, SNAP can only afford to help 150 pets each month.



*Vet Techs Samantha Riordan and Danielle Robert tend to a patient during Calista Animal Hospital's free Spay/Neuter clinic*

ordinance that runs contrary to SNAP's efforts to help reduce the pet overpopulation problem. There are no provisions for controlling pet population of stray/community cats such as a TNR Program (Trap/Neuter/Return). Beyond the inherent cruelty of these ordinances, they ensure that pet overpopulation in Las Cruces and the county will be a permanent, continually-escalating crisis. The proposed new animal ordinances can be viewed on the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley's website [www.ascmv.org](http://www.ascmv.org)

There are, of course, many individual SNAP supporters in our area. We are most humbly grateful for the eleven veterinary clinics who continue to accept vouchers and perform spay/neuter surgeries at a discount for SNAP. Last

SNAP believes that pet overpopulation is a community problem that can only be solved through community awareness and action.

## SNAP to it, please!

SNAP is located at:  
2405 W. Picacho Avenue, Suite 103  
Las Cruces, NM 88007 • (575) 524-9265  
[www.snapnewmexico.org](http://www.snapnewmexico.org)  
Snap is a 501©3 Non-Profit Organization

To reach the goal of 450 monthly spay/neuters, SNAP needs (1) increased veterinary services (e.g., more veterinarians willing to do more surgeries); (2) increased funding for



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# Traveling With Your Best Friends

by Vic Villalobos



## The Journey Begins...

Over the years, we have been on many vacations, and I can count on one hand the vacations we have taken without our dogs. Of those vacations we have not taken our dogs on, half of them we wished we had brought them once we arrived at our destination. Traveling with your pet can be a little bit of a challenge at times, but with a little pre-planning and homework before you hit the road it can be a fun and exciting trip for the entire family.

Let me take a few steps back before I get into any suggestions or recommendations. First my wife and I have no children (at least the kind that don't bark). Second, we have 3—yes 3—Golden Retrievers. Right about now you're probably asking yourself "why on earth would anyone want to take 3 Golden Retrievers on vacation?" We started with one, many years ago. I won't lie, traveling with one is much easier; but once you get 2 of them, the third just slips right into the groove. One of our best friends is a couple that travels with six dogs and a cat. This requires an RV, a trained cat and the willingness to take 30 minute pee stops. But that is another article.

The pre-travel: The first couple of times you do this it takes a little work and the help of some very useful websites, but once you get the ground work done, your future trips will come with a lot more ease. During my first couple of planning adventures I quickly found a few websites that make life easy. Traveling with a pet in hotels is not as hard as you think, but determining which hotel is best suited for you can be. I found sites like [pettravel.com](http://pettravel.com), [bringfido.com](http://bringfido.com) and [petswelcome.com](http://petswelcome.com) to be great for researching your next stay. Not only do they have hotels but also bed and breakfasts, cabins and in some cases private home rentals that allow all kinds of pets.

I have learned over time to be diligent in my research of where we are staying. We all know what kind of room you get when staying at a La Quinta, but when you book a little place on the Oregon coast off the internet as we did a few years ago...well let's just say it's amazing what some businesses can do with Photoshop. Try to find some reviews from other travellers when you're exploring unknown territory, and write a quick review after your stay so others

can benefit from your experience.

Once we've determined our destinations, it's time to turn to the basics of our trip. Food, treats, water, sleeping arrangements, medical supplies, toys—and that's just for the dogs, I haven't even started the people part of the trip! Different dogs have different needs; some have food allergies or need food that is medicated or take prescription meds. You may not always find your particular brand of food on the road, and the absolute *last* thing you want to do is change foods while away from your home base—ughhh what a mess that can be! On one of our early trips we had not planned the food consumption correctly and had to go 2 hours out of our way to get the food our dogs had been eating. So trust me: **plan ahead and plan extras.** Be sure to also have all your pets' medications filled ahead of time and have any health concerns addressed before you leave. Dogs are much like children: they have their favorite toys, blankets and habits, and in order to

make your vacation enjoyable for both you and Fido be sure to bring these items along. Pets can get nervous when in new environments. Having these familiar items can make a stressful situation much more comfortable for them.

At this point I think I've taken care of most of the pre-travel items, and it's time to move on to the packing of the vehicle. Now I do realize you can travel with your pet on other modes of transportation, but last time I checked, the airlines frowned upon me playing fetch in the aisles, and our dogs found it ridiculous that they were not allowed in the

cockpit or "front seat" as they call it. That being said our choice of travel is a vehicle. I really wanted one of those stretch limos you see with a giant pool in the back for the dogs to swim in while going down the road, but that idea was shot down. Instead, we travel in a Suburban (with no pool in the back).

### "Must Haves"

- Pet First Aid Kit
- Extra Leashes & Collars
- Towels
- Extra Water Bowl
- Minimum 2 Gallons of Water

The biggest thing I take into consideration when packing is the fact that my wife likes to stop a lot. And by "a lot" I mean every chance she gets, and that means that the crew is unloading out of the vehicle for a chance to look around and sniff the flowers. This means doggie water consumption and the I-can't-decide-where-is-the-best-place-to-pee routine.

Luckily, once one of our girls decides on the perfect pee-place the others quickly agree that was a good spot. The poop bags must be packed in a handy place, and you need to have easy access to the water bowl and water container.

We learned early on that just leaving the water bowl out in the back of the vehicle doesn't really work. The girls just think it's a small pool, and within 5 minutes I'm on the side of the road trying to sop up the water from our carpets, which leads to the crew wanting to unload once again... As you can see, without the proper planning this can be a viscous circle.

With a little pre-planning you can have a great adventure that both you, your family and your pet can enjoy. Stay tuned for our next issue as the Journey will continue with: "Those-bunnies-look-the-same-as-the-ones-back-home-so-let's-chase-them-and-bark-at-every-animal-we-see-in-the-field-as-we-drive-by-them," and much much more!

### We'll be going back to...

## Holly's Place, Lake Tahoe, California

A doggie paradise, this little slice of heaven is two acres of fenced woodland with four cabins and a no-people-allowed pool. When we arrived, we were enthusiastically greeted by a group of friendly dogs, who all turned out to be other guests checking out the new arrivals. Our girls took about three minutes to learn Holly's "doggie rules," and before I could even get all our bags into the cabin, they had decided the Lab and Rotty next door were the next best thing to rawhides. We really wished we had planned our entire stay there. See for yourself at [www.hollysplace.com](http://www.hollysplace.com).



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# Llyra's Pack

a kid's perspective on  
care & training

by Llyra Sarai

## The New Puppy

**M**y heart was pounding as we drove up to the house. As we stepped out of the car, a pack of Blue Heelers greeted us. An older man waited for us at the door of the house. After greeting us, he walked around to the back of the house, and when he returned, a tan-pointed Cocker Spaniel and four puppies were at his heels. My excitement grew. One of these puppies would soon be mine. There was one little girl puppy with the large, expressive brown eyes who didn't bite too hard and who wasn't too afraid of us. This was my first puppy, who I named Miyu. Everyone adored the puppy Miyu. Everyone bonded with her. Even our older cat, Yuki, tolerated her overly-affectionate kisses. She was the baby. She was our new family member.

**...I felt kind of lost when I realized I was losing my happiness over my puppy and couldn't figure out how to handle all the responsibilities...**

This little baby, however, didn't stay a baby. As she grew, things got more difficult. Those lovely presents she left in the yard got bigger, and smellier. She loved to jump on you; but that soon went from fun to a bit painful as she got heavier and the claws got bigger. The playful nipping got harder, and when she got excited while playing, she started piddling on the floor. Constantly. Before long, being a dog owner began seeming less and less thrilling to the 12 year old me. It was a real chore. I didn't really understand at the beginning; owning a dog is not just about playing and feeding it. It takes much, much more. And there are moments when you get frustrated and angry; you can't seem to get the puppy to remember "no"; you might even yell and shout when you find a steaming present waiting for you in the middle of the carpet. In fact, I felt kind of lost when I realized I was losing my happiness over my puppy and couldn't figure out how to handle all the responsibilities it meant.

One day, my aunt suggested we try books written by a certain dog behaviorist. We found that his techniques really worked for us. We learned how to use a calm assertive attitude; dogs needed to look up to a leader. Being frustrated and angry only escalated bad situations. Pack leaders were never angry; but they do disagree and discipline pack members. But discipline is not the same as punishment; we had to recognize that pun-

ishment was when you are angry and you react out of frustration. However, discipline always involves a calm, assertive and loving attitude.

The first thing we learned was that we did not exercise her enough. The philosophy that we needed was: exercise, discipline, affection. These three things need to come in that order. Dogs' natural tendencies can be seen when they hang around with each other in packs. Packs travel together – they hunt together – they work together. This had

to happen between Miyu and I. So I learned how to master a pack walk. We started walking every day, at least 45 minutes, if not an hour, at a time. Miyu needed the release of her energy by walking; not sniffing around and

playing, but setting out on a mission to walk calmly and peacefully.

You'll notice that when I talk about training, I will use the word "we." That is because my mom has helped with most of my dogs' training. When we brought Miyu home, I was 12, and knew nothing about training a dog. I know I couldn't have done it without my mom. So don't be afraid to ask for help, whether you're 12 or an adult. It can make all the difference in the world.

But most of all, if you want that cute little puppy, realize you have a long road ahead of you when you choose a new family member. Their life is in your hands. The worst tragedy of all is when the puppy grows up into an unruly, aggressive or dominant dog because the human couldn't get their act together. Way too many dogs are abandoned to be euthanized by Animal Control because humans couldn't do the job. From one dog lover to another, we humans are at fault when our dogs are out of control. So, when getting a dog, be prepared to train yourself as well, so that your cute, clumsy handful can become a calm, submissive and affectionate member of your family.

Llyra Sarai is 16 and has three dogs. She hopes to work in a field where she can help dogs and their humans build happier and healthier relationships.

**Comments? Please email [llyraspack@yahoo.com](mailto:llyraspack@yahoo.com)**

# Imagine the Possibilities

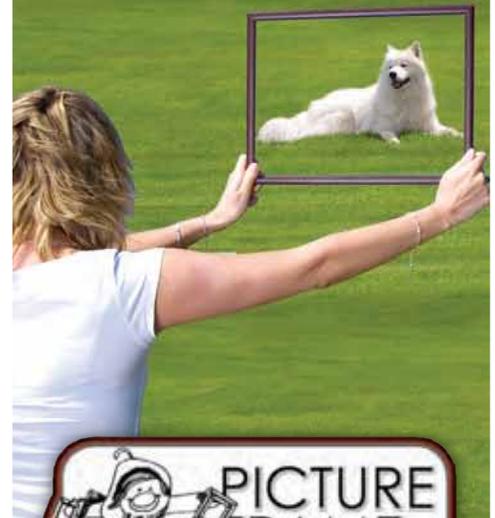
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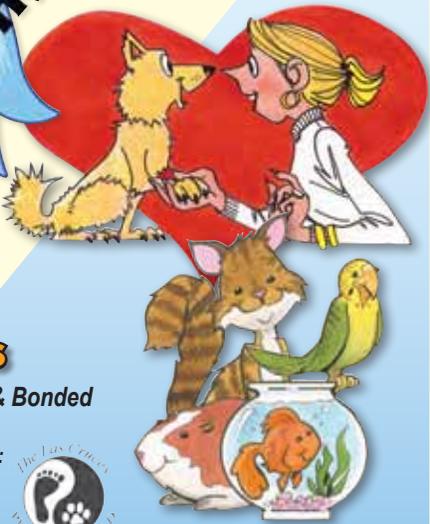
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# In hot weather, leave dogs at home.

On a 78°F day, the temperature inside a shaded car is about 90°F, while the inside of a car parked in the sun can reach 160°F in minutes. Even opening windows or parking in the shade won't prevent a dog from getting overheated. The heat is especially hard on dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paws. With only hot air to breathe, dogs and other animals can suffer irreversible brain damage and even die of heatstroke in just minutes. This summer, leave your dog safe at home.



## Hachi: A Dog's Tale

Rated G • starring Richard Gere, Joan Allen, Jason Alexander

Based on a true story, "Hachi" is a tribute to the remarkable devotion and unconditional love man's best friend is capable of. There are plenty of books and movies that describe human emotions when a beloved pet dies—we've likely experienced it ourselves—but what does a dog go through when his owner passes away?

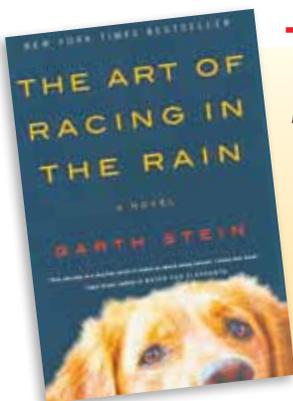
WARNING: You will cry. You will cry a lot. But this movie is worth the pain. Open a fresh box of tissues and let your dog(s) up on the couch with you while you watch. You'll need to hug them.



## Best in Show

Rated PG-13 • starring Christopher Guest, Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Jane Lynch

This classic mockumentary follows five beautiful purebreds and their insane owners/handlers to the fictional Mayflower Dog Show in Philadelphia. A wonderful combination of both subtle and outrageous humor, this show fares best with repeated viewings. Mostly improvised (as were its predecessors "This is Spinal Tap" and "Waiting for Guffman"), the crew brings a new level of quirky inappropriateness to their characters, most of whom who are better at interacting with dogs than with other people. Get a big bucket of popcorn—half butter, half salt—and prepare to learn the words to "God Loves a Terrier."



## The Art of Racing in the Rain

by Garth Stein

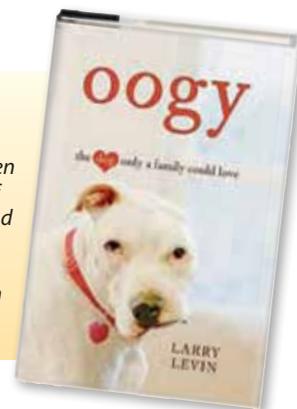
Enzo is certain he's a human soul in a dog's body. He wants to be the best man he can be when he gets his chance in the next life, so has become a student of human behavior and interactions. Through Enzo's innocent and insightful narration, we follow the lives of aspiring race car driver Denny, his wife Eve, and their daughter Zoe. Though this is an easy read, it is not a children's book; it deals with adult themes and death. But Enzo discovers a simple, metaphoric truth: while life is not always blue skies and a clear track, a good driver can still win the race.



## Oogy: The Dog Only a Family Could Love

by Larry Levin

Oogy is indeed a special dog with a heartbreaking/heartwarming story of survival. This is a true account of a puppy used as bait for fighting dogs then left for dead, who is miraculously saved and restored through the efforts of a string of caring volunteers. Oogy finds a home and love with a family, and thrives despite the early trauma. A lovely story, it might have been better suited to a magazine article or short story than a whole book. But Oogy is so lovable and inspiring it's worth wading through the sometimes-sluggish prose to get to know this dog and his saviors.





# Kat's Korner by Kat Lacy

## Hair(balls) Today, Gone Tomorrow!

**T**he heat is on and your kitty is hacking up more lovely little prizes for you to discover, usually in prime walking areas when your feet are bare. So what causes these excess wads of indescribable tubular excretion—and what can you do about them? Well, Kat has the answers for you!

Your cat is shedding more and ingesting more hair due to the increased heat and longer daylight hours. Imagine licking huge wads of hair off your body and swallowing it multiple times a day. Cats are unable to process much of the fur and so it gets stuck somewhere along the way. Yuk! Your cat will have to hack up the fur stuck in their digestive track along with some food or liquid, creating hairballs.

Cats' digestive tracks are shorter because cats are primarily carnivores, making it difficult for them to digest fur.

If left to their own devices, outdoor cats and wild cats will eat lots of grass and vegetation to help them purge the fur in their digestive tracks. This may be one of the reasons cats enjoy catnip. Fresh growing catnip is not only fun for cats; it is also a wonderful digestive aid and can, along with grass, effectively help your cat get rid of their tubular excretions.

If your cat has little or no access to the outside world, try growing your own wheat or barley grass in trays or pots. Leave them on the floor so your cat can munch when it feels the urge to purge.

Here is another solution for these wet surprises: help your cat groom itself, and I don't mean by licking it. There are some great tools available that effectively remove your cat's undercoat, like the Furminator brush. Removing the undercoat is never dangerous or harmful – think of it as using a pair of thinning scissors on your own hair. Brushing your cat ten to fifteen minutes a day for a week can effectively prevent messy accidents, and leave your cat feeling light, comfortable, and refreshed.

If your cat has a serious hairball problem and hates to be brushed, schedule a professional grooming appointment and have your cat shaved. Regular grooming appointments

have many benefits. Medium and long haired cats don't have to swallow so much fur and their self-grooming sessions are shortened. This means fewer hairballs! Unless your cat has extremely matted fur when groomed, enough hair would be left to keep it from getting sunburned or chilled.

Let's not forget about your cat's diet. A proper diet will eliminate many problems, including excess hairballs. Because of your cat's carnivorous nature a grain free diet is ideal, unless you can supply your cat with fresh birds and mice every day. Having too much grain in your cat's diet can cause problems like a dull coat, excessive shedding, stinky stools, ear mites, fleas, ticks, ph imbalances, urinary tract crystals, allergies, diabetes, and hyper-finickiness.

Your cat's eating behavior is also a prime suspect for excess hairballs. If you free feed (leaving food out all the time) your indoor cats, you are asking for trouble. Cats get bored with no outdoor romping activities and will overeat. A ten to twelve

pound cat on a high quality grain-free diet would only need to eat about ¼ cup of food in the morning and maybe, if it is young and active, another ¼ cup in the evening. Older, less active cats can drop to 1/8 of a cup two times per day. Along with fish oils and grain free treats, like freeze dried chicken or fish, your cat will be the picture of good health.

Let's sum up how you can reduce hairballs. Grow grass and fresh catnip for your cat to nibble on at leisure. Help your cat groom itself by brushing daily or making a grooming appointment with a professional groomer. Feed a high quality natural grain free diet, grain free treats, and fatty acids. Do not free feed, and monitor the amounts you feed. It's also helpful to supply fresh filtered water from a fountain. This encourages your cat to drink more liquids which helps solve digestive issues. By following these easy tips your cat will become healthier and happier, and you won't have to keep a look out for those wads of tubular excretion anymore!

*Kat Lacy is owner of Better Life Pet Foods and a Professional Cat & Dog Groomer Edited by: Shannon Ellison*



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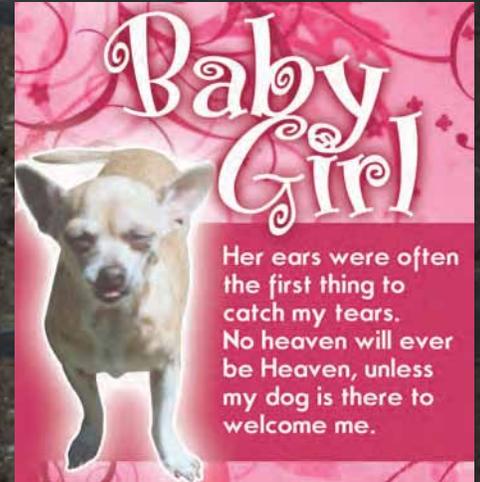
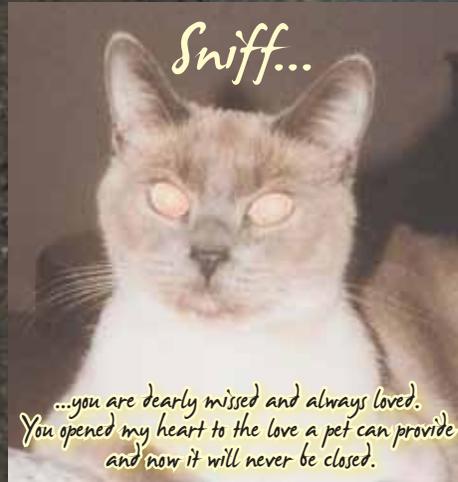
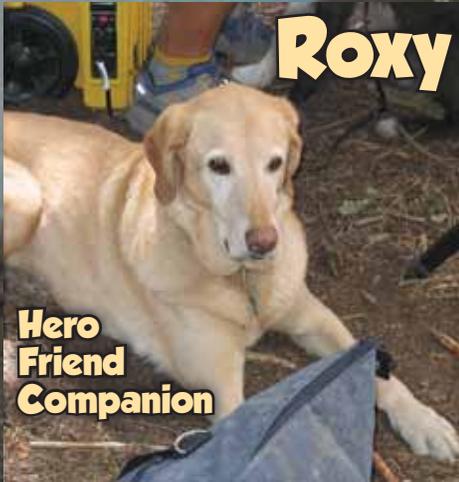
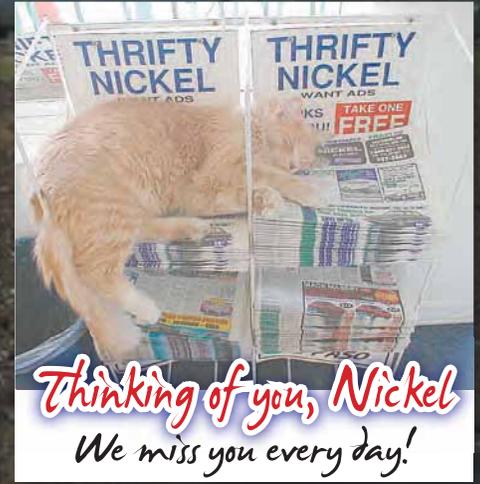
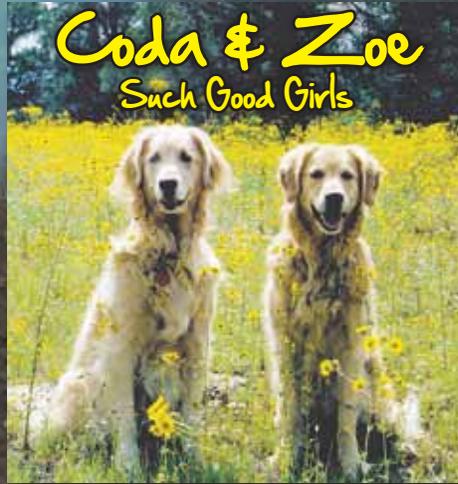
All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

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

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

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

# Rainbow Bridge



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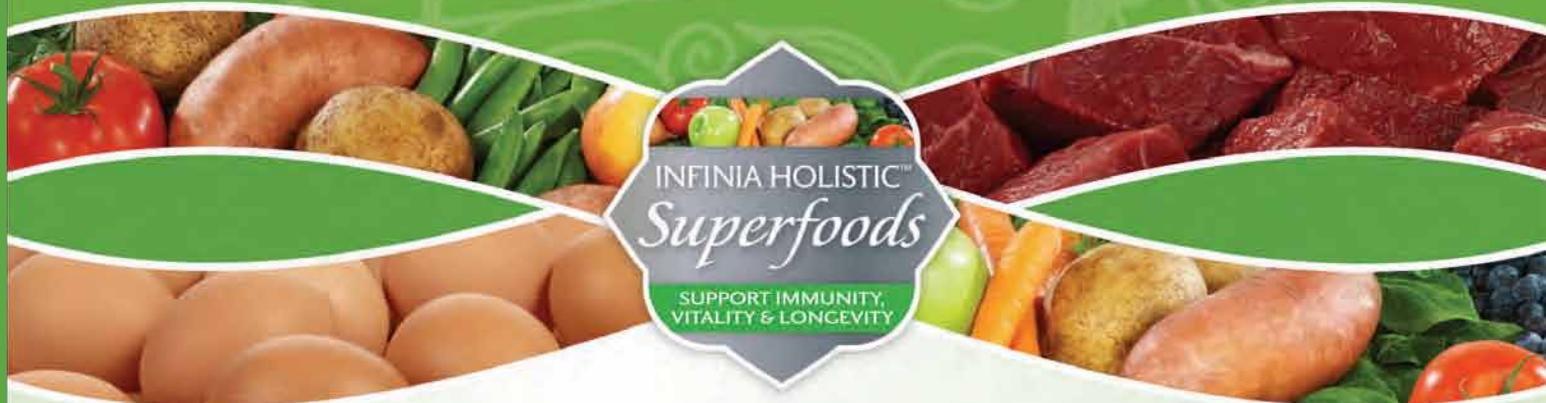
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