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FINDING **FIDO**

Swipe right for your new best friend: how ‘Tinder for Dogs’ can help

BY KELSEY RINDFLEISCH
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PHOTO KEVIN BURGONI
offers one of two things: a forum in which fluff-deprived humans such as myself can find nice (if a bit too trusting of the general population) dog owners who will let us track them down and put our hands on their pet, or a forum for dog-to-dog communication in which owners can set their dogs up on weird little dates in which they wear tiny bow ties and bonnets.

However, neither of those are the case. BarkBuddy is intended to be used by would-be pet owners to locate adoptable dogs nearby. Much to my disappointment, I had to sign into the app as my lame human self and did not get to create a fun Tinder-esque profile for my thousand-year-old Shih Tzu, Brook.

Please note that I went ahead and did this anyway (see photo) and it was very fun. It was also a surprising amount of work (I had to make an email account for my dog, you guys. You can hit her up at gobbledybrook@gmail.com).

BarkBuddy, like Tinder, requires you to sign in with your Facebook profile. It then uses your location to pinpoint dogs in need of a home near you, and you are asked to swipe left or right on their photos. If you swipe left, the dog disappears from the screen and you are shown a new furry friend but if you swipe right, the dog is saved into a list of favorites that you can access at any time.

However, I firmly believe every dog is a perfect living creature and thus was emotionally incapable of swiping left on any of the dogs I saw.

Under the “favorites” tab, you can see a map with pushpins displaying the locations of each of the dogs. You can also tap on an individual dog to view his or her profile and share it through text, email or social media, or to contact the owner and begin the adoption process.

Since most shelters or owners require some sort of adoption application form to ensure their animals are going to a safe home, BarkBuddy also allows users to sign up to get pre-approved for adoption.

While individual owners are able to use the app to place their dogs for adoption, all of the dogs I found on BarkBuddy were being kept at animal hospitals for now. Purely for journalistic reasons and certainly not just because I wanted to spend an afternoon petting dogs, I took a trip to Jewell Animal Hospital to make the acquaintance of some of the pups I found on BarkBuddy. There I spoke to veterinary assistant Ariel Hegland, who graciously spent a portion of her workday introducing me adoptable dogs and listening to me make a series of distinctly inhuman noises as I proved myself incapable of handling such cuteness.

Dogs and cats are regularly brought into Jewell Animal Hospital as strays, owner surrenders, or rescues from puppy mills—and since the hospital is a no-kill shelter, that’s where the animals remain until they are adopted.