



Why we're getting another puppy

When my wife and I took a pleasant drive down to Grand Lake Stream a few weeks back, we were not in the market for a new puppy.

At least, as far as I knew we weren't.

But over the course of a half-hour, all that changed. And I'm happy — if somewhat surprised — to announce that sometime in mid-October the Holyokes will become a two-dog family.

Do me a favor, though: Keep this big news to yourself. Genny the Wonder Dog, the current Queen Pooch of Holyoke Manor, has not yet been told she'll be sharing attention with a new addition in a matter of weeks.

Not that she'll mind. Genny has never met a dog or human she doesn't love. Heck, she even loves her cat-brother, Vinnie the Claw, who sharpens his nails on poor Genny's snout on a regular basis.

But back to the puppy. Over the years, I've surely forgotten more than I've learned. Add this factoid to the things I hope I never forget: If you don't think you're in the market for a puppy, make sure your wife never ends up meeting a painfully pregnant, sweet-tempered dog.

If she does (she did), within a matter of hours, you may find yourself reaching out to the mama dog's owner, asking if all of her pups are spoken for.

On that hot, humid day, Karen and I ended up on the porch of Weatherby's, the noted hunting and fishing lodge in the village of Grand Lake Stream. I was there to interview the lodge's owner, Jeff McEvoy. All around us, McEvoy's English cocker spaniels meandered about.

All except Molly the Enormously Pregnant.

That sweet dog made pals with my wife, leaning up against her

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COURTESY OF JOHN DYKSTRA

Heather Dykstra and her husband, Peter Dykstra, of Alton show off the two black bears they shot on the same evening from the same ground blind on Sept. 7. Heather's bear weighed 140 pounds and Peter's was 388 pounds.



COURTESY OF COREY GRAHAM

Ben Graham, 13, of Presque Isle poses with the bear he shot on Youth Bear Day earlier this year. The bear weighed in at 175 pounds, field-dressed.

1 night, 2 bears

Couple enjoy rare hunting success; County teen fills tag

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

On a sweltering Labor Day afternoon, Peter Dykstra and his wife headed into the woods to sit together in a ground blind and wait for a bear to visit their bait.

They carried one gun, four bullets, and had reached an agreement: If a bear showed up, it would be Heather Dykstra's — her first ever.

That's not how it worked out.

Over the course of the afternoon, the Alton couple watched two different pairs of porcupines, a family of raccoons and four different bears visit their site.

And both Dykstras ended up filling their bear tags.

Simply watching the interplay between the smaller animals was amusing, Heather Dykstra said.

"[When the] family of four raccoons came out, they just

took the place over," she said. "The porcupines just scattered."

Then, after sending a text about the abundant wildlife, her husband saw a much bigger critter ambling toward the bait.

"He said, 'Bear. Big one. This one is yours,'" Dykstra said.

While she has had success hunting turkeys in the past, she admitted that she was a bit uneasy as the bear approached the bait, and as she waited for the perfect shot.

"I was so nervous, [trying to aim for] that exact spot," she said. "I didn't want to mess it up or make a bad shot."

She didn't, and at 6:53 p.m., she pulled the trigger, and the bear — a 140-pounder — went down.

Then things got really exciting.

"[That] was my night to hunt, this was my bear, but I shot it early, and we still had some time [before the end of legal shooting, a half-hour after sunset]," she said.

Five minutes after her shot, another bear came into the bait, but it was skittish and ran away. Shortly after that, another showed up for a snack and also left in a hurry.

Twenty-two minutes after Dykstra pulled the trigger, they found out why: She saw a much larger bear approaching, and she handed the gun to her husband.

Peter Dykstra's bear ended up weighing in at 388 pounds, live-weight. The bear was the third 300-pounder he has shot in his hunting career.

Then, it was time to drag their bears back to the truck. And Heather Dykstra wasn't as prepared as she could have been.

"It was so hot on Monday, I didn't think we were going to see anything," she said. So I put on my camo [clothing] ... but I would not put on boots. I wore flip-flops."

The duo summoned help, and three people dragged Peter Dykstra's bear up the steep slope,

while Heather Dykstra flip-flopped her way — solo — with her own bear.

"It was tough, but I did it," she said with a laugh. "It makes you sleep well at night."

Wildlife biologist Randy Cross of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife said shooting two bears out of the same stand or ground blind is quite rare.

"Double-kills are very unusual, mostly because there is only one bear hunter in most stands," he said in an email. "However, hunters who stay put after they shoot do often see more bears visiting the bait after shooting one if they shoot the first one early in the afternoon."

He said that after shooting a bear, having other bears come to the site so soon also is a surprise.

The bear Peter Dykstra caught was familiar to Cross, who leads the field crew in the state's bear research project. In

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Migration season is underway

A southerly flow of air created hot, muggy weather conditions in August. Fog enveloped the coast. Humidity prevailed everywhere. It's normal for songbirds to begin leaving Maine as early as mid-August. Not this year. They bided their time until the weather changed.

Relief arrived on the last night of August. Northerly breezes greeted the dawn and southbound migrants

streamed over Maine. Most of this activity was invisible, but there is a location in Yarmouth where birders can watch the movement. Nocturnal migrants can get caught offshore, settling on islands until they get re-

oriented. At daybreak, they cross back to the mainland. Sandy Point on Cousins Island is such a place. Local birders know the point will be bustling with songbirds on mornings after a clear night of northerly breezes.

Usually you'll find Derek Lovitch standing there. Lovitch is a professional birding guide and owns Freeport Wild Bird Supply. On the morning of Sept. 1, he tallied 486 songbirds trying to cross the channel. Nearly 40 percent of them were American redstarts. Derek counted 73 northern parulas making the attempt. A third of the birds were too distant to identify, but he recognized 22 different species that morning.

Songbirds typically migrate at night, relying on the stars to guide them, the chilly air to cool them and the darkness to protect them. On a clear night with a light breeze from the north, you can actually hear them pass over. Many can be identified by their distinct flight calls — an expertise that far exceeds my skill level.

Waterfowl migrate in daylight,



BOB DUCHESNE

A merlin perches on a branch. Mid-September is prime time for most migrant raptors.

when they can follow rivers and recognize landmarks. They have less to fear from predation. Canada geese are famous for their "V" formations. This allows members of the flock to see each other easily, and each bird flies just outside the turbulence created by the wing flaps of the bird in front of it. Double-crested cormorants follow the same strategy, and many large flocks are milling about the skies right now, preparing to head south.

Hawks are streaming southward. Mid-September is prime time for most migrant raptors, but the movement persists into October. The hawk watch atop Cadillac Mountain in Acadia is the best-known local viewing spot. Rangers and volunteers scan the horizon for incoming birds and explain the identifying field marks as they pass.

All raptor species take advantage of the Cadillac updrafts, but

some do it more than others. In the first five days of this month, 300 sharp-shinned hawks passed the summit. More than 100 American kestrels rode the winds past the peak. Larger, slower raptors favor these updrafts, and the early trickle of vultures, ospreys and harriers is growing into a torrent. Some broad-winged hawks also pass the summit, but most prefer a route over our inland mountain ranges. A few merlins and peregrine falcons occasionally pass by the Acadia hawk watch, but these raptors generally follow a seashore route, preying on shorebirds as they go.

Birds are smart enough to avoid migrating against a headwind if they can avoid it. Soaring hawks can overcome unfavorable conditions merely by riding a southerly breeze high into the sky and then gliding to the next peak. On such occasions, they quickly

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Things to Do Outdoors

BANGOR — Penobscot County Conservation Association's 38th annual Bangor Gun Show, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12; 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13, at Cross Insurance Center, 515 Main St. Admission \$8; \$7 for members of law enforcement, military and National Rifle Association with current identification. Children 12 and under admitted free with an adult. Join the NRA at the show and get free admission. Proceeds will fund college scholarships for wildlife conservation and wildlife law enforcement students at University of Maine and Unity College. Call Charlie Rumsey at 941-8575 for table information.

BAR HARBOR — Seventh annual Night Sky Festival, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. through Sept. 14, Acadia National Park. Stargaze atop Cadillac Mountain with astronomers, take a nighttime boat cruise while listening to Wabanaki folklore, participate in night sky photography workshops and night hikes. Visit www.acadianightskyfestival.org for updates and a complete schedule of events.

BATH — Kennebec Estuary Land Trust welcomes novice geologists to meet 10 a.m.-noon Sunday, Sept. 13, at the preserve trail kiosk at the north end of High Street to explore the geologic wonders of Thorne Head Preserve with Maine Master Naturalist volunteer Denise Bluhm. Light rain or shine event. Free. Open to adults and children 10 and older. Register at www.kennebecestuary.org/calls-summertime-scene or call 442-8400.

BRUNSWICK — Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust will celebrate 30 years of building

community and the completion of its \$7 million campaign with an evening of activities, 4-7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at Farmers Market Green at Crystal Spring Farm, 277 Pleasant Hill Road. Meal tickets \$10 for adults, \$5 for children, free for children under 4. Visit bttl.org/ for details and to purchase tickets.

FOREST CITY — Tour of apple orchards in Orient, Weston and Brookton, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, meet at Woodie Wheaton Land Trust building, 2 Grove Road. Pack a lunch. Donations accepted and appreciated. Pre-register with office at 448-3250.

GREENVILLE — The 42nd annual International Seaplane Fly-In, through Sept. 13, at Moosehead Lake. Pancake breakfast, 7 a.m. Saturday, at the Masonic Temple on Pritham Avenue; craft fair, downtown Greenville, Saturday and Sunday; food at the American Legion; airport and seaplane base will include the bomb drop, spot landing, take-off contest, taxi slalom and "Bush Pilots Canoe Race," in which a pilot and a canoe take off at the same time to see which arrives at their destination first, beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday. Any events that cannot take place due to weather will be scheduled for 10 a.m. Sunday, as well as a 50/50 raffle and drawings for gift baskets. More details at seaplanefly-in.org.

ORONO — 12th annual yard sale to benefit Orono Bog Boardwalk, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, 139 Main St. Rain date Sunday, Sept. 13. If you have items to donate, call Jim Bird at 866-2578.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.