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SHARPE



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Welcome to a new season!

It's probably the cusp of springtime as you read this, but publishing timelines mean we're still thawing out from the late January snow as I write these words. Sunny, warm days can't come soon enough, and we'll welcome them with open arms.

The silver lining of a snow day is the extra time for watching TV, and I've recently discovered the delight of PBS's "All Creatures Great and Small" at the recommendation of our publisher, Casey Daves. I finished every available episode in record time. You could call it binge-watching, but with the beloved author and veterinarian James Alfred Wight (character and pen name James Herriot) as the focus, I like to think of it as professional development and research. Set in a Yorkshire Dales farming town banding together during perilous WWII-era times, the story is a heartwarming reminder of the power of community and compassion, especially when today's headlines often push us toward division.

I see reflections of our own pet community in the show's characters. Sister Rose, a nurse, fosters dogs until they find loving homes. Herriot remarks that it must be hard for her to let them go. "Oh, no, they're all still with me up here," she replies, pointing to her head. "I know they are going to leave me from the moment I take them in. They depend on me for a while, but sooner or later, they have to stand on their own. It's the natural order of things."

So it is. That natural order is at the heart of fostering: one chapter closes so another can begin, much like the quiet shift from winter to spring. In this issue's "Why I Foster" series, a local foster parent shares her personal motivation for caring for the most helpless and vulnerable, whelping mothers and their puppies.

We've also included a piece honoring the loyalty of working canines in recognition of National K-9 Veterans Day. It spotlights our local K-9 police heroes who serve, protect and put in the work alongside their human partners.

As always, this issue is filled with timely stories to entertain, educate and inform. More than that, we hope it serves as a reminder of the ties that bind us and the quiet good that lives inside every new beginning.

Warm regards,
Anna Holton-Dean

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Providing Tulsa pet owners with a one-stop resource for local products, services and information.

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- 1** NOHS NATIONAL REGIONAL (Friday)
- 2** NATIONAL OWNER HANDLED SERIES
- 3** JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP
- 3** 4-6 MONTH BEGINNER PUPPY
- 1** BEST BRED-BY EXHIBITOR COMPETITION (Saturday)
- 1** SANCTIONED B MATCH — ALL BREED, MISC. & FSS (Thursday)
- 2** OBEDIENCE AND RALLY SHOW N' GO (Wednesday & Thursday)
- 1** BEST PUPPY COMPETITION (Friday)
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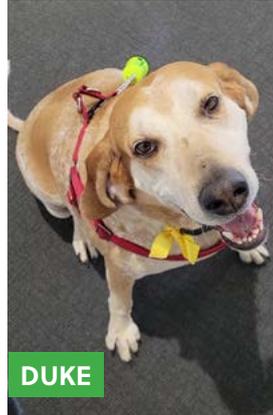
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STORMY & BILLY

‘Lessons from Cats for Surviving Fascism’ by Stewart Reynolds

Review by KILEY ROBERSON

CATS HAVE ALWAYS acted like they know something we don’t, and in “Lessons from Cats for Surviving Fascism,” it turns out they actually do. With this playful and surprisingly timely guide, author and comedian Stewart Reynolds shows us how our feline companions have mastered the art of staying unbothered, resilient and quietly powerful in a world that often feels chaotic.

Rather than offering a political treatise, Reynolds uses cats as a playful and unexpectedly insightful lens for examining how humans can maintain hope, personal integrity and emotional resilience when society feels chaotic. Through short chapters, quirky drawings and the unmistakable voice of someone who both adores cats and deeply understands their unintentionally wise nature, the book feels like a lengthy conversation with a very funny friend who also happens to have a point.

Each chapter highlights a specific cat behavior — ignoring unnecessary drama, setting firm boundaries, choosing comfort without guilt, strategically napping, asserting one’s needs unapologetically — then gently connects it to how humans might adopt similar traits to navigate stressful environments. Reynolds doesn’t pretend cats are moral heroes. In fact, some of their behaviors are framed with affectionate honesty: cats can be indifferent, demanding, aloof or selectively loving. But Reynolds argues that within those characteristics is a blueprint for emotional self-preservation. If cats can thrive by refusing to absorb chaos that isn’t theirs, maybe we can too.

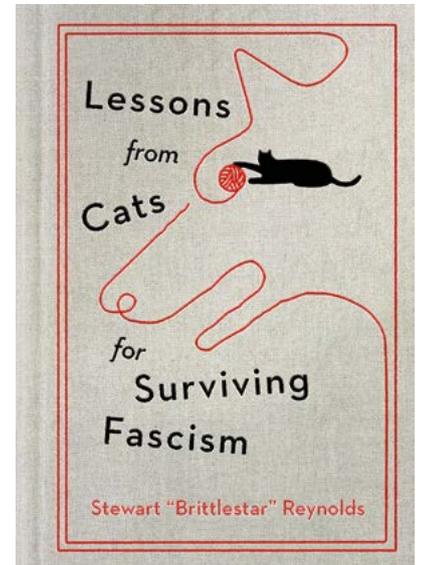
One of the book’s strengths is Reynolds’ ability to balance humor with sincerity. He uses absurdity not as an escape but as an accessible doorway to talking

about subjects like fear, collective anxiety and the importance of staying grounded when the world feels unstable. The result is a book that genuinely makes you laugh while also reminding you to breathe, reconnect and protect your peace.

Anyone who has ever lived with, or been ruled by, a cat will recognize the truths woven throughout the pages. The cartoon-style illustrations add charm and make the book an easy, engaging read. It’s the kind of title you can devour in one sitting or leave on your coffee table to pick up whenever you need a few minutes of reprieve.

Though humorous, the book carries a deeper message — resilience doesn’t always require heroic action. Sometimes it looks like resting, choosing joy, refusing to internalize negativity or walking away from nonsense with the same regal indifference our feline companions have already mastered. In a world that often pulls us toward outrage or exhaustion, Reynolds’ feline-inspired survival manual offers reassurance that small, intentional behaviors can help us stay grounded and hopeful.

“Lessons from Cats for Surviving Fascism” succeeds because it is both funny and earnest, lighthearted and quietly empowering. While the book is quite clean for a satire piece, it is categorized as adult nonfiction humor and satire, and its political themes and nuance make it best suited for mature teen readers and adults. Whether you’re a devoted cat person, a fan of Reynolds’ comedy, or simply someone seeking a fresh (and furry) perspective on navigating modern life, this book is a charming and surprisingly insightful addition to your reading list. 🐾



**If cats can
thrive by
refusing to
absorb chaos
that isn’t
theirs, maybe
we can too.**

Food-Delivery Toys for Dogs

But cats might enjoy them too! by MARY GREEN



TRAINING TIP

Food-delivery toys can help your dog learn to settle and self-regulate.

ONE OFTEN OVERLOOKED skill in dog training is teaching dogs how to settle, self-regulate and relax on their own. Perhaps your dog was crated all day while you were at work and now needs something to do, or you want to enjoy a book or a program without interruption from a pestering pup. Food-delivery toys are one of our favorite tools for building this essential life skill in a positive, enriching way.

What Is a Food-Delivery Toy?

A food-delivery toy is different from a traditional chew toy. It's a safe, interac-

tive vessel that can be filled with kibble or soft, tasty foods. Instead of eating quickly from a bowl, your dog must work to access the food, encouraging calm focus, problem-solving and emotional regulation.

Food-delivery toys are mostly used during crate time or other managed confinement. However, I find that many dogs enjoy a stuffed food toy in the company of their human companion. Food-delivery toys are also a useful tool when traveling, helping alleviate boredom when physical exercise is limited.

Using Food-Delivery Toys with Puppies

For puppies, we like to follow the Rule of Threes:

- One-third hand-fed during training in short, fun sessions throughout the day.
- One-third fed from a bowl.
- One-third delivered through a food-delivery toy during confinement (crate or kennel time).

Everyday Benefits

Food-delivery toys provide appropriate enrichment when you need your dog to settle calmly, whether daily or occasionally. When it is too cold or rainy to go for a walk or play outdoors, a food-delivery toy is just the thing to keep him content and busy.

Cooperative Care & Husbandry

Food-delivery toys — especially Licki-Mats — are excellent for nail trims, baths and grooming. Licking has a calming effect and supports cooperative care.

Safety note: Smearing food on yourself to distract your dog is unsafe and not recommended, no matter what you have seen on the internet!

Snuffle Mats & Slow Feeders

Snuffle mats and snuffle balls encourage natural foraging behavior and are especially helpful for dogs who eat too fast. These tools are not designed for chewing and should be supervised.

Multi-Dog Households & Resource Guarding

- Use food toys only when dogs are separated.
- Pick up toys immediately when empty.
- If guarding occurs, remove the dog from the toy — never the toy from the dog. (Many dogs will fiercely guard an empty food-delivery toy.)

Food-delivery toys support calm behavior, independence and emotional well-being as part of a balanced enrichment plan. PAW

Mary Green is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer Knowledge Assessed (CP-DT-KA), Certified Dog Behavior Counselor (CDBC), and Certified Nose Work Instructor (CNWI) at K9 Manners & More in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Top 5 Food-Delivery Toy Stuffing Recipes

1 Classic Calm Combo

- Kibble (soaked) mixed with canned pumpkin or unsweetened applesauce
- Gentle, simple and great for everyday use

2 Power Protein Mash

- Canned dog food or cooked turkey/chicken with a splash of water
- High value without being overly rich

3 Yogurt Berry Freeze

- Plain Greek yogurt mixed with mashed blueberries or strawberries
- Cooling and long-lasting when frozen

4 Peanut Butter Puzzle

- Xylitol-free peanut butter mixed with kibble or crushed dog biscuits
- Sticky texture increases engagement time

5 Leftover Treasure Hunt

- Small amounts of dog-safe leftovers mixed with kibble
- Adds variety while reducing waste

PREP & STORAGE TIPS

- Prepare multiple toys at once and freeze.
- Plug openings before freezing to slow access.
- Always supervise new foods and toys.





SAYSI

Saysi is a male red and white tabby with an estimated birthdate of 1/20/2023. He needs a home with adults or children who will play with him, allow him to sleep in their bedroom, and provide him with plenty of attention day and night. He may do better with a puppy than with another cat.

There are also other kitties here to look at too!



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Tripod Tippy

A little dog with
big resilience

by Anna Holton-Dean

Photos courtesy of Tonya Mason

TONYA AND STEVE MASON were not looking for a new pet when a special-needs rescue found his way into their lives.

Their daughter Abby had recently attended an adoption event for Skiatook Paws and Claws Animal Rescue after more than 300 dogs were rescued from a bad breeder. When Abby learned the Goldendoodle she hoped to adopt had already found a family, the rescue took her information in case another dog became available.

Less than 24 hours later, Abby received a call saying they had another Doodle, and she could meet the foster mom to pick him

up. “We all loaded up and met the foster mom right away to pick up the dog who had been rescued from the breeder,” Tonya recalls. “We were told that his paw was broken, but that it didn’t seem to bother him. However, once we brought him home and placed him in the yard, it was clear something was very wrong — he could barely walk. We immediately contacted Paws and Claws, who advised us to take him to the Catoosa Animal Hospital.”

The vet examined him and delivered devastating news: the dog’s leg needed to be amputated. The Doodle had to stay overnight for evaluation, and the diagnosis

was confirmed. He received his amputation and neuter surgery all at once.

“He was so small, scared and confused. It broke our hearts to leave this poor little fella there,” Tonya says. “When we picked him up after surgery, it was incredibly emotional. He looked exhausted, disoriented and frightened. I remember my daughter crying when she saw him.”

The Masons brought the 8-month-old pup home to begin healing, but he still didn’t have a name. “Tippy” was the perfect fit since the little tripod would often tip over as he learned to balance on three legs.

Within a few weeks, Tippy was no longer a foster but family. “We officially adopted him, knowing he had already taught us far more about resilience, love and courage than we ever expected,” Tonya says.

Following a life of neglect, Tippy’s first day with the family included leg amputation and neuter surgery. They anticipated a difficult recovery period, yet Tippy never once complained.

“We were stunned when he stood up and walked almost immediately after we brought him home,” Tonya says. “Even knowing he must have been in tremendous pain, Tippy pressed on with quiet strength. Our hearts ached for him, but his resilience amazed us. After spending the first eight months of his life with four legs, he patiently learned how to walk — and then run — on three, proving just how determined he truly was.”



Tippy, one week post-surgery.

Tippy runs and walks differently than other dogs — and requires assistance getting on and off the couch since he can’t jump — but it doesn’t slow him down or dampen his spirit.

“His back leg swings out to the side when he runs, and he looks like a little low rider. It is so cute!” Tonya says.

“He can almost keep up with all his cousins, and even when he loses his balance, he pops right back up. Nothing keeps him down.”

Apart from missing a leg, Tippy is just like other dogs with the typical quirks, cute habits, likes and dislikes. He loves fetch, chase and morning naps, of course.

“He loves when we get home and almost jumps in our arms,” Tonya says. “He loves putting his ball under the couch and then barks until you retrieve it (he can be a micromanager). He loves going places but hates car rides. He is always so excited to

go but seems anxious in the car unless he is sitting on the driver’s lap.”

He also hates the vet, understandably. “He does have a good reason to hate the vet,” Tonya adds. “He was traumatized, so now when we pull up to the vet his little body shakes uncontrollably. He gets the cats in every night at the same time and makes sure they are safe in the garage and fed. If he won’t come in, all you have to say is, ‘Tippy, let’s get a treat,’ and he comes sprinting.”

While the Masons will never know the extent of Tippy’s neglect, they rest in the fact that he never has to worry about mistreatment again. “We just love Tippy and are so smitten,” Tonya says. “He brings so much joy to our family. We never thought we would have a dog with three legs, let alone a Poodle, but God brought us together. He is our miracle. He knew we needed each other, especially after losing our sweet Lewie who blessed us for 12 years.”

The family hopes Tippy’s story can inspire others to consider special-needs pets.

“A special-needs dog can show us how strong we can be when we face tough times or have things that make us different,” Tonya says. “You can become a dog’s hero by adopting them. In the end, they will end up blessing you more.”

If Tippy could speak, he would tell you he is now living his best life and that strength often comes from imperfections, Tonya says. “He would also tell you he loves people, food, treats and his family.” 🐾



Tippy with his cousins at Christmas.



Tonya and Tippy.



Welcome, Spring!

Spring brings longer days, fresh routines and more time spent outdoors together, a welcome return after the colder months. It also comes with seasonal hazards, changing weather and a few reminders worth noting. This spring spread rounds up a mix of ideas, from recipes and pet-friendly outings to grooming tips, seasonal gear and safety notes, to help you welcome the season with a fresh start.

Treat Time

Chocolate may be off-limits, but Fido and Fluffy will leap for joy over these pet-friendly delights.

CARROT & APPLE DOG BISCUITS

Celebrate spring with a crunchy, healthy snack your dog will love. Made with wholesome carrots and apples, these biscuits are easy to bake and perfect for bright, sunny days.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup grated carrot
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 egg

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix all ingredients into a dough.
3. Roll out and cut into shapes or small squares.
4. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
5. Bake 20–25 minutes until golden and firm.
6. Let cool completely before serving.
7. Store in an airtight container for up to one week or freeze for longer freshness. Perfect for training rewards or a weekend snack!



CATNIP "SPRING ROLLS"

Brighten your cat's day with these easy, homemade catnip toys. Quick to assemble and packed with irresistible catnip, they'll have your kitty rolling into spring fun.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup catnip
- 2 small fabric squares (cotton or felt)
- Needle and thread or fabric glue

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sprinkle catnip in the center of the fabric square.
2. Roll the fabric into a small cylinder.
3. Secure edges with stitching or glue.
4. Shake gently to distribute catnip.
5. Toss to your cat and watch the fun!
6. Supervise playtime the first time to ensure safety. Catnip toys can be refreshed by adding a pinch of catnip as needed.



Pet-Friendly Outings

DOG PLAY DAYS AT THE GATHERING PLACE

With warmer weather and sunshine, spring offers plenty of opportunities to explore Tulsa with your four-legged companion in tow.

Tulsa's Gathering Place welcomes leashed dogs on designated Dog Play Days, held Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Dogs can enjoy walking paths and grassy areas alongside their owners while exploring the park. Dogs are not allowed inside buildings or play areas, and owners are responsible for cleanup, so don't forget the poop bags and water.



TULSA IRISHFEST GOES TO THE DOGS

The 6th Annual Tulsa IrishFest returns March 13-15, 2026, at its new location: Cabin Boys Brewery at 7th and Utica. The dog-friendly celebration welcomes leashed pups to join in St. Paddy's Day fun.

The brewery's taproom always welcomes dogs and offers water bowls and treats on request. A festival vendor will have doggy swag on hand, including leashes, bandanas and dog treats. Live music, food and Irish flair make it an easy St. Patrick's weekend stop for pet lovers.



Spring Flowers & April Showers

Spring flowers and April showers call for toys and gear that are ready for both sunshine and puddles.

PETSHOP BY FRINGE STUDIO IN FULL BLOOM DOG TOY PLUSH

\$14.99 | Southern Agriculture

The "In Full Bloom" plushie is built to last through the toughest play dates. Made with chew resistant interior materials, extra durable binding, crazy crinkle paper and a super loud squeaker, this unfilled toy was designed with extended playtime in mind.



BLUEBERRY PET — SUNSHINE YELLOW 3M REFLECTIVE DOG RAINCOAT HOODED

\$15.99 | Southern Agriculture

Protect your pup's skin and fur from the spring elements in the Blueberry Pet doggie raincoat, also available in pink, orange and blue. Its durable PA coating is water repellent and 100% adorable.



NAKED DECOR "AT HOME WITH DOGS"

UMBRELLA \$28.99

Southern Agriculture

Rainy walks are more enjoyable with this stylish, 44-inch-diameter umbrella, complete with an automatic open-and-close feature to keep you dry and smiling.



HOT PINK FLOWERS BANDANA

\$20 | Dog Dish

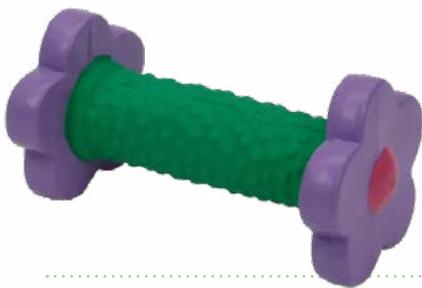
Bright pink is having a moment, and your pup can join the party! This vibrant bandana features a floral fabric design, made from 100% cotton and printed in the U.S. with organic ink. Perfect for spring walks, park adventures or just showing off your dog's cheerful side.



FLOWER DUMBBELL DOG TOY

\$3.99 | Southern Agriculture

Perfectly sized for small dogs and puppies, this adorable toy's textured latex design provides pleasing gum stimulation with durable construction, withstanding rough chewing for long-lasting use.



THUNDERSHIRT ANXIETY VEST

Price varies | Fetch

Thunderstorms don't have to mean stressed-out pups. Thundershirt, the original vet-recommended anxiety vest, provides a natural, drug-free solution to calm dogs of all sizes by applying gentle, constant pressure to help reduce fear, anxiety and over-excitement.



UP COUNTRY BOUQUET COLLAR \$17.25-\$28 | Fetch

Up Country's collars combines high-strength nylon with a stylish ribbon design that's stain- and fray-resistant and built to last. Available in three widths and multiple lengths, it's as durable as it is darling for spring walks and outings.



A Pet-Safe Easter

Easter celebrations often bring candy, flowers, guests and décor, all things that can pose hidden risks for pets. With a little planning, the holiday can be happy and stress-free.

COMMON EASTER HAZARDS TO WATCH FOR

Chocolate & Candy:

Chocolate is toxic to dogs, and sugar-free candy often contains xylitol, which can be life-threatening. Ask guests to keep candy bowls out of reach.

Easter Baskets & Grass:

Plastic Easter grass and basket fillers can cause dangerous intestinal blockages if swallowed.

Spring Flowers: Lilies are extremely toxic to cats, even in small amounts. Other spring plants and bulbs can also be harmful if chewed.

Dropped Treats: Egg hunts and family gatherings often mean food on the ground — keep a close eye on curious noses.

Open Doors & Visitors: Extra foot traffic increases the risk of pets slipping outside unnoticed. Make sure collars, ID tags and microchips are up to date.

Craft Supplies & Dyes: Easter crafts, dyes and decorations can be tempting but unsafe for pets.



Designate a quiet, comfortable space for your pet during busy gatherings to reduce stress and prevent accidents.



Grooming Refresh

As temperatures rise and outdoor time increases, spring is the perfect time to reset your pet's grooming routine. Seasonal grooming isn't just about looks — it's an important part of overall health and comfort.

GROOMING ESSENTIALS

Shedding Control: Many pets shed their winter coats in spring. Regular brushing helps reduce loose hair and keeps skin healthy.

Paw & Pad Care: Check paws for dryness, cracks or debris after winter walks and muddy spring adventures.

Nail Trims: Longer days often mean more outdoor activity; properly trimmed nails help prevent discomfort and injury.

Bath Time Refresh: A gentle bath can help remove winter buildup but avoid over-bathing, which can dry out skin.

Ear & Eye Checks: Increased outdoor exposure means more dirt, pollen and debris; routine checks help prevent irritation.

Professional Grooming: Spring is a great time to schedule a groomer visit, especially for thick or high-maintenance coats.

Always watch for excessive itching, redness or hot spots that signal skin issues and require veterinary care.

Sources: AVMA, ASPCA, AKC and Humane Society of the United States

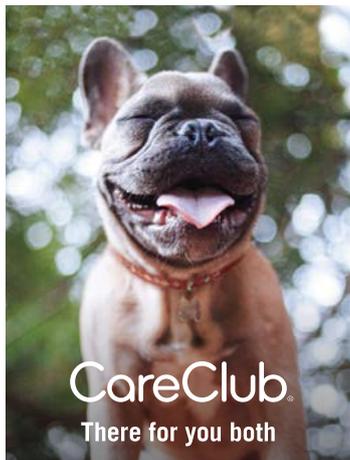
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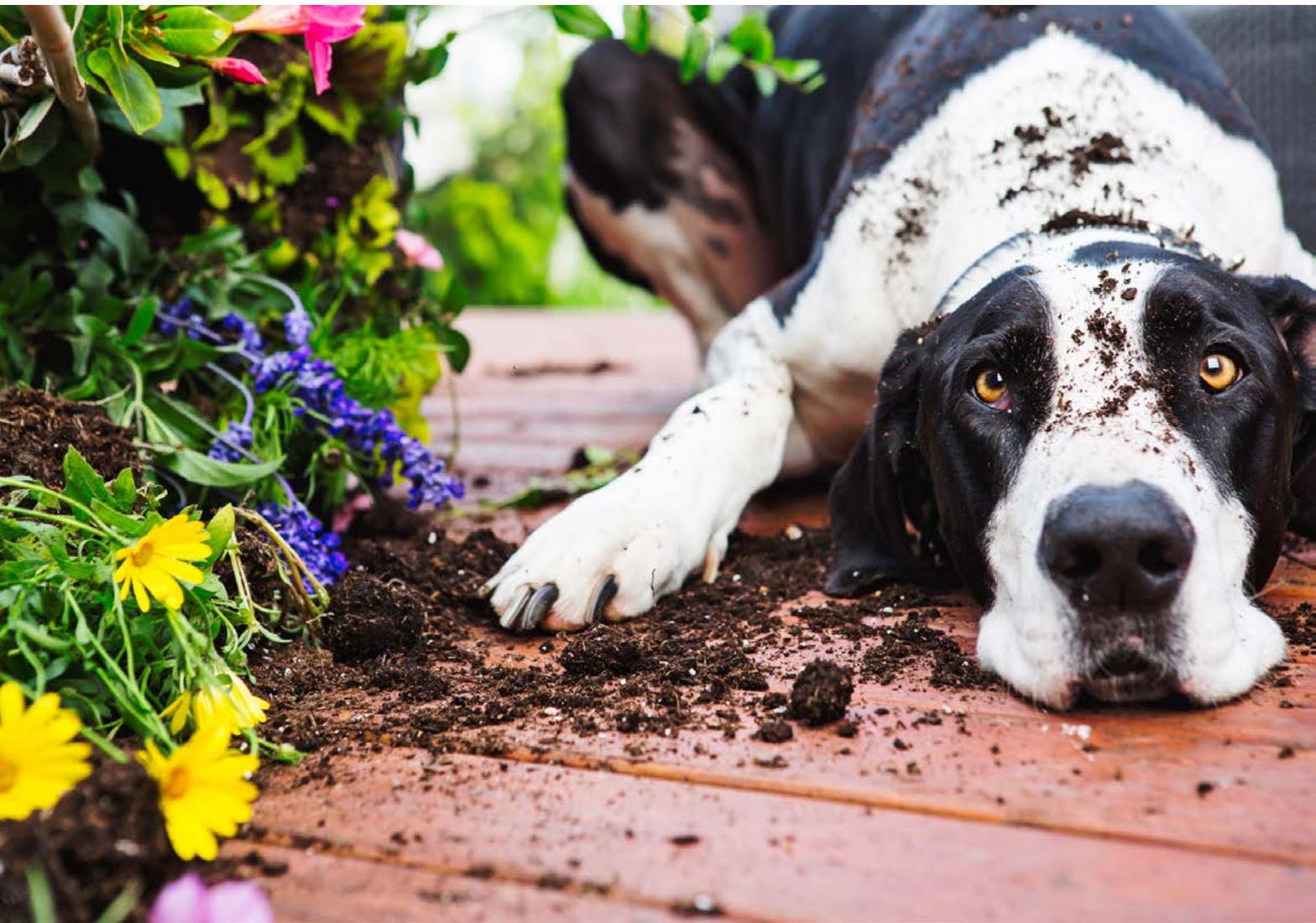
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Green Paws

10 Ways Your Pet Is Secretly a Master Gardener

WE OFTEN SEE their antics as mischievous when our pets dig holes or nibble plants, but maybe they're really just helping out. Here are 10 ways your best friend is secretly a master gardener.

1 Soil Aeration Specialist – Every hole dug is a carefully planned improvement to soil structure.

2 Weed Control Consultant – Those “extra” plants in your flower bed? Tactical testing of garden boundaries.

3 Compost Manager – Leftover snacks mysteriously disappear... and become nutrient-rich fertilizer.

4 Pest Patrol – Birds, squirrels and rogue bugs don't stand a chance under their watchful eye.

5 Plant Pruner – Nibbled leaves and chewed stems? Precision trimming for a modern aesthetic.

6 Mulch Supervisor – Soil mysteriously rearranged? Just strategic nutrient redistribution.

7 Watering Technician – Morning puddles, sprinkler dives or accidental hose antics = perfect irrigation planning.

8 Seed Dispersal Expert – Dropped kibble and tracked dirt: accidental, yet remarkably effective, seed spreading.

9 Shade Architect – The perfect nap spot under your plants? Optimal microclimate design, obviously.

10 Garden Morale Officer – Purr, wags and snuggles = essential motivational support for thriving greenery. 🐾



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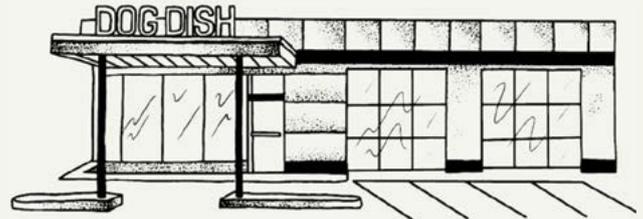
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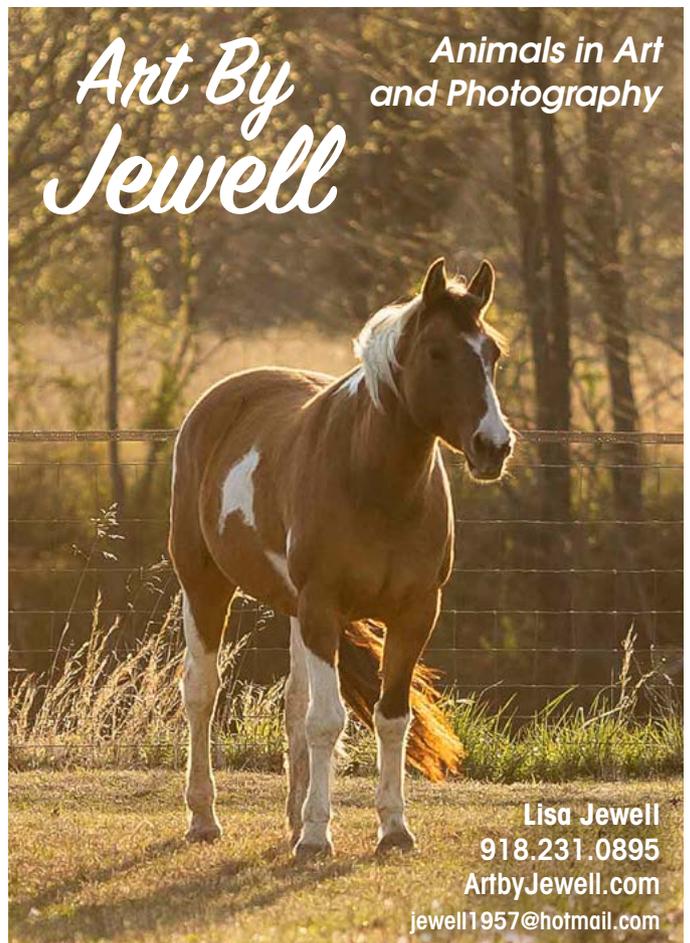
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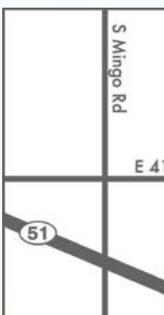
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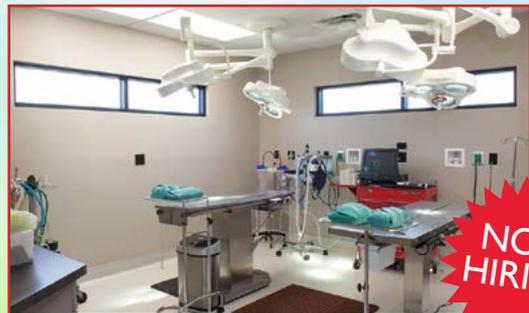
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Wait... Cats Do That?

3 Mysteries of Feline Life by JESSICA SAWATSKI

CATS ARE MASTERS of the expected: They nap in sunbeams, patrol the windowsill and give you that slow-blink look that somehow feels like a compliment. But every so often, they drop a reminder that they're also gloriously weird, tiny predators with big opinions and a flair for the unexpected. From playing fetch to chirp-chattering at birds like they're live-commentating nature TV to insisting that sink water is the only acceptable source, feline life is full of small mysteries that make us laugh, wonder and reach for our phones to document it. These three cat quirks will make you ask, "Wait... cats do that?"

1 THE FETCH FACTOR

Cats have a reputation for being too cool for dog games, yet a lot of them absolutely play fetch. In a comparative "Pet Science Daily" survey of more than 8,000 pet cats, 40.9% were reported to fetch "sometimes" or more often, meaning they chased a tossed toy and brought it back like a tiny, judgmental retriever.

Another large study, "Making Fetch Happen: Prevalence and Characteristics of Fetching Behavior in Owned Domestic Cats and Dogs," published in PLOS One by researchers at Purdue University, found essentially the same thing: about 41% of cats fetch, compared with 77.8% of dogs.

Who's most likely to fetch? The "Pet Science Daily" survey noted higher rates among Siamese, Burmese and Tonkinese cats, and found that 95% of fetching cats weren't taught; they initiated it on their own. The Purdue/PLOS One study also reported fetching was more common in younger animals and males, and less common when cats lived with dogs.

Why they do it: "Many cats fetch, or hunt if you will. They're quite good at it actually," says Dr. Ashley French, medical director at Neel Veterinary Hospital. "Sometimes it's just a difference in personality. Some are avid fetchers and hunters, and others are more easy-going or aren't into it at all."



TRY IT AT HOME: Choose small, light toys that skitter like prey. Keep sessions short, celebrate the "return" and don't be offended if your cat quits mid-game. French recommends rewarding fetching behavior with a small treat, verbal praise, or the kind of petting and physical touch the cat enjoys.

**"There's a new breed in town...
the Retriever-Tabby!"**

– Leticia Fanucchi, DVM, PhD

Clinical Assistant Professor, Behavior Medicine
Service at Oklahoma State University

2 THE "CHIRP-CHATTER" COMBO

That squeaky, rapid little clicking noise cats make at birds or squirrels through a window is one of their strangest greatest hits. Animal behaviorists generally link it to predatory excitement mixed with frustration. Your cat's brain is yelling "HUNT!" while their body is stuck behind glass.

Fanucchi says chirping or chattering at prey through a window is a sign of excitement, anticipation or a greeting type of vocalization.

Normal or not? "Cat chirping can be frustration from not being able to get to prey outside the window, but overall, it's usually a positive vocalization and can even resemble mother-cat communication with kittens," says Fanucchi.



CHANNEL THE INSTINCT: If your indoor cat chatters a lot at wildlife, lean into enrichment. Offer toys that move or make sound, rotate prey-like play sessions and give them a comfy "nature TV" perch near a window, as both experts recommend. "Chirping in cats is an expression of their personality, and it should be encouraged with play and positive reinforcement," says Fanucchi.

TRANSLATION

What Your Cat Is Saying

Slow blink = "You're safe."

Tail like a question mark = "Hi! I'm friendly... for now."

Cat tush in your face = "You're family." (Weird family, but still.)



HYDRATION HACK: French agrees fountains can help with hydration, especially when placed in open, high-traffic spots your cat already likes to hang out. "Drinking water is important to overall health, especially for the bladder and kidneys. Encouraging your cat's water intake is likely to help."

3 SINK = THE BEST WATER ON EARTH

Cat owners, you know the drill. You set down a pristine water bowl. Your cat strolls past it to drink from the faucet like they're checking into a luxury spa. According to PetsRadar, cats are often drawn to running water because, in nature, moving water tends to be fresher and safer than stagnant pools. There's also a sensory angle: flowing water is cooler, makes an interesting sound and lets cats sip from shallow streams that don't squash their whiskers.

"Cats drink more water when they have a fountain compared with a bowl," says Fanucchi, who cites whisker fatigue and the fact that cats perceive moving water as fresher and more interesting as common reasons they avoid bowls. 🐾

Hello, whisker sensitivity!

If your cat is obsessed with the sink, a pet fountain can scratch the same itch without wasting water and may help support kidney and bladder health by boosting daily hydration.



‘The Humane Gardener’

Author and speaker Nancy Lawson shares practical ways to make urban yards healthier for plants, animals and people

by SHARON BISHOP-BALDWIN | Photos courtesy of NANCY LAWSON

GROWING UP AS the daughter of an animal-loving mother and a father who was a plant pathologist, Nancy Lawson unsurprisingly developed an affinity for both animals and plants.

But it’s what Lawson has done as an adult — for animals and plants and people — that has allowed those dual affections to coalesce in a way that is helping change the world.

Lawson, also known as the Humane Gardener, will speak twice this month in Oklahoma about ways to create

wildlife-friendly landscapes that are beneficial to both the animals and the plants that inhabit them.

Lawson, the author of “The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife” and “Wildscape: Trilling Chipmunks, Beckoning Blooms, Salty Butterflies, and other Sensory Wonders of Nature,” was working in the early 2000s for what was then the Humane Society of the United States (now known as Humane World for Animals). She had a particular interest in topics dealing with conflicts

between humans and wildlife, and while writing about humane geese control, she learned that sometimes the most effective, humane solution is often the simplest.

Lakeside residents, angry about the geese pooping on their lawns, were resorting to some pretty inhumane methods to control the fowl visitors, but Lawson found an answer in simple goose behavior.

“Geese need a clean sightline to the water, and the people were mowing the grass around the lakes,” she said.

By simply allowing vegetation, such as native grasses, right around the water to grow tall, the geese would stay away.

About the same time, Lawson was cultivating her own interest in gardening.

“I was seeing how much people were in conflict with wildlife all the time,” she said. “I thought, ‘There’s a niche here for humane landscaping and also to welcome wildlife.’”

“There’s a way to employ plants to help with both of those purposes,” Lawson said. “Animals need plants, and plants need animals. You can learn from the other beings in your landscape.”

Lawson has plenty of targets where a little education could go a long way.

She said humans could be more aware of the sensory receptors of animals in our habitats. Noise pollution affects all animals, even insects, and can reduce nest hatching and spur avoidance behaviors.

Besides the more obvious problems with herbicides, humans also need to be more aware of the “coverings” we put on the ground, she said.

Mulch, AstroTurf and other types of non-native substrates might be attractive, but they can do catastrophic damage to the insects that live on the ground.

“There are all these animals in those layers (of leaves, grass and dirt), nesting in the ground,” she said. “If you’re smothering that ground, you’re really leaving no opportunity for pollinator life cycles to be completed.”

Even changing the way we talk about plants and animals can improve the environment.

“The language that we use to describe plants and animals can end up influencing how we treat them,” Lawson said.

“Overgrown” is a bias-laden word, she explained, adding that a lot of what we do in our yards has to do with what’s being recommended by agricultural influences.



Author Nancy Lawson in her element.

“So many animals are called pests and aggressive,” Lawson said. “Think about that from the animals’ perspective. Everyone has a role to play. When we categorize stuff so much, I think all that gets lost.”

Many urban gardeners counter that wildlife- and plant-friendly measures end up creating conflict with other humans.

The people we call neighbors often take objection to tall grasses or to plants that might look more like weeds than flowers.

“The first thing to always do is just try to talk to people,” Lawson said. “That’s not always possible, but people might just not understand what you’re doing. They haven’t seen it before. That goes for neighbors and code enforcement.”

Lawson recommends talking to disgruntled parties about how you’re supporting local businesses by buying all those native plants.

Signs denoting your landscape as certified habitats for pollinators or wildlife also can placate some detractors, she said.

Gardeners also can create paths through landscapes to show human involvement, place attractive bird baths in the area and maybe even plant some shorter, more-recognizable flowers near the front.

But isn’t it bad to bring wildlife to cities? They’re already here, Lawson said.

“Urban wildlife are already thriving or at least surviving in cities. They’re already moving through our landscapes,” she said. “I think we should be living in a way to try to help them and to try to live in harmony with them.” 🐾

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MAN'S BEST FRIENDS

WHO SERVE

Celebrating Tulsa's K-9 Unit on National K-9 Veterans Day, March 13

THEY DON'T ENLIST or choose the assignment, but they never hesitate when called into danger. For decades, military and law enforcement K-9s have quietly stood on the front lines, using instinct, training and unshakable loyalty to protect the people beside them.

March 13 is recognized as National K-9 Veterans Day, a date set aside to honor these working dogs who have served alongside America's military and law enforcement agencies. Since the U.S. military first began employing Military Working Dogs, more than 30,000 have served, with roughly 1,600 currently on active duty. Trained to detect explosives,

drugs and contraband, track suspects and assist in search-and-rescue operations, these dogs routinely put themselves in harm's way, often in situations where human senses fall short.

That legacy of service extends beyond combat zones and national agencies into our local communities. The Tulsa Police Department's K-9 Unit was established in 1962 with just two officers. Today, the unit includes 11 dual purpose dogs certified in patrol and narcotics work, partnered with 11 handlers and overseen by a lieutenant and sergeant.

The K-9 Unit exists to support field officers on a wide range of calls, deploying

primarily on felony crimes. The canines are trained in building and area searches, tracking, suspect apprehension and narcotics detection.

While some K-9s become nationally known — like Conan, the Army Special Operations dog involved in the mission against ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, or Hurricane, the most decorated dog in U.S. Secret Service history — most working dogs serve without headlines or medals.

This year, it's our honor to highlight the dogs of the Tulsa Police K-9 Unit.



MASCOT HECTOR *Frenchie*

Hector is the K-9 Unit mascot. "Hector the Protector" believes he is also a K-9 shepherd. He loves to go up against the others and never backs down.

LIEUTENANT CHRIS MOUDY *Owner*

Supervisor, retired from the Special Operations Team (team leader); Moudy found the K-9 Unit to be a natural fit for his background and training.

Department service: 24 years

Unit service: 5+ years

Awards (Moudy): Medal of Valor winner, Life Saving Award, Chief's Award, Department Commendation Medal



K-9 SATO

Belgian Malinois

Sato enjoys sitting in the front seat and seeing the action; he's a "passenger princess." Off duty, he's a great family dog. His favorite toy is his ball.

Handler: Officer Evan Hobbs
Department service: 9 years
Unit service: 5+ years



K-9 VANDER

*German Shepherd/
Belgian Malinois mix*

Vander is the biggest dog in the unit. He also loves to run in between people's legs.

Handler: Officer Luke Temple
Department service: 9 years
Unit service: 4 years
Awards: Vander and Temple won 1st place in the USPCA Apprehension category and 2nd place overall.



K-9 CLYDE

*German Shepherd/
Belgian Malinois mix*

Clyde loves his family and is very relaxed outside of work.

Handler: Officer Max Mattsson
Department service: 6 years
Unit service: 2 years
Awards: 3rd place USPCA competition



K-9 AJAX

German Shepherd

Ajax has the most bites of all the K-9 officers and numerous apprehensions in the field.

Handler: Officer Jeff Maxey
Department service: 9 years
Unit service: 5+ years



K-9 NICO

*German Shepherd/
Belgian Malinois mix*

Nico loves his cat siblings at home.

Handler: Officer Daniel Kite
Department service: 21 years
Unit service: 14 years



K-9 DIEGO

Belgian Malinois

Diego is very happy and friendly outside of work.

Handler: Officer David Hornok (trainer)
Department service: 22 years
Unit service: 17 years
Awards: 2023 USPCA champion



K-9 MULA

Mula is the youngest and newest K-9 in the unit!

Handler: Officer Eric Johnson (trainer)

Department service: 20 years

Unit service: 15 years

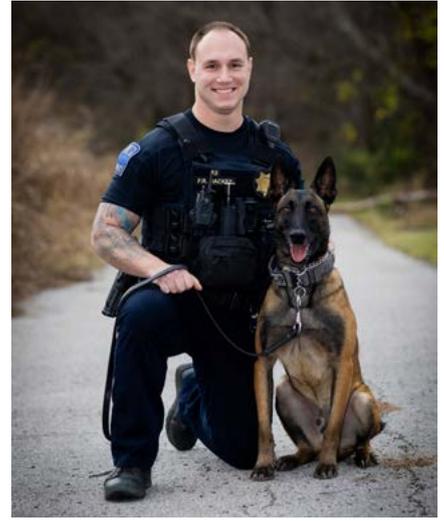


K-9 KNOX

Handler: Officer Camden Houck

Department service: 9 years

Unit service: 6 years



K-9 SPANOS

Handler: Officer Francis Mackey

Department service: 8 years

Unit service: 3 years



K-9 OTIS

Handler: Officer Cheyenne Walden

Department service: 4 years

Unit service: Just started as the newest handler



K-9 TAZ

German Shepherd

Taz loves basketball and Anderson's son who is his best friend.

Handler: Officer Wes Anderson

Department service: 15 years

Unit service: 8 years

Awards: 2nd place 2024 USPCA overall and obedience



SERGEANT CHRIS BUTTERFIELD

Supervisor

The K-9 Unit was formed in 1962, the same as Butterfield's badge number, so for him, it felt like destiny.

Department service: 25 years

Unit service: 17 years

Awards: Departmental commendations, Chief's Award 🐾



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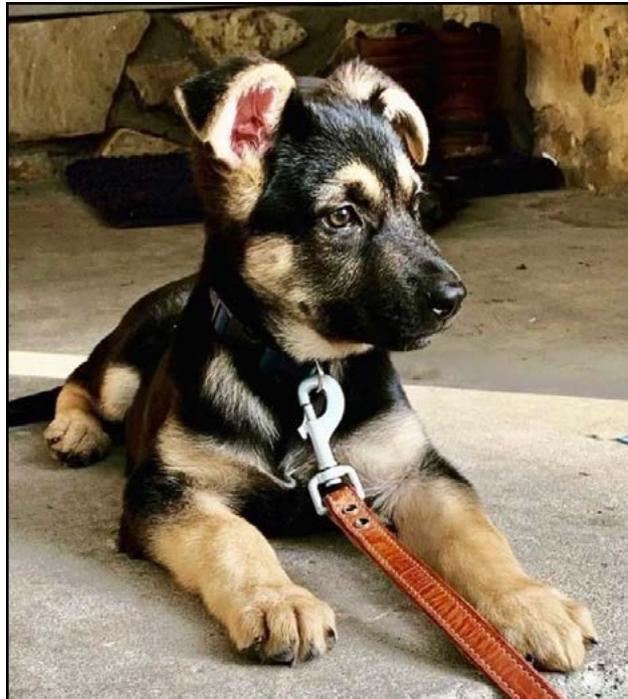
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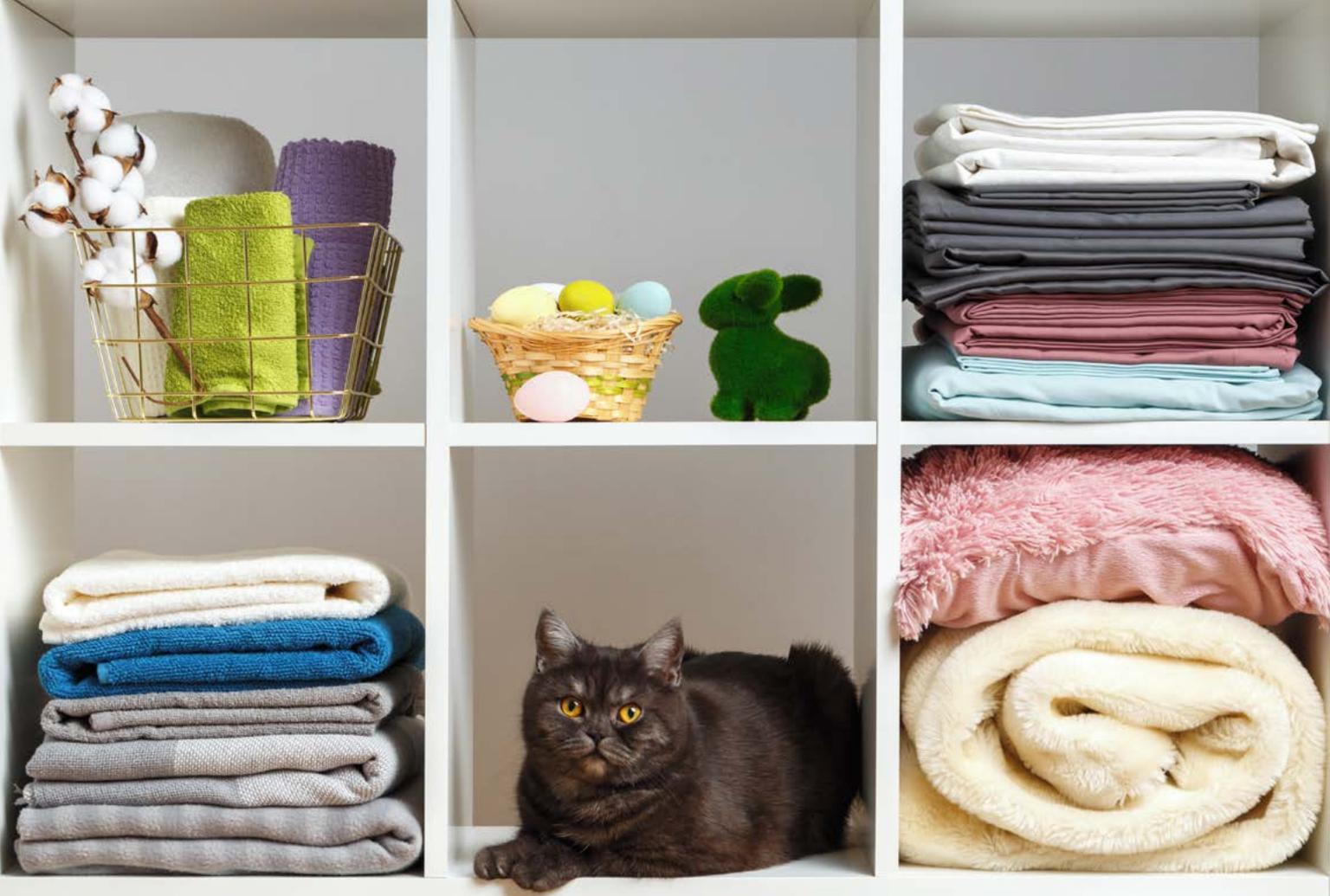


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The Organized Pet Life

Smart ways to store, clean and declutter this spring

by ANNA HOLTON-DEAN

FOR SOME, the thought of spring cleaning and organizing brings a sense of relief and peace.

For others who aren't sure where to begin, it can trigger overwhelming dread. For pet owners, it's a double challenge.

Which products are truly pet-safe and effective at eliminating odors? And how do you rein in the clutter that comes from sharing your home with pets?

We've come to the rescue with tips from Tonya Mason, owner of Mess to Less: Get Organized LLC, to help make your home safer, fresher and more organized for humans and pets alike. It's all about creating a space where everyone can breathe easy. Here's how to do it, step by step.

OUT WITH THE OLD

Before organizing and categorizing, Mason advises taking inventory and removing anything that's expired, broken,

A scoop stored inside the container and a feeding mat help minimize everyday messes.



worn out or no longer needed. This is also a great time to donate gently used items to rescue shelters if they're no longer in rotation, such as well-loved blankets or hand towels.

Once you've pared things down, create boundaries for what remains. "Boundaries are physical limits that prevent clutter from spreading," Mason says. "They make items easy to find and return. Think of boundaries as guardrails."

ORGANIZE PET SUPPLIES

Food & Treat Station

Use airtight containers to keep food fresh. Label with your pet's name and expiration date.

Grooming & Health

Keep these items together for quick access:

- Brushes
- Shampoo
- Nail clippers
- Flea and tick medications
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Pet-safe wipes
- Basic first aid supplies



STORAGE TIP

Use a handled bin or a dedicated drawer near the bathroom or laundry room.

The Brabtod caddy is a great option for various pet supplies that can be transported easily from room to room ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)).



Labeled, clear storage containers make it easy to see when it's time to restock (Iris USA storage container on wheels, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)).



Clear jars or bins also work well for treats. This stackable option by Buddeez saves space and fits jumbo-sized treats ([southernagriculture.com](https://www.southernagriculture.com)).

ORGANIZE TOYS, LEASHES & OTHER ACCESSORIES

Mason advises creating simple, low-maintenance systems that actually work.

An open basket works well for toys, and rotating them weekly keeps your pet engaged and active.

Wall hooks or racks make leashes and harnesses easy to grab, while a small bin or basket can hold travel bowls, poop bags, boots and coats.

Mason's simple declutter rule: if a toy is broken, missing stuffing, or unused, toss it or donate it.



STORAGE TIP

Keep cleaning supplies stored safely under the sink, in a mudroom or laundry room away from curious noses.

CLEANING SUPPLIES

Having the right cleaning supplies on hand helps you tackle pet messes safely and quickly, before they become bigger (and smellier) problems.

- Enzyme-based (and pet-safe) cleaners like Nature's Miracle (southernagriculture.com) for breaking down bacteria-causing odors
- Baking soda (neutralizes odors in carpets, fabrics and litter boxes)
- Paper towels
- Lint rollers
- Vacuum attachments for hard-to-reach places



Pet Maintenance Checklist

DAILY BASICS

- Wipe food and water bowls
- Pick up toys
- Quickly sweep or wipe floor near doors your pet uses

WEEKLY QUICK RESET

- Brush coat
- Check ears, paws and nails
- Wipe down feeding mat and eating area

MONTHLY MAINTENANCE

- Wash/sanitize food and water bowls
- Clean the toy basket and rotate toys
- Check medications and refill as needed
- Wash pet bedding
- Restock poop bags and treats

SEASONAL TO-DO'S

- Deep-clean crates and carriers
- Replace worn leashes or beds
- Update veterinary records and vaccination reminders
- Review flea, tick and heartworm prevention plans

FILE PET HEALTH/MEDICAL RECORDS

Keep phone numbers and records in an inexpensive file folder or binder and store with pet supplies or in a filing cabinet. Use tabs for categories.

Mason suggests labeling bins and containers with:

- Pet name
- Purpose (daily, grooming, travel, etc.)
- Expiration dates (food and meds)

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Labeling bins and baskets helps everyone in the household know where items belong, making clean-up and organization faster and easier.



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Nothing to Sneeze At

Symptoms, causes and treatments of spring allergies in pets by JENNIFER SHARPE

WITH WINTER BEHIND US and warm weather ahead, there's no better time than spring to enjoy fresh air and the Oklahoma sunshine. For many of us though, springtime also brings seasonal allergies and nagging symptoms like sneezing, watery eyes and itching.

Unfortunately, our pets can suffer from allergies too. Just like humans, their allergies can be triggered by environmental factors or food.

How do I know if my pet has allergies?

Look for clues that your pet is itchy.

"The most common clinical signs associated with allergies include scratching, licking or chewing at their paws, and red or irritated skin," says Kelly Baptiste, DVM, of Britton Road Veterinary Clinic in Oklahoma City.

Recurrent ear infections are also common, Baptiste says.

Hair loss around the eyes, muzzle, nose and paws can occur as well, says Erin Stayton, DVM, of Veterinary Associates in Tulsa.

"Symptoms depend on what the pet is allergic to," Stayton explains. Skin issues can include recurrent infections, and "sometimes pets have gastrointestinal signs like vomiting, diarrhea, nausea or loss of appetite."

It's important to see a veterinarian and rule out other causes of itching, such as fleas and skin mites.

Food allergies versus environmental allergies

Since the signs are similar, it's important to know how to determine whether your pet is experiencing a food allergy or seasonal allergy.

"Environmental allergies typically start between 1 and 2 years old. They're chronic and progressive," says Stayton.

If the symptoms are worse during a particular time of year, like March or November, it might be more of a seasonal, outdoor issue. "If symptoms are year-round, we're thinking more indoor allergen or food," she says.

Any recent changes to food or diet can also help pinpoint a possible food allergy, Stayton adds.

"With GI signs — vomiting and chronic diarrhea — usually it's the protein in the food. The most common food protein allergy is going to be chicken and beef, just because that's what most pets are exposed to," she said.

If you want to know exactly what your pet is allergic to, see a veterinary dermatologist, advises Stayton. "There are a few in the state of Oklahoma, and you might have to travel a little bit. They're quite booked out because this is a high-allergen area."

Using intradermal skin testing, a veterinary dermatologist can determine exactly what your pet is allergic to.

"It's the same process as it is in humans," says Stayton. "Your pet must be off steroids and antihistamines for a week or two before the appointment. In the office, they'll shave a patch of skin on your pet's side, and then they inject allergens into the skin. And if the animal gets big



welts, they're allergic to it, same as it is in people. It's the most accurate way to test for allergies."

Are allergies more common in some breeds?

In short, yes. But it's very individualized.

"While allergies can occur in any breed, we frequently observe a higher incidence in Doodle-type breeds," Baptiste says.

"Just like in humans, some people really suffer with allergies, and others never have an issue," says Stayton. "The same is true for pets."

Treatment options

Many options are available for treating allergies in pets, and treatment plans are individualized based on the pet and owner.

"Which road we go down, based on which allergy it is, is going to depend on clinical signs, the owner, the pet and what else is going on," Stayton says.

"Obtaining a detailed history from the owner is essential to determine the underlying cause and develop an appropriate treatment plan," Baptiste explains. "In general practice, environmental allergies are typically managed in two ways: oral medications such as Apoquel or Zenrelia, or an injectable option called Cytopoint. Some pets require a combination of treatments or a trial period to determine what works best. If food allergies are suspected, a diet trial or prescription diet may be recommended."

If it's a seasonal allergy, simply removing pollen from your pet can make them feel noticeably better.



"You can do baths with a colloidal oatmeal-based shampoo," Stayton says. "In-between baths, you can wipe down their paws with pet grooming wipes or baby wipes, just to remove the pollen when they come in from outside."

Antihistamines, both over the counter and prescription, can also help. Stayton says Zyrtec over the counter is safe for dogs and cats, and some owners also find success with Claritin or Benadryl.

"There are also prescription antihistamines, like chlorpheniramine and hy-

droxyzine, which are nice because they don't have a lot of negative side effects," she says. "They can be on it long term, and we don't have to run blood work. With some other allergy meds, we have to run blood work every six months to make sure they're handling it OK."

In some cases, a low-dose steroid can also be used, she adds.

With the right combination of care, medications and veterinary guidance, most pets with allergies can still enjoy the outdoors right alongside their owners. 🐾

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Substitute Mom

The challenge of parenting orphaned puppies

Story and photos by NANCY GALLIMORE



Ten-day-old Penny in the “polar bear cub” phase.

IT'S 5:30 AT WALMART on a Friday afternoon. This is a terrible time to be Walmarting. Everyone is getting off work and rushing in for weekend provisions. Me? I'm staring at a display full of baby bottles. So many choices.

I find myself feeling the same level of confusion I felt on the first day of Algebra II in high school. Then it was because I wasn't great at math. Now it's because I've never been an actual mom, so we are standing in very foreign territory. Let's face it, I'm far closer to having to figure out Medicare than I am to being in my childbearing years.

How did I arrive here? Well, back up about 48 hours to a post on Facebook about an orphaned litter of Australian Cattle Dog puppies. It kept popping up when my nonprofit, Tails You Win K-9 Rescue, was tagged repeatedly. So I stuck a toe in the water and replied to a message from a friend trying to find help for the little family.

After a little back and forth, I agreed that partner Jim and I (and yes, for once I talked to him before I ran to get the dogs) could take two of the puppies. Newborn puppies are best raised with at least one sibling for optimal mental and physical health. Two little bottle babies wouldn't be too hard, right?

This leads us back to the baby bottle aisle. I was panic shopping because the puppy bottle purchased at the animal supply store was either causing the puppies to struggle to nurse or it was flooding them with formula. We were all frustrated. On the advice of a veterinarian friend, I finally selected a bottle designed for premature human babies. The packaging touted anti-colic properties and an air-free vent (whatever that is).

I'm pleased to tell you this bottle was the ticket to puppy nursing bliss. Our snow-white puppies filled their bellies and fell into formula-induced comas. Our first new parent challenge was conquered.

I have gained deep appreciation for mothers of all species. Newborn puppies need to eat about every three hours around the clock. And some of those feedings land during times normally reserved for slumber. It's a treat to be jarred awake by an alarm at midnight and 3 a.m.

I also kept feeling remorse over the kind woman who initially cared for the septuplet litter and still had five hungry mouths



Penny and Bolt at 12 days old.



Bolt in the puppy pen, eyes open and beginning to turn blue.



Penny at 4 weeks, enjoying some outdoor time.

to feed. Thankfully, relief came within a couple of days as two more wonderful foster families volunteered to take puppies, one accepting a pair and one taking three tiny charges — a demanding but manageable distribution.

The puppies are now approaching the five-week mark, and oh, the changes we are experiencing. The once helpless polar bears now have open eyes that don't miss a thing. Gray fur has blended with white to create the trademark Blue Heeler coloring. Puppies who initially belly-crawled are up and exploring with growing agility. And babies who once needed assistance to answer nature's call (there is a reason mom dogs lick puppies often and vigorously; we opted to use damp washcloths) are heading to piddle pads to relieve themselves with increasing accuracy.

My two little geniuses, now known as Bolt and Penny, have also mastered the art of eating on their own — 3 a.m. bottles, a thing of the past. Do I miss the night feedings? No. But oddly, also yes. This childless-by-choice adult may finally understand a minuscule fraction of the up and down emotions new moms experience.

Taking on orphaned puppies is a demanding task. Not just the obvious part of providing for their physical needs but also making sure their intellectual and social needs are met. Clumsy two-leggers are no match for what momma dogs bring to the puppy pen. We can't possibly mimic the life lessons their bio mom would have



Gene, another of Nancy's foster dogs, happy to babysit the puppies while teaching them how to be dogs.

delivered, but we must make every effort to help her puppies grow into well-adjusted young dogs.

Thankfully, I have several nanny dogs in my home who are ready and oh-so-willing to step in to play with and occasionally gently school our furry toddlers. And we will continue to do our best when two foster puppies become seven.

As their siblings, three more girls and two boys, fully abandon bottle feedings, they will return to our home to spend their last few weeks together, growing, playing and learning more important stuff about

how to be a dog. Those weeks will be filled with fun, chaos and endless messes.

There will be vet visits and socialization outings to help our puppies stay healthy and grow in confidence. Hopefully, we'll also get a jumpstart on house training and a few other lessons in preparation for their transition to new families.

Then, at 2 months of age, the seven will dwindle to none as we select wonderful homes for each of our babies. We will pack little puppy bags, kiss each furry head and send them into the world to be the best little Cattle Dogs they can be.

I look over into the adjacent puppy pen where Bolt and Penny are deep in midmorning slumber.

Bolt is on his back with his front paws twitching slightly in dream-induced play, while Penny is curled into a little donut on the plush bed inside their crate. This is the calm before the full-litter storm.

Like all good parents, Jim and I will love each pup fiercely, but then with seven sharp tugs at our heartstrings, we will let them go. This roller coaster canine parenting ride will conclude after eight short weeks, and new humans will step in to pick up where we leave off.

And to think you human parents keep this up for 938 weeks. Kudos to you. You're made of tougher stuff than I am. Hug your two- and four-legged puppies close. 🐾

Mapping a Way Home

Tulsa Lost Pet Map helps reunite animals and their families

by JULIE WENGER WATSON

EVERY "MISSING PET" flier represents a heartbroken human and an anxious animal. While many lost pets are ultimately returned to their homes, others aren't as fortunate. In order to increase the odds of a happy reunion, Tulsa Animal Services launched a free, interactive online Lost Pet Map that allows individuals to search for animals that were recently impounded, report lost pets, or connect with people who may have found a lost pet.

The map shows information from the last 90 days and updates daily, using blue dots to represent pets currently housed at the TAS shelter and red paw prints to represent pets reported missing by their owners. Clicking on the blue or red icons pulls up more information about each animal.

People who come across a lost pet can use the map to help locate its owner. They can then reach out to the owner directly through the provided contact information or call TAS to help them with the next steps.

TAS Director Sherri Carrier is excited to have this new tool. She believes it's particularly useful because it facilitates the return of pets directly to their owners without entering the shelter system, easing both the burden on TAS and the animals' stress.

"We're trying to reunite families and not have so many animals coming into our facility that don't really need to be there," she says.

Earlier last year, TAS partnered with the Tulsa Fire Department on another initiative to help lost pets reunite with their families while avoiding an unnecessary trip to the shelter, a program previously featured in TulsaPets. Through a grant from the Best Friends Animal Society, every Tulsa Fire Station was equipped with a handheld pet microchip scanner, giving residents a quick and easy way to check for a microchip on a found pet. Firefighters can help scan the animal. If a chip is found, they can provide information about how to contact the microchip company to reconnect the pet with its owner.

To learn more about TAS, including these services and volunteer opportunities, visit cityoftulsa.org/TAS. 🐾

How to Use the Lost Pet Database

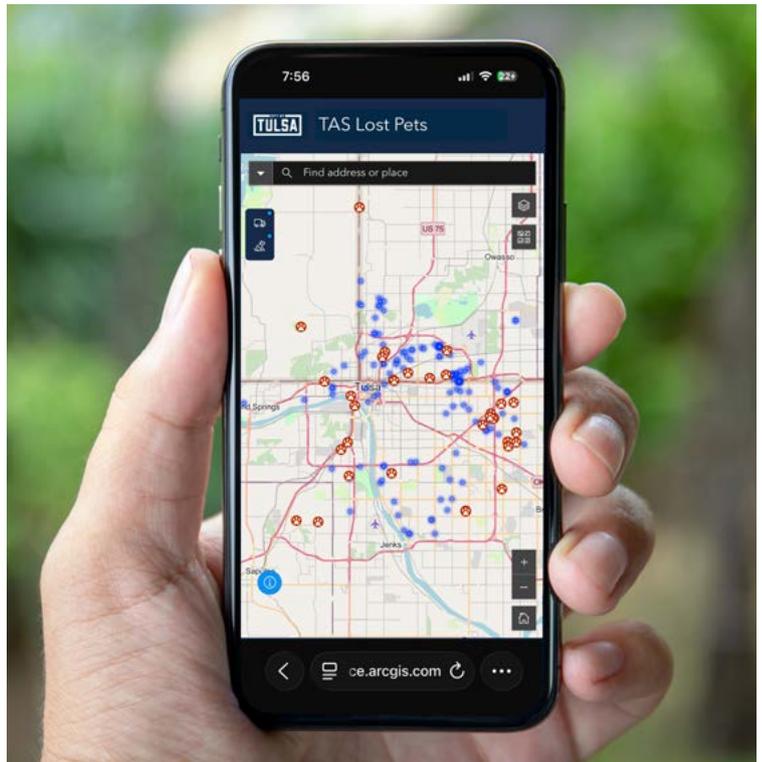
BLUE DOTS — Animals at the shelter (updated throughout the day)

RED DOTS — Lost pets reported by owners

Default view — Shows the last two weeks of data

To adjust — Use the filter icons (truck & dog) to change the date range

Found a lost pet? Contact the owner directly using their listed phone number



Prevention

1. **Teach your pet "come" and "stay."** These basic commands help keep your pet from darting through an unlocked door or gate.
2. **Use tech for identification and tracking.** In addition to your pet's regular ID tags, microchips, a GPS-enabled pet collar or Apple AirTag collar are useful tools for keeping tabs on your animal.
3. **Use a leash and harness.** If your pet is a collar-escape artist, a properly fitted leash and harness prevents escapes during walks.
4. **Secure your yard.** Ensure your yard is safe for your pet and inspect it regularly for any possible escape routes.

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*Photo courtesy of
John Hnath*

Visit our website at www.tulsadogs.com for information on the next class sessions and upcoming events.

In each issue this year, meet a local foster parent and discover why they open their home and heart to pets in need.

Making Room for New Beginnings

by RYLEE ZARAGOZA

RESCUE WORK BEGINS with one simple thing: a safe place. As an elementary school administrator, I spend my days creating environments where children feel protected, supported and free to grow. Fostering through Skiatook Paws and Claws Animal Rescue allows me to extend that same purpose beyond the school day and into my home, especially for dogs who need it most.

I have been an active foster for about seven years, and I have six dogs of my own, from pure bred Dalmatians to Pyrenees who all came from rescue. They are wonderful dogs, and I rely on my calm, welcoming pack to help rehabilitate foster intakes who need support learning those skills.

I most often foster whelping mamas — pregnant dogs or new mothers who deserve a calm, clean, warm space to bring their puppies into the world. Many of these mamas come from uncertain or unsafe situations. Some have lived outdoors, some have been abandoned, and some have never known consistency or care. When they arrive, they are often exhausted and unsure. My goal is to give them exactly what they need: safety, stability and the time to nurture their babies without fear.

My work in public education has taught me that beginnings matter. The environments we create during vulnerable moments can shape an entire future. That belief is at the heart of why I foster. Just as children thrive when they feel secure and supported, these mamas and their puppies flourish when given a peaceful place to rest and grow. Fostering is also how I strive to model compassion and service — not only in what I say, but in what I do.

Fostering whelping mamas is not glamorous. It includes late nights, constant cleaning and watching closely for signs that something might not be right. It means being present for births that are equal parts beautiful and intense. It means worrying when a puppy struggles and celebrating when each small milestone is reached. It is work that requires patience and commitment. But it is also deeply rewarding.

There is something powerful about watching a nervous mama slowly relax as she realizes she is safe. About seeing puppies open their eyes in a warm, clean space instead of the uncertainty they might have faced otherwise. Because of foster homes, these dogs are given a chance at health, stability, and ultimately, loving forever families.

Rescues like SPACAR depend on foster homes to save lives. Without fosters, there is nowhere for these dogs to go. By welcoming a whelping mama into my home, I am able to help save not just one life, but many.

Letting them go is always the hardest part. When the puppies leave and the mama moves on to her next chapter, the house



“The environments we create during vulnerable moments can shape an entire future.” — Rylee Zaragoza

feels quieter. But fostering is about loving deeply without holding tightly — knowing your role was never meant to be permanent, but essential. However, I know that when I let one go, there is a list of others waiting who need me. Each save, each perfect forever family match, changes lives.

If you have ever thought about fostering, I encourage you to take that step. One of the most common misconceptions is that you have to do it alone. When you foster with Skiatook Pawws and Claws, you become part of a supportive network of experienced fosters, rescue coordinators and volunteers who are always there to help. There is guidance when you have questions, support during challenging moments and encouragement every step of the way.

You don't need to be an expert. You don't need a perfect home. You just need the willingness to open your door for a little while.

Whether it's a whelping mama, a litter of puppies or a dog simply in need of a soft place to land, fostering changes lives — including your own. If you have room in your home and heart, Skiatook Paws and Claws Animal Rescue, as well as any local rescue organization close to you, is always in need of foster families willing to say “yes.”

I foster because I can. I foster because they need someone. And I foster because every life deserves a safe beginning. 🐾

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1123 E. Archer, Tulsa 74120
torchlightk9.com, (918) 947-9743

Tulsa Dog Training Club
6307 S. 107th E. Ave., Tulsa 74133
tulsadogs.com, (918) 294-8557

Woodland West Pet Resort
9400 S. Union Ave., Tulsa 74132
woodlandwestpetresort.com
(918) 299-5720

PET BOUTIQUE, SPECIALTY PET FOOD, TREATS & SUPPLIES

Dog Dish 2803 S. Harvard, Tulsa 74114
dogdishtulsa.com, (918) 624-2600

Fetch
7891 E. 108th St., Ste X-8, Tulsa 74133
fetchtulsa.square.site, (918) 943-5458

Southern Agriculture – all stores
southernagriculture.com

StreetCats
3105 S. Winston Ave., Tulsa 74135
streetcatstulsa.org, (918) 298-0104

PET BURIAL, MORTUARY AND CREMATION SERVICES

Angel's Pet Funeral Home & Crematory
6589 E. BA Expy Frontage Rd., Tulsa 74145
angelspetfuneralhome.com
(918) 960-2828

PET PHYSICAL THERAPY

Animal Acupuncture and Canine Sports Medicine Facility
4505 S. Peoria, Tulsa 74105
animalacupuncturellc.com
(918) 728-2351

Oklahoma K9 PT: Canine Therapy & Wellness
oklahomak9pt.com, (918) 856-6018

PET TRANSPORT

City Veterinary Hospital
3550 S. Peoria, Tulsa 74105, (918) 747-1641

PET-FRIENDLY/FRIENDS OF PETS

Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa
mckctulsa.com

Oklahoma Alliance for Animals
5321 S. Sheridan Rd., Ste 30, Tulsa 74145
animalallianceok.com

Oklahoma Harness Horse Association
okharnesshorse.com

Pat Becker Books
PatBeckerBooks.com

Pause4Paws
pause4pawsok.org

Tulsa Community College
tulsucc.edu

PET PHOTOGRAPHY

Art By Jewell
Animals in Art and Photography
(918) 231-0895
artbyjewell.com

Pup Photo Waggin'
Mobile Pet Photography Studio
(918) 231-0895
pupphotowaggin.com

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