

Prescott Dog

magazine

May/June 2024 • PrescottDog.com



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All Things Dog**

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Dog 132**

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PRESCOTT DOG MAGAZINE

Cherie L. Dreves – Publisher/Owner
 PO Box 11868, Prescott AZ 86304 • (928) 445-4811
 Cherie@reddogpublishing.net
 Website: PrescottDog.com • Facebook: ThePrescottDog

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PUBLISHER/OWNER

Cherie L Dreves

ADVERTISING

(928) 445-4811

Cherie@reddogpublishing.net

CONTRIBUTORS

Cover Photo by Toby Frost



Heidi Dahms Foster
Feature Writer



Cheryl Hartz
Outdoor Writer



Solana Kline
Feature Writer



Skye Lyons
Rescue Editor



Rita Thompson-Tinsley
Equestrian Writer



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It's easy to enter your furry best friend!

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Deadline Dates - 12/1, 2/1, 4/1, 6/1, 8/1 and 10/1



Midas, Our Cover Dog



Name: My name is Midas, but my mom calls me Her Man Midas. I was one of four surviving puppies rescued with a King Shepherd Mom at six weeks.

Hometown: Prescott, Arizona.

Age: Two years and almost four months.

Favorite brand of kibble: Anything soaked in organic chicken broth with pieces of fresh chicken mixed in.

Favorite people food: Corn chips

Favorite toy: Tennis balls, but I can pop them open in minutes—even the tough Kong ones—so mom has to buy a lot of them.

Favorite outdoor activity: Playing with new batches of foster puppies and swimming in the lake.

Favorite indoor activity: Teasing the cats and new foster puppies.

Favorite nap spot: Mostly on the big puffy couch, but it requires testing out numerous positions to find the right spot and sometimes means I have to lay on my back with my feet up in the air.

Fitness regimen: Chasing my tennis balls or dangling a rope toy for the puppies to chase.

Describe your perfect canine pal: I like the big dogs in our house for serious romping, but the foster puppies are the best. Sometimes I can make them squeak, but then mom tells me to stop.

Describe your perfect day: Swimming in the lake, sharing picnic people lunch, and then settle in for a good nap.



HAZEL HOWLS

Spring, the Season of Yes

Feeling restless to the point that a solo post-breakfast nap in the master bedroom just wasn't going to happen, I resigned myself to re-joining the pack.

Mom's office was empty, and even though the carpet felt soft and inviting, I knew I'd get in trouble if I stayed in there alone. Common neighborhood noises tend to filter into the office (when Mom isn't rockin' out), and I tend to vocally announce my concern over some (most) of them. As a descendant from a long line of Rez dogs, I'm hard wired to watch over the camp and be ever-ready to alert all.

I'm not like The Mystery Dog that barks for hours at a time. I can't see his house from here, but his pack family lets him out on a second-story deck, up and behind the house across the street. Hence, the mystery.

I envy him, as he probably gets to see and hear and scent so much more from his elevated position than I can from my backyard. Then again, maybe I should be contented with my life where I'm at. I don't think The Mystery Dog gets much attention, as I don't hear two-legged voices from his direction.

Keira, my pack-mate, a Red Golden, has been a bit barky lately when heading outside. She's had to make the most adjustments to Prudence's adoption to the pack.

At first Keira had deep jealousy, then was aloof to her new sister. Pru, being a streamlined athlete, and Keira not so much, used Keira as a friendly sparring partner. Trading a toy from muzzle to muzzle, the open-mouth measuring game, and the "You caaaaan't catch me" game eventually led to a bonding that Keira would reluctantly admit.

As my readers know, the every-busy Pru has gone to Dog Daycare a number of times. Of course, I, being the former co-pilot of Dad's driving adventures, felt deep disappointment.

Keira and I thought it was a case of favoritism. Over time it became apparent that the outings were to give Mom (and Keira) a break from Pru's never-ending busyness. We also noticed Prudence was learning to take breaks and losing



Kiera & Pru

her compulsion to be on the move all the time. Somehow, socializing outside the pack helped her adjust and mature (a bit) and to flow better (mostly), inside the pack.

So, back to Keira's new vocalizing. She blasts out of the backdoor to charge at a random corner of the back yard and pronounce commanding, urgent barks. She tries to show Pru that she is brave and, as a "Deputy of the Pack Sheriff Himself" member of the pack, Kiera has authority in the back yard.

Pru watches from the doorway just in case Keira did see something. She didn't.

Pru thinks Keira's a bit touched in her faculties, but Keira thinks she has displayed her rank in the pack. Regardless of their widely differing perceptions, and a difficult start together, you'd never be able to separate them now.

All these musings passed through my mind as I left Mom's office and passed by Tucker (our Sheriff) consoling Pru on the living room rug. Tuck patiently washed her face and ears as Pru related something about a four-legged at daycare named Bella. From what little I heard, Bella was faster, more athletic, and gave Pru quite a comeuppance during play.

I pretended not to be listening as I passed by to the already open sliding door. Mom and Keira must be in the garden.

I had two ways to think about what I had just heard. At first, I wanted to stop and listen more so I could gloat and maybe tease Pru a bit. Then I thought about the tone of her

voice and the fact she really was hurt to learn she wasn't the fastest or most agile at school. I didn't hear a "Life's not fair" entitled-brat edge to her voice. I didn't have the heart to embarrass her further.

I didn't want to go out in the garden with Mom and Keira. I was hoping for a stretch in the sun without any botheration.

Another reason I'm keeping a low profile in the garden area is... Well, Mom put fresh dirt in some of the beds. I kind of tasted some from this bed, then that bed. Early the next morning, before the family waking hour, I headed into the kitchen to get a drink of water, but gakked (Dad's word) dirt patches here and there.

Like I said. Keeping a low profile in the garden for a while.

My biggest regret is not the discomfort of the first two-legged encounter of my leavings, or the fervent lecture I got for eating dirt in the first place. No, my biggest regret is that my annual Chasing of the Lizards season is going to hit a snag if I run to and hide near a garden bed. Not a good look hovering over a garden bed in light of recent events. Hovering, not Hoovering... must keep that in mind.

When I got outside to find Dad alone cogitating on the math of a carpentry project, I felt my spirits lift even though I wasn't aware they were a bit low. I guess that after-breakfast nap is more important than I knew.

One-on-one discussions with Dad without multiple interruptions are rare and short, as you can guess.

After some well-meaning, but distracted ear waggles, I thought I would bring up something. Having Dad distracted might even be helpful.

While he was asking himself if the clangy metal strip read sixteenths or thirty-seconds, I asked him whatever happened to the pack putting on The Three Muzzleteers play he had promised us.

Counting the little dashes on the strip, Dad answered rather brusquely that making and handing out cardboard swords was probably not the best idea, especially now that Pru is part of the family.

I was soooooo ready for that answer and quickly turned the tables on his fully engaged attention.

"How about a good old-fashioned western drama?" I asked, using certain words for persuasion purposes. Old-fashioned (*activates nostalgia*) and drama (*sounds less dangerous*) should help seal the deal.

Dad looked up and asked to no one in particular, "Fourteen sixteenths is, uh..."

Since I've been around long enough to have heard this one before, I blurted out, "Seven-eighths."

Dad scratched more numbers on a board while telling me, "Maybe."

Pru, who was in the doorway listening, barked out, "I could be Black Bart!"

Dad shook his head while still penciling more math, "Wouldn't be proper, can't have anyone run over by Roy Roger's horse."

I was going to contest the details of old Bart's demise, but Pru interrupted.

"I could face Johnny Ringo and do that line... I'm your buckle hairy."

"Huckleberry!" Dad and I said in unison.

Dad looked at me and shrugged. "What could go wrong, Haze? Might as well do a western... DRAMA... understood, Hazel?"

I didn't answer, because as soon as I sensed a yes, I ran inside to tell the others.

Spring is feeling so good right now.

~Hazel Bazel Rocket Dog

She Was Dog 132, and We Named Her Andi

By Judith Dawson



She was not the dog we wanted, the puppy we were looking for. She was all wrong for us. We named her Andi, and she was our dog for seven and half years.

My husband and I had buried our much-loved Rottweiler two weeks earlier, a dog I had when I met him, and we were “Just looking” at puppies at the city animal shelter. We turned a corner and there she was: The wrong age (5 months, give or take), the wrong size (large), the wrong hair (long, shaggy, and thick), the wrong breed (which was no breed at all), the wrong sex (female, not male). The kennel assistant told us she was a German Shepherd mix.

There must be some special training that enables people at the Animal Shelter to lie with straight faces.

When we first saw her, she was cowering in the back of her kennel. Then my husband talked to her, and she raised her head to look at him. She was his dog, and he was her person from that moment forward.

Andi was, to put it mildly, a handful. A street dog, she had been picked up, not surrendered. No one claimed her, and she had been at the shelter for about thirty days. She had obviously never been disciplined or housebroken and was an escape artist. She trusted no one (probably for good reasons), and in the beginning if you talked to her, she braced herself and cowered, waiting to be struck.

She was very wary of us for a long time. Two things never changed. First, she cowered if you approached her with any object in your hand—a stick, comb, brush, anything. My husband worked with her almost daily over the years, but that fear never changed. Second, her very favorite food was a raw potato. She stole potatoes and hid them all over the house for her entire lifetime. If that’s street dog behavior, I’ve never heard of it before.

She couldn’t be groomed because she was so afraid, so we resigned ourselves to living with a dog with the worst hairdo in the world. She was the Phyllis Diller of dogs until the day she died.

Her eyes were deep chocolate brown, and when you held her chin in your hand and looked into them, you could see that her early life had not been easy. My husband always said he could see into her soul. Looking back, I think she could see into his soul, too.

She dug under our backyard chain link fence. We fastened landscape timbers all around the outside of the fence. She dug under the fence AND the timbers. We countered with more landscape timbers fastened all around the inside of the fence. She gave up digging and countered by climbing over the fence. (If I hadn’t seen her, hind feet searching for a foothold, I wouldn’t have believed it.)

She sat outside the fence and never went anywhere. We countered with an electric fence inside the chain link fence. She—and we—went through the training process, we were assured it was safe, and she went out alone while we watched. She heard the buzz, kept walking, and got a shock which caused her to howl and urinate.

My husband ran to her and carried this big dog, her hair wet with urine, into the house. The fence came out after a very brief discussion with the installer. A six-foot-tall privacy fence was installed, and Andi was finally secure. Of course, by that time, in true Andi fashion, she was no longer interested in leaving and never made another attempt.

Her specialty was digging holes, holes for the sake of digging holes. She dug holes deep enough to sit in with only her head showing. She never buried anything, and once the hole was finished to her specifications she moved on to the next hole. It was her full-time passion.

My husband’s health deteriorated rapidly, and he went on dialysis. Andi was confused because she didn’t understand his new schedule. When he came home, she was confused by the new medical smells on him, and the bandages.

He would come home, sit in his recliner, and I would warm a quilt in the dryer and wrap it around him. He would quietly watch television for an hour or so until he recovered his strength. Andi watched from the kitchen doorway. This went on for two weeks, through seven treatments.

At the end of the second week, he came home and sat in his recliner. I brought the warmed quilt in, and she jumped into his lap—all seventy pounds of her. I wrapped the quilt around both of them, and she relaxed and leaned against him.

She learned his schedule, and they sat quietly together, watching television, every time he came home from dialysis. Somehow, she knew he needed the comfort she provided, and I believe he needed her. I would hear him softly talking to her while she cuddled against him.

My husband was hospitalized frequently, during which she waited and worried and was ecstatic when he came home. He kept telling me everything would be all right. He kept telling Andi everything would be all right.

Andi and I knew better.



Two years later, he came home from dialysis, sat with Andi, stood up and collapsed.

I hung her photo on the bulletin board across from his hospital bed so he would see her if he opened his eyes, and I went in every day and told him how much we missed him. I told him stories of Andi’s latest adventures (burying my wallet in the backyard, hiding the car keys under the deck, and getting trapped under the deck in the process). I know he heard me.

My husband died Christmas Day night. I came home and sat in his recliner for the first time ever, wrapped the quilt around myself and grieved for a life cut too short. I cried for myself, for my loss, my loneliness, my fears. Slowly and cautiously Andi crept into my lap. I wrapped the quilt around both of us, and we sat in that chair until the sun came up.

I slept on the living room sofa for about two months, Andi at my feet. When I found the strength to go into the bedroom, she followed and slept next to me on the bed, and that’s where she stayed. Every night I repeated my husband’s words to her: “It will be all right.”

She never went back to being the handful she once was but grew more and more quiet, thinner and thinner as time went on. She and I went back and forth to the veterinarian, but other than one attack of pancreatitis, there were no diagnosed health issues despite all sorts of tests.

Just before her eighth birthday she began to sleep on quilts at the foot of my bed, no longer able to jump onto the bed. One morning, I bent over to say good morning to her and found she had died quietly during the night.

The necropsy indicated sudden cardiac arrest. I think she grieved to death.

I took her body to the Veterinarian’s office for cremation, and when I left and kissed her good-bye, I whispered in her ear, “Andi, go forward. It will be all right.”

And it is all right, and I’m sure she’s with her master, both of them at peace. I hope they’re wrapped in a warm quilt, watching television.

Yes, looking back, she was the perfect dog for us. We just didn’t know it right away.



She Was Dog 132, and We Named Her Andi

DOGGIE DAYCARE OFFERS A WEALTH OF BENEFITS FOR YOUR CANINE COMPANION

By Heidi Dahms Foster

Doggie daycare has become increasingly popular for people who work and need an outlet for exercise and socialization for their canine companions. A great doggie daycare can provide a wealth of benefits to increase your dog's health and happiness.

Doggie daycares provide a safe and fun place for dogs, breaking the routine of staying at home, and enriching their daily lives. Owners who connect with a good doggie daycare find that the experience can transform their dog and make for a better relationship with people and other dogs.

The Prescott area has several dog daycares popular with local dog owners.

Doggie Dude Ranch, Prescott

Doggie Dude Ranch, owned by KJ Skiby, is Prescott's original dog boarding facility with more than 40 years serving the community. Its employees are made up of dog lovers, all with experience either as dog walkers, volunteers for local shelters, or who have animals of their own.



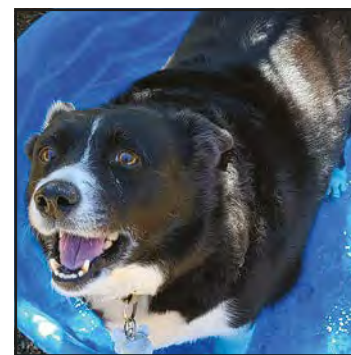
Doggie Dude Ranch

"I have been a dog owner all my life," said Skiby. "My family always had yellow labs and I had a husky for 15 years. Chihuahuas, snakes, turtles, iguanas, chickens, and many other animals were part of growing up."

Doggie daycare has many benefits, among them a change of pace. "The owners get a break, the neighbors get a break, the house and yard get a break," KJ said. "Sometimes pet siblings need a break, too. We have a lot of everyday clients that rely on us to keep their pups exercised and active."

Additionally, dogs that are unsure or have not been exposed to others can overcome those issues with time. "We have changed the undesirable patterns of many clients with thoughtful consideration. Any client that needs to be monitored during the day, has too much energy that is unspent, that is bored or lonely, is the perfect candidate for our facility."

KJ said Doggie Dude Ranch has some clients who bring in their dog every day, but big improvements can be made with any sort of repetition. "Once a week goes a long way to put them out of their comfort zone and make new friends that they look forward to seeing."



Doggie Dude Ranch

"We have the largest kennels in town," KJ said, "with indoor and outdoor access, heated floors and swamp coolers for the summertime. New dogs are introduced by putting them in kennels facing the play yard so they can get an idea that this is a fun place to be and not a shelter or a pound. We introduce them over time when we have an idea of who gets along, then move on to monitored play time with one or two new friends. This is a process that takes time and consideration, we do not allow new dogs to be thrown into 'the pack.'"

KJ said the best part of this business is seeing the trust of both the animals and the humans increase

(Doggie Daycare continued on page 10)



Rescue Resources

For an expanded view of Rescue Resources, visit PrescottDog.com & FlagstaffSedonaDog.com



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(Doggie Daycare continued from page 8)

over time. "My favorite clients either have had their own apprehensions at drop off, relaying that worry to the animal, or the dog does not want to be here at the first drop off. Within a couple stays the same clients are seeing huge improvements in their style of ownership and the dogs can't wait to get back to their friends. The turnaround is gratifying to say the least."

Doggie Dude Ranch is located at 3900 Willow Creek Rd. in Prescott. Phone is (928) 445-2259. Visit the website at doggiedude.com.

Wags Pet Resort, Prescott

Brandy Drey created Wags Pet Resort in 2015. The business was born out of a need to find a place for one of her own dogs who had some challenges and needed a place to stay when the Dreys were out of town. Drey had previous experience with dogs and missed working with them. She wanted to open her own business, so Wags was the perfect fit.

Drey bought the former Kennel Kamp Village in Prescott Valley and remodeled it to represent the Wags brand originally created in Iowa. She hired general manager Kerry Hunt to run the Prescott Valley location.

"This is my first year in the dog industry," Hunt said. "I came from the world of hospitality and managed several resorts and hotels in my past life. I was also an elementary teacher at Coyote Springs Elementary School in the early 2000s. When I found Brandy, she said she needed a general manager who could run the business, and she would teach me about dogs. Being a dog lover, I thought this would be a great new adventure for me."

Hunt has learned first-hand the benefits of dog daycare. "It provides socialization, communication, and mental stimulation for the dogs. This gives the owner a well-rounded dog with the potential of good behavior and an outlet for releasing energy in a positive way."

Recommendations for frequency of play depends on the dog and their temperament, Hunt said. "Some dogs have a high energy drive and could use daily or three to four times a week in play. Other dogs are more neutral and only like to have play once in a while or less frequently, such as two days a week. Any dog can benefit from play if they enjoy the stimulation."



Doggie Dude Ranch

Some dogs don't enjoy the group play, and Wags has other options for those who just need a day stay with a one-on-one play time or walk. "This is why we do an assessment to see what works best for your dog," Hunt said.

Keeping dogs safe during group play is a priority, and Hunt said

structured play is managed with an attendant there at all times. "Every employee goes through a training process to make sure we are consistent from commands to processes. This in turn creates a routine environment that the dogs come to expect and they do well in it."

Hunt said one dog who came in as a young puppy had not been trained or socialized. He was



Wags Pet Resort

nervous and the play group was overwhelming for him.

"He was having to take a lot of breaks and reactive to other dogs. After staff worked with him using the tools and resources we have, over time he began to settle down and really enjoy play. Now he comes regularly and loves the play group and the other dogs."

Another client dog, a rescue, was shy and timid. She was afraid of her surroundings and didn't want people or other dogs to approach her. Not knowing her background, the staff were able to slowly work with her in small intervals to get her used to socializing with other dogs of her temperament. "Over time and with repetition, she became more confident and approachable with people and other dogs. She also has become a regular to play group," Hunt said.

Wags Pet Resort is located at 9049 Florentine Rd., Prescott Valley. Phone is 928-923-6751. Visit the website at wagspetresorts.com.

Woof Woof Ranch, Prescott Valley

Woof Woof Ranch is a small, home-run, boarding and daycare operation that provides boarding and daycare for dogs of all breeds and sizes.

"We don't put the clients in our home but have a nice facility that is cozy," said owner Giselle Hall. "Dogs are only crated to sleep and eat. They have three acres to run and play on."



Woof Woof Ranch

Hall said she started the business because she wanted to work out of her home, and in talking with others, found there was a need for dog daycare in the community. She said she is not a trainer, but enjoys the company, compassion and desire to be appreciated of dogs.

One of the major benefits of dog daycare, Hall said, is socialization. "If you question whether your dog is ready for socializing, then try daycare," she said. "We pay attention to our new clients and if they are lacking social skills, we will recommend a trainer."

Hall recommends daycare sessions a couple days a week, and all dogs can benefit, she said, although there are exceptions. "Some may not enjoy it but I can't say 'this breed' or 'that breed.' That's not fair. Dogs' personalities change based on their owners and environmental factors."

Hall said constant supervision is the most important way she uses to keep the dogs in her care safe. She enjoys seeing the successes of good daycare.



Woof Woof Ranch

"We had one dog that was afraid of everything and every dog at first, hiding all the time. As the visits progressed, she is now one of the pack. She is friendly and playful, and loves getting here for play dates," Hall said.

Another daycare regular was a tiny protector of his owner. "The owner said he wasn't too social, but she needed our service for appointments. Some social time helped the client and the dog get a break, and the dog became very social. Now they both enjoy dog parks as well."

Woof Woof Ranch is located at 7445 E Cheyenne Springs Rd, Prescott Valley. Phone is 928-830-4308. Visit the website at woofwoof-ranchpv.com.



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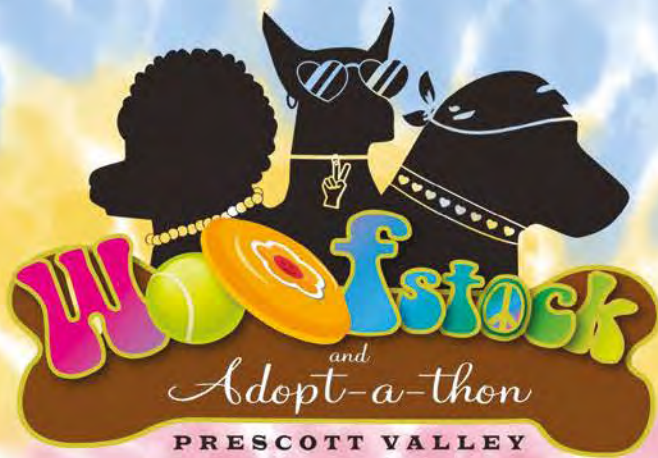


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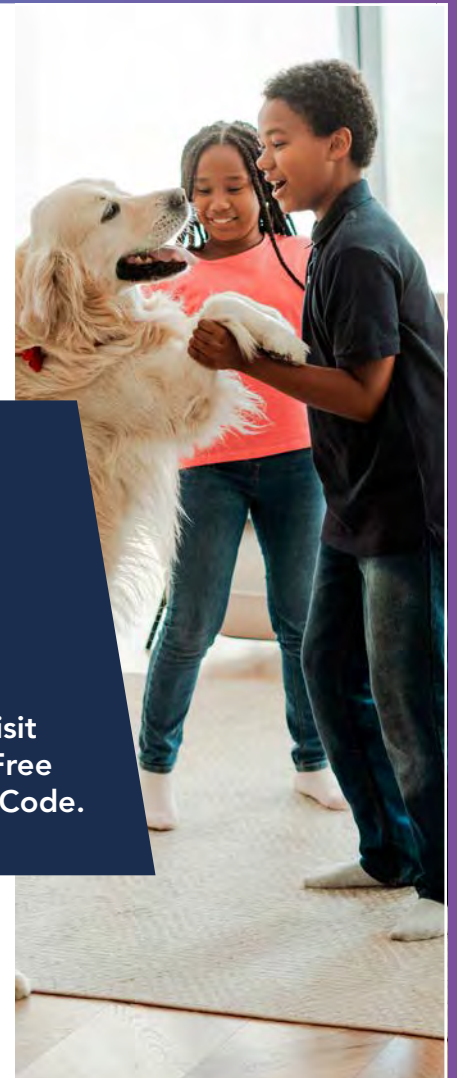
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MAVERICK: A 1-year-old male black and tan Chihuahua. For more information, please contact: Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



LOKI: A 3-year-old male English Bulldog/Pug mix. He is a loveable, playful pup. He weighs 50 pounds. He gets along with most other dogs, except his brother. Yavapai Humane Trappers at yavapaitrappers@gmail.com



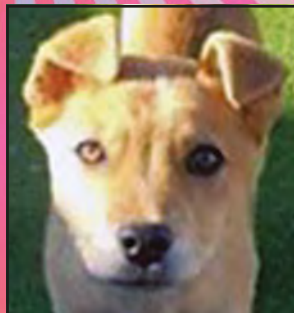
ERNIE: A 5-month-old male terrier/Chihuahua mix. He is happy, high energy, affectionate, and very smart. He knows basic commands and walks well on a leash. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



BRICK: A 2-year-old male Black Lab/shepherd mix. Outgoing & a lot of fun, he'll be your adventure buddy. Loves walks. Knows basic commands, crate-trained. Loves belly scratches! Yavapai Humane Trappers at yavapaitrappers@gmail.com



OPIE: A 1-year-old male who looks like a long-legged Corgi. He weighs 28 pounds. He loves toys, playing, and people. He is looking for a fun family. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



WILLOW: A charming female mixed breed puppy. Good w/other puppies & loves people. She's getting the idea of housetraining & is smart, so obedience training shouldn't be difficult. Yavapai Humane Trappers at yavapaitrappers@gmail.com



MOLLY: A 1-year-old female Cattle dog mix. She is 24 pounds. She is a unique blend of affection and energy, whether she is running outside or cuddling on the couch. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



BERNIE: A big male puppy with a cheerful outlook on life. He knows basic commands and leash manners. He is very smart and learns quickly. He is good with other dogs and children. AARF 928-925-7219



PIXIE: A female Cattle dog mix puppy. She is affectionate, playful, and curious. She is crate trained and almost housetrained. Good with other dogs and cats. Blackhat Humane Society 575-999-6236



WHEELER: A 10-year-old male Labrador cross. He has a very mellow disposition, and he loves to take walks. AARF 928-925-721

Kane, the Mystery Dog

At the Verde Valley Humane Society, we have our share of sad stories and happy stories and sometimes mystery stories. Recently we received a dog named Kane whose foster called him Mr. Kane after the fictional star of Citizen Kane, the classic 1941 movie. His story evolved into a mystery.

Kane came to us as a stray, dropped off at the shelter by a traveler, along with a blue-eyed black shepherd mix. A lanky 65-pound cream and white mix of many possibilities, Kane was obviously an older dog, and we were disappointed when his microchip didn't lead us to an owner.

No owner appeared and when he was ready for adoption, it was clear he needed a break from the stress of shelter life. One of our new fosters agreed to take him home. At her home Kane settled in away from shelter stress. Our foster described him as well behaved and very smart. He got along with everyone. He enjoyed two walks a day, and she didn't notice significant signs of aging although he slept a lot and liked to lie in the sun.

Ready to be adopted, we described Kane as: "Good ole boy Kane is one of a kind. Tall, distinguished, with old-school manners and a charming



smile, this guy has it all. Sure, he's a bit stiff in the mornings. Sheds a little, too. He's gentle, a dream to walk, but no marathons for him please. Kane is eager to meet any potential doggie siblings. He's ready for a comfy bed and quiet retirement. If Kane sounds like your match, give us a call."

Nine days later we received a phone call from Kane's owner! We learned that Kane lived over two hours away from Verde Valley Humane's Cottonwood shelter. Their home caught on fire, and Kane and his doggie sibling went missing. She said she had spent every day searching for her dogs. She told us she has had Kane since he was six weeks old, and that he is now 16 years old!

We'll never know all of Kane's story. A big thank you to Kane's foster mom. She had an amazing experience with her first foster. Kane had a rough time with shelter life. No wonder. 16 years old! Kane's foster couldn't be happier that his owner found him and has the satisfaction of knowing that she helped Kane through a difficult time.

Fostering is more important than ever, for older dogs like Kane and other dogs and cats that don't

do well even in the best shelter. Fosters are the angels who help former pets for a few days or longer.

Reminder to Dog Owners

Get your dogs microchipped and keep your microchip information updated. And if your dog gets out, don't forget to look at rescues farther afield than may seem possible.

The Verde Valley Humane Society needs foster homes for our animals that need a little extra help, as well as for those times when the shelter reaches full capacity. We often require foster homes for pregnant and nursing moms and those too young to be adopted or recovering from a medical condition or a surgical procedure.

Like Kane there are others shy, scared, and stressed in the shelter who need extra love and socialization, and seniors who tend to become depressed when confined to a shelter. Often just being in a home helps them recover good emotional and physical health.

Some may only need a week or two, while others may need more. Fosters provide love and care. We provide everything else (food, bowls, bedding, toys, medications, crates, litter, vet services etc.), along with lots of support and gratitude.

If you would like to become a Foster for the Verde Valley Humane Society, find our Foster Application on our website verdevalleyhumane.org, or for more information call 928-634-7387.

K9 Synergy's Training Philosophy is Patience, Communication, & Understanding

By Heidi Dahms Foster

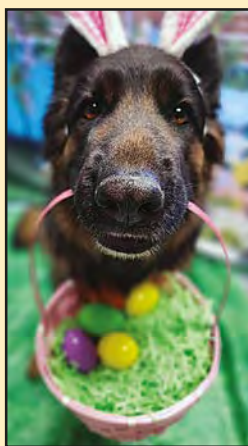
Dedicated owners know that dogs are like people. Every one is unique, and varied training and activities suit different canines and their partners. K9 Synergy in Prescott is a more recent training game in town, and that means more options for dog owners.

Amber Riley, owner of K9 Synergy, said she has had a passion for animals since she was a child. She also wanted to build something that was her own, incorporating that passion. Looking for a job where she could work directly with animals was the perfect fit.

"I worked at a chain store for four years," Riley said. "Then I took classes at Yavapai College and worked through other trainers. I like teaching and building."

The goal in her dog training, Riley said, is to simplify owners' relationships with their dogs in an easy and stress-free way. "I want to get that across in my training business," she said.

Riley said that philosophy "looks like understanding from both partners in relationship, keeping angry or resentful emotions out of it." It requires patience, communication and understanding. She said the book, *The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs* by Patricia B. McConnell mirrors her convictions about training. "It's a great book, exactly how I want all owners to feel with their dogs," she said.



Easter Egg Hunt

K9 Synergy has a wealth of experience among its trainers, including Riley, Amanda Baile, and intern Malina Taylor. "All of us have our own specialties," Riley said. "We all have different things we understand more, which offers a wide range of training."

Currently, K9 Synergy focuses on a class structure, with a variety of group classes available, such as puppy, basic, intermediate, advanced, and specialized classes, depending on where each dog is with their training. Private classes are also available. However, Riley said the business is working to provide other fun courses with the goal of keeping people engaged and working with their dogs. "That way, they always have something to do with their dogs."

Some of the tailored classes include reactivity, rally, scent work, and the only dock dog pool in the area. "All of us are into dog sports, and for me as a dog owner, it's fun to learn all of them," Riley said. "I tell people to come out and try something, because you never know what you'll really like, and you should also try activities suited to your dog's breed."

Both dock diving and scent work are relatively newer, or at least a bit more uncommon, on the dog sport scene. Dock diving is becoming more popular throughout the U.S. In 2023, K9 Synergy brought dock diving to the Quad Cities area, and has now completed upgrades to its pool in readiness for



Dock Diving

the 2024 season. In dock diving, the dog waits on a 40-foot dock. The owner throws the dog's toy, and on command he runs, leaps off the dock and into the pool, and retrieves the toy. The goal is to have the longest jump, and more advanced classes include air retrieve, both at a variety of levels.

Dogs are expert sniffers, and scent work is a fun way to let them work those noses. In American Kennel Club scent work, the dogs search for cotton swabs soaked in essential oils of birch, anise, clove and cypress. The swabs are hidden out of sight in a designated search area, and neither owner nor dog knows where. The handler must rely on their dog to find the swabs via scent, and then trust their dog to alert so the owner can communicate the "find" to the judge.

Riley said K9 Synergy is always looking for new activities to add to their offerings for local dogs. On March 30, they had an Easter egg hunt for dogs, with fun games through the day, such as a teach your dog a trick station, doggie treats hidden inside colorful eggs, a photo backdrop and coupons for dog training.

Located on Corsair Drive in the industrial park off Larry Caldwell Drive in Prescott, the business is also located next to a dog friendly restaurant, Iron Horse Grill, which makes it a perfect place to spend a few hours with your canine partner.

For information on K9 Synergy, visit K9Synergy-DogTraining.com, or message them on Facebook at [K9SynergyPrescott](https://www.facebook.com/K9SynergyPrescott).

(Rescue Tales continue on page 20)



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CALI: A beautiful gray and white 2-year-old female with big golden eyes. She is affectionate, friendly, playful, and enjoys being a lap cat.
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HOLLYWOOD: A big brown tabby male with kind green eyes. For more information, please contact:
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ORI: A very sweet 2-year-old orange and white male. He loves to play and enjoys head scratches. He is a talker.
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(Rescue Tales continued from page 18)

Sula Finds Her Home

When Didi's partner was headed to work last November, she noticed a young Aussie-looking dog and her single small puppy cowering near the road deep on the Reservation between Ganado and Window Rock. She made a mental note to stop if they were still there on her way home at the end of her day. And there they were, again looking into the busy traffic as if begging for help.

Mom Sula was friendly and easy to catch by hand. Baby Maisy was a bit more evasive but finally came to her. Sula had a notable limp on her back leg, but it was hoped that with some rest, regular groceries, and care, she would heal. Baby Maisy, a striking tuxedo pup, went to another foster, Tauni, and was quickly adopted. By January, Sula's limp was still evident, and arrangements were made for an evaluation.

With vet clinics at least three hours away, making plans for vet support is always challenging, but they settled on Gallup. They learned that poor Sula had an old fracture that had healed incorrectly and was showing signs of early arthritis as well as a torn



ACL, both of which were causing her pain.

Didi struggled with the idea of a leg amputation as a good resolution but in the end realized that would be the best fix for keeping Sula comfortable and not reliant on pain management the rest of her life.

The clinic in Gallup was losing their surgery vet and could not perform the surgery at that time so another evaluation was scheduled in Albuquerque, confirming the first findings. Finally with a new vet in place in Gallup, the third trip secured her surgery in March.

The next challenge was the aftercare and although Didi and her partner did not want to let her go, they also realized the long hours both their jobs required would make the post-surgery care difficult. And then Tauni stepped up again and with her medical experience, turned out to be the best option for Sula's recuperation.

Didi was torn, as part of her wanted to keep Sula forever, but their lives were so busy.

The leg amputation went smoothly, and it only took one day for Tauni to fall head-over-heels and realize that this charming congenial Aussie girl was



Sula & Maisy

now home. Didi was thrilled that it had all fallen into place.

Sula has adjusted well, as most dogs do, to being a tripod and is now living a pain free secure life in grand style. And since Didi and Tauni developed a friendship in the process, they get to keep up on Sula's adventures and activities.

tures and activities.

It is so rewarding to change the destiny of dogs and cats in need just as Didi, her partner, and Tauni did.

Knowing how many more are struggling keeps Blackhat Humane Society and other rescue organizations assisting on the Reservation hopping. There are so many street dogs and cats trying to survive and we are always in need of contributions of time, donations, and assistance to make more happy endings just like this one.

Please take a look at what our hardworking volunteers are accomplishing on blackhathumanesociety.org and see how you can fit in and help us save more lives.



While rescuing dogs,
I lost my mind but
found my soul.

~Unknown

Freedom Frenchie Rescue was established in 2024, although I have been in rescue for the last eight years. I started rescuing French Bulldogs in the summer of 2023.

Our mission is to advocate and build a humane community that promotes compassion, protects, and educates for the French Bulldog. We want the community to value and promote kindness and provide these fur babies with a clear opportunity for life. Our goal is to establish loving and secure homes for them to live their best lives.

The increased trend of the French Bulldog in the last five years has been astronomical. They're now being overbred and becoming overpopulated like the American pit-bull. The new fad colors like merle, tri-color, blue brindle, and now the fluffy Frenchie and big rope are the latest trends.

This was created by crossbreeding DNA lines that should not be created. In turn, this causes major medical issues such as IVDD (down in the back/paralyzed), IBS, breathing issues, skin issues, heat stroke, birthing issues, high risk with anesthesia, corneal ulcers, etc. Not taking care of your French Bulldog hygiene weekly can cause other issues such as major ear infections, tail issues, and skin issues mostly caused by allergic reactions which are very common. As you can see, they need to be in a special type of home that can be attentive to their needs.

This all really started because I would apply for several French bulldogs with several rescues, and



up two, then it just escalated from there.

I applied for my 501c3 and was approved. I had already had about ten vetted and found them new homes. Most of this was with my own money, and still to this day I work for Door Dash to have funds for these guys.

As of today, a friend of mine from Chicago, Lydia, has joined the team, as has Melissa in California, and my kiddos Bryce, Braxton, and Kia are involved in rescue full time with me. They are constantly helping, traveling, and assisting with anything that's needed for these babies. Finding fosters has been the hardest as no one wants to foster, and receiving donations is almost impossible. We are lucky to have a great vet, and the few fosters that we do have are amazing.

So many rescues have come in, capacity is way more than the funds we have available. Almost every Frenchie that comes in will cost on average \$500 to just treat medically, and we tend to take on the harder cases.

We currently have five that are down in the back, one just had puppies, two have mange, a prolapse, two with level-three heart conditions that need heart surgeries, and almost every dog comes in sick with kennel cough or giardia. We

I would always get denied. I was not sure why, because I have a medical French bulldog with IVDD issues and have experience in rescue. So, I started seeing the abundance in southern California. I reached out and went to pick

also have had four bilateral ear ablation surgeries—that's \$1,400 per ear—so we're busy and don't sleep much.

Do we adopt out of state? Yes, we do. We will provide transport for a fee if you're unable to travel to pick up. We are very thorough with our adoption process, as we want to make sure these babies are going into the right home that is safe for them, the new owners, and their new fur siblings. Safety, love, attentiveness, and fun are the keys to success.

I truly love what I do, and a lot of times I put the rescue before my kids. I also put a lot of pressure on my kids to assist.

It's hard to say no, but we can't save them all. Until we get some land for a sanctuary and a safe place for our rescues, we do the best that we can now. Fostering dogs is crucial because it provides temporary homes for animals in need, offering them love, care, and stability while they await permanent adoption.

By fostering, we alleviate overcrowding in shelters, reduce stress on animals, and give them a chance to thrive outside of a shelter environment. This also allows key members a chance to focus on advocating for the rescue and dogs they are taking in. Fostering also allows potential adopters to learn about a dog's personality in a home setting, which increases their chances of finding a forever family.

Each foster home opens doors to saving more lives and spreading compassion, making a profound difference in the lives of these furry friends.

Please let us know if you can foster, and keep in touch with us on our website at FreedomFrenchieRescue.org, or on Instagram at [FreedomFrenchieRescue](https://www.instagram.com/FreedomFrenchieRescue).

May & June: Important Months

Mother's Day is May 12th. WOOFstock is June 8th. In May, we honor all the moms that have arrived at our rescue since August 2019: 21 moms, 3 litters born, and 143 puppies brought into AARF. All these lives began at AARF.

Rescuing is incredibly satisfying, and the miracle of nurturing, socializing, and finding wonderful homes is the ultimate outcome. Our staff and volunteers will tell you, teaching and nurturing them is one of their special joys. Basics and an appropriate learning curve at that age is critical to their development. As hard as it often is to let go, we have been blessed to share them with folks that love them like we did.



All our moms have been exceptional, and we're happy they now get to spend their days in loving homes as special friends to someone. Our regret is we were not able to meet some of the moms and offer spay assistance. It is so important to spay/neuter your pets because, as adorable as puppies are, there are far too many to guarantee protection in loving forever homes.

Back to puppies. All of us in rescue are experiencing the dramatic increase in the requests to rehome, help a lost or abandoned animal, helping to relieve overcrowded shelters. In plain language, it's awful, draining, and frustrating. We can't step into anyone's shoes or know their emotions, but we want all dog owners especially to please spay/neuter/vaccinate their pets.

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To help with that, something new is coming soon. Watch for it on AARF's Facebook page or aarfrescue.net.

Hope WOOFstock is on your calendar! It's an annual event we participate in and look forward to each year. We especially enjoy seeing some of our alumni and meeting new friends to rescue and AARF. Come say hello!

A Letter From Your Newly Adopted Dog or Cat



Yavapai Humane Society

Please be patient with me.

These are our first hours/days together, and I'm still trying to figure everything out.

You keep telling me that everything is okay and that I'm home, but I'm just not sure. You see, I had a home before, and I thought I belonged there and that I was loved, but something happened, and it all changed and my whole life turned upside down.

I don't know what I did wrong. I don't know what changed for them, I don't know why they didn't want me anymore or why they just let me go. It's been very confusing for me, and I've been scared. I'm still scared.

So, please be patient with me.

I may poop or pee in this new place that you call my new home, because I'm not used to where to go yet, and I'm still very nervous. I'll get used to it all and the new routines, but it's going to take me some time.

So, please be patient with me.

I don't know this place—the smells, the rooms, the sounds. I don't know you or your routines, your mannerisms, your voice, or anything about you.

It's a big adjustment for me, and for you. So let's take this day by day and work on this together.

You may make movements that scare me. Your tone of voice may scare me. You don't know my history, and I can't tell you, so all I ask is that you give me time.

So, please be patient with me.

I may not want to eat what you're giving me. Or, if I do, I may not like it or may even get sick. I've been on a special food at the shelter and that's what I'm used to. So please give me some time to get used to

what you're feeding me and when you're feeding me. Trust me, I'll get used to all this new stuff.

So, please be patient with me.

I may not want to play with you or cuddle on the couch right away. I may just want to lay in that new fluffy bed you bought for me or my crate, where I feel safe. I may just want to hide under a bed or in a corner. Just give me some time because this is all so new for me.

And even though you may want me to jump up in your bed with you right away, it's probably not a good idea. You may get up in the middle of the night and it might spook me.

I'm not used to it here, nor am I used to you. I'm used to sleeping alone, and I may want to do that for the rest of my life. Or I may eventually want to cuddle up with you. We'll work on this together, but it's going to take time.

So, please be patient with me.

Especially if you're trying to introduce me to my new furry brothers and sisters. We may not like each other right away, it may take weeks, or even months, for us to like each other, but we need time to get used to each other.

You can't judge it in one or two days—think about how long it takes for you to make a real friend or form a trusting relationship. It's the same for me and this new family you've brought me into.

Just give us some time, let us do it at our own pace, and don't push the issue. If you do, it's going to fail, and I don't want that. Neither of us do.

So, please be patient with me.

We're starting out on a new adventure together and I'm excited, and a little nervous. I want you to be my forever home and I'll do my best to make it happen because nobody wants that more than me.

When you adopted me, they told you about the 3-3-3 Rule. It's really good advice, and if you

follow it we can make this work and live together happily ever after. I know that's what I want, and I think you do, too.

So, please be patient with me. I promise it will be worth it.



THE 3-3-3 RULE

In the first 3 days I may:

- Feel overwhelmed
- Be scared & unsure of what's going on
- Not be comfortable enough to be myself
- May not want to eat or drink
- Shut down & want to curl up in my crate or hide under the furniture
- Test my boundaries

After 3 weeks, I may:

- Start to settle in
- Feel more comfortable
- Realize this could be my forever home
- Figure out my environment
- Get into a routine
- Let down my guard & start showing my true personality
- Have behavior issues that start to show up

After 3 months, I may:

- Finally feel complete comfortable in my new home
- Build trust and a true bond with you
- Have a complete sense of security with my new family
- Be set in our routine

(Rescue Tales continue on page 25)

BE WARY: JAIL TRAIL COULD CAPTIVATE HIKERS

Story and photos by Cheryl Hartz



The river-cobbled jail was built in 1929 and used in Hollywood films.



Willows monsoon.

In the heart of Old Town Cottonwood, the Jail Trail illustrates how the northern Arizona settlement earned its name. Stately and timeworn cottonwood trees shade the one-mile-plus loop, half of which basically borders the Verde River.

It also runs through an edge of Riverfront Park.

What's interesting about this trail is that liquid loving cattails cohabit with dry desert prickly pear cacti. And much of it is shaded. The trail itself alternates between river rock, sand, and packed earth.

The fun starts with a peek inside the river cobble-covered jail building. The Cottonwood Hotel lists the building's history on its website.

Built in 1929, it was first used by the Yavapai County Justice of the Peace, mainly for housing bootleggers in the Prohibition Era.

It also has housed the Verde Valley Justice Court, Cottonwood Police Department, Humane Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Cottonwood Visitor Center.

Several Hollywood productions, including Elvis Presley's *Stay Away, Joe* (1967), and Burt Lancaster's *Desert Fury* (1946), have been filmed at the site.

Part of the Verde River Greenway Riparian, at an elevation of 3,315 feet, the easy Jail Trail boasts a plethora of avian species year-round.

So birders, bring your binoculars. It also is home to nearly two dozen threatened or endangered species. If you're lucky, you might see a river otter, bald eagle, or lowland leopard frog.

For flora, Fremont cottonwood and Goodding willow predominate. The dense riparian forest also contains ash, box elder, elm, desert and seep willows, salt cedar and others.

For an extended hike, the free Jail Trail is adjacent to Deadhorse Ranch State Park, which includes another

20 miles of trails – if you ford the Verde River. But then you're in a fee area. Expect high temperatures in the summer, but you can always sit under a huge cottonwood on the riverbank with your tired feet in the cool water.

The Jail Trail conveniently starts at the end of South Main Street in Old Town Cottonwood, within easy walking distance of several food establishments. This means hungry hikers can enjoy an unhurried meal, whether you prefer pizza, tacos, burgers, or something more exotic, along with an abundance of ice-cold beverage choices.

Please heed the Verde River Greenway motto: "Respect the land, its wildlife and property owners."

Happy shady riparian hiking!



Much of the trail is shaded.



A variety of flora carpets the area, such as Goodding willow and cheerful flowers.



The Verde River keeps the cottonwoods growing.



The trail winds through massive Fremont cottonwoods.



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LENDING A HAND TO OUR BEAUTIFUL LAND

By Rita Thompson-Tinsley

Before lacing up your sure-footed hiking boots or dusting off the seat of your meticulously maintained mountain bike; before saddling up your newly shed-out trail mount and checking his cinch, take a minute. Think about how wonderful it is to enjoy the amazingly beautiful and diverse trail systems in the greater southwest.

As avid trail travelers, we live in the lap of luxury in God's great Central Highlands. We can hike, pedal, or trot high in the pines, or over rocky terrain, sandy washes, and through granite dells. It's a magical lifestyle, but what makes it so outstanding? The many folks volunteering behind the forestry scenes.

Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona (BCHCAZ) is a non-profit organization that is comprised of local equestrians committed to help maintain and manage local trails in the Prescott National Forest and, on occasion, lending a hand to other nearby national forests. They put together work crews that haul in tools and supplies to various trail projects, hiking in for miles.

Since BCHCAZ is an equestrian organization, President Wendy Timmel was able to initiate a new 'trial operation' where members ride their horses to the worksite carrying equipment. Though what seems to be a pertinent practice, this procedure remains on probation with forestry personnel.

BCHCAZ is totally devoted to keeping trails open for all users, and they continually strive to educate horse trail riders in the Leave-No-Trace practices. They work closely with other trail-focused organizations such as Yavapai Trails Association (YTA) and Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance (PMBA).

The Yavapai Trails Association is not only dedicated but passionate about protecting, preserving, and developing recreational non-motorized trails. This organization is focused on creating trails and safe outdoor spaces, but as our community grows, they strongly persevere to increase awareness of trail etiquette and trail safety.

YTA recognizes the constant need for trail user education and the continued practice of maintaining our trails to a sustainable standard. They are happy to announce their new 'Traveling Billboards' featured around town promoting trail safety, the "No Trace" principles, and trail courtesy reminders.

YTA president Lisa Lafoon shared with me the clever events regularly planned each month for group members and guests. They have a booth at the Prescott Farmer's Market, and you can find them at Whiskey River Tavern on Whiskey Row for their Thirsty Third Thursdays.

YTA, along with BCHCAZ, provides a multitude of volunteers who work on trail maintenance the second Saturday of each month. You can find that Workday Schedule at yavapai-trails.org. And, by the way, "All membership donation dollars go right back into the trails," reminds Lisa.

Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance is the third non-profit organization that naturally belongs to this triad of trail blazers. Their focus is to provide a voice in the community for the ever-growing population of trail bikers in the Prescott area.

Along with BCHCAZ and YTA, PMBA has provided thousands of volunteer hours maintaining our trails and initiating the crafting of new ones. Bean Peaks Gravity Flow Trail System Phase 1 will be ready to flow in June of this year.

Ximena Florez, PMBA president, was excited to share details of this monumental bikes-only project, "It is the first and only of its kind in Arizona". Phase two is in the works, with Phase three just around the bend. PMBA along with the International Mountain Bicycling Assoc.

"(IMBA) has been working closely with the City of Prescott and the Prescott National Forest. The Bean Peaks three phases will be comprised of seventeen miles worth of trail featuring bike-optimized detail

to suit every level of rider. What began as a vision is becoming a spectacular reality."

All in all, you can hug a tree, but sometimes it's better to hug a volunteer trail worker. Or, better yet, be one.

Happy Trails!



BCHCAZ enjoying the fruits of their labor. Photo by Wendy Timmel.



Bean Peaks Gravity Flow, Phase 1. Photo by Scott Bideau.



BCHCAZ Pres. Wendy Timmel and mustang Coquette. Photo by Thomas Lukes.



YTA work crew takes a break. Photo by Lisa Lafoon.

OUR TRAILS ARE CALLING YOU!

The Greater Prescott area is home to hundreds of miles of trails for hikers, bikers and equestrians. What are you waiting for?

BE SAFE

- Be Prepared with trail essentials.
- Proper footwear for the mileage and terrain of your trail.
- Trail Snacks and plenty of water. Trail map.
- Sun protection-sunscreen, hat, and sunglasses.
- Extra clothing to match the weather.
- Safety items- flashlight, whistle, basic first aid kit, wear a helmet if riding.
- Leave a note-tell someone where you will be.

BE RESPONSIBLE

Leave No Traces

Stay on established trails to avoid environmental damage. Don't shortcut trail switchbacks. Do not use trails when they are muddy.

Leave natural and cultural objects as you found them.

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not approach them or feed them.

Respect other trail users. Practice proper trail etiquette-courtesy, communication and cooperation. Avoid loud noises.

Keep pets leashed and under control. Pick up their waste.

Rack out all your trash.

When you stop for a rest on the trail, check the area for leftover food, belongings and litter before leaving the area.

BE NICE

HIKERS AND RUNNERS

Make your presence known when approaching other trail users. Allow faster trail users to pass. Keep your dog leashed, under control, and PLEASE pick up any pet waste.

MOUNTAIN BIKERS

Expect to encounter other trail users, especially as you approach corners. Always ride in control and within your ability. Yield to all hikers, runners, and equestrians, and to uphill bikers. Slow down as you approach other trail users.

EQUESTRIANS

Call out to other trail users as you may see them before they see you. Manage your animals on the trail. It is not advisable to ride a "green" horse or mule on high-traffic trails. Most bikers and hikers will yield, but some do not have experience with animals. Please use a friendly approach to educate other trail users during these encounters.

MOTORIZED VEHICLES

All other trail users have the right of way. When encountering equestrians, slow down and pull off trail as much as possible. Stop and shut off engine. Say hello as it helps the horse recognize you as human. Wait for the equestrian's okay before starting your engine and driving away.

YAVAPAI TRAILS ASSOCIATION
www.yavapai-trails.org

YTA Traveling Billboard. Photo by Lisa Lafoon.



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(Rescue Tales continued from page 20)

Last July, United Animal Friends opened our Snip n' Go Spay & Neuter Clinic to address a critical need for low-cost spay/neuter and vaccination services in our area. Since that time, we've already spayed or neutered more than 800 cats and dogs - and that's just the beginning!

The clinic started as a dream that was made reality through donations from Arizona Community Foundation of Yavapai County, Prescott Women Who Care, NOAH Thrift Store, and individual donors who all believed in our vision.

We've recently expanded the clinic space through a donation from a board member, and an additional donation from NOAH Thrift Store allowed us to replace the old surgical table with a new V-Top model, which keeps the pet in the correct position for surgery.



We are so thankful for the support of our community, which has enabled us to succeed with this important initiative to prevent unwanted litters that would end up as homeless pets. To learn more about the clinic, make an appointment, or donate to this worthy cause, please visit unitedanimalfriends.org.



In other exciting news, we've expanded the business hours at our Furr-tastic Finds Rescue Resale to include Wednesdays and created space for new merchandise, including furniture, UAF branded shirts, dog and cat themed necklaces, and fun new

hats and from Tug Tees and Hats. The store is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10am to 4pm at 510 S. Montezuma Street in Prescott. Your purchases and donations help animals in need. Follow us on Facebook for updates and photos of the bargains you'll find at Furr-tastic Finds.



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BETTY AND MICKEY TAKE TO THE HIGH SEAS: PADDLEBOARDING WITH OUR PUPS!

By Solana Kline—A lifelong dog-rescue advocate and avid back-country motorcycle adventure rider.

It's 6:30 am on my 40th birthday, and we are standing on the sage-filled West shores of Flaming Gorge. The September sun is trying its darndest to break through the purple thunderclouds brewing, but it's a futile effort. The winds grow stronger by the minute, and the glassy waters from an hour ago are morphing into stiff white peaks, some treacherous seascape out of *The Perfect Storm*.

Ms. Betty Dog (aka Dr. Sausage), snuggled in her yellow life-vest, squints as the near-horizontal driving rains start pelting her face. Mr. Mickey Dog (aka Dr. Wiggles), wrapped up in his own life preserver, turns his bum to the winds like the true stallion he is.

Our paddleboard is fully loaded for five days paddle-camping along the golden rolling hills of the Northwest alley of the Gorge. And she is now being tossed back and forth across the boat ramp, at the whimsy of the churning air and waters.

My decision to wear shorts and actually believe the "Sunny and 70 degrees" weather forecast from last night was clearly an egregious judgement error.

Thunder bellows, foreshadowing the ferocity and grace of the coming storms. With hope, as always, I imagine the storm will pass quickly, and we will be fine, and that our epic birthday adventure will go off without a hitch.

I follow the pups up onto the board, and we set out into the dark stormy waters whose depths hold secrets and memories all their own. It's far too windy to stand so I kneel and paddle as hard as I can into the wind, seeking a bit of respite in a calmer branch of the reservoir just up ahead.

Dr. Sausage and Dr. Wiggles are unamused, accustomed to still being wrapped up cozily in their fluffy down blankets at this hour of the morning. I cover them with a big rain slicker, and they nestle in. We make it up into the cove, and the wind calms enough to rest near shore. The pups dismount for shore sniffers while I assess the storm.

There's electricity in the air, hairs reaching up for the heavens, that uneasy feeling of static and impending doom. The first lightning bolt meets the water just North of us, and that was that, no dog of mine will get capsized, not today, not ever! Luckily, the gale winds were at our backs, so I stand up to make a human sail, carrying us back to the boat ramp in no time.



I had always seen people out on their paddleboards, steadfast four-leggers manning the bow, taking in all the fresh water-kissed sniffers, snouts high, tails alert.



It looked fun. It looked relaxing. But being the trail and dirt lover I am, it also looked like a task more well suited to labradors and boat people.

Wouldn't I get bored? Wouldn't the dogs get bored? Wouldn't the winds decide to turn full hurricane and carry us off into oblivion? Wouldn't the inflatable paddleboard get punc-

tured plunging us into a long swim home in frigid spring waters?

Well, I've never been one to live in the what-ifs of life, and we all know that these spicy hounds of ours most certainly don't. And that's what spurred our stormy birthday adventure.

The summer before, I rented my first paddleboard to try with the pups. After riding in sidecars and bicycle trailers, they took to the board with enthusiasm! We have now paddled all around the West in creeks and rivers, in lakes and reservoirs, in rain and shine.

While our birthday trip was a bust, these two furballs have happily captained us on many an adventure. As soon as I pull out their life vests and unroll the inflatable paddleboard, they get feisty and wrestle, hopping alongside me as I carry the board to the water.

They sunbathe and sleep and dream all while taking in the new sniffers on the board. They smell the underwater worlds beneath us (dogs can smell time: tinyurl.com/zeubd3pa), and they see the undisturbed shorelines and still waters teeming with diving ducks, massive fish friends, angry otters, ancient squawking herons, and olfactory remnants of stealthy lions and bear. They encounter their new favorite nature friend: beavers!

This past summer, with the lakes and reservoirs flooded, we got to paddle in and out of the aspens and cottonwoods alongside the beavers building their new condos. Betty and Mickey started shaking, ears perked, whining in their antsy pants. I scanned the area, sussing the cause of all this fuss, and there she be, the world's biggest beaver swimming a treetop back to its den right near us!

These two learned pretty quickly that they don't like being off the board in the deep water, so they hold their ground on the board, letting the sniffs come to them, trying to sort what this new creature was. It was differ-

ent than that otter that jumped out of the water and slapped its entire body behind us as a warning, it was different than those wily ground squirrels taunting them in the desert. This new friend was greasy, sleek, and ready to defend his territory.

But the beauty of the paddleboard is its quiet. It moves across the water tops with gentle flow. We have seen animals that I have never seen up close before getting on the board—bald eagles nesting in cliffsides, osprey mating, great blue herons carrying sticks to their nests. And we have had immense accomplishments and milestones, each of the pups swimming from shore out to the board when their shore leave was up, and they needed a little cool off before getting back onto the board!

Exploring with them in this way is unlike any other. We paddle to new trails and hike, we nap in the middle of the lake, we Huck Finn downstream for lunch.

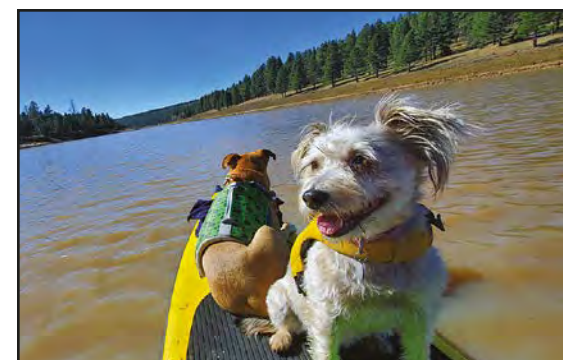
If you've ever been curious about paddling with the pups, go for it! It might feel intimidating at first but it's an easy learning curve and with a little practice becomes a gentle way to exercise with the hounds, you can even let them run on shore while you paddle! It is a neat exploring adventure for the humans and doggos in the pack, especially as we all get a little older and a gentler form of exercise feels so good.

For some starter tips check out this site on paddleboarding with dogs: tinyurl.com/e74de2aa.

Our favorite board so far for pack travels is the Sol Paddleboards Soltrain inflatable (tinyurl.com/y5n96mar). They are a Southwest local company with excellent customer service and warranties.

So as we round into Summer, consider a float down the Verde River, out in the Granite Dells, or across Lake Mary and experience this amazing way of bonding with the pack!

Until next time, happy tails and happy trails!



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