



# Seniors *for* Pets

## GAZETTE

serving senior citizens—both human and four-legged

### Vacationing With Fido

It's vacation time, and you want to take your dog with you because he's part of the family. Times are pretty good for traveling with Fido. Pet-friendly hotels are plentiful, but you do need to research them and reserve before you go.

Hotels that accept pets have rules and requirements that you should know before booking. Some will ask to see proof of the dog's vaccinations, while others don't seem to care. It would concern me that a hotel didn't ask to see that proof.

Most pet-friendly hotels will ask guests to sign something at check-in, accepting responsibility for any damage the pet causes.

Hotels generally expect visiting pets to be house-broken, friendly and not aggressive, to be clean and free of fleas, ticks or other parasites. However, I have never been asked such things when a dog has accompanied me on trips.

Granted, I did not take my Great Danes to a Four Seasons or The Ritz Carleton, where pets and guests alike follow stricter requirements and in return receive the ultimate in luxurious surroundings. But

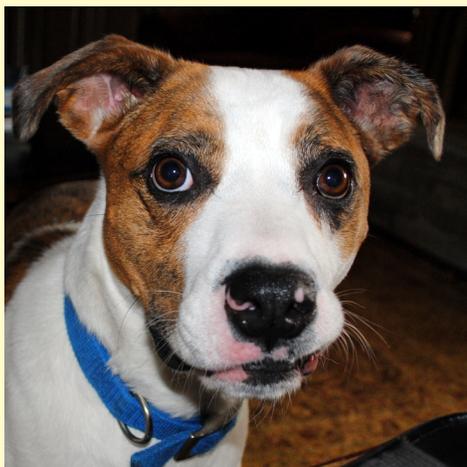
my dogs and I have stayed in Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn, Best Western, Ramada and a few other middle-of-the-road motels that willingly accept pets.

Jim and I learned years ago that there are very nice, pet-friendly hotels and resorts around Santa Fe, New Mexico. Pets there are treated like visiting royalty. Consider areas that are known to be dog-friendly when you are planning your trip.

None of the places we have stayed with pets has presented us with house rules, other than to inform me of a suitable potty location on the grounds or to say the dog would not be allowed in the lobby area when breakfast was being served. I'm certainly ok with that!

Some hotels may limit the size of pet or number of pets allowed. Some may charge a per/night pet fee.

To be sure what is expected of you and your pet, confirm a hotel's pet policies before you travel and before you confirm your reservations with a credit card.



### Dog of the Month: Meet Flick

Flick and his buddy, Luther, belong to Craig North and family of Little Rock, Arkansas. Craig rescued Flick from a shelter in Ft. Walton, FL. Flick's breed is unknown and definitely mixed, but judging from his herding instincts, some Border Collie is part of his genetic make-up. He loves people and loves to play.

**If you would like your dog featured in this newsletter, please send me a jpg photo and a short bio to [carol@seniorsforpets.org](mailto:carol@seniorsforpets.org).**

## From the Editor Carol North

Hello Readers,

I just returned from a 2-week trip to Tennessee and Arkansas, visiting some of my children and grandchildren. In Tennessee, I delivered a pet gift basket to a lovely lady in Sewanee and to a couple near McMinnville. One of those stories appears in this issue of the newsletter. As much as I love to see my children and grandchildren, I'm always happy to be home again with Jim and my fur kids – this time to a new home. With this change comes a change of address for Seniors for Pets. Please note that in this issue.

In Arkansas, I met a grand-dog for the first time and promptly fell in love with Flik. You'll find his photo somewhere in this issue. If you have cute pet photos, please email one to me. I'll run them in future issues of the newsletter.

I hope you enjoy the story of Chica, a little dog helped recently by Seniors for Pets. You'll find it on page 4.

Maggie Digiovanni's "Snow King" on page 5 is a beautiful story. Everyone should be so lucky to be owned by such a pet!

Please be sure your pets are on flea and tick and heartworm preventatives. With hot weather, parasites are plentiful. In Florida, mosquitoes are a problem in the summer and our pets are prone to all sorts of problems. Be proactive and protect your furry friends.

Hope the tips on page 1 about vacationing with your pets is helpful as you plan your family trips.

Happy Summer!

*Carol*



## Does Your Dog Inhale His Food?

Does your dog gobble his food like he hasn't eaten in days? Some take their time and enjoy their meal, but others seem to inhale it. Our Maggie is one of those.

There are products on the market to help with canine piggies. Check out the feeding bowls at your favorite pet supplies store. There are bowls with little dividers that force the dog to dig around to pick out the kibble, thereby slowing down the process.

The Gobble Stopper is a product available in 4 sizes that fits inside any sized dog bowl. Another one is the Green Slow Feeder that makes a game out of eating by scattering a certain amount of dry food across a grassy "green," where the dog has to work to push the food out between the blades of grass.

I plan to check out the Green Slow Feeder for Maggie. We only use stainless steel feeding bowls to avoid those ugly "pimples" that plastic often creates on a dog's chin. Perhaps the fake grass won't do that.

It's good to know that possible solutions are out there, because dogs that eat too fast create gassy digestive systems and sometimes even regurgitate their meals. Whatever it takes to slow them down is a good idea.

## Household Pet Ownership Stats

Based on a breakdown of pet ownership in the U.S., the American Pet Products Association provides the following:

Number of U.S. Households That Own Pets  
(Per Millions)

Dog	46.3
Cat	38.9
Freshwater Fish	11.9
Bird	5.7
Small Animal	5.0
Reptile	4.6
Equine	2.4
Saltwater Fish	0.7

### Seniors for Pets, Inc.

6570 Anchor Loop, #108

Bradenton, FL 34212

941-587-3025 • Email: [info@seniorsforpets.org](mailto:info@seniorsforpets.org)

[seniorsforpets.com](http://seniorsforpets.com)

## Pet Obesity Aid

Obesity is rampant in pets, just as it is in humans. According to the latest survey from the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention in 2012, 52.5% of dogs and 58.3% of cats in the United States are considered overweight or obese by their veterinarians.

Information like this prompted the pet food industry to take steps to make pet owners more aware of what their pets are eating. The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) voted to adopt a regulation that requires a calorie-content statement on all cat and dog food labels. AAFCO still has to determine when the new law will take effect.

Whenever compliance begins, any cat or dog food sold in the U.S. will be required to list calories and do so in terms of “per-kilogram and per-common unit (cans, cups, pieces).” They will also have to identify the method of determination (calculated versus fed).

Whether adding the calorie chart to pet food packages will actually help owners control their pets’ weights remains to be seen, but effort has to begin somewhere. It’s a step in the right direction.

**(petfoodindustry.com)**

## Contaminants in Pet Food

Like it or not, pet food may contain antibiotics, pesticide residue or mold. The meat from the 4-D animals (dead, dying, diseased or disabled) may well include antibiotic residue. Some of those drugs pass intact through processing and end up in commercial dog and cat food in small amounts.

Grains that aren’t suitable for human consumption because of excess pesticide residue are legally allowed in pet food.

Given the melamine in wheat gluten from China scare in 2007, it can be said that sometimes contaminants in pet food are deliberate. That melamine was used to falsely elevate protein levels in exported pet food and is still widely used in Chinese-made human food products exported for sale around the world.

Protect your pet! Avoid pet food made in China. Make sure that dry dog food is free of rendered ingredients – no-byproducts!

## Pet Spending

The U.S. may still be caught up in the throes of the economic crisis, but it hasn’t spread to our pets. Americans are still spending generously on Fluffy and Fido. Total pet expenditures are estimated at \$53 billion each year, according to the American Pet Products Association (APPA). That’s an increase of over \$12 billion over the last 3 years.

From necessities to luxuries, pet owners are not cutting corners with spending. An APPA 2011-2012, National Pet Owners Survey said that dog owners spent an average of \$407 a year on surgical visits; \$248 on routine checkups; \$274 on kennel boarding; and \$254 dollars on food. They spent \$95 on vitamins; \$78 on travel; and \$43 on toys per year.

This spending pattern has been lucrative for the retail pet supplies industry, since the big box pet stores like Petco have shown steady gains in revenue (Moody’s Investors Services, Inc.)

The largest portion of the pet owners budget goes to health care. The average dog owner is spending \$655 a year on Fido’s health needs, and VPI Pet Insurance Co. reports that 70% of pet owners said that they would spend any amount necessary to save their pets.

Premium pet food sales are booming. High-end cat and dog food sales grew by 4% a year from 2007 – 2012. Walmart launched its own brand of premium pet food – Pure Balance – in 2012.

The bottom line is that we Americans love our pets and will spend whatever is necessary to keep them happy, healthy and well-fed.

---

## Which Dog Breeds Are Prone to Weight Gain?

Some dog breeds are more prone to obesity than others. I would have expected those breeds to include couch potato dogs, like English Bulldogs or Pugs. However, the breeds with the highest rate of obesity include the Golden Retriever (62.7%) and the Labrador Retriever (58.9%).

# Changing Chica's Life

On the day before Easter, Jim and I visited a mobile home park in Sarasota to help a precious Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and her owner. Seniors for Pets friend, Laura Abbott, contacted us when she realized the dog's owner wasn't able to take care of the situation by herself.

Chica was covered in fleas and flea bites and scratched herself incessantly. She was miserable!

Also working to correct this problem was Diane Palmer-Ponleit, who operates Groomingdale's in Sarasota. Diane has followed our organization for more than three years and had previously offered her grooming expertise anytime we needed it. Chica presented the opportunity to take her up on that offer.

While Diane worked her magic on Chica, Jim set off flea bombs in the owner's home and also sprayed the yard with a flea & tick killer. Chica and her owner were able to return to a flea-free environment.

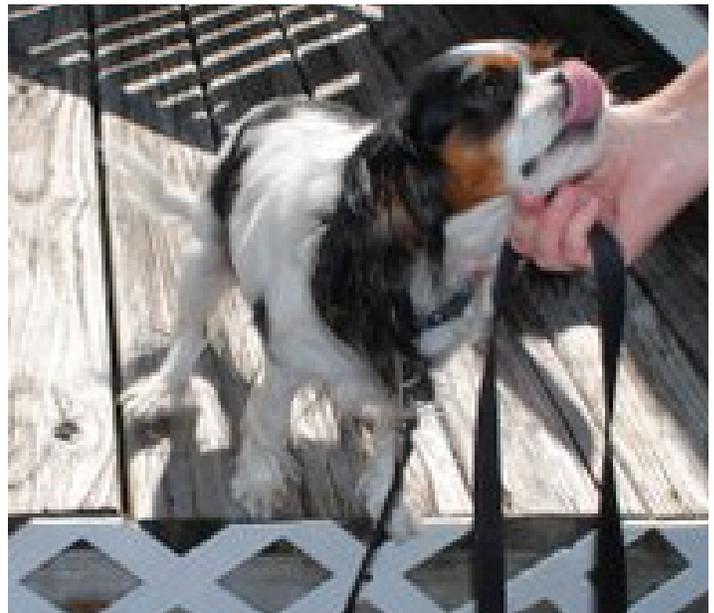


Later, Chica will receive her vaccinations and a full medical examination from a local veterinarian.



**Diane Palmer-Ponleit & Chica**

Diane picked up the little dog and bathed and groomed her at her shop before returning her to her elderly owner.



**Chica On Her Way to Groomingdale's**

This project – to help Chica and her owner – exemplifies how your donations are spent. There are many more seniors and their pets who need our assistance, but it takes money.

Your donations are needed and very much appreciated!



**SFP Angels, Laura & Diane**

Seniors for Pets, Inc.  
6570 Anchor Loop, #108  
Bradenton, FL 34212

# Snow King

## by Maggie Digiovanni

He ran away from the house behind us to live with our daughter. A medium-sized tom cat with no markings on his snow white coat, he walked into our hearts and the position of Jaimie's guardian.

Given the unlikely name of Spot by his three-year-old charge, he suffered through hugs and kisses, as well as her insistence that he lie calmly in her lap while she "bathed" him with a soggy bath cloth. If she was on her swing, he remained within easy distance of removing any threat. What he would not do was come inside the house.

After he ran to us several times when his owner had to go out of town, she asked if we wanted him permanently. Yes, we did!

At summer's end, I looked up to find four curious eyes of baby possums looking through the sliding glass doors of our den. When I moved closer, one shied away, while the bigger of the two stared me down a moment longer.

"I wonder where their mother is."

The next night our visitors came again. This time, a green pair of eyes joined them. The possums sat with Spot, peering inside before all of them wandered away. The cat adopted them that night.

We put an old lounge chair out back, intending it for heavy trash pickup. Within hours, our cat and his little ones had moved into the chair, via the back flap. Once the babies were inside, Spot sat on top, once again the guardian. By autumn's end, they had been taught all they needed. The nuzzling between the possums and the cat sent a pang through me. Spot rubbed the side of his mouth along their heads and sent them on their way back into the sparse woods.

The winter was harsh for Maryland, with major snowfalls every couple of weeks. Begging Spot to come inside did no good. He reveled in the snow, cavorting like a kitten. He bounced through small drifts, rolled in the soft wetness, and took a bite or two once in awhile. My professed "cat hater" husband built a small house, complete with light bulb warming system, to protect his nemesis. The cat showed its appreciation by moving in immediately.

On a rare sunny, warm day, Jaimie wanted to play on her swings. I took her out and returned to the kitchen to wash dishes. The window above the sink

allowed me to keep an eye on her. As usual, Spot rested near his charge. Like any good protector, he kept looking all around with special emphasis on the yard next door.

Our neighbor had opted to babysit a German Shepherd, known to have a mean streak. Chained to a large tree, he posed no problem ...until the chain broke.

From the corner of my eye, I saw the dog running toward Jaimie. Grabbing a broom on the way out to the yard, I screamed at the top of my lungs. Jaimie heard me, stopped swinging but didn't run to me.

A white streak flew past my daughter, headed for the dog. Screeching, the cat brought the dog to a halt and made it turn around. That ten pounds of feline fury chased the dog back into our neighbor's yard. Abruptly, the Shepherd stopped, as though it suddenly occurred to him that something was seriously wrong with that picture of cat chasing dog.

I got Jaimie into the house and returned to help Spot. The cat had climbed the nearest tree, when the dog caught onto who should be chasing whom. Our neighbor chained the beast back to the tree and insisted he would never volunteer to keep it again.

The next day, new snow fell. Spot was in the middle of it with Jaimie. They rode down a small hill on a big piece of cardboard. She made snow angels; he rolled beside her.

"For a cat, he's not bad," commented my husband. "Never saw a cat that liked snow so much. He's a regular snow king."

He's a king alright. A brave king who saves his lady from the biggest dragons. I pictured the scene from the day before. Maybe we'll rename him Snow King.

## Top 10 Pet-Owning States

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the top 10 pet-owning states are: Vermont; New Mexico; South Dakota; Maine; Oregon; Washington; Arkansas; West Virginia; Wyoming and Idaho.

## Pet Apps for Your Smart Phone

Did you know you can monitor your pet's health on your mobile phone? That's assuming you have a smart phone!

Some new apps allow you to follow your pet's weight – both in pounds loss or maintaining its weight. They will also track calories intake on a daily basis and keep a record of the animal's progress.

Petmobi, a new app for the iPhone, enhances your social networking experience so you can share your pet's successes, photos, and reach out to friends. This particular phone app was created by a veterinarian.

There is a database that will hold nutritional information from thousands of pet foods sold on the market. You can keep track of what your pet eats and track its progress. The Pebmobi app is free for the first pet and only \$.99 to add an additional pet.

In case you don't have an iPhone, there are pet apps for Android phones. How about a Pet Map, a social networking app for those who want to share their pets' videos? Or Pet, an app to find all pet-related services near you. It will help you find dog parks, veterinarians, groomers, pet-friendly lodging and many more.

Dog Whistle is an app for Androids that will help you train your dog to respond to a whistle. There is also a Pet First Aid app that could come in handy in an emergency.

Whatever your choice, Fido and Fluffy can now enter into the tech world with you. You can download some pet apps at [pcworld.com](http://pcworld.com) and at [androidfreeware.net](http://androidfreeware.net). Amazon also sells pet phone apps. For iPhone apps, check the iPhone store.

## Invasion of the Gallinippers

Mosquito season is here and in Florida, a monster mosquito, the gallinipper, is expected to wreak havoc on humans and pets alike. This beast is aggressive and painful and about 20 times bigger than the average mosquito we are used to seeing, according to University of Florida researchers. The male supposedly doesn't bite, but the female makes up for it.



Photo from [www.livescience.com/27772-gallinipper-giant-mosquito.html](http://www.livescience.com/27772-gallinipper-giant-mosquito.html)

Gallinipper eggs hatch after a rainstorm or flood and eggs laid last year are expected to produce a bumper crop of these nasty critters.

The Gallinipper – or psorophoro ciliate – is at least an inch long and actively goes after people. The only good news about them is that they don't carry diseases like West Nile.

It's not yet known if insect repellants will provide protection from the gallinipper because they are so much larger than insects the repellants were created to deter.

The only good thing to say about these creatures is that they do eat smaller insects. Be sure to clear away brush and standing water on your property and make sure your screens are all securely in place with no holes.

Get ready, Floridians, for the gallinipper invasion. Protect your pets and yourselves.

**Please visit our websites,**  
[www.feedingfidoandfluffy.com](http://www.feedingfidoandfluffy.com)

**and**

[www.seniorsforpets.com](http://www.seniorsforpets.com).

**Visitors help move us up in  
Google rankings, plus you'll  
find some good articles to read!**

# Meet the Stewarts and Their Adorable Puppies

Mark Stewart of Rock Island, Tennessee, knows the importance of pet ownership! Dogs had always been part of his life until the death a few years ago of his Blue Heeler, Molly.

After an accident with a tractor 3 years ago resulted in amputation of part of one leg, along with nerve damage to his neck and hands, Mark was forced to spend most of his time at home. Newlyweds, Mark and Donna, had agreed to not acquire anymore pets because she wasn't fond of them living in the house, and Mark refused to have a dog that couldn't be inside with them.

And then, two little angels appeared on their front porch.

Quickly dubbed Oreo and Ebony, the Border Collie - Chihuahua mix puppies were just what Mark needed as he recovered from his injuries. After a visit to a local veterinarian for



Oreo and Ebony

exams, vaccinations and spaying, Oreo and Ebony settled into their new home.

Mark built a large, fenced pen for the dogs with a doggie-door access to the screened back porch housing their beds and food and water.

The little dogs that Donna insisted would not live inside the house soon began sleeping on comfy beds in front of the living room fireplace.

Oreo and Ebony are devoted to each other and can't stand to be separated. When Oreo is being bathed, Ebony becomes frantic and cries until they are reunited.

Donna loves the cute things the dogs do: "Oreo is a people-dog and very sociable. Ebony is the one who demands to be center of attention."

Donna fully recognizes the part that Ebony and Oreo have played in Mark's recovery. "I appreciate the companionship the dogs provide for Mark when I'm not home."

Being unable to work fulltime has been a difficult adjustment

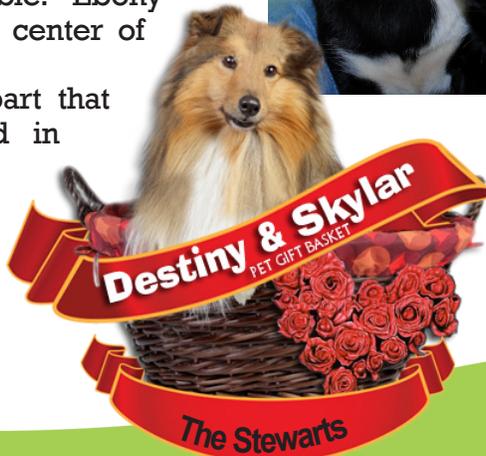
for a man used to activity and independence. According to Mark, "The dogs give me a sense of purpose when I'm not doing my volunteer work." (He volunteers at their church, keeping the grass cut, and he often helps his neighbors with their yards.).



The Stewarts with the SFP Gift Basket for their puppies.



Mark with Ebony



I believe that God provides what we need. Clearly, those puppies appeared on the Stewarts' doorstep at a time when they were exactly what Mark needed.

## People-for-Paws Pets of the Month



### Marley

Marley is 6 months old, rescued from Lake County, FL, just a month ago. He is up-to-date on shots and is neutered. This boy LOVES to play. He is a very out-going kitten with a high activity level. Marley gets along great with all the other rescue cats and is everyone's favorite.

Contact Leanne at [leannemcintire@gmail.com](mailto:leannemcintire@gmail.com) to arrange a meeting with Marley or Koji.



### Koji

Koji came from a shelter in the Florida Panhandle. (They called him Peaches and said he was a girl! Poor boy!) In fact, he is a laid-back, awesome 9-mo his gorgeous blue eyes are slightly crossed. Koji is independent but loves to be petted and for a Siamese, he doesn't make a peep! He has been neutered and is up-to-date on vaccinations. Koji will be great with other cats, dogs and children.

## The Importance of Spaying Fluffy

Did you know that female cats are capable of spraying and will mark their territory with urine, same as a male? If a female is spayed before their first heat cycle, it will prevent marking behavior. If not spayed, she is subject to contracting a life-threatening condition called pyometra.

When I was a child, very few people bothered to spay their cats. I remember my stepfather cursing the bevy of male cats hanging around outside our house as they serenaded my "Honey-Bun" day and night for a few weeks. Following that episode, Honey-Bun was spayed, pronto.

Today, you will find very few male cats wandering around the neighborhood intact. But there are the feral felines that live in vacant lots or heavily-treed areas, and they will come running if your female goes into heat. Always spay your female cat by four months of age.

## Read the Labels!

### Deciphering Strange Terms

On the ingredients label, you'll find some odd names, such as a-tocopherol or ascorbic acid. Those are technical terms for Vitamin E and C.

The presence of choline chloride in pet food ensures proper fat metabolism and nerve function. Manganous sulfate is necessary for developing strong bones.

Sodium caseinate is used as a texturizer in cheap canned food.

Propionic acid is a preservative to prevent mold but is potentially harmful to animals. Dicalcium phosphate is also used to texture food but can be toxic to pets.

Your pet needs vitamins and antioxidants to thrive. Just be sure you know what's good and what's not.