

# ZigZagZine

Issue 8

CREATING, THINKING, IMAGINING

January/February 2009



## My New Dog for the Holidays

by Jessica Chase

Do you have a pet? I didn't until recently. I'm so excited, because I got a little dog in early December! His name is Mickey, and he's been "training our family" for the past month. We've been learning all his little quirks—the way he snorts and sneezes when he's excited, and the way he perks his ears up when he sees another dog. Our whole family loves him.

I've always wanted a dog, although I am allergic to them. I've been getting treatment for my allergies for 6 years; they should go away as I get older. I might have always wanted a dog, but I didn't expect to even think about getting one until my allergies were gone. So, it came as somewhat of a shock (albeit a nice one) when my mom asked me one day, "Should we get a dog?"

I had been asking about a pet for some time, but at most I was thinking

of some kind of reptile (considering I'm also allergic to hamsters, cats, guinea pigs, mice, bunnies, and probably chinchillas too, though I never checked). I said, "Yes," enthusiastically. Mom looked at a couple of Web sites, with me breathing down her neck. Finally, she found a shelter nearby. Then she printed out the map, and asked me if it was okay if we went now! You can guess how I answered.

Soon we were at the shelter. We looked at the various dogs, and none of them seemed quite right. Then we saw the sweetest-looking little dog, lying on his little bed, ignoring his noisier roommates. The sign told us his name was Mickey, and that he was a ten-year-old Chihuahua mixed breed. We decided we wanted to meet him and another dog in person (in person? in dog? you get the idea).

We met Mickey first, and he was as sweet as he looked. We got to feed him treats and pet him. The other dog was sweet too, but he wasn't as well trained, and he was a

little more energetic than we preferred. Mom and I talked it over, and we agreed to get Mickey! Then we had to complete all the paperwork and Mickey had to get shots. In the end, we spent three hours at the shelter. But it felt worth the wait when we finally got to walk Mickey out. I held him on my lap the whole way home.

The organization we got Mickey from, the SPCA, or the [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#), was founded in England in 1824. As time went on, other SPCAs were formed, quickly spreading from England to America. Today, there are SPCAs all over the world, including in San Francisco, where we adopted my little boy.

One of the most important aspects of SPCA is that they never kill animals to make room for more. Although it might sound like an idea no one could think of doing, most city government pounds still do so with strays.

The SPCA also provides much more livable quarters for cats and dogs than city pounds—they have no

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### Happy New Year!

Woohoo! It's 2009! Celebrate the new year with our new issue. We've got some great articles about pets—from dogs to hermit crabs—and some wonderful photography.

Want to see your name in ZZZ? You don't have to be famous, because anyone can send in articles, stories, poems, and artwork for our next issue. If you'd like to contribute to our March/April issue, you can flip to page 5 for details. In the meantime, you can check out our Web site at [zigzagzine.com](http://zigzagzine.com). (All clickable links in this issue are in blue type.)

— Jessica Chase, Editor

cages, and they give the animals room to move around, a warm bed, and toys, and make sure they're well fed.

The [San Francisco SPCA](#) (SFSPCA) works hard to get as many cats and dogs adopted as possible. Every year, from November 21 to January 1, SFSPCA and Macy's present the "Holiday Windows." They furnish the downtown San Francisco Macy's store window displays with cute little settings, put in water and food, a soft bed, and some toys, then put one or two cats or dogs in them to play and frolic, for passersby to watch. This year, the Holiday Windows inspired the adoption of 362 animals in San Francisco, and approximately \$50,000 in donations.

SPCA International also runs rescue programs of various kinds. They recently started [Baghdad Pups](#), a project that rescues stray dogs from battle zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, hundreds of pets have been stranded due to the war.

If you're thinking about adopting a dog, it's a great idea to consider adopting one from a shelter. Shelter dogs have been abandoned or orphaned; they are probably sweet little animals who just need a little love. You also want to make sure you can care for a dog—for example, are you home often enough to feed and give

attention to another family member? If you're getting a puppy, are you willing to put time and effort into training and housebreaking it?

If you're having trouble trying to imagine yourself being able to provide the amount of walking, exercising, and attention a puppy needs, you might want to think about getting an adult dog, like I did. An older dog isn't

necessarily more mellow than a younger dog, although they can be. Adopting an older dog is also a kind thing to do, because there are many more of them who need homes than puppies.

Even President-Elect Obama's family is planning to adopt a dog from a shelter. Because his daughter Malia is allergic to dogs like I am, it will be best for them to adopt a short-haired, relatively "hypoallergenic" dog, just like my Mickey. (This means he causes little allergic reaction.) It will be



**Mickey on high alert: He always perks up his ears and tail when he sees other dogs, like he's doing here on the beach.**

fun to see the dog they pick featured in the news!

There are many ways to find the perfect pet. You can visit a local shelter and look around like I did, and if you don't see an animal you like right away, there are probably other shelters nearby. There are also Web sites like [Petfinder.com](#) that let you look through many shelters and adoption groups in your area. *zzz*

## Flower Photography

by Caley Scheppegregl





# Unusual Pets: Hermit Crabs

by Mara Hughes

Welcome to my column, *Unusual Pets!* I have more than ten pets, which I'll introduce to you in this column. Three of them are hermit crabs, the animal I'm featuring in this issue.

Let's say you're in a pet store, probably in the reptile section. As you peer into a tank, a small animal pulls into her shell. You wait a minute, and soon the amazing little creature scampers off to find a nice hiding place, waving long antennae. This could be your first glimpse of a land hermit crab!

## Facts about Hermit Crabs

- Land Hermit Crabs in captivity need at least 70 percent humidity at all times.
- You can put pet land hermit crabs into a small hamster ball for exercise, because most hermit crabs will learn how to roll them around and will try to go under shelves and couches!
- The scientific classification of the Purple Pincher land hermit crab, the species found in most pet stores, that normally lives in the Caribbean, is:  
Kingdom: *Animalia* (all animals, including humans!)  
Phylum: *Arthropoda* (all arthropods)  
Class: *Crustacea* (all crustaceans)  
Order: *Decapoda* (ten-legged; decapods)

Family: *Coenobitidae* (Coconut Crab and Land Hermit Crabs)

Genus: *Coenobita* (all Land Hermit Crabs)

Species: *Clypeatus* (Caribbean a.k.a. Purple Pincher hermit crab)

## Get the scoop on my creatures!

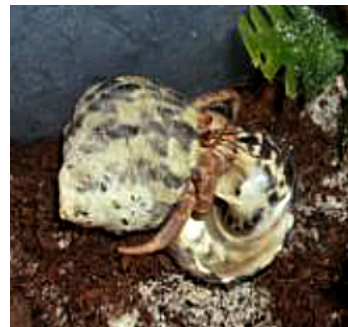
I have three pet land hermit crabs: Skyllaroi, Robin, and Aloe. Skyllaroi is a feisty medium-sized female Purple Pincher hermit. She sometimes climbs on the wire roof of the 10-gallon crabitat that she shares with Robin, a

smaller medium-sized male Purple Pincher!

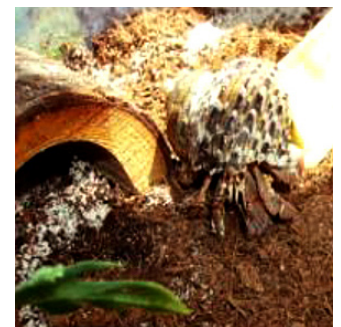
He loves the hamster ball and both he and Skyllaroi have both molted (shedded) since I got them in January 2008. Aloe is a new male Purple Pincher that I got in December. He likes to dig and soak in his salt-water dish. *zzz*



Aloe



Robin



Skyllaroi

## Incredible Animal Art



Cobra, 2008 by Guido Daniele

Wow, have you seen the incredible paintings of animals on hands by Italian artist Guido Daniele? His paintings on models' hands for an advertising campaign are extremely realistic and so amazing. Check out his hand paintings of a lion, a horse, a zebra, an elephant and a lot more animals on [his Web site](#).

Also see *Reader's Digest's* feature of his work in a slideshow called "[Slight of Hand Illusions](#)."

For more information about hermit crabs as pets:

- [Hermit-Crabs.com](#)
- [Hermit Crab Paradise](#)
- [The Crab Street Journal](#)
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Online Field Guide Entry - Hermit Crab](#) - includes video of hermit crab feeding
- [Hermit Crab Association - Discussion Board](#)
- [HermitCrabs.org](#)
- [Enchanted Learning's "Label Me!" Hermit Crab](#)
- [How Stuff Works: Hermit Crabs](#)
- [Hermit Crab Student](#)

# Random Acts of Nature Photography

by Nico Peck

The natural world is an inspiration to me—both as a person and as an artist. For the past five and a half years, I've been exploring the diversity of nature with the naturalists in the [Riekes Center's Nature Awareness](#) programs. I bring my Sony Cybershot W-70 camera with me on all of our adventures, to capture the wonderful scenery with my random acts of nature photography. If you want to see more of my pictures, you can check out [my Web Gallery](#). Off to another adventure...



Sunset Over Ocean



Creekbed with Flowers



Mountain Iris



## Contributors to this issue

- ♦ Jessica Chase, 11, lives in San Francisco, California
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## CONTRIBUTE!

We accept stories, poems, articles, and artwork from kids and teens. The deadline for our March/April 2009 issue is February 15.

If you'd like to see your work in *ZigZagZine*, please send submissions to [info@zigzagzine.com](mailto:info@zigzagzine.com). Check out our Web site at [zigzagzine.com](http://zigzagzine.com) for details!

## Sign Up for Our Mailing List!



If you'd like to receive announcements about new issues of *ZigZagZine*, you can sign up for our mailing list. You'll receive an email each time a new issue comes out.

Sign up at  
[groups.google.com/  
group/zigzagzine](http://groups.google.com/group/zigzagzine).

## Riley's Tech & Science Column

by Riley Price

### Shopping for a New Computer

If you own a computer, you probably know that every 3 to 6 years (depending on how nice your computer was when you bought it) comes a time when your PC or Mac is simply too outdated to use properly. There are ways you can prolong its life (I've had my 8-year-old IBM ThinkPad T23 for 4 years, and am still using it), but eventually, it inevitably gets too old or too slow to be useful, something that is happening to me right now. I thought I would take this chance to write an article on how to shop for a new computer.

The very first choice you need to make is whether you want (or need) a laptop or a desktop. The advantages of a desktop are more power and upgradability (unless you get an all-in-one like the iMac or one of those new HP ones) for a lower price. Also, a desktop computer can be a little more comfortable and, possibly, stylish (iMac).

The advantages of a laptop are, well, portability—you can't lug a desktop around (let me rephrase that, you shouldn't lug a desktop around, it is not a very good idea) and you can't use a desktop computer without a power outlet.

Laptops are a little more integrated (you don't typically need to buy a keyboard or a mouse or a webcam). I personally need a laptop for several purposes, but the rest of this article will apply to desktops as well.

The next choice you should probably make is whether you

want a Windows PC or a Mac. I will not get into which you should choose; there are advantages and disadvantages to both, and it is simply a matter of personal preference.

But if you choose a Mac, your entire buying process becomes a lot simpler. There are far more PCs to choose from than there are Macs, so if you want a Mac, just head over to your local Apple store, or the [Apple Web site](http://Apple Web site), and everything else should be pretty self-explanatory.

Buying a PC is beyond the scope of this article. There are just too many to choose from.

Figure out your needs, wants and likes and find the model that meets them for the best price (Best Buy and a few other Web sites offer "computer selectors,"

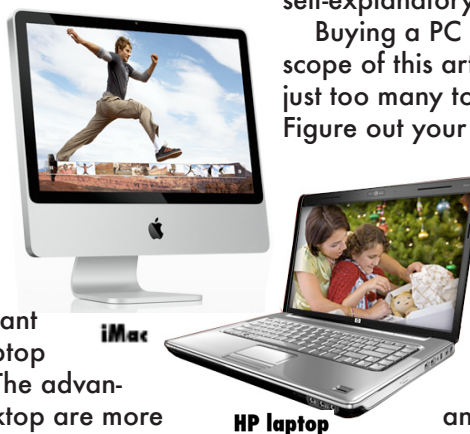
and you can always post your needs, wants

and likes on a forum and hope somebody else does the work for you).

Also, don't expect your new computer to last you more than 4–5 years. Macs and desktop PCs sometimes can last through a few more upgrades than PC laptops depending, but still, 4–5 years is what you should expect. *zzz*

#### WEB RESOURCES

- [Apple Computer, Inc.](http://Apple Computer, Inc.)
- [MacRumors: Buyer's Guide](http://MacRumors: Buyer's Guide)
- [eHow: How to Buy a New Computer](http://eHow: How to Buy a New Computer)
- [wikiHow: How to Buy a Computer](http://wikiHow: How to Buy a Computer)
- [About.com: How to Buy a New PC](http://About.com: How to Buy a New PC)
- [Cyberwalker.com: How to Buy a Computer to Suit Your Needs](http://Cyberwalker.com: How to Buy a Computer to Suit Your Needs)



iMac

HP laptop