

# Pet Palaces

Home improvement for your pet improves home for you too



## Precious Buoy

My mom tenderly cared for my Granny for the last five years of her life, so when Granny passed away, Mom's hands were too empty. "Get Mom one of those dogs that looks like a little fox," I suggested to my dad. He was reluctant at first but finally agreed to buy a Pomeranian pup from an ad.

Shortly after Precious Buoy (as Mom called him) moved in, her only remaining sibling came down with an incurable disease. I watched Mom cuddle Precious during her grieving, and I knew that to her he was more than a pet. Her strokes of love and occasional kisses on his golden mane were affection she needed to release to family members she could no longer touch.

Precious' antics brought both my parents joy. He preferred that Mom not wear socks, and if she did, he worked until he pulled them off. And his favorite resting place was on the back of Dad's chair. For the 16 years that he was a part of the family, I don't think he ever knew he was a dog (see above). Certainly, no one ever told him.

*Sandra Hobson, East Bend, Surry-Yadkin EMC*

## After the flood, Rusty came to stay

Months after Hurricane Floyd and the Flood of 1999, our mixed canine Rusty came to our house. He had no hair on his body, and his collar was almost embedded into his neck. He had been hanging around our neighborhood for weeks after the storm. The neighbors tried to catch him, but they had no success. But the minute he saw my husband, he came running. My husband removed the collar, and the dog stayed.

We decided that if he was going to stay he needed medical attention. The vet told us he was about a year old, and that the collar was put on him when he was young. He had heartworms and mange, and the vet said it would be almost impossible to treat or cure. We could not bear to see him put down, so we went through the treatments.

It took months, but he became heartworm-free, and his hair finally grew back. He is a beautiful, loving watch dog today. I guess you can say he found his refuge and the best home he ever had, his pet palace.

*Nancy Mills, Emerald Isle, Carteret-Craven EC*

## A home for a ferret

We had wanted a pet for some time. Having bought our own home, we were no longer restricted by a "cats only" lease (my husband is severely allergic to cats and dogs). After some research, we adopted an 8-month-old ferret whom we named Minion. We bought him a top-of-the-line two-story cage and a large playpen to romp around in, as well as a few ferret-safe toys. We have found, however, that much like cats and some small children his favorite toys are always the simplest and cheapest ones: a felt-covered dowel rod, a ball of yarn or a duffel bag full of my husband's work things.

At the top of the list is Minion's box. Nothing more than a cardboard box with an entrance hole, adding a towel or piece of scrap fleece transforms it into the perfect hide-hole in which to sleep, play or simply hide treats for later snacking. In this picture, Minion is comfortably ensconced in his box watching me take his photo. I have to be quick, because he never stays still for long!

*Michele Ogle, Bessemer City, Rutherford EMC*



Thanks to everyone who sent us photos and stories about pet palaces.

You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish some of your favorite wedding photos. [Deadline was April 15.] For more themes and the rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 20.





### *Meatball, USAF Retired*

Although a bulldog is the US Marine Corps mascot, “Meatball” is US Air Force blue through and through! Owned by recently retired USAF Col. Ken Lynn and his wife Monica, Meatball spent his last few years at Seymour Johnson AFB in Goldsboro listening to the daily roar of F-15E Strike Eagles overhead and then at Langley AFB in Hampton, Va., where the even louder F-22A Raptors interrupted his favorite pastime of sleeping. Now that he too is “retired” and living atop his own quiet little mountain in Ashe County, Meatball has made the sunroom, with its beautiful scenic view, his very own pet palace where he snoozes in between playtimes with his favorite stuffed football.

*Kenneth Lynn, Fleetwood, Blue Ridge EMC*



### *Barnyard pet palace*

This is the type of pet palace you find down on the farm. It has a lot of air conditioning in the summer, but probably needs a little extra attention in the winter. As you can see, neither one of these dogs is smiling or wagging its tail. They know that one day this pet palace will be gone, just like so many farmers over the years.

*Louis Talmadge Meads, Elizabeth City, Albemarle EMC*

### *R.C. on his sun porch*

I am not ashamed to admit that I like chickens. Short, tall, fat, skinny, fried or roasted—I’m a fan. So I suppose it should come as no surprise that while driving through Catawba one spring day I stopped to pick up a rooster who literally fell off the chicken truck on his way to slaughter.

Over the following weeks of care, R.C. (Road Chicken) made a full recovery minus a wing. Soon it became clear it was time for R.C. to move out of his makeshift hospital (an old dog kennel) and into something more appropriate for such a peculiar bird. He loved cats and sunning himself on porches, so

it was important that his new home accommodate both. For one week I worked sun-up to sundown taking apart wooden pallets and building what I affectionately refer to as “The Poultry Palace.” Complete with an A-frame roof and front porch for sunning and feline visitors, R.C. moved in without hesitation. Each morning I would let him out, and by dusk every evening he would return to the safety of his abode for the night.

R.C. has since passed on, but his house still stands to his memory.

*Christina Borders, Statesville, EnergyUnited*



### *Tigger's house*

I built this custom home for my cat Tigger. It was modeled after an actual life-size home, with two floors, a staircase and nine rooms. Each room has a vent for heat and AC. The home has hardwood floors and carpet and lighting in each room. Windows and doors were custom made as well as the shingles. Each shingle is 1-by-2 inches and was cut from a regular sized shingle. The home is over 4 feet long and more than 3 feet wide. The tallest point is just over 36 inches, and it weighs over 600 pounds.

*Adrian Stokes, Fayetteville, South River EMC*

*continued on page 20*



### *Hootie at home*

Who says that a pet needs to be one that lives in a home or cage? In my mind, a pet is an animal you love and appreciate whether near or far. We have such a pet, and we've named her/him Hootie. Yes, it's a screech owl that lives in a tree in our backyard. This owl has lived in this tree for over 10 years. It's no more than 15 yards from our house, and it sits as you see it in the photo all day long. At night or when the weather is bad it stays inside that hole.

Hootie's palace is an old tree where he nests. My husband noticed that the tree was rotten and needed to come down, but we still wanted the owl to return. My husband decided to cut out and cover the top and bottom of the section that the owl was using. He then took a very tall ladder and nailed it to an adjacent tree. We waited that whole year for the owl to return.

Sure enough, in the fall that year Hootie came back and resumed his/her residence in the palace. Hootie also has a mate who we don't see that much. In the late spring we see a baby or two and then shortly thereafter they all fledge only to return in the fall.

*Loretta Harrison, Havelock, Carteret-Craven EC*



### *Blue-eyed buddies*

The best home our pet ever had was in the arms of his master, Connor. Connor received his Siberian husky, Dakota, for his fifth birthday. No palace could ever match the love in Connor's arms. The two blue-eyed boys have been best friends since.

*Beth Purser, Monroe, Union Power Cooperative*



### *Away in a manger*

From November through January, Kody's home is by the manger. She not only stays dry and warm, but she looks like she is worshipping the Christ child. She has chosen the best palace of all.

*Lori Barker, Asheboro, Randolph EMC*




### *Here to stay*

Charlie appeared on our welcome mat one November day as a 6-month-old, 25-pound puppy. After a month he decided, since we were a home without a dog, he would adopt us. Folks often ask what breed of dog we have. The best we can do is say he's a "Danish-Lab-Hound," because we see characteristics of those three breeds.

Charlie first lived on our porch in a Dell computer box with a quilt. When the "adoption" was finalized, he received a "dogloo" for Christmas. One day he was carried indoors. Later, with much coaxing, he climbed the steps to our home's second floor.

Now, 85-pound Charlie loves his two-story home. He has a dog bed, but often prefers to retreat to our walk-in closet. He loves to look for wildlife from second floor windows (day or night), bark at UPS trucks, or nestle next to the computer. He likes leaving the house for hikes and truck rides. Charlie doesn't like gunshots, backfiring cars, or beeping cell phones. His house is his haven from scary noises.

Arriving home from work, it's wonderful to see Charlie at the second floor window, welcoming me to his home! 

*Dawn Hollifield, Marion, Rutherford EMC*

## send us your best **EARN \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

#### July 2008

##### **My Favorite Car**

Stories and photos of the best car you ever had.

*Deadline: May 15*

#### August 2008

##### **If Students Ran the School**

For students: How would you run your school?

*Deadline: June 15*

#### September 2008

##### **My Favorite Photo**

Our annual photo gallery of N.C. people and places.

*Deadline: July 15*

#### October 2008

##### **Celebrity Presidents**

What celebrity—human or cartoon—would make the best President, & why?

*Deadline: August 15*

#### November 2008

##### **The Techno Whiz**

Your craziest experience with home electronics.

*Deadline: September 15*

#### The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616  
E-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com Online: www.carolinacountry.com