



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

# SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 45th YEAR

FALL 1991

*As noted in our lead story, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria looks forward to meeting you and your pet at our Pet Photos with Santa sessions in early December. Perhaps you have a Santa costume you would be willing to donate or lend to the Shelter for this event. If you can help, please call 838-4775.*

*This year the League again will be selling Entertainment books. These books contain discount coupons for restaurants, movies, theaters, sporting events, and many other activities in Washington and Northern Virginia. The books make wonderful gifts. They are available for \$35 at the Shelter and at most veterinary hospitals. The proceeds go directly to our programs to help injured and homeless animals. For more information call 780-4949.*

*Is your pet wearing an I.D. tag? All pets should wear proper identification tags at all times. It will be the one most important thing that will get your pet back to you quickly if he ever gets lost.*

*There appears to be no end to the terrible suffering of animals. You can continue the fight against animal abuse, even after you are gone, by remembering the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria in your will.*

*We can use your old blankets and towels. They make wonderful bedding material for our dogs and cats. If you can spare any, please drop them off at the Shelter, at 910 South Payne Street in Alexandria.*

*The Alexandria Animal Shelter is open seven days a week. If you are thinking about adding a four-legged member to your family, please visit the Shelter any day of the week. Call 838-4775 for more information.*

## Pet Photos with Santa December 7-8

The Fourth Annual Pet Photos with Santa session sponsored by the Olde Towne School for Dogs and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. The event will be held at the Olde Towne School for Dogs, 529 Oronoco St., Old Town Alexandria.

As in previous years, everyone associated with the photo session will be donating his/her services. Kimberly McAneny, a prominent local interior designer, will be decorating the set in traditional Christmas style. Sharon Sweeney, who is a professional photographer, will take all the photos. Carlos Mejias, the owner and director of the Olde Towne School for Dogs, will help pose every animal. Of course, Santa Claus, sitting on his chair, will be ready to greet and pose with everyone—human, canine, or feline. Pictures will be taken with families, individuals, pets, or any combination.

Everyone who has had pictures taken in previous years has been very pleased, and many people now make this photo event an annual Christmas activity.

Each photo package will consist of one 8 x 10, two 5 x 7, and four wallet-size pictures, all in brilliant color. The finished package will be available for pickup at the Olde Towne School for Dogs on Friday, December 20, or any time after that date. The cost for the entire package is only \$24.95, and all proceeds will go to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria to help find homes for injured and abandoned animals.

Appointments will be necessary and can be made by calling the Olde Towne School for Dogs, 836-7643, on November 11 or later. Last year all the appointments were booked within the first few days, so to avoid disappointment please call early.



*Last year's Pet Photos with Santa was a tremendous success. Get a wonderful keepsake and help homeless animals by participating in this year's photo sessions. Make your appointment early!*

## Thank You!

The League recently sent letters to selected members of the community asking them to assist us in the work of helping injured and abandoned animals by becoming members of the League.

We want to sincerely thank everyone who responded. Because of the generosity of these kind people, many more innocent, abandoned animals will be placed in good homes where they can live in the peace and comfort that had previously been denied them.

Thank you very much for your support.

# The Ten Commandments of Winter Pet Care

by Fern B. Crist, DVM  
and Julia N. Jones, DVM

**1. Thou shalt not leave thy pet outside in cold weather unattended.**

Even cold-weather breeds can be susceptible to temperature extremes. If your pet must remain outside, provide it with adequate shelter and a source of heat, and make sure the pet's water isn't frozen.

**2. Thou shalt guard thy pet zealously against frostbite.** Feline ear tips and paws are especially susceptible to freezing injuries, which can result in severe cosmetic disfigurement.

**3. Thou shalt clean thy dog's paws after winter walks.** Ice balls and salt, caked between your dog's toes, can cause discomfort or tissue damage. Salt can irritate the skin and make the paws very painful.

**4. Thou shalt walk thy dog slowly and carefully on slick, icy surfaces.** Orthopedic and soft tissue injuries are common results of falls on ice, especially in older dogs with brittle bones. Be especially careful on icy steps, as an overenthusiastic dog can easily pull his owner down, as well as himself.

**5. Let not thy dog drink liquids from unknown sources in the winter.** Any fluid in a driveway or ditch must be suspected to contain antifreeze, which is extremely toxic to both dogs and cats. Animals will drink this because it tastes sweet to them, and also because it will remain unfrozen (and is therefore easily available) even at subzero temperatures. Antifreeze poisoning, even in tiny amounts, will cause coma, kidney failure, and death. Also very toxic is any water containing dissolved salts used to de-ice driveways.

**6. Thou shalt resist temptation to feed thy pet from the holiday table.**

Fatty or spicy foods in particular may cause digestive disturbances ranging from mild upset stomachs to very severe vomiting and diarrhea. Instead, treat your pet to snacks designed specifically for animals (and maybe a little extra TLC!).



**7. Allow thy dog no chocolate, lest he become ill.** Chocolate toxicity is common during the holidays, and can be dangerous even in small doses.

**8. Thou shalt forgo poinsettias in thy winter celebrations.** These common holiday plants, if eaten, can cause irritation of the stomach and mild diarrhea.

**9. Thou shalt use only pet-proof Christmas ornaments.** Tinsel should never be used in a house with pets; it can cause intestinal obstruction. Any breakable tree ornament can cut an animal's mouth or paws and so should be placed out of reach if used at all.

**10. Hide thy electric cords, that they may not be chewed upon.** Puppies and kittens will often bite cords in play, resulting in electrocution. Cords from Christmas tree lights all too often are fatally attractive.

*Fern B. Crist, DVM and Julia N. Jones, DVM both practice at the Alexandria Animal Hospital.*

## Combating Pet Overpopulation

The statistics on pet overpopulation are familiar to all of us, and the greatest contribution you can make to resolving the problem is to have your pet neutered or spayed.

Neutering and spaying allow you and your pet to enjoy each other's company to the fullest extent. Altered pets' attention and affection are concentrated on their families; moreover, many undesirable behaviors—such as territorial urine marking, fighting, roaming, and calling—are prevented or eliminated by neutering and spaying.

Many people are not aware that neutering and spaying also protect your pet's health, and improve his or her chances for a long and healthy life. Intact pets are at a much greater risk of many types of cancer, especially mammarian and ovarian cancers in intact females. Pyometra, an acute and life-threatening uterine infection, is fairly common in intact female cats and dogs. Spaying is both the best prevention and the only cure for this disease; but once the female has developed pyometra, she is sometimes too ill to undergo surgery. Breeding with unknown and untested animals puts your pet at tremendous risk for contracting many deadly diseases: feline leukemia virus, feline infectious peritonitis, feline AIDS, and others.

Far from limiting their lives in any way, neutering and spaying offer your pet the best chance for a longer, fuller, healthier life.

## Monthly Grief Therapy Sessions to Continue

On September 4, the Shelter conducted its first pet bereavement session for people who are anticipating the death of their pet or have recently experienced a loss. The program, conducted by grief counselor Katherine M. Reiter, was very  
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## Adopt Me!

If you are considering adopting a pet, please think of the Alexandria Animal Shelter first. We have a number of beautiful, healthy pets who would be wonderful companions for you and your family. Pictured below are just some of the homeless animals available as this issue goes to press.

To learn more about how you can adopt a pet, visit the Shelter at 910 South Payne Street in Alexandria, or call 838-4775.



*This female chihuahua is about three or four months old. She was discovered in Alexandria without identification, and is now ready to become a part of a loving home.*



*This gentle shepherd/collie mix, named Lady, is a one-year-old female. She would make a wonderful pet for you and your family.*



*The Animal Shelter also finds new homes for birds like Casey, a one-year-old female blue-and-white parakeet. If you enjoy feathered companions, you'll want to come to the Shelter and meet Casey.*

## Participate in the November 'Doggie Dash'

Next month, you can aid the area's homeless and injured animals as you work toward your own goal of personal fitness.

On Sunday, November 10, individuals and their dogs are invited to participate in the First Annual "Doggie Dash," a 1.4-mile walk-run event. All proceeds will benefit the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

The event will be sponsored by the Washington RunHers Unlimited group, which will help to organize and set up start and finish lines. The race will begin

at 8:30 A.M. in Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria. A veterinarian will be on the premises, and ample water will be provided for the animals.

T-shirts will be available for the runners, and the dogs participating will receive bandanas and toys. Prizes will be awarded to the first place male and female dog and the last place male and female dog, as well as for the largest and the smallest animals entered in the race.

The entry fee of \$15 is tax-deductible. For more information, call Elizabeth Singleton at the Shelter, (703) 838-5042.

## Help Animals When You Travel

Planning a trip? If so, please contact Frommer Travel Service, 529 14th Street, NW., Suite 425, Washington, D.C., (202) 508-8668, and allow them to assist you with all the arrangements.

The Frommers, who are longtime Alexandria residents and who give much of their free time to volunteer work at the Animal Shelter, have agreed to donate to the League 20 percent of their commissions on travel arrangements made through their office by League members and friends.

There are some restrictions, but if you are considering a trip please call Larry or Yo Frommer for more details. You'll be helping injured and abandoned animals when you do.

## Grief Therapy

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well received by the 15 individuals who attended.

These group therapy sessions will be held on the first Wednesday of each month beginning September 4, from 7:30 until 9:00 P.M. The Fairfax County Animal Shelter currently conducts sessions on the third Wednesday of each month.

There is no charge for these sessions. For more information, please call (703) 838-4775.



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## League Offers Humane Education Programs

Humane education programs are a large part of the AWLA's community outreach services. The Shelter's humane educator, Elizabeth Singleton, provides programs both at the Shelter and in the community, free of charge, to school classes of all ages, scout troops, civic associations, and special interest groups on animal welfare concerns and the Animal Shelter in general.

Programs center around pet care and owner responsibilities, but also touch on animal cruelty and neglect, the duties of an animal control officer, city ordinances, and pet safety. Ms. Singleton always addresses the issue of pet overpopulation and solutions, such as the League's low-cost spay/neuter certificate program, and wildlife awareness.

If you are interested in having a program presented to your class or group, please call Elizabeth Singleton at (703) 838-5042. There is an answering machine to take your message at all times when no one is available personally to take your call.



*Humane educator Elizabeth Singleton welcomes the opportunity to work with school classes, scout troops and other groups.*

## League Annual Dinner

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria will hold its Annual Dinner and Membership meeting on Thursday evening, Oct. 24.

As in past years, the dinner will be at the American Legion Banquet Hall in the historic Gadsby's Tavern building, 400 Cameron Street in Old Town. The evening will begin with cocktails at 6:30 P.M., followed by dinner at 7:30. A vegetarian option will be available. After dinner, there will be a very short business meeting, including the election of the Board of Directors for 1992.

The highlight of the evening will be an address by Suzanne Cliver, DVM. Dr. Cliver graduated from Tuskegee College of Veterinary Medicine in 1978. A year later, she completed her internship at the University of Illinois, specializing in small animal medicine and surgery. A past president of the Northern Veterinary Medical Association, she has been in private practice in this region for the past 11 years.

The dinner is not a fund raiser, but rather an opportunity for members and friends of the League to get together and to meet community leaders, the Shelter staff, and others who are concerned about animal welfare activities in our area.

Cost is \$15 per person. For more information, please call Mrs. Walter Willis at 549-8962.

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## Adoption Levels Up

We are very pleased to report that our animal adoptions continue to increase. During the first nine months of this year the Shelter placed 744 animals in good homes. That's an increase of 4 percent over the same period last year, a 29 percent increase over the same period in 1989, and a big 87 percent over 1988. It now appears that 1991 will be our most successful year ever in animal adoptions.

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