

When Harry Learned to Drive

By Judith LeRoy

I'm a Bearded Collie and my name is Packer. That's a dumb name for a Beardie, but there's a reason for it. Many years ago, on the eve of my birth, there was a raging late-October blizzard in my home state of Colorado. A vicious north wind chilled human and canine bones and piled multiple feet of snow into huge drifts that barricaded humans' doors and windows. But that didn't matter, because neither dogkind nor mankind would dare venture out in the hostile white-out for fear of getting lost, buried, or both.

Sure, the state of Colorado is familiar with ice and snow—why else would it be a much-hallowed skiing mecca? But the stuff doesn't usually start falling in earnest until after Halloween, so this storm took even the natives by surprise. The heavy, wet snow accumulated on power lines, and the poles, burdened by the weight of the snow and rocked by violent blasts of fierce wind, fell like match sticks. Most of the town of Colorado Springs was left without electricity, and many homes had no heat. My breeder, being an ingenious lady, warmed bricks in the fireplace and put them in our whelping box to keep us newborns cozy. She was so moved by the weather drama that she gave all us pups "snow names." There was Snow Drift (aka Drifter); Snow Storm (call-name Stormy); Snow Cloud (another no-brainer, Cloudy); and me—Snow Pack (thus, Packer). We also have a sister named Snow Bank. Her owners call her Penny—Snowy would have been too common and Banky is simply absurd. Ironical, isn't it? One freakish weather event, and five Bearded Collies spend a decade explaining how a snowstorm defined their identities.

I was thinking about that the other day. I'm going on 13 now, and I spend a lot of time thinking ... time I used to spend barking or wandering the back yard in random pursuit of squirrels, rabbits, or abandoned stuffed animals. It's been suggested that these days I often think with my eyes closed. I'm told I sometimes snore while I'm thinking and, the other day, I even passed gas—my fellow Beardies, Leo and Harry, moved out of range fast, so it must have been a really good one. Despite these ancillary activities, I'm always thinking. Just a couple of minutes ago I was thinking about the time that Harry, our household's youngest Beardie, learned to drive.

First, a bit about our family. There's Leo—he's seven, he's from England, he's brown, and he's recently become a candidate for Canine Grinch of the Decade. Lately, Leo can find fault with a cloudless spring day. There's Harry—he just turned three, he's from Wales, he's brown and mad as a March hare (although a self-respecting hare might resent the species slur). And there's me—I'm slate and sane. I'm not inferring a color bias, it's just that when I moved into this household, then populated by three older brown Beardies, I noticed that each ... well ... each had his own eccentricities. And, now, here's Leo and Harry. I'm not a stupid dog—I can put two and two together. The only alternate explanation is that all those Beardies were not only brown, they all came from "across the pond"—but I find it hard to believe that "Born in the UK" means "Expect Quirky Behavior."

The humans: First, there's Judy, the Mistress, She Who Feeds Us, Walks Us, and Cleans Up After Us. Then there's the Master, her husband David, Who Does None of the Above. Daughter Simone lives in town across the river. We get to visit with her almost every day, and she comes to stay with us when Judy and David go off on business trips. We love Simone. We can bamboozle her into giving us anything we want and letting us do whatever we like. We all sleep on her bed at the same time and instead of yelling at us to get off, she moves to the sofa. She's a Beardie's dream dog sitter.

Harry learned to drive because our lives, a few years back, involved a lot of car travel. We lived in Wisconsin in the summer, when our Florida winter home gets besieged by hurricanes and giant flying bloodsuckers called mosquitoes ... with weather that's 100% humidity and near 100-degree heat. Ugly, let me tell you. Even the local Florida toads head north in the summer, which must be hard because they don't hop very fast. We're called snowbirds by Florida natives, because we migrate with the seasons. I don't know what they call the toads.

We dogs loved the snowbird life, especially the Interstate Highway Rest Stops and the motels. Rest stops are wonderful—all those good dog smells—and the motels are heaven. Two beds close enough together so you can leap from one and land on the other—you can get in a good rhythm if three dogs sequence their jumps. And the fast food? Delicious! Motels don't have stoves, so it's pizza and take-out burgers, all the way. Yum! Oh, sure, we were offered our usual kibble, but if we stared at it and looked pathetic, some crumbs from the McDonald's bag usually fell our way. We loved our road trips! When the packing began, we camped by the door, waiting to hit the trail.

We made the 1500-mile northern sojourn in what our Master called "The Dog Mobile"—an SUV large enough to accommodate three or more Beardies, suitcases, boxes, a freezer chest, and anything else the Mistress decided, at the last minute, we couldn't do without. The Master usually stayed in Florida another month or so with the excuse he had to "close up" the house. He'd fly up later. The real reason he stayed behind to "close up" the house is that he really didn't LOVE traveling in the Dog Mobile with three hairy bodies, boxes, and ancillary gear. He said it was too much like James Steinbeck's ramshackle "Grapes of Wrath" migrants, who piled jalopies with pots and pans and bits of life before leaving the 1930's American Dust Bowl for California. Picturesque, David called us. He preferred to be un-involved.

The trip I'm currently thinking about—the one when Harry learned to drive—happened when Harry was less than a year old. It was May and the weather in Florida had heated up—90 degrees Fahrenheit and 90% humidity—so we set out a little earlier than usual. Judy did the driving and Simone rode shotgun, although any one of us canines would have happily filled that post. We had traveled half a day without stopping—a near record for dogs like us who love rest stops. Yes, the Interstate Rest Stops awaken humans' highway-hypnotized brains and give their travel-stiffened bodies a chance to stretch and bend, but their real purpose is to pleasure us dogs ... from a male canine's point of view, an Interstate Rest Stop offers a wonderful opportunity to leave the canine equivalent of "Kilroy was here" on every bush and tree in the vicinity for present and future generations of dogs to sniff out and appreciate.

The air conditioner had been chugging non-stop, so it was relatively cool in the back of the SUV, and I was dozing as we crossed the Florida/Georgia border. Most states have "Welcome Centers," and they're fancier than ordinary rest stops ... they try to capture "the uniqueness and the flavor" of each state—or so the propaganda says. Judy and Simone like to stop at them to savor that flavor. Leo points out that "savoring" isn't an exclusively human indulgence at Welcome Centers, because they have different but equal allure for canines—exquisite and varied canine pees and poops. Absolutely scintillating.

As the car slowed to leave the freeway at the Georgia Welcome Center, Leo and I roused ourselves. Simone scrutinized the tall white Roman columns supporting the roof of the

large red brick structure that furnishes road information to brain-numbed travelers and restrooms for the more basic human needs. "This Welcome Center is like a mini-Tara plantation from 'Gone with the Wind,' isn't it?" Simone marveled. "Can't you just see Rhett Butler slamming out the front door?"

Leo, always the skeptic, muttered that he'd never heard of a "Gone Wind" before. The wind either blew your head hair in your eyes or it didn't. "It's not a matter of being here or gone, is it?" When Leo gets in this deep, it takes a long time to yank him out, so I just ignored him and hoped Dog Walk-anticipation would divert him. It didn't. He lifted his head off his paws and frowned. "And who the heck is this Rhett Butler dude? Does he live in the Welcome Center? I didn't think anyone lived in Welcome Centers besides those nice ladies who stand behind the counter and hand out maps and, if you get lucky, dog treats."

Yeah, I wondered about this Rhett Butler character, too. It would be way cool if he were a good ear scratcher, because my left one had developed quite an itch. Or maybe he possessed a particularly interesting crotch. I've always felt that a good whiff provides an excellent indication of human character, though Judy despises it when I indulge. I dragged my mind from wind, Butlers, itchy ears, and crotches so I'd be ready to exit the car and check this plantation place out.

I looked through the back window to get my bearings. Probably to reinforce the plantation motif, there were a dozen or so unique picnic tables squatting on the green grass near the dog walk area. The tabletops were huge cement slabs ... big enough, probably, to accommodate a celebrating Little League Baseball team ... and they sat on robust red brick legs. The tables' benches echoed the Deep South theme—smaller cement slabs also sitting on stout red brick legs. Southern pines, magnolias, and dogwood trees surrounded the picnic area, their sturdy trunks just waiting for a visit from dogs like us. We watched with great satisfaction and lots of barking as Judy wheeled the car toward the sign that said, "Dog Walk Area."

Harry, who had only one migration under his belt, asked, "What's happening now? Why are we stopping?" Harry, at that age, asked more questions than any three-year old human. Actually, he still asks more questions than a three-year old human. It's true, his questions have become more philosophical ("What is the meaning of life, anyway?"), more pragmatic ("Why did She change our kibble? I liked the Salmon a la Veg flavor better."), or more rhetorical ("Why do humans talk baby talk to small yapping dogs and small yapping human children?"). Harry was (and still is) relentless until he gets answers, so Leo launched into the Theory of Rest Stops.

"The rule of thumb at rest stops is that the oldest dog always gets to go out first," Leo began. Harry interrupted, looking skeptical, "Rule of Thumbs? But dogs don't have thumbs, Leo." Harry astutely looked at one front paw, then the other. "Rule of thumbs shouldn't apply to us, should they Packer? I have dew claws, though. Is there a Rule of Dew Claws?"

Leo scowled, momentarily drawn off course by Harry's meanderings. "Forget the thumbs. Forget the dew claws. We're talking Rules, here, Squirt, so listen up! The Mistress takes each of us out separately at rest stops so we don't, she says, have 'opportunity to fraternize.' Fraternizing, apparently, delays us from 'doing our business,' and that leads to 'wasting valuable travel time.'"

Harry looked confused. "What's fraternize, what's our business, and why is travel time more valuable than regular clock time?"

Leo belatedly remembered the futility of discourse with Harry and gave up trying. He grunted, "Packer's oldest. He goes first."

"Right, Leo! I go first," I warbled. Yes! I was poised, ready to ramble, the envy of all dogs. Well, at least the envy of Leo and Harry. "My turn, my turn! Ha, ha, I get to go first!" I may be old, but I still like to gloat.

The Dog Mobile's front tires touched the curb, and the dog walk and picnic area beckoned from the bottom of a gentle slope. Judy told Simone, "I'll leave the engine on. You and the dogs would roast without air conditioning."

"That'll work. I'll fill the dogs' water bowl while you're out with Packer, and I'll add some ice cubes from the freezer chest—that'll help cool them off." Good idea, Simone. We'd need liquid refreshment after our jaunts. We were already panting heavily in the back of the SUV, mostly from anticipation.

Judy snapped on my lead and opened the door. She and I sauntered down the hill and strolled past one of the gigantic picnic tables. Unfortunately, there were no other dogs around. Mad dogs and Englishmen are supposed to be out in the noonday sun, but there was no sign of either at this rest stop.

I pressed my nose to the ground, looking for a little action. Aha! I smelled a bitch. Small footprints and a few strands of white hair. She must be a ... West Highland White Terrier? I love Westies! And here's the piquant aroma of a big old hound dog—he was here, too. And a cat? Who in God's name walks a cat in the Dog Walk area of an Interstate Rest Stop? When I was a puppy, I had a mentor ... a cat named Grps. A mentor is someone who uses big words and "expounds on the precepts of life" (those are Grps' words). I learned from Grps that it's a major violation to bring a cat onto a Dog Walk. I don't know what it violated other than Grps' sense of propriety. But Grps was a cat, so he should know.

"Hurry up, Packer," Judy roused herself. "Leo and Harry need to go out, too." Like I care? I'm hot on the trail of a (I'm sure) gorgeous Rottweiler. Wow! She was here less than an hour ago!

I lifted my muzzle from the fragrant earth and looked up. Something caught my eye. Was our car moving? Without us? Where's it going?? Judy saw it, too, and she started to frown. Yes, the car was definitely backing up, making a slow arc through the parking lot, reversing direction so that the rear of the car now pointed toward the curb. There were no other cars in the vicinity, so there was lots of maneuvering room. Judy's frown disappeared. "Simone must be turning the car around. That'll make it easier for you guys to get in and out. Good idea," she told me. "I should have thought of that."

Huh! I watched the backing car reach the curb. But it didn't stop there, did it? No, it just kept right on coming. It casually jumped the curb and rolled down the little hill toward us, rear end first. What? Are they trying to run over me because I was taking too long? I wouldn't put it past Leo to try something like that.

Judy's eyes opened wide. We both recognized, at the very same instant, the brown furry body sitting in the driver's seat of the car. "Harry??" Judy queried. "Harry's driving the Suburban?" I was too stunned to respond. Who knew a dog could drive? But there was no mistake, because a white hairy head with long brown ears was peering through the windshield

and two fuzzy white paws were resting on the steering wheel as the SUV lumbered toward us, hatchback first. It certainly wasn't Simone driving that SUV.

"Harry???" Judy repeated, her brain rejecting what our eyes were telling us. We watched the vehicle continue its leisurely trip down the gentle slope. Judy and I were frozen to the spot ... though we probably should have been planning an escape route.

The car continued its slow arc down the grassy hill, just missing the towering steel lamp post that provided light for the rest stop's parking area.

Wham!

It mowed down the nearest giant picnic table like a plastic Lego model being deconstructed by a five-year old human. The cement tabletop became a giant airborne kite freed from its tether and the table's red brick legs imploded. The concrete bench traveled in the opposite direction from the tabletop, and bricks from the bench's legs sailed through the air like shrapnel. Luckily, there were only two other people at the rest stop, and they ducked and covered, watching the action from a safe bunker behind a live oak tree.

Judy was appalled. Me? I was pretty darned offended. Where the heck did they think they were going without me?

The car, unfazed, continued its lazy drift, taking aim at another picnic table. Then it shuddered to a stop, barely sparing the next victim. Judy hurried to the SUV, but I lagged as far behind as my lead would allow, planning not to be an easy target if the car got frisky again.

Simone was now sitting behind the steering wheel with a stunned expression on her face. Harry was in the passenger seat looking perplexed.

"I couldn't do a darn thing," Simone blurted. "When you got out of the car, I climbed over the seat to fill the dog's water bowl. Harry jumped into the driver's seat and put his paws on the steering wheel. He must have moved the gear shift stick from Park to Reverse because the car just took off."

Harry had his own explanation. "I was just looking for you, Packer. I couldn't see you from the back seat, so I hopped into the front, but then some really weird things happened."

"Weird is right!" growled Leo from the back seat. "I was taking a drink and the water in the bowl started splashing around and the ice cubes in the water went flying all over ... and Simone knocked me down when she crawled over the seat to stop the car. Harry is a lousy driver. Whoever heard of driving a car onto the dog walk at a rest stop?" Leo scowled ferociously. A Law and Order kind of Beardie, Leo was downright offended.

I looked at Harry. Harry had the old familiar "Who, me?" look on his face. Then he got indignant. "I didn't do anything! Like Simone said, the car just took off!!"

I couldn't really blame Harry. I'm sure he'd never heard of a dog driving a car before. Neither had the rest of us ... we all considered it impossible until that very day. But seeing is believing, and Harry was definitely behind that steering wheel.

Judy cleared her throat and looked around, wondering, maybe, whether anybody had noticed. Could we just get in the SUV and sneak away? Then her conscience and her

“responsible citizen” inclinations kicked in and she said, “I’d better go to the office and tell somebody we had an accident—in case they didn’t hear it.” I forgot to mention, the noise when the car hit the picnic table resembled the soundtrack from a battle scene in a World War II movie. In other words, hard to miss.

It wasn’t missed. A lady had left the white columned building and was walking in our direction. Leo, Harry, and Simone got out of the car and joined us in the dog walk area because it was too hot to stay inside the car. The lady listened to Judy’s explanation, and she greeted Harry cheerily. “Wait ‘til I get home to tell my husband this story!” She turned to Judy. “You know, those tables and benches each cost \$2,500. We’ll have to call the State Patrol. I think they have jurisdiction here.” She didn’t sound very certain. Obviously, they rarely have incidents where dogs run over expensive picnic tables.

We sat and waited in the heat, only slightly shaded by a big old live oak tree. And was it hot! Where is a rain cloud when you really need one? Twenty minutes later, the Georgia State Patrolman arrived, sirens blaring, and Judy explained how her dog had demolished the picnic table. Despite his sexy wrap-around sunglasses, I could see the corners of the Patrolman’s eyes crinkling. I’m a dog, so I know these things—he was smiling behind those fierce-looking sunglasses. But Judy just kept blathering on, like she expected him to haul us all off to the nearest town and toss us in the hoosegow. I didn’t think so. Who’d want three Bearded Collies in their hoosegow? No sensible policeman, that’s for sure.

“Ma’am,” he said. “Ma’am?” Judy was still explaining. Eventually she quieted down. “Ma’am, you need to report this to local law enforcement. It’s not my incident because it’s a matter of property damage, not injury or assault.” Personally, I doubted that the picnic table would agree. To me, it looked pretty much assaulted, lying there in a hundred pieces, simmering in the afternoon heat. But who am I? Just a spectating dog.

“Here’s their number,” the State Patrolman said. Judy reached for the card, but the trooper reconsidered and put it back in his pocket. “Never mind, I’ll call them with the details.” He got into his vehicle, still smiling. I got the impression he couldn’t wait to entertain somebody, anybody, with the story. He’d probably have it well-rehearsed before he got back to the State Trooper station and even further embellished when he got around to telling it at the neighborhood bar on Friday night. I’m sure I heard laughing as he drove off.

We stood around for another half an hour, practically melting in the heat, awaiting the arrival of the local law enforcement officer. I fervently prayed for a rain shower to cool us off. I wouldn’t even have minded if the rain came with a little thunder—which I absolutely despise—but the sun continued to shine wickedly down upon us.

Leo glared at Harry. “I used to think that Interstate Rest Stops were the best part of a road trip. I anticipated them for weeks. I loved Interstate Rest Stops. And now you’ve gone and ruined them forever. Now I’ll always worry that some stupid dog will pull off another car jack.”

Harry looked appropriately chagrined. “I’m sorry, Leo,” he said in a small voice. “I don’t really know how I did what I did ... if I really did it, that is,” he equivocated. He looked at me earnestly, “So if I did it, but I don’t know how ... how can I be sure I don’t do it again? And who’s this Jack that Leo says “pulls off” cars? I don’t think I’ve met him.”

That set Leo’s eyes rolling. I’d have rolled my eyes, too, but I was too damned hot.

Suddenly, a car wheeled into the rest stop with smoke billowing from under its hood. A woman with a yapping lap dog under each arm leaped out, screaming, "Help, help, our car is burning!" A man, the driver, jumped out and yelled, "The engine's on fire! We need a fire extinguisher. A pail of water. Who's got a wet towel?" We carry a lot of gear in our Dog Mobile, but we had none of the above. He kept yelling, she kept screaming, the dogs kept yapping, and we kept watching. If Leo and I weren't so darned hot, we'd probably have gotten into the spirit of things and helped with the yapping.

"Wow! Look at that!!" said Leo as a police car whipped into the rest stop behind the smoking car, siren howling. "It's the fuzz!" Leo likes to watch cop shows on TV, so he's picked up a lot of the lingo. He threw his muzzle in the air and accompanied the siren's last plaintive wail.

"Fuzz?" questioned Harry. "Mom calls me Fuzz-butt sometimes. But the man in the car looks more like a policeman. Is he here to arrest me? I really didn't do anything. I was just sitting there looking for Packer and the car took off!" he repeated once again. Leo and I ignored him. Stupidity has its own just rewards and I fervently hoped Harry would suffer them very soon.

A policeman dashed out of the squad car carrying a fire extinguisher and he sprayed the flaming engine with some weird-looking foam stuff that looked like whipped cream on last Thanksgiving's pumpkin pie. We weren't close enough to take a lick to be sure, though. We watched as the smoke kept billowing, the woman kept screaming, and the dogs kept yapping. After about 10 minutes, the excitement died down. The woman had stopped screaming but the dogs kept yapping, so she tossed them into the back of the car.

The policeman finally noticed us, sitting on the grass next to the Dog Mobile, which was still resting amongst the rubble of the picnic table and its bench. He ambled over. "Officer Peters from the State Patrol called my cell phone. He told me about the incident." He too, wore those sexy, wrap-around sunglasses. It must be a Georgia-policeman thing. I know from personal experience that those sunglasses taste very expensive. I chewed the earpieces off a pair one day and got quite a lecture. The corners of the Local Lawman's eyes also crinkled behind his sexy shades as he looked at us. Obviously, the law in Georgia finds driving dogs pretty amusing. But the Lawman's voice was gruff. He looked at Harry, who, like the rest of us, was panting heavily, tongue hanging almost to his knees. Harry's got the longest tongue I've ever seen on a dog. Sorry. I digress.

The policeman asked Judy, "Does your dog have a license?" Ever on the ready, she handed him the envelope with all our information—dog licenses, rabies tag numbers, vaccination histories, even AKC papers and pedigrees, although I'm not sure why a lawman would want those. The policeman glanced over the handful of papers.

"No, no, no," he growled. Then he guffawed. "I mean a driver's license!" He kept laughing until he had to take off his sexy shades to wipe his eyes. He looked at Harry. "You're pretty good at backing up, and that's the hard part of driving. Now will you please drive your car out of the dog walk area and onto the parking lot?" Then he sauntered back to the disabled car to talk some more with the humans, ignoring their still yapping dogs—an impressive feat, to my way of thinking. I was ready to kill them for some peace and quiet.

"Did'ja hear that?" Harry asked. "The policeman said I should drive the car to the parking lot!" I shuddered and Leo was horrified ... Harry's first attempt had turned out so well, hadn't it?

Maybe he could demolish the police car next? Or do us all a favor and aim for the still yapping lap dogs?

Then Harry pondered out loud, "I can turn the steering wheel, but I can't reach those foot pedal things." A light bulb went off in Harry's small brain. "If I can't reach those foot pedal things, I can't drive! So, I couldn't have squished that picnic table," he said decisively, exonerating himself from all blame. Ah, confusion, error, and/or peril usually accompanies Harry's thinking, and today was no exception.

Leo, the would-be scientist of our canine family, aka Smart Ass, was thoroughly exasperated. Leo's a glass half-empty kind of guy in normal circumstances; today he'd been elevated clear up to drained-dry glass status. He growled, rather savagely I thought, "It's physics, Harry. A matter of gravity and inertia." The look on Harry's face told Leo that science wasn't cutting it, and it was too hot for either balderdash or scientific explanation, so Leo didn't mince words, "You rolled the SUV down the hill, Stupid. You were behind the wheel. You'd be guilty in any court of law in the country. Even in Georgia."

And Judy wasn't ready to offer Harry a further driving opportunity, either. She got behind the wheel and drove the car up the grassy knoll, over the curb, and onto the asphalt parking lot while the rest of us waited in the semi-shade. "It works fine," she told Simone through an open window. "Outside of the dent in the rear bumper, you wouldn't know that it just destroyed a \$2,500 concrete picnic table and bench."

We all headed for the Dog Mobile, anxious to cool off in the air conditioning, but the lady from the smoking car came running over. She stopped in front of Harry. "Are you Harry?" she asked. "Are you responsible?" Leo and I looked at Harry doubtfully. Harry was probably the LEAST responsible living creature in the state of Georgia, and that included squirrels and grasshoppers.

She got down on her knees and hugged Harry. "Sergeant Rogers told us all about you. If it hadn't been for you, he might not have stopped at this rest area, and our car would have burned with everything inside, and maybe even the dogs." In view of their ear-splitting yaps, I thought that might not be so great a misfortune. I was way too hot for compassion.

"You are a hero!" the lady said. "You deserve a medal!! You're amazing, Harry!"

We all stared at Harry. Harry looked pleased by the public acclaim. He didn't receive this level of human approval very often ... for very good reasons. Simone said musingly, "Yes, Harry is kind of amazing." I suspected that the lady and Simone weren't thinking the same kind of 'amazing,' though.

"So, am I in trouble or not??" Harry wondered as we left the Welcome Center three hours after we entered it. "Hard to say," I told him. Leo added, "It all depends on whether the State of Georgia sends her a bill for a \$2,500 picnic table and bench or not."

Judy cranked up the air conditioner to maximum cool. We didn't get out of the car again until we left the state of Georgia. At the next rest stop, Judy called our insurance company. The nice lady took down all the details, then asked Judy to verify the accident report with her supervisor. Judy found out later that the nice lady had put her on speaker phone so everyone in the office could enjoy the story. Guess insurance companies don't work with many dogs who have driving accidents.

So that's what I was thinking about a little while ago—the time Harry learned to drive. Since then, Harry has managed to get into many other scrapes, though mostly without running engines. The rule, from then on, has been "If Harry's in the car, turn off the engine and take out the key." Judy said that would be the rule as long as she and Harry lived ... no exceptions. But Harry has continued to find trouble, with or without engines, even in very innocuous circumstances.

And that got me to thinking about the time Harry got stuck, head down and rear legs up, in a tall, narrow trash bin in the family room. I didn't actually see it happen because I was sleeping under my favorite lilac bush that afternoon, but I've heard it described often enough by Leo, David, and Judy. Their stories are exactly the same, down to the last detail.

You've got to admit, it's an interesting image. There are days I firmly believe they should have left Harry upside down in that trash bin. It would have saved us all heaps of trouble.

Author's Note: Honest to God, this really happened, exactly as described. And we do have a photo or two, though they don't adequately portray the magnitude of the occasion. And, yes, Harry's still alive at 12 years of age and we still shut off the engine and take the keys whenever he's in the car. (Turns out, Harry's pretty good at locking himself and other dogs in cars, too, so keys are doubly important.)