

Summer 2017

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Dog Cruces

Information for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!



DRIVEN TO ACTION

Borman Autoplex takes the wheel in a campaign offering FREE pet ID tags and FREE spay/neuter services!

Page 23

MIND GAMES

Make a playdate with your dog that will train his brain in the process.

Page 21

ALMA D'ARF

Page 14

The kids *are* alright—and they're talented, too! Check out the words and visions of this year's crop of Alma d' Arte high school students.

PLUS... Scratch That!... Toby Gets Pissy... Local Business, Common Sense... The Expo is Coming, The Expo is Coming!... and More!



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Life, the Universe & Everything!

We're celebrating another anniversary here at *DogCruces*, which means it's time for my annual joke about how much older we are when measured in dog years. Heh heh. Since this is our sixth, that would make us 42 in dog years. And as fans of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* know, 42 is...The Answer—to the ultimate question of Life, the Universe and Everything, of course. I always figured it had *something* to do with dogs!

It's also time for our yearly visit to Phyllis Wright's AP English class at Alma d'Arte Charter High School. We have three dog-inspired stories from her students published here in the magazine, and drafts of other stories (too long to publish here) available for you to read online at DogCruces.com. Alma's young artists are also showcased in this issue, with Brigitte Kearns' papier-mâché *The Dog Days of Summer* gracing our cover.

Another gem on our website (and worth a visit all by itself!) is *The Day Cats Attacked*, written and illustrated by nine-year-old Nain Hernandez. No, he's not yet among Phyllis' high schoolers, but he is a member of our *DogCruces* family—and we loved his story so much we just wanted to share it. Don't miss this or you will be in "the trouble!"

At least a few of the games you play on your phone are probably geared toward sharpening your mental skills, but you might be surprised to know that your dog can benefit from playing brain games, too! In our

"Workin' Like a Dog" section, Claren Wilson introduces a few of her favorites that you and your dog can try, using items you probably already have at home.

Borman Autoplex has stepped up in a big way to serve our local animal community. Read about what they're doing on page 23, then flip to Kat's Korner on page 29 as she makes the case for supporting local businesses and keeping more of our hard-earned dollars close to home. Communities like ours thrive when we all commit to each other and invest in the success of our friends and neighbors.

And speaking of friends and neighbors—you're going to want to tell *everybody* about the *DogCruces* Pet Expo coming to the Las Cruces Convention Center this September! It will be two days of furry family fun, and we've never had anything like it before in this area. We've lined up law enforcement K-9 demos, obedience and agility demonstrations and lessons, pet behavioral classes, how to choose the right foods for your companion animals, canine massage therapy, and more. Head to our website or Facebook page for more information as the Pet Expo gets closer.

Mark your calendars for Saturday and Sunday, September 9th & 10th—we can't wait to see you there!

Vic Villalobos
Mayor of DogCruces

TOP 10 REASONS to get to DogCruces Pet Expo 2017

- 11 Free treats for your pets!
(and vendors for the humans, as well!)
- 10 Try a K-9 agility course!
- 9 Learn about pet massage therapy!
- 8 Get expert advice on pet behavioral issues!
- 7 K-9 Demos, K-9 Demos and more K-9 Demos!
- 6 Fun for the whole family at the Kids' Corner!
- 5 Pet carnival area! That's right, your pets get to play for prizes!
- 4 Drawings, Raffles, Giveaways!
- 3 Your next furry best friend may be there, waiting to meet you!
- 2 It's more than just dogs!
- 1 It'll be the most fun you and your pet have ever had indoors!

*I know, I know...
but we really
couldn't limit it
to just 10!*

Write to us at:

DogCruces Magazine
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Las Cruces, NM 88001

or email us at:

Vic@DogCruces.com

www.DogCruces.com

Information for the Las Cruces Dog Lover!

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**Health, Nutrition, Adoption,
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DogCruces Magazine

151 S. Solano • Suite E • Las Cruces, NM 88001
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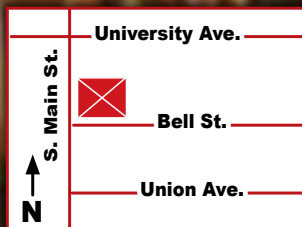
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RECURRING & ONGOING EVENTS

SUMMER 2017

Red Brick Pizza Monthly Fundraisers for HSSNM

Thursday, July 27th

Thursday, August 31st

Thursday, September 28th

Red Brick Pizza, 2808 N. Telshor, all day, from 11am-9pm. Just Mention "HSSNM" when placing your take-out or dine-in order, and 15% of the proceeds will be donated to the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Join us for "Social Hour" at 6pm on the above dates to meet and greet other "dog people." For info, contact Jean at 575-640-6867.

"Happy Tails" Adoption Events for HSSNM

Saturday, August 12th

Saturday, September 9th

Saturday, October 14th

PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman (by Old Navy), from 10am-4pm. For info, contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020 or email mail@hssnm.org.

Safe Haven Adoption Events

Saturday, July 22nd

Saturday, August 26th

Saturday, September 23rd

PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman (by Old Navy), from 10:30am-2:30pm. For more information call 575-805-5338 or email info@SHASpets.com.

JULY

Sunday, July 30th

APA Adoption & Donation Drive

PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman (by Old Navy), from 11am-4pm. Accepting pet food, treats, cat litter, pill pockets, toys and other items for APA's rescued animals and food bank. 575-644-0505.

AUGUST

Tuesday, August 1st

Happy DOGust!

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

Saturday, August 5th

APA's 5th Annual Mulligans Fore Mutts Golf Tournament

Picacho Hills Country Club. Shotgun starts at 10am. For information contact Rich Fisher 575-373-0159, fishyankees@sbcglobal.net

Doggie

or Andrea Sparkevicius, 575-636-9080, sparkeva@yahoo.com.

Monday, August 7th

Spay/Neuter Clinic by Dr. Starr

SNAP office, 2405 W. Picacho. Pre-registration required. Call 575-524-9265 for more information.

Tuesday, August 8th

Restaurants for Rescues

Caliche's, 590 S. Valley Dr., and 131 N. Roadrunner Pkwy (both locations) from 11am-10pm for National Frozen Custard Day. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to APA. For more information call APA at 575-644-0505.

Thursday, August 10th

Restaurants for Rescues

Pecan Grill & Brewery from 7pm-10pm. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to APA. For more information call APA at 575-644-0505.

Tuesday, August 15th

National "Check the Chip" Day

Pet parents are encouraged to take a moment to ensure that their pet is microchipped and that the information is up-to-date.

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

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Dates



Wednesday, August 16th

Yappy Hour

St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, outside on the patio and lawn, from 6-8pm. Music, games & door prizes. Free goodie bags for the dogs. Food & drink, including wine and beer, available from the menu. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. \$5 donation at the door benefits DACHS & SNAP. For information call 575-642-2648.

Thursday, August 17th

Safe Haven Adoption Event

Natural Grocers, 3970 E. Lohman, from 12pm-4pm. For more information call 575-805-5338 or email info@SHASpets.com.

Saturday, August 19th

APA Adoption & Donation Drive

Sam's Club, from 11am-4pm. Canned food, dry food, treats, toys, litter, and cleaning supplies needed. 575-644-0505.

Sunday, August 27th

APA Adoption & Donation Drive

PetCo, 3050 E. Lohman (next to Ross) from 11am-4pm. Donations of pet food, treats, toys and other items are needed for APA's rescue animals and food bank. 575-644-0505.

Monday, August 28th

Rainbow Bridge Remembrance Day

In honor of all of our pets with fur, feathers, or fins to whom we have said farewell.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 9th and Sunday, September 10th

Dog'Cruces Pet Expo

Las Cruces Convention Center, from 10am-5pm, \$5/person. The Dog'Cruces Pet Expo is a two-day event that gives pet lovers the opportunity to discover pet services and products available in the Mesilla Valley. Whether attendees are looking for a new pet, obedience classes, cool new products, top-quality food and treats, veterinary care, or even family pet photos, we bring all of the information and contacts together in one place. For more information go to www.dogcrucespetexpo.com.



Sunday, September 17th

APA Adoption & Donation Drive

PetSmart, 2200 E. Lohman (by Old Navy), from 11am-4pm. Seeking donations of pet food, treats, cat litter, pill pockets, toys and other items. 575-644-0505

Wednesday, September 20th

Yappy Hour

St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, outside on the patio and lawn, from 6-8pm. Music, games & door prizes. Free goodie bags for the dogs. Food & drink, including wine and beer, available from the menu. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. \$5 donation at the door benefits DACHS & SNAP. For information call 575-642-2648.

OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 18th

Last Yappy Hour of 2017

St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, outside on the patio and lawn, from 6-8pm. Music, games & door prizes. Free goodie bags for the dogs. Food & drink, including wine and beer, available from the menu. Well-behaved, leashed dogs welcome. \$5 donation at the door benefits DACHS & SNAP. For information call 575-642-2648.



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Scratching the Surface

Maybe the number one question I've been asked in all the years I've practiced is "why does my dog scratch?"—or some variation of the same. It's a very common problem, but it doesn't always have an easy answer. In this issue of *DogCruces*, let's spend a little time talking about "the itchy dog."

The skin is the largest organ in the body, and unlike many organ systems it is very visible—at least on the surface. I guess if we could see our dogs' internal organs we might have even more questions about them. But the ability to see the skin, and the fact that the skin is directly exposed to a harsh external environment makes it an easy target for concern and attention. Owners can see rashes, bumps, hair loss, etc., so they can easily bring these conditions to their veterinarian's attention, as well. You might think this would make things easy, but unfortunately the skin has many different disease conditions, and only a limited number of ways to react to them—so diagnosis can be tricky. Hair loss, redness, color change, bumps, and scabs are a few of the things we might see. And some conditions result in no visible reaction at all! But none of these are specific to any one condition, so a significant amount of detective work might be involved. And almost all of these conditions are very likely to cause some degree of itching.

So just what is it that makes a dog itch? Answer number one: chemicals! A huge number of chemical signals are taking place in the body at all times. In the skin, these chemical signals frequently stimulate the release of other chemicals that cause burning, irritation and itching. Let's take allergies, for example. Most of us know the misery of suffering from the effects of allergies—itchy eyes, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, sinus drainage, etc. No need to expound on it, you know what they are. The reason we, as humans, react this way is because the cell that is responsible for most of these reactions, the mast cell, lives mainly in our respiratory systems. Mast cells are like little bombs that are full of chemicals that wage warfare on our respiratory tract.

Make them angry and they burst open to release their chemical barrage on our bodies. Histamines are one major group of these chemicals, so it makes sense that "anti-histamines" are the main drug we take to control our allergy symptoms. For your dog the same thing is true, with one major difference—the mast cells that release these chemicals live mostly in their skin! Now it makes sense that your dog scratches like crazy at the same time of year that you are taking an antihistamine every day for your hayfever.

A list of all the possible things that can make

... the skin has many different disease conditions, and only a limited number of ways to react to them—so diagnosis can be tricky.

a dog itch would be huge, so I'll just address a few of the major ones. Keep in mind that many dogs are affected by more than one of these at the same time. Nationwide, parasites of the skin such as fleas and ticks have always been number one. We

have such amazingly effective drugs to treat these now (compared to only a decade ago) that no dog should really have to suffer from these devilish little pests. But in Las Cruces, our dry, desert climate isn't as hospitable to fleas and ticks as many locations, so we don't see the number of parasites here that other areas of the country do.

I think the biggest cause of itching for dogs in our area is allergies (sometimes called atopy, the term for a genetic tendency to be allergic). That, combined with dry skin due to our very dry climate, is a major reason for our pets to itch. And by allergies, I mean pollen—grass, trees, bushes, and the like. The same things that make us humans have our respiratory signs. This might not be what some people want to hear...but food allergies, which can manifest the same way as atopic dermatitis, are not as frequent a cause of allergies as many people want to believe. Grain-free diets may be beneficial to a small number of dogs, but in reality most allergic dogs are not allergic to food. If they are, grains or carbohydrates are not the major cause of food allergies anyway—protein is. And a dog that is truly food allergic is often so genetically inclined to allergies that they are allergic to environmental allergens too! Certainly some dogs are food allergic, but



DogCruces • Summer 2017

The Vet's View

by
Dr. Scott Pirtle, DVM

of the "Itchy Dog"

that can be a challenging mystery to unravel. Suffice it to say that if your dog is itchy, buying a different brand of food or going to a grain-free diet is rarely the answer. It might help some dogs, but I personally don't see it help as much as many people think it will.

Additional causes of itching can include other skin parasites such as mites. These are not visible like fleas and ticks and can be more difficult to diagnose and tougher to treat. Skin infections contribute significantly to itching, and these include bacteria, yeast, and ringworm (dermatophytes, or a skin fungus). Skin infections are sometimes a primary disease, but most often they are secondary to something else. The bacteria and yeast on the skin are very opportunistic and will overpopulate easily if some other condition is present. The ear canal is a continuation of the skin, so these infections often explode in the warm, moist environment of the ear canal; and this is especially true with underlying allergies!

Hormonal conditions cause a significant number of skin symptoms, including itching. Thyroid disorders or conditions that affect a dog's adrenal gland function can be major players. Autoimmune disorders, though less common, can cause some very severe skin conditions that can cause a tremendous amount of itching, as well. Genetic skin conditions can be a factor. Some dog breeds suffer from their own unique diseases that have genetic causes. Plain old "dry skin" is an issue here, particularly in the winter when humidity is very low outside,

(stiff plant or flower bristles)—the list goes on and on and on.

The bottom line is this—a quick answer to why your dog is itchy may not be as obvious as you might hope. Just because we can all see the skin doesn't always mean the cause is obvious! Your veterinarian will probably have a long list of possible causes in mind when you ask about your pet's itchy skin. And a methodical list of questions and testing might be needed to try to get to the bottom of it.

In our next issue of *DogCruces* I want to go over the many treatment options available for your itchy pet, including some very exciting, newer types of treatments that avoid the use of steroids, which have long been our most effective tool to control itching. Steroids work well but come with lots of side effects. By the next issue we'll be in the middle of our fall allergy season, so it should be a timely discussion. In the meantime, keep an eye on your dog's skin. It might be telling you something about his overall health. It could be time to go see your veterinarian!

I think the biggest cause of itching for dogs in our area is allergies.... That, combined with dry skin due to our very dry climate, is a major reason for our pets to itch.



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C'EST LA PEE

by
Jess Williams



When Charissa, my taskmaster, told me that the theme for this issue was going to center around the original artwork of the students at Alma d' Arte, I was jazzed.

Back before the earth cooled, I was a pimply-faced kid at Court Junior High School, where those Alma kids do their thing these days. Kathy Lopez was my art teacher. The classroom was on the bottom northwest corner of the building, right next to the irrigation ditch on the west side of the school.

Ms. Lopez taught me a lot of things about art. I know this only because I passed the class. However, the only thing I have retained all these years is that, when drawing a human face, you first draw the oval of the face, and then you place the eyes at the center of the oval. We have big foreheads, she told us. I've been studying foreheads ever since, and she was (still is) absolutely right.

So now that's something you know.

Ms. Lopez's class room smelled like paint and markers. It was heavenly. I love the idea that the whole school smells that way now. I really hope that Room 22—where my Dad taught—smells like

an art room. When he taught there, it smelled mostly of pigeon poop from the flockers who perched all day on the little air-conditioning unit.

Ms. Lopez would be the first person to tell you that I am not a terribly artistic person. Actually, I'd be the first to tell you; she would merely nod at you fever-

ishly if she was standing behind me and overheard me make the assertion. Her energetic nod would be her way of saying, "He truly sucks at art."

After I wandered off to make a drink or something, she'd confide in you. "He can't even draw stick figures," she'd say, "but for some reason he has pretty good taste in art, and he has quite a nice collection at his house. I'm pretty sure he's compensating for his inability to trace his own hand with any accuracy."

My art collection is eclectic. The pieces range from refrigerator art created by my niece in her infancy to oil paintings and watercolors and charcoal drawings. I even have a large piece that was originally a bed sheet. The artist dipped the bedsheets in concrete and then painted on the rough, crinkly surface. It takes up a whole wall in my bedroom. Not many people like it, but I do.

Outside, I have a mural that was commissioned in 2005 by Mesilla artist Preciliana Sandoval. It shows a lush green riverbank through which the vibrant blue river flows. Above, in the azure sky, is the message I asked her to convey with the piece: Restore the Rio Grande.

Perhaps my most valued piece of art is a custom-built Kyther pool table made in 2005 by Las Cruces craftsman Kerry Rhodes. It eats up the largest room in my house, and it is never used for piling stuff on. It's a pool table, and I play pool with friends and neighbors quite frequently. It is stunningly beautiful.

Toby knows it's my most prized possession, so of course he uses it when he needs to let me know he's mad at me about something or another. Most frequently, this happens if I go on a trip and leave him in the care of someone else for any length of time. Upon my return, he smiles and dances and cavorts like the happiest dog in the world.

Then he remembers that I left him.

The celebration abruptly stops and he goes into the laundry room (there is even art in

the laundry room) where he sulks until he hears me getting ice from the freezer door. Then he comes into the pool room, looks me straight in the eye, and pees on a leg of the pool table. I can scream if I want, but I've learned it's better to just go with the flow (as it were) and proceed with a quick clean-up after he's had his say. In the moment when I'm cleaning up the puddle, he forgives me for my transgression, and life gets back to normal.

In the pool room is another mural by Preciliana. It depicts parrots in a forest. Toby never barks at it the way he barks at the actual parrots. He does, however, look directly over it when we have to go through our little ritual in the aftermath of his having had his feelings hurt.

I tell you all of this because Charissa insists on 800 words. I hesitate to think what she might do to my pool table if she were angry about something. She's considerably taller and more dexterous than Toby.

In any case, I'm honored to have my 800 words alongside the artwork of the Alma students. Rock on, kids!

Jess Williams chairs the Board of Directors of the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley. Toby is a vaguely evil and consistently charming Yorkshire terrier. Charissa is probably not capable of doing anything evil, but testing that theory is not today's objective.





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Many thanks to Alma d' Arte's digital design teacher, KC Cherkasky, and art teacher, Sheri Doil-Carter, for encouraging their students to focus on dog portraits for *DogCruces Magazine*!

Our students' short stories this year draw attention to the ways that even good people can become so preoccupied with the demands of their own lives, they can overlook the larger impact their choices have on everyone around them, including man's best friends.

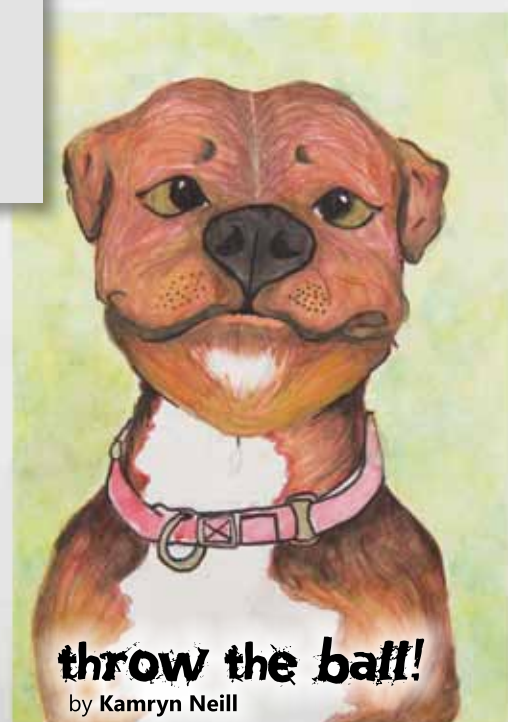
—Phyllis Wright

beau by Blanca Martinez



little wolf by Dolly "Lama" Diaz

xoloitzcuintli
by Aurora Courts



throw the ball!
by Kamryn Neill

photos by John Connell Photography



blind love

by Eric Acosta

Soft sounds of tiny toenails awkwardly prancing on the cement served as an audible tracker of a small dog with patches of hair that would make you think he was either a victim of abuse or of premature balding, neither of which was the case. The dog's mangy coat seemed to be a natural occurrence, just like all his other awkward features, which had prompted Animal Control's pursuit. The dog's hanging tongue, patchy hair, bugged-out eyes, and jagged overbite drew the attention of the entire neighborhood. People were utterly terrified of what they described as the "chupacabra" or "zombie demon"—surely a devil resided in this 10-pound, pointy-eared pup with a dumbfoundedly cheerful expression cemented onto his face! The neighborhood called for the dog to be taken away from the public's eye, and it was Animal Control's mission to do just that. He was inevitably caught and taken to the shelter, and because of his ghastly appearance, his breed was listed as "Unknown."

Later that week, a little girl named Molly hopped into her father's old van. Molly had been born blind, but with her father's help she conquered the challenges that her disability presented. That day was her 11th birthday, which was especially exciting because her father had promised her she could get her first dog. Her father started the car, and they began their journey to the shelter. Molly imagined cuddling her dog at night, putting sweaters on it during winter time, and taking it for evening walks. They finally arrived at the shelter, and Molly's heart was beating fast with joy.

A short, bearded worker guided them through a vocal array of excited dogs. They were barking loudly, and all eyes were filled with hope. Their bursts of energy were conjured from the thought of being let out of their cages. The worker lead Molly and her father to an outside area filled with small and medium-sized dogs. He turned to Molly's father and started talking to him about his own dog. As they talked, a joyful little dog with patchy hair barked insistently at Molly. His strange bark made her laugh, and she rubbed her hands through the puffy patches of hair while he licked happily at her socks. The little dog danced in circles around her legs and followed her diligently as she walked around the area. She started to pet other dogs but her mind was locked on the awkward sound of the patchy-haired dog coming closer from behind her. She had made her decision and picked up the little dog. She carried him over to her father so that she could tell him she was ready to take her new dog home.


Molly's father was still talking to the short, bearded man, so she gently pulled on the back of his sleeve to draw his attention. He turned around with a smile that immediately faded to a look of fear and disgust. He took a step backward and felt his stomach turn as his grinning daughter triumphantly held up the monstrous looking dog. Embarrassed and almost queasy, her father decided it was time to leave and insisted they visit the local pet store on their way home.

Molly was still daydreaming about her very own dog, but now her dream was about the dog from the shelter. She imagined braiding the thin patches of hair that were on his pinkish brown body. After meeting sleek, sweet-smelling pure breeds at the pet store for a good fifteen minutes, Molly told her father she had chosen the dog that she wanted. Her father was ecstatic and asked her which dog. When she told him that she wanted the patchy-haired dog from the shelter, his tone turned melancholy. He told her they couldn't get the dog she wanted because it looked sick. He claimed it looked half dead and would require a lot of extra work because of its health conditions. Molly said nothing—she was shocked by her father's dread that the dog would be hard to care for because he might have health issues. She knew her father wasn't sure if the dog had ever had any problems. It was true that the dog she wanted wasn't like most dogs, but that's what made him special to her.

She was quiet during the car ride home, not because she was daydreaming, but because she was sad. She had thought she would be returning home that day with a new best friend, but instead she had nothing but a heavy heart. When they got home she ran to her room and refused to come out. Her father could hear the soft sounds of her crying. That pierced his heart like a rusty knife. How could he have ruined her birthday like this? He knew she had been looking forward to this day, and he had completely let her down. His guilt overwhelmed the embarrassment that would have kept him from ever returning to the shelter.

The next morning he did return, walking past the concerned faces of the workers who had seen him pale and anxious the day before, and filled out the paperwork for the patchy-haired dog. Then he mustered up all of his courage and picked up the small dog, thankful that he hadn't yet eaten breakfast. The office lady congratulated him on his way out and called him a life saver. The little dog had been scheduled to be put down that very morning. He stared into the dog's bugged eyes while the pup stared back happily with his long tongue protruding. He was completely unaware of the fate from which he had just been saved. Molly's father sighed deeply, but he smiled tenderly at the dog—maybe he wasn't so ugly after all.

When Molly woke up, she felt something warm at her feet. She reached her hand out, felt the familiar wisps of hair, and pulled the small dog closer towards her, a sleepy smile forming on her face.





big man

by Olivia Star Kilpatrick

The day was Sunday, and while many were out basking in the sun and the heat, enjoying the first day of summer, Ashanti felt suffocated by the weather. The sun was lashing down on her black hair, heating it to temperatures that could sizzle water. Even when she returned home, the humidity lingered, and it sat on her chest, quickly extinguishing any energy she had left in her.

There was only one thing that bothered Ashanti much more than the weather—her mother’s rule that her dog, Big Man, a bumbling old pup that waddled with a limp from the time he’d been clipped by a passing car, was not allowed inside under any circumstances. In the winter, he lived in a small plastic doggy igloo that Ashanti had stuffed with polyester blankets, and he didn’t seem to be struggling with that. Winters never really got cold in New Orleans anyways, but the summers were unspeakably hot. Her mother was unyielding, and Big Man had to stay outside, rain, snow, or shine. It wasn’t that her mother didn’t like Big Man, but she worked multiple jobs and told Ashanti that she had much more to worry about than fishing dog hair out of the grooves of their corduroy sofa.

Ashanti pulled back the curtains to see the big black dog outside. He was sitting under the small bit of shade that the wooden fence in their humble backyard provided, and his tongue was hanging out of his mouth. He was really panting. Big Man was breathing like he had just run a marathon, but Ashanti knew that the black lab had been only in the backyard, and certainly hadn’t gotten out to do anything strenuous. No, it was just too hot outside for the sweet old guy. She was absolutely sure that her mother had given Big Man plenty of water every morning. She quickly opened the door to double-check his water bowl, and understood the problem—the light, clear plastic container had been knocked over onto the cracked wooden deck. She suspected that after Big Man had drunk from the bowl, his foot or waggy tail had knocked over the only fresh water he had available to him.


Luckily, Big Man wasn’t as bad off as Ashanti had previously thought, and upon the sight of fresh water, he walked over and began to lap it up. Drool spilled out the corners of his mouth as usual, and she scratched his head comfortingly. She didn’t release her breath until she saw the wagging of Big Man’s tail strengthen, and he craned his neck up to lick her cheek. He seemed infinitely better, and tears of relief came to Ashanti’s eyes as she scratched under Big Man’s chin to comfort both him and herself. Never one to cry, she knew she could never be comfortable now that she knew Big Man was in constant danger of spilling the water he needed to survive in the heat of summer. She had to do something to keep him safe and healthy, because she knew she couldn’t count on coming back at exactly the right moment to save the him in the future. Suddenly, Ashanti’s heart swelled with determination.

She had an idea.

Ashanti had a plan, and she knew exactly where to find the materials to help her vision come to life. She trudged back up the stairs, her steps heavy with resolve, until she reached the attic which was once her dad’s workshop.

Her hand hesitated at the metal doorknob, and she stalled on the ladder to the attic. No one had been inside the attic for years, since her dad had been in it. The room was collecting dust and spiders, and she had even heard the squeak of a rat all the way from the second floor, but neither she nor her mother could bring themselves to simply open the door and allow themselves inside. The attic was haunted, not by the ghost of her father, but by the memories that she and her mother clung to desperately. Ashanti had a particularly vivid memory of carrying a tray of lemonade up to the attic with her mother. Her mother was dressed in a white and blue gingham dress, and her father was in an old linen button-down covered in paint and wood glue. He smiled as he saw them, and his smile seemed to take up half his face, his teeth blindingly white against his deep skin. Ashanti always felt his warmth radiating all the way through the house when he smiled, and that man was almost always happy about something.

Ashanti pulled the tears back from her eyes for a second time that day and tugged on the knob, opening the door to her father’s workshop. She felt very wrong for wanting to take something from this sacred place, as if touching a single screw would be ruining the last memory of her father. Her hand brushed a long hollow pole made of thin metal, and she knew it was exactly what she needed for her contraption. If she picked it up, this piece of her father would be forever altered, but if she didn’t, Big Man would always be running the risk of dehydration. She remained still for some time before she heard



barking outside, and she ran over to the window. Her big friend was barking at a squirrel skittering up a tree, and he twisted in a circle in excitement.

Even in his old age, he liked to chase after the critters he no longer had the ability to actually catch. Ashanti felt her heart soften, and her obligation to the animal grew even more. In a moment of motivation, thinking of how much she wanted to protect Big Man, she grabbed the dusty metal pipe out of her father's workshop, and climbed down the ladder again, pushing away any thought of guilt.

It took her two hours of engineering, and nausea brought on by guilt, to complete her system of relief for Big Man. She hammered holes in the pipe and then hammered the pipe to the high wooden fence, which was feet above anything that Big Man could reach anymore.

Finally, she attached the hose to it, so in the daytime when the water would come on automatically to trickle into her mother's potted plants in the small front yard, cool water would rain down on the grass, as well, and finally give Big Man a respite from the oppressive lash of the sun's rays. Ashanti felt relief, both for Big Man and for herself. She had found a way to remain close to her father and knew he would be proud of her.


It was almost sunset by the time Ashanti had finished, and the sun had retreated slightly, lazy from its day of abuse on all the inhabitants of her city—from the people in wool suits heading home from work, to prisoners hammering away in a chain gang, to the boatmen on the Mississippi River which was warm as bathwater, to Big Man and herself. Yet despite her weariness, when the water came on she knew immediately that her effort had paid off—her makeshift sprinkler worked perfectly!

She was drenched in sweat, but stayed outside to watch from the porch for Big Man's reaction. The dog instantly stood at the sound of the water, and bounded, jumped, and ran through the water sprinkling down. Ashanti was transfixed, shocked by how Big Man was acting. He was acting like a puppy again! She had never seen him so excited, his mouth was even open in a cross between panting and a doggy smile. His eyes were shut in excitement, and he seemed to bounce off the damp grass as if it were a spring or trampoline. Not only was he cooled off, he was the epitome of joy.

She contemplated the day she had gotten Big Man; it was one of her first memories. She remembered looking up at her father towering over her, strong and powerful, but also trying to hold back a goofy smile, because of the puppy wiggling around in his hands behind his back. She remembered her mother, who was halfway through hot combing her tight black curls. Only half of her hair had been straightened, but she paused to watch her husband and daughter, who were each the owners of half her heart. Ashanti remembered the moment she first laid eyes on the black Labrador puppy who grew and grew into his name. She remembered how she had taken him in her arms, snuggling him close to her chest, having to hold the energetic pup firmly close to her so he wouldn't fall from her hands. He was the first thing she had ever protected. She remembered the instant bond she had felt with him, and how excitable and good-natured he seemed to be. Seeing him play in the water, his bones not heavy with arthritis, and his tongue not thirsty, brought back all the magical memories of playing with him as a child. She realized the countless hours Big Man had given her, and how grateful she was to finally be able to give something back to him.

Ashanti felt the corners of her mouth tugging all the way across her face, her smile seeming to take over her face. No . . . more than just her face, the smile was taking over her whole being.

Although she and Big Man weren't even looking at each other, she felt a connection between the two of them, deeper than any connection she'd had with her beloved dog already, deeper, perhaps, because she felt another presence, as well. It was the same infectious warmth that she remembered when she took that glass of lemonade to her father all those years ago. The guilt in her stomach for disturbing her father's workshop disappeared, as she realized that acknowledging joy in her father's tools was a far better tribute than allowing his memory to be suspended in time. Ashanti laughed. She couldn't help but find it funny that all these years she had been trying to capture her father's spirit, feel close to him, and preserve his memory, but she never truly had until she used his workshop tools and to make her good-natured, lovable, clumsy, old Big Man happy.



logical

by Cesar Angel

There was a loud ring at the door of the old convenience store, deep in the heart of old El Paso. The establishment was a Ma and Pa shop that boasted a legacy of three generations. The owner of this shop was an older gentleman who wielded a black beard that was as sharp as the needles of Arizona cacti. It didn't seem to bother the old man, though, when the callouses on his fingers would stroke the blades of his beard. His glasses were millimeters away from falling off the bridge of his nose when he turned to the door. There he saw his fifteen-year-old daughter, arriving to help out for the afternoon. "Hey there, Pop!" she said with a joyful sense of enthusiasm. "Look what I found!" The smiling old man looked over his counter full of cigarettes and chewing tobacco to see a medium-sized dog. Its breed was not apparent, given that its once white hair was dripping with mud. The old man's smile faded as he looked back up at his grinning daughter and shook his head. The girl's smile deteriorated just as quickly as her father's had, and she quickly took the messy dog back outside.

The following hour passed with many customers coming in and out of the store, purchasing souvenirs, candy bars, chips, hot dogs, and lottery tickets. The owner's smile returned, but he didn't notice that a few beads of sweat had formed on his daughter's brow.

As one of the regulars was purchasing a soda pop, he greeted the owner, "Hey Boss!"

"Hello there, Michael, how's the wife?" the bearded man responded.

"She's great! You got some mad business comin' in now, dontcha?" he said, reaching in his pocket for change.

"Yeah, and it isn't even happy hour!" Boss said with glee. "So glad I got my daughter to help 'round the store today, otherwise I'd be on a stretcher right about now!"

"And y'all got that dog hanging outside, drawing customers in," said Michael. "All the little ones are out there petting the darn thing. You oughta give him a bath tonight, maybe. It looks like he got dirty playing in the street." He paid Boss and walked out of the store.

Boss was far too happy with the sudden inflow of money to register what Michael had just said. A moment after putting the cash away, though, he realized what he had just heard. Marching outside with his apron swaying, he discovered that the muddy off-white dog was right there in front of his store, with a crowd of children around him. Boss stretched his head into the doorway of his store calling to his daughter, "Didn't I tell you to shoo this mangy dog away? I don't want him taking over my store!"

His daughter rushed over, her apron swinging with the same urgency her father's had. She peeked outside. "I'm sorry Pop! He must've followed me back here. I gave him a bone down by the river and ran back here while he was sniffing around! I swear!" Boss stomped his way over to the gleeful dog with messy pasta for hair. He put his hands on his own hips and exhaled sharply through his nose. "Go! Shoo!" his tone as almost as sharp as his beard. Yet the dog stayed still. It even seemed like he smiled up at Boss, with his noodle-hair draping over his eyes. Boss's face grew red as he waved his arms in exaggerated motions that screamed "zap!" or "woosh!" trying to get the dog to leave his property. After embarrassing himself in front of passing pedestrians, he marched angrily back inside, like a toddler throwing a tantrum. The dog just sat contentedly, smiling at everyone who approached the store. A man stopped to pet him. A woman paused to say "awwww." A young boy cuddled the dog as his parents—who knew they already had milk in the fridge—figured they could always use another gallon from the store that had such a friendly canine greeter.

Each new customer complimented Boss on his dog, as the cash register kept track of the record sales. The pigment in Boss' face became as red as the peppers he sold the folks who could not stop talking about the cute mixed-breed dog that sat outside.

By the end of the night, the cash register was filled to the brim with coins and bills. The door jingled again as Boss' daughter walked in with a leash around the freshly bathed dog. His clean white hair was curled like pearl springs. The dog raised his smiling face to Boss and gave a greeting bark. Boss sighed and stepped out from behind the counter. He stood still and stared down at the dog. His daughter said, "I named him Tal." She smiled and patted Tal's head. "I don't think I was the only one that helped you with the store today Pop. I think you should give credit when it's due."

Boss reluctantly nodded and stepped up to the dog, kneeling, catching him in eye-to-eye contact. "I don't know what you did, but you sure as hell filled my register today. I guess you can't judge a book by its cover. I suppose I'll keep you around." The dog licked Boss across his face, from the sharp blades of his beard to his eyebrows—which were just as sharp. Boss wiped his face with his apron while Tal danced at his feet. "You'll have to teach him some manners," said the Boss to his beaming daughter, "because there can only be one Boss in my store."



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Workin' Like a Dog



Train Your Dog's Brain with Games!

Every breed of dog was originally bred to perform a specific type of job. Today, most dogs are simply our companions. But without their breed-specific jobs to occupy their attention, many dogs begin to display unwanted behaviors, such as digging, destructive chewing, separation anxiety, whining/barking, pacing, mouthing, and hyperactivity. All of these behaviors can be helped by playing brain games with your dog. These games are not a magical fix for unwanted behaviors, but they are a good addition to any training program.

Brain games can increase your dog's critical thinking skills while decreasing boredom (a common cause of problem behaviors), and they are beneficial to dogs of all ages. While we all want a well-mannered canine—one that will sit on first command, for example, and walk well on a leash—our dogs also need to be able to solve problems and think for themselves. This is crucial to having a well-rounded canine companion. We aren't with our dogs 24/7, and even when we are around, we want our dogs to make the best and safest decisions.

One of the reasons brain games are so effective for our dogs is because of the power of their noses. Dogs have phenomenal noses in comparison to us humans. While we have approximately 5 million olfactory receptors in our noses, dogs on average have approximately 220 million!

Artemis leaves no stone unturned in her pursuit of a finely-tuned brain (and tasty treat!).

Effective brain games have several things in common. First of all, they involve a reward. A reward is the dog's "payment" for completing the puzzle. Food is the best and quickest reward. Next, you'll need specific items with which to play the games. You can purchase commercially-produced games, you can make your own, or you can use everyday items from around your house. One of the great things about brain games is that you can make them more difficult as your dog's puzzle-solving skills improve. Lastly, *it is imperative that no punishment is involved while playing these games.* If you punish your dog during the game he will begin to associate punishment with the game and will be less likely to continue to play.

You and your dog can get started immediately with some basic, entry level brain games using everyday items around your house....

The Vanishing Treat. This is a very simple game that involves only a washcloth and some treats. Place the treat on the ground so your dog can see it, and then place the washcloth, flat, on top of the treat. Encourage your dog to get the treat from underneath the washcloth. (The majority of Labradors and Golden Retrievers I've played this game with just eat the treat through the washcloth! This is fine—but be sure you're not emotionally attached to the washcloth and that your dog is not harming itself.) Once your dog gets the treat, repeat the process. You don't want to play any of the brain games too long, as the dogs will begin to get tired.

Leave No Stone Unturned. This game involves treats, a muffin tin, and a variety of balls. If you don't have an extra muffin tin at home, you can pick one up at a thrift store. To start this game you want to make sure your dog understands that you want it to

take a treat from one of the cups in the muffin tin. To do this, place a treat in one of the cups and place the tin on the ground. Allow your dog to get the treat. Pick up the tin and repeat a few times until your dog is getting the treat quickly and easily. Be sure to place the treat in a different cup each time. Next, place the treat inside one of the cups and place a ball over the treat. The ball you use should be easily moveable by your dog using its mouth, nose, or paw. Place the muffin tin back on the ground. This time your dog doesn't have easy access to the treat and needs to figure out how to move the ball to get to the treat. Encourage your dog, if needed.

The Lick n' Slide. This game is played using a paper plate and some Xylitol-free peanut butter or wet dog food. Place a long dab of the peanut butter on a paper plate; then place the plate on the ground. This game is best played on wood or tile floors. Allow your dog to lick the peanut butter off the plate. The plate will slide around, and it is up to your dog to figure out the most effective way to get the peanut butter quickly. I played this game with three different dogs—at the same time—and all three had a different method of stopping the plate. Dog #1 placed her paw on the plate to keep it still. Dog #2 wedged her plate under a chair for the chair to keep it from moving. Dog #3 followed the plate around the room until all of the peanut butter was gone.

There is no need to rush any of the above games. If it takes your dog longer to figure something out than you expected, continue to allow him to work for it. Your dog is not stupid. Play a variety of brain games together—the more frequently you do so, the quicker your dog will improve in figuring out new puzzles. If you're interested in learning how to advance the above brain games or to learn more brain games, please contact Cloud K-9 Dog Training Services for their next Brain Games workshop.

Claren Wilson, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA, BSc,
Head Dog Trainer, Cloud K-9 Dog Training

Resources:

¹Tyson, Peter. "Dogs' Dazzling Sense of Smell." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, 04 Oct. 2012. Web.

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/dogs-sense-of-smell.html





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BORMAN TAKES THE LEAD



Today, somewhere in Doña Ana County, a child will cry herself to sleep because her parents had to take a litter of unexpected kittens to the animal shelter. A frightened dog that lost his family will be picked up by Animal Control and, with no identification, will be put down when he isn't claimed or rescued. A family that couldn't afford to have their beloved dog spayed will be faced with surrendering her litter of playful pups to an uncertain fate and possible euthanasia. These events are far too common in our community, and are a direct result of pet owners who are too careless, too callous, or too financially challenged to provide the care that pets need.

Things are changing for the better, though. More community members and local businesses are becoming involved in the welfare of the local pet population, leading to more solutions. This is important, because although Doña Ana County has seen a 73 percent decrease in the number of animals euthanized since 2008, the number of

unwanted animals being received by the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) has not decreased in the past two years.

Spay and neuter programs are the only way to reduce and possibly eliminate the area's overpopulation problem, and this requires public education and greater access to convenient, affordable spay/neuter programs. In recent years, the ASCMV has focused on getting the word out about the importance of these programs, as well as making the community aware of the requirements for pet licensing and microchipping.

The good news is that the ASCMV provides access to more and more low- or no-cost spaying and neutering services. The shelter continues to work to reduce their overall intake rate of unwanted animals through low-cost spay and neuter programs and public education efforts. Now, the ASCMV is finding even more support for their mission within the local business community.

As a long-time, locally owned and operated business, the Borman Autoplex of Las Cruces is one of the region's most well-known automotive dealerships. Recently, the owners of the Autoplex approached the ASCMV about how they could help improve the situation. The dealership has strong ties to the entire area, and a philosophy of helping make a difference in their community. Many of the men and women at the Autoplex are loving pet owners themselves, and several are involved with multiple local non-profit and volunteer pet organizations. The Autoplex wanted to find a way to make a positive impact on the quality of life for area pets, and created several new programs to help.

One of these areas is pet identification. Once the city's Animal Control officers bring an animal to the ASCMV, every effort is made to find its owners or a new home. Nationwide, only two percent of cats and 20 percent of dogs find their way back home. The best chance for a pet to find its way back home is with an external identification tag and a microchip. Although highly effective—and required by local law—a microchip can migrate under an animal's skin and be difficult to find. However, if a pet also has an ID tag, an ACO can return the pet to the owner directly, avoiding the shelter altogether.

To encourage pet identification, the Borman Autoplex is now providing free external pet tags to the community.

Owners need only to visit the front desk of the Ford building at the Autoplex to receive tokens that will work in the tag machine kiosk in the lobby. The whole thing is self-serve, so you can easily make your individualized tag yourself!

Pet ID tags and microchips help return pets

to their owners, but that's only part of the equation. Spaying and neutering reduces the number of unwanted pets in the community, but cost is often a problem for some families. The ASCMV provides low-cost

services—from just \$25 for cats and \$35 for dogs, but that can still add up for some people. To help, the Borman Autoplex will be offering to the community free spay/neuter days at the dealership. The inaugural event will be held on Tuesday, July 25, and provide first-come, first-served free spay and neuter service to pit bulls and large dogs of 50 pounds or over.

The Autoplex has really dedicated their resources to this issue. In addition to the free pet ID tags and hosting clinics, they also have donation boxes set up throughout the dealership (and at the DogCruces office). The campaign is called "I Give a Lick," and the money collected in these boxes will be used for even more spay and neuter surgeries throughout the community. Your donation lets you slap one of these colorful, fun stickers that proudly state that you "Give a Lick!" wherever you want to showcase your support for the animal community, and to spread awareness for local spay/neuter services.

Volunteers and caring businesses like the Borman Autoplex will continue to help the ASCMV make a positive impact on the unwanted animal situation, and will help bring an end to unloved, discarded pets in our community.



... Borman Autoplex will be offering to the community free spay/neuter days at the dealership. The inaugural event will be held on Tuesday, July 25...



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Just One Dalmatian

My mom had hip replacement surgery recently, and when they wheeled her out of the recovery room I was there to hear her first thoughts after the fact....

"I saw a Dalmatian puppy!" Where...here in the hospital? "No, it was sitting in front of a forest." You mean, there was a painting like that in the recovery room? "No. I see it now, right here. It's running towards me." What are you talking about? "You have a trail of glowing sparkles coming out the side of your head."

Yup, the Old Woman was trippin'.

But her hallucination—while *hilarious*—was not as out-of-left-field as it may have sounded. True, "glowing sparkles" was pure crazy talk, but for the significance of the forest, look no further than my byline. And that Dalmatian puppy had to have been my darling baby boy, *Bacchus*. Mom's little trip led me on a journey down memory lane, and I was happy to spend some time there reminiscing about that first special dog who was all mine.

I had wanted a Dalmatian ever since I saw the Disney cartoon as a child. So years later, when friends decided to have a litter of pups, I hovered like Cruella De Vil, eagerly awaiting news of the impending birth. I wasn't going to *take* a puppy (it was not a good time for added responsibility)—I just wanted to play with them once they were old enough to handle.

A swarm of squirming, spotted puppies greeted me when I finally got my opportunity, but one little boy climbed onto my shoulder to snuggle and chew on my ear. My friends were certain they'd made a sale, but I stuck to my plan and resisted the impulse—you know, like a responsible adult.

As weeks passed and the puppies found homes, my sweet little boy was left behind, but I maintained my resolve. And then, one glorious day, my friends brought the pup to work, placed him in my arms and said, "You can have him if you want him, Jen." So I kept him—you know, like an impulsive child. We spent the next eleven years together.

Bacchus was so beautiful, so loving, soooooo stupid. I know I'm not supposed to say that, but it's true.



He could not enter or exit a room unless the door was *completely* open. Even if there was plenty of room for him to pass without touching the door, I had to fling wide the opening or he would have been stuck where he stood for eternity.

There is a corner in my home where two full-length mirrors form an almost-right angle. I would often (yes, often) catch *Bacchus* sitting at attention between the two, looking from one to the other and back again. And again. And again. I couldn't tell if he was having episodes of extreme vanity or simply wondering which of his two new friends would be the first to speak.

Bacchus' favorite treat was paper, and his obsession with it was legendary—though it came with some unpleasant side effects. One day I watched in horrified wonder as he reached back to grab the protruding end of a whole paper towel which had *almost* completed its journey through his digestive system. He pulled the Bounty from its exit point in one slow, continuous motion, and simultaneously ate it a second time. It never touched the ground. This was an astounding, disgusting feat of recycling, and I would like to say I never saw him do it again. But I can't.

I wish I had more room to recount all of the wonderful, silly, heartwarming moments I had with my boy through the years. I wish I had more pictures, especially of *Bach* as a puppy and of the two of us together. But more than that, I wish I had more time with him. I wish I could have him back.

But it doesn't work that way. And even if I had 101 Dalmatians, there would never be another quite like him—because you only ever get one *Bacchus*...one *Luna*, one *Penny*, one *Summer*, one *Nacho*, *Zimba*, *Sharkbait*, *Meeka*, *Cosmo*, *Lola*.... Each dog that finds its way into our lives is as unique and special as the human friends and family around whom we build our lives.

So do your human best to be as devoted a companion to your dogs as they are naturally to you. Embrace the personality quirks, behavioral oddities, facial expressions and gestures of love your pets offer. Appreciate every moment you have together.

There will be far too few.

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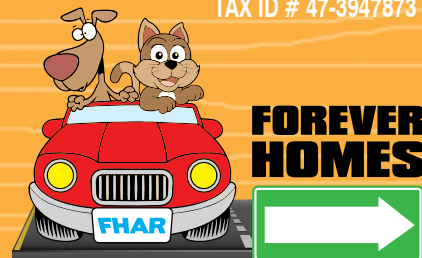
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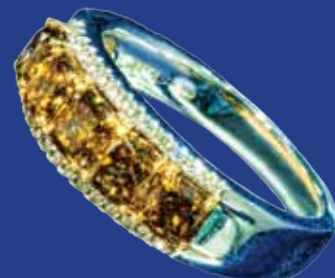
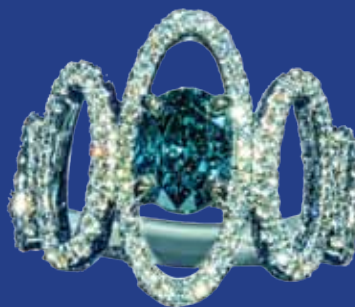
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Buliwyf's Lunchbox

by **BULIWYF** IV
(as told to Margaret Dubbin)



Butthead Strikes Back

Hello? Helloooooo? Hi guys! It's me—*Buliwyf*! I'm poking around here on my big bro's 'puter while he's out snoozing in the sun. I'm not 'upposed to be using it so... SHHH, don't tell him. Now, how does this thing work?... I've seen him do this before... you push this... then...uh-oh...whoops....

Oh well—guess I'll just have to write *Walter's* column for him this time. Hmmm, now is my chance to tell y'all about my wonderful life since my furever family captured me five years ago. Most of you probably know me as *Butthead*. Well, I'm here to tell you that despite what my meanie big brother has been telling you, my name is *Buliwyf*. That's pronounced "Bull-vie." I'm named after the brave Viking King from Michael Criton's novel, *The Eaters of the Dead*. Or for those movie buffs, the movie *The 13th Warrior*. Anyway, call me *Buliwyf*—Brave King of Small Viking Dogs! I'm only afraid of: loud noises, Dad's sneezes, and going down stairs in the dark. Aside from that, I'm the bravest of brave dogs. That's right, I'd leap in front of a bullet to save my family (so long as there wasn't a loud noise involved).

In truth, I've been plotting this moment for quite some time now. I mean, why should *Walter* get all the attention? He always gets the attention. I'm fun, cuddly, and good looking, too! Even though I'm a dog, my feelers get hurt when I'm not included with the cool kids. There was this one time when Mom had taken *Walter* and me out for a Saturday morning run and then to breakfast at The Bean (their scrambled eggs are scrumpious by the way). While we were dining on the patio an older couple came out and asked Mom if they could pet us. Well, they spent all their time oooing and aahing over how handsome *Walter* was and how his eyes were "just so blue," and how it was "SO sad" that he was deaf, etc, etc, etc. Then, as they were leaving, they turned back to Mom and said "oh, and your plain dog is nice too." PLAIN DOG?! Who's the PLAIN dog, I wondered? Then I realized they were talking about me! I was so hurt that I moped all the way back home!

Mom assured me that I'm not plain—that I'm wonderful and very special, too. That helped soothe my hurt feelers, but I realized that this might be part of the reason so many of us black dogs end up least-likely to get adopted. That is so very sad. Even though many peeps believe themselves to be accepting of all, they often are not.

Despite his calling me "*Butthead*," *Walter* is a pretty good big brother to me. He lets me clean up

his food bowl after he's done, he lets me warm up his bed for him before he decides to go to sleep, and he's super brave and charges downstairs in the dead of night ahead of me to defend our family when I alert him to a strange noise. Mom tells me that *Walter* has no clue what he's charging downstairs in the dark for, and that I probably shouldn't follow him, but she just doesn't see how truly brave my big brother really is.

Well guys, it's been fun rambling here with you. Hopefully, *Walter* doesn't realize that I've commandeered his column. Here's two recipes that Mom has cooked up just for me—I hope you enjoy them as much as I do!

Peanut Butter Banana Blueberry Biscuits

**2 Ripe Bananas • 1C Fresh Blueberries
½ C All-Natural Peanut Butter
4C Brown Rice Flour • 1C Flax Seed Meal
2 Tbsp Honey • 2 Eggs**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. In separate bowl, mix together wet ingredients until thoroughly blended. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients, and mix until a stiff dough forms. Knead until all ingredients are thoroughly distributed. Divide dough, roll out sections to about 1/4" thickness between pieces of parchment paper. Cut out desired shapes, and place onto parchment-lined cookie sheets. Brush treats with egg wash (optional). Bake 30-45 minutes or until center of cookie is firm. Turn off heat and allow cookies to completely cool in the oven.



Dumpster Stew a.k.a. (Clean-Out-Your-Fridge-Stew)

**1lb Ground Meat (lamb, beef, chicken, turkey, or game)
1Tbsp Coconut Oil
1C Rice (long grain, jasmine, brown, or white)
½ C Rolled Oats (gluten-free preferred)
¼ C Flax Seed Meal
2C Carrots (diced)
1C Fresh Green Beans (diced)
1 Can Diced Tomatoes w/ Juice
1C Fresh Spinach (chopped)
1 Tbsp Grated Ginger
1 Tbsp Fresh Parsley (finely chopped)
3C Broth (chicken or beef) • 3C Water**

Brown ground meat in coconut oil. When cooked, combine all remaining ingredients in slow cooker or electric pressure cooker. For slow cooker: set to "High" and cook for 6 hours or until rice is cooked through. For electric pressure cooker: select "Manual — Low Pressure" or "Rice" setting and cook for 12 minutes with natural pressure release. Allow to cool thoroughly before serving. Serve as a topping to regular kibble diet or as a meal replacement. Store refrigerated up to five days in a sealed container.





Local Businesses, Good Neighbors

Shopping can be a grueling ordeal. And when it comes to your pets' food, it can be quite confusing with all the choices now available. The internet has made shopping a little *easier* in a lot of cases—but at what cost? On average, for every dollar spent on-line or at big box stores, only 14% of your money stays in our community. But when we shop at local establishments, over 45% stays in the community, with an additional 9% remaining in-state. Our pets are like family—just as our community should be. Shopping at locally-owned retail establishments creates a better community, and here's why....

THE 10% SHIFT

According to the 2007 Economic Census, the City of Albuquerque produces annual retail store sales (excluding motor vehicles and gas stations) of roughly \$7 billion. If just 10% of those purchases shifted from on-line and chain stores to independent retailers ("Mom and Pop Shops") Albuquerque's local economy would receive an additional \$179 million EVERY YEAR. Of course, Las Cruces is not as big as Albuquerque, but we could sure use a corresponding economic lift like this. These extra dollars injected into our local economy would produce more jobs, extra tax revenues for community improvements, bigger investments in commercial districts, and more cash available to support local non-profits like SNAP, SHAS or APA.

THE "SHOP SMALL" CAMPAIGN

The Shop Local movements like "Shop Small" and "Small Business Saturday" have been gaining some ground as families rediscover the value of face-to-face interaction with local store owners and their personnel. Unfortunately, these movements are not growing as quickly as on-line shopping is, and we are losing more Mom and Pop Shops all the time. "Shop Local" needs to be an every-day habit—not just a promotional slogan. Take advantage of these stores for their knowledgeable staff and personal service, and reward local entrepreneurs who employ your friends and neighbors, and who have invested their blood, sweat, and tears into their busi-

nesses and into supporting our community. Remember that buying on the web creates almost NO local benefit.

FULL CIRCLE

When you shop locally, the money you spend here is reinvested into our kids' educations, salaries and job benefits; the roads we all drive on, and the city facilities and activities available to all. It's the economic Circle of Life. But it's not just about the dollars—even more important are the wonderful relationships created at our local stores and restaurants. And these relationships are at the very heart of the community, itself.

So next time you are shopping for your most finicky feline and you think you are saving money by shopping on-line or at a big box store, think again. Are you truly saving? Keep in mind that most local stores make an effort to price match or to offer loyalty discounts you may not be aware of unless you take a long-term view of your pet food budget. And does that on-line store answer your questions or make a return easy?

Local independent stores have been crippled by competition from the internet and big box stores run by faceless executives who've probably never set foot in the Mesilla Valley. As consumers, we all have the power to support local establishments that offer more than just product sitting on a shelf. Once the "little guys" are all gone, do you really think you'll get those cheap deals on-line anymore?

One last thing to keep in mind—independent local businesses are, in essence, the ones who introduced customers to the benefits of high quality pet products. They are the ones who initially invested in and promoted the boutique products—long before the "big guys" were willing to take the risk. So don't let the entrepreneurial spirit fade away into the sunset of the internet. Help our local businesses continue to build a strong, tight-knit community for everyone.

Written by Kat Lacy,
Local Business Owner for over 20 years.
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