



Paw Prints

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Columnist

Does your dog need a friend?

Every time you and Rover spend the weekend with your friend and her dog, the two dogs have a great time together. And each time when you return home your dog seems down for a couple of days.

Should you consider having a playmate for Rover or a second dog?

Since dogs are pack animals, they enjoy being around others. Some miss having companionship so much when their pet parents are away that they bark incessantly or become destructive. A dog can benefit from having another pet in the home to bond with, in the right circumstances.

However, dogs do not

automatically get along with other dogs. Just like humans, they can be picky about their friends. Most dogs who have been well-socialized with a variety of other canines from puppyhood shouldn't have trouble getting along with a new furry family member.

A friend can help make your dog more active because they will play together when you are not available and some dogs exhibit improvement in their behavior and overall demeanor once another pet is introduced.

On the other hand, when dogs don't get along, it can lead to heartbreak and even physical injury between the two dogs.

Start by observing Rover with other dogs. Take him to a neutral site where there are only a few other dogs. Dog parks are good places to meet other dogs.

Begin by keeping your dog on a leash when meeting other dogs, so you can maintain control of the initial session.

Once your dog exhibits friendliness toward other dogs, let him play with them freely at the dog park but observe his behavior.

Some dogs don't enjoy the company of other dogs and spend their visit to the dog park close to their pet parents. This could be due to

a lack of interest in socializing or fear of other dogs.

If Rover displays aggressive behavior with other dogs, it's best to get professional training before considering bringing a second dog into the picture.

But, if your dog is the life of the party at the dog park, he may enjoy having a playmate at home.

And then there are some dogs that guard their "territory," and while they are fine at the dog park, they would not like the idea of a playmate coming home for dinner.

So, even if Rover gets along well with other dogs in neutral places things could be very different if you bring a new dog into his home.

Not every dog likes to have a new dog come into the household. If your furry friend is strongly bonded to you then he may not like the idea of sharing your time and attention with a new pooch.

Try having your friend bring her dog over for a visit and notice if Rover is still playing nice on his own territory. If so, then he would probably enjoy the company of a second dog.

If you decide on a second dog, take your dog's preferences into consideration. Ask yourself: "What kinds of dog would my dog like?"



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Ollie needed a friend; Mia came into Ollie's life and they were perfect for each other.

Sit down and list out these characteristics, and remember to take notice when your pooch meets a new dog so you can begin tracking patterns. While you may be attracted to the look of a small dog such as a Chihuahua, your Mastiff may prefer the company of other big dogs. And if your dog is older he may not enjoy the energy of a puppy.

Arrange for Rover to come with you to the shelter when scouting out potential companions. Most shelters are fine with this. But make sure that your dog is completely healthy and up to date on his vaccinations.

Introducing your resident

dog to your new dog correctly is very important. Some breeders and rescue organizations have staff experienced in canine social interactions and body language, who can help make the introduction as low-stress as possible.

Getting a second dog as a playmate for your furry friend can be a good idea but it's not something that you should rush into without thinking it through. Remember to consider your situation and your time. And it could take your dog a while to accept the newcomer and things could be tense until the furry kids call a truce.

Quilt Drawing

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"Pets Just Wanna Have Fun" quilt was designed, appliqued, and quilted by Valerie Fercho-Tillery. The original design and incredible detail make this a spectacular quilt!

The quilt is currently on display at The Nugget office, 442 E. Main Ave. Bring your pup by for a dog cookie and have a look!

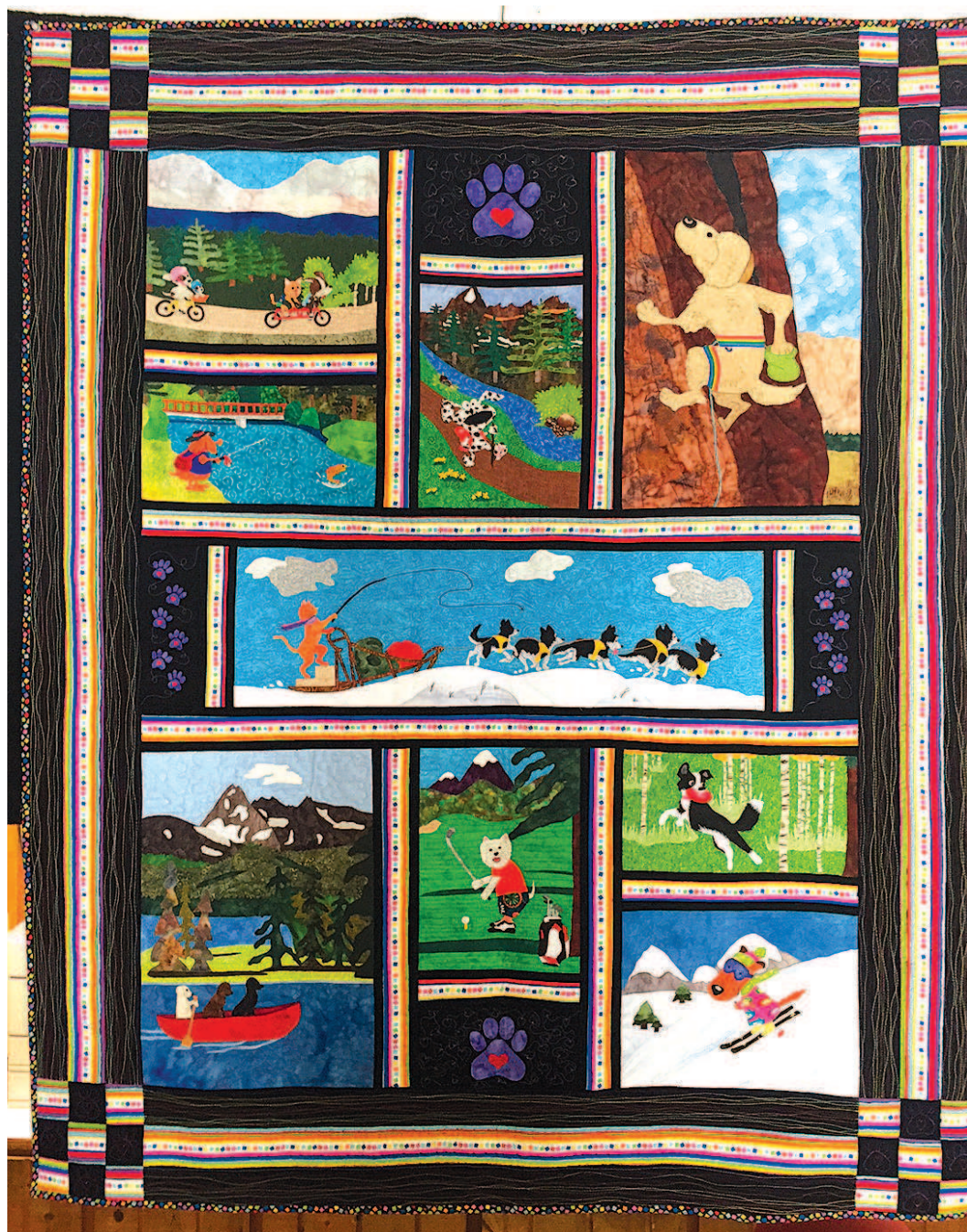
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"Pets Just Wanna Have Fun" - by Valerie Fercho-Tillery (45.5"w x 57.5"h)