

THE PETAGRAM



A PUBLICATION OF THE ALEXANDRIA ANIMAL SHELTER

SPRING 1985

Dear Citizen,

You are holding the charter issue of **The Petagram**, a newsletter printed four times a year by the City's Division of Animal Control.

The Petagram has been designed as a practical tool for both the pet owner and the non-pet owner. It will include resources, notices of events and tips on animal health care and behavior. Most importantly, it is designed to help the pet owner meet his responsibility to both his pet and his community. It is also intended as a communication device among its readers.

Articles or pieces of information can be reprinted in civic or service club publications, provided that **The Petagram** be given credit for the piece.

We hope you enjoy reading through the newsletter and that when you're finished you'll share it with a friend or neighbor.

Yours sincerely,

Gail M. Snider, Director
Alexandria Animal Shelter

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

The following brochures are available in quantity for tenant or neighborhood distribution. Call the Animal Shelter at 838-4775 for more information.

- Cats and Kittens
- Declawing? Think Again
- Canine Heartworm Disease
- Critter Control
- Holiday and Vacation Pet Care

LEAVE THE BABIES ALONE

Every Spring hundreds of baby wild animals are taken to an animal shelter after being "rescued" by a passerby. Many of these animals are taken away while under the close watchful eye of their mother.

Birds have little sense of smell. Contrary to popular belief, babies can be put back into the nest even though they have been touched or handled. Don't replace weak or injured nestlings. If the babies are feathered but not flying well, they did not fall out of the nest but have left it and are learning to fly on their own. The parents are usually nearby. Only "rescue" a baby bird if there is something to rescue it from.

Baby squirrels that are found at the foot of a tree should be left alone and watched to see if the mother comes down to pick them up. Only after several hours, if the mother doesn't come, rescue them.

If you have a specific wildlife problem in your neighborhood, call the Animal Shelter. We can offer assistance in most cases over the telephone.

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

Four new volunteers have joined the animal care team at the Animal Shelter. They are Betsy Gorman, Kim Jefferson, Matt Corn and Nancy Cornett-Zabala.

Volunteers are trained for many jobs at the Shelter. They help bathe and groom animals, exercise dogs, clean Kitty City, take adoption applications and telephone owners who have lost their pets.

If you've got a few hours each week that you'd like to spend having fun while helping animals, call us at 838-4775. We'll mail you an application and a volunteer handbook.

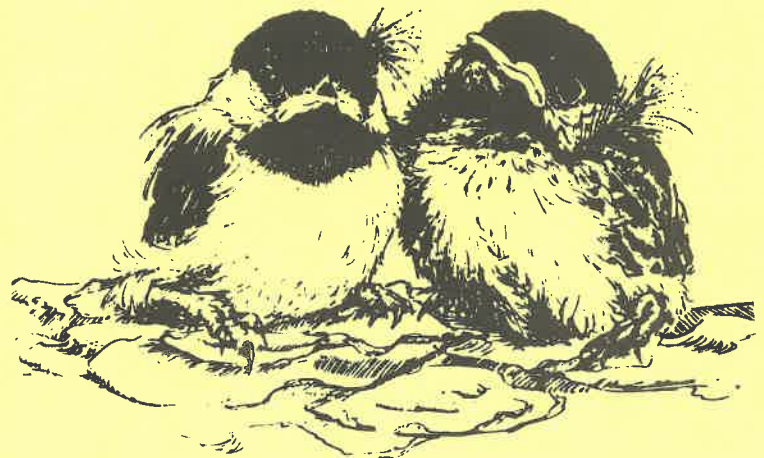
RABIES UPDATE

The recent rabies outbreak in the City of Alexandria and surrounding area has subsided during the past few months. Health Department officials, however, warn us that the rabies problem is still very real.

With the onset of warmer weather, raccoons may be spotted more often in the daytime hours. Mother raccoons will come out in the day to get food and then return to their nursing young.

If you see a raccoon acting strangely, such as crying or turning around in circles or staggering, be sure to call the Animal Shelter immediately. Try to have somebody keep an eye on the raccoon until an animal warden arrives on the scene.

Make sure your dog and cat are vaccinated against rabies. Your dog should never be off of your property unless you have him at the end of leash. Cats should be kept in the house unless you are outside with them. Responsible pet owners have helped keep the rabies situation here in the City in check. Let's keep up the good work!



Emergencies	Symptoms	First aid
Bleeding	Arterial bleeding or cuts and wounds that don't stop bleeding.	Apply a pressure bandage to the wound. Use a tourniquet (loosen at least every 15 minutes) if the bandage fails.
Thermal burns	Burned hair and accompanying odor, along with red, inflamed skin underneath.	Flush the area with cold water. Apply an ice compress or wet pack of strong tea or diluted soda solution.
Fractures	A limb dangles loosely, or your pet limps with severe pain.	Immobilize the limb. Keep your pet warm and transport him carefully to a veterinarian.
Convulsions	Loss of consciousness, loss of muscle control (uncontrollable "swimming" or "running" action), involuntary urination or defecation (especially common with poisoning).	Restrain your pet with a blanket, towel, etc., to keep him from injuring himself and/or you. Keep the animal warm, but don't give any medication unless prescribed by a professional. See a veterinarian.
Heat stroke	Panting, collapse, fast pulse rate, reddened gums, anxious or staring expression.	Move your pet to a cool spot. Bathe him in cold water. Apply an ice pack to his head. Massage his limbs gently.
Paralysis	Inability to move one or more limbs or head.	Keep your pet warm. Avoid moving him if possible, and contact a veterinarian. Immobilize your pet on a flat surface if he must be moved or transported to a veterinarian.
Respiratory difficulty/choking	Gagging, pawing at the mouth, shallow breathing or lack of chest movement, or unconsciousness.	Check your pet's nose, mouth, and throat for foreign objects, bones, or food. Apply mouth-to-muzzle resuscitation if breathing has stopped. Rush to a veterinarian.
Internal injuries	Labored breathing, bloody urine, extreme sensitivity or tenderness in the stomach or another abdominal area.	Keep your pet warm and as quiet as possible. See a veterinarian.
Poisoning	Convulsions, intense abdominal pain, vomiting, trembling, difficulty breathing, coma.	Speed is crucial to treatment. If convulsions or other symptoms are advanced, or if you're uncertain about the poison, rush your pet, along with a sample of the poison or vomitus, to a veterinarian. If you can identify the poison, administer the antidote on the product's label. If vomiting is indicated, place a teaspoon of hydrogen peroxide or one-half teaspoon of salt (more for dogs over 30 pounds) near the base of the animal's tongue; one-fourth teaspoon for cats. Repeat if vomiting doesn't occur in a few minutes. Both materials also can be mixed with warm water. Don't induce vomiting if the poison is corrosive (acids, alkalis, petroleum products). Always seek professional help immediately; take along the poison in its original container if possible.
Stings (insects, including bees and wasps)	Localized irritation and/or swelling and tenderness, usually around the muzzle, eyes, and tongue.	Remove the stinger (if you can find it) with tweezers. Apply a compress of baking soda or a weak ammonia solution. Watch for difficult breathing, swelling, and signs of an allergic reaction that call for immediate professional attention.



The Alexandria Animal Shelter

A complete animal care and animal control facility
 910 S. Payne Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314
 838-4774

Hours for receiving animals:
 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday

Hours for viewing animals:
 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday
 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday evening

INTERNAL PARASITES ARE PESTS

Internal parasites, commonly called "worms," can produce diarrhea, dehydration, weight loss, a dull coat, bloating, anemia, internal bleeding and even death in puppies and kittens. Take a fresh sample of your pet's feces to your veterinarian for examination. Cautions: All puppies and kittens should be checked for parasites early because infections can be transmitted from the mother to the young before birth. Over the counter worming medicines are ineffective and can be dangerous to your pet; let your veterinarian handle worming. Any pet allowed to roam will harbor parasites and can contaminate the entire neighborhood.

High Rise Syndrome

by Angela Moody

What is high rise syndrome? High rise syndrome, for lack of a better term, can also be called "cabin fever". Just think, your cat's whole life is spent inside your house or apartment. The cat doesn't go to work five days a week, or out on a date on weekends. He doesn't visit friends periodically; go to the grocery store, movies, or even a simple trip to the corner drug store. Your kitty probably sleeps the day away until you come home.

How can you tell if your cat has cabin fever? Some of the signs he may exhibit are: (1) obesity - If food is left out for self-feeding, your cat may entertain himself by overeating; (2) talking - Some cats will let you know they want out by standing near the door or window and meowing excessively every time you walk by; (3) charging the door - When an exit door is opened the kitty will make a mad dash for the great escape; (4) hyperactivity - If your cat seems more active than usual (i.e. bouncing off the walls or racing throughout the house like there's no tomorrow); (5) bad behavior - Oftentimes cats will do things they know are wrong to tell the owner they dislike something (i.e. clawing a forbidden piece of furniture; urinating or defecating out of the litter pan, but be careful because going out of the litter pan can also be a sign of a physical problem.)

Now that you know what signs to look for with highrise syndrome, what can you do to help your cat cope with boredom? The first thing that should come to mind is GIVE YOUR KITTY SOMETHING TO DO!

There are many things you can do to help your cat, such as: (1) try a few toys, a large paper bag left open before you leave for work, an empty shoe box, an empty spool of thread, the cardboard center from paper towels or toilet paper. Please note that if you choose to leave one of the paper products available there may be shredded bits of paper around when you return, but wouldn't you rather pick up paper than have an unhappy cat?

(2) Purchase toys, rubber ball, or something similar; grass or catnip you can grow yourself; or a spider plant, which is not poisonous to cats. Don't purchase toys that have small parts or strings that can get lodged in the digestive tract, which could result in a very sick cat with a very large veterinary bill.

(3) A scratching post or kitty condo can be made or purchased. A kitty condo looks like a carpeted scratching post that has several cubby holes and levels. Most condos go from floor to ceiling. Your cat will be entertained for hours!

(4) Get another pet, cat or dog. Your cat would certainly enjoy having someone to play with during the day.

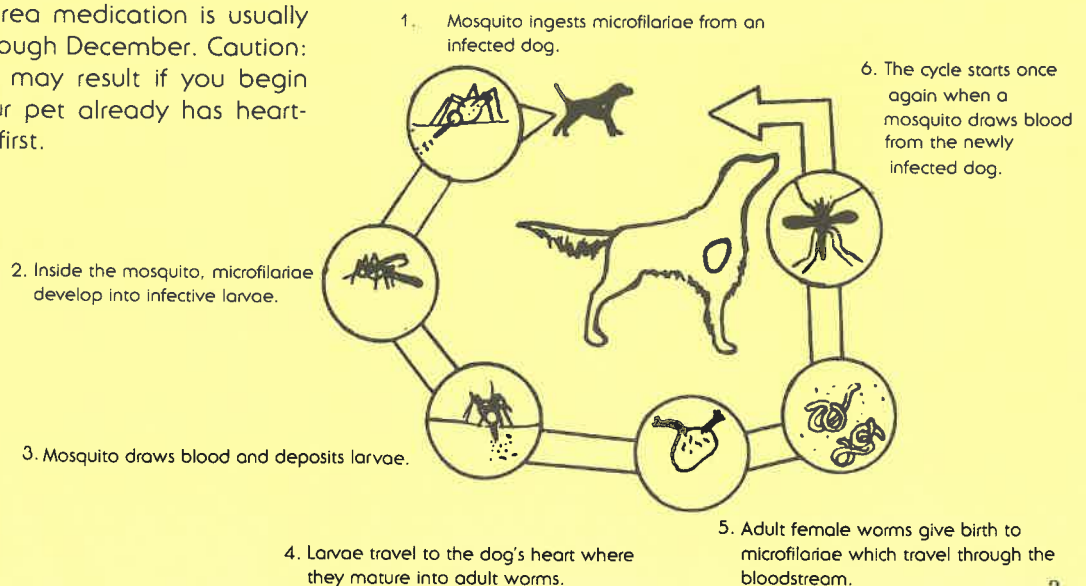
(5) If your cat insists on having some contact with the great outdoors, you might try taking the cat outside on a leash, using a harness instead of a collar. If you have a balcony or fenced in porch, take the cat out for a few minutes under, supervision, for cats have been known to jump. Let him explore the exterior hallway or the laundry room with you. Sometimes putting a small towel on a window ledge for the cat to sunbathe and bird watch will keep him occupied for hours. Make sure your cat always has some sort of identification on him when he is out in case he gets away from you.

If you think your cat has high rise syndrome, try some of these suggestions. If none work, take your cat to the veterinarian, who may have other suggestions.

ANNUAL HEARTWORM CHECKS

Heartworm disease, transmitted by mosquitoes, blocks a dog's circulation and results in death. In early Spring have your pet tested by a veterinarian to detect heartworm disease. If your pet is free of heartworms, your veterinarian will recommend the required medication to begin a preventative program. In this area medication is usually administered daily from April through December. Caution: Serious illness and even death may result if you begin preventive medication and your pet already has heartworms. Have your pet checked first.

THE HEARTWORM LIFE CYCLE



FLEA AND TICK FLICKIN' TIME

Fleas transmit tapeworms and ticks carry disease transmissible to humans as well as pets. Powders, sprays, shampoos and dips are available from veterinarians and over the counter. Treat your pet, treat the environment (your home, the pet's sleeping area and yard) and do so repeatedly throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall. When you protect your pet from fleas and ticks, make sure you don't over do it. Leave new flea collars and tags unwrapped for 24 hours before putting them on. Avoid getting collars wet -- it intensifies the poison. Remember that these devices contain pesticides and shouldn't be used with worm medication. Remove immediately if your pet becomes listless. Cautions: Never use flea collars on puppies or kittens under two months of age. On cats and kittens use only those preparations specifically labeled "for cats/kittens." Flea and tick preparations for "dogs only" can kill cats.

SPRINGTIME PET CARE

"Spring has sprung. The grass is riz'. I wonder"...how my doggy is. Let this be a concern of yours as Spring approaches suggest the Animal Shelter Information Network. Don't let Spring fever tempt you to let Fido or Fluffy have the run of the neighborhood. Prevent heartworms, fleas, internal parasites and distemper by scheduling your pet for a Spring veterinary check-up today.



A DOG THAT CHEWS
AT FLEAS IS LIKELY
TO GET TAPEWORM.