

Miracles: A Dog's Vision Of Paradise

BY TOBIN BARNES

I have a dog's vision of paradise in my house. It's a virtual manifestation.

Now don't get me wrong. I don't believe in magic anymore, but my dog most certainly does.

As for me, long ago I realized that even when extraordinary things happen, there's always a perfectly reasonable explanation, even if we don't know what that might be when it happens. It's kind of...oh well, someday we'll figure out the why and the wherefore. It's just a matter of time and science.

That's not the reality my dog Molly is living, however. From her viewpoint, just about everything is miraculous. Dogs, I think, live a life of wonder, which has its negatives and its positives.

The negatives include Molly's inability to rationalize the terror of thunder and lightning. These and other natural phenomena she just has to hunker down and endure, like why the heck that mean dog plagues her existence when she just wants to be friendly.

And the positives?



Barnes

Well...they're wondrous and innumerable, like a veritable host of angels. Alleluia! Those positives begin and end with humans, which, to dogs, are spiritual avatars of divinity.

It's like the witticism, "A dog thinks: Hey, these people I live with feed me, love me, provide me with a nice warm, dry house, pet me, and take good care of me. They must be gods!"

But then "a cat thinks: Hey, these people I live with feed me, love me, provide me with a nice warm, dry house, pet me, and take good care of me. I must be a god!"

We used to have cats, but now we have a dog—maybe for self-esteem reasons. After all, as Holbrook Jackson said, "Man is a dog's idea of what God should be."

And, evidently, we're fitting the bill. Whenever we put food in her

bowl, it makes our dog excited—so much so that it's like Molly's thinking: "Hey, that's just what I wanted!" And when we take her for a walk, she's absolutely thrilled and seems to be thinking, "Hey, that's just what I wanted!" And when the gas stove comes on after it's gotten a little chilly and Molly goes to lie in front of it, it's kinda like, "Hey, this place is perfect. It's just what I wanted."

As an unknown author has said, "The dog is the only animal that has seen his god."

To Molly, we are it—perhaps in some sort of dogmatic duality. Not only that, but we provide her with intermittent visions of heaven...and that's every time we open the refrigerator door.

Nirvana is right there in Molly's glistening eyes and in her absolutely rapt worshipful devotion. As I open the door, it's as if I have said, "Let there be light," and there it is, displaying everything a dog could ever want.

But then the door closes again and the vision ends, as all visions must.

The door stands in the way until the gods open it again—not only the door to heaven but all those darned doors.

I'll never forget the Gary Larson "Far Side" cartoon of these dog scientists dressed in lab coats (no pun intended) conducting experiments and writing mathematical equations on a blackboard trying to decipher the complexities of opening a door knob.

As Samuel Butler said, "The great pleasure of a dog is that you may make a fool of yourself with him and not only will he not scold you, but he will make a fool of himself too."

Amen

Tobin Barnes, a high school English teacher, gets his skewed viewpoints of life from staring too much at Crow Peak, which looms above his home a few miles outside Spearfish.

Muffler Is Growing Hair

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI

Dear Tom and Ray: Recently while looking in my tailpipe, I noticed a small amount of what appeared to be human hair sticking out. I began to pull on it, and at least 10 feet of strung-out human hair came out! How, where and why did it get in there? It's a 1996 Saab. —Harris

TOM: Well, Harris, you've discovered where the Hair Club for Men gets its replacement locks. When they put you on the list, and say they're waiting for a donor, they're snooping around supermarket parking lots.

RAY: It DOES look like human hair, Harris, but it's really just plastic. It's sound-deadening material that's used inside certain mufflers to slow down the exhaust and muffle the engine noise.

TOM: And when a muffler gets worn out, the insulation can start to escape and work its way down the exhaust pipe, until it



CLICK & CLACK

looks like you've run over ZZ Top and are dragging them down the street under your car.

RAY: So you need to replace your muffler, Harris. It's not urgent, but you want to do it before it gives up all of its hair—and looks like me!

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk Web site at www.cartalk.com.

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SCHOLASTICS

YANKTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

ROLL OF EXCELLENCE

8th Grade

Ament, Brittany

Anderson, Jessi

Bender, Brooklyn

Bockholt, Haley

Brandt, Briana

Brenner, Derek

Clark, Devin

Conrad, Haley

Cowanman, Brice

Droppers, Layne

Fitzsimmons, Brenna

Frick, Brandon

Frohreich, Colton

Greaver, Allyyah

Grode, Justin

Gulick, Anna

Haak, Ashlyn

Hackack, Tessa

Hauer, Gregory

Kelly, Brianna

King, Molly

Kinsley, Susanna

Koch, Hunter

Kotalk, Elsie

Kotalk, Stephanie

LaCroix, Mariah

Livingston, Amber

Luken, Haley

Magnuson, John

Mammola, Kamrie

Megard, Logan

Montoya, Antonia

Mueller, Mitchell

Olson, Ryan John

Peterka, Kalyon

Popovich, Jessica

Rodig, Katie

Rothenberger, Taylor

Sawatzke, Lane

Schild, Alyssa

Schild, Angelieah

Schrempf, Alexa

Schulte, Abby

Scoblic, Tierney

Skillingstad, Casey

Skorey, Juan

Smith, Fyloe

Spence, Jennica

Stone, Brae

Termanen, Tanner

Tessier, Morgan

VanMeeteren, Abbey

Wagner, Molly

Watt, Matthew

Withrow, Landon

7th Grade

Adam, Garrett

Arens, Jaclyn

Beckmann, Danielle

Bergeson, Kyle

Blom, Brooke

Cap, Kimberly

Chambers, Connor

Dannenbring, John

Doyle, Shannon

Dvorak, Rachael

Frank, Kaitlyn

Greenaway, Evan

Guthmiller, Jacq

Guthmiller, Jacq

Jaquith, Morgyn

Jeffcoat, Faith

King, Bethany

Klimisch, Ethan

LaFave, Nicholas

Larson, Lindsay

Leshner, Story

Lippert, Johanna

Logue, Madeleine

Mauch, Broc

Moody, Malan

Nelson, Jade

Osborne, Janae

Rust, Elizabeth

Ruter, Taylor

Schmidt, Abigail

Shindler, Jason

Strahl, Mason

Tolma, Julius

Turner, Veronica

Ulmer, Brad

Wallis, Maggie

Walter, Adam

Westerman, Erica

Wieseler, Alex

6th Grade

Andersen, Ellen

Andre, Sydney

Becker, Ashli

Black, Rylee

Bockholt, Hannah

Boots, Sydney

Bouza, Michael

Brandt, Garner

Busskohl, Savannah

Cammock, Grant

Chu, Alina

Clark, Natasha

Cronin, Ramzie

Davenport, Micah

Drozmann, Sophie

Duncan, Kylee

Dykstra, Tanner

Fedders, Ellison

Ferris, Natalie

Folkers, Brock

Frick, Rachel

Frick, Rebecca

Gallinger, Paul

Gant, Sheldon

Giansante, Virginia

Gillis, Danielle

Kotalk, Elsie

Kotalk, Stephanie

LaCroix, Mariah

Livingston, Amber

Luken, Haley

Magnuson, John

Mammola, Kamrie

Megard, Logan

Montoya, Antonia

Mueller, Mitchell

Olson, Ryan John

Peterka, Kalyon

Popovich, Jessica

Rodig, Katie

Rothenberger, Taylor

Sawatzke, Lane

Schild, Alyssa

Schild, Angelieah

Schrempf, Alexa

Schulte, Abby

Scoblic, Tierney

Skillingstad, Casey

Skorey, Juan

Smith, Fyloe

Spence, Jennica

Stone, Brae

Termanen, Tanner

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Ruter, Taylor

Schmidt, Abigail

Shindler, Jason

Strahl, Mason

Tolma, Julius

Turner, Veronica

Ulmer, Brad

Wallis, Maggie

Walter, Adam

Westerman, Erica

Wieseler, Alex

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Anderberg, Kyle

Anderson, Stephanie

Armentrout, Devin

Banks, Shenona

Binder, Alanna

Binder, Ashley

Bos, Emily

Breen, Landon

Brinkman, Colton

Buchmann, Melissa

Bushaw, Courtney

Carda, Garrett

Christensen, Lindsey

Cressy, Seth

Culver, Richard

Dolejsi, Brandon

Eilers, Ashley

Ewald, Brett

Fellmeier, Jennifer

Giesen, Anthony

Granflaten,

Chipper

Gusso, Shayna

Hallberg, Miranda

Hanzlik, Cody

Hawkins, Bradley

Hedges, Haley

Hill, Morgan

Hilson, Matthew

Hochstein, April

Hofler, James

Ishmael, Brandon

Johansen, Lexie

Knock, Amanda

Johnson, John

Jones, Alexia