



Shipwrecked Spaniel 'Snickers' survives lengthy ordeal

# Tid Bits

By Paul Everett

## Tuscan Pups Free to Become Culture Vultures

Dogs in Tuscany are soon to enjoy the freedom of the region's cities. England's 'Times' reports of a new law allowing pets not only onto beaches but into such previously human-only venues as cinemas, galleries and restaurants.

Dogs in possession of a veterinary health certificate and wearing a muzzle where necessary can take advantage of the law when it comes into effect in June. Their humans must guarantee the animals won't disturb public order.

## Pets Prevent Allergies

A German study, published in the 'European Respiratory Journal', has concluded that keeping a dog in a house with young children will reduce the children's likelihood of developing allergies, says AAP.

The six-year study suggests germs carried into the house on the animal's fur help the development of the immune system, which becomes less sensitive to allergy triggers like hayfever and asthma.

## Spaniel Pup Becomes Salty Sea Dog

An eight-month-old Cocker Spaniel has survived three months adrift at sea followed by four months on a tiny island.

Mast problems set Snickers the Spaniel's owners' catamaran adrift after setting off from California. Having drifted for three months the catamaran hit a reef, and Snickers, his owners and their parrot swam to shore on Fanning Island, 1609km south of Hawaii. The owners then departed on a cargo ship, leaving the Spaniel and parrot on the island, to be looked after by locals.

With assistance from the Hawaiian Humane Society, Snickers has since been sent to LA via Honolulu for rehoming.

## Dog and Sheep Strange Bedfellows

The 'Los Angeles Daily News' reports of a dog and sheep love match. Spotted crossing a Los Angeles street together and heading for the extreme peril of a freeway off-ramp, the sheep and German Shepherd then proved inseparable when rescued. A quick-thinking driver stopped his car and put the German Shepherd into the back seat. The sheep jumped in too.

The man took the animals to his grandmother's yard for safekeeping while arranging for their transfer to an animal shelter. Wherever the dog went in the yard, the sheep was sure to go. If an adult would approach the sheep, the dog would growl protectively.

Media reports of the rescue reached the pair's owners and the unlikely duo were collected from the shelter a few days later. The sheep, it seems, had only been in the family a matter of days before the animals wandered off together. Frightened, the sheep stayed close to its canine minder as the only familiar friend available.

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## Dogs @ Work-June 20

A surprising number of progressive businesses recognise the added value of allowing dogs in the workplace and an annual event called 'Take Your Dog To Work Day', Friday, June 20 will attempt to support and develop this healthy trend. It's being promoted in Australia by the online social networking site for everything doggy, MuttSpace.com.au, which will alert media through press releases, encourage government and business to follow the lead of the concept and also assist in finding a balance in the office for those who are pet wary or have allergies.

Innovative businesses in the US like Amazon, Google, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and many universities have developed official pet policies as part of the employee handbook and have set out rules and procedures for introducing and maintaining pets in the work environment. These initiatives not only encourage worker loyalty and take the strain off leaving pets at home, they also can be effective in stress relief and socialisation of staff as well as having a welcoming nose for clients. Having a pet at work can

increase productivity, add to a casual corporate environment and encourage healthy relationships among staff as they socialise with the animals during the day. It encourages needed physical and mental breaks as well as a sense of community.

The policies take into consideration the needs of non-dog staff and those who may have pet allergies. These include making sure the animal is behaved and has mutt-etiquette, having pets gated into offices, with closed-door setups or restrained from roaming the cubicles. Dogs need to be current on vaccinations, on a lead when entering or leaving buildings and of course, making sure that they are office trained not to leave surprises behind.

Details on Take Your Dog To Work Day are posted on MuttSpace.com.au with links to articles on how the concept works. Call (02) 9557 8894 for further information.



## Legal Beagles

The 'Detroit Free Press' reports of the emergence of an area of United States legal practice known as animal law. Animals are increasingly being given their own legal standing, moving away from their previous legal status as mere 'property'.

Practitioners of animal law are becoming higher-profile and more specialised. Areas of focus include animal rights issues, animal abuse cases, and disputes where animals are the beneficiaries of estates.

## Seoul Food

Seoul's city government is seeking to reclassify dogs as livestock, reports AFP. Between two and four million dogs are consumed in South Korea each year, it says. As dogs aren't presently considered livestock there are no hygiene regulations governing their slaughter. A change in the law would set new food safety standards and legitimise the serving of dogmeat, banned in the city in the late '80s. An estimated 500 dogmeat restaurants presently operate in Seoul despite the ban. Animal activists, including the Korea Association for Animal Protection, are working to prevent the classification change.

## Dublin Zoo Unamused by Jokers

Callers asking to speak to G Raffe, C Lion, Rory Lyons and Anna Conda have recently overwhelmed the Dublin Zoo switchboard, AFP reports.

Hoax text messages have asked people to call the zoo regarding an urgent message from one of the joke names. This has prompted 100,000 calls in two weeks. Zoo marketing manager Veronica Crisp says, "It might be kind of funny the first few times but we have lost our sense of humour now with calls coming in at a rate of about 13 a minute. The system is pretty much choked."

## Dog Food Fight

The market for top end dog food is getting more competitive as one major brand exits and three new brands enter. Australian quarantine rules over cooking temperatures stopped the importing of Nutro from the US. Popping up on the pet food radar are Artemis, Orijen and Pro Pak. Another brand, Australian-made Be-Natural is starting to be sold here after being primarily an export brand to Japan.



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