

animal welfare matters



SUMMER 2016

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria: Born 70 Years Ago Out of Concern for Local Animals

by Barbara S. Moffet and Gentry Silver

Seventy years ago this June the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria was born, and it was one of the first humane organizations in metropolitan Washington. Springing from the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, which was founded two years earlier, the Alexandria organization was started by a group of citizens concerned about the welfare of animals in the city. One driving force was the existing Alexandria “dog pound,” located near the intersection of Route 1 and East Monroe Street. Conditions there reportedly were so bad that on occasion well-meaning citizens broke in to free the dogs.

A few months before the June 1946 founding, the citizens met to choose officers. Minutes from one of the meetings about the formation of the League reveal that the functions and activities of today’s AWLA have deep roots. The April 16, 1946, minutes conclude with:

“Before the meeting adjourned, Mrs. Miller enlisted the interest of all in trying to locate a police dog by the name of Streaky which had been lost by a (World War II) veteran on his way through Alexandria. The dog had been brought back by the veteran from *(continued on page 5)*

Top: Rabies vaccination effort at the original Alexandria dog pound on East Monroe Street. Poor conditions at the pound led to the founding of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria in 1946 and its operation of a new shelter on S. Payne Street. Right: A worker and dog in front of the original Alexandria animal shelter at 910 S. Payne Street. The building still stands in Old Town. Photo circa 1959. *Courtesy of Alexandria Library, Special Collections*



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matters
at a glance



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Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Celebrating 70 Years

4101 Eisenhower Avenue
 Alexandria, Virginia 22304
 703-746-4774 | 703-746-4775 FAX
 EIN 54-0796610
 AlexandriaAnimals.org

Board of Directors

Diane F. Vidoni, *Chair*
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 Lynnwood G. Campbell, *Treasurer*
 Jackie Cottrell, *Secretary*
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Hours of Operation

Monday 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.
Tuesday 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.
Wednesday CLOSED
Thursday 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.
Saturday 12:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
Sunday 12:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

Adoptable animals are available for viewing beginning at noon, and always at AlexandriaAnimals.org.



We are celebrating our 70th anniversary by unveiling a new logo, newsletter, and soon-to-launch website. We hope you agree that our new look represents how we help all types of animals find happier, brighter futures.

Executive Director

From the desk of Megan Webb



Courtesy of Zebra.



Celebrating 70 years of animal rescue with 2016 Vola Lawson Award Recipient Ellen Flynn (see page 3).

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria was formed out of the passion and dedication of animal lovers who wanted to significantly improve the lives of the city's animals. From this rich history, it is clear that our role is to organize the intense passion evident in the community to make it the best possible it can be for animals. This couldn't be done without the help of a dedicated group of volunteers and donors.

The AWLA's Leadership Circle recognizes the generosity of individuals and businesses who support our work through financial donations, volunteer and foster hours, and in-kind support. The Circle includes four tiers of recognition for donations made in the previous calendar year. Tier 1: Animal Champions—\$10,000 or more in financial or in-kind support or 1,000 volunteer hours, Tier 2: Legacy Donors; Tier 3: Friends of Animals—\$5,000 or more in financial or in-kind support or 500 volunteer hours; and Tier 4: Vola Lawson Leaders—\$500 or more or 100 volunteer or foster hours.

We are dedicated to giving back to those who make our work possible by publicly thanking these donors, hosting special appreciation events and communicating regularly with them. If you would like more information about the AWLA Leadership Circle, please contact development@alexandrianimals.org.

AWLA 2016 LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Animal Champions

Kendra Davis and Joe Trahern, Suzanne Fedder, the Estate of Beverly Ridgway Kimes, Mike Shera, the Estate of Naomi J. Totten, and:



Volunteering Still Rewarding After 4 Decades

If the thousands of dogs who have passed through the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter over the last four decades could talk, many would recall the calm voice and gentle hand of volunteer Ellen Flynn. Ms. Flynn first served as a volunteer at the original Alexandria shelter location on South Payne Street, beginning in September 1971. “I took my sick pet dog into the shelter that month and liked the place—and decided to volunteer,” Ms. Flynn remembers. She never left.

Ms. Flynn soon became a fixture of the volunteer corps, taking care of the dogs in particular. In those days, she said, volunteers did nearly everything—bathing dogs in a big tub, taking them on walks along a nearby canal, and helping put on the “canine games,” an annual fundraiser featuring competitive events for dogs that took place in a park under the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Besides volunteering, Ms. Flynn for several years served on the board of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), which operates the shelter.

Some 150 volunteers assist the AWLA staff today, many of them having served for years. Volunteers do just about everything that’s needed to keep a busy animal shelter going—socializing animals, helping with adoptions, cleaning cages, doing laundry and working at special events, among other duties.

These days Ms. Flynn can be found at the shelter on Monday afternoons, helping to socialize the dogs who are waiting for adoption and assisting would-be adopters. “I love being up-close and personal with dogs—I just think ‘dog,’” Ms. Flynn said. She also organizes the donation jars positioned in shops around Alexandria to benefit the shelter.



Volunteer Eleo Worth (left) with Ellen Flynn



Ellen Flynn, flanked at left by Executive Director Megan Webb and Board Chair Diane Vidoni, receives recognition for her positive impact on the community of Alexandria’s animals through 45 years of continuous volunteer service with the 2016 Vola Lawson Award.

Eleo Worth is another pillar of the shelter’s volunteer program. Ms. Worth became interested in the Payne Street shelter in the 1970s after adopting two cats there, and 40 years later she still puts in a weekly shift in the shelter’s cat room, helping to socialize and adopt out felines. Ms. Worth, who also served on the AWLA board a few decades back, recalls that at the Payne Street shelter cats didn’t wait in spacious cages to be adopted, as they do now; instead, they roamed free in a zone known as “kitty city.” Ms. Worth volunteered with both cats and dogs in those days, a time when many unwanted animals were euthanized. Also, she says, the old shelter didn’t have a foster program like the one that thrives today, preparing newborn kittens and puppies and other special-needs animals for adoption.

Ms. Worth has kept coming back for 40 years because, she says, it’s been such rewarding work: “If I can help make an animal happy, it’s much more likely to be adopted.”

AWLA’s volunteer cadre lost another pillar this spring. Nancy Posey, who died in April at age 86, had served at the shelter for more than 28 years and continued to work at the front desk until just a few months before her death. Ms. Posey had a soft spot for German shepherds and was known for a bright smile and easy laugh that warmed the shelter’s lobby. “She always put *(continued next page)*



Left to right: Nancy Posey, Phin Cooper and Marnie Moore often staffed the front desk as a threesome.

(continued from previous page) herself last, looking to make life better for all creatures—two-legged and four-legged,” recalled AWLA staffer Phin Cooper, who worked alongside Ms. Posey at the desk for several years. “She played the Mother Goose role very well.”

Eighty-seven-year-old Marnie Moore also worked closely with Nancy Posey on the front desk; the work has been a tonic for Ms. Moore, a former flight attendant, since her husband died 14 years ago. When she takes a break from the desk, Ms. Moore makes a beeline for the dog kennels, talking to the dogs and slipping them treats. No longer strong enough to take a dog out for exercise, Ms. Moore goes on duty every Thursday afternoon answering citizen phone calls, filing, and greeting shelter visitors. “I’ll go anyplace they need me,” Ms. Moore said. ❤️

Animal Senior Finds a New “Leash” on Life

After a healthy comeback (right,) Marty is all smiles, enjoying his “golden years” with visits to the local pet store to pick out new chew toys (bottom) and the swimming pool to work in a few laps (below.)

Dirty Paw Photography (right) and Rebecca Raffaele (below, all.)



A dachshund called Marty was brought to the AWLA by his owner, who asked us to euthanize him because of his serious medical issues. As in all cases of owner-requested euthanasia, we have our veterinarian evaluate the animal to see if there are any other options. Our veterinarian, Dr. Kaci Angelone, determined that Marty was severely overweight and riddled with a multiple health issues, but she felt she could treat his obesity, Cushing’s disease, and skin problems so that he could have more doggy years ahead of him.

This senior dachshund is now in a foster home and receiving excellent care by our veterinary staff. He makes regular visits to the pet store to pick out a new toy to shred. He’s taking swimming lessons to help lose weight and ease the stress that longtime overeating has placed on his back. And he loves playing outdoors. From his foster caregiver, Becky:

“One morning last week, (Marty) nudged me with his nose to get up. This morning he did it again, and I greeted him and went back to sleep. After a second nudge at 5:30 a.m., I got up and fed him, then returned again to bed. A few seconds later, I felt the sheet being pulled off. By the time I looked, he had it halfway off and was still pulling. I surrendered. We went outside.” ❤️

If you would like to help us care for senior animals, many of whom come to us with very serious medical issues, please donate to the AWLA in care of “Rosemary’s Fund.”



An Election with a Photo Finish

Polls are Open for AWLA's Elect-A-Pet 2016

The race is in full swing . . . who's your favorite candidate? Our nation's spirited presidential election has inspired the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) to present "Elect-a-Pet 2016," a political spin on our annual photo competition. Pet candidates belonging to *Canine*, *Feline*, and *Small Animals* parties are racing for the title of Alexandria's 2017 Animal of the Year. At the conclusion of the election, the AWLA will publish a full-sized calendar celebrating all of the pet candidates, with winners gracing the front and back cover, as well as several interior spreads. The photo contest is one of the AWLA's most important annual fundraisers, encouraging donations critical to helping local animals in need; entries and votes are being accepted right up to the contest deadline.

A description of rules and prizes, as well as current election standings, can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org/calendar. Don't miss your chance to enter or cast a vote!

The fee to enter your favorite furry candidate is \$30 (one entry per photo). Votes cost \$1 each. Honor a special pet or occasion by reserving a blank grid space with your pet's photo for \$150. Submissions and voting continue until 8 p.m. on September 15. Visit AlexandriaAnimals.org/calendar for details. ❤️

Animal Welfare League, (continued from page 1) the South Pacific. It is one of our first acts as a League to endeavor to find the dog and bring him back to his master."

Some milestones in AWLA history:

- **June 1946:** AWLA is incorporated. City permits the League to use city records of dog tags for a large-scale membership drive.
- **1950:** The city of Alexandria provides a desk and phone to the League at the city recreation center. League members begin to set up central files and launch a daily operation.
- **1950:** AWLA lends support to a fight against Alexandria dog-owner eviction order.
- **Jan. 1, 1951:** City turns over supervision of the shelter entirely to the League, providing a budget of more than \$9,000 a year. Soon the League is able to raise \$3,000 to cover veterinarian fees and other shelter needs.
- **Jan. 20, 1951:** New shelter, at 910 S. Payne Street, opens. During the first six months, more than 1,000 animals are handled, and more than 250 are adopted.
- **1952:** Newspaper story proclaims that the new shelter can "take all animals but snakes and alligators . . . truly marvelous pets available at the shelter."
- **January 1952:** Minutes of an AWLA meeting summarize the progress made in the shelter's first year.
- **1989:** AWLA secures official contract with the City of Alexandria to provide animal care, control and operation of the shelter.
- **May 18, 2002:** The new Vola Lawson Animal Shelter on Eisenhower Avenue in Alexandria is dedicated, with former city manager Vola Lawson and other city officials in attendance.

- **2015:** AWLA signs a formal agreement with the Alexandria Police Department to create a working relationship on all animal-related matters in the city of Alexandria. Working with officials, AWLA brings forward 25 criminal cases of animal abuse and neglect.
- **2016:** Alexandria's animal shelter is a vast improvement over the squalid conditions of the original dog pound on East Monroe Street. The Vola Lawson Animal Shelter is a model shelter and a leader in national best practices for animals, both pets and wildlife. ❤️



Above: AWLA shelter worker and her furry friends accept a check for a planned addition to the Payne Street Shelter. Right: Rumpelstiltskin the cat and a guardian at the Alexandria animal shelter, 910 S. Payne St. The facility was replaced by the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter on Eisenhower Avenue in 2002 after a half century. Photos by Don MacAfee, courtesy of Alexandria Library, Special Collections.

Adoptions by the Numbers



4 #100DayStay Club animals were adopted in July.

Grace is an 18-month-old Tosa dog transferred from South Korea in December 2015. A resident since 2014, 15-pound Julia Raberts finally found her new home on a farm in Round Hill. Opie is an athletic pit bull who had been residing at the shelter since February. Sadie, a beautiful domestic longhair who arrived in March, caught the eye of a generous donor who sponsored her through the Adopt It Forward program. After being with the AWLA for more than 100 days, we are thrilled that Grace, Opie, Julia Raberts and Sadie finally have loving homes!



ADOPTED!



63 animals went home on July 23 for CLEAR THE SHELTERS

Waiting in over 100-degree heat to get inside, dozens of potential adopters visited the shelter for the nationwide "Clear the Shelters" marathon adoption event on July 23. Our staff, with the assistance of 42 volunteers, did a wonderful job processing each adoption with a thorough consultation despite the busy schedule, wrapping up with a record-breaking 63 adoptions in one day.



Where There is a Will There is a Bequest

“It was our decision to update our will and make a planned gift to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria as a meaningful way to carry forward a legacy of compassion.”



Planned gifts to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) provide a lasting legacy of care for animals in need in your community. Lilly and Dave Pierce recently included the AWLA in their estate plans. Lilly Pierce explains why they chose to become Legacy Donors in a letter on June 13, 2016:

“No one can know the future. Even the youngest or healthiest of us is vulnerable to accidents. A little planning can provide some peace of mind. Recently, it was our decision to update our will and make a planned gift to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria as a meaningful way to carry forward a legacy of compassion and concern for animals.

“At the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, you take your commitment and responsibility for animals seriously.

“We’ve been an occasional donor to the AWLA, visiting the shelter for many years in different capacities: volunteer, adopter, donor. We have witnessed how your shelter brings together hopeful critters and loving homes, but it is by no means the only thing that you accomplish.

“Whether it be taking in and caring for strays, intervening on behalf of the abused, or reuniting lost pets with their families, your local animal shelter



Lilly and Dave Pierce with their furry family.

spends 365 days a year saving animals. We saw it on the day we used your humane services: From your back yard, I saw animal control officers, dog walkers, and staff come and go—never at rest for the animals in your care.

“We firmly believe in your shelter’s mission in encouraging the adoption of animals; we adopted several dogs and cats of our own over the years. So, after just occasionally donating to your shelter, we decided to make an everlasting commitment and make AWLA a beneficiary of our estate. We are honored to become AWLA Legacy Donors.”

Legacy Donors are included in the AWLA Leadership Circle on an ongoing basis. To become a Legacy Donor or inquire about planning a future donation, contact Megan Webb at mwebb@alexandrianimals.org or 703-746-5506.

Shelter Cat-titude

Did you know that some animals who are normally very friendly can react to being in a shelter with aggression? This can make it challenging for our staff to identify the true personality of an animal and strategies for getting them adopted. Chewy the cat was so aggressive in her cage that we had to hang a “Caution!” sign on it. She was far too dangerous for us to attempt to socialize in an office or a foster home. It took some time and extra research, but our staff did not give up on Chewy and found a woman who was looking for a barn cat. Chewy’s new guardian reports that she is really a love-bug and likes to sleep wrapped around her neck at night.



AWLA 2017 LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Special welcome is extended to the newest donors in the AWLA 2017 Leadership Circle March 16–June 15, 2016.

Animal Champions

Alan and Sandy Yamamoto
Tara Zurawski
Estate of Constance Virginia Doberenz
Estate of Winifred Williams Rabbitt
Estate of Michael & Virginia Royal
Estate of William S. Torrick

Legacy Donors

Jean Marie Antone
Allen Argentieri
Doreen Bradford
Margaret Hodges
Dave Pierce
Alexander Repace

Friends of Animals

Colleen Mullally
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Vola Lawson Leaders

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Candice Adams
Cynthia Albert
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Allen Argentieri
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Amanda Morris
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Priscilla Zink Mulford
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Mitchel and Kay Papanicolas
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Whole Dogz
Brian Joseph Zwit

AWLA's Leadership Circle recognizes individuals and businesses who donate their time and/or financial support (donated or raised) at the highest levels. The program includes four tiers of recognition for donations made in the previous calendar year. Tier 1: Animal Champion—\$10,000 or more in financial or in-kind support or 1,000 volunteer hours; Tier 2: Legacy Donors; Tier 3: Friend of Animals—\$5,000 or more in financial or in-kind support or 500 volunteer hours; and Tier 4: Vola Lawson Leaders—\$500 or more or 100 volunteer or foster hours. For more information about the AWLA Leadership Circle, contact development@alexandriaanimals.org.

Many thanks to those who donated to the AWLA in one's honor or memory between March 16–June 15, 2016:

In Honor of

Steve, Jeremy, Christina and Ashley—George Brown
Strider and Kili—Susan Horita

Kendra Davis and Joe Trahern (Xando), Diane Wood (Sarah), Lynn and Don Weaver (Sunny), All animals awaiting forever homes —Alan and Sandy Yamamoto

In Memory of

Bill Torrick—James Hardaway
Bosco Hooley—James Hooley
13 Dogs (12 of them rescues) —John and Helen Dell

The AWLA recognizes all donations given in honor or memory with a card mailed to those who are honored or memorialized to inform them of the gift.

Thank you!

Animal Welfare League of **Alexandria**
Celebrating 70 Years

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