

A Winner, Doggone It

■ We collar a winner in the Alive! Owner-Pet Look-alike Contest.

We have a winner in the first Club contest to see who looks most like their pet (or is that vice-versa?).

The winner: Club Member Ivan Forbes and his pet dog. Hey Ivan, we'll be sending a Target gift certificate your way.

Congratulations, and thanks for playing!



The Club Pet-Owner Look-Alike Contest

Does your pet look like you?



Win a prize!

- Send in a photo of you and your look-alike pet. You could win a **\$100 gift certificate to Petco!**
- **Deadline: January 12, 2005.** Results to appear in the February 2005 issue of *Alive!*
- Send in your photo now!
- Send digital photos to: talkback@cityemployeesclub.com
- Send print photos to:
City Employees Club of Los Angeles
350 S. Figueroa St., Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90071

RULES:

1. Pet clothing is acceptable but discouraged. Please respect your animal and be humane. *Alive!* will reject submissions immediately that appear inhumane.
2. Winning contestants must be Club members in good standing. Everyone is welcome to submit responses, however. (Responses without Club membership numbers will be accepted but not eligible for the winning prize.)
3. Winning responses will be determined by official Club personnel. All decisions will be final.
4. The contest is all in good fun. The Club cannot be responsible for delays in delivering *Alive!* or for delays in the transmission of responses.

Special Guest Judge:



Jackie David of Animal Services!

by Jackie David, Public Information Director, L.A. Animal Services

The Pet Club



Heroes Quiet, Unsung and Brave

They are, to me and to many who know them well, the City's quiet, unsung and yet bravest heroes. Armed only with a stick and rope, they literally place their lives on the line every single day to protect the animals and citizens of Los Angeles and almost never receive acknowledgement for their heroism and bravery. If anything (and this really maddens me), people actually have the nerve to call them "dog catchers." *Dog catchers?*



I am talking about the City of Los Angeles' Animal Control Officers. Yes, they are officers and deserve just as much respect if not more than any officer out there. Just like police officers they get to issue citations, serve warrants and make arrests. Just like police officers, they conduct investigations and file reports and show up and testify before judges and juries. Just like firefighters, they too take many chances with their own lives to save animals and people.

Here's a difficult one for them to swallow. You are watching TV. You see a horse down. You see a Fire Department helicopter and bright Fire Department jackets. What do you assume? Naturally, that the heroes down there, doing the dirty work, are LAFD. Well, not so. Like I said, they are hardly ever mentioned for their heroism because the Department does not have the resources for bright jackets touting "Animal Control Officer." And so these officers, having toiled and worked in the mud for hours to save a horse, watch the news as firefighters once again receive the credit. How difficult do you suppose that is for them?

Want to talk about bravery? Well, here it is. Like police officers, Animal Control Officers put their lives on the line every single day and, guess what? They don't have the luxury of carrying a gun on their person and they do not have the luxury of backup and they do not have the protection of full Peace Officer Status. They sure don't have the luxury of receiving commensurate pay for putting their lives on the line, either. Yet, it is their job to enforce State and City ordinances dealing with the care, treatment, licensing and impounding of animals in the City. I'm not just talking about dogs and cats. I'm also talking about indigenous and non-indigenous wildlife – including predatory wildlife like coyotes and bobcats and mountain lions and snakes. Would you have the nerve to do this?

Picture this situation. You are told to save a raccoon on a building ledge 12 stories high. You go up with a rope and a stick. Someone holds onto your belt as you reach over the ledge to save this animal. Why? It's your job and it's expected of you. The sheriff holding onto your belt as you lean over the 12-story ledge tells you you're crazy. You have to admit ... maybe ... after all, your life is literally in his hands. If he



lets go of your belt, you're dead. Yet you get the job done. This is a true story.

Here's another one. You are told to go deep into gang territory to impound a dangerous animal belonging to a gang-banger who happens to be on parole. You are alone. You have a rope and a stick. You knock on the door and are confronted by yours truly and his buddies. How much nerve do you suppose you'd have to stand there and tell them you need to impound their animal?

During day shift, L.A. Animal Services has an average of 15 Animal Control Officers to respond to a City of almost 4 million residents and covering 470 square miles - that translates into one Animal Control Officer per 250,000 residents. On swing shift, we have one Animal Control Officer per 1.8 million residents.

How about this one? Neighbors complain there is a pack of dangerous dogs. You go in, armed with your rope and stick, and find yourself surrounded by a pack of snarling pit bulls. Got nerve?

How brave can you be with only a stick and rope? How about going into a dark alley alone, with no backup?

Why aren't Animal Control Officers afforded full peace officer status? Why, when we are talking about public health and safety, is the Animal Control Officer's health and safety not paramount? If you hurt an officer with full peace officer status, you will have a high price to pay. Not so with your Animal Control Officer.

I hope I got my point across for the life-saving work these quiet unsung heroes do. They are heroes – every single day – and should you ever run into one of them, please, let them know you appreciate them. It's the least we all can do

Send Questions

Jackie David, Public Information Director, L.A. Animal Services

Feel free to send questions and concerns to me, and I'll be happy to respond to them in my column. I'm excited about this, so don't hesitate! Write to me at: talkback@cityemployeesclub.com

