



# Tid Bits

By Michelle Padovan

## A Butt is better than a Bite!

The Welsh Police force is trying to retrain its dogs to 'head-butt' criminals rather than bite. The policy, directed from North Wales Police, comes as a result of increased compensation claims from members of the public who've been bitten by police dogs.

Dog squad handlers say the toothless tactic provides a safer way to tackle uncooperative crims. Instead of biting suspects, the dogs have been in training to subdue their

A ban on biting Police Dogs

targets by leaping and delivering a flying 'head-butt' to the midriff of the target. Critics say that this is yet another example of political correctness gone mad—putting the safety and rights of criminals before protecting the public. The dogs wear a muzzle that has a metal rod across the front of the apparatus that is designed to absorb the impact of the strike. The rights of criminals aside, we have to ask what about the impact this 'Hannibal Lecter' looking muzzle has on its canine wearers physically.

## Assisted living for ageing animals

Assisted living for the aged is nothing new, but how about the concept for aging animals in zoos? That's just what world renowned Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Zoo wants for its aging animals so that they can age gracefully, away from the prying eyes of visitors. A large retirement facility is already in the works for the zoo's aging bears. Eventually the zoo hopes that there can be assisted living for all its older residents including birds.

## Announcing Post-Apocalyptic Pet Care

A serious question for Christians "If Jesus returns tonight, who will feed your pets tomorrow?" An Internet site in America called 'Jesus Pets' points out a serious problem that born-again Christians must face if they own a pet: "Many Christians believe that animals do not go to heaven. So when Jesus comes back and you return with him to heaven, will there be somebody to take care of your dog or cat?"

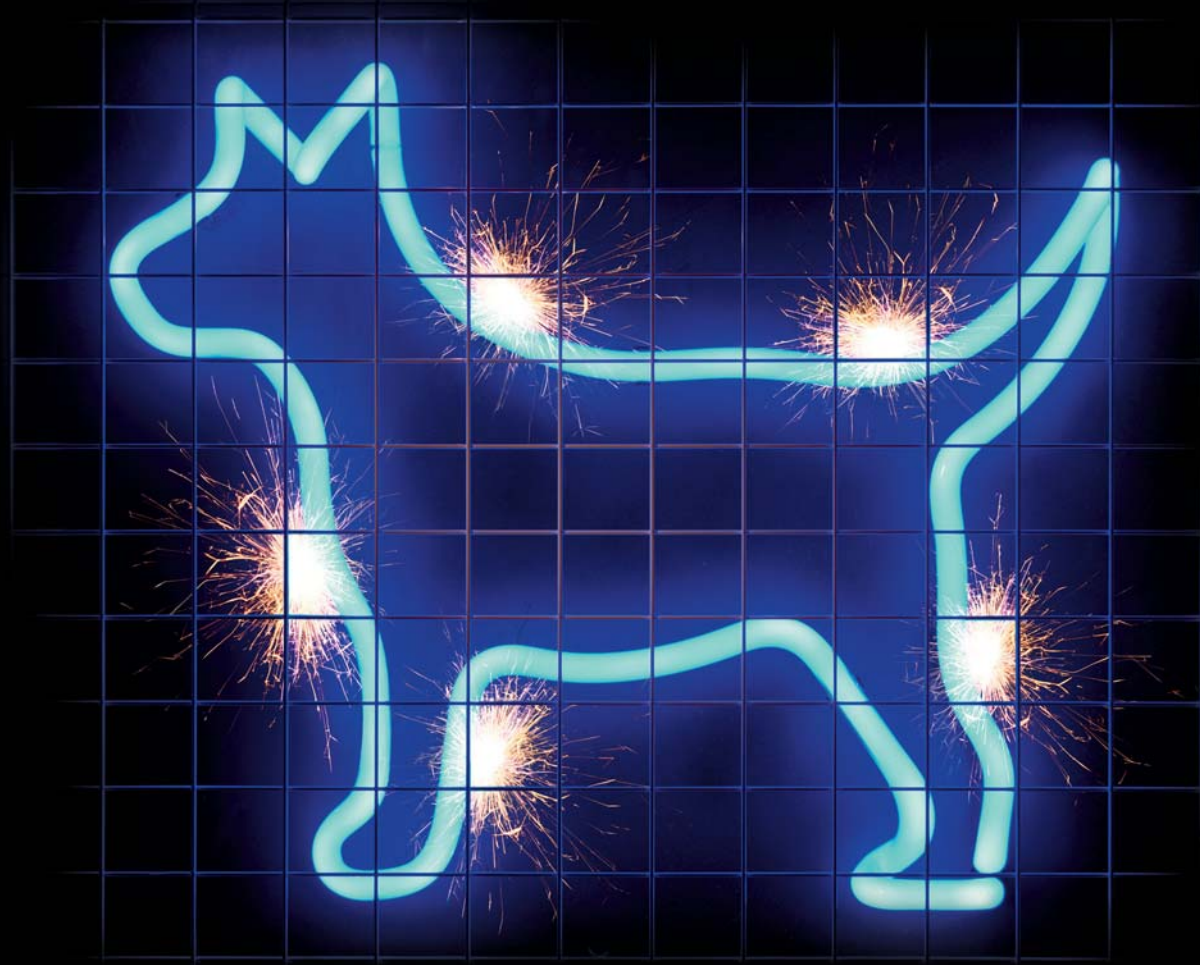
With the imminent collapse of the global economy and rampant godlessness, even the community shelters will not have the resources to care for your poor, hungry animals. So you need to make preparations."

Happily, they offer a solution: "We are assembling a community of heathen pet-lovers to care for pets that are 'left-behind.' We are co-ordinating with feed mills and kennels in preparation for your post-apocalyptic pet care needs."

Internet hoax or not, all we can say is 'only in America'.

## Cat lovers spit over Halloween

The Associated Press reported that several pet shelters in the US held off adopting out black cats around the Halloween period to prevent cats from being harmed, tortured or killed. Apparently there is a rise in the abuse of black cats around late October. US Humane Society leaders also say owners of black cats should keep their animals indoors for safety during the Halloween week. Very dark arts indeed!



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## Zoo's Cheetahs-For-Hire-Program takes a swipe

For NZ\$2,500, Wellington Zoo will hire out its two juvenile cheetahs, Charlie and Delta, for two hours at private functions. This off-site encounter has come under fire with concerns for the welfare of both the animals and public alike. The off-site cheetah visits have been in operation for 18 months in an effort to raise money for the zoo. In that time there have been six off-site promotional visits that require at least six zoo staff in attendance and one independent official from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

A media-relations official from the Zoo confirmed the program and stated that it was for educational purposes and restrictions applied. She stated that only ten people at any one time could meet the cheetahs and that MAF had to pre-approve the venue and nature of the visit.

## China gets rabid over stray dogs

Beijing authorities are cracking down on stray dogs in an effort to control the spread of rabies. They've recently started a two-month campaign to remove stray dogs from the capital's streets due to the increased threat of rabies. Reports indicate that over 110,000 people in China were given rabies vaccinations after being bitten by pets in the first eight months of this year and there have been nine deaths associated with this disease.

Authorities claim that stray dogs will be captured and then inoculated against the disease. No confirmation as to the fate of these strays in the long-term.

## Survivor Reality TV to determine the fate of endangered species

Eight of the World's most endangered species, teetering on the brink of extinction will be put in focus for a new reality TV program in the UK. The show will see celebrities put forward the case for their own chosen species. Viewers will then vote for the cause they prefer-much like Australian Idol or Big Brother.

The animals to be featured are the polar bear, mountain gorilla, giant panda, leatherback turtle, Asian elephant, Bengal tiger, orang-utan and hyacinth macaw. 50 percent of the money raised will go to the World Wildlife Fund to help the winning animal, with the remainder divided between the other seven.

## Kennel Cable

**Napoli Dogs Sunday December 24 at 7.30pm (AEDST) screening on Animal Planet**

A real life Sopranos doggie style: set in the Italian town of Naples, this would-be soap opera follows a pack of street dogs struggling to survive in the Napoli streets.

Known by everyone in town—and feared by most—seven dogs form the inner circle of a notorious four-legged street gang: The Napoli Dogs. Complete with love affairs, gang rivalries and bitter bouts of jealousy, this charismatic documentary tells their story, as runaway domestic dogs brave the city jungle, devising amazing strategies for survival and building up immense loyalties to each other.

**Happy Feet scheduled for release in Decembuurr!**

*Happy Feet* is Director George Miller's (Mad Max and Babe) first animated, full-length feature, scheduled for release on Boxing Day. *Happy Feet* is a comedy adventure set in the land of the Emperor Penguins in the heart of Antarctica. These penguins sing-and each needs their own special song to attract a soul mate. It centres on Mumble (voiced by Elijah Wood), who is the worst singer in the world but he has another talent-he can tap dance.

Other voices that lend their talent include Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman, Hugo Weaving and Robin Williams. Beat the Boxing Day heat and head into an icy, air-conditioned theatre near you and enjoy this delightful movie with a choc-top.



Cheetahs-for-hire

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