

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

Commentary: Augie Doggie finds a home

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

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Small dog No. 7 was rescued from the shelter. He calmed down quite a bit during the walk out behind the shelter to glimpse his disposition. Bit of a poodle, bit of who-knows-what mixed together. Cream colored, or is he white and just needs a bath? He's kind of square in the body, and round in the head. He's a little long and sort of short. But he can wag the tail, and tilts his head just so when he looks you in the eye. Perfect dog! His name should be Lucky, but Augie Doggie it is. Pay the adoption, and off to the house for a clean up; a Pantene bath, a few snips with the scissors, a few clips on the nails and a new collar with tags. A day of leash training helped a lot. Augie, you're ready!

Next stop is at the local nursing home. Running up and down the hall with an occasional "yap, yap" to announce "Hey everybody, Augie is here. Come on out and play."

"Hey pup, you come here," says the bearded old man with a twinkle in his eye. "You aren't knee-high to my old German Shepherd, but you sure are a rascal." A partnership forged out of necessity of being alone no longer, for both man and dog.

Augie watches out for the old man each day. He is so proud to lead the way on the short walks about the grounds when his owner is having a good day. What a trusted listener to the twists and turns of all the old stories. Tales of dogs gone by, friends gained and lost, and adventures through times good and otherwise. And a loyal watchdog, lying on the foot of the bed, Augie closely eyes all the moves of the caregivers, housekeepers, and greets the occasional friend just popping in to say "Hey, Augie, you're a good dog."

"If I go home, can he come with me? He's my partner, you know." Sure he is. And he is your dog and your partner as long as you want. He can go with you where ever you go. Thanks.

"Who's going to care for him when I'm gone?" Don't worry, Augie can stay right here and live with us. "Thanks, I just don't want him to be without a home after I'm gone. Come on Augie, help me get my coat, the afternoon is warm for January, and it will get cold soon. It's time for our walk."

He seems to live for that little dog. That darn Augie watches us every step while we clean the room and pick up his clothes and things. We even have to change the sheets when they go out for a walk, or go out to smoke the pipe. Well, thank God they have each other and neither one is alone anymore. I don't think he has any family. And he just doesn't seem to have as many good days as he used to. That man just seems to live for his Augie.

Augie is a real dog that lives in a Las Cruces area nursing home. He is from our local shelter. He is a local hero.

Mike Hainer is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.