



Nike was much more than a family pet. Nine days before Super Storm Sandy, I took a scruffy puppy named Nike from Babylon Town Shelter and brought him to Last Hope. He was fostered after Sandy, and then adopted by a wonderful family. Each year I would get a first day of school

photo of Nike posing at the front door with his three kids. Until this year. No photo was worrisome.

My fears were confirmed when I received an email from Jen DiPalo, Nike's mom, last Sunday night: "I am very sad to write you that Nike passed away today. (The Blessing of the Animals, St. Francis Day.) He had been declining since the summer; he didn't suffer and my daughter held his paw as he took his last breath today. We gave Nike the best dog life, filled with walks, naps, treats, fun. He will be missed forever."

It was only fitting that Nike would leave during St. Francis of Assisi feast day weekend. \*\*Nike was much more than a family pet. He was patron saint and guardian angel to his loving family. Nike also had uncanny ties to Nickie, valiant World War II veteran and grandfather of Nike's mom Jen.

In October 2012, Nike, a six-month-old scruffy Terrier pup, was turned in to Babylon Shelter by people who claimed they had too many dogs. Their surrender sheet showed that they didn't even know their pup was a male, but he did already have the name "Nike." They mentioned that his brother was probably his father, making poor Nike inbred. They tried to turn in his mother too, but she was scared and snappy so they took her back home.

At the time Nike arrived at Last Hope, Jen and her then eight-year-old daughter Holly were volunteers. (Since then, Last Hope upped the minimum age for dog volunteers to 14.) Holly had wanted a dog for a long time. To show that she would be responsible, her parents (both teachers) asked her to "walk" a toy dog three times a day for a month. Then Holly and her mom began helping at the Last Hope Dog Center in Wantagh. Nike, once discarded, was cherished by three children- Holly; Vincent, six and Francesca, five. He slept and "bathed" with them. He liked the family guinea pig, Owen. He never left a family member's side whenever someone was sick or injured.

**Grandfather Nickie:** Soon after, I learned about a remarkable, old family photo that made both Jen and me ponder the chance of departed loved ones watching over us. Jen's late grandfather Nicholas "Nickie" Capece, a true dog devotee, landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day, fought at the Battle of the Bulge, in "Rhineland," as his Army honorable discharge states, as well as at other European battles during World War II.

A Bronx native, Jen's grandfather was drafted in 1942 while his wife was expecting Jen's dad. He didn't meet his son, and only child, until the war was over in 1945. To those lucky enough to have known him, Nicholas Capece was a member of "The Greatest Generation," all of whom fought because it was the right thing to do. He was the salt of the earth, a wonderful family man who died, not in combat, but still far too young.



Nike at Babylon Shelter 2012.



Nike smiles with his kids.



Grandfather Nickie with dog on his lap- Belgium during WWII.



Close-up of Grandpa Nickie with WWII dog on his lap; Francesca with Nike on her lap.

Unconditional love 24/7 from the world's greatest, most loyal vacuum hating dog. My kids loved him with every cell in their bodies. When we were sick or injured, he was always with us. Nike was devoted to us, and we were devoted to him."

**Are the names "Nicky/Nike" a coincidence?** Or the resemblance of Nike to the Belgian World War II dog? Someone once said coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous. With further investigation, I just found out this coincidence quote is attributed to Albert Einstein.

Grandfather Nickie owned a window shade shop in Elmont after the war. He was a big animal lover. It seemed that all his dogs wound up with the name "Lucky." One was a Collie; another a mixed breed who would wait by the door for his owner "Nickie" to come home from the shop each evening. After Grandfather Nickie died unexpectedly in his sleep at age 65, Jen's grandmother said that "Lucky II" continued his sad vigil each night until years later when she found his lifeless body waiting at the door.

Jen was very close to her grandfather, who died in the 1980s. Her dear grandmother is gone 15 years now. Her family and her brother's family spend a lot of time together. In 2013, when going through her grandfather's military albums, she found a photo from Belgium. Her grandfather, posing with his fellow soldiers, had written his name "Nickie," pointing to himself with an arrow. Sitting on his lap is a little Terrier who looks exactly like Nike. The resemblance takes your breath away.

Jen inherited a hutch, at least 50 years old, that belonged to her grandparents. It was in her dining room many years but got run-down. The

## Tickets available for Last Hope's Annual Wine Tasting event

Last Hope Animal Rescue's Annual Wine Tasting event will be held Fri., Oct. 21 from 6:30 to 10 p.m., at The Museum of American Armor, 1303 Round Swamp Road, Old Bethpage. Admission is \$65 per person in advance, \$70 at the door- includes wine and dinner. The evening will include a Live Auction, dozens of Raffle Baskets, 50/50 Raffle.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from this event go to rescuing and providing care for homeless dogs and cats.

Purchase your tickets using the PayPal link on the Homepage of lasthopeanimalrescue.org or by mailing a check to Last Hope, PO Box 7025, Wantagh, NY 11793

For more information call: Terri - 631-332-6606 or Letty - 631-946-9528.



## • Recipe Corner •

### Bacon-Wrapped Goat Cheese Stuffed Dates

Wrap up this app at your holiday cocktail party

Cocktail parties feature prominently on social schedules

each holiday season. Such get-togethers are convenient because the foods and beverages served are designed to be small and portable. That can save any holiday host time in the kitchen.

There may be plenty of prepared foods in the grocer's freezer that can be served for gatherings, but the taste of easy, homemade offerings can mingle with the time-savers when guests arrive. "Bacon-Wrapped Goat Cheese Stuffed Dates" are an easily prepared appetizer that pairs sweet with savory. Even better, these morsels are delicious served warm out of the oven or can be eaten at room temperature when late-arriving guests stroll in.

Wrap up cocktail party spreads with this recipe, courtesy of "Spectacular Spreads: 50 Amazing Food Spreads for Any Occasion" (Rock Point) by Meagan Brown.

Makes 16

- 16 pitted dates
- 8 thin slices bacon, halved
- 4 ounces creamy goat cheese
- Toothpicks
- Hot honey, for garnishing
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnishing

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a rimmed baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.

If your dates are not already pitted, slice the dates lengthwise on one side, but not all the way through, to create an opening. Remove the pit.

Using a teaspoon measure, fill the cavity of each date with a heaping teaspoon of the goat cheese and then gently press the sides together to close a bit.

Wrap each date with a half slice of bacon and secure with a toothpick. Arrange the bacon-wrapped dates on the prepared baking sheet.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, turning the dates halfway through so the bacon is evenly cooked. Transfer the bacon-wrapped dates to a serving platter and drizzle with the hot honey. Garnish with the parsley. Serve warm or at room temperature.

