

## FINDING HOMES

PetSmart Charities pivotal to Michigan rescue groups **PAGE 3**

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Boy, 8, raises thousands with lemonade stands **PAGE 10**

# We OUR PETS

## FELINE FRIEND

Doctor prescribes a cat to cure sadness **PAGE 33**

## TO THE RESCUE

Cat saved from hot car becomes Target model **PAGE 36**

## PAWS OFF!

Keep your pet from being poisoned **PAGE 41**



## WE LOVE OUR PETS » STORY INDEX

- **PetSmart Charities integral in Michigan** animal rescue groups finding homes for pets **Page 3**
- **Clinton Township rescue slammed with needy animals:** 'I don't know if we're going to pull out of this' **Page 5**
- **Royal Oak animal rescue** group hosts cat 'circus' at PetSmart **Page 6**
- **Through neutering and new homes,** Saved by Zade helps protect hundreds of cats **Page 8**
- **8-year-old makes a difference,** one lemonade stand at a time **Page 10**
- **Southfield man,** canine team earn silver medal at World Dog Agility Championship **Page 12**
- **Michigan's state veterinarian shares** tips for animal care throughout the year as seasons change **Page 14**
- **County animal shelter cancels** events due to overcrowding **Page 17**
- **Michigan veterinarian's** TV show is over after 24 seasons **Page 17**
- **Adopting a dog?** It helps to do some homework first **Page 18**
- **How to choose pets** based on your lifestyle **Page 18**
- **How to acclimate** an adopted cat to a new home **Page 19**
- **How to prepare children** to welcome a new pet **Page 20**
- **6 ways to get more** joy with your dog **Page 22**
- **7 ways to keep** your pets cool in the summer **Page 24**
- **Nocturnal pets want to play,** eat when you're likely sleeping **Page 26**
- **Prevent pets from fighting** like cats and dogs **Page 27**
- **How to protect your pet** during an in-flight emergency **Page 28**
- **Sorry, dogs:** Cats can play fetch, too, study finds **Page 30**
- **5 pet-friendly** travel tips for summer trips **Page 31**
- **5 ways to set up a safe,** cozy home for cats and dogs **Page 32**
- **A woman was feeling sad,** so her doctor prescribed her a cat **Page 33**
- **How a rescue dog helped me grow up** — and made me rethink marriage **Page 34**
- **Nearly 50 cats rescued from a hot car;** one is now a model for Target **Page 36**
- **Cats aren't jerks;** they're just misunderstood **Page 38**
- **It's a dangerous multiplication situation.** Here's what to know about cat reproduction **Page 40**
- **Paws off!** Keep your pet from being poisoned **Page 41**
- **As veterinary costs rise,** people wrestle with high price of caring for pets **Page 42**
- **Know the warning signs** of illness in four common household pets **Page 43**
- **Heartworm:** What is it? How best to detect and prevent it? **Page 44**
- **Word searches:** **Pages 45-48**

24

19

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## SPOTLIGHT

# PetSmart Charities integral in animal rescue groups finding homes for pets

National organization expects to reach 11 million in-store adoptions this year

By Riley Murdock  
For MediaNews Group

With Michigan's shelters and rescues overwhelmed by animals in need, many are taking advantage of the opportunity to host adoption events at local PetSmart stores and help connect pets with potential adopters.

PetSmart Charities, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by the pet supplies giant, has partnered with thousands of municipal shelters and nonprofit rescue organizations across the country, about 55 of which are in Michigan, said Heidi Marston, PetSmart Charities' director of pet placement. The nonprofit works with those local partners to host adoption events in PetSmart stores, exposing rescue animals to people who wouldn't typically come out to a shelter, she said.

"What we continue to find is that the public, by and large, either isn't going to shelters at the same pace or shelters aren't open at times that are convenient for people," Marston said. "The more that groups are able to bring their animals to where the community is, the better outcomes that we're seeing."

PetSmart Charities is celebrating its 30th anniversary and expects to reach a total of 11 million in-store pet adoptions sometime this year, Marston said. Michigan stores contributed 50,000 of those pet



## FURRY FRIENDS FACT

About 50,000 pets found their families in Michigan PetSmart stores from 2019 to 2023

adoptions between 2019 and 2023, with roughly 7,500 taking place last year alone, she said.

The nonprofit also runs an incentive program for its partners, providing monetary awards to organizations based on their annual adoption totals. Partners can earn up to a maximum of \$250,000 per year should they reach 7,500 adoptions, according to PetSmart Charities' website.

Like the rest of the country, Michigan's shelters are mostly full and overwhelmed, Marston said. However, animal intake has stayed the same or actually dropped, she said. Instead, animals are staying in the shelter longer, with larger dogs often languishing the longest.

Most PetSmart stores have adoption centers where cats can stay overnight, allowing shoppers to visit them throughout the day. Cat adoptions have continued to rise in general, possibly due to their ease of care, Marston said. In contrast, landlord restrictions



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH MCGRAW — PETSMART CHARITIES

Animal adoptions can often be emotional experiences.

on dog breeds and sizes create barriers to home placements for shelter pups, she said. Rising pet food costs and lack of access to veterinarian care also can create hesitancy in potential adopters.

"Michigan is no exception to just having lots and lots of dogs that are desperately in need of adoption, and particularly big dogs," Marston said.

Understaffing might also lead shelters to only open

themselves to the public at hours that are inconvenient for potential adopters. Community presence at PetSmart stores goes a long way toward alleviating that issue: Some groups are able to hold events with fixed hours each week and can find new homes for 50 to 60 dogs a day through in-store adoptions, Marston said.

Municipal shelters located in more vulnerable,

**"What we continue to find is that the public, by and large, either isn't going to shelters at the same pace or shelters aren't open at times that are convenient for people. The more that groups are able to bring their animals to where the community is, the better outcomes that we're seeing."**

— Heidi Marston, PetSmart Charities' director of pet placement



PHOTO COURTESY OF OBED GONZALEZ — PETSMAK CHARITIES

PetSmart Charities Director of Pet Placement Heidi Marston pets her dog, Gatsby, a blind and deaf Great Dane. Marston met Gatsby, then 6-years-old, during a visit to the Arizona Animal Welfare League and ended up taking him home.

## Homes

FROM PAGE 3

low-income communities with large populations tend to experience higher animal intake rates, Marston said. Shelters in the Detroit, Flint and Kalamazoo areas have done “tremendous work” but also see the most need, she said.

“I believe when we ask communities for help and tell them what we need, generally people show up,” Marston said. “So we need to be reaching out and inviting the community in to support.”

On a visit to Detroit Animal Care late last year, Marston said, PetSmart Charities was able to pull 10 large dogs from the shelter to take to pop-up adoption events.

The organization was able to find new homes or placements for each of

those dogs within a few hours, she claimed.

Amulet, a “low-rider, chunky Bulldog mix” among the 10 pulled from Detroit Animal Care, made an instant connection with a woman who walked into a PetSmart store to pick up her dog from the groomer, Marston said. Despite having breathing problems, a skin issue and other conditions, the woman declared Amulet as “the most beautiful dog I’ve ever seen” and adopted her on the spot, Marston claimed.

“I think that that shows over and over, and I think it showed for Detroit, too, is bringing these dogs to places like PetSmart stores where people are already walking in who love pets, catches their eye and puts these animals in front of them,” Marston said. “It was really cool to see that we were able to do that, and I think it was also just a big morale bump for the De-

troit team, too, to see some of the success for those dogs that they’ve been caring for.”

One of the nonprofit’s goals is to promote ways to help local organizations other than through adoptions, such as volunteering or fostering animals even for short periods of time. PetSmart Charities has found dogs that are allowed a short break from the shelter for a one-night “sleepover” or “field trip” are 14 times more likely to be adopted, Marston said.

“The message I think we want people to see is adoption is needed, and if you can’t, can you do a sleepover? Can you volunteer? Can you foster?” Marston said. “All of that really helps in terms of an outcome and creating capacity for these organizations that are really overwhelmed right now.”

For more information, visit [petsmartcharities.org](https://www.petsmartcharities.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETSMAK CHARITIES

Amulet, a Bulldog mix pulled from Detroit Animal Care by PetSmart Charities, goes home with her new owner after the two made an instant connection.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH MCGRAW — PETSMAK CHARITIES

PetSmart Charities is celebrating its 30th anniversary and expects to reach a total of 11 million in-store pet adoptions sometime this year. Michigan stores contributed 50,000 of those pet adoptions between 2019 and 2023.

## SPOTLIGHT

## 'I DON'T KNOW IF WE'RE GOING TO PULL OUT OF THIS'

## CLINTON TOWNSHIP RESCUE SLAMMED WITH NEEDY ANIMALS

By Riley Murdock  
For MediaNews Group

At a time when Clinton Township-based nonprofit A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue has seen its resources stretched to the limits, its founder said its long-standing partnership with PetSmart Charities has provided crucial funding and support.

A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue was founded in 2007 and has been working with PetSmart Charities for more than a decade, founder Michelle Heyza said. The rescue takes in and rehabilitates stray, abandoned and unwanted dogs and cats — as well as the occasional guinea pig — then helps them find new homes, she said.

In 25 years of animal rescue work, Heyza said, she's never seen more animals in need than now. To top it off, donations also are down, she said.

"It's been really, really, really bad, and I don't know if we're going to pull out of this," Heyza said. "I think it's just going to continue to get worse."

The simplest thing people can do to help?

Keep your pets, Heyza said. When financially needy pet owners consider surrendering their animals, A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue does what it can to help those pets stay in their homes rather than take up crucial space in a shelter or foster home.

Grants from PetSmart Charities, including funds provided for each animal adoption, enable the nonprofit to help owners in need, which in turn helps ease pressure on the en-

**PETSMART**  
**Charities**

tire rescue system, Heyza said. PetSmart Charities also provides spay and neuter grants, which helps in fighting overpopulation, she said.

"We don't need any more animals in the rescue. We have enough," Heyza said. "We don't need someone surrendering their animal because they can't afford a surgery. Instead, we'll try to say: 'Hey, what if we help you out with the surgery? And would you be willing to keep your pet?' And 95% of the time, the answer is 'Oh my God, yes.'"

Heyza pleaded for concerned residents to make donations to their local animal rescues. County shelters may be short on resources, but they do receive some government funding, she said. Local rescues subsist solely on donations, adoption fees and grants like those provided by PetSmart Charities, Heyza said. A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue is primarily foster-based, but operates a small shelter that costs about \$17,000 a month to run, Heyza said.

"Donate to your local shelters, donate to your small shelters, because we survive on it," Heyza said. "With us being here, it takes the burden and stress off of the county shelter. I don't even know how many times we've gotten animals brought to us that were supposed to go to the county shelter, but we've taken them in instead. ... We're all here to work together as



PHOTOS COURTESY OF A REJOYCEFUL ANIMAL RESCUE

Taco is undergoing heartworm treatment and is being fostered by A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESCUE,  
VISIT [REJOYCEFULRESCUE.COM](http://REJOYCEFULRESCUE.COM)

a community."

While the rescue holds adoption events at a variety of different locations, all of their adoptions are finalized through PetSmart and new owners pick up their pets at the store, Heyza said. A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue runs the "cat condos" at the PetSmart store in Chesterfield, which she said has been a "tremendous" help with exposing cats to adopters and finding them new homes.

"I think (the partnership) has been hugely beneficial for A Rejoyceful Rescue," Heyza said. "The fact that they give back for every single adoption that's done through PetSmart is amazing. PetSmart is truly giving back to their community in that respect because the dollars that we get from that go right back into our community efforts."

Special needs adoptions

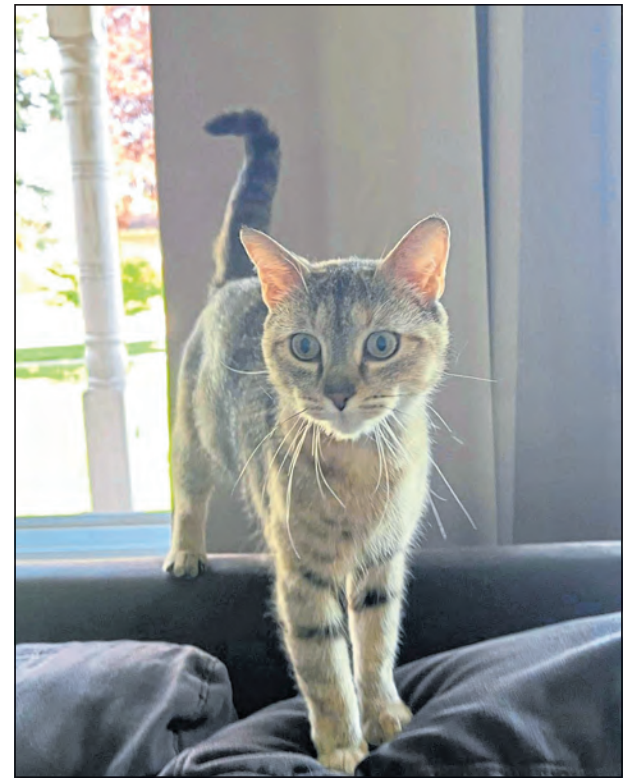
always stand out to Heyza.

Orion, a cat with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) who was with the rescue for nearly a full year, was recently adopted from the PetSmart cat adoption center, she said.

Another cat condo resident, Potato, recently found her forever home after raising a litter of kittens. Potato was considered special needs because she required a home where she would be the only animal, Heyza said.

"We couldn't even bring her back to our shelter because she didn't like all the animals in our shelter," Heyza said. "So that was a really huge success story — the fact that she found a home as an only-cat through PetSmart Charities, and being able to have those condos there."

For more information, visit [rejoycefulrescue.com](http://rejoycefulrescue.com).



Potato recently was adopted from A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue through a PetSmart cat adoption center.



A ReJoyceful Animal Rescue has been working with PetSmart Charities for more than a decade. The rescue takes in and rehabilitates stray, abandoned and unwanted dogs and cats to help them find new homes, like Hutch, who is blind.

## SPOTLIGHT



Tom Mac, a male cat with Animal House of South East Michigan, explores a tent set up during cage cleaning time at the Royal Oak PetSmart store.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANIMAL HOUSE OF SOUTH EAST MICHIGAN

# ROYAL OAK ANIMAL RESCUE GROUP HOSTS DAILY CAT 'CIRCUS' AT PETSMART

By Riley Murdock  
For MediaNews Group

At 6 p.m. on weekdays and 4 p.m. on weekends, a curious “circus” sets up shop in the Royal Oak PetSmart store on Woodward Avenue.

The performers, rescue cats with Royal Oak-based Animal House of South East Michigan, are able to stretch their legs and play in black mesh tents while volunteers clean their cages.

Because the store doesn't have a built-in room for the cats, the tents allow the



cats to exercise and socialize as well as showcase their personalities to potential adopters, Animal House cofounder Julie Tirony said. Some people come in just to play with the cats, she said.

“I think seeing them in action is helpful,” Tirony said. “It's one thing to see them in a cage, and the ones that are chatty or reach out, they get more attention. But

when they're out here and they're playing and they're being silly, and they're just being cats, I think that really does kind of capture people's hearts.”

Tirony and her business partner, Lisa Yaeck, started Animal House in 2012 after having previously worked at the Royal Oak Animal Shelter, she said. The nonprofit, volunteer-run rescue has found new homes for 119 pets this year as of May 3, according to statistics provided by Animal House. The organization has facilitated a total of 1,286 adop-

tions since 2014, peaking at 258 in 2022.

Animal House has had a busy summer of attending community events, which Tirony said has been a lot of fun for those involved. The rescue had a booth alongside PetSmart at Motor City Pride, and also attended the Madison Heights Juneteenth Celebration and Berkeley Pride, she said.

The rescue has been able to take in more animals — some strays, some surrenders, some pulled from shelters — thanks to a higher number of participating

foster homes this year, Tirony said. However, Animal House also has received more requests for help and to surrender pets recently, possibly due to economic issues or a backlog of spays and neuters caused by the pandemic's effects on access to veterinary care, she said.

While Animal House helps both cats and dogs when able, few of its foster homes are able to take in canines, Tirony said. With most of the rescue's clientele being felines, being able to run the cat adop-

tion center at the Royal Oak PetSmart has “made all the difference in the world” for Animal House, she said.

“We found that in other stores that people were there buying for the animals they already had, and were not very interested in seeing (new) animals necessarily,” Tirony said. “But when people come here, PetSmart has kind of been known for having animals, so they come here knowing they're gonna see animals.”

Animal House's first appearance at PetSmart was originally for a one-day

event, as the location is a “micro-store” that had no plans to host animals, Tirony said. However, the store had a group of empty cages when the rescue returned a month later, and Animal House was able to use them starting in fall 2015 after a discussion with the store’s manager, she said.

“We’re very, very grateful to have gotten this space, and it’s been convenient for us because both of us live in Royal Oak, so we’re close by,” Tirony said. “This has just been, I think, a gift from God. It really has been.”

Some shy cats tend to get used to their foster family,

but not anybody else, Tirony said. Bringing them to the store helps them become comfortable with having unfamiliar people around, as they realize they’re still safe and well-fed in their new environment, she said. If any cats stay in the cages for too long, the rescue can rotate them back into foster homes to give them a break and allow other adoptable animals a chance at the store.

“They kind of start to get used to new situations and are less shy as time goes on, and sometimes it’s very helpful,” Tirony said.

Volunteer Andrea Carollo’s first brush with Animal House came sometime

around 2016 or 2017, when she came into the store to buy wet food for her Yorkie that had recently had dental surgery, she said. She felt someone staring at her in the checkout line, and that someone turned out to be Bob — a cat she felt an instant connection with. After adopting the newly-proclaimed Lord Cabbit — named for his stubby, bunny-like manx tail — Carollo started volunteering for Animal House and has since brought home several more cats, she said.

“He’s a very, very handsome man,” Carollo said.

For more information, visit [facebook.com/animalhouseofsem](https://www.facebook.com/animalhouseofsem).



Cats with Animal House of South East Michigan explore tents set up during cage cleaning time at the Royal Oak PetSmart store.

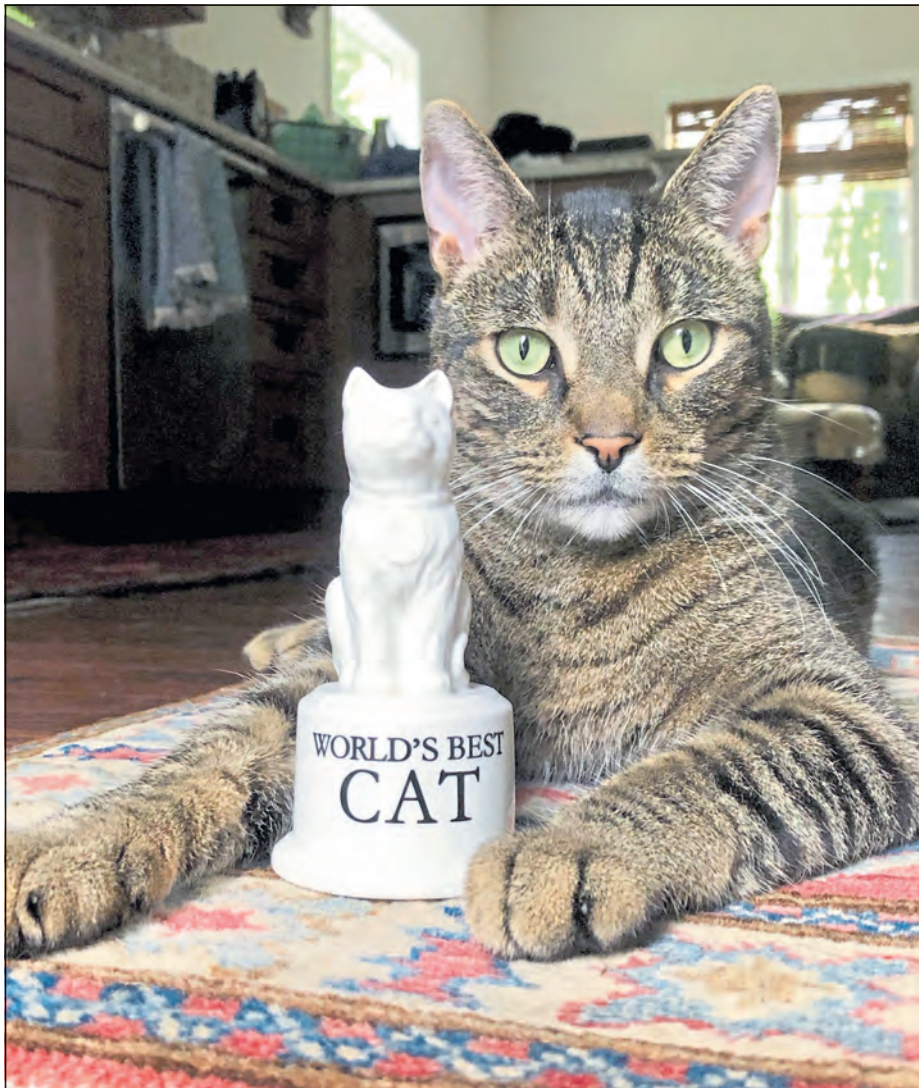


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANIMAL HOUSE OF SOUTH EAST MICHIGAN

Lord Cabbit, Animal House of South East Michigan volunteer Andrea Carollo’s rescue cat, was adopted through the organization.



Patches and Butterscotch, a pair of bonded male cats with Animal House of South East Michigan, cuddle in their cage at the Royal Oak PetSmart store.

## SPOTLIGHT

# HELPING OUR FELINE FRIENDS

## THROUGH NEUTERING AND NEW HOMES, SAVED BY ZADE HELPS PROTECT HUNDREDS OF CATS

By Riley Murdock  
For MediaNews Group

Through its partnership with PetSmart Charities, Lansing-area grassroots nonprofit Saved by Zade has furthered its mission of controlling cat overpopulation and easing related suffering by finding new homes for hundreds of feline friends through in-store adoptions.

When Saved by Zade started, it focused on bottle-feeding stray kittens and moving into TNVR work, which stands for trapping/neutering/vaccinating/returning, according to the organization's website.

Many of the strays at that time were friendly and adoptable, leading the group to create a foster and adoption program in 2018 and partner with PetSmart Charities.

Saved by Zade was incorporated in 2017 and has since grown by "leaps and bounds," according to Alyssa Draper, a longtime volunteer with the organization. Draper, a veteran volunteer with other organizations since 2012, joined Saved by Zade in 2018 at the onset of its foster and adoption program, she said.

Draper also chairs Zade's Anatomy, a sister organization created to handle high-risk medical issues, with plans to operate a spay-and-neuter clinic in the future.



Saved by Zade was incorporated in 2017 and now handles the cat adoption centers at two PetSmart locations in West Lansing and Okemos and also regularly hosts adoption events there.

**"In addition to publicized events, we ask volunteers to be there as often as they can just for when people are walking by as well, to hopefully make that connection and find the right kitty the right home at the right time,"**

— Alyssa Draper, Saved by Zade volunteer

"Zade" does not refer to a specific person, but the organization likes to say that the "Spirit of Zade" represents the community's inspiration to help manage cat overpopulation issues, Draper said.

"As soon as we went gung-ho, PetSmart became our first major platform for adoptions," Draper said.

Today, Saved by Zade

handles the cat adoption centers at two PetSmart locations in West Lansing and Okemos and also regularly hosts adoption events there, Draper said. Saved by Zade has adopted a total of 235 cats through PetSmart so far in 2024, and was able to reach 919 adoptions in 2023 and 686 in 2022, she said.

Saved by Zade has seen a



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAVED BY ZADE

Saved by Zade adopted out more than 900 cats through PetSmart in 2023.





PHOTO COURTESY OF SAVED BY ZADE

Mozzie is one of the many cats to come through Saved by Zade in 2024.

drop in adoptions coinciding with rising inflation, but those numbers might just be normalizing from a spike during the COVID-19 pandemic, Draper said.

“In addition to publicized events, we ask volunteers to be there as often as they can just for when people are walking by as well, to hopefully make that connection and find the right kitty the right home at the right time,” she said.

**PETSMART**  
**Charities**

The most obvious benefit of Saved by Zade’s partnership with PetSmart is having a physical platform and presence at those stores so shoppers can learn about the organization and know where to go if they want to adopt a cat, Draper said.

PetSmart Charities’ adoption incentive program has been “life saving, literally” for Saved by Zade’s cats, as the grants allow the organization to recoup costs spent on vet care, Draper said.

Draper’s favorite Saved by Zade adoption story involves Cher, a cat she previously fostered. After having surgery to remove intestinal blockages, Cher was adopted in January 2019.

However, she returned to

the rescue after her owner had to enter assisted living and was unable to bring her along, Draper said. Cher re-entered foster care and was able to find a new forever home, where she is already bonding with her new sibling, Draper said.

“My favorite thing about being a Saved by Zade cat is you’re a Saved by Zade cat for life. We will move Earth and mountains to make sure that a cat that is

affiliated with our program gets what it needs,” Draper said. “It’s just great to know that not only did she have her happy ending the first go-round, we were there to make sure she got it the second go-round too.”

Despite Saved by Zade helping roughly 2,000 cats a year, overpopulation remains a pressing issue and seems to get worse and worse over time, Draper said.

The organization has to make careful use of its limited resources and funds to address as many needs as possible, she said.

“We’re full and we’re always going to be full,” Draper said. “I think that’s just the reality of the overpopulation problem, and hopefully if we keep chiseling away, we can see some progress.”

*For more information, visit [savedbyzade.com](http://savedbyzade.com).*

## SPOTLIGHT

## FRESHLY SQUEEZED FUNDRAISER



Members of the Southgate Fire Department make a point to stop by Henry Bryant's fundraising efforts to support local animal shelters.

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
SHELLEY BRYANT

## 8-year-old makes a difference, one lemonade stand at a time

**By Susan Thwing**  
For MediaNews Group

In the heart of Southgate, 8-year-old Henry Bryant is proving that age is no barrier to making a difference.

For the past three summers, the Downriver boy has been holding lemonade stands to raise money for local animal shelters, inspired by his love for an-

imals and a deep sense of compassion.

Henry, a third grader at Grogan Elementary School this fall, decided to start his fundraising journey when his mother, Shelley Bryant, told him about a dog with heartworms at a shelter.

"My mom told me there was a dog at a shelter that had heartworms and asked if I wanted to raise money

to help," Henry said.

Without hesitation, Henry set up his first lemonade stand, raising \$202. That was three years ago, and since then, Henry has continued his efforts every summer, often holding two or three stands each year.

His efforts have paid off in a big way.

Shelley Bryant proudly shared that since the sum-

mer of 2022, Henry's lemonade stands have raised \$15,960, not including additional donations people have sent in on their own. This substantial sum has gone to various Downriver animal shelters, each one carefully chosen by Henry and his family.

One of Henry's favorite parts of his fundraising efforts is meeting the animals

he helps.

"Bear, a pitbull mix, was very skinny — he was 16 pounds — when he was rescued. You could see his bones. He had heartworm. Now, his name is Moose, and he has a family. ... That was the first one," Henry said, referring to one of the dogs that benefited from his donations.

Henry's own dog, Pick-

les, a 5-year-old from an unwanted litter of puppies, has also inspired his fundraising efforts.

Earlier this year, Pickles had a medical emergency and ended up in the ICU. Inspired by Henry's love for pets, the animal shelter community raised funds for Pickle's medical costs.

Henry's recent fundraiser in late June benefited the



Henry Bryant, 6 at the time, sits at one of three lemonade stands he held as fundraisers for the Wyandotte Animal Shelter in 2022. That summer kicked off his lemonade journey.

River Rouge Animal Shelter, which received \$8,339 from lemonade sales. The shelter's director, Patricia Trevino, is impressed by Henry's accomplishments.

"Henry is absolutely amazing. He is here on this earth on a mission to help animals. He is smart beyond his years," she said.

Trevino said the money will help support several animals, including two dogs' heartworm treatment. Other dogs and cats will benefit from spaying, neutering, vaccines and vet care.

She said heartworm disease — considered a silent killer for animals — is expensive to treat.

"Not everyone has the financial means to do so, and it could eventually be a death sentence for a dog," Trevino said. "The funds and donations we receive help us fully vet the animals and get them on a healthy track, which increases their likelihood of adoption and finding a family."

Henry's mother helps by making the lemonade, but Henry's dedication and enthusiasm drive the project.

"We try to pick different shelters every time," Henry explained, ensuring that the money raised helps as many animals as possible.

When asked how it makes him feel to help the animals, Henry simply said, "Good." His humble response belies the significant impact he's making.

Henry believes that anyone, regardless of age, can make a difference.

His advice? "Any age, any size. You can do anything.

Just get started. Come up with a good idea and make it work."

Henry has learned valuable lessons through his lemonade stands about focusing on a project and making good things happen. He also said he learned that "people like lemonade, and they like dogs."

Trevino said children are enthusiastic about helping others.

"We have Girl Scout groups who make blankets for the shelter animals. Others collect and donate toys or braid pull toys for the dogs. Sometimes children will ask that instead of birthday presents, a donation is made to a shelter on their behalf," she said. "It is very amazing what young people can do."

Shelley Bryant noted that through the lemonade stand experience, she's witnessed Downriver's strong sense of community, where people come together to support each other.

"Downriver is one of the best communities to come together to support each other," she said.

Looking to the future, Henry has big dreams. He wants to be a veterinarian, a fitting aspiration for a young boy who has already shown a strong commitment to helping animals.

But for now, Henry is looking forward to the next lemonade stand and ensuring that "all dogs have a good home and a good life."

*For more information on upcoming lemonade stands or how to help, follow Henry's Lemonade Stand on Facebook.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHELLEY BRYANT

Henry Bryant's latest lemonade stand benefitted the River Rouge Animal Shelter. Patricia Trevino, the shelter's director, said the funds help get animals up to date on vaccines, neutering, or spaying, and ready for their new homes.

## SPOTLIGHT

## COLLECTING CANINE COMMENDATIONS



Maverick and trainer Jeremy Gerhard, a veterinary technician, have amassed many awards since they began working together in 2017.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMY GERHARD

## Southfield man, team earn silver medal at World Dog Agility Championship

**By Mark E Lett**  
For MediaNews Group

Don't be fooled by Maverick's first name. The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is a team player.

Working with his Southfield-based trainer, Maverick was part of Team USA which brought home a team silver medal from the 2024 World Agility Championship in Bourgbarre, France.

The annual event was a showcase for more than 200 competitors from more than a dozen nations.

For Maverick and trainer Jeremy Gerhard, a veterinary technician working in Commerce Township, the success was another high mark in a partnership arranged in 2017 by Maverick owner Sally Slade of Grand Blanc. The showdown in France was their fourth in-

ternational event together.

The dynamic duo was assembled, Gerhard said, when Slade was recovering from knee surgery and sought a partner for her Maverick. About the same time, Gerhard's pet dog had died.

Slade often joins Gerhard and Maverick at trials to review training and strategy.

Maverick "has a big heart and is a hard-working dog

who always likes to please," Gerhard said.

For Maverick, he said, plain pancakes are an effective treat and reward.

"Sally makes him pancakes wherever we go to compete," he said. "She brought pancake mix to France and made them for him."

They're served up without syrup or other goodies. "He good with plain, old

pancakes," Gerhard said.

Maverick puts in the work, but always prefers competition to training. And, while he enjoys the camaraderie of his teammates, Maverick is "all business" when competing on the agility course.

Moreover, he really cranks up the effort and performance in front of an audience, Gerhard said.

"In practice and the early

rounds of competition when the crowd is smaller and it's more quiet, his times are slower," he added.

But when the competition and audience heat things up, Maverick gets cooking.

"He can be pretty darn focused," Gerhard said. "Maverick likes a crowd, so the atmosphere (at the world championship), where most competitors are ringside,

watching and cheering for others, is perfect for him.”

The competition includes dogs of all breeds and sizes in a race against the clock through an array of obstacles: hurdles, tunnels, hanging tires, weave poles — and more. Winners are those with the fastest times and fewest penalties.

Maverick competed in the 10-inch height category.

In France, Gerhard said, “we (had) a couple of faults that potentially cost us another medal or two, but Maverick ran really well, as he always does.”

“This was our fourth year as part of Team USA, and it is always a great thrill and makes me so proud to represent our country and the United States Dog Agility Association,” said Gerhard, secretary and trial chair for the Canine and Combustion

Dog Agility Club, Michigan’s oldest dog agility club.

The USDAA is the world’s largest independent authority for the sport of dog agility, with more than 45,000 registered competitors among more than 200 breeds.

A Michigan resident since 1990, Gerhard’s interest in dog training began as a high school student in Massachusetts, where he attended some dog training with an aunt.

“I was hooked from then on,” he said.

Gerhard and his wife have two dogs of their own, an Australian shepherd and a border collie. Both have competed with the USA team, he said.

Maverick’s next big showing is expected in October at the U.S. national championships in Arizona.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMY GERHARD

Maverick was camera-ready for the opening ceremony of the 2024 World Agility Championship in Bourgbarre, France.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED STATES DOG AGILITY ASSOCIATION

Jeremy Gerhard of Southfield and Maverick earned a silver medal for Team USA in the team competition at the 2024 World Agility Championship in France.

## SPOTLIGHT

# Keeping pets healthy throughout the year

Michigan's state veterinarian shares tips for animal care as seasons change

**Heat**  
**Pet Safety Tips**

**Let it Flow**  
No matter the species, animals should have access to unlimited cool, clean, fresh water to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion.

**Happy Paws**  
Surfaces like asphalt, concrete, and sand can really heat up in the sun, which can burn paws. Consider taking a different route that is mostly grass.

**Know Their Limit**  
Animals' age, breed, type of coat, and health history can all play a role in their ability to tolerate the heat. Keep an eye on them for signs of heat stress—like increased panting or drooling and being more lethargic. If they are showing these signs, it is time to immediately move them to a cooler area.

**Get in Gear**  
Vehicles can heat up very quickly, creating dangerous conditions. It is best to leave pets at home when you need to go out and about.

**A Place to Chill**  
Animals know when they are too hot and will usually try to find a place where they can cool down. Make sure they have a place to cool down.

By Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

[michigan.gov/mdard/animals](http://michigan.gov/mdard/animals)

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) recognized National Pet Preparedness Month in June. While the month is dedicated to the health and safety of animals during times of natural or man-made disasters, it is just as important to consider their everyday wellness every day of the year.

“Any animal preparedness plan should begin with considering their general wellness. Working with your veterinarian can help ensure that you are doing everything possible to maintain their good health,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Nora Wineland. “Keeping up with their core vaccinations, taking simple preventative steps to avoid illness, and making sure they have current identification can all help safeguard animals’ health and safety under any circumstance.”



Dr. Nora Wineland

Vaccines can play a critical role in preventing numerous diseases — some of which are zoonotic, meaning they can affect animals and people. For dogs, cats, ferrets, horses, and other animals, a core vaccination is for rabies. Rabies is zoonotic, often fatal, and carried by certain wildlife species including bats and skunks in Michigan.

Pets and other animals can get rabies from bites or other interactions with rabid animals.

As of mid-June, there had been 15 cases of rabies detected across the state in bats. Highly safe and effective vaccines are available to protect animals against this virus.

Vaccinations also are vital to protecting the health of horses, especially from several mosquito-borne diseases, including West Nile virus (WNV), Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) and Western equine enceph-

alitis.

WNV and EEE are regularly seen in Michigan with EEE being particularly fatal.

In 2023, four cases of WNV in horses were discovered and one confirmed case of EEE.

For a majority of these detections, the animals were either unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. Several horses died or were euthanized due to the severity of their illness.

There are many other diseases that can impact the health of your animals. Contacting your veterinarian can help not only determine what vaccinations are best for your animals but also make sure these vaccinations are up to date.

Beyond vaccinations, talking to your veterinarian can ensure other steps are in place to prevent disease in your animals.

Simple actions like washing your hands before caring for your animals, placing your shoes in an area where your animals cannot reach them, making sure animals do not have contact with wildlife, avoiding interactions with sick animals or animals with unknown health status, and avoiding shared bowls or toys can help maintain their good health.

By reviewing how you care for your animals, your veterinarian can reveal some new ideas and strategies for keeping them healthy.

A final way to ensure the safety of your animals is to double check they have up-to-date identification. Whether they slip their leash, sneak out the door, jump a fence, or become lost during a hectic situation, it is vital for animals to have current identification tags and/or registered microchips so they can be quickly returned once they are found.

Visiting your veterinarian can help you with verifying and/or obtaining your animals' identification.

Overall, by thinking about the health and safety of your animals today, both you and your animals can be better prepared for any situation tomorrow.

### Summertime

As temperatures rise into the 90s in many parts of the state, MDARD is reminding owners on some of the best ways to keep animals cool and safe.

“When temperatures rise, keeping animals cool and hydrated is essential to their overall health,” Wine-land said. “While it is important to recognize the signs of heat stress in animals, it is even more critical to prevent this stress from occurring. Michiganders can follow six easy steps to help keep animals cool and safe.”

Keep animals safe from the heat by following these tips:

- **Let it Flow:** Provide unlimited cool, clean, fresh water. Just like people, animals can quickly get parched in hot temperatures. No matter the species, animals should have access to unlimited cool, clean, fresh water to prevent dehydration. Also, if out in public, bring along some hydration options for your animal and avoid using shared/communal water bowls.

- **Know Their Limits:** An animal's ability to tolerate heat varies. An animal's age, breed, type of coat, and health history can all play a role in their ability to tolerate the heat. Keep an eye on them for signs of heat stress, like increased panting or drooling and being more lethargic. If they are showing these signs, it is time to immediately move them to a cooler area. Also, consider talking to your veterinarian. They will have a greater knowledge of your animal(s) and be able to give more specific guidance on how to best handle them in hot weather.

- **Happy Paws:** Test surfaces to make sure they

won't burn paws. Surfaces like asphalt, concrete and sand can really heat up in the sun, which can burn paws or at least make a walk very uncomfortable. To test if a surface is too hot, touch it with the palm of your hand. If it is too hot for you, consider taking a different route that is mostly grass or waiting until the evening when everything has had a chance to cool.

- **Look Before They Splash:** Avoid harmful algal blooms (HABs) in bodies of water. HABs form due to a rapid growth of cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, which are naturally found in lakes, rivers, and ponds. To prevent illness in animals, keep them out of areas with scums or discolored water, rinse them off after contact with any lake water, and bring clean, fresh water for them to drink. If an animal becomes sick after contact with a suspected HAB, call your veterinarian right away. Also, animal illness due to HABs is reportable to MDARD. To report cases, call 800-292-3939. In addition, to report any suspicious looking algae, email [algaebloom@michigan.gov](mailto:algaebloom@michigan.gov).

- **Get in Gear:** Parked vehicles are not places to park pets. Even when temperatures feel more moderate, vehicles can heat up very quickly, creating dangerous conditions for the animals left inside. Leaving windows cracked open and/or parking in the shade do little to improve the situation. In these conditions, it is best to leave pets at home when you need to go out and about.

- **A Place to Chill:** Make sure animals have a place to cool down. Animals know when they are too hot and will usually try to find a place where they can cool down. Make sure they have access to shade, fans, misters, pools, cooling mats, and/or air-conditioned spaces to help them stay comfortable.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

# Health

FROM PAGE 15

## Springtime

“Spring holiday celebrations are filled with food, family, and loved ones, including our pets. It is important to consider their needs as we plan our festivities,” Wineland said. “From keeping them away from eating chocolate and candy to ensuring they have a quiet space to destress, there are many actions we can take to make sure they have a safe holiday.”

Keep pets safe in the spring by following these tips:

- **Happy Tummies:** Avoid feeding pets people foods. Unfortunately, pets cannot enjoy all of the same foods and treats we do. Foods not specifically formulated for pets should be avoided as they could cause pancreatitis, even when consumed in small amounts. Also, be sure to keep candy and other sweets containing chocolate, raisins, and/or xylitol (an artificial sweetener found in many candies and gum) away from pets as these ingredients can be hazardous.

- **Avoid Temptations:** Keep holiday decorations out of reach. Brightly colored plastic Easter grass or other basket fillers may make for a beautiful presentation, but it can also catch the eye of our pets. If consumed, the filler could cause intestinal blockages or other injuries. Be sure to remove filler from baskets completely or at least keep the baskets out of a pet’s reach, along with candles, lights, plastic eggs/toys, and some festive flowers/plants, especially Easter lilies as these are highly toxic to cats.

- **Go Natural:** Save the dye for eggs — not pets. As a reminder, in Michigan, it is illegal to sell baby chicks, rabbits, ducklings or other fowl or game that have been dyed or artificially colored



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

(Public Act 163 of 1945). Violating this law is a misdemeanor, so keep animals their natural color.

- **Search No More:** Make sure pets have proper identification. With all the holiday activity, pets can easily sneak out and get lost. Make sure pets have identification tags and microchips updated with your current contact information to ensure they can be returned home.

- **Destress and Decompress:** Have a quiet space for your pets. Any holiday celebration can be loud and overly stimulating for pets. So, it is important to have a quiet space set aside for them to go if they are getting too stressed. Also, have the room stocked with their food, water, litter pan, etc. in case they want to maintain their distance for an

extended period of time.

- **More Than Novelties:** Bunnies and chicks are forever pets. While it may be tempting to surprise someone with a real bunny, chick or duckling, it is important to remember these animals are long-term pets, often requiring specialized care and feed. Many people feel unprepared to properly care for one of these animals and hand them over to local animal control or an animal shelter. Opt for gifting someone a stuffed or chocolate animal instead.

### Holidays

These tips can help keep your animals safe and healthy throughout the holidays:

- **Treat them Right:** Avoid feeding animals chocolate or other candy. While it may be tempting to share

a sweet treat with your animal, they cannot enjoy all the same foods we do. Any type of chocolate or treat sweetened with xylitol (an artificial sweetener found in many candies and gum) can be poisonous to animals. Instead of these sweets, stick to their normal treats.

- **Avoid Temptations:** Keep holiday decorations out of reach. Gift wrap, ribbons and balloons can make a celebration special, but they can also catch the eye of our pets. If consumed, these items could cause intestinal blockages or other injuries. Be sure these items are out of their reach, along with candles as curious paws and excited tails should not be near an open-flame unsupervised.

- **Build a Better Bouquet:** Make sure all arrangements

are pet friendly. Whether flowers and plants are given as a gift or used as a decoration, not all of these plants are safe for your animals. Flowers with thorns (like roses) can cause injury if bitten, swallowed, or stepped on; and certain floral varieties (like lilies, chrysanthemums and tulips) can be dangerous for pets if they are ingested. Keep these items away from pets and make arrangements with plants that are not toxic to animals.

- **Share the Love, Not the Germs:** Keep animals up to date on routine vaccinations. Vaccinations are central to animals’ preventative care as the vaccines can protect them against common diseases, such as rabies and distemper. Contact your veterinarian to ensure your animals’ vacci-

nations are complete and/or to schedule an appointment.

- **Be a Secret Admirer:** Consider donating to the Animal Welfare Fund. Not every animal has someone to count on as many are waiting at one of Michigan’s 209 registered animal shelters for their forever home. When generous Michiganders check the Animal Welfare Fund’s box on Form 4642, Voluntary Contributions Schedule, on their state tax returns, 100% of the contributions go directly to these shelters to help them better care for local animals and support their broader community. Consider donating to the fund to keep the good going by continuing to protect local animals and increasing their chances of adoption into a loving home.



## SPOTLIGHT

# Michigan veterinarian's TV show is over after 24 seasons

By Sue Field and Sarah Wright

MediaNews Group

After nearly 13 years, 24 seasons and nearly 240 episodes, Nat Geo Wild's wildly popular "The Incredible Dr. Pol" has come to an end.

A series finale, in which Isabella County veterinarian Jan Pol; wife, Diane; and son, Charles will "look back on an incredible 24 seasons," aired in June on Nat Geo Wild.

It's set to air on streaming services Hulu and Disney+ on Oct. 1.

First airing Oct. 29, 2011, the reality show followed Pol and other veterinarians at Pol Veterinary Services at West Jordan Road in Nottawa Township, where he has tended to large and small animals since 1981.

With two to three seasons a year, the show has been a hit and at times controversial and led to a spinoff, "The Incredible Pol Farm," and a line of pet foods that expanded to Europe.

When Charles returned to Michigan to produce the sizzler — a film industry term for a demo reel — that led to Nat Geo Wild's top-rated series, his father didn't think it would get picked up, let alone last.

As cameras followed Pol to farm calls and the Isabella County Fair every year, he continued practicing veterinary medicine as he always had, but at times was called away for book tours, appearances on national news and talk shows, and other events.

A family-friendly reality show, The Incredible Dr. Pol was a hit on Nat Geo Wild since it first aired, but also brought criticism from some who didn't agree with



KOEN VAN WEEL — AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Dutch-American veterinarian Dr. Jan Pol, from "The Incredible Dr. Pol" television show broadcast on the National Geographic channel, is pictured at the Ridammerhoeve goat farm in Amsterdam on Feb. 17, 2016.

his style of treatment, which resulted in a fine from the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, which was later reversed by the Michigan Court of Appeals.

While Kentucky veterinarian Eden Myers' complaint resulted in a \$500 fine from the state, court of appeals judges reversed the decision, saying that Pol was sanctioned based on a standard of care for animals that doesn't exist.

Pol generally specializes in treating large farm animals though he also treats cats, dogs, horses, pigs, cows, sheep, alpacas, goats, chickens, and reindeer on occasion.

His interest in animals began at a young age at his family's dairy farm in the Netherlands. He later graduated from the Utrecht University Veterinary program in 1970 before immigrating



STACEY WESCOTT — CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dr. Jan Pol with his wife, Diane Pol, in Chicago in 2018.

to the United States in 1971.

He later moved to Weidman in 1981 where he and his wife founded Pol Veterinary Services out of his garage. Over the years, his practice has gained numerous accolades, including the hit television series, podcasts, products and books.

He also had a reality show in the Netherlands called "In de Voetsporen

van Dr. Pol" (or "In the Footsteps of Dr. Pol") where a group of Dutch veterinarians compete for the opportunity to join Dr. Pol's practice. He also released a memoir called "Never Turn Your Back on an Angus Cow — My Life as a Country Vet," a line of branded products that includes animal feeds, and a podcast called "The Incredible Dr. Polcast."

## SPOTLIGHT

# County animal shelter cancels events due to overcrowding

By Peg McNichol

pmcnichol@medianews-group.com

Oakland County's animal shelter and pet adoption center is busy and close to capacity, and do to that, there won't be any special adoption events in the near future, division manager Bob Gatt said in early June.

"We don't have an event coming up because we're so busy," he said. "Crowd adoption events take time and staff."

People can visit the shelter to adopt animals during the six days the office is open, he said.

During a recent week, the shelter housed 151 dogs and 130 cats — including 40 kittens Gatt described as "gorgeous" — plus more cats and dogs being fostered by volunteers in family homes.

"We're really, really crowded and we have some great dogs here," he said.

People who can't adopt, but would like to help in other ways can donate supplies or volunteer to be a foster home to the shelter's dogs, he said.

The at-home fostering improves animals' social skills and their chances for a permanent home, Gatt said, adding that all food and medical care is supplied free for fostered pets.

"We want to make sure the house they're in is good for the animal they want to foster," Gatt said. "We wouldn't want to put a Great Dane in an apartment, for example."

The shelter, 1200 North Telegraph Road, Building 42E, Pontiac, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

Call 248-858-1070, email [petadoption@oakgov.com](mailto:petadoption@oakgov.com) or visit [oakgov.com/community/petadoption](http://oakgov.com/community/petadoption) to learn more.



MARK CAVITT — MEDIANEWS GROUP

The Oakland County Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center

## CARE

# Adopting a dog? It helps to do some homework first

By David Wharton  
MediaNews Group

Local animal shelters have plenty of dogs waiting for new homes, but if you choose to adopt from a private rescue group, it helps to do some homework first.

A legitimate group will quarantine its dogs for at least two weeks to watch for diseases such as distemper or parvovirus. The animals will be microchipped and, if old enough, spayed or neutered. They should also come with a vaccination record.

Beyond these basics, experts have a few tips:

## Face-to-face

Beware of rescue groups that ask you to adopt online or sight unseen. Don't commit until you've spent a few minutes with an animal

to get a feel for its health and behavior.

## Living conditions

Don't adopt from a group that wants to meet in a parking lot or other public space. Better to see the facility or foster home where the dog has been staying. Is it clean? Are there individual spaces for quarantining sick animals?

## References

If previous adopters have had a bad experience with a particular group, it will probably show up on the internet. Same goes for good reviews.

## Online records

You can check a group's nonprofit status on the IRS and state attorney general websites. City and county

governments often keep an online registry of private rescue partners that draw from their shelters. "They have a whole list of groups who aren't hoarders, who aren't frauds," said Judie Mancuso of Social Compassion in Legislation.

## Read before you sign

Adoptions usually involve a contract, so read before you sign. There should be a provision for returning an animal if things don't work out. There should be information about transferring the microchip number to your name and address.

## Common sense

Consider the amount you're being asked to spend to adopt. A deal that seems too good to be true probably is.

## CARE



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

# How to choose pets based on your lifestyle

Getting a pet can seem like a fabulous idea in the heat of the moment when puppy dog eyes are blinking back from behind the bars of a cage or when a cuddly hamster peeks out from his hiding spot and makes kids swoon.

Even though pets can make wonderful companions, approximately 6.3 million pets enter United States shelters nationwide every year, according to the ASPCA.

Though many shelter pets find new homes, one of the ways to reduce the number of surrendered pets is to avoid impulse decisions. A careful consideration of lifestyle can ensure potential pet owners find an animal they're fully capable of caring for.

Consider time constraints. People can be honest about their schedules and how pets can fit

in. A busy executive who works 12-hour days and travels often may not be able to have a high-maintenance pet. Animals that do not require much interaction, such as aquarium fish or reptiles, may be better fits.

Consider your interests. It can be beneficial to find a pet who aligns with one's interests and hobbies, as this can make the connection even stronger. A person who likes to hike may benefit from a pet that can handle long periods traversing the great outdoors.

Factor in budget. Pets can be expensive. The American Kennel Club says the lifetime costs of dog ownership can range from \$14,480 to \$15,051 depending on the size of the dog (which relates to life expectancy). Exotic pets, such as macaws,

may have large expenses for specialty vet care and cages. If money is tight, a pet that has minimal expenses might be a smarter move.

Assess your personal health. Someone with allergies may have to avoid furry pets because dander and fur may trigger allergic reactions. Mobility issues can make it challenging for someone to walk a dog every day, making a cat who is relatively independent a more practical choice.

Lifestyle should be a major consideration when deciding if the time is right to introduce a pet into a home. A pet who aligns with the household dynamic can increase the likelihood of a successful pet-owner relationship.

— By Metro Editorial Services



GINA JOSEPH — MEDIATEWS GROUP

Dianne Reeves, founder of I Heart Dogs and Animal Haven, a no kill shelter in Warren cuddles with a Chihuahua Shih Tzu mix pup.

## CARE

# How to acclimate an adopted cat to a new home

Cats have a special place in the hearts of millions of people. These wily rascals can be flirty, funny or even aloof. The personality of cats, coupled with their compact size, makes them ideal pets for homes of all sizes.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says approximately 1.3 million cats are adopted from animal shelters each year. However, of the cats entering shelters, only around 37% are ultimately adopted, according to the National Kitten Coalition. Individuals who adopt cats may want to take every step they can to make the relationship with a new companion animal work. That often means finding ways to help the cat feel comfortable by acclimating it to its new home. The length of time it will take to adjust to a new environment depends on the cat's temperament.

However, these tips can help:

- Pick a familiar item and bring it with you. Does the cat have a favorite toy, carrier or scratching post? Moving something into the home that has the animal's smell may help him or her adjust more quickly.

- Select a room as a home base. Introducing the cat to the entire home and all of the people in it can be overwhelming. Rather, select a small room in the home, such as an office or laundry space, that the cat can call home for the time being. With the door closed, this small space can be comforting and let the cat learn the smells and sounds of the home before it ventures into other areas. Remember to visit often and provide plenty of love and affection as tolerated.

- Avoid lots of traf-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

fic. Now is not the time to host a house party. Remove stressors like large crowds, increased foot traffic and kids' play dates. Loud sounds and sudden movements can put cats on edge.

- Don't force the issue. The kitty will start to come around when he or she is ready. Don't be compelled to pull the pet out from hiding under a bed or couch; let the cat set the pace.

- Keep kids away. Young children tend to be boisterous and jerky, which isn't a good mix with a skittish cat. While the cat is acclimating, keep young children

away. When they are introduced, do so in small intervals and supervise carefully so the cat does not get hurt and children are not accidentally scratched or bitten by a scared cat.

- Provide a quiet area. Perhaps that first room or a cozy nook can be the cat's quiet spot. According to cat behaviorist Jackson Galaxy, cats need solitude and quiet time. A box or basket lined with soft, washable bedding in a corner can serve as a place for a cat to retire to.

- Introduce existing pets slowly. Existing pets should be introduced gradually.

Keep a dog confined until the cat feels secure in the home. Two altered cats can become friends in the same home. However, older cats often are more accepting of kittens than other adults. Keep this in mind when making introductions.

Cats are happiest when they've had time to settle and get used to surroundings in their new home. Once the adoption takes place, give the cat plenty of time to become comfortable in the new environment.

— *By Metro Editorial Services*

**The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says approximately 1.3 million cats are adopted from animal shelters each year. However, of the cats entering shelters, only around 37% are ultimately adopted, according to the National Kitten Coalition. Individuals who adopt cats may want to take every step they can to make the relationship with a new companion animal work.**

## CARE

# ADDING A NEW FAMILY MEMBER



PHOTO COURTESY  
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SERVICES

## HOW TO PREPARE CHILDREN TO WELCOME A PET INTO THE HOME

Excitement is the order of the day when welcoming a new pet into a home.

Families often go to great lengths when picking a new pet for their household, spending significant time studying specific breeds and preparing their homes for the new addition.

Despite that preparation, no one truly knows how a family dynamic will shift until the pet comes

home.

Adults who have had pets in the past may know what to expect when welcoming a new pet to the family, but kids with no such experience may need a little coaching.

Following are some ways parents can prepare youngsters to welcome a new pet into their homes:

- Emphasize respect for the animal. The Animal Humane Society urges par-

ents to teach children how to touch animals with respect. Many children naturally love animals, and that enthusiasm may compel them to be a little overexcited in their initial interactions with their new pet. In such instances, pets may feel threatened, even by small children, which could lead them to bark, growl or lunge at youngsters. So it's important for parents to teach chil-

dren how to approach and touch their new pets prior to bringing the animal into the home.

- Explain body language to kids. The American Kennel Club notes that deciphering a dog's body language is an important part of communicating with the animal, as dogs utilize posture, facial expression and other physical cues to communicate with their human companions. Par-

ents can speak with the adoption agency and/or their veterinarians about body language specific to certain animals and what each gesture may signify. Explain these gestures to children so they can learn when to leave a pet alone or when to engage with it.

- Encourage kids to afford animals a period to adjust. Kids may not be the only ones who don't know what to expect when wel-

coming a new pet into their homes. The pets themselves may be a little nervous. Explain to children that the animal's initial days in the home should be seen as an adjustment period and not necessarily a time to engage in lots of play with the animal. For example, when welcoming a new cat or kitten into a home, the AHS urges parents to limit children's interactions to gen-

**Having pets is an ideal opportunity to introduce children to some measure of responsibility, and it may encourage youngsters to become advocates for animal welfare.**

tle petting when the cat approaches. This initial adjustment period is not the time to pick up the cat or encroach on it physically. This time should be free of sudden movements and loud noises as the pet adjusts to its new surroundings.

**Establishing kids' roles in caring for the family pet**

Children and pets living together can make for a boisterous but happy household. Having pets is an ideal opportunity to introduce children to some measure of responsibility, and it may encourage youngsters to become advocates for animal welfare.

Pets require all sorts of care and companionship. Introducing children to age-appropriate pet-related tasks can set the groundwork for a lifetime of loving and caring for companion animals. Children shouldn't be given all of the responsibilities of caring for pets, but there are some notable roles they can play.

- Teach gentle interactions. Toddlers and even kindergarteners may be unaware of how rough they are being. Therefore, they will need a lot of supervision and reinforcement to learn how to be gentle when petting or engaging with companion animals. Young children also may think that pets are toys and that there are no consequences when animals are handled roughly. Parents and other caregivers may need to spend a lot of time emphasizing gen-

tle play with pets.

- Start off with some play sessions. Playing together is a great way for kids and pets to bond and get some exercise. Purina behaviorist Dr. Annie Valuska suggests games like high-five, rolling over, finding treats in hidden places, and practicing tricks or commands. Children also may be able to do short training sessions with pets, like helping them get acclimated to a new pet carrier, wearing a leash, or even moving the vacuum cleaner nearby so the animal overcomes its fear of it.

- Family vet visits. Children can learn a lot about pet health and care at the vet's office. Bring youngsters along to help out and see what is involved in routine veterinary visits. Kids can soothe and distract the pet during the administration of vaccines and watch how a vet assesses an animal's overall health. Watching a pet go through a physical examination also may help a child become more brave in relation to his or her own medical check-ups.

- Participate in feeding and bathing. Children can be responsible for putting pre-measured scoops of food in the bowl for feeding and help refill the water. Kids also may be able to offer treats to pets who are able to take them gently out of hand. When it comes time to groom a pet, children can assist with scrub downs in the tub or at a grooming station in a nearby retail store. More hands available can help wrangle a



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

wet and slippery animal, after all. Kids may find it soothing to brush pets, but they must do so gently.

- Teach about quiet time. Pets need opportunities to rest, and children should understand that quiet time means the pet should be left alone. Kids can help set up a cozy napping spot where a dog or cat can retreat when they need some rest.

Children can be taught responsible pet care when their parents feel they're ready. With trial and error, family members can see where kids' strengths lie in caring for pets and gauge the animals' tolerance for interaction with youngsters. Pet owners must remember to ensure young children and animals are never together without adult supervision.

— *By Metro Editorial Services*



## CARE

# MAKING A MEANINGFUL CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY  
OF METRO EDITORIAL  
SERVICES

## 6 WAYS TO GET MORE JOY WITH YOUR DOG

**By Stacey Colino**

*Special to The Washington Post*

The human-dog connection runs deep.

Dogs are so tuned in to their people that they catch their human's yawns, even if they simply hear the yawn rather than see it.

"The emotional connection between humans and dogs is the essence of the relationship," said Clive Wynne, a professor of psychology and director of the Ca-

nine Science Collaboratory at Arizona State University. "Dogs are amazingly social beings, so they are easily infected with our warmth and joy."

We asked dog experts for tips on how to strengthen the bond between owners and their dogs.

Here's their advice:

### **Gaze into your dog's eyes**

One study found that when you

and your dog share a long, loving gaze, both of you get a boost of oxytocin, a calming hormone associated with love and bonding. "When humans and dogs are interacting and looking into each other's eyes, they both get more oxytocin — there's a positive feedback loop," said Larry Young, a professor of psychiatry and an expert on the neuroscience of social bonding at Emory University in Atlanta. "In the short term, it dampens the stress response, in-

cluding cortisol release."

### **Embrace baby talk**

If you find yourself chatting with your dog in a sing-songy voice, don't fight it. People often talk to dogs in a slightly higher pitched voice than they do to other adults, and it turns out that dogs appreciate it.

Research has found that dogs actually pay better attention to "dog-directed" speech and "dog-relevant" words than adult-di-

rected speech, and that this style of speech may strengthen the bond between you. "Dogs understand our tone of voice and our meaning," said Lori Kogan, a psychologist and professor in the clinical sciences department at Colorado State University. "We instinctively talk to children in a higher pitch because it's comforting. It's the same way with our dogs."

Richard Heaton, 53, a business owner in the U.K., has taken this

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EDITORIAL SERVICES

principle to the next level. After going for a walk together on a rainy day, Heaton will sing a little tune he calls “The Drying Song” while using a special towel to dry off Buddy, his golden retriever. “It never fails to make his tail wag and bring a smile to my face,” he said. “It’s become a fun and special part of our routine.”

### Run errands with your dog

Identify situations your dog enjoys and bring them along. If your dog loves riding in the car, consider taking them on errands with you. “Keep the car window open and they’ll pick up a cocktail of scents,” said Marc Bekoff, professor emeritus

of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado at Boulder and author of “Dogs Demystified: An A-to-Z Guide to All Things Canine.” (If your dog gets car sick, don’t do this.) “Pay attention to their body language, whether they look happy or tense,” Bekoff said, and make decisions based on their reactions.

### Let your dog cheer you up

Snuggling is good for you. Human-dog tactile stimulation has been found to improve the dog owner’s well-being and self-esteem, according to research. Dogs are sensitive to their humans’ emotional state, and their

desire to play is incompatible with you being subdued or angry, said Daniel Mills, a specialist in human-animal relationships and a professor of veterinary behavioral medicine at the University of Lincoln in England. “Dogs often use manipulative strategies with attention-seeking gestures such as a play bow to improve your mood.” If you give in to your dog’s desire to play when you’re in a bad mood, he added, “it cheers you both up.”

### Learn new tricks (even if you’re both old)

Consider training your dog to roll over, catch a Frisbee or jump through a hula hoop. It’s a myth that you can’t teach old dogs new

tricks. Research has shown that dogs of all ages respond well to touch-screen games and that such learning might even help keep older pups mentally sharp as their physical capabilities decline.

Plus, it can be a feel-good experience you can enjoy together. “Teaching a dog something new that’s in the flavor of what they like to do is part of enriching their lives,” Bekoff said.

### Create rituals

Whether you have a routine that involves tucking your dog into their bed at night, baking special treats for them on weekends, or playing a particular game during the “zoomie hour,” dogs thrive on consistency and

routine.

On chilly mornings, Rhianna Jones, 32, often makes her dog, Charlie, a cup of warm bone broth. Sometimes she’ll have one, too, but usually she sticks with coffee. Either way, “the act of sharing a nourishing beverage strengthens our connection and adds a touch of joy to our mornings,” said Jones, a nurse in Georgia. “I like to imagine Charlie appreciates this cozy routine as much as I do.”

Ultimately, what dogs want most is to “trust you and feel safe, secure and comfortable with you,” Bekoff said. So if a routine “makes you feel good and your dog feel good, it continuously builds up or maintains the bond. That’s all part of love.”

## CARE

## 7 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR PETS COOL IN THE SUMMER

## EXTREME WEATHER CAN BE STRESSFUL ON ANIMALS

By Natalie Delgadillo  
Special to *The Washington Post*

Summer is, in many ways, awesome for pets. After months of rain and cold, dogs can romp at the beach and laze in the grass. Cats can bake in a sunny spot by a favorite window.

But more extreme weather can also be stressful for pet parents: How do you safely exercise an active dog in the humid July heat? How do you know whether your pet is getting enough water? What are the warning signs of heat exhaustion in an animal?

We talked to veterinarians and pet sitters across the country to get the answers and also to compile some useful tips for keeping dogs and cats safe and cool in higher temperatures.

### Avoid going out in the hottest part of the day

It may sound obvious, but it does require planning ahead. If you know the day is going to be brutal, you should take your dog on her walk either early or late in the day, says Amy Sparrow, owner of Furkid Sitting and Services in Baton Rouge and president of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters.

If even the mornings and evenings are hot, you should cut down on the walks altogether, she says. “They don’t need to

walk walk [at those temperatures]. Let them sniff, let them mosey,” Sparrow says, noting that sniffing is mentally engaging for dogs and can tire them out just as well as exercise.

You can also tucker out an active dog by playing games inside: hiding treats, for example, or hiding toys around the house.

So how hot is too hot to be walking or exercising outdoors? Like many things, the answer is, “It depends.”

You can start reaching a danger zone at “80, 85, 90 degrees depending on humidity, wind and ventilation, and sun exposure,” says Byron de la Navarre, a veterinarian with 34 years of experience who works at Animal House of Chicago. “85 in the shade is different than 85 in the sun.”

Also important to note: If you have a brachycephalic, or “smushed-face” breed like a French bulldog or a boxer, they should never be outside for long in high temperatures. These dogs have a more difficult time cooling down by panting and are at higher risk of overheating.

### Never (ever) leave your dog or cat in the car

Seriously, don’t. “Cars get hot very, very quickly. Having a dog or a cat in a car is not an option in the summer,” says Brian Collins, a veterinarian with the Cornell Richard P. Riney Canine Health Center in New York.

The typically dark seats



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES



in a car and the lack of ventilation can create dangerous conditions for your pets even if it's not extremely hot outside, and air conditioning doesn't always adequately reach the back of the vehicle, where many people put their pets, notes de la Navarre.

If you have to bring your pet into the car on a very hot day for a vet appointment or something else, it's best to cool the car down with air conditioning first, de la Navarre says. There are air conditioning extenders you can purchase to bring the airflow into the back of the car, and there are also fans you can attach to pet carriers to keep pets cool.

### Make it fun to keep cool

If you want to let your dog romp around outside on a sunny day, you can encourage him to stay cool without ruining the fun.

Foldable dog pools are great for pups who like to wade around in the water, says Tiffany Jackson, a registered veterinary technician and the owner of Ally 4 Pets, a pet sitting service in Maryland. "The other thing you can do with the pools is you can use them to give your pets frozen treats so it's contained in something easily cleanable," Jackson says, noting that she likes to do this on her deck or even inside her house.

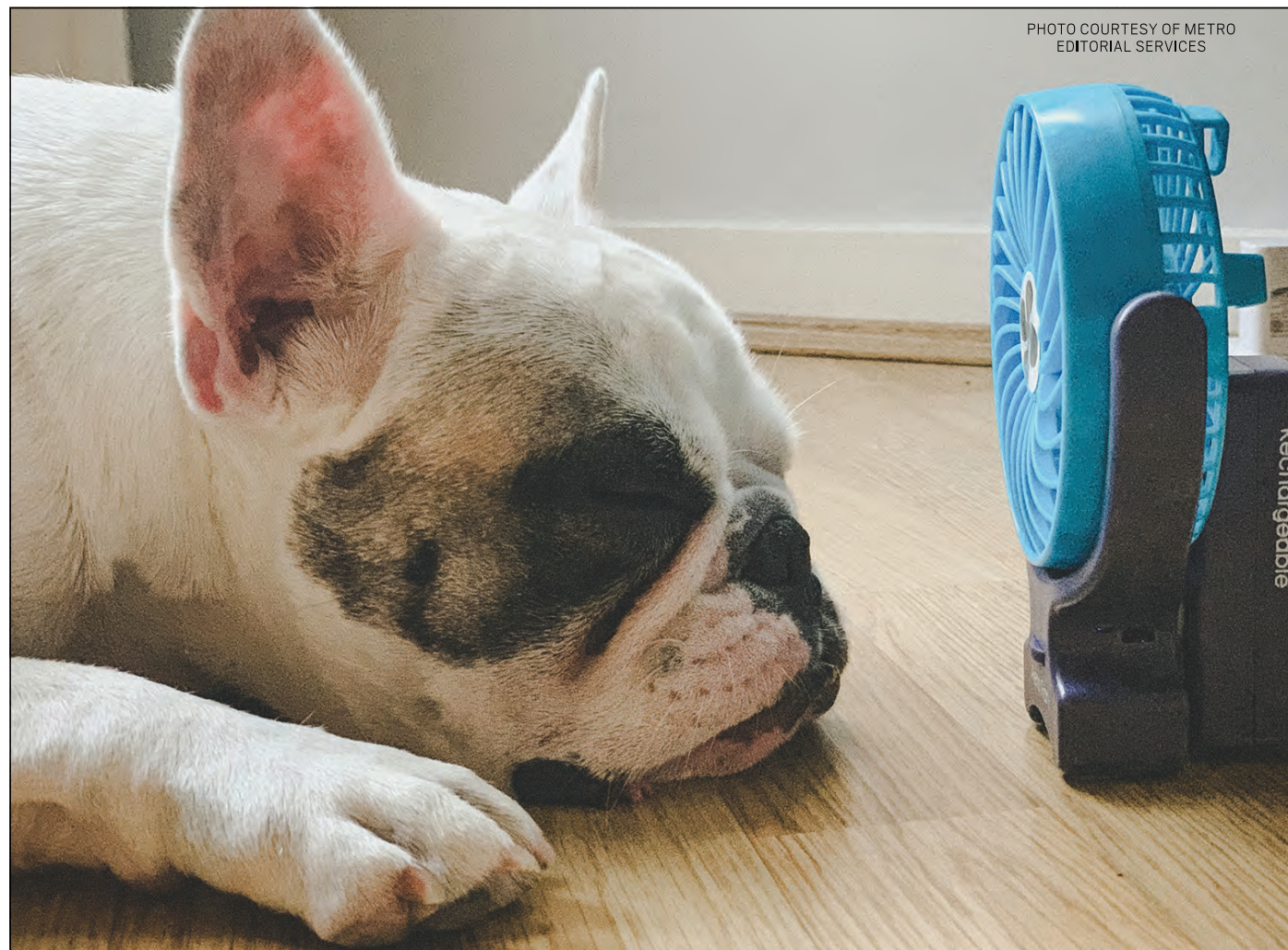
Jackson also suggests creating frozen treats inside a Kong — you can find hundreds of recipes online to freeze inside the dog toy, and "it will mentally stimulate your dog for 30 minutes" or so. You can also use ice trays or any other mold to make your pet a pup-friendly ice pop.

If your dog doesn't like being completely wet, you might try a splash pad for hot days instead of a pool. (Splash pads, which spray streams of water for your pet to run through, are like "a sprinkler for dogs," Jackson says.)

### Prioritize hydration

Healthy dogs and cats in their normal environment will generally drink enough water, says Collins (so don't worry too much about your indoor cats). But when your dog is frolicking at the beach or wrestling at the dog park you may have to watch her water intake — especially since dogs can become too excited and distracted to remember to hydrate. In these situations, it's helpful to know how much water your pet typically drinks, so you'll recognize if they're not drinking enough.

To err on the safe side, encourage your pet to take breaks and bring the water straight to them. You should make sure you're always carrying cool water in an insulated container if you take your dog somewhere on a hot day. If the water is not cool, it won't cool the animal down



sufficiently.

Collins notes you shouldn't push your pet to consume more water than they seem to want because dogs can actually drink too much and develop water toxicity.

### Know your pet's risk factors for heat exhaustion

Other than brachycephalic dogs, older dogs, younger dogs, dogs with a lot of fur and dark-colored dogs (especially black ones) are more susceptible to heat exhaustion, Collins says.

You should also know the side effects of all your pet's medications, as some of them increase heat sensitivity. Dogs with diabetes, liver disease or kidney disease can also overheat more easily, Sparrow says.

### Know your pet's normal behavior

The first sign your dog is overheating is an excessive amount of panting, multiple vets say. You can only really determine what's "excessive" by knowing what's normal for your dog, Collins says.

"It's important to know when too much panting is happening," he says. "If people start to suspect their dog is panting more than usual, they probably are and it's time to determine whether you should be concerned."

You may also notice that your dog slows or stops activity, seeks shade or seems very tired. Cats are generally better than dogs at regulating and tolerating heat, not least because they simply tend to move around less, especially when it's hot. But that doesn't mean they never overheat. If you ever see a cat open-mouth panting, that's a sign the cat is in significant distress and needs veterinary care right away, multiple vets say.

### Take early action

If you notice unusual behavior in your pet, you should immediately get them to settle down from activity and bring them indoors into air conditioning or in front of a fan where it's cool, Collins says. You should give them cool water, and you can also spray them down to help cool them off (be aware that garden hoses can get very hot in the sun, so test the water be-

fore you spray it).

Collins says it's not necessarily ideal to cover your dog in a wet towel or blanket because sometimes that towel or blanket can actually trap heat. He also does not recommend immersing dogs in cold water because you can accidentally make a stressed out pet hypothermic that way.

You can use an infrared thermometer on pets to take their temperature quickly, de la Navarre says. If a dog or cat's temperature is above 103, you should be concerned and begin taking measures to cool them down.

Various online sources recommend that pet owners put alcohol on their animals' feet — the quick evaporation of the substance cools them down because dogs and cats sweat through their paws. But de la Navarre says it's safest to leave that trick to the vets because they can make sure the animal doesn't lick the alcohol off their paws.

If your dog or cat begins showing more concerning signs of heat exhaustion, like weakness, wobbliness or seizures, you should get your pet to an emergency vet immediately.

## CARE

# Nocturnal pets want to play, eat when you're likely sleeping

While many animals like to soak up the sun and go about their business in daylight, there are plenty of others who seem to come alive after darkness falls. These night owls and more hunt and survive in the dark, which is called nocturnal and crepuscular behavior.

Nocturnal behavior is an adaptation to help animals survive in dark conditions and avoid predators. While some have excellent night vision, others have poor eyesight and rely on other senses to survive in the darkness, according to Animal Sake.

Nocturnal animals sleep all day and are active at night.

Crepuscular animals are mostly active at night, but not entirely sedate during the day.

While a number of wild animals, such as lemurs, coyotes and skunks, follow these patterns, certain animals that have been domesticated as pets also have nighttime predilections.

People who take these animals into their homes should understand that they won't see much action from the pets during the day when the animals are resting.

But when nighttime arrives, there will be much more activity. Those who are hoping to sleep themselves may have to make accommodations if they plan to cohabitate effectively with nocturnal pets.

▪ Mice and rats: Rats and mice are intelligent



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

and social animals that are often kept as pets. They are most active at night when they can be heard squeaking, eating and chewing.

▪ Hamsters: Another small rodent, hamsters also are nocturnal. At night, hamsters can be seen running on their wheels, collecting foods and making nests in their bedding.

▪ African pygmy hedgehog: This is a species of hedgehog commonly kept as a pet. According to The Spruce: Pets, pet hedgehogs are quiet, active, entertaining and require a lot of care. They make great companion animals. However, because they're nocturnal, they will need to be fed and cared for in the evening hours.

▪ Leopard geckos: These lizards sleep in safe and hidden spots during the

day and become active when night falls. Leopard geckos do not have the same light requirements as other reptiles that are kept as pets.

▪ Cats: Cats are most active between dusk and dawn, and are content to snooze throughout much of the day. They seem keen on catching prey (whether real or imaginary) around the house at night and vocalizing when their owners are trying to get some shut-eye.

▪ Rabbits: These furry friends also enjoy frolicking at night. They may scratch around their cages and make various noises. They also visit the litter box at night (if trained), groom themselves and may be more receptive to petting from owners.

— *By Metro Editorial Services*



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## CARE



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

# Prevent pets from fighting like cats and dogs

Animal interactions are often portrayed as confrontational. Many people have undoubtedly watched a cartoon mouse outsmart a cat, or laughed as the Road Runner stays a few steps ahead of Wile E. Coyote.

Common companion animals also have reputations for confrontation when forced to coexist under one roof.

Reality often differs from such depictions. Potential pet owners can rest assured that many animals of all different breeds and species have the potential to cohabitate peacefully. It's just a matter of doing your homework and facilitating the process of companionship.

Here's how to get started:

## Plan an initial meet and greet

When thinking about welcoming a new pet into the home, particularly one who has

not previously bonded with another animal that you are adopting together, you should always bring your current pet along to gauge their interactions. Also, it is wise to get a disposition report from the rescue about whether the available animal has a history of confrontation with other pets. Rescues typically let prospective pet parents know if a pet is good with dogs, cats, small animals and children.

## Create safe spaces

Whether it is two dogs, two cats, or one of each, animals may need time to spend alone, particularly if they have different energy levels or needs. The Animal Humane Society says sanctuary rooms can be set up so pets can separate. Rooms should be secure, with a door and a ceiling. These also are good spots to place new pets as they

get used to the smells and sounds of other pets and the people in the home.

Think about placing items that smell like the other pet in the new pet's area along with treats, so that the new animal comes to associate these items with good things, suggests the American Kennel Club.

## Utilize a gate or screen

After a few days, new pets can be given a chance to see one another separately through a baby gate or screen door without the risk of fights. When the pets are calm enough to meet without barriers, arrange the meeting in a neutral room, rather than in a sanctuary space.

## Offer equal measures of attention

Pets may covet their owners' attention, and that could lead to jealousy, especially

among particularly needy pets. While it's not always possible to be equal, offer adequate time with both animals, including time where each gets individualized attention.

## Sometimes it's a no-go

Pets may not be able to get along. For example, a dog with a very high prey drive, such as a breed that has been bred to flush out small animals or birds, may find a parakeet or guinea pig simply too tempting to leave alone. A large snake may not work out in a home that has gerbils or hamsters, as rodents are snakes' natural food sources. Always take a pet's breed, disposition and natural inclination into consideration before bringing in a new pet.

— *By Metro Editorial Services*

## CARE

# SAFETY IN THE SKY



DAVID MCNEW — GETTY IMAGES

## How to protect your pet during an in-flight emergency

**By Andrea Sachs**  
*The Washington Post*

A recent spate of in-flight emergencies — severe turbulence, a burning plane, a blown-out door panel — has underscored the importance of aviation safety protocols.

The measures are clear, comprehensive and potentially lifesaving if you're a human.

But the protocols are

murkier for cabin pets and service animals.

The Federal Aviation Administration's rules cover lifesaving gear and procedures designed for people, including seat belts, oxygen masks and life vests.

During an emergency evacuation, flight attendants order passengers to leave all hand baggage behind; there is no asterisk for carriers containing pets.

Passengers with cabin

pets or service animals hope to never find themselves in such a dire situation. Even so, Deborah Mandell, a professor of clinical emergency and critical care at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine, encourages travelers to have a plan of action.

"Being prepared and thinking about all these things is really important," said Mandell, who is also

an American Red Cross pet care adviser.

### Secure your pet during turbulence

Airlines require cabin pets to remain in their kennels at all times, though some carriers, such as Delta, allow passengers to hold their enclosed pet on their lap when the plane is not taking off, taxiing or landing.

If the air turns choppy, owners should tuck the kennel under their seat — the safest spot for the animal and, by extension, any nearby passengers.

Liz Rozanski, a critical care veterinarian at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, recommends traveling with a hard-shell pet case rather than a soft-sided bag. "The stiffer ones are more like a child's seat," she said.

A hard case can also better repel rolling objects, such as water bottles.

Inside the enclosure, soft bedding will provide protective padding. Mandell suggests removing any objects that could turn into projectiles, such as toys or food.

The rules are different for service dogs, which are allowed to sit in the open, by their owner's feet or on their lap.

If you have a carrier, place your service dog inside as soon as the pilot switches on the seat-belt sign. If you don't have one, Mandell said, seat the dog on the floor, cradle it between your legs, and wrap your arms around its chest in a safe and comforting hug, "as long as you're not putting yourself at risk."

### Use a spare oxygen mask

Each airplane seat is equipped with an oxygen mask, plus extras intended for lap babies. Airlines do not specify whether passengers can use a spare mask for their pet, but it has happened before. In 2018, JetBlue flight attendants deployed an oxygen mask to help a French bulldog named Darcy that was struggling to breathe.

Similar to the rule for adults traveling with children, passengers should put on their mask first, then help their pet. Keep in mind that masking an animal may require some finessing because the gear is not made for canine or feline faces. Mandell said the equipment might be a trickier fit for larger breeds, such as a German shepherd or Great Pyrenees.

"Because of all the different conformations of dog heads, it may or may not stay on with just the elastic," she said. "So you may just have to hold it."

Based on her experience in animal hospitals, Mandell said some pets might object to having their snouts covered with a foreign object. The owner needs to position the cup so the pet can inhale the oxygen. Don't press it too tightly against their nose, which can impede their intake.

If a spare mask is not available, the passenger and pet would need to share. Rozanski said to trade off air every 15 seconds or so.

### BYO life vest

By law, planes flying over



DAVID MCNEW — GETTY IMAGES

or near large bodies of water must carry life vests for each passenger, including a few models for infants. Pets are not part of that equation, but Mandell said you can bring your own pet life jacket.

The gear might make sense if your trip includes family swims in the vacation rental pool or boat rides in the Pacific Ocean. It's probably excessive if you're carrying it solely for the plane ride. Fortunately, emergency water landings

by commercial aircraft are very rare.

### Evacuating with your pet

In the event of an evacuation, flight crew members will instruct passengers to proceed to the emergency exits and leave all carry-on items behind.

Passengers must be able to deplane within 90 seconds, according to the FAA. Searching for or shouldering a bag can slow the

process; luggage can also puncture the inflatable slide.

Pet carriers, which are considered carry-ons, are no exception.

Airlines such as Southwest say passengers should remove the dog or cat from its case and hold it in their arms. (Flight attendants will provide real-time guidance since each crisis is unique.) Animal experts, however, said a freed pet comes with risks. The pet can become spooked and

escape in the plane, for example, or its claws can pierce the slide.

Rozanski suggests exiting with the pet inside its carrier and dealing with the consequences later. "If the plane is burning up, I would take the carrier with me," she said. "If somebody says 'no,' I would jump anyway." Just be aware that ignoring or defying a flight attendant's orders could be classified as unruly behavior.

For sliding down with a

larger dog, Mandell said, try to hold the animal on your lap facing out, with its back to your chest and its feet up. That way, its nails won't rip the material.

Service animals, meanwhile, are trained for emergency situations, Rozanski noted, citing the guide dogs that led their owners out of the World Trade Center to safety on Sept. 11, 2001.

Service dogs "are not going to have a problem," she said, "because they are going to follow instructions."

## CARE

# Sorry, dogs: Cats can play fetch, too, study finds

By Leo Sands

*The Washington Post*

They are sleeker, more understated, and rarely as desperate for humans' attention as their canine counterparts. But, according to a 2023 study, many cats share a trait more frequently associated with pet dogs: They play fetch.

The peer-reviewed study dispels any lingering myth that cats do not know how to retrieve objects for their owners, said its authors, who based their findings on a survey of the owners of 1,154 cats that played fetch on every continent except Antarctica. Some cats can and do play fetch, they found, although it depended on the feline's individual traits and the bond shared with its owner.

"It was more common than people were probably expecting, and even I was expecting," Jemma Forman, an animal psychologist at the University of Sussex and an author of the study, said in an interview. The authors of the study, published in the *Scientific Reports* journal, said they believe it is the most extensive conducted to date on this specific behavior among cats.

The authors found that the vast majority of the domesticated cats surveyed — 94% — were not trained to play fetch, but did so spontaneously. Most owners first noticed their cats fetching within the animal's first year of life. Owners most frequently reported 7 months as the age cats began fetching.

The study, limited to cats whose owners already reported fetching, did not assess how prevalent the behavior was among the general cat population. While many cats do fetch, Forman suggested that more



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

research was needed to determine how common it was more generally. A cat's breed was not a barrier to its ability to fetch, the study found, although Siamese cats were particularly well represented in the sample.

It is also not yet clear if cats fetch for the same reason as dogs, who enjoy the bonding reward from their owners, the study said. It may simply be because cats are fascinated by the object, perhaps because it reminds them of prey. "We're not quite sure whether it would be a social purpose, or that object-playing purpose in cats," Forman said.

"Some humans might prefer to play football and some

like to play golf. Some cats just prefer to play fetch," added co-author Elizabeth Renner, a psychologist at Northumbria University. In this way, fetching in cats was akin to a personality trait found in humans, she said.

Most critically, cats must have the right personality or temperament, and be bonded with an owner who is receptive to their needs, Forman suggested.

"Give it a try, but don't be disheartened if your cat doesn't fetch," Forman said, noting that it was more frequently the feline, rather than its owner, who decided when it was time to play. "It's a very spontaneous behavior, maybe even opportunistic,"

she said.

In the survey, cats were found to fetch a variety of objects, though feline-specific toys, spherical objects and cosmetics were the most commonly retrieved. Other owners reported their cats playing fetch with scraps, ring-shaped objects and clothing items.

The authors also found that cats initiated fetching sessions more frequently than their owners, demonstrating their agency and an independent propensity to play. Some 48% of the cats in the study tended to initiate fetch play, compared with 22% of pets whose owners reported initiating more often. The remainder of

cats initiated sessions about equally with their owners, according to the study.

"Cats prefer to be in control of their fetching sessions," said Forman, noting that this reflected a broader tendency shared by cats to maintain a sense of control across all their interactions. "When they are in control, they enjoy themselves more, so they play more enthusiastically."

For those wishing to train their cats to fetch, Renner suggested the clicker-training method, which involves making a specific sound when the animal performs a behavior correctly and then associating it with a reward. When training a cat to per-

form a sequence of events, like fetching, Renner suggests first focusing on the end of the sequence, before working your way in reverse through the cycle. In other words, begin by rewarding the cat for dropping an object before you, and after creating the positive association, eventually throw it and have them retrieve it.

"If you wanted to train your cat, you could give them lots of social praise, lots of food, lots of treats when they bring the toy back to you," Forman said. But ultimate success cannot be guaranteed.

"Fetching is a weird one," she said. "All the stars have to align."

## CARE

# 5 pet-friendly travel tips for summer trips

For pet owners, cats and dogs are part of the family, which means when it's time to head out of town, the four-legged friends get to come along, too.

In fact, a survey conducted by Motel 6 revealed that of 2,000 Americans with summer leisure plans, the vast majority of those traveling with pets this summer (90%) are bringing their dog, and more than a quarter (31%) are bringing their cat.

While traveling with pets can be a handful, Motel 6 offers these tips to help make the journey easier, safer and more fun:

## Pack the essentials

Travel anxiety is real for your four-legged friends, too, so keep the experience as "pawsitive" as possible by packing your pet's favorite toys and snacks.

Don't forget to pack enough food, water, collapsible food and water bowls, and a favorite blanket or bed to provide a sense of familiarity.

## Map out stops

One in 6 (16%) Americans with summer travel plans are driving to their destinations because they plan to bring their pets along.

Travelers should map out breaks, especially

when it comes to stopping for meals, in anticipation of traffic and construction. This can help ensure they find spots for bathroom breaks and a chance for active pets to exercise. Even lazier pets can enjoy the fresh air.

## Find pet-friendly lodging

As you plan your getaway, look for pet-friendly lodging options with plenty of places to lounge, like Motel 6, which offers travelers and their four-legged friends accommodations, with pets always staying for free.

This helps take the stress out of researching hotel pet policies and paying additional fees.

Traveling pet parents can join the free My6 discount program to receive a minimum of 6% off every stay at locations across the country and access to hundreds of pet and travel benefits.

## Travel safely

If you're planning to travel with your pets, ensure they receive the royal treatment by researching how to safely transport them during the trip.

The Humane Society of the United States recommends that cats and dogs travel in their crates or carriers anchored by a

seatbelt to prevent them from moving around the car.

It's important to never leave your pet alone in the car or place your pet in the front seat because it could lead to injury.

Always keep pets on leashes when outside, no matter how well-trained they are, as new surroundings or unexpected noises can startle them.

## Remember to have fun

Travelers' top reasons for bringing their four-legged friends on trips include spending quality time with them and the joy of seeing their pets happy (39%), making new memories with their pets (34%), seeing their pets' reactions to new experiences (32%) and the extra level of companionship pets bring to trips (29%).

A few ways to reserve quality time with your pets include dining at pet-friendly restaurants, locating nearby green spaces or parks to play, trying new experiences together or going on walks.

For those who like a more leisurely travel experience, don't forget to add a quick nap with your pet to your schedule.

— Family Features



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**If you're planning to travel with your pets, ensure they receive the royal treatment by researching how to safely transport them during the trip.**

## CARE

# 5 ways to set up a safe, cozy home for cats and dogs

As much as you love your pets and work hard to make them part of the family, they're also a big responsibility.

Part of that responsibility includes setting up your home so it's equal parts stylish (for you) and functional (for Fido).

Show furry friends a little love, beyond the walks and snuggles, by making your home more pet friendly.

## Set up their space near an entry

It's common for pet owners to desire a space to keep all their furry friends' belongings and avoid clutter. Ensure convenience and cleanliness by establishing an area near the door where you can store leashes, collars, toys and more.

Consider keeping a towel or two nearby for wiping paws (and snouts) after going outside.

You also can keep your pets' beds, food and water bowls in this space so it feels like their own little "home" when returning from a walk or going to sleep at night.

## Consider stain-resistant fabrics

From furniture to decor, avoiding fabrics that attract pet hair is a no-brainer for pet owners looking to escape a constant mess. Silk and velvet are virtual magnets for fur, while alternatives like leather offer more practical choices that are easy to clean and durable.

## Install resilient flooring

Reduce your fear of zoomies causing damage to your floors by installing resilient flooring focused on reducing wear.

Both durable and beautiful, a variety of Beautifully Responsible floors take on some of the burden of pet ownership with built-in durability for the everyday and the unexpected.

With options designed to bridge the gap between style and function, numerous water-resistant and waterproof floors give you and your pets room to live your best lives for years to come without wet shakes triggering worries.

Plus, many resilient floors don't flinch when it comes to addressing muddy paws, often only requiring the mud to be easily wiped away, without harsh cleaning products.

## Decorate with pets in mind

Displaying Grandma's fine china and your favorite sports memorabilia may not go hand-in-hand with pet ownership as that autographed baseball may look more like a chew toy than a treasured artifact.

Instead, prioritize decor that's washable and sturdy so you can avoid coming home to a delicate family heirloom shattered on the floor.

## Pet-proof the yard

If you plan on your pets being outside on their own, it's a good idea to carefully inspect your outdoor spaces before letting them roam. Look for gaps in the fence, identify potentially harmful plants and ensure outdoor structures like grills and furniture are secure.



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FAMILY FEATURES



## FEATURE

## IN NEED OF A FELINE FRIEND

## A woman was feeling sad, so her doctor prescribed her a cat

By Cathy Free

Special to *The Washington Post*

Robin Sipe's eyes filled with tears as soon as her doctor entered the examining room.

"My cat had recently died and I was feeling really sad and depressed," Sipe said she told her pulmonologist, Earl D. King, whom she's known for 15 years.

King has treated her for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a condition that blocks airflow and makes it difficult to breathe. Sipe said he'd saved her life three times in an intensive care unit at Sentara RMH Medical Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

So when he asked her what was wrong, Sipe, 67, opened up to him about her loneliness since her beloved cat died over the summer.

"I was really going through a bad time," she said she told him during her appointment.

King mentioned she should think about getting a new cat. When her checkup was over, he handed her a printed summary of the appointment.

Then Sipe's eyes lingered at the item at the top of the list: "Get a cat," the doctor wrote.

King, 63, has been a doctor long enough to know that "people sometimes don't follow your instructions," he said. In fact, patients don't take medications as prescribed by their doctors about half the time, according to the American Medical Association.

King wrote down his advice so there would be no



Robin Sipe and her new kitten, Earlene.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB GREBE

mistake about what he told Sipe during the appointment.

"Robin was down in the dumps, crying about the loss of her cat, and I felt that a new cat was the best remedy for her," he said.

He'd seen the studies showing pets can improve a person's mental health and help older adults cope with feelings of loneliness. He'd also seen the effects from a firsthand.

"I grew up on a dairy farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and we always had herds of cats and dogs," King said.

"One winter, it snowed so bad the milk truck couldn't get to the farm, and we had to run 600 gallons of milk

down the drain," he said. "The cats drank as much as they could hold, and they were very happy. Having them around was a wonderful experience."

King was serious when he advised Sipe to get a new cat, he said. But he was surprised when Sipe, who has one adult daughter, took him up on it immediately.

After leaving King's office, Sipe stopped at a farm produce stand for some fresh corn and cantaloupe on her way to her home. While she was browsing, she noticed a black and white kitten romping around.

"She was from a litter of five, and she was missing her front left paw," Sipe

said.

The workers at the stand told her the kitten lost her paw shortly after she was born when something fell off a wall in a shed and severed it.

The kitten's missing paw didn't seem to affect her ability to play and get around, Sipe said.

She was instantly smitten, and the words "get a cat" were echoing in her mind.

"I asked if I could take the kitty home and told them I could guarantee that she'd be safe and happy inside," Sipe said. "They had four other kittens they'd need to find homes for, so they said OK. This sweet little kitten was mine."

Sipe said she has spent years struggling with COPD and has been admitted to the intensive care unit with breathing problems several times.

"I've had to be intubated and put into a medically induced coma," she said. "Dr. King pulled me out of death each time."

When her cat Datura suddenly died, Sipe said she cried for weeks.

"She was a solid black domestic shorthair that I'd rescued," she said. "I've loved cats since I started chasing kittens when I was 5."

She thought she'd probably get a new cat one day, but King's prescription brought home the urgency of bringing back some fun to her life, said Sipe, a retired purchasing agent.

"I do believe this was meant to happen with all my heart," she said, noting that Earlene likes to watch television with her and cuddles up next to her in bed.

"She's a sweet and loving kitten, but she does have this habit of waking me up to play at 1 a.m.," Sipe said.

"She likes to reach up and rub my face with her stubby little paw," she added.

King said he's gratified that Sipe found a kitten so quickly, and that it's bringing her joy.

"I'm really happy that Robin found a new cat — particularly one with a disability," he said.

Sipe said a kitten was the perfect prescription for her sadness.

"As far as I'm concerned, she was the pick of the litter," Sipe said.

## FEATURE

# Lessons learned from an unexpected source



MARISA KASHINO — THE WASHINGTON POST

Bexley, enjoying a beach trip in July 2015, during what turned out to be the final week of his life.

## How a rescue dog helped me grow up — and made me rethink marriage

**By Marisa Kashino**  
*The Washington Post*

On one of the first nice days of spring, my two dogs lounge in the grass by our patio, their noses popping at all the smells that emerge when the world warms up.

They're here because of Bexley. Maybe I am, too.

When I first met him, in a small, fluorescently lit room at a Washington, D.C., animal shelter, he was a matted gray mop

who kept rolling onto his back. "How cute, he wants a tummy rub," thought 24-year-old me. Fifteen years of dog-parenting later, I understand that he was saying, the best way he knew how: "I am terrified. Please don't hurt me."

The shelter called him "Dude" — an anonymous-sounding name for a genuinely anonymous guy, found tied up at a gas station in a desolate section of the city. No tags, no microchip, unthinkable dirty.

A volunteer left us alone to get acquainted. Almost as soon as she closed the door, I cried. He was pathetic. I loved him instantly.

Back then, the shelter enforced a waiting period before you could take an animal home. So, Nate — the boyfriend who I'd been living with for less than a year — had to wait until the following week to meet our new roommate.

It didn't go great.

Bexley was not playful

or lively in the way I'd assumed all dogs were, especially ones who'd just been sprung from the pound. He kept his distance and eyed us nervously — Nate, in particular. Even so, that first night together, determined to force a bond, I picked him up and plopped him into our bed. I guess I figured we could cuddle out our differences.

It took seconds for him to transform into a snarling, snapping, teeth-baring gremlin. Nate and I

scrambled away as fast as we could, leaving Bexley as the bed's sole occupant. The image is hilarious now — a 10-pound fluff ball kicking both of us out. But in the moment, it was a crisis. I don't remember anymore what we said to each other then. I do remember Nate's face — exhausted, anguished — as he decamped to the couch.

And I remember what I was thinking: I will never give up on this dog. But what if Nate doesn't feel

the same? If he makes me choose, our relationship won't survive.

I spent that night on the bedroom floor, sneaking glances at the animal I'd expected to love me as easily as I'd loved him, panic-Googleing variations of: What to do about an aggressive dog? What makes dogs aggressive? What is the difference between a dog trainer and dog behaviorist? And, crucially, for a fledgling journalist in one of the most expensive cit-

ies in the country: How much does a dog behaviorist cost?

The answer, in the summer of 2009, was several hundred dollars for an in-home consultation with one of the area's only two veterinary behaviorists — essentially, an animal psychologist. It was a lot of money. But what choice did we have? By the time the doggy shrink came to see us in our shabby basement apartment, Bexley had bitten both me and Nate at least once and drawn blood.

The behaviorist concluded that Bexley had been severely abused. We talked about the litany of things that seemed to trigger him: When we — especially Nate — picked up throwable objects such as pillows and the TV remote. When we made sudden movements in Bexley's direction. When we set a glass or, really, anything down too hard on the table, making a loud sound. The list went on.

There had been one positive development: Bexley had started warming up to me. But even this came with a caveat. Oftentimes, when Nate did any of the above, Bexley seemed to think he had to defend both of us, putting his tiny, scruffy body between the two humans, growling and baring his teeth at the male one in warning. I wondered if his last mom had left him at that gas station out of desperation, to get him away from whatever monster could hurt a dog the size of a footstool.

Nate had grown up with a big, happy black lab. I had a dog only very briefly as a kid. Which is to say, neither of us were equipped for this. Not even close. So, the behaviorist trained us — in the art of delivering treats at precisely the right times, so Bexley could begin to associate scary sounds and other triggers with something positive instead. In the slow, careful dance of maneuvering around him in non-threatening ways. In the language of nonverbal signals that dogs send to communicate fear.

Like other newly minted adults adopting a first dog, Nate and I figured we'd have to trade happy hours for after-work walks, make room in the budget for dog food and vet bills. Neither of us anticipated having to move around our apartment like it was booby-trapped.

And yet — Nate never made me choose. He dug in.

That first year is somewhat of a

blur now. I know we were both very stressed. But the thing that I remember most is how much my own worldview shifted.

When we moved in together, I did not think I ever wanted to get married. (My parents are divorced, marriage seemed wildly overrated.) Nate knew this about me. He was fine with it. But watching his commitment to Bexley changed how I felt. To win him over, Nate altered so many fundamental things about himself. He spoke — and even laughed — at a lower volume. He reined in the way he gesticulated when he talked. In essence, he made himself smaller so that Bexley might feel a bit stronger.

And it started to pay off. Two months after we adopted Bexley, the three of us were out for a walk. We'd just been past the P Street Whole Foods, where Bexley spent several minutes sniffing at the pile of Halloween pumpkins out front. At the corner, Nate crouched down while we waited to cross the street. To our astonishment, Bexley sat down with him, nestling between Nate's legs as the cars and other people whizzed by. It was the clearest signal he'd given that he might be starting to view Nate as a protector, rather than a threat.

The more we worked to rehabilitate Bexley, the more the three of us were beginning to feel to me like a real family. Every bit of progress was a shared victory. Every setback, a blow made easier because Nate and I were enduring it together. This, I realized, was what marriage could mean.

Anyone who's loved a dog knows you're never the same after. But I think that's especially true of the first dogs of adulthood — the dogs who teach us how to put another living being's needs above our own. The dogs who show us how to grow up.

Bexley's later years were more peaceful. He learned to accept affection and give it in return. That we'd had to earn his love just made us relish it more. He was probably 7 or 8 when we adopted him, so in the end, we had six years together.

Nate and I did get married. Today, we have two rescue dogs and two rescue cats. Because of Bexley, we will always share our home with animals who need one.

In the moments when I feel especially grateful for this life we've made together, I often think: Bexley was here.



MARISA KASHINO — THE WASHINGTON POST

Bexley, as an older gentleman, accompanying the author at work.

## FEATURE

## A WONDERFUL RESCUE

## NEARLY 50 CATS SAVED FROM A HOT CAR; ONE IS NOW A MODEL FOR TARGET

By Cathy Free

*The Washington Post*

The scene was heart-breaking: Nearly 50 cats were crammed into a hot car at a rest stop near Minnesota's Twin Cities.

The cats were piled from floor to ceiling inside an SUV, and police soon learned their owner had been living inside the car with them.

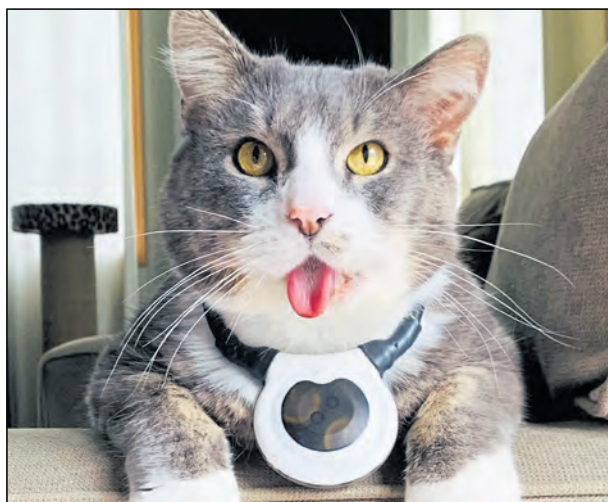
The owner agreed to surrender the cats to area animal shelters, but during the rescue, one of the cats escaped. Hercules, a gray and white feline, scampered off that sweltering day in June 2022, said Nicole Perreault, a veterinarian who runs Tuff Start Rescue, a Minnesota foster and adoption nonprofit.

Animal rescue volunteers searched for the cat for a month, she said, until Hercules was finally spotted sitting on someone's doorstep in the area. His jaw was fractured, he was covered with maggots and his tongue was severely damaged, Perreault said.

The person who found Hercules brought the cat to the veterinary clinic.

Perreault said she suspected the cat was Hercules and contacted his previous owner, who confirmed it.

"This gentleman said he had fallen on hard times and had been evicted so he was staying in his car with all of his cats," she said. "He was very polite, and it seemed he loved them very much. He was happy to know that Hercules had been found and was getting



Hercules relaxes at home in St. Paul in Aug. 2023 while wearing a device that delivered pulsed electromagnetic therapy to help with pain and inflammation while his jaw was healing. The cat's dangling tongue is a result of injuries suffered in 2022.

a lot of love."

She did not know what happened to the man who was evicted. She assured him Hercules would be taken care of, she said.

"We suspected he might have been hit by a car," Perreault said of Hercules. "He was so near death that I wondered if it would be more humane to euthanize him."

But then Hercules lifted his head and looked right at Perreault.

"I got the impression that he really wanted to fight," she said.

Perreault and her team fed Hercules and cleaned him up, then gave him fluids through an IV and put him on pain medication. When the 6-year-old feline was strong enough, Perreault took him to an animal oral surgeon to have his

jaw repaired.

Perreault said she posted a few photos of Hercules on her Facebook page to let people know the cat had been found and was gradually healing.

"He ripped my heart out when I saw him," she wrote. "... I decided we owed it to him to give him every chance to recover from this horrible ordeal, so that hopefully he can experience the love and TLC that awaits."

Jill LeBrun, a pediatric nurse from St. Paul who has fostered dogs and cats for Perreault's rescue over the years, was immediately interested.

"As a nurse, I'm attracted to medically fragile animals," said LeBrun, 50. "I knew that Hercules was going to need to be fostered and I felt that I could do it."



Jill LeBrun enjoys some down time with Hercules.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JILL LEBRUN



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY

A rescue worker took this photo of 47 cats in a hot car at a Minnesota rest stop on June 15, 2022.

Once Perreault and her staff determined that Hercules was strong enough to leave veterinary care, LeBrun took the cat home. Hercules was soon snuggling up for naps with her other cat, Kay.

LeBrun quickly realized she'd be adopting the feline instead of fostering him.

"He's pretty special; he also gets along with our new puppy, Juni," she said.

"His jaw is a little crooked and his tongue almost always hangs out because of what happened to him," added Perreault, 44. "But he's a sweet, tough cat. The name Hercules suits him."

Last fall, LeBrun said, she was scrolling on social media when she came across a post from the Animal Connection, a pet talent agency in search of cats with unusual faces. It was scouting pet models for Target, which is based in Minneapolis.

LeBrun said the agency

loved the photo she sent of Hercules with his tongue hanging out. She was asked to bring her cat to a studio for a photo shoot so his personality and star appeal could be assessed.

"Hercules did great — he's a friendly cat and everybody loved him," LeBrun said, noting she was paid \$100 to participate. "They told me his picture would appear on something for Target in early 2024."

In mid-March, when LeBrun still hadn't heard back, she made a trip to her local Target and walked down the pet aisle.

When she came to a display of store-brand cat litter, she was stunned and delighted to see her cat's image — with his dangling pink tongue — on every bucket of Up & Up Fragrance Free Clumping Cat Litter on the shelf.

She bought some right away.

"So did all my friends

and neighbors," LeBrun said. "One of my friends didn't tell her son about it when she took him to the store. But he saw the litter and said: 'Mom! That cat looks just like Hercules.'"

LeBrun said Hercules was recently called in for a second Target photo shoot, which means he'll probably be appearing on other merchandise in a few months. The TV station Kare 11 recently reported on the cat's sudden fame as a model.

"He's a natural and he loves to be the center of attention," LeBrun said, noting her cat has remained humble and is not the least bit finicky.

She said she still marvels at his journey from being hoarded in a sweltering car, then escaping and nearly dying, to becoming a feline model.

"I feel very lucky to be the person who gets to spend every day with him," she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL LEBRUN

Hercules appears on the label of cat litter at Target.

## FEATURE

# GETTING PAST NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

## Cats aren't jerks; they're just misunderstood

**By Colleen Grablick**  
*The Washington Post*

If you've lived with cats, you've probably found yourself staring at them after they've toppled a plant or swept a mug off the table, thinking: "Why did you just do that?"

A precise answer isn't easy to come by. Some recent studies have made strides in assuaging the more self-conscious human anxieties about cat ownership (allegedly, they

know their names and they emotionally attach to us). But by and large, research that sinks its claws into domestic cat behavior, genetics and psychology remains somewhat nascent, especially compared to what's available about dogs.

We can look to history to (partially) explain this dearth of information; humans way back when developed an interactive relationship with dogs, performing tasks together that required some form of

companionship and understanding. Our cats' ancestors, by comparison, hunted and existed in solitude. We had less reason to figure out what was going on inside their heads.

"The cat suffers a bit from its legacy of just being something that lives around people's houses and farms, and keeps the mouse population down," says James Serpell, a professor emeritus of animal welfare at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Med-

icine. "There's this legacy of being not exactly a wild animal, but an animal that lives on the margins, so to speak, of society."

Even though cats have moved indoors and become human companions, the view persists that they are asocial and detached. And beyond providing fodder for grumpy-cat memes, it can create roadblocks for loving cat owners seeking to correct problematic behavior, or simply maintain a happier home.

"There are so many misconceptions that cats are spiteful, or cats are being aloof or asocial," says Luke Hollenbeck, a cat behaviorist with the Animal Behavior Wellness Center in Fairfax County, Virginia. "But cats are trying to communicate with us all the time, and people have to be really good at understanding that. If there's a communication barrier, we're not going to be able to get along very well."

### Cats are not antisocial

Cats indeed descended from solitary creatures, but this doesn't mean they're hermits. In wild or feral colonies — which form the basis of most feline social research — cats develop dynamic relationships with their peers, selecting a few "preferred associates" (Hollenbeck's words) to hang out with.

"A lot of this also comes down to different personalities and social preferences

— every cat is individual,” Hollenbeck says. “Just like you and I might choose to hang out with different people or participate in different events, cats are no different.”

Research into feral colonies shows that cats tend to form matriarchal social bonds; females will adhere more closely to one another (typically in a community of mothers, aunts and sisters). Males, once they’re about a year old, are more likely to move about nomadically. Even though existing research focuses primarily on feral cats, any person who has lived with more than one feline can attest that the domesticated ones form bonds with each other, too — if they so choose.

Monique Udell is the director of the Human-Animal Interaction Lab at Oregon State University, which has been investigating the social potential of domestic cats. According to Udell, cats actually have a “flexible” social structure, meaning they can exist successfully on their own or in groups, depending on early life experiences (such as whether they were exposed to humans as babies) and their environment.

“What we’re finding is that when we give them the same kinds of opportunities or challenges that we regularly give dogs, that oftentimes cats not only can engage in high levels of social behavior, but many cats actually prefer social interaction,” Udell says.

Of course, no one — cat or human — wants to be around others all the time. Leslie Sinn, a veterinary behaviorist in Ashburn, Virginia, says domestic cats, just like their wild ancestors, navigate conflict by dispersal; they remove themselves from an uncomfortable situation as protection. “That’s often where we run into issues in our home, because there’s limited movement that can take place in order to be able to avoid con-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

flict,” she says.

### ‘Dominant or submissive?’ It’s complicated

In a multi-cat household, what might be perceived as a display of “dominance” by one cat toward another is often just the groucher cat’s way of pointing out a problem in their environment.

“Dominance is actually such a huge trigger word in the behavior consulting world because it’s so often misunderstood,” Hollenbeck says. “Cats certainly do not form dominance hierarchies in the sense where there’s someone who’s on top, and then cats existing in ranks below them.”

While today’s household cats have evolved socially to coexist with humans and other animals, much of their behavior remains motivated by survival instinct, and encroachment on their space may spark conflict. This means that the individualization of resources

— having their own food, water and bathroom — remains incredibly important to them.

Rather than “dominant,” “territorial” is a more accurate way to describe discordant behavior that can arise in multi-cat homes. One cat may obstruct an entrance to the litter box or block food bowls around meal times, indications that these resources should be increased and spread further apart so each animal has its own turf. While multiple cats can harmoniously share a bathroom, it’s important to have a box for each one. The same goes for food bowls, water fountains and cozy areas.

Still, some cats will never be best friends. Differences in age, energy level and lived experience can all fuel clashes. And some cats’ personalities simply don’t gel, Serpell says. Researchers in Denmark are preparing a study now, he says, to figure out why some cats get along easier than others, and to learn more about

the roots of their individual personalities. While you can reduce the drama by creating a world where they’re not forced to share every necessity, some furry housemates just aren’t terribly compatible.

“You will get what looks like ... almost cruel, kind of bullying that goes on,” Serpell says. “There are cats who will just seemingly get pleasure out of persistently annoying another cat.”

### They aren’t destroying your sofa out of spite

Cat owners may assume their pets are using the furniture as a scratching post or the carpet as a toilet to exact some kind of revenge, but that’s rarely the case. “They don’t wake up in the morning and plot how they’re going to ruin your day,” Sinn says.

Instead, unusual or upsetting behaviors are more likely to be your cat’s way of communicating that something is wrong, either emotionally or medically. Signs

that something is amiss might include growling and other forms of aggression, litter box aversion, and constant scratching or other destructive acts. Sometimes, the underlying cause is clear-cut; maybe you need to relocate the scratching post to a more easily accessible spot, or clean the litter box more frequently.

“There are many of us who would travel on down the road, rather than using the ... dirty stall at a local truck stop, so why should we expect our cat to be happy about that?” Sinn says.

Other reasons might be trickier to detect, requiring more careful observation. For example, an older cat forced to cohabitate with a rambunctious sibling may isolate, hiss or growl when they can’t be left alone; conversely, a young cat that spends much of the day on its own may create trouble out of boredom.

“A lot of the so-called mischievous behavior of cats is simply an attempt to get the owners’ attention,” Ser-

pell says. “They’ve learned by trial and error if they sit on your desk and throw your pens on the floor, eventually you’ll give them attention or get up.” Taking an extra 30 minutes every day to interact with your cat could lead to a happier dynamic.

Hollenbeck emphasizes that “misbehaviors” in cats rescued from unknown circumstances could also stem from past trauma. An animal who was hungry all the time in an earlier life may be defensive or agitated around meals, just like a cat who was mistreated by previous owners might be anxious around people. “As a survival instinct,” Hollenbeck says, “they are really good at generalizing that fear.”

### You can teach (some) cats tricks

The stereotype that cats are either too independent or too indifferent to listen to a silly human telling them to fetch or roll over isn’t a universal truth.

At the Human-Animal Interaction Lab, Udell and her colleagues lead classes for both children and adults to strengthen their bonds with cats by participating in activities together, including learning tricks or chasing a toy. While it depends on the individual animal, many cats coming through the lab have demonstrated an interest and ability to walk on a leash, play fetch and perform tricks when they’re given the attention and time, she says.

“People who have participated in these programs, they’ll send us back pictures of taking their cats on hikes and taking them on kayaks, and all sorts of adventures,” Udell says.

Separate from Udell’s findings, another study from researchers at the University of Sussex last year also found that cats can play fetch — although it was unclear if the behavior was more rooted in a bond with the object than the owner. Classic.

## HEALTH

# Here's what to know about cat reproduction

Pet owners must take many things into consideration in their quest to keep animals healthy and happy.

One of those considerations involves animal reproductive health.

Veterinarians as well as animal welfare organizations urge pet owners to spay or neuter their pets, not only to provide various health benefits, but to help reduce overpopulation in pet communities.

Cat pet parents must be especially diligent in their quest to squelch reproduction to help control cat populations.

According to The Spruce: Pets, female cats that are not spayed will come into estrus (heat) as early as four months old. The animal health resource BondVet says a cat can go into heat as often as every two to three weeks. Generally, though, cats are seasonal breeders, meaning heat cycles slow down in autumn.

Another thing to note is that cats do not enter menopause like people and other animals. That means a female cat can continue to reproduce well into her senior years.

Cats can become pregnant even during the first estrus cycle. A feline's pregnancy lasts around 63 to 65 days, or about nine weeks.

A cat also can be impregnated again very quickly after giving birth, as nursing kittens will not prevent a subsequent pregnancy.

The average litter size is three to six kittens, so it's easy to see just how many kittens can be born of one cat if she's left to her own reproductive devices. Females also can be mated by more than one male or even one of their male relatives.

While there is still some debate among veterinarians as to the best age at which to spay or neuter cats, the general consensus seems to be the earlier the better, particularly if cats have access to other cats that are not fixed. This can occur as early as age six to eight weeks, while standard spays and neuters occur at five to six months of age.


Vets who advocate for spaying before the first heat say it nearly eliminates the risk of mammary cancer, and spayed cats will not develop ovarian and uterine cancers, according to PetMD.

Physiologically and behaviorally, cats are built to reproduce as frequently as possible.

Pet owners must put a stop to that to protect against overpopulation and to reduce unwanted behaviors like inappropriate marking, aggression and other issues.

— By Metro Editorial Services

**While there is still some debate among veterinarians as to the best age at which to spay or neuter cats, the general consensus seems to be the earlier the better, particularly if cats have access to other cats that are not fixed.**



## Found kittens?

If you've found kittens outside, here's what to do.

START  
HERE:

Are the kittens injured or critically sick?

YES






→

Contact a local veterinary hospital or rescue in your area for assistance and recommendations.

NO

↓

ESTIMATE THE AGE OF THE KITTENS

|                                                                                    |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 0-2 WEEKS OLD                                                                      | 2-4 WEEKS OLD                                                                        | 4-6 WEEKS OLD                                                                        | 6-8 WEEKS OLD                                                                        | 8+ WEEKS OLD                                                                         |
| Eyes closed or barely open                                                         | Eyes open and alert; becoming mobile                                                 | Very mobile and often talkative; can eat food                                        | Very active and playful; around 1-2 pounds                                           | Very active and playful; 2 pounds or more                                            |

STOP!

Can you see the mom cat OR a nest?

YES ↓

DON'T KIT-NAP!

A kitten's best chance of survival is with mom. **Leave the kittens where they are.** If you want to help, make sure mom has access to shelter, food, and water. Contact a TNR group or local rescue to have mom and kittens fixed and adopted when ready.

NO ↓

ARE YOU SURE?

Mom may be off hunting or not want to come around if people are present. Watch for her to come back for a few hours.

PRO TIP: Set up a trail cam and check the footage to see if mom is caring for her kittens when people aren't around.

**If the kittens are friendly,** utilize social media and your personal network to try and place them in homes, or contact MARL and additional shelters and rescues in your area for support.

**If the kittens are not friendly,** a shelter environment is not ideal. If a foster home is not available to acclimate them to becoming household pets, trap-neuter-return (TNR) is the recommended option. Unsocialized kittens and cats can live long, healthy outdoor lives.

↑ MOM CAME BACK

↑ STILL NO MOM

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## HEALTH

# PAWS OFF! KEEP YOUR PET FROM BEING POISONED

Animals typically do not understand that certain items in their environments can be harmful. Pets' innate curiosity coupled with unique aromas produced by common household items can put them in jeopardy of potentially deadly poisoning.

According to veterinary experts at WebMD Pet Health Center, an estimated 232,000 cases of pet poisoning occur annually in the United States. In March 2022, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline fielded 22% more calls stemming from incidents of pet toxicity than in 2021.

Following are some steps pet owners can take to protect their companion animals against poisoning:

- Don't leave out human food. Dogs, cats and other animals may be lured by the sweet temptation of their owners' food. Many food scraps can be toxic to pets, including alcoholic beverages, chocolate, coffee beans, moldy foods, and raisins, among others. Keep the kitchen tidy and trash cans (indoor and outdoor) secured.

- Be careful with houseplants. While they may look beautiful and filter indoor air, certain houseplants can be toxic to pets if ingested. Before bringing any new plants into your home, check the ASPCA Toxic and Non-Toxic Plant Guide. Lilies may be pretty, but they also are quite toxic. The smallest nibble can be fatal to cats.

- Keep medications locked away. Be sure that over-the-counter and prescription medications are locked away and cannot be accessed by curious pets.

Even seemingly mild medications, like human pain relievers, can be toxic to pets.

- Be safe when spring cleaning. Keep pets out of rooms when they are being cleaned by chemical products or when using insecticides. Wait a day or more before letting pets back into the area. Store products beyond a pet's reach when they're not in use.

With diligence, a significant percentage of pet poisonings can be prevented. Pet owners should do their homework about toxic items in and around their homes and do their best to keep pets safe.

## Common pet poisons

Pet poisoning is serious and almost entirely preventable. With diligence, pet owners can keep their companion animals safe.

Various household substances and foods found in a typical house can be poisonous to pets, and such items include:

- chocolate
- grapes/raisins
- xylitol (artificial sweetener)
- alcoholic beverages
- rodenticide
- acetaminophen/ibuprofen
- antifreeze
- macadamia nuts
- onions
- houseplants
- mushrooms
- aloe
- cleaning products
- avocado
- flower bouquets
- veterinary medicines (when eaten in bulk and not used as directed)
- recreational drugs

Anyone who suspects a dog has ingested something toxic can contact their veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

Control Center at 888-426-4435 immediately.

In the event that a vet or poison control organization suggests inducing vomiting, pet owners can follow this formula for making an emetic to make dogs vomit: Hydrogen peroxide is an irritant to a dog's intestinal tract and typically works within 10 to 15 minutes of being ingested. The proper dosage, according to the American Kennel Club, is one teaspoon of 3% hydrogen peroxide per five pounds of the dog's body weight by mouth, with a maximum dose of 3 tablespoons for dogs who weigh more than 45 pounds. Only induce vomiting under the guidance of an ex-

pert and within two hours of the dog consuming the substance. Use a syringe to squirt the solution between the dog's back teeth, being careful not to let the pet inhale the substance. Do not let the dog eat the vomit, which some pets are bound to try. Vomiting can cause dehydration, so make sure the dog has plenty of access to fresh water if the vet advises no further action.

Hydrogen peroxide is not typically effective at inducing vomiting in cats, and poisoning may require further consultation with a professional health care provider.

— By Metro Editorial Services



## HEALTH

# As veterinary costs rise, people wrestle with high price of caring for their pets

Experts see more owners considering pet health insurance

By Judith Kohler  
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Julie Baxter just faced the most agonizing decision a person with pets can face: whether to euthanize an ailing animal in the face of the overwhelming desire to keep a beloved companion alive.

Baxter's pain was made all the more acute as she and her partner wrestled with wanting to do all they could for their dog Roscoe, while realizing there was a limit to how much they could spend on tests and hospital stays. The 50-pound mixed breed lived with them for eight years after his rescue off the streets as a puppy.

"My partner and I had a kind of rule that \$1,000 is where we're going to stop on vet bills," Baxter said. "It was really trying to take that pragmatic approach to how much can we spend. It stinks."

They ended up paying \$2,400 for medications, tests and trips to the emergency room, but decided against further treatment that could have been as much as \$8,000. Roscoe, diagnosed with pneumonia, died in early June.

Baxter wonders if she should have bought pet insurance at some point.

"I don't know that it would have changed the

outcome, but it certainly would have saved me at least part of the \$2,400 in vet bills," Baxter said. "It's something I wish I would've looked into because I feel like I wouldn't have been quite so backed into a corner."

Rising costs of veterinary care are helping drive an increase in the number of people who are opting for pet insurance, according to the personal finance company NerdWallet. The company reported that more than 5.6 million U.S. dogs and cats were covered by pet insurance in 2023, up 17% from the year before, according to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association.

However, the number of insured animals is just a small fraction of pets nationwide. The 2023-2024 American Pet Products Association National Pet Owners Survey said there are an estimated 65 million households with dogs and nearly 47 million households with cats.

An incentive for buying insurance is increasing pet-care expenses. The cost of veterinarian services rose 7.6% from May 2023 to May 2024, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A 10% jump in 2022 was the largest dating back two decades, The Associated Press reported.

Higher worker pay and higher costs for medical supplies, lab tests and pharmaceuticals are among the reasons for increases. Some veterinarians also blame the purchase of clinics and hospitals by large corporations for boosting prices.



HELEN H. RICHARDSON — THE DENVER POST

Veterinarian Dr. Cynthia Sweet, left, poses for a portrait after doing a senior wellness check on Maddie, a 14-year-old boxer, at Belcaro Animal Hospital in Denver on June 18.

Nearly half of the respondents to a survey by pet food and supplies online retailer Chewy said the primary reason they have wellness or insurance plans is to be able to take care of their animals if something happens to them. Katy Nelson, senior veterinarian at Chewy, said in an email that the average monthly cost for pet insurance is around \$30 for cats and \$50 for dogs.

"Doing your own research is important. There are many options out there and sometimes selecting the right plan can feel over-

whelming," Nelson said.

A number of online sites provide comparisons of different policies, including NerdWallet and PawLicy Advisor. Pre-existing conditions typically aren't covered. Some breeds of dogs, such as English and French bulldogs, are more expensive to cover because they are prone to certain health issues.

Bethany Hsia, a California veterinarian and co-founder of CodaPet, an in-home pet euthanasia service, said the trend of pet insurance has been on the

rise in recent years. She recommended that people look at a plan's exclusions, the premium costs, the percentage of expenses that are reimbursed and an insurer's reviews and reputation.

Something to keep in mind, Hsia said, is that a majority of pet insurance companies don't directly contract with vets.

"So the pet parents pay out of pocket at the time of the services to the vet and submit the itemized invoices to the insurer for reimbursement," Hsia said. "Can I afford to buy gro-

ceries next week if I pay for this right now?"

The best time to consider pet insurance is when the animal is young and healthy, Hsia said. In any case, she suggested reviewing different options.

"It's good to have that peace of mind where you have the ability to do something in an emergency situation and you know that those finances are going to be reimbursed," Hsia said. "It means the world when you're sitting there looking into the eyes of your beloved pet."

## HEALTH

# Know the warning signs of illness in four common household pets

If pets could speak, caring for them would be that much easier. But pet owners must rely on physical cues to determine if their beloved pets are doing well or feeling under the weather.

Various animals display different symptoms when they are not feeling well or suffering from illness. It is important for pet owners to become familiar with what is “normal” for their pets so that they can readily identify behaviors or symptoms indicative of illness. Keep in mind that symptoms that would indicate illness in one pet may not do the same with other animals. That is why it is key to establish a baseline.

According to Dr. Mark Stickney, director of general surgery services at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, any change in a pet’s behavior from what is normal is reason to consult a veterinarian.

This generalized symptom list may give pet owners pause to speak with a vet about the health of their furry friends.

## Cats

Cats will spit up on occasion, particularly if they have been grooming themselves and have to pass a hairball. Cats who roam outdoors may gobble down a kill and later vomit back up indigestible parts, like feathers or fur. But frequent vomiting may be indicative of a food allergy or intolerance. Sometimes it may be the symptom of gastric irritation from parasites like roundworms. It is difficult to gauge if cats are ill because they can be so stoic. Blood in vomit or feces, decreased activity, straining to urinate, or urinating in inappropriate places can be signs of illness in cats.

## Dogs

Dogs are a little better than cats at conveying illness. Generally speaking, normally upbeat and boisterous dogs who are now lethargic and uninterested in interaction are probably sick. Fetch by WebMD says disinterest in food for several days, vomiting, diarrhea or changes in urination might indicate illness. Quite often pet owners do not discover their dogs are suffering from diabetes until they have to frequently refill water bowls and their normally trained pets start urinating inside the home.

## Hamsters

According to The Spruce: Pets, common signs of illness or injury in hamsters include inactivity, huddling in a corner, unkempt coat, discharge from the nose or eyes, wetness around the tail, or hair loss. Bring the hamster in for a checkup if it exhibits any of these symptoms.

## Lizards

Determining if your pet lizard is sick can be challenging since lizards (and most reptiles) have such slow metabolisms that, when they get sick, they often do not show signs of illness until a disease has progressed. Different species have varying nutritional requirements and light requirements. They also have their own specific temperature and humidity needs. PetMD says lack of appetite, fewer droppings, lethargy with hiding under bedding, sunken eyes, sticky mucus in the mouth, and weight loss (particularly thinning of the tail) are signs a lizard may be sick.

— By Metro Editorial Services



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## HEALTH

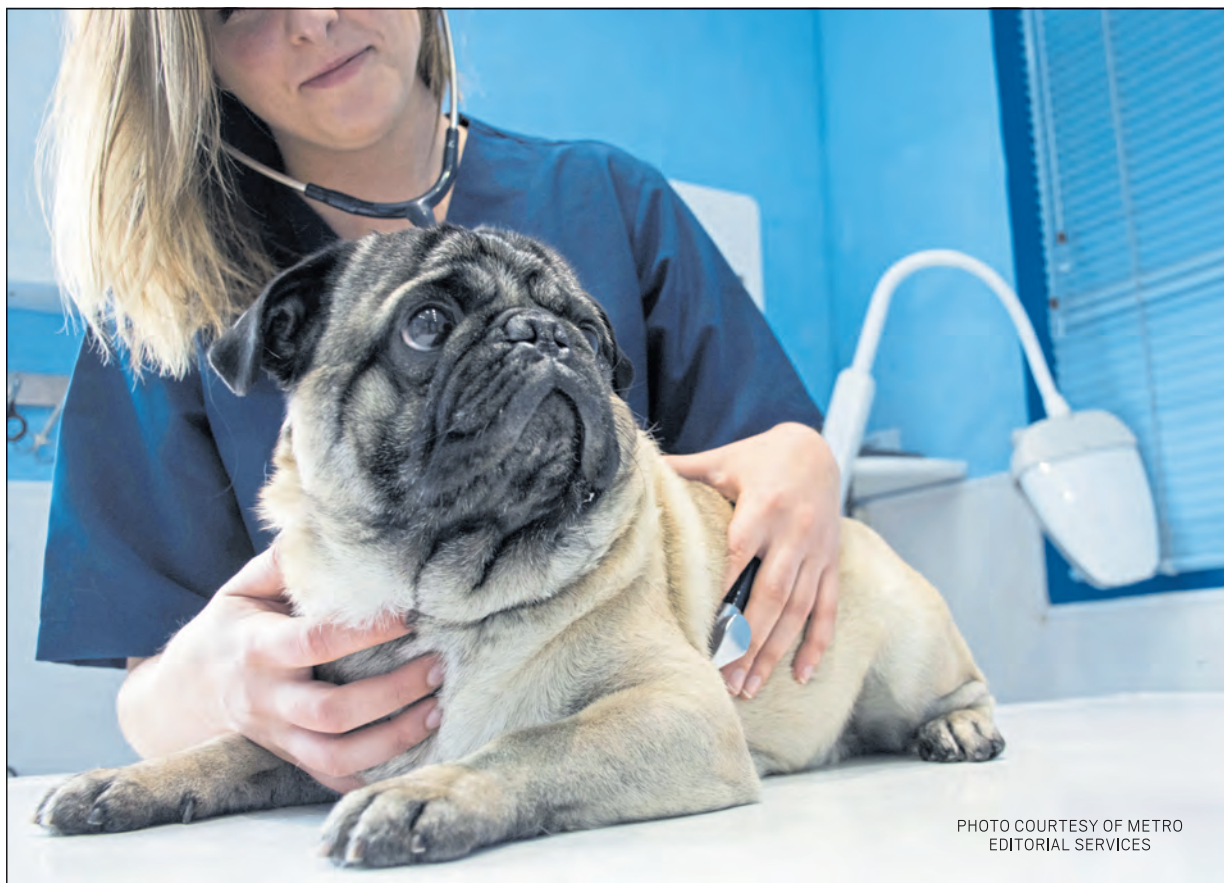


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO EDITORIAL SERVICES

## HEARTWORM: WHAT IS IT? HOW BEST TO DETECT AND PREVENT IT?

Nutritious diets and routine visits to a veterinarian are two ways to keep pets healthy. Pet owners also can educate themselves about various conditions that can adversely affect their pets' health, including heartworm.

### What is heartworm?

The American Heartworm Society notes heartworm is a potentially fatal disease caused by foot-long worms that can live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels of affected pets. A pet affected by heartworm can develop severe lung disease, heart failure and organ damage.

### Are all pets vulnerable to heartworm?

The American Veterinary Medical Association reports that heartworm primarily infects dogs, cats and ferrets.

However, wild animals like foxes and wolves also can be infected, as can animals like raccoons and opossums that many people see in their backyards and local parks.

The AVMA notes that heartworm is spread from animal to animal via mosquitoes, which can easily get into homes, potentially biting pets, including indoor house cats.

Humans also have been infected with heartworm, though the AVMA notes such instances are rare.

### Is heartworm preventable?

The good news for pet owners and their pets is that heartworm is entirely preventable.

Various preventive medicines are available, and pet owners can speak with their veterinarians to determine which product is best for their pets.

Pet owners who suspect their

pets are infected with heartworm should report those suspicions to their veterinarians immediately.

### Heartworm and dogs

The AHS notes dogs are a natural host for heartworms. Heartworms that live inside a dog can mature into adults and even mate and produce offspring while inside the dog.

Numbers increase if the dog is not treated for heartworm.

Even if a dog is treated, the effects of heartworm infection can linger after the worms are gone, contributing to lasting damage to the heart, lungs and arteries.

Symptoms of heartworm infection in dogs may not manifest early on.

The AHS notes that it's more likely symptoms will develop the longer the infection persists. Such symptoms may include:

- A mild, persistent cough
- Reluctance to exercise

- Fatigue after moderate activity

- Decreased appetite

- Weight loss

According to the AHM, active dogs, dogs with heavy heartworm infections or those with additional health problems frequently exhibit pronounced clinical signs.

### Heartworm and cats

The AVMA notes diagnosis of heartworm in cats is more difficult than it is with dogs.

Unlike dogs, cats are not natural hosts for heartworms, and the AHS reports most worms in cats do not make it to the adult stage. In fact, many cats with heartworm have no adult worms.

That contributes to the difficulty of diagnosis, and it does not protect cats against harmful side effects of heartworm, including a condition known as heartworm associated respiratory disease (HARD).

The AHS notes that signs of heartworm in cats can be subtle or very dramatic.

Sadly, the AHS also reports that the first sign of heartworm in some cases is the sudden collapse or sudden death of the cat. If cats exhibit symptoms, those signs may include:

- Coughing
- Attacks that mimic an asthma attack

- Periodic vomiting
- Lack of appetite
- Weight loss
- Difficulty walking
- Fainting or seizures
- Fluid accumulation in the abdomen

Heartworm poses a potentially serious threat to cats and dogs. Pet owners are urged to speak with their veterinarians about heartworm prevention and what to do if a pet becomes infected.

— By Metro Editorial Services

# PET WORD SEARCH

K M K V N Q V E T E R I N A R I A N Y B  
 L G N I M O O R G D L F K E D R U W T O  
 O V I H S A E L H Y F W S N H E P A R W  
 N N D R I B W B Z W O P B Z O T E O N L  
 M C P E L B B I K F O G S T R T C S F S  
 D C Z I P T A F E N G N N A T I D O C Z  
 M L Z N U R U N S C N H O N E L O C R F  
 Z E A B U R C I I I I C I K I D S G A I  
 B V L Y R E B N H Q D A T Y C S I S T L  
 Q A I Y M I S R R A D T A R M P T V E T  
 S R A R L U A Q H P E O Z I A O Z N T E  
 R G T I R L I Y R Y B F I E R S H O Z R  
 W L T A L A R R P V S Y N E I Z Y R Z P  
 I Y N O L E F U A S P I U B L S E Q T A  
 Y C C D T I P C T U U D M R D T O E B M  
 E G V A Y R C E S G Q H M Y S Q R U F H  
 Y F W O D E P E U T A A I M Y R P I W N  
 C E A O G O M B N W P K A Y E U S Y R A  
 R Q A A I B G K R S H H M F M H W P E L  
 H H C R E P C E F C E C O M P A N I O N

## WORDS

AQUARIUM  
 BEDDING  
 BIRD  
 BOWLS  
 CAGE  
 CAT  
 COLLAR  
 COMPANION  
 CRATE  
 DOG  
 FENCE  
 FERRET  
 FILTER  
 FISH  
 FOOD  
 FURRY  
 GRAVEL  
 GROOMING  
 GUINEA PIG  
 HAMSTER  
 IMMUNIZATIONS  
 INSURANCE  
 KIBBLE  
 LEASH  
 LICENSE  
 LITTER  
 PERCH  
 PETS  
 RESPONSIBILITY  
 SEED  
 STORE  
 TAIL  
 TANK  
 TOYS  
 VETERINARIAN  
 WATER

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

# PET CARE WORD SEARCH

G R B N V P E E C N E N I T N O C N I Y  
 C D X C B E C L T G V C X F N O C W P U  
 R N E A X G N E A D A L X L A U N N A M  
 X K T N N N E E V T B I E S A F X Y I M  
 I V K I V I I K K I I I T Y E I L P M L  
 K E E N E T D B M O T N W E L L N E S S  
 P H O E W T E F T O O A E D S D M I A D  
 E I T B P A B R B N B P T G B K V L Y S  
 L L D R I M O W Y V F U M N N R C B F O  
 F X F G D H Y D R A T E R A E O C I T A  
 C L I P P E R S I T U K L T H V C D T N  
 R E X A M I N A T I O N W C B S E N K F  
 G F U A I S A L P S Y D P I H T E R C M  
 L R G F X S G C L P O W H W N H N E P V  
 V O O O H V Y G N I N A E L C E I X H U  
 S X N O F P G M Y E A V H D Y R L G U F  
 R S C A M R R C C S Y H F Y W A E W C R  
 B K T L I I N U T R I T I O N P F D D N  
 V B D F C L N K C H R O N I C Y H D Y N  
 B O H K U C S G M S F R P H A V Y S W S

## WORDS

ANNUAL  
 CANINE  
 CHRONIC  
 CLEANING  
 CLIPPERS  
 CONGENITAL  
 EXAMINATION  
 FELINE  
 FLEAS  
 GAIT  
 GROOMING  
 HIP DYSPLASIA  
 HYDRATE  
 INCONTINENCE  
 MATTING  
 NAILS  
 NUTRITION  
 OBEDIENCE  
 PREVENTATIVE  
 SHAMPOO  
 SHOCK  
 THERAPY  
 TICKS  
 WELLNESS

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

**PUZZLE ANSWERS  
 ON PAGE 47**

PUZZLES COURTESY OF METRO  
 EDITORIAL SERVICES

## SAFE & SOUND PET WORD SEARCH

O N I A T N O C A F D T R L R E T H F D  
 C G A C S N Y N C F E N C E V R G R H S  
 H O M R N H A N P M D S P I L S E U S N  
 B A L B B T S L N A D T G V R T G R L O  
 D S T L U L E F W A E B V Y L S F T O L  
 Y E I F A S F R N U B T T E I M P G C N  
 A R H I P R G F A P M V H L I I Y G A A  
 H V L C U I E I E C E S A L H T S G T I  
 B S T E T Y H D R S O L B S S Y N A E R  
 Y A Y B R A I C U E E T R O E O I O W A  
 D O G N P A L C O A T E L N U O B B L N  
 V N U O R D H Y S R N S A G G U T S C I  
 N D F I E W S H I W C V I O R E G H S R  
 C Y S N C Y E S O C B I C G B V E B P E  
 L I B A A W C F S B V L M T E A U R D T  
 P I Y P U R U M T M I S A R L R O P S E  
 T W R M T S R R U V I C B T S T P I M V  
 W T D O I S I A A B N V H F E R S B M B  
 Y E F C O M T S P R R I F C O D T T M L  
 P W B W N B Y V T I G V T F V U A R F G

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

### WORDS

CARE  
 CAT  
 COLLARED  
 COMPANION  
 CONTAIN  
 DOG  
 FENCE  
 HEALTH  
 EMBEDDED  
 LATCHED  
 LEASH  
 LOCATE  
 LOST  
 MICROCHIP  
 OWNERSHIP  
 PRECAUTION  
 PROTECT  
 REGISTER  
 SECURITY  
 SHELTER  
 VETERINARIAN

## GOOD DOG WORD SEARCH

S O H T C R A T E A B A S S G R A R C L  
 D O O V I N O I P M A H C L S R W U P U  
 Y M K C L G M R I C B B B Y K A A W N D  
 E D T O B I O Y L L E B E E V P U A E G  
 D A E N M N V O B Y B C U K A Y H V U H  
 G V P K M V P D U A A Y I I T R P R T W  
 I S H E C E K S R G R T A I L K D W E D  
 H K A C A O E K R A V V L N C A D Y R A  
 C U Y A S Y D B N W R I S I G B V I Y R  
 R B M P L B E I G U G G K T B A I V C K  
 O R W E I C R L M A W D B H Y L B N I M  
 U I D G B E D R D I B L A Y I A A S B D  
 P N M E T H D Y T E W V M L T N B N I V  
 K D B E E O T H T V Y I V E A C V V T D  
 M L V U G R E B U T L P U M S E W O H S  
 N E G D L R B Y E H D U L Y G D P Y R R  
 G E U G S C U T M B O Y P E N I N A C O  
 I H O D N D H O C K S P B S I O M C S I  
 I U E V G R E S G R Y V R W Y A P S E P  
 B G G K T D E U P U L H L H U D K B P N

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

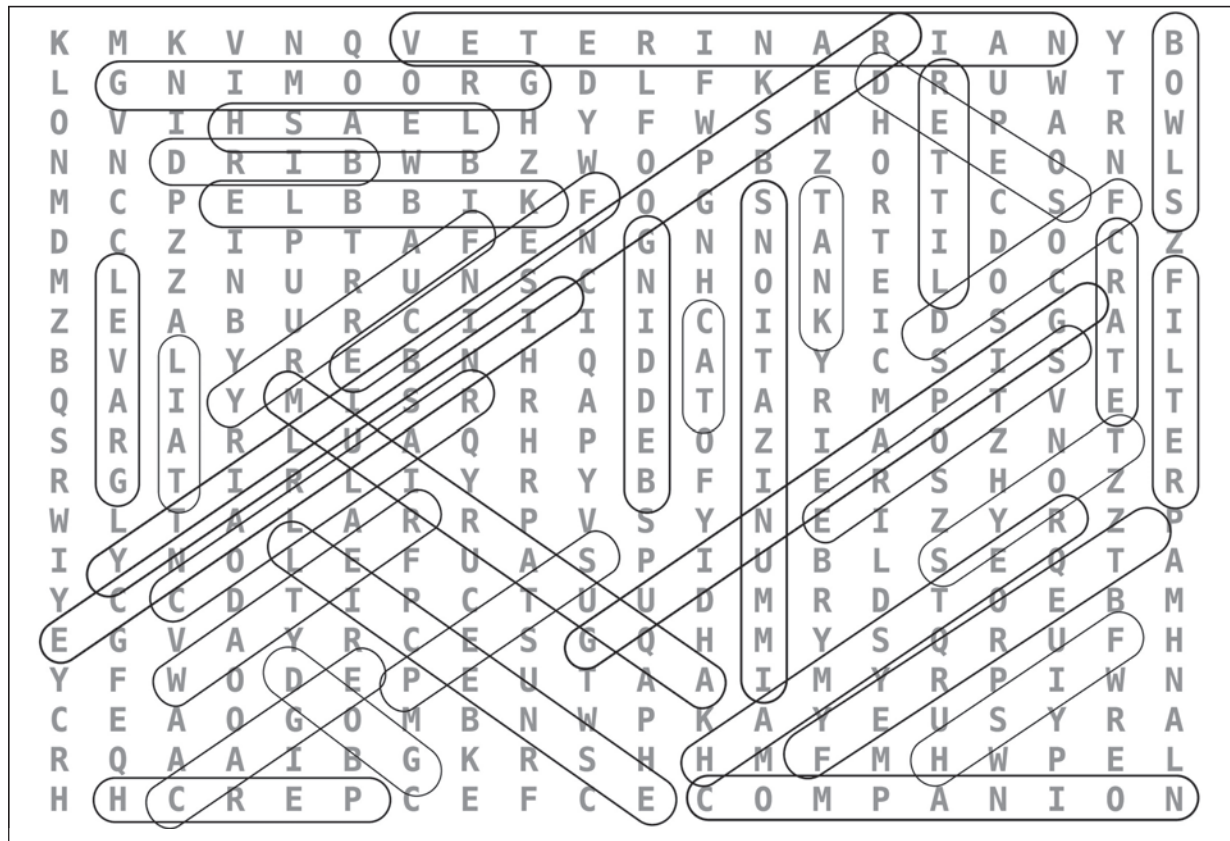
### WORDS

AGILITY  
 APRON  
 BALANCE  
 BARK  
 BEARD  
 BELLY  
 BREED  
 BRINDLE  
 CANINE  
 CAPE  
 CHAMPION  
 CLUB  
 CRATE  
 CROUP  
 DOCKED  
 DOG  
 HOCKS  
 NEUTER  
 PET  
 SHOW  
 SPAY  
 TAIL  
 VETERINARY  
 WITHERS

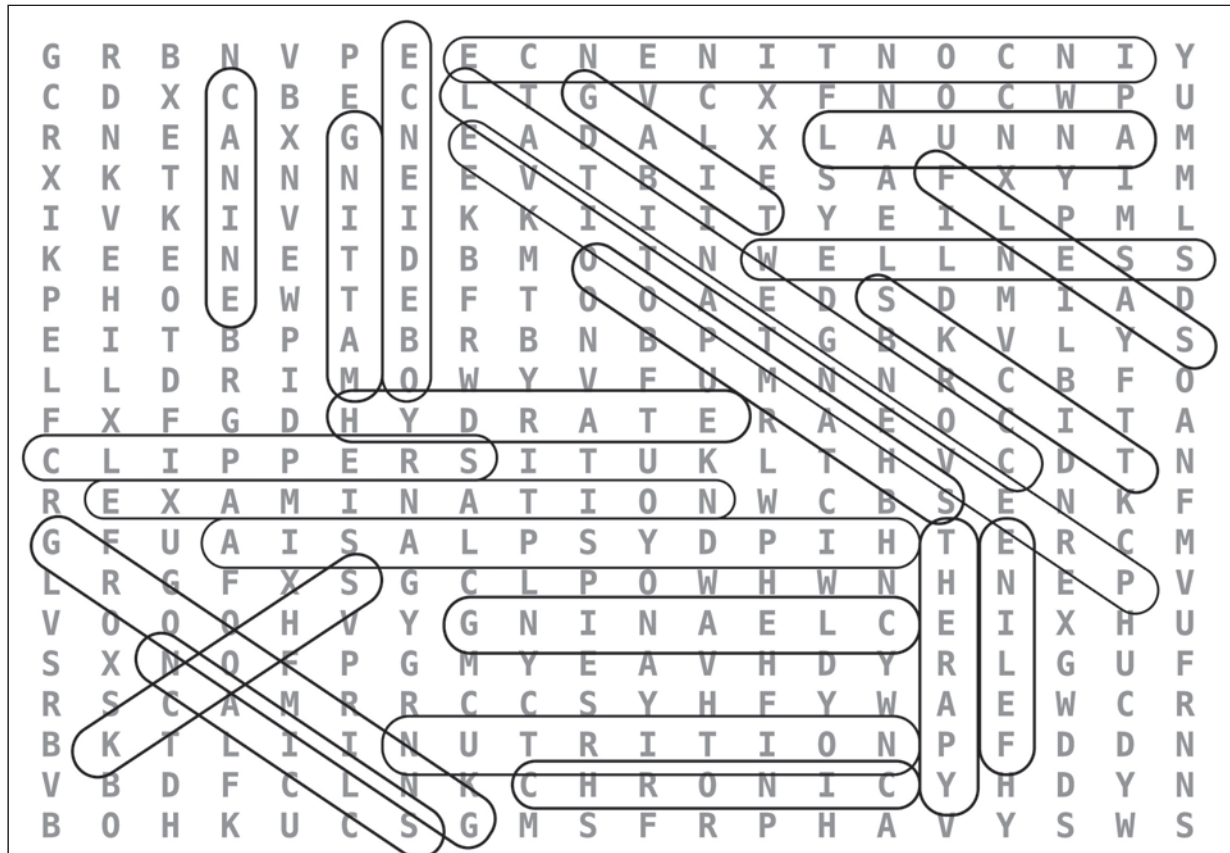
**PUZZLE ANSWERS  
 ON PAGE 48**

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PET WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



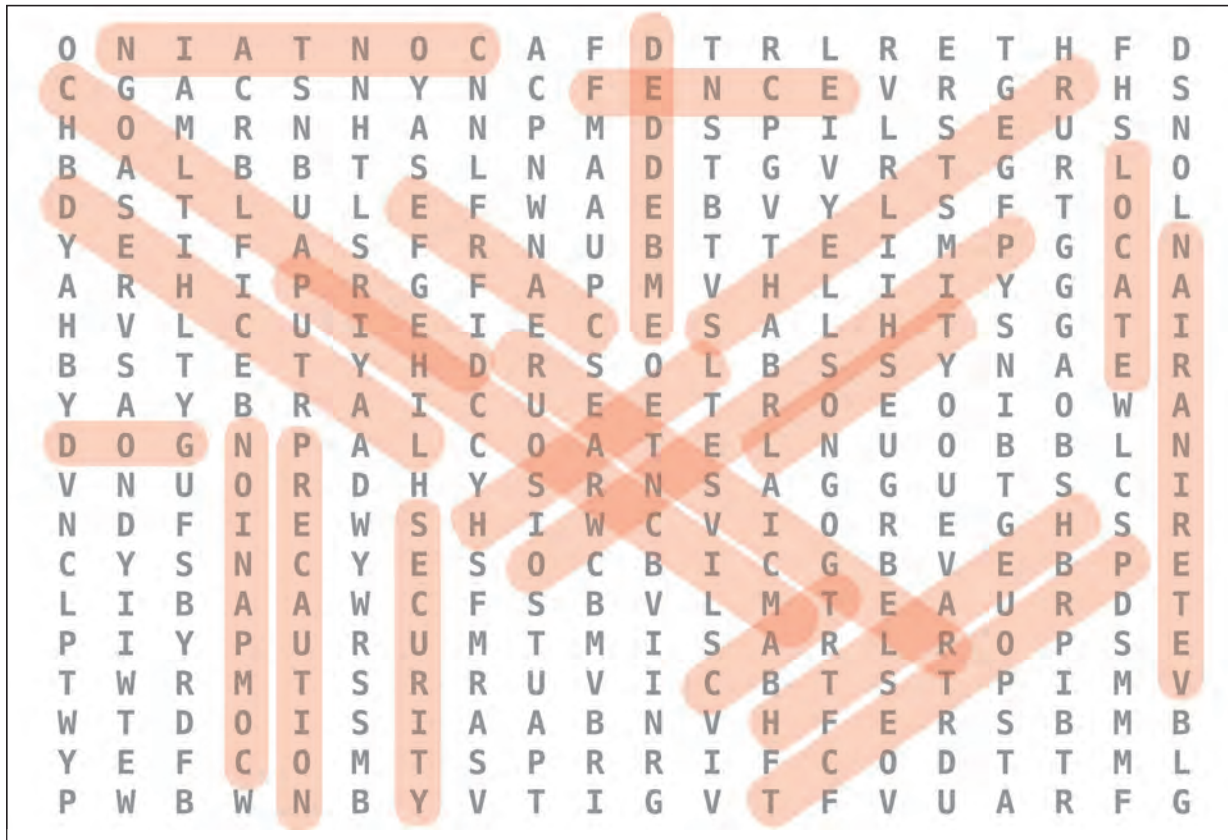
PET CARE WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



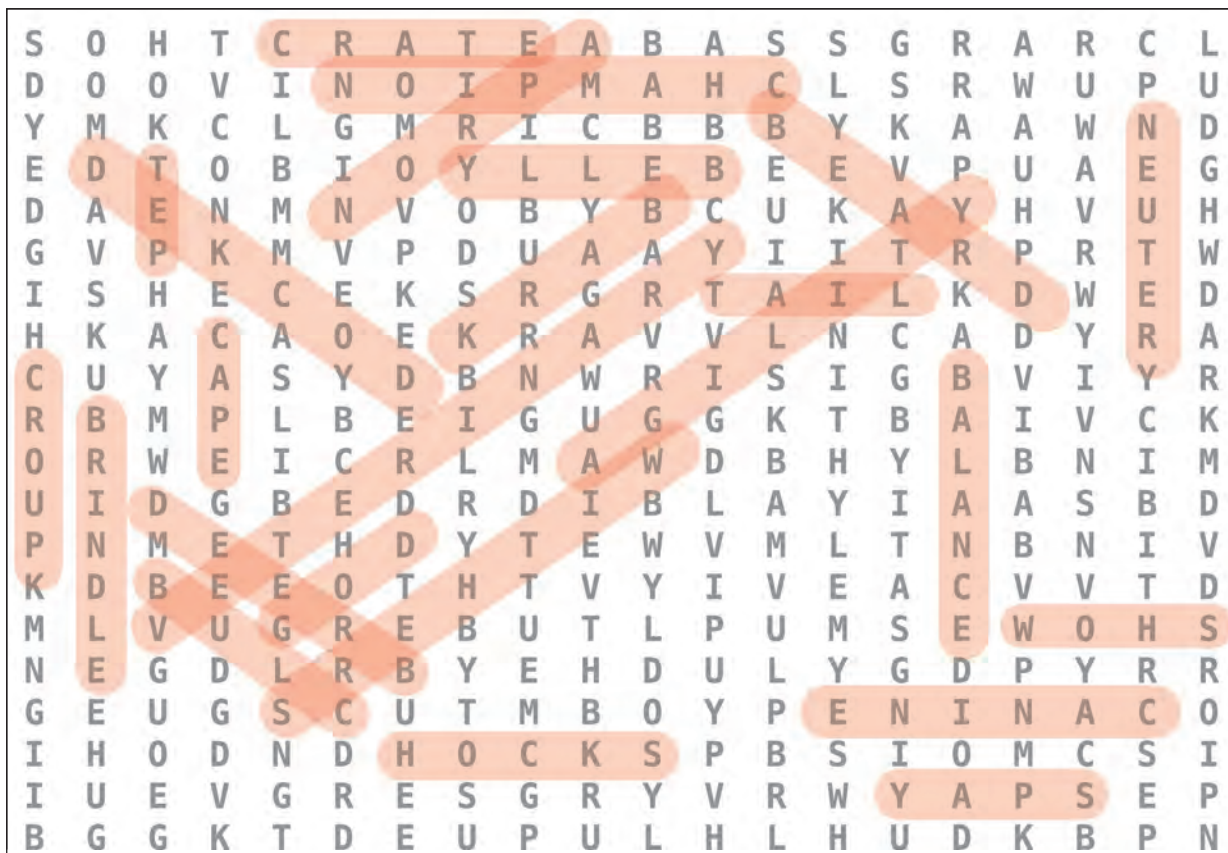
PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PAGE 45

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SAFE & SOUND WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



GOOD DOG WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



PUZZLE ANSWERS  
FOR PAGE 46

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