

Darling Dog

For Dog Lovers, By Dog Lovers

JUNE 2025

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SUMMER SCOOPS & SNACKS:

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome READERS! 🐾

My job as editor of this magazine entrusts me with the task of making sure that you, the reader, have an enjoyable experience each and every time you pay our pages a visit. Whether it be the magazine's content or readability, it is my job to give you the best *Darling Dog* has to offer. I am always open to any ideas or constructive criticism that you may have!

I have been reflecting on the first six months of *Darling Dog* and realize that we have a good product. The content is really good. The artwork and style are really good too. I want it to be better. I want it to be the best magazine in its genre. That means that I have to be better. I have to work harder and engage with you, the ultimate judge, to make this product the best that it can be. Look, delivery, style—everything can be better.

Expect some new ideas in the near future. Expect some different looks. Expect a better website with more features and easier usability. Expect better. Everything *Darling Dog*—better.

Beau Boyd, Editor, DarlingDog.com

Dog Days of Summer

Summer Safety Tips For Your Dog

Summer is a time of sunshine, vacations, and lots of outdoor adventures with our dogs. But the rising temperatures also bring increased risks—from heatstroke to paw burns. This month, I'm sharing must-know veterinary advice to keep your dog safe, cool, and healthy all summer long.

1. KNOW THE SIGNS OF HEATSTROKE

Dogs don't sweat like humans. They cool off primarily by panting, which isn't always enough in extreme heat. Signs of heatstroke include heavy panting, drooling, bright red gums, vomiting, lethargy, and collapse. If you notice any of these symptoms, move your dog to a cool, shaded area immediately and seek emergency veterinary care.

2. HYDRATION IS EVERYTHING

Always bring fresh water on walks, hikes, and road trips. Add extra water bowls around your home and consider dog-safe electrolyte supplements if your pup is active or a heavy sweater (like brachycephalic breeds). Wet food and frozen treats can also help increase hydration.



3. HOT PAVEMENT HAZARDS

If the ground is too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog's paws. Walk early in the morning or later in the evening, and stick to grass or shaded paths. Consider dog booties or paw wax for protection, especially in urban areas.

4. NEVER LEAVE A DOG IN A PARKED CAR

Even on a mild day, temperatures inside a parked car can rise to dangerous levels within minutes. Cracking a window is not enough. Leaving a dog in a hot car is not only unsafe, it's illegal in many places. Always bring your pup with you or leave them at home in the AC.

5. POOL & WATER SAFETY

Not all dogs are natural swimmers! Always supervise your dog around pools, lakes, and beaches. Introduce them slowly to water, and consider a canine life vest for boating or swimming. Rinse off chlorine or saltwater afterward to protect their skin and coat.

MEET DR. MAX HARPER, DVM

Dr. Max Harper, DVM, is a practicing veterinarian with a passion for educating pet parents about all things canine. He believes every dog deserves a long, happy, and healthy life.

DOGTER'S CORNER

Summer Smart:

Quick Vet-Approved Warm-Weather Tips

- **Frozen Fun:** Make pup-sicles using low-sodium broth, plain yogurt, or mashed banana frozen in silicone molds.
- **Sunscreen For Dogs?:** Yes! Dogs with short or light-colored coats can get sunburned. Use a vet-approved pet sunscreen, especially on noses and ears.
- **Bug Watch:** Mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks thrive in summer. Stay current on all preventatives to avoid heartworm and vector-borne diseases.
- **Grooming Reminder:** Brushing out the undercoat helps regulate body temperature—but don't shave double-coated breeds. Their coats protect from both heat and sunburn.

Final Woof: Summer is a season of connection and joy—but it's also a time when we must be extra mindful of our dogs' well-being. A little planning goes a long way in preventing common heat-related issues. If you ever have doubts about how your dog is handling the heat, reach out to your vet—we're happy to help. 🐾

The *Ultimate* Summer Bucket List For You And Your Dog

Summer is here, and there's no better adventure buddy than your dog. Whether they're the type to cannonball into the lake or sunbathe in the yard like royalty, this season is full of ways to make unforgettable memories together.

From road trips to pup-friendly popsicles, we've created the ultimate summer bucket list for dog lovers who want to soak up the sunshine and the snuggles. No matter your budget or location, you'll find easy and joyful ways to bond with your four-legged bestie, while keeping things safe, cool, and fun.

Ready to give your pup the best summer ever? Let's dig in!

1. Have A Splash Day: Set up a kiddie pool in the backyard, turn on the sprinklers, or visit a local dog-friendly beach. Don't forget the waterproof toys!

2. Go On A Scenic Hike: Find a shady trail, pack extra water, and let your dog take the lead (literally and figuratively). Bonus points for sunrise or sunset hikes.

3. Host A Backyard Dog BBQ: Invite your dog's best buds over for a cookout—grilled chicken for them, burgers for you. Make frozen peanut butter treats for dessert!

4. Make DIY Pup Popsicles: Freeze blended banana, Greek yogurt, and a touch of peanut



butter in silicone molds. Serve during a sunny afternoon for instant tail wags.

5. Visit A Dog-Friendly Café Or Brewery: Find a spot with a dog menu and enjoy a chill afternoon on the patio. Pup-uccinos, anyone?

6. Take A Summer Road Trip: Explore a nearby town, state park, or lakeside hideaway. Just be sure your dog is safe, secure, and AC'ed up in the car!

7. Plan A Sunrise Or Sunset Picnic: Pack snacks and a blanket and head to a quiet park for a cozy picnic at golden hour. Your dog will love the sights (and bites).

8. Teach A New Trick Outdoors: The grass makes a great training mat! Try fun tricks like "spin," "roll over," or even beginner agility skills using pool noodles and lawn chairs.

9. Set Up A Dog Photo Shoot: Grab a bandana, head to a wildflower field or beach, and snap your dog's "Summer 2025" glamour shots. Make it a tradition!

10. End With A Lazy Lounge Day: Sometimes the best summer days are the quiet ones. Open the windows, nap in the shade, and just be together.

SOAK UP THE SEASON

Summer comes and goes in a flash, but the memories you make with your dog last forever. Whether you check off all ten bucket list ideas or just one, what matters most is the time you spend soaking up the season together.

So grab the treats, leash, sunscreen (for both of you!), and get ready for tail wags, belly rubs, and a whole lot of sunshine.

Here's to your dog's best summer ever. 🐾

Charlie's Big Summer

A Bucket List Adventure With Alex And Sophie



It all started with Sophie's sparkly gel pen.

She tore a page from her floral notebook and wrote in big, loopy letters:

"Charlie's Summer Bucket List!"

Alex leaned over the kitchen table, munching a peanut butter cracker. "Does Charlie even want a bucket list?"

Sophie rolled her eyes. "Obviously. He just can't write it himself. That's what we're for."

Charlie, their golden retriever, lay flopped across the cool tile floor with one ear inside out and his paw twitching from his dreams of chasing squirrels.

"First up: a picnic," Sophie declared, adding a heart next to it. "With peanut butter pup pops and a dog photo shoot."

That Saturday, the kids packed a cooler with juice boxes, dog treats, and their mom's homemade popsicles for Charlie. Sophie packed a flower crown too, "for the photo vibes." Alex brought Charlie's squeaky donut toy and a camera they borrowed from Dad.

Willow Creek Park was sunny and green, with just enough breeze to make Charlie's ears flap like miniature capes. They found a shady spot and spread out the blanket. Sophie placed the flower crown gently on Charlie's head.

Alex tried to take a picture—but Charlie had other plans.

Before anyone could say "cheese," Charlie lunged after a butterfly, knocked over the juice boxes, and rolled straight through the hummus.

"CHARLIE!" Sophie squealed, scrambling after him.

Charlie trotted away proudly, flower crown lopsided, tail wagging like a metronome. Hummus clung to his fur like sand at the beach.

Alex was laughing so hard that he dropped the camera.

"I guess he's crossing things off the list his way," Alex said, wiping tears from his eyes.

By the end of the day, the picnic blanket was a mess, the pup pops were melted, and the photo shoot was mostly blurry pictures of a flying flower crown.

Still, Sophie drew a giant, sparkly checkmark next to "picnic" when they got home.

"That totally counts," she said. "It was chaotic and weird and amazing."

Charlie snored beside her, belly-up and completely content; dreaming, no doubt, of butterflies, snacks, and all the summer adventures still ahead. 🐾

Bitch, Please:

The Life Of Mae, A Boykin From Mobile



Installment VII

Hellur! (Said as spelled, with the voice of Tyler Perry as Madea.) Summer is fast approaching in temperatures and mindset. As much as I like the winter months, I have to admit that I am more of a summer type of lass. My human—who I think of as a**—and the spare infinitely prefer warmer to cooler weather. I am ready for it, too! Come tomorrow, I get my first summer cut for the approaching season. I will transform from a furry bear to a sleek seal! My charming and mischievous self will be aerodynamic! The increased speed

will hopefully pick up my human's pace. That joker needs to get his own physique in shape for summer! Warmer weather brings to mind trips to the beach. When I say beach, I mean the Gulf Coast. Being a Mobilian, the Gulf's many beaches are within a short drive from my homey midtown bungalow. My favorite Gulf Coast watering hole is Dauphin Island. Let me tell you, Boykin-loving reader, of my first visit to that quintessential Gulf Coast destination. Pour yourself a cocktail. I am likely to take a sip of my human's. The brown water compliments my soon-to-be trimmed fur coat!



My human introduced me to the joys of the Gulf when I was a puppy.

Our first forays were not to Dauphin Island but Bear Point. One of my grandmother's friends, a lovely lady who is a second mother to my human, has long had a place there. I loved my initial forays to salty air and spirit that is the Gulf. Bear Point holds many memories for my human. It is not Dauphin Island, my place and the subject of this account. When the spare first appeared on the scene, some three years ago, we visited the Island. All three of us love that crunchy community. Almost completely devoid of the big developments that unfortunately characterize so much of the Gulf, Dauphin Island reminds my human of the way the Southern coast was in his early childhood. He misses the days of the Gulf being populated by summer colonies shaped by the seasonal occupation of families from across the Deep

South. The old families of many coastal and inland towns and cities all had their own favored summer haunts, many going back generations. The summer houses were nothing grand. They were like beach and bay houses should be—informal and rambling. Screened porches and decks were true outdoor rooms that brought the smells and views of the water inside and their occupants outside. You did not have to worry about where you placed your towel once you got inside. "Seconds" from town comprised the furniture. Pictures of family and friends topped tables, fronted walls, and plastered the refrigerator. These summer houses were escapes from the formalities of life and places where you reconnected with families like your own in an environment that was anchored by place and tradition.

The Dauphin Island experience starts before my little family even leaves town. I know what is going down as soon as the beach chairs emerge from the storage house. Towels and coolers appear. The humans are not wearing their stiff collars and pressed khakis. Bathing suits and breathable shirts are the uniforms of the day. Towels and coolers appear. I make my selection of a favored toy from my play basket and watch with joy as those humans prepare our day of fun in the sun! When not dashing in and out of the door, I pogo up and down in anticipation. In short, I make a genuine a** of myself. I am looking forward to the beach, not to mention the car ride to reach it! The chairs, towels, and cooler displace me from the back of our ride. My human tells me to stay in the middle portion of our ride. Rules do not apply to me, though. I hop from the front seats, the area where I am supposed to be, and the rear of the car. As the drive is about forty minutes, it does not take long to reach Dauphin Island. I love it when the human and the spare roll the windows down a bit. If you have seen the head of a brown dog emerging from a car on the road to the Island, that canine would be me.



“To the horror of the human and spare, I helped myself to them. The cheeseburger was delicious. That gal did not need it.”

On my first visit to Dauphin Island, I did not know what to expect of the journey. We drove over a big bridge. The sight of birds outside my window intrigued me greatly. I barked at them. My human told me to shut my trap, only with stronger language. The human uses such foul language, which is not suited to a lady such as myself. I gave it right back via the expression in my eyes and the barks from my snout. Does he not know it is a dog's world? I am the star of his dog-and-pony show, after all. Upon descending upon the Island, I could spy lots of activity. Cars, golf carts, people on foot—you name it.

Ultimately, we reached the main intersection and hooked a right. The center of the Island is forested, which is a good thing, for those trees help to keep it from washing away! A few minutes after making that right at the intersection, we drove into a parking lot. So to ensure that I was not left behind, I jumped between the human and the spare. They secured in the car a tad longer while

they gathered our possessions. I could see the beach. This lady was ready to go!

Cooler, chairs, and towels in tow, we began our walk down to the water. I led the way. You should not find that state of affairs as shocking in any shape, form, or fashion. I jerked the human in zig-zagging way all the way down to the advancing and receding tide. Oh, I have failed to mention that the rounded one was having neck issues. He has chronic pain in that area. Anything can tip it off. I feel for him during those times. All the same, I do not alter my movements, literally or figuratively. My constant pulling might have a role in his pain. Two tears in a bucket. Unbeknownst to me and the spare, the fatso popped a muscle relaxer on the ride to the Island. The pill was going into effect; a reality I would take advantage of very soon.

While the human and spare were setting up camp, I kept pulling on my lead. The tide, seagulls, people, and a few other dogs were all of interest to me. Finally, my people settled down into their chairs. It was at this time that I realized that the tubs was a tad out of it. A cold beer or two soon caused for even less monitoring of my movements. He removed my lead and this lady was off! Never leaving sight of my people, I ran along the beach and into the water. I was in heaven. When other dogs came along, the spare would capture me. The popping of the muscle relaxer was still unknown to us.

The pleasures of being on the water are so many and so nice. It was nice having the human detached a bit. I continued to take full advantage of the freedom afforded by the scenario. A lady who positioned her belongings near ours was out in the water. Reclining on a float, she was not paying attention to her chattels, including foodstuffs wrapped in aluminum. To the horror of the human and spare, I helped

myself to them. The cheeseburger was delicious. That gal did not need it. The spare questioned the human regarding his overall calm demeanor. The latter admitted to taking the muscle relaxer. The spare gave the human a look like I give the human. I back-kicked sand in both of their faces before taking off with a catch-me-if-you-can look!

My first trip to Dauphin Island almost became my last. Other trips have ensued since that first and most glorious visit though. Let me tell you, I thoroughly relish those trips. The preparations, trek, and beach time are all equally relished. If all visits were like the first, that burger was delicious! 🐾



MEET CART BLACKWELL

Cartledge Weeden Blackwell III, "Cart," is a historian and a curator. Blackwell was born in Selma, Alabama. He obtained an undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston and his graduate degree from the University of Virginia. He authored *Of People and Of Place: Portraiture in Alabama (1870-1945): Reconstruction to Modernism* for the Alabama Chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America (NSCDA). His second book, *Of Color and Light: The Life and Art of Artist-Designer Clara Weaver Parrish*, is to be published by the University of Alabama Press in the winter of 2025.

Blackwell has penned scores of articles for magazines and numerous essays for exhibit catalogues. An eighth-generation Alabamian, Cart loves his native state. When not found on his family's farm in Wilcox County, he is on the Gulf Coast. Regardless of where he finds himself, Mae, his crafty spaniel, is always by his side!

DOG IS MY
CO-PILOT

The Upset Stomach

**“Yes. I let the dog
sleep in the bed
with me. Heck, I’d let
him borrow my car
if he needed it.”**



That is currently the quote on my favorite greeting card. Winnie Lew has a bladder of steel and would stay in bed until 10:00 in the morning if I'd let her. She also has the regularity of a train schedule when it comes to her morning constitutional. That said, there is nothing worse than when your dog, who does indeed sleep in your bed, is whimpering in your face and standing on your chest at 12:15 a.m., 2:30 a.m., 3:30 a.m., and 4:30 a.m. The only reason Winnie Lew would do this is because she has an upset stomach and needs to go out. Without opposable thumbs, she depends on me to let her out.

So at 12:15 a.m., I drag myself out of bed, fumble for my glasses, try to find my shoes, and stumble to the back door. Winnie Lew dances as I try to put her harness on as she is looking back at me with that urgent expression that says, "Human, if you don't hurry, there will be consequences we'll both regret." Once she is appropriately tethered to me, she makes a beeline for her favorite spot in the middle of the backyard. I stand there in my mismatched pajamas, shivering in the night air, waiting for her to finish.

We come back in, and I get a washcloth and clean her rear end fluff. She clearly needed to go, if you know what I mean. "Good girl," I mumble, though I'm not feeling particularly generous with my praise at this hour.

Back to bed we go. I drift off, only to be awakened again at 2:30 a.m. by panting and a cold nose pressed against my cheek. The same routine follows, except this time, I stub my toe on the bedside table and have to bite my lip to keep from cursing loudly and waking my neighbors, or worse yet, the raccoons and possums. I decide this time that Winnie Lew might need a peanut butter-covered Pepto-Bismol tablet. She eagerly eats her "treat" and back to bed we go.



I've barely gotten back to sleep by the 3:30 a.m. wake-up call. I've given up on proper attire, pajama bottoms be damned, and just go out in my nightshirt. I don't even try to find my shoes, just grab a pair of flip-flops by the door. Winnie Lew and I stumble outside like two drunks after last call, her pulling me along with surprising strength for a dog who seemed so miserable moments ago.

"This better be important," I mutter as she sniffs around and finds the perfect spot—adjacent to the two other perfect spots. The moon is full tonight, casting everything in a silvery glow that would be beautiful if I weren't so exhausted. Winnie Lew finally does her business, and I notice with relief that things seem to be firming up. Maybe the Pepto is working.

By 4:30 a.m., I've abandoned all pretense of being a functional human being. When the whimpering starts again, I don't even open my eyes. I just reach out, pat around until I find her furry head, and groan.

"No, Winnie Lew. Please. Have mercy."

But mercy isn't in her vocabulary in these early morning hours. She nudges my hand with her wet nose and gives a pitiful little whine that somehow manages to convey



both urgency and apology. I crack one eye open to look at the clock: 4:37 a.m.

"You're killing me, baby girl. You know that, right?"

I don't bother with the light switch this time. I've memorized the obstacle course that is my kitchen through the night's previous expeditions. The harness goes on by feel alone, my fingers fumbling with the single clasp. This should be simple but now feels like advanced engineering. Winnie Lew dances impatiently, her nails clicking on the hardwood like impatient Morse code. I shuffle toward the door, my hand trailing along the wall for support.

Outside, the world has that eerie pre-dawn stillness. Not even the birds are awake yet. The air has a damp chill that seeps straight through my thin nightshirt. I stand there, arms wrapped around myself, watching Winnie Lew quickly circle, sniff, and settle on yet another adjacent spot. I have no idea by this time if the desperate squats are successful.

"That's my girl," I whisper, with more sincerity this time. I do one last, thorough bottom clean. Her poor tummy.

I make a mental note to call the vet first thing in the morning—the real morning, when the sun is actually up.

When we get back inside, I fill her water bowl and watch her take a few tentative sips. Her eyes meet mine, and I swear there's gratitude there, mixed with a touch of embarrassment.

She lets me sleep until my alarm goes off at 6:30 a.m. I drag myself out of bed and begin my morning routine, this time to go outside for our walk. My ensemble has changed to shorts, a sweatshirt, and my running shoes. Winnie Lew and I head outside. Her tail is still wagging as we go for a short walk, but I can see that she doesn't feel well. Once back inside, I get myself ready for work and call the vet at 7:30 a.m. I don't even bother with any coffee knowing there is no brew strong enough. The vet says to bring her in at 8:00 a.m.

When Dr. West comes in, Winnie Lew wags her tail as if to say, "Finally, some relief." Because this has happened before, he looks at her and says "What have you gotten yourself into this time? Have you been back in the cat food again?" All of a sudden, it occurs to me that, yes, Winnie Lew was eating my neighbor's cat's food last time we were at the vet's. I sheepishly tell the doc, that yes, that may be it. He politely admonishes me and Winnie Lew, gives her a shot and medicine to take home, and sends us on our way.

When we get back in the car to go home, I look over at Winnie Lew who is already starting to perk up thanks to the miracle shot. "You're going to be the death of me, you know that?" I say, reaching over to scratch her ears. She responds with that goofy, tongue-lolling smile that makes it impossible to stay mad at her.

Back home, I call the church to let them know I'll be late. Again. Due to Winnie Lew's unauthorized cat food buffet that led to a night of gastrointestinal distress and emergency bathroom breaks. I tell them I will be there as soon as I can, but I look like I've been through

war. "Put another pot of coffee on. The strong stuff," they say.

After hanging up, I glance at Winnie Lew, who's now curled up on my bed. "Lucky you're cute, co-pilot." She wags her tail but doesn't bother to open her eyes. And with that, my day officially begins. 🐾



MEET AMY GEORGE

Amy George is an Episcopal priest in Selma, Alabama, where she shares an office with her volunteer pastoral care assistant, Winnie Lew. When not doing God's work, you can find Amy doing Dog's work—vacuuming a never ending supply of dog hair, chauffeuring Winnie Lew, and being the provider of endless dog treats. Amy feels blessed to have no fear of ever being attacked by squirrels, UPS delivery people, or small lizards.

A German Shorthaired Pointer dog is running through tall, dry grass. The dog has a white coat with dark brown spots and patches. Its ears are large and floppy, and it is looking directly at the camera with a focused expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus field of grass and shrubs.

Hunting Dogs

& Life Lessons

My father was not a dog person. At least not in the way I think about dog people now. And neither were any of the other men I admired.

Don't get me wrong. We had dogs. Always. But they didn't live in the house, and they didn't get treats. They were working dogs. They lived in a pen at the back of the property, and they only got out to hunt.

I blame *Garden & Gun* magazine for gentrifying hunting dogs. And hunting. And most every other problem I have with aspirational bourgeoisie culture in the modern South. I am convinced that quail hunting with expensive dogs and wearing expensive clothes while riding a mule-drawn wagon was never actually a part of our culture until people in Buckhead and Mountain Brook started reading *Garden & Gun* and buying into its nostalgia for a past that, if at all accurate, was rare. Let's be real. Old money doesn't spend money or put on airs. If they were hunting with mule-drawn wagons, it's because they thought ATVs were expensive and downright silly. And they damned sure didn't have a faux-campaign-furniture style briefcase bar full of expensive whiskey with little collapsible cups. They most likely had a Coca Cola and a pack of Tom's peanut butter crackers in the game pouch of the vest they bought at TG&Y on clearance 40 years ago.

I grew up hunting coveys of wild quail with my father on massive tracts of paper mill property. We started walking at daybreak and walked all day. We layered our clothing not for warmth but to turn briars. I got my first pair of "briar britches" for Christmas when I was 14 years old, and I felt like the luckiest, most privileged kid in the world. Our dogs were good dogs, but they didn't have pedigrees. They didn't come from a renowned kennel, and they didn't get trained

before we got them. They ranged farther than the dogs I hunt over now, and they'd hold a point until we caught up with them. My father didn't have a lanyard full of shock collar controls. If a puppy broke point while backing a mature dog, my father peppered it with a load of number 8 shot. Inhumane? Maybe. But it worked. And it didn't seem to me that the puppy minded much. He just kept hunting and eventually quit breaking point before my father gave permission.

We didn't have custom-fitted over-under shotguns imported from the King's armorer in London. We had Belgian Browning Auto-5s. No plug. Plugs were only required for migratory fowl like doves. So we loaded them "bird-bird-buck-bird-bird." Because you always jumped the biggest deer when quail hunting. And you instinctively learned to pull the trigger three times as fast as you could when you jumped one.

My father started taking me everywhere he went as early as I can remember. On a 10-hour quail hunt through thick briars, I'd walk until I was exhausted. When I got tired, he'd simply stomp out a clear spot in the sage, lay me down for a nap, tie a piece of flagging tape to a nearby branch, and hunt back to me a few hours later.

By the time I was 15, I had my own truck, my own dogs, my own shotgun, and a pocket full of permission slips from sweet widow ladies to hunt the pea patches behind their sheds. My friend Bo and I went to school every day during quail season with a dog box full of dogs in the bed of our pickup trucks and a shotgun behind the seat. After school, we'd hunt over small family farms and raise three or four wild coveys before supper.

When I describe my adolescence to my "new

friends” who didn’t grow up in that time and place, I always recount a specific story. I was 16 or 17. When I went to feed the bird dogs one morning before school, one of my dogs was missing. It was not unusual. My personal experience with bird dogs says they are escape artists par none. We lived on a long dirt road, and our closest neighbor, about a quarter mile up the road, had a yard full of chickens, peacocks, and guinea fowl. I didn’t care for him, and that dulled my concern when I saw my dog on his front porch shaking the life out of the last of his birds. His yard was littered with carcasses, but my only concern was that my dog had tasted blood and therefore had become cursed with that most dreaded of maladies for hunting dogs—the hard mouth.

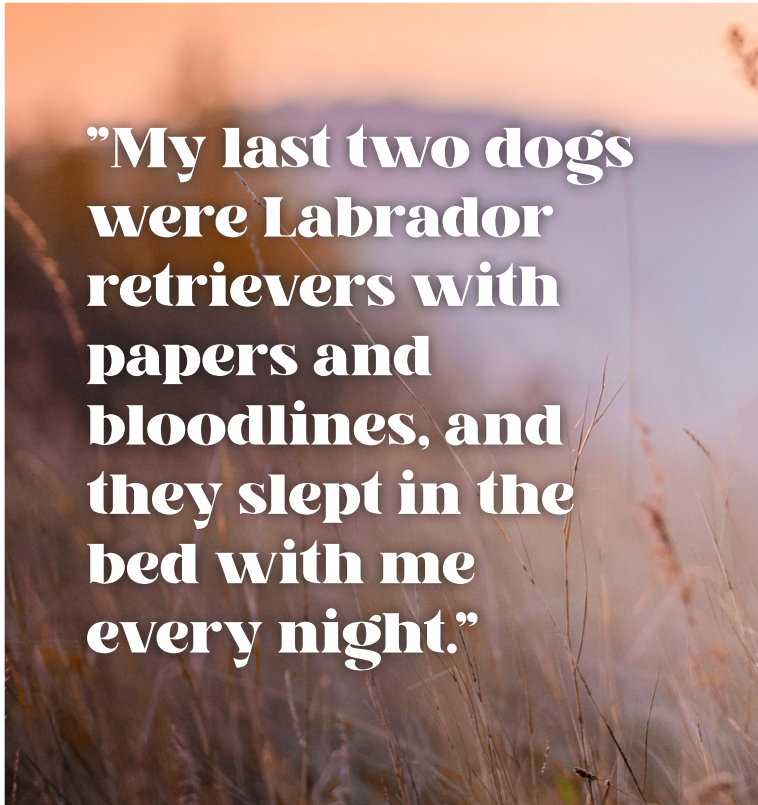
I scooped up my dog and threw him in the back of my truck. It wasn’t hunting season, so I didn’t have a dog box in the bed of my truck, but I knew the head football coach—with whom I often hunted—had one in the bed of his truck. So when I got to school, I pulled in behind the gym, tossed my dog in his box, and walked into his office.

“Hey, Coach. My dog killed a bunch of chickens this morning, so I’m going to have to kill him. I didn’t have time to fool with it this morning, so I threw him in your truck. I’ll get him after school and take him home and shoot him.”

“OK.”

I didn’t want to kill the dog. I dreaded it. But that’s what you did to bird dogs with a hard mouth.

Salvation came (for the dog and me) when Coach knocked on the door of my second period chemistry class and asked that I join him in the hall. I walked out with the teacher’s permission and waited.



“My last two dogs were Labrador retrievers with papers and bloodlines, and they slept in the bed with me every night.”

“You ain’t got to kill that dog. I sold it. Here’s your half.”

I guess I should have asked why I only deserved half of the sale price of my dog, but I was young and naïve and thinking of my fellow man.

“Hold on, Coach. That dog has a hard mouth. He’s tasted blood. He’s ruined. Did you tell them that?”

“He wanted a bird dog. There was a bird dog in my truck that you didn’t want, and didn’t want to kill. Everybody’s happy. Shut up and take the money.”

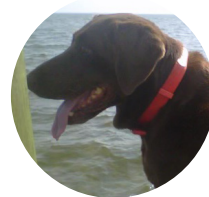
So I shut up and took the money.



That was more than 30 years ago. I can't tell you exactly when everything changed, But nobody hunts wild coveys any more. Fifteen-year old kids don't have their own trucks and guns and dogs. I live in the city and don't have a pen full of working dogs in the back of the property. My last two dogs were Labrador retrievers with papers and bloodlines, and they slept in the bed with me every night. My parents have a miniature schnauzer that is more pampered than Little Lord Fauntleroy. I've taken my father on trips to hunt released birds on manicured plantations over expensive dogs and guides with lanyards full of shock collar controllers. I didn't have the heart to tell him that every bird we killed over the limit cost me a small fortune. What's the point? He was a kid

in a candy store, and it made me happy to see him happy.

Who am I to say what's better or worse? It was what it was and it is what it is. But I know one thing for certain: I'm a dog person. I have zero desire to hunt anything that doesn't involve dogs. I want them to lay beside my chair while I watch the news and read a book. I want them to ride in the front seat of my truck and sleep in the bed with me. I want to give them treats and brag about them to my friends. I don't subscribe to *Garden & Gun*, and I think it's blatant propaganda to encourage consumerism in new money pretenders. But hey . . . if it makes them happy to wear Martin Dingman ostrich boots on a mule-drawn wagon in South Georgia, who am I to judge? 🐾



MEET CURT BROWN

Curt Brown's childhood and adolescence in Monroe County in rural Southwest Alabama stamped him for life. He loves bird dogs, books, whiskey, cigarettes, pretty women and rock and roll. He over-tips at restaurants and bars and freely gives his cash and spare change to panhandlers in hopes that Jesus approves. He learned everything he knows about politics and popular culture from *MAD Magazine* in the 1980s and believes work is a necessary evil. He'd rather be on the Alabama River than the French Riviera. He hopes to spend eternity sharing a luxury apartment with Dan Jenkins, Larry McMurtry and Jerry Jeff Walker and gathering daily with all his old running buddies for dinner and drinks at Bud's Bar and Jubilee Seafood.

Summer Scoops & Snacks:

Treats For June Adventures

June is the start of summer fun—whether you're hitting the trails, splashing at the beach, or relaxing in the backyard. Keep your pup cool and energized with these fresh and fun homemade treats. Each one is simple to make, dog-safe, and bursting with seasonal flavor!



1. FROZEN BERRY PAW-SICLES

A cool, antioxidant-rich treat that's perfect for warm-weather play days.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups oat flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats-
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/2 cup strawberries, chopped
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt (unsweetened)
- 1/4 cup water

DIRECTIONS:

1. Blend the berries, yogurt, and water until smooth.
2. Pour the mixture into silicone molds or ice cube trays.
3. Freeze for at least 4 hours.
4. Pop out and serve as a refreshing reward!

Storage: Keep frozen and serve on hot days or after active play.

2. CHICKEN & SWEET POTATO JERKY BITES

A protein-packed chewy treat that's ideal for summer hikes.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cooked chicken breast, shredded
- 1/2 cup mashed, cooked sweet potato
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup oat flour

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C).
2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix until dough-like.
3. Roll into small logs or flatten into shapes.
4. Bake on parchment paper for 35–40 minutes, flipping the jerky bites after 20 minutes.
5. Cool completely for a chewy texture.

Storage: Refrigerate up to 1 week or freeze for longer shelf life.

3. BANANA COCONUT TRAIL BALLS

Portable, bite-sized snacks for on-the-go dog adventures.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 tbsp unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp peanut butter (xylitol-free)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well.
2. Form into small balls using your hands or a spoon.
3. Place on a tray and refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up.

Storage: Keep in the fridge for up to a week.



June Tips For Dog Parents

1. BEAT THE HEAT

Always carry extra water for your dog during outdoor adventures. A collapsible bowl and frozen treats can help keep them hydrated and cool.

2. MIND THE PAVEMENT

Hot sidewalks and sand can burn your pup's paw pads. Walk during cooler hours, or use protective booties if necessary.

3. SUMMER GROOMING

Brush regularly to reduce shedding and help your dog stay cooler. Consider a trim if your pup has a thick coat—but never shave double-coated breeds.

4. CELEBRATE SUMMER HOLIDAYS SAFELY

With Father's Day and the Fourth of July approaching, be mindful of BBQ leftovers and fireworks. Keep dogs away from bones, skewers, and loud noises. 🐾

Say TREATS!



Hey Paw- Tographers!

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