

Conch Characters



Star Wars themed wedding at Gilbert's Resort. Photo Tonjia Rand.



Art class at the Key Largo Moose with Rodney Nelson in July.



Dennis Holmes performs at the Lorelei every Tuesday night at 6pm. Photo Rob LeBrun.



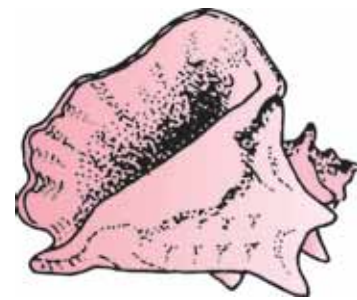
American Legion Ladies Auxiliary officers I (L-R) Maggie McKeehan, Cheryl Cordes and Monica YBarbo.



BLAST FROM THE PAST: Mel Fisher and wife Dolores when they celebrated their 35th anniversary at Jules Undersea Lodge. Photo Teresa Mckinna.



Hemingway look-alikes took over Duval St for the annual contest in July. Photo Rob LeBrun.



The Sunshine Billionaire Micah Gardner performs at The Lorelei.



Sun 103.1 radio personalities Bill Hobie, Joey Naples, and "Ham Salad" enjoy a night at a local jam. Photo Rob LeBrun.



Even feathered friends like visiting Carrie at Centennial Bank in Islamorada. Photo Rob LeBrun.

Have You Talked With Your Pet About Pot?

It all started on a Tuesday night, when I came home from work to an unmistakable absence. My brown-and-white pitbull mix, Maizey, wasn't at the top of the stairs to greet me. Instead, she was in her bed, shaky and confused.

When I tried to get her up, she stumbled, nearly falling over while standing still. Walking to the vet, she leaped like a puppy chasing imaginary balls.

Later, at the 24-hour veterinary clinic, the staff ran tests and determined Maizey was in no immediate danger.

Instead, they wagered a guess that Maizey was simply high. On marijuana.

How Are Dogs Getting High?

"Dogs will get into anything and everything," said veterinarian Dorrie Black of the San Francisco-based veterinary clinic Animal Internal Medicine Services.

Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia now have legalized pot in some form. And since Colorado ushered in recreational marijuana in 2014, nine more states and D.C. have followed. As weed has become easier for people to get, it has also become a hazard for dogs.

Black said dogs ingest marijuana by eating the

remainder of a joint, or getting into someone's edible marijuana, either at home, on the street or in parks.

Another unsavory source in San Francisco — and other cities with high numbers of people living on the streets — is human feces tainted with marijuana. This is, in fact, what we think happened to Maizey. She had spent quite a bit of time in the park bushes the morning she got stoned. "Dogs love that [feces] scent; to them, it's perfume," said Black.

Black and other veterinarians see this becoming more common in urban area, as the homeless population grows.

How does a high dog look?

Veterinarian Benjamin Otten says he looks for these symptoms when identifying "marijuana toxicity" in a dog:

- Wobbly movements, like a person who is drunk
- Dribbling urine
- A dazed or glazed look in their eyes
- Low temperature
- Nervousness

Dogs exhibit these symptoms because THC — the psychoactive element of marijuana — is poisonous to them. Despite that, none of the vets interviewed had seen an animal die from it.



"There's nothing about that actual drug itself that will kill them," Black said. "It doesn't cause any organ failure. It doesn't cause liver failure, renal failure."

What can happen, Black said, is that the drug can sedate a dog so fully that it will inhale its own vomit, which can be lethal. For that reason, Black cautions pet owners to play it safe.

"If you do not know the quantity that they got into, I'm always going to recommend that you go to your vet," she said.

Dr. Dorrie Black works at a 24-hour veterinary clinic near Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. She says she often treats three dogs per week who have ingested marijuana. (Laura Klivans/KQED)

A Colorado study found that two dogs who'd ingested chocolate baked goods made with marijuana-infused butter had died, but it's unclear if this was from the marijuana, the chocolate or the combination. Butter and dark chocolate, common ingredients in edible marijuana products, can be highly toxic to dogs.

Cannabidiol, or CBD, on the other hand, is marketed

to pet owners for a variety of pet ailments. But the research is incomplete about its efficacy for treating things like animal anxiety and seizures, and veterinarians are not allowed to recommend CBD to patients (although a bill making its way through California's Senate could change that).

How do you treat a dog that has ingested marijuana?

To reduce marijuana's effects on a dog, Black said, there are a few options: Veterinarians can induce vomiting, pump a dog's stomach or give the dog activated charcoal, which will help remove the marijuana from the dog's system.

On average, it typically takes about 24 hours for a dog to return to normal — but it varies depending on the strength and amount of marijuana the dog has eaten.

Otten, who formerly worked as an emergency vet, joked about what he used to tell pet owners: "We're gonna take your dog in, we're gonna put him in a quiet room. We're gonna play some Led Zeppelin for him and give him some Doritos, and you can pick him up in the morning."

From KHN.org

