

Summer 2015

FREE!

Dog 'n' Cruces

Information

for Cruces Dog Lover!

DOGGIE d'ARTE

Alma d'Arte's AP English class dazzles with four stories of love and friendship.

Page 14

PAWS FOR EFFECT

Homeless dogs and prison inmates team up with tremendous early success in this new program.

Page 19



OH NO, NOT AGAIN

Sorry.

Page 20



HONORING ZENTO

Patrick Strait pays tribute to his Military Working Dog partner and best buddy.

Page 10

PLUS... Walter takes on the National Parks...Jess squawks about his avian friends...Vic's RV goes completely to the dogs...and More!

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The Heat is On!

I'm in Phoenix, it's 7 o'clock in the morning, and it's already 98°—which is going to be the LOW for the day! I can't wait to get back home to the relative cool of Las Cruces. I know, I know, it's blazing hot in New Mexico, too, and I can't help but feel partly responsible. See, it's *Dog'Cruces'* anniversary once again, and I'm afraid the **FOUR** candles on the cake might be contributing to local warming. All kidding aside, it is a dangerous time of the year for our furry friends who cannot sweat—so make sure your little guys have plenty of clean water available and please, please, please don't leave them in your vehicle. Not even for "just a minute while I run into the store." It's unbelievable how quickly they can overheat and DIE—and cracking a window when it's 100° outside does absolutely nothing.

OK, I'll get off my soapbox and onto something new and exciting. We've been hard at work (especially Charissa) on a new *Dog'Cruces* website. I've been assured it will be up and running by the time this issue comes out, so keep your paws crossed! Better yet—everybody get your iPhones out at Yappy Hour and log in immediately! That should be fun! Let us know what you think....

I'm also starting a *Dog'Cruces* podcast (available on our fancy new website). I always think I have a lot to say, but no one ever seems to listen. Now everyone can ignore a recording of me, as well. Truthfully, I love that we can tell some great stories through our writing, but I think with this podcast we'll be able to cover more ground more often. I'm excited to kick this off and see how it develops along the way.

Our summer cover story has become an annual tradition—Phyllis Wright's talented new crop of

AP English students flexed their creative muscles and delivered wonderful dog-themed stories again this year. Phyllis has moved to Alma d'Arte Charter High School over on West Court Avenue. She says she loves opening her classroom door to the artwork exhibited in the hallways of the historic building, and the sound of guitar and piano classes across the hall, and the aroma of the freshly-prepared lunches the culinary students make every day. But some things never change—as always, we had the nearly-impossible task of selecting those few who would be published from among the many stories we received. It was so nearly-impossible this year that we decided to break our own rules and publish four stories instead of three. We hope you enjoy them. Congratulations and thanks to Jordan, Xodia, Kristin and Arianna for their hard work and beautiful results.

Thanks also to Hillary Fuentes for allowing her gorgeous Doberman, *Jenna*, to be this issue's cover model. In case you're wondering, *Jenna* is, indeed, balancing the book and the apple—we did not Photoshop them onto her head. Pretty impressive, huh?

In our Spring issue, Renee Waskiewicz gave us a quick overview of the Prisoners and Animals Working for Success (PAWS) program, initiated this year at the Southern NM Correctional Facility. She provides an expanded look at PAWS in this issue's "Workin' Like a Dog" section on page 19. It's such a great idea, and they're doing work that benefits both the inmates and the dogs.

Cartoon Vic and Cartoon Wayne are back! This time we're joined by my buddy Steve and his new puppy *Wave* in a *Goofus & Gallant*-esque approach to establishing good puppy manners and

habits. Try to guess which team is *Goofus*. The last time we did this, Wayne was in a borrowed cat costume. This time, we bought him his very own dog suit. We will make sure to get our money's worth out of that suit. Heh, heh, heh....

Finally, it's been too long since I've given a shout-out to our contributors, to whom we pay (as Jess reminds everybody is his column) "zippity" for their efforts. We can never thank them enough for providing the content for this magazine. Equally important and appreciated are our advertisers, who are pillars of the *Dog'Cruces* community. Remember, ads for the animal welfare and rescue organizations you see in every issue are either provided for free or at a very reduced cost—which means the businesses that advertise are supporting the whole cost of producing the magazine. Please support them in return.

Enjoy the summer sun and monsoon rains—and remember...there's nothin' like a good podcast to help take your mind off the heat (and muddy pawprints) of the season!!

Vic Villalobos

Mayor of Dog'Cruces

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151 S. Solano, Suite E
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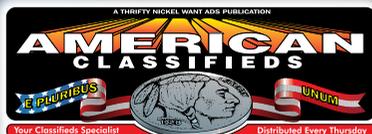
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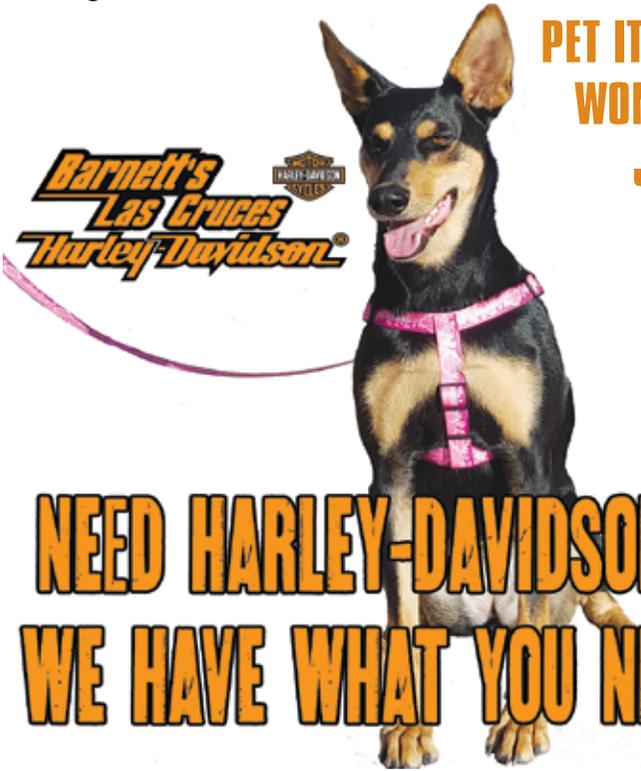
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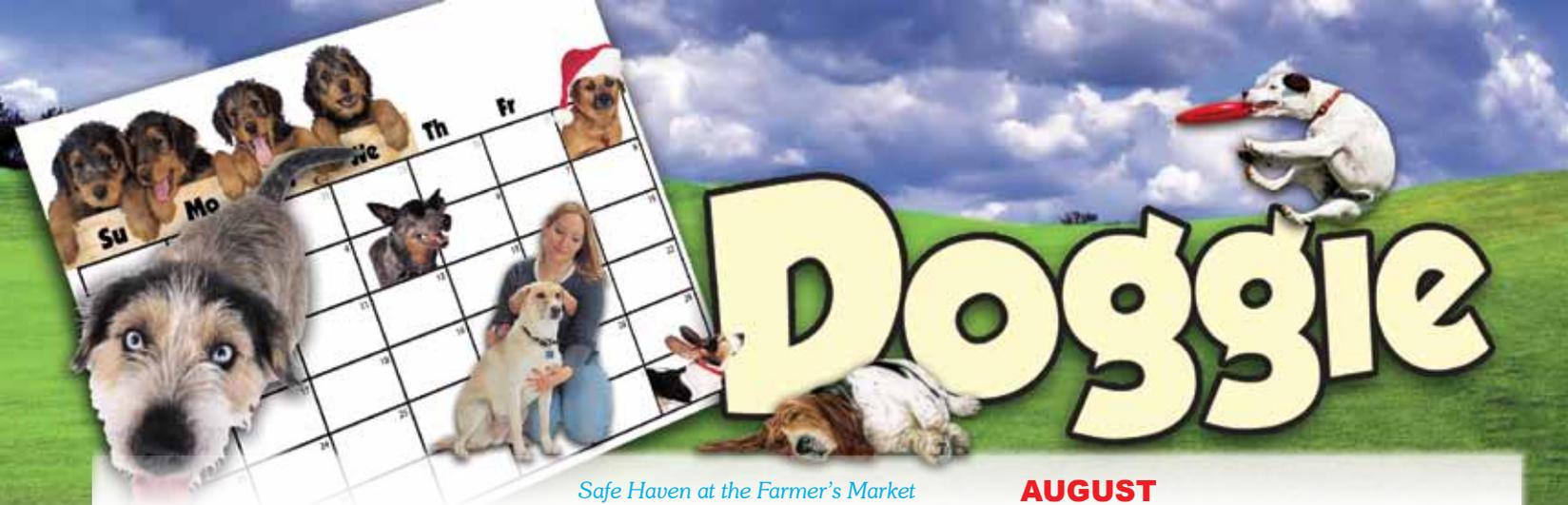
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RECURRING & ONGOING EVENTS SUMMER 2015

Red Brick Pizza Monthly Fundraiser for HSSNM

Thursday, July 30th

Thursday, August 27th

Thursday, September 24th

Visit Red Brick Pizza, 2808 N. Telshor, from 11am-9pm. Social hour at 6pm. Mention "HSSNM" when placing your take-out or dine-in order, and 15% of the proceeds will be donated to HSSNM. Contact Jean with HSSNM at jean@hssnm.org or 575-522-2529.

Yappy Hours

Wednesday, August 19th

Wednesday, September 16th

Wednesday, October 21st

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

Safe Haven at the Farmer's Market

Saturday, July 18th

Saturday, August 15th

Saturday, September 19th

Every 3rd Saturday of the month, from 8:30am-1pm, Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary will have an information table event at the Farmer's Market, Downtown.

APA Adoption Events at PETCO

Sunday, August 2nd

Sunday, September 6th

Sunday, October 4th

3050 E. Lohman Ave., 10am to 3pm.

JULY

Saturday, July 18th

SHAS Adoption Event

Pet's Barn, 1600 S. Valley, from 11am-3pm.

Saturday, July 25th

Dogs Deserve Better "Chain-Off"

Albert Johnson Park, near Branigan Library (corner of Main & Spruce Street), from 9am till 1pm. Come participate in a "Chain-Off" demonstration, bringing awareness to the plight of chained dogs. Special appearance by *Wayne the Dawg!* Dogs deserve better than life on a chain! For information contact Jean at jean@hssnm.org or 575-522-2529.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 1st

Happy DOGust!

DOGUST Universal Birthday for rescued/shelter animals whose birthdays are unknown.

Thursday, August 6th

Cruces Canines "Dogust August" Event

Andele's Dog House, 1983 Calle del Norte in Old Mesilla, from 5:30pm-8pm. Well-behaved leashed dogs welcome at this People and Pet Social. \$5 admission benefits HSSNM. Event theme is Happy Birthday to All Dogs! Dog Owners are invited to dress up their pets. Ribbons, door prizes, raffles and entertainment included. Info Jean@hssnm.org or 575-522-2529.

Saturday, August 15th

Dog Daze of Summer

Horse N Hound, 991 W. Amador Ave., from 8am to noon. The event will include a barn hunt, 8 to 10am, several other contests at 10am, and a Barn Hunt for beginners at 10am. Take the Canine Good Citizen Obedience Test, and try some agility tests! There will be obedience training and demos, as well as agility demonstrations. For more info, call 575-523-8790, email rachel@horsenhoundfeed.com or visit the Horse N Hound facebook page. Free to the public (except the Barn Hunt for advanced dogs, approximately \$25).

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Dates

3rd Annual Bow Wow Swim Luau

Desert Hills Pool, 5800 La Reina (northeast of Doña Ana, off Hwy 25, exit 9), from 12pm to 6pm. People and their well-behaved, leashed dogs are invited to attend a day of swimming, food, drinks and live entertainment. Door Prizes and Raffles! Bring your own towels and chairs. Proceeds benefit Cherished K-9 All Breed Rescue and 2 Hearts 4 Paws Refuge. \$10 per person. Info: Dee Dougil deedee08@q.com, 575-382-9508.

Check the Chip Day

Microchips increase the chances that you will get your pet back if he/she goes missing, but they only work if chip is registered and the information is accurate. Check the Chip Day encourages you to chip your pet, register your pet, and update your information.

Saturday, August 29th

Big Kitty Fix Clinic

Cats only spay/neuter clinic. Suggested co-pay \$45, includes spay/neuter, rabies shot, and microchip, if needed. Reservations needed. Call 575-639-3036 or email corella@zianet.com.

SEPTEMBER

Thursday, September 3rd

Cruces Canines "Back to School" Event

Andele's Dog House, 1983 Calle del Norte in

Old Mesilla, from 5:30pm-8pm. Well-behaved leashed dogs welcome at this People and Pet Social. \$5 admission benefits HSSNM. Event theme is Back to School! Dog Owners are invited to dress up their pets. Ribbons, door prizes, raffles and entertainment included. Info Jean@hssnm.org or 575-522-2529.

Saturday, September 19th

6th Annual Crusin' for Critters

Motorcycle Run benefitting and organized by APA. Call for more information 575-644-0505, and check for updates on DogCruces.com.

Saturday, September 26th

Big Kitty Fix Clinic

Cats only spay/neuter clinic. Suggested co-pay \$45, includes spay/neuter, rabies shot, and microchip, if needed. Reservations needed. Call 575-639-3036 or email corella@zianet.com.

Sunday, September 27th

Fashion Show for People and Pets

Downtown, from 3pm to 6pm. Brought to you by Safe Haven Animal Shelter and Project Mainstreet.

OCTOBER

Thursday, October 1st

Cruces Canines "Howling Halloween" Event

Andele's Dog House, 1983 Calle del Norte in

Old Mesilla, from 5:30pm-8pm. Well-behaved leashed dogs welcome at this People and Pet Social. \$5 admission benefits HSSNM. Dog Owners are invited to dress up their pets for the "Howling Halloween" Event. Ribbons, door prizes, raffles and entertainment included. Info Jean@hssnm.org or 575-522-2529.

Sunday, October 11th

Safe Haven's Annual Open House

Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary, 12pm-4pm. Annual Open House and Adoption Event at the Sanctuary. For directions, go to safehavenanimalsanctuary.net.

Saturday, October 17th

4th Annual PITS for Peace Fest

Pioneer Park. A day of passion for compassion, education and appreciation of Pit Bulls, organized by APA. This day is designed to change the perceptions and stereotypes about Pit Bulls by encouraging responsible guardianship. Call APA for more information 575-644-0505, check for updates on DogCruces.com.

For a complete
calendar of events, visit

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List is updated as events are announced



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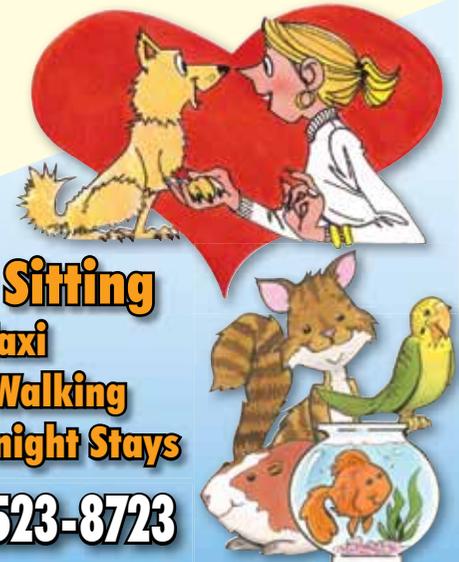
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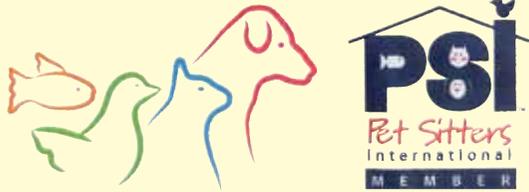


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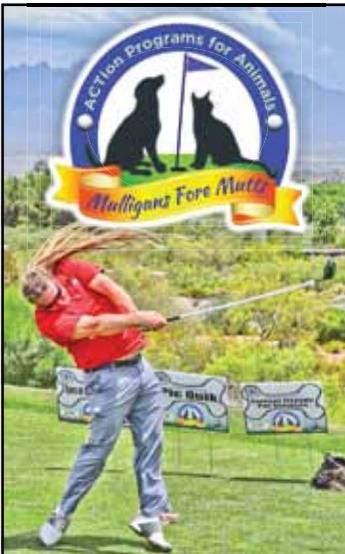
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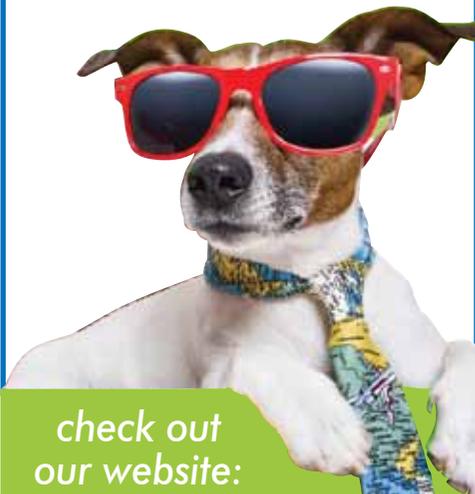


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A HERO'S LIFE

**MWD ZENTO (E-129)
JUNE 2000 - JUNE 17, 2015**



Naval Master at Arms Petty Officer Second Class Patrick Strait contacted us about his "partner and best buddy" Zento, with whom he served in Afghanistan, then adopted upon Zento's retirement. He wrote, "Unfortunately the US Government doesn't technically consider him a veteran service member and there are no honors available. With Zento being 15, his health is deteriorating and I don't think he'll be around much longer. I would like to ask if you could possibly mention Zento in DogCruces so I can share what an awesome dog he is." Strait kept a journal during their deployment in 2006. The following is the epilogue he added to that journal in June of this year...

In 2001, Zento entered his military service at the Department of Defense Military Working Dog (MWD) School at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. He was trained in narcotic detection and patrol (apprehension of human suspects). In 2003, he was assigned to Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, CT. In the Northeast Region, Zento and his handler were tasked with ensuring the safety and security of Naval Personnel and families. Normal work for Zento consisted of inspections at base entry control points, barracks and buildings, and submarines. Zento had an amazing sense of smell, and he set the standard for all the other dog teams in the kennel.

Zento also loved barking at (and scaring) pedestrians while riding in the patrol vehicle.

From May to December, 2006, Zento and [I] deployed to Afghanistan. Zento's main mission was providing detection, deterrence and security of U.S. service members on patrol. His secondary (and non-official) mission to U.S. service members was providing relief from the stresses of the war zone. Zento had a dignity and calmness about him, and just petting him provided a service to the

soldiers that they couldn't get in a war zone. Zento deployed to Afghanistan for a second tour from February to November 2008 with a different handler, Lacy Wall. His mission then was much the same as his first deployment. For both of his deployments, Zento earned the Army Commendation medal for service to the U.S. Army.

In the Navy, MWDs are assigned to a certain base, but the handlers transfer every three years. It is not rare for an MWD to have several handlers in his career. In the [MWD] community, the dogs aren't technically given a rank, but it is widely practiced that the Military Working Dog is one rank higher than his handler. In 2011, Zento retired from military service as a Chief Petty Officer (CPO).

Zento was immediately adopted by [me] and flew across the country from Connecticut to Las Cruces, NM. Zento spent almost 4.5 years with his family in Las Cruces enjoying the comforts he earned and deserved in his senior years. Zento had the free range of 0.25 acres, not just the 8'x 8' military kennel. He also got to enjoy food treats that he hadn't been allowed to have previously. Zento still enjoyed car rides, going on walks, and sitting at the fence barking at pedestrians.

Zento passed away last Tuesday, June 17, 2015. He was 15 years old and went with all the dignity and grace that he earned.

Rest easy. Fair winds and following seas.

Patrick wanted to thank Arroyo Vet Clinic and Getz Funeral Home for going "above and beyond with Zento." Both waived all fees for the services they provided when Zento passed.

And we want to thank Patrick for sharing Zento's story and for their service.



The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM



Canine Flu and You

Many of you probably heard about an outbreak of Canine Influenza Virus (CIV) in the Midwest earlier this spring. The national attention this outbreak received resulted in a large number of phone calls to our clinic from concerned dog owners wondering what this new disease was, and what they could do to prevent it. Here are the key facts regarding CIV...

The first cases of CIV in dogs were diagnosed after outbreaks of an unknown respiratory disease in 2004/2005. These were primarily in racing Greyhounds, and they caused a significant number of deaths. Researchers discovered the cause to be a strain of influenza virus common to horses—thus illustrating the ability of influenza viruses to adapt and change over time. (This is why the effectiveness of human influenza vaccines can vary each year—because the strains of virus causing infections in a given year can be different from the strains of virus in the vaccine.) Scattered outbreaks of CIV continued nationwide for a few years until cases had been reported in many states. These cases, like most respiratory illnesses, occurred primarily in situations where large numbers of dogs were housed in close proximity—shelters, kennels, and grooming facilities. I am only aware of two cases of CIV diagnosed in the state of New Mexico (although there may be other cases of which I am not aware). Our clinic tested a significant number of dogs during this outbreak and did not find any dogs testing positive for the virus.

Symptoms of CIV infection are similar to many other respiratory diseases in dogs—coughing, fever, nasal discharge, depression and loss of appetite. While many infected dogs show few to no symptoms, some outbreaks of the virus have caused mortality rates as high as 5%! It is impossible for a veterinarian to examine a sick dog and determine if that dog has CIV without doing specific lab testing for the virus. A vaccine against the first CIV outbreak was developed and marketed within a short period of time and seemed to offer some degree of protection against severe symptoms of the disease. Just as with human influenza vaccines, immunization with the vaccine does not necessarily stop a dog from becoming infected, but it does seem to

reduce the symptoms and severity. Interestingly, cases of CIV seemed to almost disappear, and very little information was generated about the disease during the past several years.

The recent outbreak of dogs with respiratory infections in Chicago and the Midwest has brought attention to CIV once again. At first, the original strain of CIV was suspected to be the cause. Research and testing revealed that this outbreak was actually caused by a *different* strain of the influenza virus. This virus is an Asian-origin CIV that was not previously known to occur in

the United States. This influenza is a strain that was originally a form of avian influenza (bird flu). Thankfully, the risk for either of these strains of CIV to infect humans seems to be extremely low at this time. Because this strain of CIV is different from the original, it is *likely* that immunization with the currently available vaccine may *not* provide significant protection against the new viral strain.

So what do we take away from all this? First, viruses in general, and influenza viruses in particular, pose significant medical challenges in humans and animals because of their ability to change over time. New strains can develop that infect the same species, or sometimes they can adapt to a new species altogether! Canine influenza is a new challenge for veterinary medicine. The veterinary profession needs to do more research, remain vigilant and be able to respond to the new challenges that CIV may pose in the future. Thankfully, New Mexico has been spared any significant problems so far. In the meantime, the veterinary community will be watching carefully for new information on these viruses as it becomes available.

If your dog frequents boarding facilities, dog parks, dog shows/agility contests, or anywhere large numbers of dogs may be present in close proximity, it may be prudent to discuss vaccination for ALL canine respiratory diseases with your veterinarian. CIV, while it has captured headlines recently, is not the only infectious disease of concern for your dog. Make sure to discuss your individual dog's lifestyle with your veterinarian to determine the best immunization plan for your pet.

While many infected dogs show few to no symptoms, some outbreaks of the virus have caused mortality rates as high as 5%!

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DogCruces ❀ Summer 2015 🐾

b-b-b-bir bir bird

bird is the word!

by Jess Williams

Vic “hired” me for this gig with the understanding I would write for *DogCruces* about dogs. Vic is the nicest guy ever to work for and be around, but he pays me zippity.

I’m going to write about birds.

First-time visitors to my home are almost always drawn immediately to the parrots, and they have to be warned quickly not to go sticking their digits in the cage, because one of those birds—the one named *J.B.*—is mean as a snake. Dave Barry once wrote that, “For sheer hostility in a pet, you just can’t beat a parrot.” He could have been writing about *J.B.*

Up until last month, I only (only!) had two parrots: *J.B.* (a double-yellow head Amazon) and *Tanea* (a blue-and-gold macaw). I was set for life in the parrot department.

But my good friend Mark is about to leave Las Cruces on a post-doctoral job hunt, and he asked if his lilac-crowned Amazon, *Admiral Byrd*, could join the Williams Zoo. I don’t know what the flock I was thinking when I said yes.

Byrd is the smallest of the three parrots. She is easily possessed, however, of the biggest set of pipes—she is the Ethel Merman of bird voices. She is louder than the macaw, and that’s saying something. *Tanea* can be heard from points distant in the neighborhood; I’m confident *Byrd* can be heard in Deming.

It could be argued that—like the other denizens of the Williams Zoo—the parrots are what you might call “slightly spoiled.” They have an indoor/outdoor cage complex, with a little cat-sized door through the wall that allows them to come inside when the weather is unfavorable, or stay outside when the weather is nice.

Las Cruces has really nice weather, so the birds are outdoors a lot, especially during the day. Also, their food and water are in the outdoor cage. In the bottom of that cage lives a box

tortoise named *Lincoln*. Parrots are amazingly inefficient eaters, so *Lincoln* cruises around eating what they drop. He also has a rapacious appetite for cockroaches. There’s nothing not to love about *Lincoln*.

But this isn’t about *Lincoln*. This is about *J.B.*, *Tanea* and *Admirable Byrd*, all of whom like to spend a lot of time outside. It is also about my



Just east of Luke is Don and his family. We don’t interact a lot, but Don told my sister at some neighborhood event that they enjoy listening to the parrots, too. I have to believe it, because they leave their garage door open a lot, and that’s pretty much like funneling parrot sounds into the domicile on purpose.

To the east of my back yard lives Nema and her family. Nema is a minister for a local church, and she and her daughter like the parrots so much that they sometimes appear at my door requesting access to the back yard so that they can offer the birds fruits and nuts. (They also have a rocking horse in their back yard, so you kinda know you’re dealing with cool people right there.)

Parrots live inordinately long lives (as do tortoises, *Lincoln!*), and I have no plans of moving, so having neighbors who are cool with the cacophony of *J.B.*, *Tanea* and *Admiral Byrd* is really key to my quality of life, in the sense of not having to wear body armor to go outside.

I only wear body armor when I’m contemplating handling *J.B.*

If there is a point to this story—and I strongly suspect that there might not be—it could be that a willingness to share one’s life with parrots is grounds for periodic psychological evaluations. But it’s also a great way to get to know your neighbors. And if you have a hungry tortoise in your life, consider yourself enlightened about a possible solution.

Jess Williams chairs the board of directors of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley. His contractor has warned him about further modifying a residential structure to accommodate non-human ease of movement. Seriously, his neighbors have working halos. You have to be of a certain age to get the Ethel Merman reference. Williams does a stunning imitation of her doing “No Business Like Show Business.” There’s a punch line in here somewhere about fruits and nuts, but Vic says there’s no space for it. No wonder his guest writers go all rogue on him.

neighbors, all of whom are saints. It helps that my neighborhood is close to the train tracks, so we’re all used to loud noises, but still.

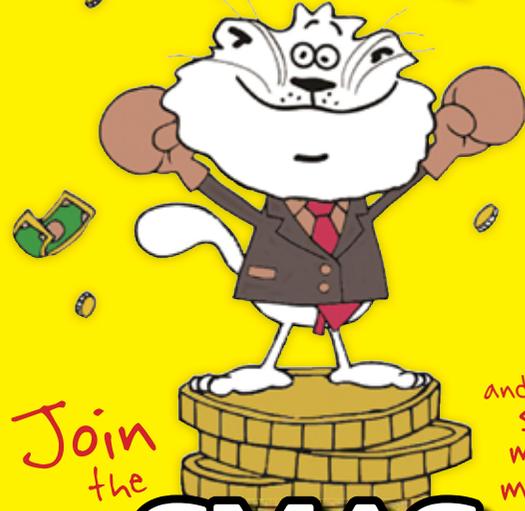
Saints.

My closest neighbor is an affable and mellow fellow named Luke, a bartender whose bedroom window is mere feet from the outdoor parrot enclosure. I would have to sleep in my kitchen to be as close to my birds as Luke is when he sleeps. As a bartender, Luke keeps odd hours.

The birds’ most active times for vocal calisthenics are sun up and sundown. I don’t know quite how Luke manages to sleep through that, but he has never once complained about the daily symphony of *The Three Terrors*. Heck, he still offers me beers from across the fence every once in a while, and they never taste like arsenic or cyanide.



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DORRY MARIE

by Jordan Martinez



I still remember when I first met her, my beautiful *Dorry Marie*. All my cousins had crowded around my grandmother's dog's bed. They grabbed the puppies they wanted with their aggressive sticky small hands and ran to show off to the neighborhood kids. My grandmother's dog, *Chiquita*, sat silently by her bed watching as the children sped off with her babies. It all happened so fast she had no time to even whimper a goodbye. I petted her lightly and placed my cheek against hers. *Chiquita* wagged her tail a little and returned to her bed.

That's where I first saw my *Dorry Marie*, in her mother's bed. The other children had ignored her for she looked too small, and the other puppies had more exciting colored fur, like golden spots, coppery mousse, and shiny nickel silver. *Dorry* lay cuddled in a corner with her head

under her paws and her tail hidden between her jittery legs. A beautiful little Chihuahua with olive-black and honey colored fur. She felt the warmth from her mother and quickly stumbled into her belly. *Chiquita* licked her and tried to soothe her, but she would not stop shaking. Then something incredible happened, *Chiquita* nuzzled *Dorry* towards me. *Dorry* scrambled into my hand. I picked her up in my arms and held her close to my heart. I felt her tiny heart beating against mine, and then she stopped shaking, nuzzled into my arms, and fell asleep; it was then I knew she was perfect.

I was five when *Dorry* was born. I had just started kindergarten. I didn't like going to school, not because of the work, I loved learning, but because of the other kids. I had a hard time fitting in with the children. I was always alone, and so was *Dorry*. One day as I rushed out the front gate late to school, I heard *Dorry* crying. She had followed me out the door and refused to go back inside. She was afraid of being alone, and so was I. So I did what any dog-loving-five-year-old would do. I hid her in my backpack. I made sure to leave the zipper a bit open so she could breathe, and I placed my jacket inside so she could cuddle up in it, which is exactly what she did. She was happy, and so was I. As I walked into class, my cousin Savannah approached

me. She used to tease me a lot, and I tried not to react angrily to her words. However, *Dorry* didn't mind releasing a little anger. As I tried to walk away, my cousin grabbed my arm, and *Dorry* came out of the backpack. She growled and touched her teeth against my cousin's arm to scare her away. Savannah ran towards the teacher crying. It was mayhem! I grabbed *Dorry*, who had pounced toward the other children as a warning, and ran home with her in my arms; she licked my cheek all the way.

Not only is *Dorry* brave, she is also understanding. Once when we were on the road to our camping site with my family, she proved to understand exactly what I felt. My cousin's boyfriend had decided to join us. He wasn't much liked in the family and had started to tease me about *Dorry*. He claimed she was like any other dog and would listen to him when he'd whistle for her to come over. I argued with him, but to my surprise, she jumped onto his lap when he whistled. I felt betrayed and sad until I looked at her eyes, and I swear I saw her wink. She cuddled up in his arms and wagged her tail, faking her feelings towards him. Then she looked at me and threw up on him, all over him. I grabbed her quickly through my laughter, in fear of his anger. My entire family was proud of her.

Another event in which *Dorry* proved to be understanding was in fifth grade. I was sick with terrible nausea, headaches, loss of strength, and chills. I must have been sick for at least two weeks, and for those two weeks *Dorry* stayed by my side. She wouldn't get up to use the bathroom unless I would, she wouldn't eat unless I was eating, and she definitely was in no mood to play with anyone. She sat there by my side night and day for two weeks. The doctors couldn't diagnose the problem, but *Dorry* found a way to cure me. She had healing powers. Every time I was sick she found a way to make me feel better.

Thankfully, I still have my beautiful *Dorry Marie*. I took my high school senior photos with her last month. I know she is getting old and growing weak and that her time is coming to an end, but I will do anything to keep her happy and healthy for the rest of her life. I have been blessed with my special *Dorry Marie* for 13 years, and she still protects me and understands me in every way. I would do anything for her, and she has proven she would too. In the end, time is everything; it is what makes us appreciate life. Hopefully, every dog owner can appreciate the fragility of a dog's life—and stretch each and every loving moment.



GOOD BOY

by **Xodia Choate**



The leathery black nose twitched in the dry air. A soft, pink tongue flicked up to dampen it—and to perhaps catch a taste of the salty goodness of a stray booger. Lazily lifting his head from his sun-bleached napping pillow, the dog blinked his dark brown eyes twice, long wiry hair hanging down into his eyes. His afternoon nap was over. He briefly missed his dream: he had been chasing his nemesis, the mysterious Red Dot, which somehow managed to mask its scent and heat, so that it was untraceable. The dog had been just about to finally catch it when a cool breeze woke him. Now he would never know what it tasted like, what it smelled like, how it somehow managed to continually evade him—even though the dog was pretty sure he had had it under his paw many times before.

Ah, well. He sat up on his short, pudgy legs and peered around his grassy domain. He quickly noticed that, much to his dismay, a pigeon had encroached upon his territory while he was asleep, and, worse, was now trying to steal Human's precious work glove! This simply would not do! The dog jumped up on all four paws and sprinted toward the bird, barking threats at the trespasser as he approached at full speed. The bird squawked and stumbled backward, awkwardly pulling its wings from its body in a feathery squalor, and then flapping away in a desperate act of self-preservation. That would teach it to invade the dog's yard while his guard was down! The dog picked up the glove with his teeth, carrying it back to his pillow, a triumphant bounce in his step, his wagging tail flopping with every springy stride.

He placed the glove—a trophy of his victory over the bird—next to his pillow, but not before giving it a few hard shakes and growling at it, just for good measure. He climbed up onto his pillow, ready to continue his nap, determined to get Red Circle, when suddenly, he caught the whiff of an all-too-familiar scent: Cat.

Cat was the dog's other nemesis, but Cat

was not nearly so mysterious and enchanting as Red Dot. Oh, no, the dog knew very well that Cat was malicious in intent, plotting to first win Human's affection and then.... And then.... Well, Cat would do something terrible, the dog knew that much at least, and he was determined to make sure that Cat never ever got the chance. The dog spied Cat lounging on the rock wall that separated the dog's yard from Cat's, and he approached slowly, his tailing swinging back and forth menacingly, his ears pressed firmly against the brown fur on his head. Cat peered down at him amusedly, a sly grin painted on Cat's white face. The dog growled, the low sound resonating in his small chest. Cat flicked its tail, a clear mockery of the dog's warning. The dog barked at Cat, warning that if Cat didn't leave soon, he'd get him. Cat yawned lazily, and this was the last straw for the dog. Determined to scare Cat away, the dog began yapping his head off, sure that it would—

"Carter! Carter! C'mere, boy! C'mere!"

The dog, unable to ignore Human's calls, trotted over obediently, but not without a threatening backward glance at Cat, who sneered at him triumphantly, mocking his loyalty to Human. The dog knew Cat would never understand the deep love he and Human shared.

"Is that mean old cat antagonizing you again? Oh, you poor boy."

Human picked the dog up, and, cradling him in his arms, carried the dog inside. Human sat down on the couch, and put the dog down next to him. The dog, after spinning around clockwise several times—just to make sure that the couch was structurally stable—laid down, placing his head gently on Human's thigh, his tail thumping against the couch contentedly.

"You're a good boy, aren't you? Yes, you are! Yes, you are!"

Human patted the dog's head and smiled, and as the dog looked up at Human, the dog knew that he *was* a good boy.



THE LAST FOSTER

by **Kristin Wolek**



hen my family first started thinking about fostering, I wasn't sure I liked the idea. We already had dogs, and it sounded like a lot of extra

work to have more. Besides, they would inevitably be adopted, and I would never see them again.

However, it ended up being one of the best experiences of my life.

We began fostering for Perfect Pets Rescue, an organization that brings unwanted dogs



and cats from kill shelters in Georgia to foster homes in New York, where good homes would be found.

In two years, we cared for about fifteen dogs. Each one was unique and very, very cute. I loved every dog that we had. However, my favorite was the last.

When we heard that there was a Pomeranian/Pekingese mix available, I was thrilled. It turned out that he was actually a Japanese Chin mix, but I loved him anyway.

His name was *Rumba*. The workers at the shelter in Georgia named him that because he used to dance around in his crate when they took him outside. The workers liked him so much that he was saved from the kill list for a while.

He had silky orange fur, with a semi-curved, feathery tail, that hung over his back like a very soft waterfall. He also had lanky legs, a significant under bite, and a large forehead. We didn't know exactly what had happened to him on the streets before he was found by the shelter. He was in bad condition. His fur was thin at first, and he showed signs that he had been starving. He had puncture wounds on his face, most likely from an attack by another animal.

For a few months, *Rumba* seemed to be anxious about being hit. However, he quickly learned that I would never hurt him. He had many more peculiar fears. He was terrified of the buzzing noises that insects make. Whenever he heard a fly, he would run to hide in his crate. I felt bad for him, since the area was always rife with stink bugs, who were rather loud.

Once, my brother found an old yo-yo and showed it to me while *Rumba* was on my lap. As he watched the toy move up and down, he sat up and backed away until he was pressed against me. He then jumped off the couch and wouldn't come out of his crate for several hours. Since then, I have kept yo-yos away from him.

He was sometimes hyper and always begged me to walk him. I walked him every day, rain or shine, as soon I got home from school. If I stayed after school for club activities, *Rumba* became very distraught, barking at my siblings, as if they could bring me home so that I could walk him sooner.

These outings built a bond between us. I really enjoyed them, even when the weather was

harsh. In the rain, *Rumba* wore a coat with frog princes on it. For the cold, he had a cozy blue sweater. He was comfy and looked adorable in both.

When he wasn't out walking, he was very relaxed and loved to cuddle. He didn't mind being moved or carried around, as if he was a ragdoll. He often acted like a cat, and would use his paws to try to drag food closer to him, and walk along the narrow back of the couch.

I became attached to *Rumba* almost immediately. I always referred to him as "my dog," despite my family's repeated reminders that this was not true. Every time we took him to meet a potential family or to an adoption event, I anxiously hoped he would come back, even though I knew I was supposed to want him to get adopted.

Over time, he began to change. His coat became less coarse and more full and shiny. His wounds healed, and he became very social. I started to teach him commands and found that he was a quick learner. I took him to the dog park, where he enjoyed running around with his new friends. He seemed to find toys pointless, but he really loved playing with dogs and people.

Everyone who met *Rumba* loved him, yet for some reason no one took him home. His adoption fee was reduced repeatedly as a "special," though my family joked that he was on clearance. I wanted him always to be loved. I kept asking my mother if I could adopt him, myself.

I had saved up some money for a video game console, but *Rumba* was a better deal in a million ways. I don't know how many times I must have asked, but when my mother finally gave in, it was one of the best moments of my life.

I proudly and joyfully adopted *Rumba*! I know for certain that he has a happy home. We moved to New Mexico, and he is still with us! I've learned a lot from fostering and have met many wonderful dogs, but the most important outcome is *Rumba*, my best friend.

ESTRELLA OR THAT LITTLE STAR

by Arianna Torres



I should start this with honesty, just to establish a little author-reader trust, you know? I'm a cat person. I love cats—every time I see one I have to drop whatever I'm doing and point it out. My voice gets shrill beyond my control, and all I can produce is a shriek; then I quietly follow the little feline until it ventures beyond my reach. I have always loved cats. Now let me tell you about *Estrella*.

Estrella was my grandparents' Beagle pup, named for a little white patch between her shoulders. It looked just like a star. Really, that's exactly what she was, their little star. Everyone loved her, she was an instant hit with the family. Everyone except me. I hadn't wanted her, she was too energetic for me, the only child in the world who would want a mellow puppy. I remember pouting about this wiggly little thing, wondering why, out of the whole litter, we had to get this one. But the dissent of an eight year old is nowhere near enough to get rid of a dog.

Of course, over time as I grew older and more understanding, and she grew to be better behaved, I liked her. Little *Estrella* grew on me, and like any dog, she had loved me the whole time. I started wanting to take her for walks, teaching her tricks, brushing her fur, anything. As I recall, she got pretty good at the tricks, obediently sitting, staying, or fetching. All of that aside, I loved her for what she was: a warm, furry, little ball of life.

Then all at once it was over.

I had been eating some tuna with onion powder like my cousin had shown me, just relaxing after school as one does. Then the phone rang, and just as it often is, the call was relegated to my mom. She cheerily greeted her own mother, then she gasped. I knew that meant something was wrong. The rest of the conversation was worried, with my mom rushing around getting dressed saying

she would be there soon. I was worried then that something terrible had happened and she was going to try to keep me out of it, so as soon as the phone was hung up I asked what was wrong.

"*Estrella's* at the vet, apparently something happened at the farm." My mother had seemed concerned, but not terribly. The farm where my grandfather worked! His home was in town, but his heart was out there, and he would always take *Estrella* so she could run around in the wide open fields. Figuring she'd be fine and that my grandparents just needed support, I said I would go, too. We never made it to the clinic.

Just as we entered the city limits (we live far out) the cell phone rang. Despite the law forbidding it, Mom answered while driving, keeping the speaker off. Her face said what I didn't want to hear.

"She's gone," my mother whispered. "They said there was nothing to do but put her down." I was, well . . . I was at a loss. There was no sadness, no pain or sense of loss. Just a feeling inside similar to when you hear something fall down, but it's far away. I felt far away.

We went to my grandmother's house. My aunt had already arrived, her eyes as red as my grandmother's. It wasn't until I saw the loss on her face that it really hit me. *Estrella* was gone. *Estrella* was dead. They were talking about my grandfather now, how he said that a neighbor's dog had shredded her, how he had thought she would be ok, how he hadn't spoken a word since it happened, how he was sitting in his room with a pack of Buds, just staring ahead, how he hadn't said yes to *Estrella's* euthanization. But that was far away too now, I was back in the place where something had broken, and it tore at me.

I ran to the bathroom and screamed. I wept bitter tears, mourning the loss of that sweet

little beagle. I remembered how soft her fur was, the feeling of her paws in my hands, the sweet look in her eyes, framed by those floppy ears. I would never see that face again. The sheer magnitude of death washed over me. She was gone, forever. I don't know how long I cried, I just know that eventually my mom came and said it was time to go, that it was a school night. How could school still be real? How could anything?

On the drive home, after my mom bought me a soda, I remembered something. I remembered a warm sleepy day, when *Estrella* had been napping on the hardwood floors, and I walked up to stroke her. She wagged her tail excitedly, but didn't make any move to get up. I just laid down with her, soaking up her every feature, because I knew nothing lasted forever. That was a good day—remembering it didn't stop my crying, but I was happy to remember. As soon as my mom parked the car, I got out and poured out half my drink, just like my brother had taught me to do when someone passes. I hope *Estrella* likes soda.

I am a cat person, I love cats. *Estrella* was a dog, a Beagle. But not really. Really, she was family, family just like my cat *Luna*, who I fell asleep hugging that night. Family like my cousin who taught me about tuna with onion powder, my aunt and her red eyes, my grandma's decision, my grandpa's silence, my mother's understanding, and my brother's wisdom. She was our family dog, and we will never forget her.

Now, *Estrella's* ashes rest in my grandparents' backyard under a shade tree, her urn protected by her old carrier, and surrounded by colorful perennials. Something else is there too. A little Chihuahua, named *Joy*. She waddles around on fat little legs, her face the picture of dumb excitement. I didn't like her at first, it was too soon. But now, as I rub her oddly proportioned little head, her tongue hanging out, I think she might grow on me.



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Workin' Like a Dog



Prisoners and Animals Working Toward Success

Prison dog programs are popping up all over the nation. They partner animal welfare organizations with prison facilities to work toward bettering the lives of both dogs and inmates. Dogs are rescued from shelters and paired with inmates who socialize and train them in basic obedience, potty training, and puppy manners. Dogs live full-time with inmates throughout their stay, which is usually eight to ten weeks. At the end of their training, dogs are ready for adoption and, hopefully, will find their forever homes.

In January, New Mexico Department of Corrections partnered with the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley to create PAWS (Prisoners and Animals Working Toward Success). PAWS began with five shelter dogs at the Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility just west of Las Cruces. All five dogs had been at the shelter for more than five months. The program paired each dog with two inmates—a main handler and an alternate. The dog-and-human teams attend formal training once a week headed by volunteer dog trainer, Doug Baker. The dogs are allowed to go just about everywhere the inmates go: educational classes, treatment sessions, recreation and visitation. The teams train periodically throughout the day, by themselves and with the other PAWS teams.

Programs like PAWS provide important benefits for all involved. The dogs are given a chance to find a home instead of ending up a euthanasia statistic at the shelter. After training, the dogs are calm and well-behaved and will make perfect family members. They have less chance of being returned to shelters because of future behavior problems. The inmates learn responsibility, empathy and compassion—skills that may assist their rehabilitation. The PAWS program also

gives inmates incentive to modify their behavior, because they cannot have any disciplinary actions against them if they want to participate in the dog program. Correctional officers have found that dogs can boost morale and promote understanding between staff and inmates. These aspects of the program can improve the safety and security of the facility.

Inmates and shelter dogs are a perfect pairing, really—if you think about it, they have a lot in common. Both are essentially “out of sight, out of mind.” Prisoners have been separated from society because of some behavioral infraction that requires time behind bars. It’s somewhat similar with shelter animals—many are unwanted because of behavior problems and are deemed unadoptable as a result. Putting these two groups together is a win-win situation.

Responsible dog owners know that training takes a lot of time and consistency—commodities that inmates have in abundance. They are kept on strict schedules, which makes for a perfect dog training environment. Inmates are taught calm and assertive skills and the power of positive reinforcement. There is no yelling, scolding or physical reprimand allowed. Inmates who want to be in the PAWS program cannot have a history of animal abuse, crimes against children or sex offenses. The inmates have to be clear of disciplinary action at least six months before they are allowed to participate, and they cannot acquire any disciplinary action while they are in the program. Inmates take turns being the “lead” trainer and all inmates are responsible for ensuring the entire group follows the rules.

PAWS is still in its infancy, and although it func-

tions inside a state-run correctional facility, it is not funded by the state. PAWS exists by donations only—though it is not currently a non-profit organization. Last year PAWS received a huge outpouring of support and donations from all over New Mexico. Animal organizations in Las Cruces were especially kind. Doña Ana County Humane Society and the very generous Lorelei Poulin donated twenty dog crates. Ricki Combs at Handgards Company in El Paso donated 10,000 plastic poop bags. PAWS received beds, blankets, treats, grooming supplies, leashes, collars, balls and toys from dozens of citizens. But because it is a donation-only program, it will always also need a steady stream of items such as tiny biscuits or training treats, flea and tick preventatives, large mats for crates, toys and balls. Donations can be dropped off at the Adult Probation and Parole Office at 2635 W. Picacho in Las Cruces or any state-run probation and parole office across the state. Or you can call Renee Waskiewicz at 575-312-1741 for pick up in Las Cruces.

In March, PAWS celebrated its first graduation. All of those first five dogs have been adopted and are now in their forever homes. These are dogs that, without PAWS, might very well be dead today. Eight dogs from Class #2 were ready for adoption in mid-June, and four of them have already been adopted.

You can find more information about the PAWS program—and see the adoptable dogs—by going to corrections.state.nm.us and looking for the PAWS icon. If you are interested in adopting, you can fill out an application online or at the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley on Bataan Memorial. You can also ‘like’ us on Facebook at Southern New Mexico PAWS.



A TALE OF 2 TRAINERS



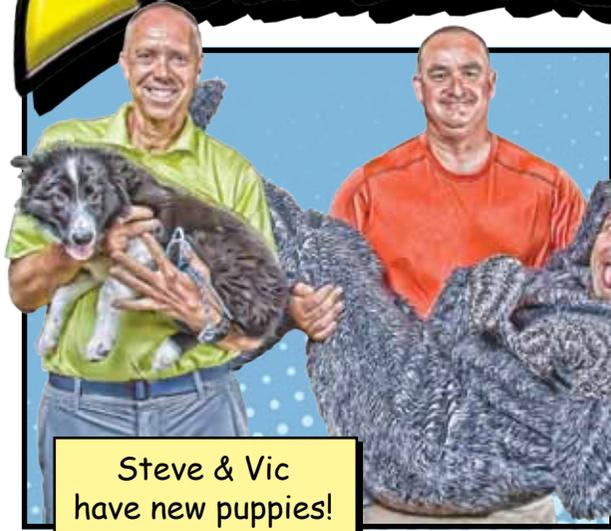
Meet **Steve & Vic**

wave

&



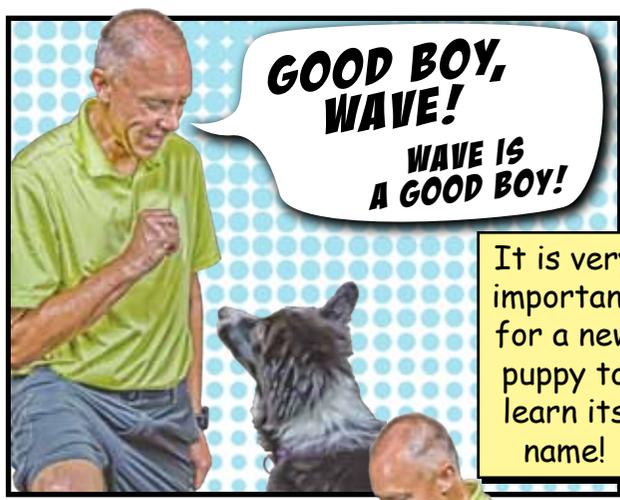
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Steve & Vic have new puppies!

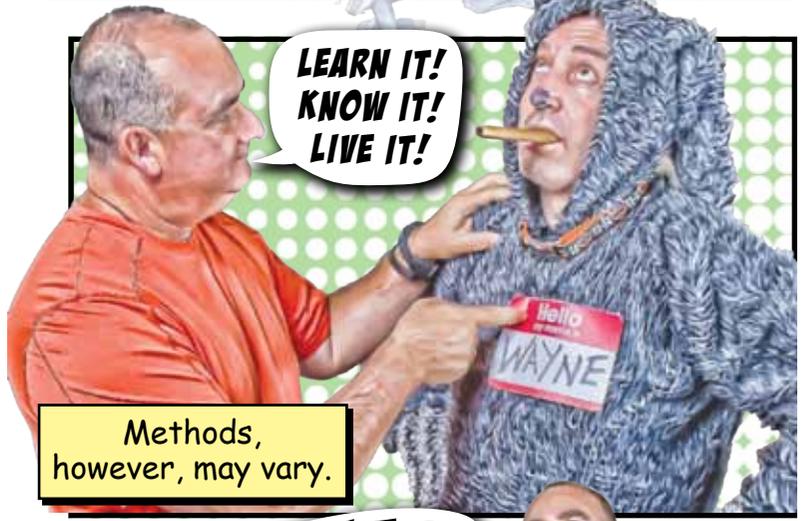


Both puppies need to be trained!



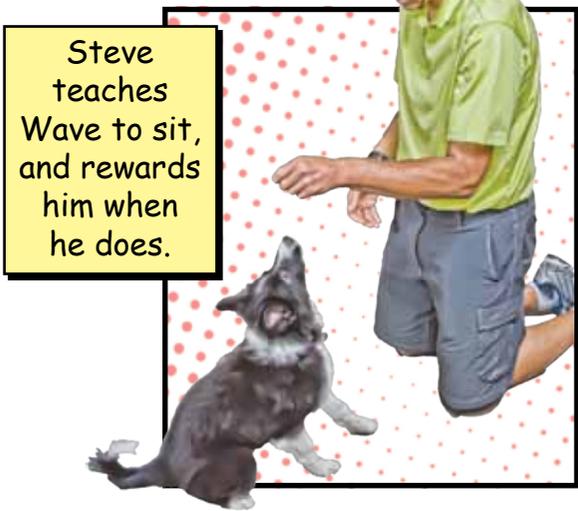
GOOD BOY, WAVE!
WAVE IS A GOOD BOY!

It is very important for a new puppy to learn its name!



LEARN IT! KNOW IT! LIVE IT!

Methods, however, may vary.



Steve teaches Wave to sit, and rewards him when he does.

Wayne already knows how to sit.

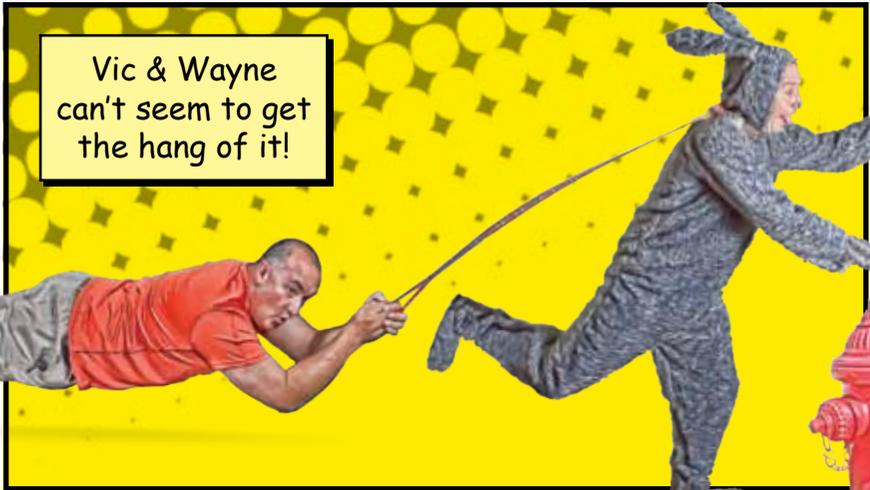


WHAT? I HAVE TO GET UP NOW?!

GRRRR!!!



When leash training, Steve NEVER tugs violently on Wave's leash.



Vic & Wayne can't seem to get the hang of it!

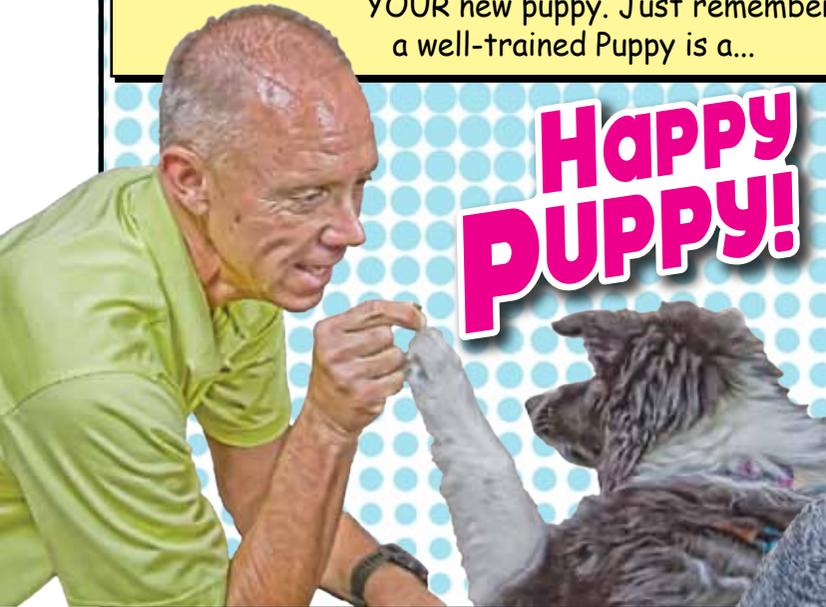


During Potty Training, Steve shows Wave his suitable potty area.



Sometimes Wayne gets it right, and sometimes he doesn't.

These are only a FEW things you need to teach YOUR new puppy. Just remember, a well-trained Puppy is a...



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Traveling With Your Best Friends

by Vic Villalobos

Oh, The Things We Do...

Spring came and went, and we never had the time or opportunity to take even a quick jaunt in the RV. But...we *did* decide it was a good opportunity to make a few changes to its interior—again.

With each trip we took, it became clearer and clearer that WE NEEDED MORE SPACE. It's not really that my wife and I need the room—it's the three Golden Retrievers, who seem to think the entire RV is solely for their enjoyment and use. A bigger, fancier RV is *not* in the budget, so we had to get creative. We figured this lull in our travel schedule would be a great time to implement some improvements—and we did them all for very minimal cost. We are truly amazed that a few small changes could make such a big difference in usable space!

We're going to put all this to the test when we head to God's Country—Montana—our biggest trip to date. Our friends Steve and Nancy (it wouldn't feel right if we didn't mention them at least once every issue) travel to Yellowstone Dog Sports near Red Lodge, Montana every summer. Yellowstone has always been an amazing doggie summer camp and retreat, and this year they also joined the North America Diving Dogs circuit. There's an NADD qualifying event there and 18th, so we packed Ruby's favorite diving chicken and are headed way up north to make a splash—with a few scenic stops along the way, of course.

I'll let you know all about it in our fall issue! Or follow along with my new **podcast**, where I'll be "talking dog," discussing pet-related topics, and maybe have a guest or two. The podcasts will be available on the NEW DogCruces.com website.



It can be difficult to get Crazy Chicken away from Ruby, but when we do manage, it's nice to be able to put it away with the other dog toys in our new cargo hammocks (placed strategically throughout the RV).



Storage for the human stuff—clothes, shoes, DogCruces hats, etc.—was a big issue for us. By adding this simple (and cheap) shelving unit and securing it to the wall, our problem was solved! I imagine it will end up holding some of the dogs' stuff, as well. Everything does.



This was our biggest change. We removed both large, built-in chairs and the fold-out table in the main compartment, and replaced them with a carpet and dog bed (on order when this photo was taken). This will make the time on the road much more comfy for the pooches while providing some badly-needed elbow room for the humans when we're not driving. We bought two folding, leveling chairs that fit the space perfectly.



We were using towels to cover the RV's windows because the old, dark blinds just didn't work any more. New blinds let the light through while maintaining our privacy. The extra light helps the RV feel roomier. Plus, now we can use the towels for what they were meant for—drying wet dogs!



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Penny for your
Thoughts

by **Jennifer Woods**

365 Days of Summer

The day I met *Summer*, Mayor Vic and I picked her up at her former home and brought her to the *DogCruces* office. I filled a deep, stainless steel bowl with cold, clean water, and watched as she plunged her entire face into the bowl, making more noise and mess than two toddlers in a kiddie pool. I was afraid for a moment she might actually drown, but she emerged—dripping wet—looking for the nearest human lap to nuzzle. I didn't realize it at the time, but I had just learned everything I needed to know about this dog: *Summer* puts 100% effort into 100% of her pursuits 100% of the time. She eats with gusto, plays with abandon, sleeps like the dead, and loves-with-all-her-heart everyone she's ever met. She is my new role model.

It's been a year since the manic Golden Retriever joined our *DogCruces* family, first as a foster then as a permanent member. I loved her right from the start, and *Penny* was overjoyed to have a new sister. *Summer* is *Penny's* alter-ego, and has been a godsend for my shy and hesitant Beauty—I can't imagine a better example to help *Penny* become more social and less fearful of the world around her. And for us humans, it's great to finally have a furry friend in the office who truly *loves* interacting with people.

Sometimes we pay a price for this interaction, though. Golden shed, so those dressed in dark colors must be careful not to leave the building with half a pound of silky, blond hair clinging to their clothes after a bout of cuddling. My co-workers who wear lighter clothes aren't immune to *Summer's* stamp of approval, either—after a good, long, drink/swim in her water bowl, *Summer's* supersaturated face and muzzle leave embarrassing wet spots wherever she sticks her nose. You should see people dance to avoid this badge of honor!

We refer to her, fondly, as "Dragon Breath." *Summer* does not smell of brimstone, but when she feels she's not receiving sufficient attention, she draws very close to her chosen target and begins to pant. And pant...and pant—heavy and insistent and hot as the fires of Hell. Perhaps this is why she needs to go

deep-sea diving in her water bowl. It's unnerving and a little sinister, but it's hard to argue with the results: she always gets what she wants.

Summer is not quite as enamored with other dogs as she is with people. She's not *bad*, she just views her fellow canines as competition for human attention. It doesn't help that she's a pathological toy thief. *Penny* doesn't care, and just lets her sister take whatever she wants, but this proclivity has led to some minor unpleasantness with other dogs. So when *Penny* goes to doggie day care once a week, my Golden Girl stays with me, among the bipeds.

Except once. I decided to let both girls enjoy a day at *Karen's* Animal House, but after I dropped them off I kept imagining *Summer* stealing someone's beloved squeaky baby and ending up banished to the "time-out" crates. When I picked them up at the end of the day, I asked how *Summer* had fared with the other dogs. "There was one incident." I braced myself. "A couple of the more dominant dogs were giving *Penny* a hard time, and *Summer* came to her defense." I was so very proud to learn that *Summer* had her sister's back when I wasn't around. Good girl.

Mayor Vic (while on the floor, basking in *Summer's* full attention) once asked me if I thought her constant, crazy outpouring of love means *Summer* understands how her life has changed—that, maybe, she is genuinely grateful *not* to be spending her days and nights in a kennel (however nice), and this is just her way of showing appreciation. I told him I didn't think so. In my opinion dogs (especially *Summer*) just live in the moment, then move on to the next moment right away.

But who knows? Maybe I'm totally wrong, and dogs DO have all the human thoughts and feelings we dog-people like to ascribe to them. In either case, I know I should be more like my *Summer Girl*—all-in, all-out, all the time. That seems so indulgent and impractical in my day-to-day human world, but with this Golden role model, it might just be possible to tap into my inner puppy and live a glorious, endless summer all year long.



A typical *Summer* day at the *DogCruces* office.

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Thank you to all my family and friends, including my buddies at Karen's Animal House, for their support, well wishes and love while I was healing from my surgery.



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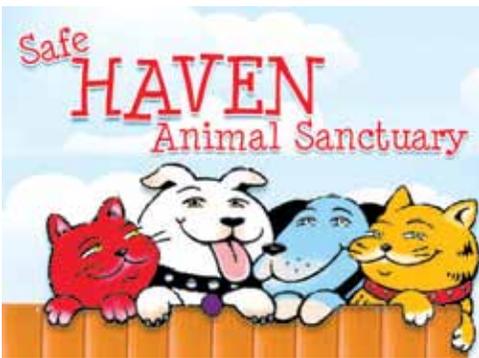
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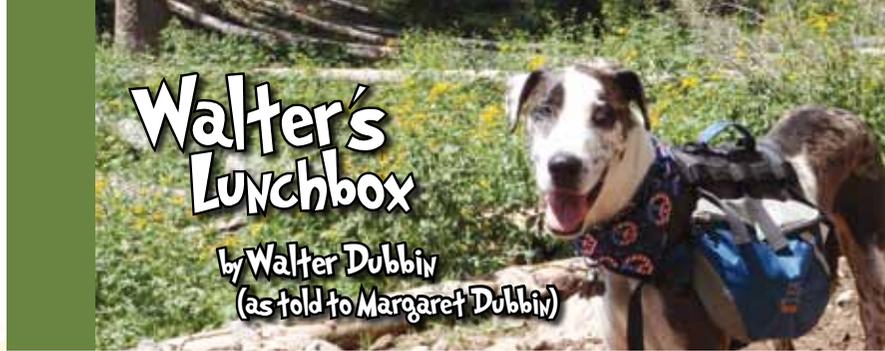
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The Call of the Wild!

Hi folks! Thank DOG it's summertime!! Mom asked me earlier this year what I wanted to do this summer. First I thought how great it would be to just do nothing but sleep, eat, poop, and repeat all summer long—but I do that every season. Then it crossed my mind that I might want to hang out by the pool or hit the beach strutting my studly K-9 physique and attracting a harem of drooling bitches—but I remembered there are usually large quantities of water at both those destinations, and I'm sure Mom and Dad would make me go swimming. So, that daydream was short-lived.

Then it came to me! An adventurous stud like me ought to explore our country's superb National Parks—like Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Bryce Canyon, and Yogi Bear's premium picnic pilfering grounds—Jellystone! Mom thought that sounded like a great idea and got busy planning.

How PAWsome will it be to explore some of the very same back country as good ol' President Theodore Roosevelt once did with his dogs? I was super excited about our trip, until Mom broke the horrifying news that our National Parks do not allow pets on almost all hiking trails! What kind of nonsense is that?! Don't you think ol' TR had at least one of his many dogs with him when he explored these glorious places and established them as National Parks?! He knew that we doggies are just as much a part of the family as those two-legged mini-monsters are. The only difference is that we do far less damage to the natural environment than they do.

Mom explained it was for our own safety—to protect us from area predators like bears and mountain lions. Pffft! Really? Who do you think a bear or mountain lion is going to want to eat first—a smelly dog with sharp teeth and quick reflexes or a sticky, sweet-smelling, clumsy little human who has little chance of escaping?

Do you really think Teddy was offering advice in diplomacy when he said "Speak softly and carry a big stick?" No, he was telling humans how to include us doggies as part of your family—you should never raise your voice to us perfect creatures and always carry a toy to play fetch with! Of course! Every decent historian knows that. Duh! No wonder they don't teach real American History in schools anymore, 'coz y'all can't seem to get the facts straight. Sheesh!

Ok, enough complaining about the ridiculous discriminatory rules established by the National Parking Lot Service. Mom said we'll still have a

fabulous summer vacation abiding by the NPS rules, and she promised to find some equally spectacular, dog-friendly hiking spots outside of the parks for us to check out. Watch for our travel adventures on my blog www.walter-slunchbox.com.

I have two big news, Peeps! Walter's Lunchbox now has two products officially registered with the NM Department of Agriculture and available for special order. They are two of my very favorites: Pumpkin Flavor Dog Treats and Liver & Cranberry Sticks for Dogs and Cats. Give Mom a holler (at the website above) if you want to place an order. Remember—we do this for fun, and all proceeds will go to local area rescues.

Meanwhile, here are couple of delish treats you can fix up for your pups this summer! Stay cool and don't forget to keep your pets hydrated!

Sweet Potato Oatmeal Muffins

- 1 Can Sweet Potato Puree
- 4 Eggs
- 1 Tbsp Honey
- ½ C Flax Seed Meal
- 2 C Brown Rice Flour
- 1 C Oatmeal
- ½ C Water



Preheat oven to 375°F. In a food processor, mix sweet potato puree, eggs, honey, and water. In separate bowl mix rice flour, flax seed meal, and oatmeal. Stir puree mixture into the dry ingredients and mix well. Spoon batter into silicone muffin cups or paper lined muffin tins and bake for approximately 30 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely before serving. Keep in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Grain-Free Banana Carob Chip Cookies

- 2 Ripe Bananas
- ¼ C Dry Milk
- 1 ½ C Water
- 1 ¼ C Coconut Flour
- 3 Eggs
- ¼ C Carob Chips



Preheat oven to 400°F. In a food processor, puree wet ingredients. Add flour and dry milk powder and blend well. Fold in carob chips. Drop batter by tablespoon onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake at 400°F for approximately 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely before serving. Keep in the refrigerator for up to one week.



Dog Cruces Summer 2015

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

Chronicles of Vash

by SHANNON ELLISON & KAT LACY



Coming of Age

Imagine the deep and unquestioning sense of entitlement that powers all felines. Expand it to include a general fearlessness, the honest belief that things could not possibly go any way other than how they are supposed to go, and a generous dollop of pure sass. The kitten born beneath the forgotten garbage bin was gone. In his place sprawled a fluffy-grey behemoth with the bones of a Maine Coon and the physique of Jaba the Hut.

Vash the Stampede had arrived.

His days were filled with restless joy. *Vash* was out of the cage and running loose in the store. He stalked aisles for prey—usually sweet, well-meaning older ladies—and pawed at their bums till they relented and gave him the treats they'd purchased for their own cats. He sprawled on the floor between the door and the cashier counter, forcing every single person coming or leaving to step around him. He stared down pit bulls (who left him alone) and fluffed up to three times the size of Chihuahuas (who did not). He broke out of his cage at night, ripped open half-hidden sacks of the most expensive cat food available, and slowly worked his way through the entire bag, lying on his side and pulling kibble towards him through the hole. He raced through the store during the day, darting full-speed between legs and over carts and under dogs, leaving tufts of grey fur hanging in the air like dust behind a high-speed chase.

Life was good. Until, inevitably, it was not.

Vash woke with a cough. His breath rattled in his lungs, and great, convulsing sneezes tore out of him with regularity. He stumbled over to one of his servants (a Better Life employee) and collapsed, tail twitching feebly, mouth hanging open, breath labored and rattling. He'd never felt so awful. Clearly, he was dying.

His humans took him to the vet. He lay on his back, fat spreading out on either side, as the x-ray machine whirred and clicked softly around him. When it was over, the vet put him in a small cage along a wall covered in small cages, and left with his humans to discuss the results. There were concerns about shadows on his lungs.

Time dragged. A few more cats were brought in, one taken out. *Vash* paid them no mind. Anything that couldn't bring him food or scratch his ears was wholly uninteresting to him, as a rule.

Then she came in.

He knew the moment he saw her—she was *The One*. She was small and had long white fur

splashed with tabby and brindled red. She had long, thick whiskers and jaunty tufts at the tips of her ears. Her fluffy white tail curled around her like a fox. Her eyes were double banded green and enormous. She was perfect.

Vash let out a yowl without meaning to. The green-eyed beauty glanced at him, then away. *Vash* struggled to his feet, wheezing. He yowled again. She ignored him. The attendant put her in a cage two down and one to the right, just far enough away to make it impossible for *Vash* to see anything. He pawed at the metal in frustration and yowled again. No response.

His humans came back to take him away. *Vash* twisted wildly in their arms, trying desperately for one last look at the long-tailed vixen with the kaleidoscope eyes. She was sleeping, curled up in a perfect circle against the bars, tail hiding her face. *Vash* yowled. The beauty's ears twitched. Then the door swung shut, and she was gone.

After a weekend of worried anticipation, the vet called with good news. *Vash* did have an upper respiratory infection, but the shadows on his lungs were nothing more than excess FAT. Months of ripping open bags of food from the shelves and begging treats from customers had taken its toll. *Vash* needed to go on a diet.

That was bad enough, but the fact that he could not get his mind off the beautiful temptress he'd seen at the vet's office was driving him crazy.

Then a miracle happened. Only a few days after his FAT diagnosis, he woke to find her in the Kat Kondo next to him! She had been at the vet's office to prepare for adoption—and now she was here awaiting a forever home. Joy! Joy! *He* wanted to adopt her! He cried and begged to let her out so they could both roam free. He sprawled in front of her Kondo and played footsie with her through the wires. He adored her. He couldn't stand the thought of her leaving, so he guarded her Kondo from possible kidnappers. Then he overslept one morning and woke to go find she was gone.

He couldn't lose her again. But he couldn't seem to convey his desperation to the humans. *Vash* had no choice but to take matters into his own paws. He loved his home—this wonderful place where kitty dreams were real and there was nothing to want. Except her. He wanted her. So he determined to leave the safety and plenty of the Pet Food Store to find his true love.

Vash's new adventure was about to begin.



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**Animal Service Center
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www.ascmv.org

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**Doña Ana County Humane Society
(DACHS)**
575-647-4808
www.Donaanacountyhumanesocietyinc.org

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

**Humane Society of Southern NM (HSSNM)
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email: mail@hssnm.org
www.hssnm.org

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2 Hearts 4 Paws Refuge

2 Hearts 4 Paws is the brainchild, appropriately, of 3 sisters. Debra and Sue run the refuge with support from sister Sharon. They built fourteen indoor/outdoor kennels on five acres of land in Radium Springs, where Debra and Sue are next-door neighbors—so someone is always on-site. The sisters have been rescuing dogs informally for 15 years, and in November 2014 they finally decided to become a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

In addition to the mistreated, neglected, abandoned and lost dogs they rescue themselves, 2 Hearts helps other local rescues, as well. They gladly accept and care for dogs with heartworms or other special needs until they are healthy and adoptable—at which time the dogs are returned to their original rescuers to find forever homes. As long as space is available, 2 Hearts will help. Dogs are vaccinated, spayed/neutered, provided vet care and even surgery, if needed.

Most of 2 Hearts 4 Paws' funding comes from the founders' own pockets, and they are in need of donations as well as volunteers who can play with and socialize dogs and/or help at adoption events. Visit their website at 2hearts4pawsrefuge.com or on Facebook at 2hearts4pawsrefuge. Their email is: twohearts4pawsrefuge@yahoo.com, phone: Sue 575-642-9614, Deb 575-642-6589. They are also on Adopt-a-pet.com and are members of AmazonSmile for donations.



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*Discount applies to New vehicles only. Dealer adds, ie: tint, aftermarket accessories, are additional. Must take delivery from dealer stock. All prices do not include TT&L. Specialty vehicles may be excluded from sale price, ie: Dodge Hellcat, KIA K900, Nissan GTR. Final sale price is new vehicle invoice less any applicable rebates. Cannot be combined with any other offers, ie: affiliate rewards, employee pricing. See dealer for details.

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