Musings from the land of the Golden Obsessed

We have a wonderful article on Slow-Cooking for your dog, a very special book review, and our continuing 10% off store-wide special.

The last few months have been filled with loads of excitement. Just not the kind of excitement that a homeowner relishes. We had started on a much needed kitchen remodel (23 years + a few Goldens will do that) . . . only living through it due to the help of our talented and understanding designer, Stuart Bunyea, of Stuart Kitchens.

The trouble began when we had a separate builder do the installation. He put in our newly purchased Stuart Kitchens cabinets incorrectly—some even backwards—further damaging them in an attempt to fix the errors. Damage was also hidden or ignored, our learning about it only after the fact. Even simple tasks, such as prepping the walls before painting, failed to be done. But, it was the fire shooting out of a new outlet, and a wiring short which could have burned down the house, that became the last straw.

So, we now must add 2 more months onto the 3 already spent, waiting for new cabinets and various materials. We have new contractors re-doing many parts of the remodel, and repairing the mistakes. Thousands of dollars of mistakes, of course.

While the before and after photos must wait, we knew you’d love seeing Alfie on our new tile floor. Notice the perfect match? Honestly, we never realized that our sweetie had subliminally inspired the new color scheme—until looking from across the room—and seeing the visual above.

We are in love with this new tile. It is a genuine gift as you cannot see the dirt or endless tufts of fur that abound in Golden homes like ours.

Alfie has enjoyed the 3-months long remodel, except for that one terrifyingly loud day when the old tile was being ripped out. He’s loved on every single workman who has appeared. It is his mom and dad who have been much less enamored.
Taking a bite out of cancer one working dog at a time

It is always sobering when we receive an application for a Working Dog Cancer Treatment grant (grants.landofpuregold.com).

Foundation grants are $500 per individual working dog in the U.S. or Canada, reimbursements provided directly to treating veterinary personnel. Applicants must be active working dogs, in the areas of assistance, detection, search & rescue, enforcement, military work, or animal-assisted therapy.

Our latest grant recipients are Therapy Dog, Marley, and Robin (Am-Can Ch. Nitro’s Boy Wonder SDHF BISS TD CGC, Police K-9/Search & Rescue Dog), pictured below in his Hope necklace on our new fundraising card.

Eight-year-old Marley, who was diagnosed with Thyroid Carcinoma, had a surgical removal of his thyroid and is now receiving chemotherapy treatments. He has comforted those in nursing homes and hospitals since age one and recently began working his magic at a cancer treatment facility.

Robin was diagnosed with Cutaneous Epitheliomatous Lymphoma, an aggressive form of cancer, on October 15, 2010 — just two days after his eighth birthday. Despite treatment costs of at least $10,000, our fundraiser and grant saved the day. Robin has made it through 16 radiation treatments at Cornell and is being closely monitored to determine if additional chemotherapy is required.

For those diagnosed with cancer, the embodiment of hope remains critical, Suzi Beber’s necklace creation (Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund at smilingblueskies.com) keeping this belief burning bright.

TRUE GIANTS... curing both humans & pets

The National Cancer Institute Director has challenged researchers to “eliminate the suffering and death caused by cancer by 2015.” Research in comparative oncology demonstrates that our dogs are critical to making that a reality.

Funding research in comparative oncology, the study of cancers that occur similarly in companion animals and humans, we plan on continuing to co-sponsor projects from Dr. Jaime Modiano’s (via the Minnesota Medical Foundation’s Comparative Oncology Research Fund).

Last year we provided $20,000 for his project, Discovery and Characterization of Heritable and Somatic Cancer Mutations in Golden Retrievers. This huge study has Dr. Modiano being joined by Dr. Jim Cerhan (Mayo Clinic), Dr. Matthew Breen (North Carolina State University), and Dr. Kerstin Lindblad-Toh (Broad Institute).

Proposing to identify and characterize heritable traits that contribute to the risk and also progression of hemangiosarcoma and lymphoma in Goldens, their long-term goals are:

1. to institute simple, straightforward tests to allow assessment of the specific genetic risk carried by an individual dog and thereby to allow breeders to develop strategies that will slowly reduce the incidence of hemangiosarcoma and lymphoma in Goldens, while retaining the positive phenotypes of the breed; and
2. to develop effective diagnostics, risk reduction, and treatment strategies for hemangiosarcoma and lymphoma that will benefit not only Goldens and other dogs, but also humans with these diseases.

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all. —Emily Dickinson

The important thing is not that we can live on hope alone, but that life is not worth living without it. —Orison Swett Marden

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow. —Orison Swett Marden

Hope never abandons you, you abandon it. —George Weinberg

Hope is a song in a weary throat. —Pauli Murray

One should be able to see things as hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise. —F. Scott Fitzgerald

We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope. —Martin Luther King, Jr.

The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure but from hope to hope. —Samuel Johnson

Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence. —Lin Yutang

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us. —Samuel Smiles

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us. —Samuel Smiles

Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; but remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for. —Epicurus

Hope is a waking dream. —Aristotle

Long live blue spaces where hope is a kite and dreams really do come true. —Anonymous

Above featured in our Hope Cards
never seen before. It was a big adventure. While I was the bone cruncher, Anna was the numbers cruncher, and the kitchen was a disaster area, covered with our potions and powders.

One thing remains the same, all these years later . . . crock potting is still one of the simplest ways you can make savory snacks and meals for your animal companions, and once you get the hang of it, there really are endless possibilities.

Here are a couple of basic recipes to get you on your way, using the National Research Council's guidelines for feeding pets. Check out the NRC site at dels.nas.edu/banr/petdoor.html for more information, and great pamphlets that you can download for your personal nutrition resources file.

The cats will come calling, when you make up this stew.

Use organic ingredients when possible.

The following quantities are “raw” quantities, before cooking.

1 pound ground turkey
1 pound beef heart, sliced in small pieces
1/4 ounce beef liver, sliced in small pieces
2 cups oatmeal
1/4 cup zucchini, chopped
6 cups filtered water

Combine all ingredients in your crock pot. Cover and cook on Low for 6 to 8 hours or High for 3 to 4 hours.

We love Dr. Greg Martinez’s Dog Dish Diet book & slow cooker recipes and knew Suzi had further insight as she began working with special needs crock potting almost 15 years ago.

I grew up in a home that had a pink and chrome 1957 Frigidaire Imperial stove. I’m not kidding. It was the most amazing stove, with two ovens and a drop down burner, so my mom could go from stove top to soup pot, with a quick flip of the burner. That was my first introduction to the art of slow, one pot cooking.

I also grew up with two Yorkshire Terriers, Julius and Caesar, and other assorted animals that I snuck into our house from time to time. Our dogs enjoyed slowly simmered specialties, just as much as we did.

The “Pretty in Pink” stove remained a hit in our home for over 40 years, and along the way, Rometoph clay pots and then Rival crock pots, showed up more and more on kitchen counters everywhere. In fact, I don’t know how I would have survived all my years of university without one!

Later, I came to the conclusion, that a crock pot would be perfect for my first forays into home prepared meals for my pets.

Thinking back on those days brings a smile and a chuckle. My friend Anna and I, would go from store to store, picking up fresh meats, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, oils, calcium supplements, things we had heard about and lots of things we'd
Crock Potting for Your Pet . . .
(continued)

hours. If you don’t have a crock pot, simply combine all the ingredients in a big pot, bring to a gentle boil, then turn down to simmer for 2 to 3 hours, stirring from time to time, so ingredients don’t stick to the bottom of your pot.

This recipe makes a full week’s worth of food for a 9 pound cat, providing approximately 250 calories per day, which includes about 40% protein, 25% carbohydrates, and 35% fat.

Drizzle 1/2 teaspoon of olive oil or another oil of your choice, on your cat’s food, just before serving.

Your dog will be delighted when you serve this sumptuous stew.

Use organic ingredients when possible.

The following quantities are “raw” quantities, before cooking.

1 pound ground turkey
1/4 ounce beef liver
4 cups sweet potato, chopped
1/2 cup zucchini, chopped (or other green vegetable of your choice, e.g., green beans, broccoli)
1 garlic clove, minced
1 small red apple with skin, chopped (or 1/4 cup other brightly coloured fruits and berries of your choice, e.g., blueberries, cranberries)
Pinch of Antarctic Sea Salt*
Sprinkle of Turmeric***
4 cups filtered water

Combine all ingredients in your crock pot. Cover and cook on Low for 6 to 8 hours or High for 3 to 4 hours. If you don’t have a crock pot, simply combine all the ingredients in a big pot, bring to a gentle boil, then turn down to simmer for 2 to 3 hours, stirring from time to time, so ingredients don’t stick to the bottom of your pot.

The raw sweet potatoes in this recipe, can be substituted with:

SWITCH IT UP WITH A VARIETY OF OILS AND LEAN MEATS

Sample Oils:
- Canola
- Hemp Seed
- Olive
- Rice bran
- Safflower
- Sunflower

Sample Lean Meats:
- Beef
- Bison / Buffalo
- Chicken
- Emu
- Turkey
- Venison
Crock Potting for Your Pet . . .

(continued)

Turmeric is not only a culinary herb, but it has many medicinal properties. It protects the liver and so much more. Turmeric has anti-cancer properties, anti-inflammatory properties, it’s antimicrobial, it supports the cardiovascular system, and it is also good for the digestive system.

To learn more about this powerful herb, check out Dr. Kidd’s Guide to Herbal Dog Care and All You Ever Wanted to Know About Herbs for Pets, by Mary L. Wulff-Tilford and Gregory L. Tilford.

This recipe makes one day’s worth of food for a moderately active 50 pound dog, providing approximately 1200 calories which includes about 30% from protein, 40% from carbohydrates, and 30% from fat.

These recipes can form the base for a complete diet for your animal companions, but you will need to add a calcium supplement and a complete vitamin/mineral complex to your cat or dog’s diet, and cats will need a taurine supplement too.

Don’t forget to check with your holistic veterinarian or nutritionist before embarking on a new diet programme for your pet, and make the transition to a new diet, slow and easy.

Crock potting for your pets is like learning to ride a bicycle. Once the training wheels come off, you and your pets can set off on a variety of cooking adventures, where the sky is the limit.

Suzi Beber, successfully creating special needs diets for dogs and cats for fourteen years, is the founder of the Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund, a part of the University of Guelph’s Pet Trust, and located on the web at smilingblueskies.com.

Crock Potting for Your Pet . . . (continued)

4 cups white potato
2/3 cup whole brown rice or whole white rice
1-1/2 cups oatmeal
2/3 cup pearled barley or barley flakes
2/3 cup Quinoa**

*Antarctic Pure Sea Salt originates in the Antarctic Ocean and the Benguela current carries the ice cold water up the west coast of South Africa where it is pumped into drying pans. It is dried by the sun and wind and then harvested by hand, with no heat processing or mineral extraction. Finally, it is hand packed, in South Africa, and in Canada. For further information, visit www.gatheringplacetrading.com.

**Quinoa is considered one of the world’s healthiest foods. It is a very good source of manganese and a good source of copper, two minerals that work as cofactors for the superoxide dismutase enzyme, which is an antioxidant that helps to protect red blood cells from injury caused by free radicals.

For the humans in your family, combine cooked Quinoa with a small can of organic mandarin oranges, 1 cup of sun dried unsulphured cranberries, and a liberal sprinkling of unsweetened coconut flakes, for a snack packed with protein. To learn more about the world’s healthiest foods, visit www.whfoods.com.

CALCIUM IS ESSENTIAL

Calcium is an essential building block for our pets’ nutritional health. When you are preparing food for your dog or cat, it is important to remember, that meat without bone is very high in phosphorus, so, in order to provide the proper calcium/phosphorus ratio, you need to add a calcium supplement to every meal.

An excellent guide to calcium supplementation can be found at Dr. Richard Pitcairn’s website, www.drpitcairn.com/.

Take lots of care when choosing a pure bone meal supplement for your pet, such as NOW or KAL. Or, consider a non-animal source of calcium, like Animal Essentials, by Merritt Naturals, a natural calcium from seaweed harvested off the Southwest coast of Ireland.

You can also make your own calcium supplement, by drying egg shells overnight, and then pulverizing them in a coffee bean grinder, then adding 1/2 teaspoon to each pound of meat served.
Even Bad Dogs Go To Heaven
More from the Dog Chapel

Published on September 1, 2010, Even Bad Dogs Go To Heaven is the last book to be written by Stephen Huneck. An internationally acclaimed painter and sculptor who died in 2010, he was the owner of Stephen Huneck Galleries in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

The Dog Chapel introduced readers to Stephen Huneck’s unique retreat for dogs and their owners, and his dog-centric philosophy captured the public’s attention. Golden pal, Leann Pickering, shared these impressions of the actual Dog Chapel and Dog Mountain:

“Though his art was fun and unique, that place Rochelle, is something you never forget once you have seen it. A doggie heaven on earth with those beautiful green rolling fields for a good ole back roll and scratch, hiking paths for running and three ponds for a great dive in and dog paddle along the hiking route. What a guy, he knew what our fur friends would love and created it.”

I think folks will cherish Even Bad Dogs Go To Heaven: More from the Dog Chapel, a follow-up to Huneck’s original Dog Chapel book. This hardcover, which contains 80 pages and 33 gorgeous full-color illustrations, offers a whimsical path to understanding the life cycle of our beloved dogs. It is the perfect gift for a bereaved dog owner, or anyone who believes that dogs have a special place in human life.

The book is a quick read, and yet quite thought provoking, when one considers its unique author. Stephen Huneck believed that “dogs bring us closer to nature, help us live in the moment, and make us feel unconditionally loved.” And, it shows in the book’s sequence of simple declarations and accompanying whimsical illustrations.

Stephen takes us from “Dogs Teach Us To Live In The Moment” to “We Will Remember Them And They Will Remember Us” and “Dogs Can Save Us, Body And Soul.” And, a final declaration of “Don’t Be Afraid To Love Again” is pivotal for those successfully journeying through the stages of grief to recovery.

I have always felt a bond to Stephen Huneck, even though we had never met. A lover of both Labrador and Golden Retrievers, in 1994 he was stricken with the same disease that took my father’s life in the span of three months.

Stephen was diagnosed with Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) after falling down a flight of stairs. He had to be brought back to life and remained in a coma for two months. Doctors were not hopeful, but with the help of his wife, Gwen, Stephen made a full recovery, relearning everything from how to walk to how to sign his name.

During his convalescence, Stephen kept carving away, creating iconic images that will be forever linked to him. He also reflected on the cycle of life and those rituals utilized to cope with loss. This reflection resulted in his creation of the Dog Chapel, an 1820s-style Vermont church on Dog Mountain, a hill on Huneck’s mountain-top farm.

But in these more recent years, like many other Americans, Stephen’s gallery had been adversely affected by the economic downturn, and he feared losing the Dog Chapel, as well as the Dog Mountain and his home. Towards the end, he was forced to lay off nearly all of his employees, people that he considered to be family. It was probably the final devastating blow, as Stephen felt responsible for their welfare.

Despite being treated for depression, a continuing despondency pushed Stephen to tragically take his own life on January 8, 2010.

It did not matter that Gwen told him how she loved him and that rather than being ashamed, he should be proud of his accomplishments. She knew from the thousands of visitors to Dog Mountain how much they treasured his art and how grateful they were to Stephen for creating such a meaningful place as the Dog Chapel. But, she and the doctor were not to prevail, as Stephen’s pain simply proved too great.

It is very hard to know you have done everything possible and yet still be unable to alter such a negative course of events.

Knowing that Even Bad Dogs Go To Heaven was written in the throes of great despair, makes this book’s message that much more meaningful. When I think about the premise—that those who do wrong are still accepted in the end—I wonder whether Stephen was hoping this would be true for himself as well.

Reviews from Golden Mom Rochelle
I am always on the lookout for the latest and the greatest books . . . even though there is so little room left to store all these finds. Authors who have been kind enough to share their latest publications may see reviews here, at our website, or our foundation’s blog.

Not one to be negative, though, only those books receiving my “2 PAWS UP” Stamp will appear. My mom was right, of course. If you have nothing good to say, don’t say anything at all.

Working with Goldens since 1987, my bookshelves are overflowing with animal themed books and media. At our Foundation’s website you can find my favorites. The categorized listing includes items in my possession, or from recognized authors I’ve come to trust.


Just visit: store.landofpuregold.com/books.htm!
WOOF WOOF

You simply never want to miss the latest from Dr. V, absolutely the most fun veterinarian online. She Facebooks. She Blogs. She Tweets. She plays with Barbies. Oops, too much information.

PET PEEVES

By Dr. V of pawcurious.com fame

I was recently asked, “What are you grateful for?” Well shoot, what am I not grateful for? I am blessed with a healthy family and people and pets who love me. The rest is gravy (to start throwing in Thanksgiving puns.)

But I think the question was more specific to veterinary stuff, so let me start with telling a story:

When one of my dogs was diagnosed with melanoma, I did what any good general practitioner would do and bundled her off in the car to the specialist. In our area, we are fortunate to have not one but several veterinary oncologists, including one who specializes in radiation oncology (which is the treatment of choice for this type of cancer.)

We sat in the exam room and he outlined the course of treatment: it was intensive, involving multiple anesthesias, and fairly expensive. It is the sort of thing most owners probably cannot or would not do due to the expense and time involved. I understand that, and I respect that. It is not for everyone.

“We also talked about other things, our families and careers and all that stuff you talk about when you are chatting with someone with whom you have a lot in common. “I’ve stopped telling strangers what I do for a living,” he said.

“Why?” I asked, figuring it was the same reason I don’t: too many people pumping me for free advice.

“Because I’ve had several people tell me I wasted my career on pets,” he responded. I sat there open-mouthed, wondering if that was a joke. It wasn’t.

“When I told a woman at my daughter’s school that I was a veterinary radiation oncologist, she actually got angry,” he said. “She said to me, how could you waste all your time and effort on that when there are so many children out there with cancer that you could be helping instead?”

As if there was a vast shortage of MDs entering the field.

The underlying implication, of course, is that until all humans are healthy and happy, well, pets just have to deal. And we all know what the chances are of that happening.

Can see this coming from a mile away

Tonight I attended an orientation for new Girl Scout troop leaders. I thought it would involve some construction paper ideas, handing me a pile of beanies and wishing me luck.

Oh no. Oh NO. Starting a Girl Scout troop is like applying to vet school. There’s reference checks, medical histories, asking for when I got my last tetanus shot…it’s nuts.

And the cookies. Oh, the cookies. Mandatory cookie training is December 11th. I’ll let that sink in: mandatory cookie training. What have I gotten myself into?

The co-leader and I are both grimacing at this particular responsibility. She sent an e-mail out to the other moms asking if someone would be the Cookie Mom, but so far no one has bitten.

“I’ll do it if I absolutely have to,” I said, “but I really think it would be a recipe for disaster.” The thought of Brody alone in a house full of 500 boxes of Thin Mints strikes terror into my heart.

As a reminder, this was my daughter’s birthday, 2009:

When I got home from the meeting, I found that Brody had removed an entire bunch of bananas from the counter, peeled them individually, and eaten them, leaving nothing but one solid pile of banana peels on the floor. I cleared absolutely everything off the counter that I deemed to be at risk, so now he’s moved on to peeling bananas.

DEFINITELY Not It for Cookie Mom.
Follow our Golden Brick Road  
... for a good cause

PLANT IT SEEDED GREETING CARDS

We love these unique eco-friendly, biodegradable cards. They are so unique and simply perfect for many occasions from simple friendship, to thank-you, to birthday wishes, and finally sympathy. And the poetry on these cards is simply wonderful. Check them out at http://bit.ly/plantit.

LAND OF PUREGOLD FOUNDATION STORE

Shop for items that typify our organic, eco-friendly, chemical-free view of wellness and prevention, allowing you to shop for what truly matters — health, home, happiness and healing. And, 100% of the profit from sales funds cancer research and treatment.

Be sure to learn about how we are polluting our pets and what can be done to minimize the damage.

MAX-COMFORT was the first company to provide memory foam dog beds. They do not try to compete with beds made overseas via cheap labor and questionable materials. Beware of imitations! Inexpensive imported foams contain fillers that weaken the comfort and performance of the bed and can be a health hazard to your dogs. In fact, they often contain flame retardants that are toxic to your dog.

MAX & RUFFY’S provides organic gluten-free, vegan treats in 100% eco-friendly packaging. They are made by Kelly and Beth, from scratch, in Virginia. There are four great flavors: blueberry, sweet potato/alfalfa, squash/kelp, and pumpkin. We love the small size and also mini-size (1/4 inch cubes) for training treats.

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LUCIA BIODEGRADABLE POTTERY

Lucy Fagella, a gifted Massachusetts artisan, crafts 100% eco-friendly and biodegradable urns by hand, so providing a meaningful way to return your pet’s cremains to a special place he or she loved.

Green Burial goes hand in hand with a life well lived on this earth. The good earth has given us so much; why not give ourselves back to the earth naturally. The urn can be placed in a body of water and will degrade within two hours, can be buried and will eventually degrade naturally, or stay on a shelf for years to come. Check it out at http://bit.ly/luciapot.

Lucia Pottery is donating 30% of each sale of these incredible urns to our Cancer Treatment Fund. But, you must mention the Land of PureGold Foundation. Just contact Lucy at info@luciapottery.com and let her know where you saw her new eco-friendly urn. That way, your possible purchase can result in a much appreciated donation.
We promote holistic health, organic and chemically free living, responsible dog care, and respectful and consistent training practices. Providing materials on canine cancers, our foundation educates others about more preventative courses of action to maintain a healthy and strong immune system. With a volunteer board membership that includes renowned veterinarians, Dr. Allen Schoen and Dr. Marty Becker, our public 501(c)(3) charitable organization allows donations to be tax-deductible. And, few causes are more gratifying than helping those who are facing a diagnosis of cancer. Through these donations, online store, and educational media development, we fund cancer treatment for working dogs and research in comparative oncology, the study of cancers that occur similarly in companion animals and humans. Check us out at landofpuregold.com!

Thanks for your support!

Earth Friendly Pet Products

Environmentally friendly (also eco-friendly, nature friendly, and green) are synonyms used to refer to goods that are considered to inflict minimal or no harm on the environment. To make consumers aware, the products may be marked with eco-labels. But because there is no single standard for this concept, these labels are too vague to be meaningful. So, look for those businesses dedicated to sustainable fair trade principles, and that use organic, dye-free, and/or reclaimed materials.

One such company is Barkwheats, who uses the berry, buckwheat, for their biscuits. Handmade in Stockton Springs, Maine, these gluten-free and grain-free wonders are made with organic and local ingredients from neighboring organic farms in Maine, and family farms with Sustainable Harvest International in Belize. Barkwheats packaging is 100% compostable, biscuits enclosed in packaging made from sustainably harvested cottonwood trees and 100% recycled paperboard. They also compost, recycle, purchase wind energy, use CFL bulbs and select the most energy efficient equipment to run their facility. Find these great treats and more at: store.landofpuregold.com/sogood.htm

Recommended resource links

- cancer.landofpuregold.com — Becoming Cancer-AWARE
- ccr.cancer.gov/resources/cop — NCI Comparative Oncology Program
- www.askdryin.com — Leadership without Force from Dr. Sophia Yin

Land of PureGold Foundation
3731 Greenway Lane
Owings Mills, MD 21117