

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #155

Homeless Hotspots—Part 4



A homeless hotspot is any place unsheltered people hang in or hang out in order to hang on.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE LIVING DOGS OF DEAD DOGS BEACH?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

FOLLOWING the devastation of Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria on Wed., Sept. 20, my dog walker friend, Gretchen, asked:

“If it’s true that 11,000 people and 580 pets are already in shelters on the U.S. Territory, what happened to all the other homeless dogs?”

“What homeless dogs?” I asked.

“The 100,000 homeless dogs in Puerto Rico.”

“That’s about the size of the combined human population of all the cities on the Monterey Peninsula,” I said. “What else do you know?”

“Shortly before hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria hit, I read a story about homeless dogs being airlifted from Puerto Rico to the states for care and ultimate adoption,” Gretchen said. “They were rescued from a place called Dead Dog something.”

“I’ll see what I can find.” And so I googled “dead dogs.”

Wow!

The Living Dogs Of Dead Dog Beach

Sure enough, on Aug. 22, 205 dogs were loaded aboard two Wings of Rescue chartered planes and airlifted from San Juan, Puerto Rico to the U.S.

These dogs didn’t come directly from streets or beaches of Puerto Rico, according to Kimberly Alboum, director of policy engagement and shelter outreach for the Humane Society of the United States:

“The shelters in Puerto Rico have no choice. They run out of room and, unfortunately, they have to euthanize for space. It's heartbreaking for the staff and it's devastating because these animals are all highly adoptable.”

Puerto Ricans call packs of roaming dogs “satos.” One southeastern coastal stretch near the town of Yabucoa became so overrun with packs of dogs that once-beautiful Playa Lucia was redubbed “Sato Beach” and “Dead Dog Beach.” See Wikipedia details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Dog_Beach.

Canine Sex On Sato Beach:

Puerto Ricans’ believe male dogs “should not lose their balls” and female dogs should have at least one litter before being spayed. Thus, men withhold neutering due to machismo attitudes, while women favor puppies to sell for extra income.

Before the 2017 hurricanes struck Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Puerto Rico and other islands,, animal activists were working to resolve the problem, thanks in part to an American boxer from New York.

Boxing For Bulldogs On Dead Dog Beach

Christina “Chrissy” Beckles, founder of the Puerto Rico-based Sato Project, said fewer dogs are ending up on Dead Dog Beach because of a spay-and-neuter campaign in Yabucoa.

Beckles, who retired from boxing in 2010, reentered the ring on Nov. 16, 2013, as part of a Fighters4Life fundraiser. Partial proceeds from the event benefitted the Sato Project launched in 2011 by Chrissy and her dog-loving husband Bobby Beckles.

In a Save a Sato post, Beckles says: “When I run, I think of them. . . my legs are tired, my chest hurts. . . did Hope give up? When her hips were broken and her pelvis was crushed did she lie down and die? No, that little puppy wobbled to her feet, and she walked. Hope fought and she survived. . .

“When I’m sparring and taking heavy punches; my arms are so weary that they won’t stay up and my legs are like lead then I think of Samlee. . . Samlee laid on a step for three days with her eye hanging out. I think of her courage and her will to live. . . and I can keep on punching. I fight for them. I take each and every one of them into the ring with me. They are my inspiration.”

Beckles says the busiest rescue period is November through January “when the holidays begin and dogs are being driven to the beach and left—in droves.” In another month, the holiday season will begin in hurricane-devastated territory. What lies ahead is unknown.

What is known is the 205 dogs that inspired this column were checked by veterinarians before leaving San Juan airport, They landed in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. One load of dogs went to Florida shelters and the others to North Carolina and New York.

The Petco Foundation’s 2017 Holiday Wishes Campaign fundraiser is now open. Proceeds benefit animal welfare organizations including the Sato Project and others assisting animal victims of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Details at: <http://petcofoundation.org/holiday-wishes/#faq>.

Emmy Award winning producer Juan Agustin Marquez’s Save a Sato video “Maruja—1 of 100,000” with English sub-titles can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/6222288>.

Does it seem ironic that homeless dogs are airlifted into the US for shelter, yet homeless women with dogs are denied shelter because landlords don’t allow animals?

Any comments?

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