

# LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

## ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

The real miracle of companion animals

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

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We humans have a responsibility for stewardship. Ourselves, our families, our community and our planet. Our responsibility for stewardship of other creatures includes our special relationships with companion animals. "An animal kept for companionship and enjoyment," is the definition.

Memories of wrangling up the most trusted horse on a frosted winter morning reminds me there is a bond of mutual understanding and respect. My girls always had one of our cats as a special guest for an afternoon tea party, or just wheeled them about the yard for a bumpy ride in a baby stroller on a pretend shopping trip. For 12 years Jackson and I have walked ritually to start each day. Somehow we come home each time with less worries and ready to start the day.

The recent tragedy of the horse, "Miracle," who is recovering from horrific wounds afflicted by a human makes the front page. Real miracles don't always make the paper. Shadow drops a tennis ball beside my desk chair saying "let's play ball in the backyard. It will only take five minutes and you know you will feel better." Our lives are meant to be shared with others, and this often includes the rewarding companionship from a dog, or cat, or other animals large or small.

Today Augie Doggie and Sissy Two Shoes (temporary names given by me) are being rescued from among the multitude of lost animals at the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley. They are going to Casa De Oro Rehabilitation and Nursing Center just north of Doña Ana. Dozens of elderly and disabled residents will form a relationship, have meaningful conversations, or just share some quality lap-time with Augie and Sissy each and every day. They will recall the pets in their life and the precious times as Sissy dances on her hind legs asking for a pet, or perhaps a morsel.

We all want a richer life with trust and love. When you are ready, go to the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley and adopt a cat or dog. Share the morning walks, a trip to the lake, or just some good lap-time to discuss the day's events. You will understand the real positive side. Our work for the animals is not just about community responsibility for controlling pet overpopulation and ending unnecessary killing. It is about a richer life with our trusted friends and companions, our pets. For more local welfare information go to [www.hssnm.org](http://www.hssnm.org).

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