



# ANIMAL CRACKERS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ FEBRUARY 2023



## Kuranda beds

By Debby Beaufort

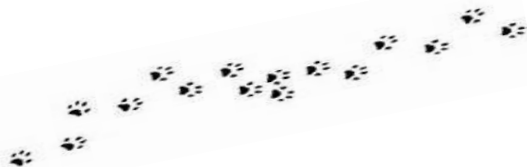
Don't know if ya' all remember but a few years ago Darcy ran a campaign getting folks to donate Kuranda beds and that really filled the need at that time. Now they needed some additional beds so Kim put it on the Wish list and I think the Facebook ladies put it out there also.

Anyway, yesterday I received notification that Casey Terminello of Copperopolis donated a 44 x 27-inch bed and then today was notified that a pal of Kim's, Jona Milo, donated two 40 x 25-inch beds and then received notice that Dora Robinson donated four, yes 4, 35 x 23-inch beds.

In the meantime, Don Payne has been repairing the old beds and last Saturday he took the 21 beds he had repaired back to the shelter. Soon there should be enough for each kennel to have an inside and an outside Kuranda bed.

It really is a big deal because it keeps dogs off the icky cement which is too cold in winter and too hot in summer. I wrote thank you letters tonight and will mail tomorrow.

Don't want to get too excited but seems good things are happenin!



## RTF Update

By Debby Beaufort

For 2022 we did 169 community kitties and 90 of them were females and 79 were males. Thanks to all of you who worked so hard this year and super thanks to all you transporters for getting all 169 to their vet appointments.

And the total cost of all the veterinary procedures was a whopping \$44,560.00!!! Plus another \$240 for mileage reimbursement!

And 1,080 potential births were prevented!

Additionally, through Kathleen Morse's OHS program, over 600 cats were transported to Oregon and WA

Excellent job all!





## Health tips by Doc Hopper

From

dogs naturally

### DILATED CARDIOMYOPATHY

There's a lot of talk about DCM in dogs because of the alarm the FDA raised a few years ago about possible taurine deficiencies in dogs fed grain-free diets. That investigation never produced any results and the FDA seems to have quietly dropped it.

But DCM can happen for lots of reasons, so here's what you need to know.

#### WHAT IS DCM?

Dilated cardiomyopathy makes it harder for the heart to generate pressure to pump blood through the vascular system.

It mainly affects large and giant breed dogs, including Dobermans, Irish Wolfhounds and Great Danes. Boxers and Cocker Spaniels also seem to be more prone to DCM.

Most dogs who develop DCM are middle aged or older.

#### SIGNS OF DCM

Some dogs can have early-stage DCM without showing symptoms. But as the disease advances, the most common signs are lethargy or weakness, plus respiratory issues.

That's because DCM interferes with the heart's ability to send oxygenated blood through the body.

That can cause weakness, fainting spells, weight loss, and even collapse in the later stages of the disease.

DCM can also cause blood to become congested in the lungs, leading to coughing, difficulty breathing, and a distended abdomen.

#### CAUSES OF DCM

Many factors are involved in DCM, but the fact that it's common in certain breeds strongly suggests a significant genetic component.

Other factors include conditions that may cause the heart to contract poorly, including ...

- Amino acid deficiencies (especially taurine)
- Low thyroid levels
- Heart inflammation (myocarditis)
- Prolonged rapid heart rate
- Poor blood flow to the heart

#### DCM TREATMENT

There's no cure for DCM. But treatments can improve quality and length of life.

Natural remedies and supplementation may halt or reverse the disease in some cases (especially those caused by taurine or thyroid deficiency).

However, once DCM develops to the stage of congestive heart failure, dogs may need medications to dilate blood vessels and support heart muscle contraction, or stabilize the heart rate to prevent arrhythmias.

#### DIET FOR DCM

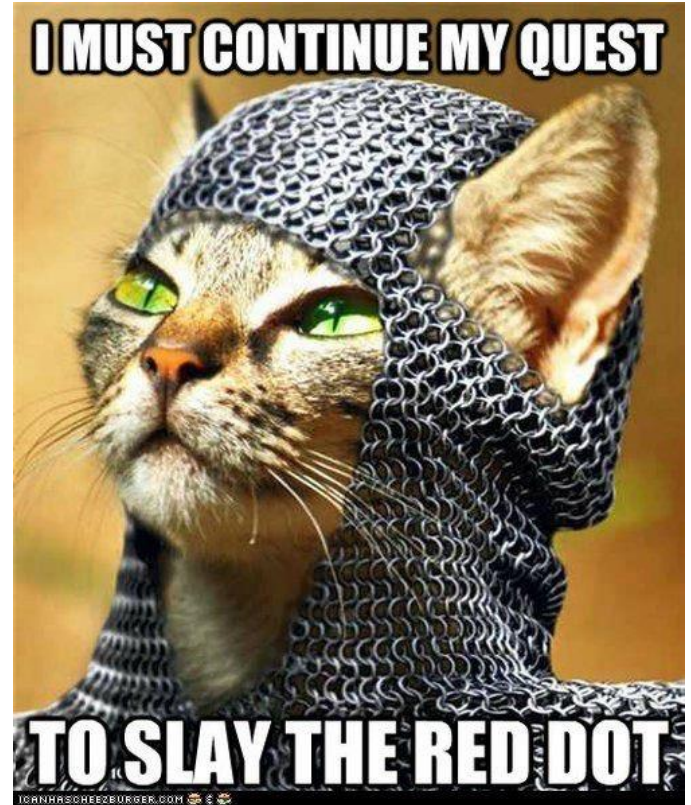
As mentioned earlier, the FDA appears to have dropped its investigation into a potential link between grain-free kibbles and DCM ... and there's now research by a group of vets and veterinary cardiologists asserting that a review of studies suggests genetics are the main cause.

And in 2022, the investigative group *100Reporters* uncovered a story that

strongly suggests the FDA investigation was prompted by certain veterinarians who may have been influenced by financial ties to the major pet food manufacturers.

But in any case, feeding a whole food, raw meat-based diet is best for your dog's overall health. As for taurine, all dogs need this amino acid for the healthy development of their eyes, brains, heart muscle cells, and immune health. A raw diet will provide your dog with ample taurine.

Poultry, fish, liver and other organ meats are great sources of taurine. It's also present in hoofed animals, milk, and eggs, but in lower amounts. Plant proteins contain no taurine, so a vegetarian or vegan diet that's not supplemented can cause taurine deficiency.



### Dog Stats

(By Ed and Dolores Ransom)

Month	Volunteer	
	Hours	Adoptions
November	445.0	9
December	593.0	9
January	<b>440.25</b>	<b>9</b>
Total		

It is averaging 25 dogs to love daily!





## Is Your Dog Giving You the Stink Eye?

Despite plenty of reasons to get mad, an animal behaviorist says dogs rarely express *real* anger.

BY KAREN B. LONDON, PHD

THE BARK

APRIL 1, 2022

Last week, a client described his dog by saying, “He’s wonderful! The kids can do *anything* to him!” When I hear such comments — which, as an animal behaviorist and dog trainer, I often do — my first thought is *I need to know what the kids are doing to that poor dog*. Usually, “anything” entails climbing on the dog, pulling their ears or poking them in the eyes, dragging them by the tail, tossing them off the couch, chewing on their toys...the list goes on.

These are things you could reasonably expect to bother even the most patient dog. The average human facing similar situations would likely lose their temper and, quite possibly, lash out. (I’ve sometimes wondered why dogs don’t do so more often.) In my experience, anger is quite rare among dogs — and since aggressive dogs are my business, that’s saying something.

## Dogs and Anger

The idea that a dog is capable of becoming angry troubles many people, which makes grappling with the concept difficult. There’s a tendency to ascribe only positive emotions to our dogs. We’re quite comfortable with the idea that dogs feel happiness or love, but we have a harder time getting our minds around the idea that dogs might also feel hate or anger.

There is evidence that this may be especially true of people who have spent a lot of time with dogs. A 2013 study that classified dogs’ facial expressions from photographs found that people who were inexperienced with dogs were better at identifying canine anger than those who were experienced. The authors suggest that perhaps experienced people were more likely to give dogs the benefit of the doubt and perceive them to be friendly rather than aggressive.

While it does not surprise me that many people have a hard time believing that dogs can get angry, studies on dogs’ (and other animals’) emotions suggest that they have a fuller emotional life than we once thought. If they can experience fear, love, joy, sadness, and grief — why not anger?

## Do Angry Dogs Bite?

Why should we worry about whether dogs do or do not experience anger? Part of the answer is that to know dogs, we have to understand the full range of their emotions. Another issue is that when pushed beyond the limits of their control, dogs may express their anger in a very problematic way: with a bite.

Though aggression is common in my line of work, I am often amazed at how relatively rarely dogs bite. Janis Bradley, in the Animals and Society Institute’s policy paper, *Dog Bites: Problems and Solutions*, noted that — according to CDC statistics, which are gleaned from hospital ERs — the average is 11 bites per 10,000 people. More than one-third of

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U.S. households include at least one dog, which means that, at a minimum, roughly 113 million people are in daily contact with dogs. Of all those interactions, only a very small percentage result in a bite. More exactly, Bradley wrote, dog bites account for 0.1 percent of all emergency room visits, and 99% of those are rated as “level 1 injuries,” or the least severe of six categories.

Don't get me wrong: Dog bites are still too common, and I'm certainly in favor of all efforts to decrease their frequency. I'm also well aware that far too many people have been scared, injured, or traumatized by an experience with canine aggression. Yet, when you consider how often dogs have an opportunity to bite but don't, it's pretty remarkable.

### **Do Dogs Get Angry?**

There is compelling biological evidence to support the idea that dogs do indeed experience anger. Jaak Panksepp, who wrote the amazing book *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*, considered anger to be one of the core mammalian emotions. Also, anger is quite primitive, which makes it hard to argue that only humans feel it.

Biologically speaking, we have many things in common with our dogs, including the anatomy of our brains (particularly the amygdala, which plays important roles in both fear and anger) and the chemistry of our neurological systems (dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, for example). Additionally, we share many facial expressions that relate to emotion, as Charles Darwin wrote about extensively in his 1872 book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.

Mild forms of anger are called irritation or frustration, and the most extreme forms are referred to as rage, but they are all versions of the same emotion. Anger prepares the body — including the brain — for action, especially fighting, and has long been necessary for survival in many

species. And because anger affects us physically, it is difficult to calm down once we become angry — it requires considerable emotional control to override the desire to act upon it. (That explains why it can be hard to resist kicking something when we are really, intensely angry.)

have observed dogs whose behavior is easier to understand in the context of being angry. For example, I've seen a few dogs display what looked to me like temper tantrums. An angry dog losing their temper and having a tantrum sounds ridiculously anthropomorphic until you see a dog in such a state. I recall an American Water Spaniel named Jonas doing just that — frothing at the mouth, jerking at the leash, and stamping his feet because he couldn't reach a toy that had gone under a dense bush, then redirecting a bite to an innocent bystander. For Jonas, these behaviors were routine, not actions that only occasionally surfaced when he was having a bad day.

Another client came to me with her Pomeranian / Shih Tzu mix, who was wearing an Elizabethan collar and was mad about it. Her emotional response and behavior reflected her feelings. She glared, was disagreeable about responding to cues, and donkey kicked at the doors and furniture.

Still, in the 20 years I've worked with aggressive dogs, I've only seen dogs who seemed to be truly angry a few dozen times. That means that, even among dogs with serious behavioral issues, it presents itself a couple of times a year. (On the other hand, I see the mild version of this emotion in the form of irritation or annoyance quite frequently — at least weekly.)

### **The Difference Between Anger and Aggression**

While some people think dogs can't get angry, others have the impression that all dogs who act aggressively are angry. Although they can occur simultaneously, anger and aggression are not synonymous. Anger is an emotion; aggression is an action. They may go together, but they are not the

same thing. Certainly, aggression can be a result of anger, but it's rare. I thank my lucky stars that I seldom encounter dogs who are aggressive in anger, because those dogs are very hard to help. Similar to humans with bad tempers, they may learn to better control their behavior, but few are able to keep it under wraps permanently and completely.

When a dog behaves aggressively, there's always a lot of speculation about the reasons. It's my experience that some factors are assumed to be common, even when — like anger — they are quite rare. Fear is by far the most common cause; roughly 80% of the aggressive dogs I see exhibit fear-based aggression. It may not be the only factor, but it is typically the main issue. This is actually good news because if we can help them overcome their fears, these dogs can significantly improve their behavior. Generally, fear as the cause of aggression is a positive indicator that behavior modification is likely to be successful.

Aggression most commonly develops gradually in young or adolescent dogs, and it's typical to see the warning signs of impending trouble over weeks, months, or even years. Among the signals: a tense dog will freeze, their mouth will close, and their jaw will tighten; if something in the situation does not change, an aggressive response, including a bite, may follow. This is not as obvious as snapping, barking, growling, lunging, or showing teeth, but it's a warning nevertheless — and it's easy to spot if you know to look for it and understand what it means. Other, more subtle warning signs include behaviors like putting a paw or body between a toy and anyone approaching; a lack of normal friendliness; a wrinkled brow; and signs of fear or stress, including tongue flicks, yawning, whimpering, sweaty paws, or tail-tucking.

Aggression exhibited by a fully mature dog with no warning is often provoked by pain. I remember two cases in which dogs really did bite out of the blue. One was a dog with a serious injury to his tooth, and the other involved a dog who suddenly began

to attack the household's other dog, who he had happily lived and played with for years; it turned out that he had an undiagnosed back injury. In both cases, the dogs acted aggressively to prevent themselves from being touched in ways that would cause them to experience more pain.

Another uncommon scenario is the dog who "misses" when they try to bite. Yes, people can sometimes move fast enough as a dog is lunging at them. The thing is, though, dogs' reaction times are many times faster than humans. When dogs choose to bite, bite they do. I'm sure there are examples of dogs who do actually flat-out miss, but it is far less common than many people think. So, chances are that if it looks like a dog tried to bite you and missed, it wasn't because you were fast enough to avoid their teeth. It was probably just a warning. If they wanted to bite you, they would.





Please do not hurt me or my mom. ❤️🐾❤️ We just temporarily moved to the neighborhood so we could be “safe.”

If you have suddenly seen a fox in the yard near your home, there is a good reason for this. It is denning season. Between the end of March and early April, a mother fox will give birth to between 4 and 5 kits (a baby fox is called a kit). A coyote will often find a fox den, dig out the babies, and kill them.

A mother fox knows this and will frequently choose a den site close to people, away from where coyotes generally go. A fox will often den under a porch, shed, garage, barn, or side of a hill, trying to keep her little family safe. Please offer them a short-term rental because this is not a permanent situation.

If you are lucky enough to see how beautiful an adult fox is, or witness the kits playing (at a distance of course), you will be glad you did! It is not uncommon for Red Foxes to change dens several times during the season, so you may not see them for long.

Kits are slow to develop and will not leave the den until they are about a month old. Foxes do not live in a den year-round, only when a mother has babies.

During the summer as the kits grow older, you will see less and less of them, and by September everyone will have packed up and moved on. Please do not call a service to “relocate them”, they will often be killed.

If you see a fox during the day, it does not mean she is rabid. A mother fox works tirelessly to feed her kits and will often be out during daylight hours foraging for food.

Foxes are omnivores, generally feeding on berries, grasses, and small rodents. They are solitary and prefer to be left alone.

They do not want to hunt and eat your children, mate with your dog, or kill your cat. A fox just wants a place to raise her family safely, please allow her to do that.

### Tips on how to be a good cat:

<b>Feed your human</b> 	<b>Bathe your human</b> 
<b>Cuddle your human</b> 	<b>Spy on your human daily and update your findings to the council of cats where we will use the information to help take over the world from humans</b> 

## Amazons Smile going away –

As many of you know, for almost a decade, Amazon Smile has allowed purchasers to choose a charity to support and each purchase results in a donation to that charity.

FOCAS has received an average of \$250 a year in these donations (thank you very much!) but we just received notice that Amazon is going to eliminate this program.

Amazon states they feel their impact is spread too thin to matter (sure matters to the little charities!) and effective 2/20, no more donations will go to FOCAS or other small charities.

Instead, Amazon says they are going to invest in other areas where they feel they can make a more meaningful change, such as affordable housing and providing access to computer science education for students in underserved communities, etc.

To say we – and I would guess all the other small charities – are disappointed in Amazon’s decision, is to understate our feeling. Ah well, it was good while it lasted.

## My cat has two lap settings:

1. You attempted to lift your leg, but I am the weight of 10,000 dying suns, and I will not be disturbed. You will perish here.
2. You moved your ankle 1/10000th of an inch. I am leaving immediately. You’ve offended not only me but my ancestors.



Me trying to eat as much as possible before attempting to lose weight for my New Years resolution

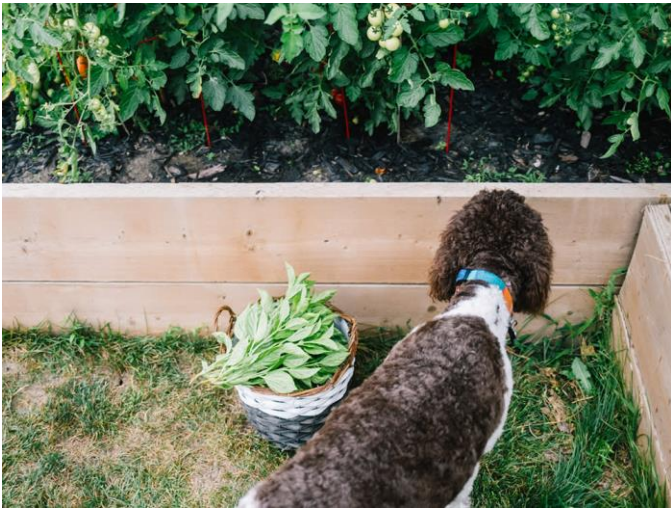




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## Tips on Dog-Safe Gardening

Garden organically, for the sake of both the planet and your dogs



BY CLAUDIA KAWCZYNSKA  
THE BARK

If your new pup is getting a little *too* interested in your garden, you've probably quickly realized that you'll need to pup-proof your garden much like you did your house. A big difference in garden pup proofing is that, on the one hand, your garden needs protection from the dog, but on the other, your pet will also need to be protected from the garden. There are plenty of hazards to beware of, from tree bark to fertilizers which can be poisonous to pups. Here are a few insights on how to protect your dog in the garden:

### Some Mulches and Bark Are Bad for Dogs

You don't really want your dog to eat any tree bark because it can cause gastrointestinal irritation or, even worse, intestinal blockage. But some tree barks and mulches are worse than others. Pet parents should avoid cocoa bean mulches; their chocolaty smell is irresistible to dogs — like a pup catnip — but they contain theobromine, which is toxic for dogs.

Cross almond or walnut trees off your list for areas used by dogs. Tannin is a canine toxin found in almonds and walnut hulls which a curious pup might get into. Moldy walnuts are also a problem. There are also fruit trees with bark toxic to dogs,

such as cherry (contains cyanide-like components). Outside of poisons, some stone fruit trees (apricots, plums, peaches, nectarines) can be hazardous simply because of their indigestible pits. It might not be an issue for some dogs, but for other dogs who like to indulge in fruit, it could lead to intestinal obstruction.

### Protecting Trees from Urine

Protect young trees, especially if you have a male dog. Be sure to frequently rinse the trunk and soil with fresh water. Or, secure a copper or galvanized splash guard of appropriate height and circumference around the developing tree the first couple of years to divert unwelcome attention from your pup.

### Use Raised Garden Beds

Raised beds protect plantings from scampering paws and swinging tails. Dogs can be taught where they're permitted and where they are not.

### Take Care With Edible Plants

Construct a barrier around plants of the nightshade family, including eggplant, tomato and potato; their foliage and stems contain dangerous alkaloids that can kill a dog. When dogs eat large amounts of onions, they may suffer red blood cell destruction. Rhubarb leaves (*Rheum rhabarbarin*) contain oxalic acid. In quantity, it damages kidneys.

### Some Flowers Are Poisonous to Dogs

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), Larkspur (*Delphinium ajacis*) have toxic effects on the heart and circulation. Tulips, daffodils, foxglove and azaleas can all cause symptoms such as vomiting, drooling and even kidney damage when ingested by pets. Lilies are especially toxic to cats—and popular around Easter time—and can cause kidney problems, while the Sago Palm plant causes health problems such as vomiting, diarrhea and liver failure in dogs.

### Watch Out for Poisonous Chemicals

Do not use snail bait containing metaldehyde, which is highly poisonous to dogs and cats. Copper

barrier tape is a good alternative; slugs and snails are deterred from crossing it by the tape's tiny positive electric charge. Rodenticides and other poisons are toxic to all animals. Avoid their use. If you have any of these products, take special care to keep them away from pets.

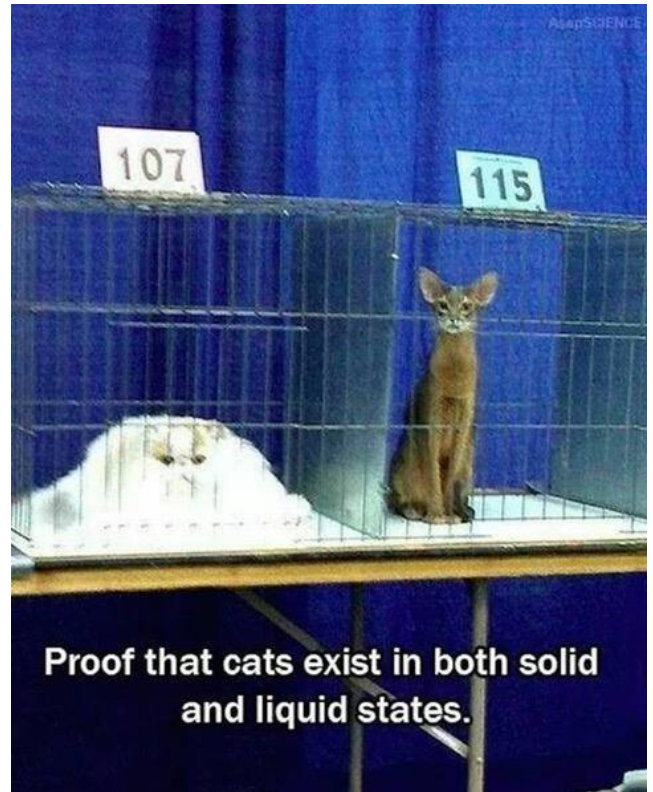
### Fertilizers Are Dangerous to Dogs

The nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, iron, zinc and herbicides that supplement plant growth can cause severe symptoms in pets, such as difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea and intestinal blockage. Be very careful about fertilizing lawn areas where many dogs like to spend time.

### Create a Dog Zone

Digging pit, preferably in shaded locations, give dogs places to practice their digging skills without disrupting your garden beds. You might entice them to use it by lightly burying (as they watch you) a treat-filled Kong. It's also a good idea to leave a plant-free "patrolling" area around the perimeter of your yard; dogs instinctively (and repeatedly) cruise boundaries and fence lines.

There used to be a bed in there



**Proof that cats exist in both solid and liquid states.**

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of.. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep.



An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out. The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks. Curious I pinned a note to his collar: *I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful, sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap.'* The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar:

*'He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3 - he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?'*

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**FOCAS is in need of volunteers to transport feral cats between the shelter in San Andreas and Vineyard Veterinary Hospital in Lockeford to be altered ✂**

**VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED**



- Morning shifts require cats to be picked up at the shelter at 7:15am and delivered to the vet at 8:00am
- Afternoon shifts require cats to be picked up at the vet between 2:00-2:30pm and delivered directly to the shelter
- Valid driver's license and proof of car insurance required



***Be a part of the solution to help community cats in Calaveras County!***

**Email Debby at [beadog1944@gmail.com](mailto:beadog1944@gmail.com) to sign up!**