

Sunday Column – National Mutt Day For publication 8.7.16

It was recently brought to my attention that last Sunday was National Mutt Day, also known as National Mixed Breed Dog Day. It's a rather new creation of Colleen Paige, a celebrity pet and family lifestyle expert and animal welfare advocate. I can't say as I've ever heard of her but I like her ideas about mutts.

In 2001 she declared both July 31 and December 2 of each year to be National Mutt Day. As many already know medium to large mixed breed dogs comprise the largest number of canines euthanized in animal control facilities.

It seems that mixed breed dogs tend to be healthier and live longer than pure bred dogs. The medical issues and personality disorders associated with various breeds are all too well known. Many are prone to specific types of cancer, heart disease or neurological disorders. Other inbred weaknesses include luxating patellas and dysplasia either of which can be both heartbreaking and expensive.

I've never sought to have a purebred dog and I've never understood the allure. Mutts are a surprise package and allow the imagination to soar. When you find one at your local shelter or pound you get to make up any story you like about what he is and where he came from.

Mixed breeds become the basis of rich conversations at local dog parks. We love to try to guess their parentage. I do at least and it seems a popular pastime in my circles.

Even Pet MD says mutts are best. They site their uniqueness for one thing. Each mutt has its own special constellation of genes, even when they're from the same litter.

They tend to have more flexible personalities. The working breeds are intended to perform specific activities such as herding. These are the most annoying breeds of all as they have a constant need to keep moving while telling everyone else what to do and where to do it. Mutts, as a rule, are affable good fellows.

Adopt an older mutt and you get to skip the puppy stage. Puppies are cute but just wait until they get to about 4 months old. Not cute anymore! Get them even just a little later in life and you've got a house-trained dog.

Last but not least Pet MD sites "awesomeness" as a reason why mutts are best. They say the mixed breed dog is for the adventurer in all of us. They urge us to appreciate the spontaneity of adopting a mixed breed that makes us awesome by association. It's hard to argue with that.

The Pet Coalition of Muscogee and Harris Counties will be at the Columbus Winn Dixie at 6770 Veterans Parkway from 9 am to 1 pm all weekend. Thanks to Best Friends Animal Society

adoption fees will be waived for all large breed mixes. If you've been thinking it's time to add a pooch to your family consider this a sign that today is the day!

Bobbi Yeo lives in Opelika, AL. She is the CEO of PAWS Humane in Columbus, GA, an animal shelter and veterinary clinic offering low-cost spay/neuter and other services to the public. Email her at byeo@pawshumane.org with your comments and story ideas.