

Prescott Dog

January/February 2026 • PrescottDog.com magazine



Canine Cartographers

Coping With Loss
Tips and Tricks for '26
Hazel Howls

Introducing Our Cover Dog – Olivia

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Prescott Dog magazine

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PRESCOTT DOG MAGAZINE

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Prescott Dog magazine



Olivia, Our Cover Dog

Who took your picture: My mom takes so many pictures of me, and I love to sit there looking pretty. Just to play with her, I will stick my tongue out too.

Name: Olivia, but my mom and grandma call me Little Red Pimento.

Hometown: I was born in Prescott, Arizona just a few minutes down the road from my forever home.

Age: I was born on June 26, 2025 which means I am 5 months old now. Mom says I am growing up fast.

Favorite brand of kibble: Raw dehydrated puppy food from the brand Primal. The vet told Mom if I get the best food possible from the time I'm a puppy, I'll grow up big and strong.

Favorite people food: I love to go downtown and visit my favorite store, Fite and Sons Mercantile (where me and my mom work) to get some homemade doggy ice cream. They use bananas, yogurt, and peanut butter which is frozen to perfection.

Favorite toy: Ever since I was a little puppy, my favorite toy has been my stuffed-animal crab, but a close second is my stuffed-animal unicorn that my mom's friend picked out for me. It's fun to have so many people who think I'm cute, but I get spoiled non-stop.

Favorite outdoor activity: I love it when Mom and Dad walk me down to Grandma's house, which is just a few minutes down the road, because as soon as I get there, she opens my toy drawer and gives me a frozen raw bone to chew on.

Favorite indoor activity: I love to play with my cat brother Fred, who chases me up and down the hallway after I bark to get his attention. Then, when we get tired, we take a nap together.

Favorite nap spot: The comfiest spot in the house is either next to or right on top of my mom, who is usually laying on the couch with Fred.

Fitness regimen: Every morning, Mom takes me outside to zoom around the yard and play fetch with my favorite stick. Mom and Dad will take me to the local park to do the story walk when we don't go to Grandma's. There's always so much to see and smell.

Describe your perfect canine pal: My best pal is my brother Fred, an grumpy old kitty who lives with me. But my litter mate who I got adopted with, Luna, now lives with my Grandpa, so I get to see her whenever they come to visit and it's always so fun.

Describe your perfect day: I love the days when I get to wake up Mom and Dad in bed, so we can go outside to run around and then get ready for work at Fite and Sons Mercantile where I get spoiled by my boss. I have my own bed and toys and tons of treats. Plus, I get to see all of Mom's friends and customers, who adore me.

Then we get to go on a short walk to Grandma's where I get even more love. By the time I get home, I'm tuckered out and ready for a nap with Fred. But I'm never too tired to play for just a little bit first.



HAZEL HOWLS

Surreptitious Spelunking and a Clumsy Rescue

Boy Howdy Hey (Rez dog cowboy greeting). I never thought I'd see such a worrisome break in our pack relationships. I spent nearly the whole day by Pru's side. Silent for the most part, as she was so angry. She didn't want to listen to much I had to say.

Who was the target of her hot consternation? Dad.

Of the six members of our family pack (four of us four-leggeds and two parent two-leggeds, not counting the revisiting named birds and other animals), Dad would be the least likely for Pru to be so upset with. She adores him, but today if Dad walks by or tries to engage her in play or conversation, she gives him the side-eye and walks away.

He knows why. He also seems to know everything will work out and regain its balance in time.

The break in the pack-peace wore on through the day. It put the house in a tip and required some intervening from the household's wise philosopher. Me.

I waited till Pru decided to seek solitude in the far garden... with the narrow gate. I positioned myself in its entrance and gave some subtle snorts, and a single low, short growl. In canine parlance, that would mean I'm sensing something without a firm sighting, which I was faking at that moment.

I heard Pru rise from the gravel bed on the other side of the garden shed. As incredibly brave and athletic Pru is, when any of the other pack sounds an alert first, Pru prefers to get around and behind whoever is barking and growling till she can get a handle on what's going on.

And, true to her form, Pru came around the shed at a trot to take her position. But I was blocking the gate.

"Sit tight, Sis. We need to talk."

Pru tried to nudge past me but, I pushed back.

"Get it off your chest kid, and let's clear the air."

I thought that imitating something Dad would say would give a serious air to the moment. Instead, Pru started laughing.

"You are the most comical when you try to sound like Dad. Please



don't do that, I'll pee myself." She tried to get past me again.

"You're not moving on yet Sis. Us Rez dogs need to talk."

Bringing up heritage got her attention. It takes her and me to not so pleasant memories. How close we came to short and brutal lives without two-legged intervention.

"What happened with you and Dad this morning? I heard the commotion off in the bedroom while I was in the kitchen and saw y'all coming out with Dad following you. Since then, you've been in a snit."

Pru sat looking over my shoulder, watching Tucker try to find a perfect spot for his business—which entails a complicated ritual of circling in several areas of the yard.

She finally sighed and admitted she was mad at Dad for waking her from a sound and peaceful

sleep with some bizarre new game that started with waking her with a crushing weight, and then wrapping her front and back half in blankets and clumsily trying to free her while yelling at her to calm down.

"I don't know what he was thinking, I'm really offended and ticked off, Hazel!"

"Don't say ticked, Pru," Tucker barked from across the yard. "It's bad luck."

Tucker had finally found his spot. When he finished, he made his way over to us with a look of satisfaction at a job well done.

"Dad wasn't playing a game Pru. You thought you could sneak up on the bed and worm your way under the blankets after you'd been told not to do that. AND you went all the way to the foot of the bed thinking you wouldn't be detected.

"Dad didn't crush you. You were the victim of Keira's basketball-sized booty. She didn't see you under there. Then you panicked and flailed around enough to wrap yourself in the sheets and blankets. Dad was yelling at you to stop being spastic so he could free you."

With that, Tuck walked back into the house.

Pru leapt over my back and raced into the house. I was afraid she was going to start a fight with Keira because of the new information from Tuck.

Pru raced past Keira in the living room and found Dad in his office. She leapt fully into his lap, and the great face-wash began with Dad's strident objections.

Before Dad could get sleeves to his face to wipe away the assault, Pru bounded off to Keira.

I came around the corner to hear Keira.

"Hey Pru. I was looking for you earlier. Sorry I laid down on top of you, didn't know were under there. Hope you're OK."

Pru got up on the couch next to her. "Not to worry, Sis."

I think they were both asleep within seconds.

I bet they were both grateful they have a wise philosopher in the pack who can solve these kinds of problems.

*~Hazel Bazel Rocket Dog
(Look out, Friedrich Nietzsche)*

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TIPS AND TRICKS FOR 2026

By Shadow, as told to Kay Lockett

JANUARY is my name, the coziest of all cats being born when it was snowy cold. I like big piles of blankets to make biscuits and muffins. My actions toward most are positive and loving which is why so many adore and admire me. I come in all colors, sizes and breeds so look for me as I am very special. I already love you regardless of your color, size or breed.



FEBRUARY is my birthday and my coat is black & white, ginger, calico, and tiger. I could be any combo of those because knowledge of the true identity of Tom, my father, is unknown. I am all those things loved about kitties even when I am having naughty fun. Climbing up the curtains (I leave no damage) and scratching the chair legs—my marks are practically invisible. I love it when you scratch behind my ears.



MARCH is my special day and a new day offers me a yummy buffet of juicy stews, dried salmon, surprises of canned tuna juice, and always fresh filtered cool water. I like to chew some of mama's breakfast eggs—no salt or butter—when we sit at the table together. but be careful of my love bites which are more fun than food.



APRIL is my name or Eamon, gender depending. Pleasure seeking, stubbornness, and indulging is our middle name. Eating our treats as the weather warms up, being the center of attention which means being in the center of your heart and soul—that's what fills us up. Purring and



satisfied, we continue our all-day catnap.

MAY is my name I claim my rep as the most mischievous, enthusiastic of all felines. I love to howl for no reason, especially at night. I feel especially cat-like when I see the moon. The sounds I make are purring (very loudly), snoring, howling, and I meow constantly in different tones just for fun, for attention to play, get groomed, fed treats or for no reason... You guess correctly much of the time.

JUNE is my birthday and my favorite places are under the bed and in the safe, dark corners of my room. I am a homebody, my love is to be home especially when I am alone. At those times I can explore, play with my toys and feel safe and serene. As an affectionate cat, I love to be scratched on my bottom, have my ears rubbed, and give cat kisses.

JULY is my birth month and I expect to receive everything top notch. The litter box must be cleaned two times a day, my nibbles and water to be fresh each day. Sometimes when things are not up to snuff, I can get snippy and hissy but mostly I soak in my sweet, neat surroundings while I get my tummy rubbed. I am a kitty who likes the calmness when things are in purrfect order.

AUGUST is my sunny day. I came out roaring for any and all attention, for any available lap, all for my contentment. All window sills are for



my perching. Sometimes I swipe while being petted because I want more or less, or perhaps in a favorite spot. Sometimes a swipe or nip just happens as my instincts take over. My royal self demands all of your pampering for all of my pleasures.

SEPTEMBER remembers me for I was born under the planet Venus. As a lover of beauty, I wonder at flowers and birds under my window seat and love to peek at the stars each night. Cuddling is my most favorite and I wake-up in the warmest spot on the bed. My bed. The queen sized bed. Undisturbed preening, grooming, sleeping and dreaming is what I love best.

OCTOBER a Scorpio is what I am and please be careful of my moods as they change without warning. Yes, I want all the affection and get jealous and pouty when your attention wanders away from me. Please do not talk on the phone so much. I am passionate about



life, my mystery beholds you and I am forever happy sharing love with all who are pulled into my magical auric field.

NOVEMBER my month is a holiday month and I got into some big trouble when caught eating foods left out on kitchen counter. Not at all my fault as I didn't forget it there by accident. Nothing should ever be left out on the counter or table. Fortunately, my siblings and I did not get into the stuffing which has ingredients very bad for me such as onions and stuff. Born during this busy month makes me appreciate the action as I conjure up more exciting things to do.

DECEMBER makes me a holiday baby with a mix of thick fur for the cold weather. The holiday decor is very particular to be careful of no plants or greens that are toxic to me because munching on plants is my favorite. I can safely eat Christmas cactus, spider plants, ponytail palm, all ferns without fear of being poisoned and getting sick. Yum-yum stuff and only the cat kind of goodies should be for left out for me in my safe place away from the busy vibes.

Meow.

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LONGTIME DOG TRAINER AND 4-H LEADER JERI HOLTON LEAVES LEGACY IN COMMUNITY

By Heidi Dahms Foster

Dewey-Humboldt and the surrounding community lost a long-time dog lover and trainer when Jeri Holton lost her hard-fought battle with cancer on November 12.

Holton and her husband Ray Farber partnered for many years at the couple's Farbenholt Kennels in Dewey. They raised and trained German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois, and offered a wide range of dog training classes.

Born and raised in Vermont, Holton's father raised Coonhounds and Beagles. She became interested in herding because of the family's collies that helped with the sheep and cattle on their small dairy farm.

She also successfully showed horses, earning top awards at the national level. But was most interested in the dogs, and started showing Doberman Pinschers where, during the 70s, she had great success in the conformation ring and in obedience trials. She later switched breeds from Dobermans to German Shepherds.

She began working in Schutzhund, a German dog sport that tests a dog's tracking, obedience, and protection skills, with Argus, a shepherd she was able to import from Germany. With Argus, Holton earned an excellent rating in Schutzhund work, which included tracking, obedience and protection disciplines. The pair scored a 99.5 out of 100 in one tracking test.

By 1981, Holton was managing a 100-run kennel in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She was an instructor at the school for dog trainers, accredited by the local community college, in which students learned all aspects of the training business. It was here that she and Farber met.

The two moved to Arizona in 1994, where Farber's



parents lived part time in the Prescott Valley area. They bought property in Dewey and created their kennel and training area.

Together, Jeri and Ray raised and trained German Shepherds Belgian Malinois, fostered and rescued a variety of dogs, and focused on obedience training for the general public. Holton was an

AKC Canine Good Citizen evaluator and a temperament evaluator, aiming for stable, well-rounded, happy dogs that can function in public places. She advocated for positive training methods and creating a close relationship between dog and owner.

One of Holton's proudest accomplishments was her more than 25 years of being a 4-H leader in the area. In

partnership with Molly Wisecarver of Mayer, she nurtured generations of kids who excelled in dog sports.

In 2020, four of her 4-H members, Eillyn Peterson of Dewey, Patricia

Disert of Prescott, Addie Kennedy of Dewey and Lilia Johnson of Dewey, won the top four championships at the Arizona 4-H State Dog Show. All were part of the Lonesome Valley Wranglers 4-H club.

During a memorial on November 22, community members including friends, former 4-H members, dog training students and more spoke of Jeri's strong faith in Jesus Christ, the difference and example she made in her 4-H students' lives, both in dog sports and life in general, the dog training.

She helped many people overcome behavior problems and build relationship with their dogs. Her husband Ray spoke of the love the two shared and their long partnership in dogs.

All agreed that Jeri was a force to be reckoned with, and someone who will be sorely missed in the community.



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Within Yavapai County, we have volunteer non-profits that can provide shelter solutions for your animal family members. Animal Disaster Services (ADS) will shelter your household pets, and Large Animal Shelters & Emergency Readiness (LASER) provides safe shelter for your barn animals – all at no cost to you.

LASER started in 2019, working in partnership with the Yavapai County Office of Emergency Management (YCOEM). When disaster strikes, LASER is activated, and one of the two LASER shelters will open to the public.

The location will be broadcast through various news sources, on the LASER website, and on the LASER Facebook page. LASER volunteers will care for your barn animals 24/7 until the evacuation is lifted.

You can prepare now by doing the following:

1. Sign up for your local emergency notification system. YCSO uses alertYavapai. Register at YCSOaz.gov
2. Most jurisdictions have adopted evacuation



zones, using pre-determined areas for the delivery of vital information. Go to protect.Genasys.com to sign up.

3. Create a family plan. If you are away from home when that GO order is issued, where will your family meet?
4. Create a list of key items to grab up quickly. Consider prescriptions, critical papers, and precious family items.
5. Prepare a GO kit for humans and animals and keep it updated. A list of suggested items for family members can be found at tinyurl.com/bp9hhnpj. For the needs of household pets, go to AnimalDisasterServices.com. For needs of barn animals, go to laser-shelter.org.
6. Create defensible space around your home. Check out the Yavapai Firewise website yavapafirewise.org.
7. Have a neighborhood evacuation plan. If you are out of town when disaster strikes, can your neighbors get your animals out?
8. Teach your barn animals to load quickly even under stressful situations.
9. Find various ways out of your neighborhood. If the route you usually take is blocked, how will you get out?
10. Stay informed, but make sure you are following reliable sources of information. Social media can be full of misinformation and

AI-generated images that are not accurate.

It takes a lot of volunteers and donations for LASER's emergency sheltering to provide this service, and to keep it free to the public. If you're looking for a feel-good volunteer group that gives back to our community in a special way, LASER is for you. Our trained and dedicated team of volunteers is ready, at any time, to activate and take care of all kinds of barn animals that have been affected by evacuations.

Come join us. Applications are online at laser-shelter.org. It's a great feeling to know we're taking care of our Yavapai County animal family members, and the people who love them, when they need it most.



What is Rescue? What Does It Mean to You?

Our dogs are real, their stories are very real and helping them to recover, trust and find happy homes is why we are a rescue. "Saving One by One...Until There Are None" is our mission, and we offer a means to get involved and truly make a difference.

Can You Help?

The answer is a definite yes on helping, and there are so many ways. We keep saying there is a comfort zone in the world of rescue for everyone. If you are physically able, you can provide walks, transport, help at adoptions, work on our property, build, repair, create a garden or a flowerbed. If you are not able, our pups love attention so you can simply spend time with them one (or several) on one. Our barn has comfy rooms or spend time in our play areas.

Do you belong to a group or club that can hold a fundraiser or donation drive? Are you part of a larger community where you can write stories about us or promote our dogs? Networking is critical if you are on any social media sites. Like or comment on our Facebook page. Have a birthday or anniversary fundraiser to support AARF. Donate, of course. You may target your donation to

vet bills, senior dogs (we are also a sanctuary), our spay/neuter clinic fund (we have helped close to 500 pet families so far).

We are volunteer-based and there is always a need. We encourage monthly donations, no matter how small, as these constant dollars provide security in many ways. Come out to visit and tour for a view to understand who we are. With ten acres and many pups to take care of, there is always something to do and everyone can help in some way. During this New Year and entering our eighth year, we're continuing to evolve.

Volunteers come out six days a week to walk, socialize and just be with our residents. Our volunteers are THE BEST. Winter, spring, summer or fall, they never fail to be there. A few of us are getting a little older and it



seems our dogs are getting stronger. Please join our team, you will make a difference.

Follow us on aarfanimalrescue.net, or Facebook, or call us at 928-925-7219 to talk with a real person. Also remember that our next spay/neuter clinic is in February. It seems a long time away but appointments fill quickly, so don't wait if you know of someone who needs us.



Did you know that United Animal Friends® (UAF) can save you hundreds of dollars on dental services, spay/neuter services, and vaccines for your cat or dog? And even better, the money you spend at the UAF Snip n' Go™ Clinic helps animals in need.

Here's what one happy customer had to say on Nextdoor: "Took our Jack Russell Terrier in for a dental cleaning. Ended up having to get a few teeth and a growth pulled. Staff kept me informed all the way."

Noodles is back home and recovering. Saved a ton of money compared to the commercial pet dental places (at least 50% to 75%). Thank



you, United Animal Friends for providing such great service!"

When you use the UAF Snip n' Go Clinic, you can rest assured that your pet is in great hands, and the revenue from the clinic goes right back into supporting our programs and services, including:

- Our Foster/Adopt Program, which rescues homeless cats and dogs, prepares them for adoption (including spay/neuter, microchipping, and any necessary veterinary care) and finds them loving homes
- Our Emergency Medical Program, which helps pay veterinary bills for critically ill and injured pets in low-income households
- Our Community Pet Food Bank, which provides free nutritious food for pets in low-income households
- Our Spay/Neuter Certificate Program, which provides low-cost spay and neuter for pets in low-income households
- Our Community (Feral) Cat Program, which alters free-roaming cats at no charge

Speaking of the Community (Feral) Cat Program, here's another testimonial from a happy client: "Thank you SO much to United Animal Friends for sponsoring the surgeries for feral cats. My husband and I have been able to get ten feral cats sterilized through their program so far. We have a few more drifters that we hope to trap this year and get their surgeries done through UAF as well. Our TNR project would not have been possible without the sponsorship of UAF!"

UAF's Snip n' Go clinic is the double-whammy of wins. You win when you save money, and homeless animals and community pets win from your business that supports our programs. For more information, or to make an appointment, please visit unitedanimalfriends.org/spay-and-neuter-clinic.

To make a tax-deductible donation to any of our programs, text "UAF" to 53-555, visit unitedanimalfriends.org/donate, or mail a check to PO Box 11133, Prescott, AZ 86304. Expecting a tax return?

Treat your refund as a chance to support animals in need. Many donors find it a meaningful way to use an unexpected return. Or, if you're 70.5 or older, giving directly from your IRA can help you avoid taxes on your required distribution. Saving lives is a great way to start the new year.



Do you own an Australian Shepherd, Cattle Dog, Boston Terrier, French Bulldog, Shih Tsu or Labrador Retriever? These breeds or mixes that include them are commonly affected by eye problems, like cataracts, glaucoma, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) to name a few.

Purebred dogs aren't the only ones who may have problems; any owner who suspects their dog may have eye problems should consult a board-certified canine ophthalmologist.

Glaucoma and corneal ulcers can cause significant eye pain, which could make your dog squint, paw at their face or even make them have aggressive tendencies due to discomfort.

Progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) and advanced cataracts can lead to partial or total blindness. Dogs with impaired vision may become more anxious or fearful or become startled easily.

Getting your dog seen is difficult here in Yavapai County because there are no certified ophthalmologists in the area, so if you have a breed prone to eye diseases, it's essential to have their eyes checked to preserve their vision, comfort, and overall quality of life.

Here is a perfect opportunity. Dr. Cindy Mar, DVM DACVO is returning to Chino Valley, Arizona on March 13-15, 2026. Dr. Mar is board certified and able to perform exams for the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals' (OFA) Companion Animal Eye Registry (CAER).

Dr. Mar specializes in the medical and surgical management of animal eye diseases. She's particularly interested in determining the underlying cause of eye conditions and treating patients through the integration of medical, surgical, nutritional, and supportive therapies. She's dedicated to improving the quality of pets' lives through the maintenance of their ocular health.

Pre-registration for the eye clinic is required. If you'd like to bring your in for an exam, please download and complete the form at cvctc.net on the Trials & Events page, and mail your check made out to CVCTC c/o Sharon Bryant, 2917 Maricopa St., Chino Valley, AZ 86323. The minimum number of dogs to confirm this eye clinic is 75, and the exam cost for each dog is \$55.

Please note on your registration whether your dog has been exhibiting any aggressive behaviors, so we can ensure the safety of Dr. Mar. Feel free to contact Chino Valley Canine Training Club at chinovalleycanine@gmail.com if you have any questions.



Sometimes it's the quiet ones in the background who tug at our hearts the most. Such is the case with Little Peewee, who came from a home where the residents struggle to live and are trying to care for a number of intact dogs as well.

Blackhat Humane Society (BH) is one of the animal rescue groups trying to pull dogs from that property and sterilize other dogs who remain. Susan, a BH foster who lives near the property, noticed two litters who were just being weaned. She made her plans



to get them into her home for fostering.

She observed that one was not thriving and was developing more slowly than his litter mates. The sores around his ears and neck said the other pups were picking on him and not accepting him.

Susan learned that he had fallen off a bed and landed on his head, and that he was initially having difficulty walking and moving around as well. Susan realized she had to get him out of that situation.

The two puppy litters were retrieved and secured with Susan and Pete. As Susan spent more time with Peewee, she realized he was sight and hearing impaired. Likely because of being bullied and his sense limitations, he was more cautious and defensive around the other dogs. Susan knew he needed more one-on-one time to build up his confidence, and gave him special time away from the puppy pack.

Now three months old, Peewee has progressed into a different dog. Susan still has to hold up his food so that he can smell it first to detect it, and he needs to be introduced to other dogs slowly. But once he knows the other dog will be nice to him, he is happily playful. He has developed quite the personality and now trusts his foster mom. He leans up against her to say hello and kicks up his front feet to prance horse-style when he feels silly and wants attention.

Peewee is looking for a home where he can progress even further. A small fenced yard would be ideal, and a gentle patient pup-mate would be a great mentor. He has so much promise and has come a long way. His potential can be measured by his courage and unique charm, and BH

is confident his best home is out there where he can get the chance he deserves.

To learn about Peewee or any of our other available rescues, please look us up at blackhathumanesociety.org. We are always looking for fosters, adopters and animal lovers who want to support our worthy efforts.





BENJAMIN: A charming male mixed breed, fully grown at 2 years. Looks like he's got a bit of terrier in his background. For more information, please contact the Yavapai Humane Society at 928-445-2666



LIBERTY: A 2-year-old female Yellow Labrador Rez Dog, 40lbs. This sweet, joyful girl is affectionate, responsible, and loves attention from people of all ages. Good with other dogs, but not cats. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



RAISINET: A petite female black-and-white Maltese mix w/a big personality packed into a small frame! Sweet & affectionate, this feisty little girl knows what she wants and isn't afraid to let you know. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



NELLI: A sweet and loving female senior schnauzer/poodle mix. Lots of personality and wisdom. Potty trained, gets along with cats and other dogs. Enjoys her walks, car rides, and snuggling on the sofa. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



DONATELLO: A 2-year-old male red Doberman mix with a gentle and shy nature. This large, timid boy may take a little time to warm up, but his loyalty and affection are worth the wait. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



SADIE: A 2-year-old female Labrador Retriever mix. As beautiful inside as she is on the outside with a playful spirit and gentle heart. Very smart. Good with dogs and cats. Loves cuddles, and belly rubs. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



JILL: A beautiful 3-year-old female Parti-colored Standard Poodle mix with a gentle and sensitive nature. She may be a bit fearful at first, but she will blossom into a loyal and affectionate companion. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



RUGBY: A 4-year-old male Cardigan Welsh Corgi mix, 4lbs. A fusion of cuteness, charm, & love. His super affectionate nature makes him an expert in the art of cuddles. His happy-go-lucky spirit brings joy. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



PEANUT: A 2-year-old sable female German Shepherd mix with one striking blue eye. A loving, friendly personality with people. She enjoys attention and affection. She takes time to trust other dogs. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



QUINN: A female 3-year-old mixed breed. Weighs 50 pounds. A gentle, loving soul, playful, affectionate, and full of heart. Absolutely charming personality. Good with other dogs. Animal Friends 928-778-2924



SPARROW: A 4-year-old male brindle German Shepherd/Box mix. High-energy with a boundless zest for life. He's always on the go with a wagging tail. He'd be a great running or hiking companion. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



PEARL: Super cute 1yo female Chihuahua/pug (Chug) mix girl, 15lbs. pug mix). She's full of playful energy and loves everyone she meets. House trained, crate trained, leash trained. Yavapai Humane Trappers at dogsdogsdogs@hotmail.com



EPSY: A beautiful 2-year-old female Australian Shepherd mix, 46lbs. This sweet, affectionate girl is as gentle as they come. She lives for belly rubs, soft cuddles, and simply being near her people. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



CHUGSLEE: 2-year-old female Pug mix. Energetic, friendly, affectionate. She has a puppyish personality, loves people, gets along w/dogs, OK w/ cats. Good with children. House-, crate- & leash-trained. Yavapai Humane Trappers dogsdogsdogs@hotmail.com



CHUGLAS: Cute 2yo 18lb. pug mix. Energetic, playful, affectionate. Loves people, OK w/dogs, not cats. Good w/children. House-, crate-, & leash-trained.
Yavapai Humane Trappers
dogsdogsdogs@hotmail.com



REEPICHEEL: An 8-month-old male Chiweenie with a striking brindle coat. Very friendly. Well started on leash, house, and crate training. Blackhat Humane Society at blackhathumanesociety.org or 928-899-3942



ZIGGY: A male Chihuahua about 8 months old. He is very sweet. I'm shy of men than women, only because I wasn't raised around men. I am already neutered, have my shots up to date and a microchip. AARF Animal Rescue 928-925-7219.



PEEWEE: 5mo white Cattle Dog mix, has hearing & sight limitations. The dearest pup, w/personality plus, but needs confidence building. Good w/gentle dogs. Blackhat Humane Society at blackhathumanesociety.org or 928-899-3942



SHASTA: A female Chihuahua mix about 8 months old. She is sweet and a little shy about men, but she warms up quickly. Good with a doggy door.
AARF Animal Rescue
928-925-7219.



ZSA ZSA: A playful 2-year-old female who weighs 30 pounds. She is learning that her new world is a safe place and will be your shadow in no time. Good with other dogs. Blackhat Humane Society at blackhathumanesociety.org or 928 899-3942



DOODLE: A male Chihuahua mix about 8 months old. He is sweet and a little shy about men, but he warms up quickly. Good with a doggy door.
AARF Animal Rescue
928-925-7219.



EMMA: A female Chihuahua mix about 9 months old. She is sweet and a little shy about men, but she warms up quickly. Good with a doggy door.
AARF Animal Rescue
928-925-7219.



HAWK: A sweet 5-month-old male bluetick hound mix. He is smart and learning basic manners. He loves to play ball, go for walks, and play in the water.
AARF Animal Rescue
928-925-7219



NYX: 8mo female mix of smaller breeds, about 30 lbs. full grown. She is a little princess. Friendly, striking in appearance, and lives well with other dogs. Blackhat Humane Society at blackhathumanesociety.org or 928-899-3942

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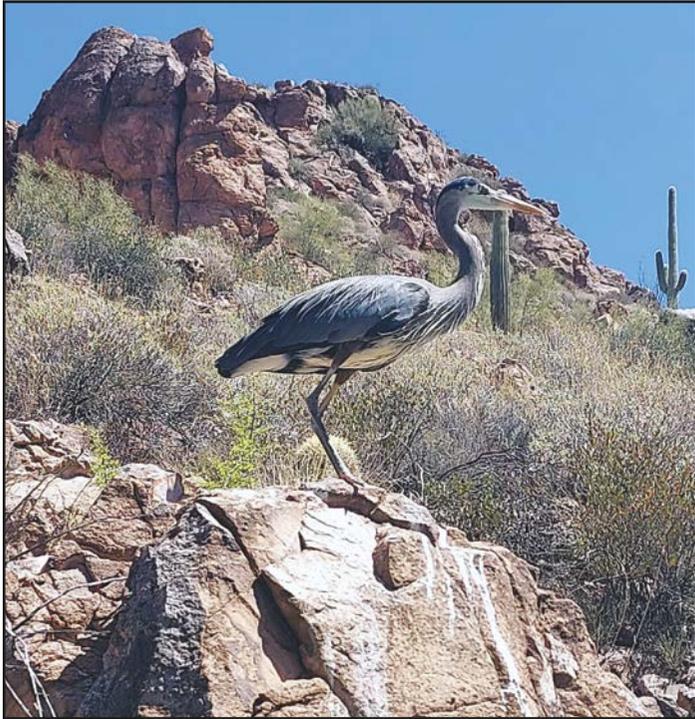
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CANYON LAKE KAYAK TREATS THE FEET AND THE SENSES

Story and photos by Cheryl Hartz



Locals will tell you to watch those walls and you could spot bighorn sheep. I have yet to see one in the wild in 39 years living in Arizona. At least you'll see great blue herons and snowy white egrets resting on boulders among the reeds and tall grasses near the creek.

Winter is the perfect season to visit this man-made reservoir in the Tonto National Forest near Mesa, Arizona.

Average daytime temperatures in January and February are around 45 degrees Fahrenheit, while March average is 53.

Arizona's sun makes those temperatures seem warmer, I've found. So while you won't need a swimsuit, you

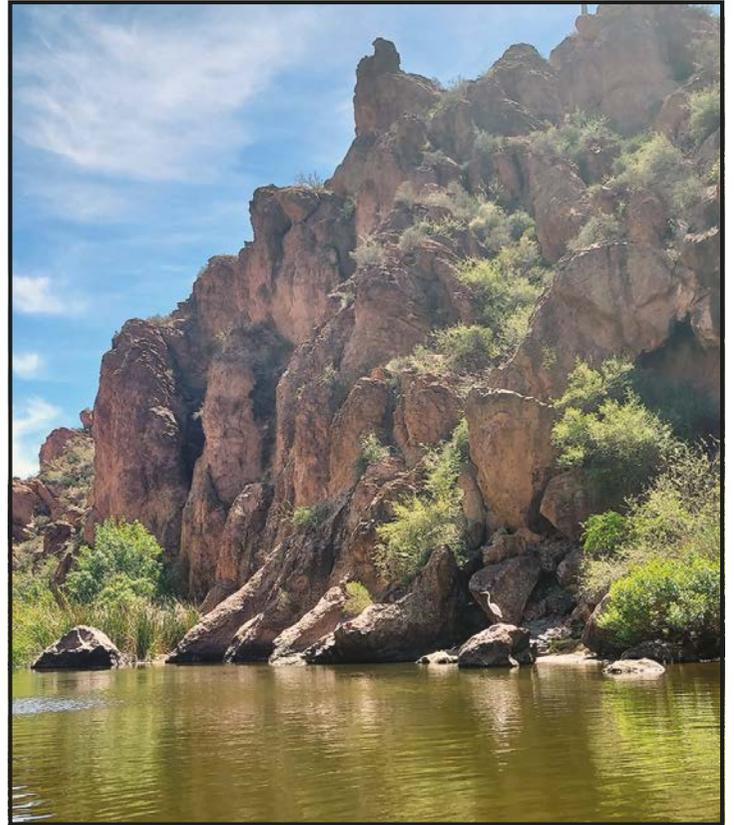
won't get overheated exploring here then, either.

Canyon Lake is the smallest of four lakes connected by the Salt River through the Salt River Project. Saguaro is westernmost, then Canyon, Apache and easternmost, the huge Theodore Roosevelt Lake.

The drive to Canyon Lake on Highway 88 is paved but winding, and on the way to Tortilla Flat, an old-west town and one-time stagecoach stop along the Apache Trail. It's a short distance from Lost Dutchman State Park, where we were staying when we visited for the first time. We definitely will return.

Hiking the Boulder Canyon Trail—at least some of it—is another opportunity I look forward to on my next visit. The trailhead for the 10.2-mile out-and-back trail starts at Canyon Lake. Elevation gain is 1,965 feet. While some sources state average hike time is 5 to 5.5 hours, that wouldn't be me on a ten-mile hike, especially one rated hard. Anyway, that's for a future article.

Canyon Lake will be closed for about sixteen weeks, starting in September 2026, for maintenance and



An egret fishes the calm creek from a boulder.



This boulder seems to be a favorite perch for a great blue heron, who has no fear of quiet kayakers.

For a peaceful kayak experience with the potential for big excitement—and sighting rare wildlife always excites me—a small creek off Canyon Lake is your best bet this winter and early spring.

At first look, busy Canyon Lake seems to bely this promise. It's a popular spot for fishing, especially for walleye, rainbow trout and largemouth bass. Arizona Game and Fish stocks the lake with rainbow trout monthly November through March. The lake boasts a state record for largemouth bass and a world record for yellow bass.

Boaters, jet skiers and water skiers enjoy it, too, especially April through October.

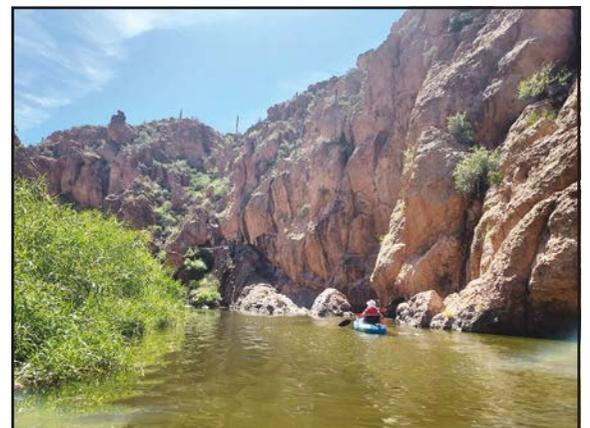
But when you guide a kayak, canoe or paddleboard to the opposite end of the dam, a narrow entrance gives you access to a shallow creek between two sheer red rock walls, where bigger boats can't go.



A heron flies over the reflection of red rock cliffs.

drawdown of the Mormon Flat Dam, which was built in 1925. But you've got plenty of time before that happens.

Happy rest-your-feet kayaking!



Kayakers enter the creek and paddle slowly, scanning the cliffs for bighorn sheep.



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COPING WITH THE LOSS OF A BELOVED PET

By Heidi Dahms Foster



Losing a beloved pet is one of the most heartbreaking things in life. The grief is often harder because we only have our pets for a finite time, compared to the love we share with them.

One social media post stated, "It's been two weeks since I lost my dog, and I'm still a wreck. I can't stop crying every day. My heart is shattered, and everything reminds me of him. I feel guilty. I can't even bring myself to wash his bed. I still sniff it every day, just trying to feel close to him.

"How do you cope when the pain just keeps getting worse?"

Another person, after the loss of the elderly dog she had raised from an eight-week-old pup, could not bring herself to pick up the toys scattered throughout the house. After several months, her husband quietly packed them away. The wall where her dog had laid in the hallway still carries the smudge she left there.

Losing an old pet that has been part of the family for many years is hard enough, but losing a young pet to illness or accident feels like robbery, and there are always feelings of missing what could have been.

Guilt over any loss of a pet is a normal feeling—we wonder if we did enough, if there was something we missed, or if there was a way to avoid an accident or illness.

There are many ways to help cope with the grief of loss of a pet, and every person and family grieves differently. Some who lose a much-loved pet never bring another into

their home. Others find peace in giving another animal a loving home.

Allow Time and Space to Grieve

Grief springs unpleasant surprises—you might find yourself weeping at a sudden memory, or experiencing sudden times of deep mourning. The sight of a familiar dog bowl, the empty space on your bed at night, or looking down to the place your pet always was next to you, can bring on times of grief.

It's important to give yourself grace—don't worry about getting over the loss, savor the memories. Take time to look at old photos, talk with friends or family who knew your pet, and try to remember the good and funny times. Every pet is unique, and over time the memories can help ease the grief.

Consider Another Pet

While some people say they could never bring another pet into their home after a loss, it's good to remember that your beloved family pet can never be replaced, and you shouldn't try. But there is always another animal that needs love and care. Another pet can fill your life again—not ever in the same way, but in a different, meaningful way.

How long people grieve after the loss of a pet is completely individual and different for everyone. Some people might want another animal in their life right away. That desire is not disrespecting the love they shared with the pet that has died.

You never replace a loved pet.

Adopting another pet will not change the past you shared with the pet that has passed on. If you adopt a new pet, you'll build a new relationship and still remember the joy and love you shared with your previous pet. You'll also be giving another deserving animal a loving home.

Before making a decision to bring another pet into your home, consider other family members and pets. It's a decision everyone in the family should make together. Pets can grieve other pets, but may welcome another furry family member.

Volunteer or Foster

If you aren't ready to bring another pet into your home, consider volunteering where you can be around other animals. Humane societies and rescues always welcome volunteers who can spend time with animals and offer general help. Animals in shelters are always hunger for the love you can offer, and giving that love can help heal your heart. You can volunteer to help clean kennels, walk dogs or just spend time with them, and provide other support.

Do Something Meaningful to Remember Your Pet

There are so many ways to honor a beloved pet. Many people have their pet cremated and keep the ashes in a special place at home or scatter them in a meaningful place, such as under a tree you've planted. Many veterinarians offer pawprints that you can keep to remember your pet.

You might consider a donation to a rescue or humane society in your pet's name, or donate to a veterinarian to help another pet lover with bills or end of life care they can't afford.

A shadowbox can hold your pet's favorite collar and tags, along with a favorite toy and photo, to make a beautiful memory for your home. A

photo or scrapbook can celebrate the best times you spent with your pet.

You might consider a special paver or stone for your garden, or plant a special garden as a memorial. You can commission a painting, sculpture or other artwork to remember your pet.

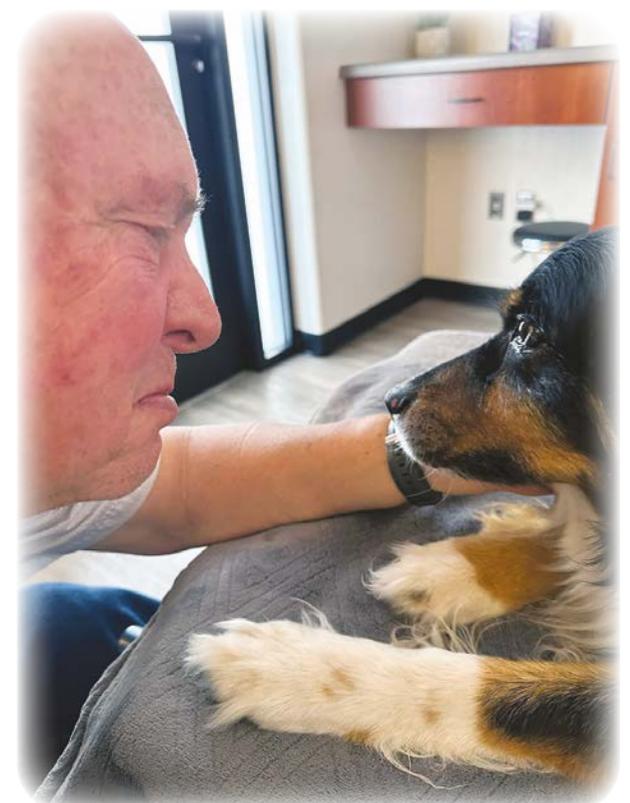
One of the most meaningful memories I treasure is a photo I took the day we had to say goodbye to our fourteen-year-old Australian Shepherd, Lili. My husband was saying his last goodbyes, and Lili, though clearly ready to go, lifted her head and looked straight into his eyes.

It's a hard time to think of taking a photo, but I cherish that memory of the connection between them.

Saying goodbye to a pet who has been a beloved part of your life is one of life's hardest experiences.

We never have them long enough. Cherish every moment and be sure to take a lot of photos—today's phones make it easier to keep and treasure the memories along the way.

Some good advice from another social media post: "Feel the feelings, cry, remember the happy times, make an album of photographs, treat yourself kindly. You were a fabulous pet parent, and you will be again."





TOMMY BOY: An 8-year-old red and white male with the most charming face. For more information, please contact the Yavapai Humane Society at 928-445-2666.



EWOK: A 3yo black male medium-haired cat w/big green eyes. If you would like an affectionate hug, Ewok is always ready with his signature move — greeting everyone with a warm, gentle embrace. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



DOO: A very sweet 4-month-old female gray tabby. For more information, please contact the Yavapai Humane Society at 928-445-2666



SUNSHINE: A handsome 7yo orange male tabby w/quiet charm & a gentle soul. Doesn't rush into new friendships, but once he feels safe, his personality begins to shine—just like his name suggests. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



AVA: a beautiful 9-year-old calico with mostly white fur and sweet patches of color. She's a people-loving girl who is an affectionate lap cat. If you call her name, she'll come running. Yavapai Humane Society 928-445-2666



MILO: A handsome 1yo black tuxedo cat w/magnificent white whiskers. Perfect mix of playfulness & charm! Active and curious but will also curl up in your lap for some quality cuddle time. United Animal Friends 928-778-2924



MOMMA: a petite, short-haired tabby who is just under a year old and discovering the world with wide-eyed enthusiasm. She is sweet, affectionate, and endlessly charming. Miss Kitty's Cat House 928-445-5411



PANINI: A sweet long-haired female tuxedo cat with big green eyes. For more information, please contact the Yavapai Humane Society at 928-445-2666

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Cats for Adoption

Should You Give a Dog A Bone?

How Your Dog Benefits From Healthy Eating Habits

By Njeri Dean



Yes, I see you! Your hand is under the table giving your pooch a treat from your plate. I bet you're contemplating whether that was a smart choice on your end.

Don't feel guilty or self-conscious that you feed your pooch something that isn't approved by your vet. You love your dog tremendously, but sometimes you turn a blind eye when it comes to your dog's eating habits.

It's really hard to not feed your dog table food. Dogs beg and whine until they get what they want, and it's hard to look at your dog's face and not give them what they truly desire.

It's time to say no to your dog and yes to getting them healthy and on track. Let's put one paw in front of the other and sniff out what healthy eating habits are right for your pooch.

Switching your dog to healthier eating habits could increase the energy levels in your dog and put your dog in a better mood. Just like humans, dogs get their energy from the food they eat.

A well-balanced diet can help a dog feel better and more energized whereas a dog on a poor diet could lead to unhealthy mood swings, hyperactivity, and overall uneasiness

throughout your dog's body.

The main vitamins and supplements your dog should be taking are: high quality proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, complex carbohydrates, probiotics, magnesium, and B vitamins.

All of these vitamins and supplements aid as a mood and energy stabilizer for your dog.

When you look in the mirror, you revel in the way you look. You want the same thing for your pet. You want people to notice your dog walking down the street looking healthy.

You may not have noticed but the way your dog looks is associated with what you feed your dog on a daily basis. Just by looking at your dog, people can tell if your dog is healthy and eating the right food. If your dog isn't consuming the right foods their coat could look dry, flaky, and unkempt.

Aside from having their coat looking horrible, not feeding your dog the right foods could put your dog at risk for kidney or liver disease and nutritional disorders.

To have your dog looking fresh at all times, feed them a diet that's enriched in protein, linoleic acid, zinc, and B vitamins. A rich diet in these vitamins and minerals can give your dogs coat protection, immunity, thermoregulation, and much needed hydration for their skin and coat.

The final reason why your dog could benefit from a healthier diet—aside from having a healthier coat and

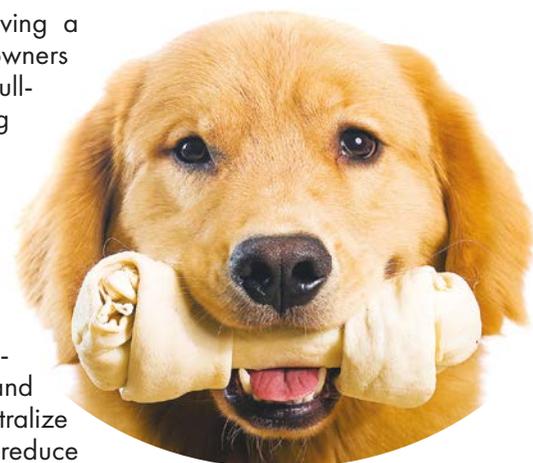
better energy levels—is having a longer life span. All of us owners want our dogs to live to the fullest and that means having your dog living out the longest lifespan that they can fulfill.

A healthy diet prevents diseases and other ailments from arising in your dog. A balanced diet provides essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that help neutralize harmful free radicals and reduce stress which contributes to aging and disease.

Another reason why a healthier diet for your dog could have your dog live longer is because it enhances the bodily function of your dog. The right balance of nutrients supports vital bodily functions from energy production and muscle maintenance to nerve condition and healthy immune response.

Everybody wants their dog to be healthy. Why wouldn't an owner want their dog to live life to its fullest and in a healthy way?

Many owners want their dogs to consume food that is right for their dog's breed, age, and temperament. Sometimes owners get it right and sometimes they don't. It doesn't have to be trial and error if you ask your vet about healthy meal options

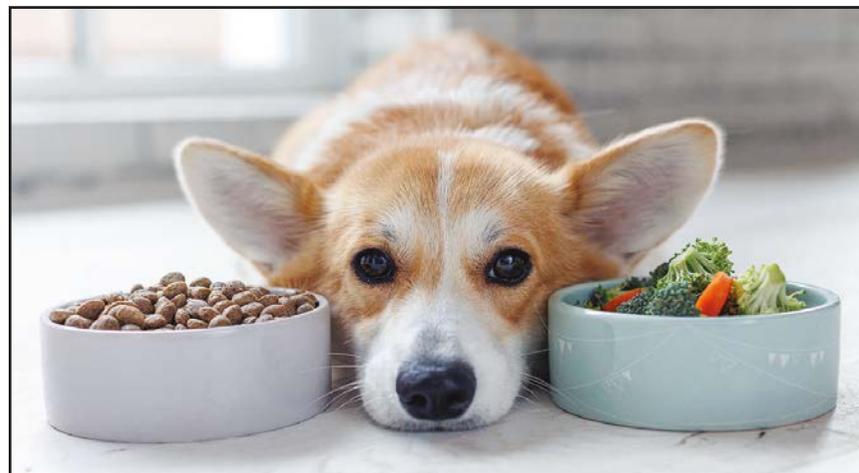


for your pet. Go to your pet shop for advice and search the internet for foods, vitamins, and supplements for your dog's consumption.

Making your dog healthy in the long run can produce a dog with a luscious coat, more energy to play, and a longer life span. Your dog deserves to be fit, happy, and healthy.

Don't deny them their true potential with a lackluster diet and the continuation of feeding them table food—that will only cause more harm than good. If you truly believe that your dog is your best friend, treat them like one and give them a paw in the right direction.

The question on everybody's mind is, should you give your dog a bone? Well, that's totally up to you.





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CELEBRATION OF LIFE: FREEMAN

By Sue Julian Vollert

Let me tell you a story about Freeman the cat. He was very special to all who knew him.

My son, Don, and I had just moved into our new home in Rancho Santa Margarita, California. We decided to get a cat to add to our new home. One day while driving to work, I saw a sign with a picture of a beautiful black kitten. We brought her home and named her Sadie.

Meanwhile, one of my co-worker friends brought a black-and-white kitten to work because I had spoken of wanting to get a cat.

She didn't know I already had Sadie when she brought him in to work with her. She said some neighborhood kids were trying to find a home for this kitten, and she remembered I was looking for one. He was so cute, I had to keep both.

The black-and-white tuxedo kitten had a broken tail, and the end looked like a stump. That is why we started calling him Stumpycat. I know this is not the greatest name for such a handsome kitten, but it seemed to stick. He was covered with fleas, but we got him all

cleaned up.

They both looked very young, and not yet knowing their history, I guess I waited too long to fix them. Sadie got pregnant. We ended up with four kittens. Two females that looked just like Stumpycat, and two males that looked like Sadie. We named them Stella, Violet, Striker, and Freeman.

Freeman was very small. My son Don took a liking to him and would carry him in his t-shirt pocket. Well, Freeman started to grow and grow and grow and grow. When he was about a year old, he was up to 20 pounds. He became a gentle giant.

We rescued a tiny, abandoned kitten with a deformed leg, not developed at the knee. Freeman took care of her. He never got mad when she would play with his massive tail.

He liked to sit next to my husband Larry and watch TV. He would sometimes look over at Larry and meow as if he was commenting on the show they were watching. Sometimes he would steal my husband's chair, so my husband bought Freeman a chair of his own.



As time went on, Freeman started to show signs of slowing down and acting like he was tired. We took him to the vet to be checked out and found he had numerous tumors in his lungs. He was unable to stand on his own any longer.

My husband and I knew it was time to say goodbye. Freeman was twelve years old when he went to the Rainbow bridge.

He was the sweetest cat I have ever known. He was truly a gentle giant who started out his life in my son's t-shirt pocket.

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THE FENN FAMILY FARM

A Melding of Passion, Skill, and Ingenuity

By Rita Thompson-Tinsley

Not so long ago in Southern California, six-year-old Kendall began her horse world journey with riding lessons. By eight, she was taking lessons from a local Olympic dressage trainer, realizing later what a good fundamental base dressage could be for a horse and rider.

Twelve-year-old Kendall got her first horse, an Austrian breed gelding, igniting what would later become her intrigue with exotic equines.

Lightning was the horse's barn name. Though the Noriker draft breed is known for enjoying the trail, this little bolt fought to avoid it. Lightning was spooky and uncooperative until enduring many, many miles of training. They rode in Marshall Canyon where there were dangerous blind curves and lots of mountain bikers approaching front and behind.

Kendall's reluctant ride developed into not only a wonderful trail horse but a decent parade horse as well.

Next, Kendall decided to take on a project pony, a Pony of the Americas mare named Finesse. She was quite a handful, bucking really hard and trying to flip over backwards with Kendall on board.

While most riders would run like the wind away from these challenging horses, Kendall actually enjoyed the challenge of a difficult project. She was able to gentle Finesse by teaching the mare that it was harder for her to do the wrong thing and easier to do the right thing.



Kendall riding one of her prized Chilean horses.



The Fenn Family: (front) son Winston, (back) daughter Karina, Kendall Fenn, Mayor Matt Fenn.

Eventually, Kendall began working with Bureau of Land Management mustangs. She became very successful in training horses for other people, and training and selling horses that she bought.

Matthew Fenn, native Arizonian and currently the mayor of Dewey-Humboldt, is what I would call a Jack of all trades and master of many.

As a youth, Matt got involved in rodeo, fearlessly riding bulls and the like. Later, as an adult, he established a professional background in real estate and did contracting work. Matt became successful by continually setting goals for himself. He understands the need to make sacrifices to make things happen.

Much like Kendall, Matt began buying and selling horses—mainly BLM Mustangs—and sometimes saving horses in distressed

situations. While Matt and Kendall were leading a common style of work life, they began doing business with each other. It's not surprising they became a team and eventually man and wife.

The couple have a farm in Dewey where they have a breeding program for both the Proven Spots Ranch (PSR) Marchador horse and the PSR Chilean horse from Kendall's earlier exotic horse collections. Both breeds are exquisitely unique.

The Marchador, the national horse of Brazil, exhibits natural gaits including the Batida gait that

gram, the Fenns have developed valuable community projects including an agri-influenced hands-on learning program for local kids.

These kids have the opportunity to compete in local riding competitions and learn all about farm life. The Fenns daughter, Katrina, and son, Winston, are huge participants on the family farm and at home in the saddle.

Matthew Fenn, a former Dewey-Humboldt councilman, was encouraged to run for mayor in 2024 by local folks who had confidence in his abilities. With his enterprising spirit, love for community and leadership qualities, he took them up on it.

Matt Fenn is not just a Dewey-Humboldt community leader: he's the perpetual voice encouraging others to also come up with solutions for their community.

A final point of distinction was during the 2025 Dewey-Humboldt Agua Fria Festival's annual parade when the mayor made his unforgettable debut atop the Fenn family's honorary steer, Jersey Boy. A little bovine bravado, for sure.



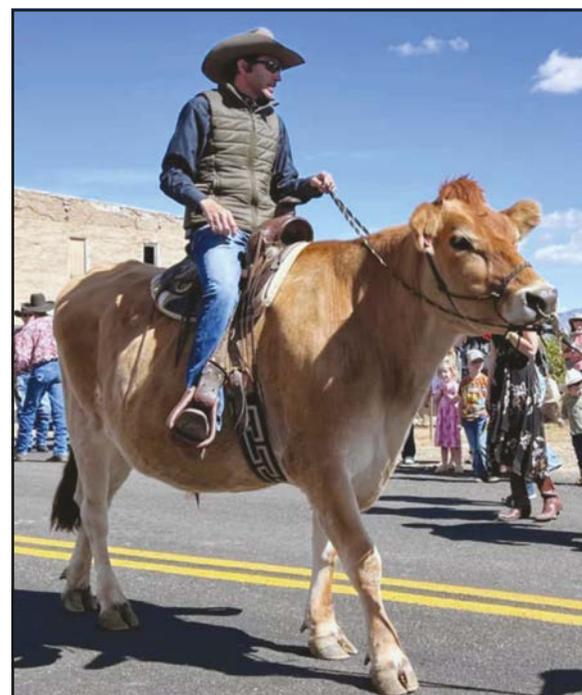
A Marchador Sire overlooking his dam and baby. Photo by Kendall Fenn.

is truly purposeful in maneuvering all types of trails.

The biomechanics of this gait allows the horse to turn on a dime, moving better and without hindrance. The Chilean horse is the national horse of Chile. Initially bred for cow and stock work, they're adaptable for trail and many other disciplines.

A characteristic shared by both breeds is their willingness in training, and each tends to be super easy for anyone to ride.

Aside from the exotic equine breeding pro-



Mayor Matt Fenn riding 'Jersey Boy' during the Agua Fria Festival Parade. Photo by Fernando Mendigutia.



The Fenn's group of Community Lesson Kids celebrating their great success.

FINDING INSPIRATION TO WRITE A CHILDREN'S BOOK IN CHINO VALLEY

By Mary Smith (author name Mary Aggas)

I started searching for kids' books on equine therapeutic riding several years ago when I was in charge of the education portion of the Horses with Heart Center's Happy Trails camp held in July each year.

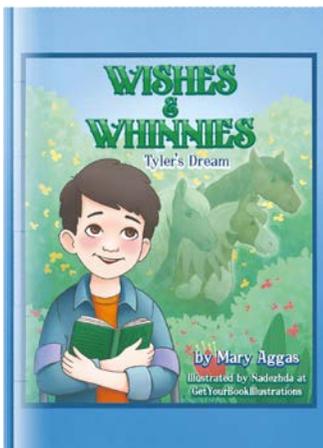
I was looking for something that would be a fun read for the participants and be a story about someone just like them, involved in therapeutic horseback riding. There was not much out there, and there was nothing for the youngest readers.

About that time, I heard a podcast with a sort-of well-known author who said, "If you can't find a book on a topic important to you—write it yourself." So, I did.

That's why my children's picture book, *Wishes & Whinnies: Tyler's Dream* came into being.

How the story became a book is complicated. It involved more than sitting down at the computer and typing it out. Even though the story is fictional, there were many knowledgeable people at Horses with Heart who I consulted regarding disabilities and therapeutic riding, to make sure details in the book were authentic.

After drafting a 1600-word story inspired by moments I'd witnessed in the arena, and having virtually no knowledge of the publishing world, I enrolled in a picture-book writing coaching program to learn the ropes. And I'm glad I did.



Twenty-one manuscript revisions later, I had cut more than half the words from the original draft because the word count for picture books must be, at most, 500 to 800 words. Next came three rounds of professional editing. And finally, a wonderful illustrator put pictures to my words.

A little about my book. The main character, Tyler, dreams of riding horses but his cerebral palsy restricts his mobility, and he needs crutches to help him walk. His family discovers a horseback riding center that teaches people with disabilities to ride. Tyler is over-the-moon happy, but when an obstacle threatens his path to independent riding, he loses faith in his dream. Will he be able to rediscover his dream?

Before writing *Wishes & Whinnies*, I did some research on the history of equine-assisted therapy. To my amazement, I discovered that the first writing about interaction with horses as being physically and emotionally beneficial for humans is attributed to Hippocrates in 460 B.C. It makes sense though: Hippocrates – hippotherapy!

A French neurologist is credited with the first real study, in 1865, of equine-assisted therapy and its effects on healing. His work led to equine-assisted therapy be-

ing used to rehabilitate wounded soldiers from the World War I at the Oxford Hospital. It's astounding to know that what we do at Horses with Heart has a 2,485-year history.

My hope is for my book to reach parents whose children can benefit from therapeutic horseback riding. My book also conveys a double message to kids that: 1) disability does not mean inability; and, 2) never give up on your dreams.

You can read about *Wishes & Whinnies* on my website: maryaggas.com.

About the Author

2026 will mark Mary Aggas' twenty-year anniversary as a volunteer at Horses with Heart's therapeutic riding center in Chino Valley. Her book, *Wishes & Whinnies*, brings together her life-long love of horses, and the joy she sees on the faces of riders as they progress in classes at Horses with Heart. She also coordinates the Marvelous Minis program for the facility, and takes Miniature Horses to visit special education classes at schools and senior living residences in the quad-cities area.

Where You Can Buy the Book

Wishes & Whinnies is currently available in hardbound, paperback, and ebook online at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and from the author's website (hardbound and paperback only) at maryaggas.com. You can also find the at Olsen's Grain in Chino Valley. If your local library doesn't have a copy, please ask them to order it.



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Finding Inspiration to Write a Children's Book in Chino Valley

CANINE CARTOGRAPHERS: HOW DOGS NAVIGATE AND MAP THEIR WORLDS

By Solana Kline honorary four-legger and lifelong dog rescue advocate

Trails hold the most immense wonder for us as humans, and for our four-leggers (canine and equine alike). For our pack, trails are our lifeblood, sanctity from a wacky world.

They present challenge and momentum, energizing our days with perspiration, respiration, peace, and beast. There's a very noticeable shift in pack energy, interest, and enthusiasm when we get on a trail, in particular a new trail. Betty and Mickey will bolt ahead for an entire run, accelerating into turns, using the trail's bermed sidewalks to slingshot them down the trail—especially Betty, who becomes the infamous Rocket Dog in these scenarios!

Trails are epic sites of opportunity to be wild animals amidst a civilized human world. On trails, we get to employ all of our senses and remember that we're a part of these delicate ecosystems of Mama Nature. The pups are sniffing harder, seeing further, and we are all constructing intricate mental maps of our location and the trail as we go.

Our pack is on trails every day and the dogs ALWAYS know exactly where we are, how they can shortcut to a further section of trail, and which way the truck is—it's astonishing!



The pack proving their superior magnetoreception

I have been completely fascinated with this. Even when we do loops instead of out and backs, or when we make a series of trail changes to get to our destination, it never fails—they know exactly where they are, where I am, and where the truck is.

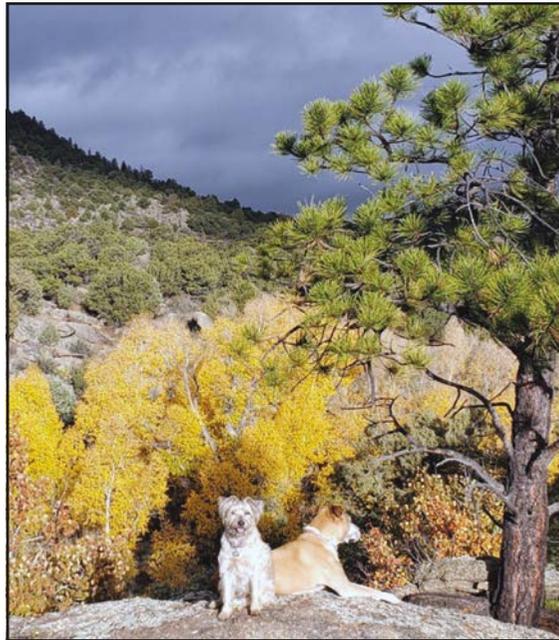
It's a rare occurrence that I lose my bearings on a trail or out in the wilderness. But on this particular day, the pups proved that their navigational systems were far superior to my own.

"This way guys, short cut!"

Betty and Micks stood fast on the trail and looked at me like I was full of it. The sun was strong this morning—in stark contrast to the new fall frost—and giving the pups' inquisitive perked ears a halo glow. They wouldn't budge.

We were out on a longer-than-usual trail run this morning, and I figured Mickey's knees and shoulders could do with a shortcut. I pressed on up the little hill to where I could see the trail again, running back down to the truck, decomposed granite soil shuffling around under my joggers. The cactus and Juniper and bunch grass radiated their happiness with yesterday's snow and today's sunshine.

I looked back for the dogs: nothing. They hadn't moved an inch and showed no inclination to do so. As I got up onto the single-track, I assured them this was the right move, that it was making our lives easier. After silent de-



Cutting trails

liberation, they simultaneously decided to follow me even though they firmly questioned my motives.

"Duly noted, you two, but you will be so excited ere in a minute when you see how much less work you have to do. Ha!"

Ten minutes later, however, we rounded the very same turn that we had previously been standing at when I decided to shortcut, and the hounds knew I was off my rocker. So, it was not a shortcut after all, quite the opposite, and the dogs knew it from the get-go.

It threw me for a loop, quite literally. I stood there, disoriented, wondering how in the world I could have done that? After 25-plus years navigating backcountry and trails.

As we jogged out to the truck—the correct way this time—I couldn't stop thinking about how the dogs knew. Their mental map of the trail was sharp and clear, even though we had only been on this trail once last Spring and going the opposite direction.

How do the pups know exactly where we are and where the trails will go? How are their trail memories and their mental maps so much more extensive and intensive than our own human ones?



Mickey relishing the Fall trails

The key seems to rest in specifically how dogs navigate using all of their senses, as opposed to we humans mainly relying on our sense of sight.

Dogs create mental maps of their surroundings and are incredibly accurate at homing. To navigate their space and place in the world, they use their senses of smell, hearing, and vision, along with two distinct mapping tools: path integration, and their very own internal magnetic compass, called magnetoreception!

Path integration is a form of mental mapping where pups can estimate how far and specifically where they are in relationship to their starting point. They do this by bringing together their mentally mapped distance and direction they've traveled since departure from their start point. This is based on their internal body movements in conjunction with their memory that help them orient in time and space. If this isn't fascinating enough, they combine path integration with magnetic sensing.

Many migratory animal species use the Earth's magnetic fields as maps for their long journeys as seasons change. This is called magnetoreception, which is where animals are able to sense the north-south poles of the earth based on their internal mechanisms and the Earth's energy. This navigational tool hasn't been studied much with non-migratory species (like dogs)



Beasting off piste

until the last couple of years. There is recent research into canine's curious ability to always find their way home—sometimes across massive space and time.

Dogs seem to geolocate themselves based on the north-south magnetic poles using an additional sensory function of an internal compass—so if they're running in the woods and are looking to find their way home or back to their start point, they'll interrupt their current path and do a north-south jog to reorient themselves within their mental maps in relation to their original start location.

It's thought that humans also have/had this ability. But with our current focus on sight to navigate—and now with our reliance on all the GPS technologies—we may have lost our feel or knowing for magnetoreception.

All I know is that the pups' mapmaking and geolocating skills consistently prove much more accurate and effective than my own. And I will never cease to be amazed at their ability to shortcut trails or find our way home. As if they weren't magical enough, now they prove to be expert cartographers to boot.

Until next time, happy tails and happy trails!

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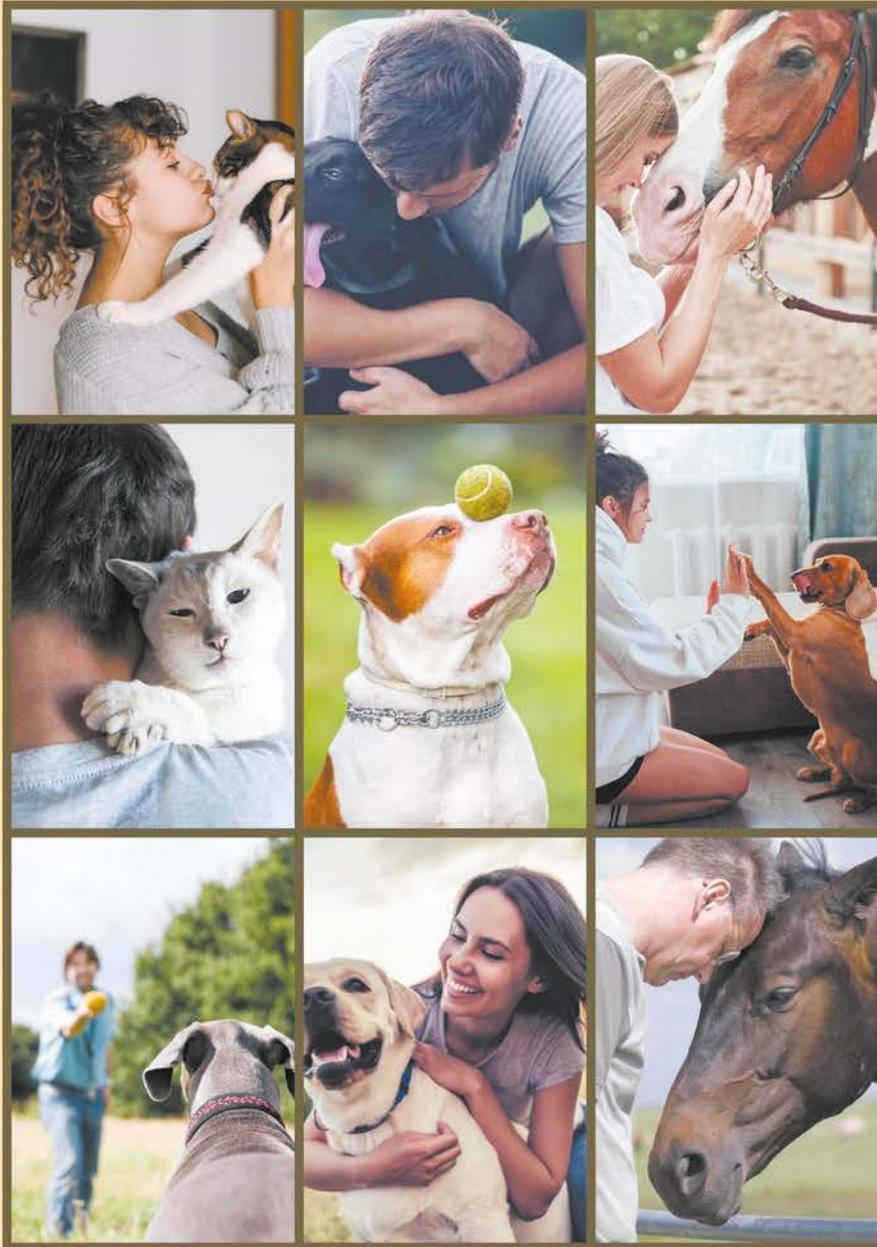


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