



Roswell Daily Record

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Pets perambulate before adoring fans

[Kelly Hopkins](#)

Record Staff Writer

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Meatball lets out a big yawn while awaiting the start of the 2009 UFO Festival Alien Pet Costume Contest Friday morning at the Roswell Convention Center. Meatball took second place. ([Daily Record/Mark Wilson](#))

If the crowd's reaction were any indication, every dog entered in the Alien Pet Costume Contest on Friday was a winner.

Garbed in their best out-of-this-world duds, the dogs were paraded in front of the judges and an adoring audience in the grass between the Roswell Convention and Civic Center and the Roswell Museum and Art Center. But in the end, only one could capture the coveted prize for first place. Or make that four.

Diane and Pete Ibarra's four dogs - Smeg, Lil Man, Squishy and Binkys - worked as a team to win the contest. The Ibarras, of Roswell, left nothing to chance, even turning a baby carriage into a canine spacecraft.

"I just thought it would be fun," Diane said of winning.

The dogs - a standard poodle, teacup Chihuahua, teacup shih tzu and teacup Yorkshire terrier, respectively - were dressed as aliens from "Planet Poop-a-lot."

Diane, who was assisted by her father Tony Duran, said this was the first time she's entered her beloved companions in the contest. The decision to include them in this year's UFO Festival came naturally.

"I love them. My pets are my babies," she said. "I take them wherever I go."

Second place went to Meatball, a Harley-riding teacup Chihuahua from Arvada, Colo. Dee Dee and Kevin Morris dressed the 13-week-old dog in goggles, sneakers and a cape. Meatball seemed to enjoy the outfit, and the attention.

"He likes dressing up," Kevin said.

"We start the Harley up and he knows it's time to get dressed up," Dee Dee added.

Third-place honors went to Sophie, a Chihuahua from Yukon, Okla. Sophie's human, Desirae Martinez, dressed her in a "platinum, inter-galactic jumpsuit, fashioned with the utmost precious gems from her planet."

More than 100 spectators attended the Alien Pet Costume Contest, which is a typical turnout, according to Laurie Rufe, director of RMAC.

Judging the contest were: Roswell artist Diane Marsh; Roswell Artist in Residence Michael Stillion, from Ohio; and Katie Labmeier, of Ohio, who is affiliated with the Roswell Artist in Residence program.

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