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# Bloomington Is a DOG'S Kind of Town

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By **Jeff Sartain** Photography By **Steve Raymer**

**The age-old maxim,  
“it’s a dog’s life,”  
usually signals hardship,  
but not in Bloomington.  
Ours is truly a  
dog’s kind of town.**

Case in point: Bloomingtonians demonstrated their commitment to their dogs (and other animal residents) with an outpouring of money and support at the recent Bark and Wine benefit at tutto bène sponsored by the city. An estimated 300 people gathered for wine and music, raising awareness and more than \$3,000 for half a dozen local animal welfare groups.

Among the attendees was Mayor Mark Krusan, “proud papa of two pups.” As the Mayor explains: “Anyone who’s a pet owner probably knows that your pets do so much more for you than you can probably ever do to repay them for the love that they give you. That’s the key to remember. When you help or adopt an animal, the animal isn’t the only one to benefit.”



“How do you get five dogs to pose for a picture? You don’t.”

Below, Bloom looks at just a few ways Bloomingtonians make lives better for every Fido, Spot, and Rover—and themselves.

### **Dogs are companions, not property...**

Bloomington’s progressive attitude toward its canine residents is evident in revisions to city and county animal ordinances approved in 2006. Changes include protections for dogs suffering from everyday forms of cruelty, such as continuous outdoor chaining and inadequate shelter.

And their human caretakers are now legally known as “guardians,” emphasizing Bloomingtonians’ respect for their pets as companions,

not mere property to be “owned.” Bloomington was only the 14th city in the U.S. to add such language to its laws. The national animal welfare and advocacy group In Defense of Animals cites Bloomington’s “guardian” language as an exemplar of the type of attitude shift it is hoping to achieve on a national level.

### **It’s not a pound...**

The City of Bloomington Animal Shelter is the center of Bloomington’s fight for animal welfare. The Bark and Wine benefit kicked off the city’s yearlong Adopt Today! media campaign, showcasing prominent local personalities with

Model Elaine  
Irwin-Mellencamp  
with shelter  
dog Mary.

### Fostering the human-animal connection...

The Monroe County Humane Association (MCHA) is celebrating 50 years of advocating for animal welfare in Bloomington and Monroe County, culminating in its “Pawsible Dreams” benefit on April 26 at the Bloomington Convention Center.

Education is the most important part of MCHA’s mission, says CEO Sarah Hayes. One of the Association’s most successful programs is Animal Reading Friends (ARF). “It’s a reluctant readers program,” Hayes explains. “Kids who are having a hard time reading are assigned to this program at branches of the Monroe County Public Library and they read to the dogs.” The kids get valuable reading practice with a rapt audience that never judges

them, while simultaneously gaining exposure to pets that MCHA hopes will translate into a lifetime of caring about animals.

The Association’s VIPaws (Very Important Paws) animal-assisted activity and therapy program demonstrates how “dogs can really do a lot of great things, not just sit around your house,” says Hayes. “In 2006, we provided over 300 hours of volunteer visits to various places in Bloomington,” including hospitals and assisted living facilities. “The health benefits of animals to people are numerous and well-known, but even beyond that, it just makes people’s days, brightens them up, and brings a smile to their face.”



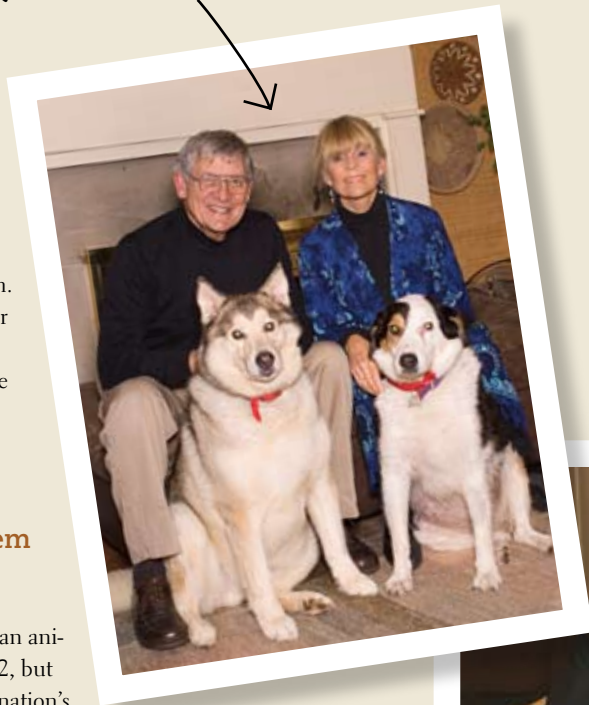
their own or shelter animals (see pictures on this and facing page). “We want you to come to the shelter and let us help you find your next best friend,” says Laurie Ringquist, the city’s director of Animal Care and Control.

Adopt Today! is only the shelter’s latest effort to avoid euthanizing healthy, adoptable dogs. Every month, the Petsmart Charities Rescue Wagon and the Canine Express programs transport more than 100 adoptable dogs from Bloomington to shelters with a demand for family-friendly pets in Wisconsin and the New England states.

The shelter also runs the “Free to Good Home” program to curb the number of pup-

pies abandoned, killed, or mistreated as a result of unwanted breeding. Every week, shelter volunteers pour over newspaper ads looking for the line “free to good home,” a classic indicator of an unwanted litter of puppies. They call the advertisers and offer to take the puppies into the shelter for adoption. “If people relinquish their litter of puppies to the shelter instead of handing them out on the side of the road, we will spay or neuter them, treat for fleas and ticks, give a rabies vaccination, and spay and neuter the mama and papa dogs, and it’ll all be completely free,” explains Ringquist. “It’s an important proactive, progressive step to take to stop the unwanted animal problems at the forefront.”

MCCSC Superintendent  
Jim Harvey and wife Sally  
with Wonder and Waylon



MCHA also sponsors Bloomington's Spay Day every February as part of a national Spay Day campaign. "We offer \$5 spay and neuter surgeries," says Hayes. For Spay Day 2007, MCHA gave away 550 vouchers for the specially priced \$5 surgeries performed at Pets ALIVE.

### "The only way to stem the tide..."

Pets ALIVE was founded as an animal adoption agency in 2002, but transitioned into one of the nation's premier spay-neuter clinics in 2005. The work Pets ALIVE does is vital to controlling the exponential growth of unwanted animals. "Adoption is great, and we'll always need adoption, but spaying and neutering is the only way to control the numbers," says Pets ALIVE Executive Director Tomi Whitaker. "Our long-term goal is to help end euthanasia of unwanted animals through education and our aggressive spay-neuter program."

Using the surgical techniques developed by their chief veterinarian, Dr. Nancy Ferguson, Pets ALIVE is able to spay and neuter an average of 60 animals a day. With Dr. Ferguson's emphasis on careful medical monitoring, absolutely sterile conditions, and precision dosing of anesthesia, Pets ALIVE is even able to operate on small puppies, a previously tricky and potentially dangerous surgery. "This is the only thing we do and we do it well," says Whitaker.

In just over two years of operation as a spay-neuter clinic, the agency has performed more than 17,000 surgeries on dogs and cats from the city of Bloomington, Monroe County, and the surrounding area. Through the combined efforts of its staff and volunteers, Pets ALIVE is establishing protocols that are the model for many planned spay-neuter clinics throughout the country.

### A dog park, officially...

If all goes according to plan, Bloomington's dogs will soon have their own official park on the far west side of town.

Monroe County Parks and Recreation has planned a two-acre dog park at Karst Farm Park as part of improvements approved last year to develop the park's last 30 acres. The dog park will be divided in two, one half for smaller, more timid dogs, and the other for larger, more boisterous canines.

The dog park will have limited memberships, available for a nominal yearly fee. Memberships will be tightly controlled and monitored to ensure that the number of users never outstrips the park staff's capacity to maintain the safety, cleanliness, and quality of the park.

If the necessary funds are raised—as expected—for the remaining above-ground improvements, such as fencing and an electronic gate-key system, the park could be open as early as spring of 2008. ✨➔

IU Professor Emeritus  
James E. Mumford with  
Miss Pookie Mae Johnson



Mayor Mark Krizan with Echo and Stormy and outgoing IU President Adam Herbert with Dusty

### For more information

about how to adopt an animal, volunteer, or donate to any of these organizations, visit these websites.

#### The City of Bloomington Animal Shelter and the Adopt Today! Campaign

<http://www.bloomington.in.gov/animalshelter/>  
<http://bloomington.in.gov/adopt-today/>

#### The Monroe County Humane Association

[www.monroehumane.org](http://www.monroehumane.org)

#### Pets ALIVE

<http://www.petsalivespayneuter.org/>

#### Karst Farm Park's official site and a link to a map

of the planned park improvements  
<http://www.karstfarmpark.com/>  
<http://www.co.monroe.in.us/parksandrecreation/Parks&Facilities.html>

# The Dogs of Bloom Magazine

Five Bloomington dogs tell their stories as only dogs can. Nessie, Samantha, Sophie, Fred, and Ginger are the “best friends” of *Bloom* contributors Lee Ann Sandweiss, Christine Barbour, Patrick L. Baude, Steve Raymer, and Editor Malcolm Abrams.

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name : **Nessie Sandweiss**  
breed : **Scottish Terrier**  
age : **10 months**  
weight : **18 lbs.**

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Okay, so one minute I'm near Lake Michigan, playing in the grass with my sister, and the next minute—I'm like in this jail cell! I am so not joking! Then, these people drive like for-ever to get to some place called Bloomington. The ride was a total bummer. I barfed at a rest stop and felt as sick as, well, a dog.

I would never admit it to them, but this Bloomington place totally rocks. There's this awesome place called Bryan Park that's really close to my house, and I go there like every day. All kinds of dogs hang there. Most of them are totally cool and eager for a good sniff; the ones that aren't are kind of obvious 'cause they're growling and lunging for your throat.

My shtick is the cute little girl submissive thing—you know, roll on my back, belly up. People dig it big time. They always say “Oooo” how adorable I am and ask if I'm a Westie. Duh, like haven't they ever heard of *breed standards*? So I go and get my hair done, you know, in a Scottie cut? And guess what? People still ask if I'm a Westie! What-ev-er.

Anyway, last summer, there was this cool dog party at Bryan Park called “Drool in the Pool” and I so wanted to go, but you had to be at least six months old, so I couldn't. But wait until this summer: Par-tay!

Right now, I'm kind of laid up from the



“I would never admit it to them, but this Bloomington place totally rocks.”

low-rent tummy tuck they give us girls, but before that happened I checked out snow for the first time, and it was totally awesome. It like turns yellow when you pee on it! I stuck my muzzle way down in a drift and almost caught this little black vole thingie. Would've caught it, too, if they had let me, the big wusses.

What else? Oh yeah, I'm a Gemini and I'm totally into chewing. And I'm here to tell you that an Oriental rug tastes almost as good as a ham bone.



“My daily joy is walking with my seeing-eye person.”

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name : **Fred Baude**  
breed : **English Springer Spaniel**  
age : **14 yrs**  
weight : **48 lbs**

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My name is Fred. They say my family had an imaginary dog in the attic named Fred before I arrived.

I remember when they came to Ohio to adopt me. The four of them walked in but I had eyes only for the five-year-old boy. They called him Jonathan. He had pizza on his shirt. I clung to his chest and loved him. I have raised Jonathan and his brother William well. I have taught them unconditional love, the importance of a playful mind, and how to swipe pizza.

Now they're away at school and I am 14 people-years old, blind, deaf, and loving. My daily joy is walking with my seeing-eye person. Mainly I sleep and dream of being an imaginary dog in the attic.

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name : **Ginger Barbour**  
breed : **Golden Retriever/Border Collie**  
age : **11**  
weight : **45 lbs**

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I've always been a dog who has definite ideas about how, and where, to live the good life. Unfortunately, due to a domestic dispute, I was living with an owner who didn't want me and consequently didn't really take care of me. Oh, she promised to find me a new home, but



"Trouble is, it's not easy moving into a household when four dogs have gotten there before you."

as far as I could tell she wasn't making much progress.

Well, I decided not to wait on her. I'd checked out the neighborhood and I had my eye on a big house up the street. The man and the lady there already had four dogs, and those dogs sure looked happy, if all the butt-sniffing and barking and tearing around chasing each other in crazy circles was anything to go by. It was a dog party, every day.

Trouble is, it's not easy moving into a household when four dogs have gotten there before you. You can be adorable, come over to play, sit in the driveway head cocked and eager, and the fact is, at the end of the day, you are not just selling them on you, you are selling them on having five dogs.

"Five dogs?" said the man in the big house. "Not a chance in hell." He said some other things too. Loud things. Oh, he was friendly enough when I came by, pats on the head, scratches behind the ears, all that stuff, but I wasn't getting in that front door.

The lady was another story. You know that book, *Are You My Mother?* Well, when I looked at the lady, I just knew. When the other dogs got rough with me, checking me out, I just got behind her and stuck to her legs like a fuzzy orange burr. It didn't make her mad, though. She liked me right off, I could tell, just like I liked her.

But, no matter how often I came by, the answer was always the same. "Go home puppy, please go home." Sometimes she would stand just behind the window—I could see her

shadow while I waited patiently for someone to come out. Sometimes she'd sit next to me and explain that five dogs was just too many for the man. She'd get all teary and I would snuggle for all I was worth, but still she'd get that leash thing and walk me back up the road.

The lady never gave up on me, though. Her birthday was coming up and she angled for days to have me as her present. I was angling too; every time I came over I'd look as cute and winsome as I could (which is pretty

cute and winsome, let me tell you.) But no go. The man was not going to have five dogs in the house, damn it, and that's final.

Well, thank God humans are all about short-term gratification. It turns out the man and the lady had been team-teaching a class at IU and it was his turn to grade all the papers. He grouched and whined and kvetched about it and the lady, who has the patience of a saint, finally offered him a deal—she'd do the grading if they could adopt me as her birthday present!

The man's stiff resistance crumbled at the prospect of getting out of grading 40 exams, and I was in, fat and happy.

That was 11 years ago. Where once we were a pack of five, we're now just three old dogs. I've been thinking about getting a puppy, someone cute to tumble around with and keep me young. The lady has raised it with the man, but he is adamant. "Four dogs?" he says, "Not a chance in hell."

And that's final.

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name : **Samantha Raymer**  
breed : **Great Pyrenees Mountain Dog**  
age : **4 years**  
weight : **85 lbs**

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I was adopted when I was two from the Rescue Farm near Ellettsville, so my story is short and my origins a mystery.

But the story of my breed is a long and distinguished one. In France where I come from, the Great Pyrenees, or the Pyrenees Mountain Dog, is an ancient breed employed for thousands of years to protect livestock, especially sheep. In the 17th century, King Louis XIV made us the official dog of the French court, and during World War II we did our duty, hauling artillery over the Pyrenees Mountains to and from Spain and France.

Life here in Bloomington is pretty quiet by comparison—no Nazis to fight or partisans to protect. But all the same, I spend a lot of time in my backyard, watching for intruders, barking at birds with talons, and running with my buddies—Cody, a chocolate lab, and Sam, a black Newfoundland mix who howls as much as I bark. Some of my best times, though, are spent cuddling up with my new mom and dad in front of the TV, while they pet me until I fall asleep.

Before coming here, I was sickly and scared a lot. I'm now taking allergy shots that are making me less itchy, and I eat a special allergy diet



"Before coming here, I was sickly and scared a lot."

of venison and brown rice. My coat has grown in so thick that my favorite place to sleep is on the cold tile floor by the drafty front door. I'm still skittish about people holding sticks or newspapers, or when people make sudden moves, but no one has ever hurt me in my new home, and I feel safe. I've learned to walk on a leash, to sit, and to come, and I can pretty much read the minds of my adopted mom and dad. I wonder if they know?



"If you've read the book *Cinderella*, then you pretty much know all about me..."

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name : **Sophie Abrams**

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breed : **Beagle/Dachshund**

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age : **4**

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weight : **25 lbs.**

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Hi, my name's Sophie, though I also answer to Princess Sophie. If you've read the book *Cinderella*, then you pretty much know all about me since our stories are exactly the same, except for the parts about the Fairy Godmother, the slipper, the carriage, the ball, and the curfew. For I too, through some unfortunate twist of fate, found myself in a home where my beauty, grace, wit, and beagle scent were unappreciated, and where I was treated like a common animal.

So, I took off on my own. I just put one foot in front of the other and one foot in front of the other as quickly as I could and headed out to find my true fortune. Was I surprised! I found it not at a grand ball in some magnificent castle but rather at the City of Bloomington Animal Shelter.

It was there that I met my true prince. He came disguised as a slightly overweight, middle-aged man—a masquerade that I quickly saw through. Now I live on fashionable First Street. I have a big backyard, my pick of several divinely soft couches and beds, a handmaiden, and two cats to amuse me.

Life is one mad, gay ball: strolls in Bryan Park, lots of squirrels and rabbits to chase, leftovers from Zagreb's, tummy rubs, and rides in the car with my head out the window. Who could ask for anything more? ☆

## Nothing Is Too Good For Our B-Town Dogs

Americans spent approximately 35 billion dollars on their pets last year, according to the American Pet Products Manufacturing Association, which means that pet-related spending in the U.S. has doubled in the last 10 years. Obviously, we don't pinch pennies when it comes to pampering our pets—the numbers (and dollars) show that people increasingly treat their pets as valued members of their families, and Bloomingtonians are no exception. Here is a rundown on some of the independent merchants in our town whose business it is to provide the *crème de la crème* of pet products and care.

### Canine Companions

Owner Bryan Bailey and his staff provide a wide range of services—boarding, grooming, doggy daycare, and veterinary care. Bailey, Bloomington's counterpart to The Dog Whisperer, has trained dolphins, sea lions, and explosive-detecting dogs for the U.S. Navy and specializes in obedience and agility training. Group and private lessons are available. Canine Companions also specializes in laser surgery, which, they say, causes less trauma for the pet and you. 3409 S. Walnut; 331-0665.

### Jane's Pretty Pet Parlor

Jane Hinson and her daughter, Shannon, pride themselves on creating the "spa experience" for the four-legged set. The lucky pet is given a full-body treatment that includes a

thorough brushing and combing, ear cleaning, toenail clipping, bathing, and blow-dry. Prices vary from \$25 to \$100+. No appointments, so call ahead. 2920 S. Leonard Springs Rd.; 335-0530.

### Delilah's Pet Store

Delilah's has a full-time registered veterinary technician on staff to advise owners about pet nutrition. Purdue-trained Karene Kidwell, R.V.T., says that customer education is the most important part of her job and offers her services free of charge. A full-service pet store and grooming operation, Delilah's also carries top-of-the-line pet food and dietary supplements to help boost your pet's immune system and promote good health and a gorgeous coat. 1320 N. College; 332-1382.

### T&T Pet Food and Supply

Now in its 38th year, this family-owned and operated business stocks an extensive variety of top-quality pet food, including brands such as Bil-Jac, Innova, and Royal Canin. Owner Terry Hays and his staff will gladly special order brands that they do not regularly stock. 2375 S. Walnut; 334-1012.

### Dog Do

Barbara Curry caters to a loyal clientele that appreciates her "appointments only" policy—so no all-day stays for the dogs who get their "do" here. Dog Do caters to grooming-resistant poodles and uses a "hydro-serge" bath that is gentler and uses less water than traditional bathing methods. Curry, a pet photographer, also specializes in portraits of "picture perfect" pets. 212 N. Madison; 330-9598.

### Barkin' Buddies

Since 2002, Barkin' Buddies has been providing Bloomington dogs with a stimulating social setting through their doggy daycare and posh boarding accommodations in the form of doggy condos, complete with beds and TVs. Owner Corey Plunkett says that the demand usually exceeds availability, so call ahead to make sure your best friend gets on the waiting list. To comfort owners suffering from separation anxiety, Barkin' Buddies also features a web cam, so pets can be observed online. 500 S. Cory Ln.; 332-7833.

—Lee Ann Sandweiss

★ ★ ★ CALLING ALL DOGS ★ ★ ★

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