



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 46th YEAR

FALL 1992

The Alexandria Animal Shelter is open seven days a week, as well as Wednesday and Friday evenings. If you are thinking about adding a pet to your family, please visit the Shelter at 910 South Payne Street. Call 838-4775 for more information.

We strongly recommend that cats be kept indoors. In addition to the ever-present danger of being hit by a car, theft (for medical research), and mutilation by dogs, the outdoor cat is very vulnerable to disease, including Feline AIDS, for which there is no vaccine and no cure; it is always fatal. The Humane Society of the United States reports that the average lifespan of the indoor cat is four times greater than that of the outdoor cat. Talk to your veterinarian about the dangers of letting your cat roam.

We constantly receive complaints about dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs. Please be a responsible pet owner, and do the courteous thing. A small plastic bag is all you need. Everyone will thank you.

When was the last time your pet was examined by a veterinarian? Remember, next to you, your pet's best friend is his veterinarian!

If you are a teacher and would like to have our Humane Education Officer talk to your class, please call Elizabeth Singleton at 838-5042. A program can be presented to any age group. It is never too early or too late to learn to respect animal life.

Don't forget to frequently examine your pet's toenails. They should be kept short; however, under no circumstances should long nails be dramatically shortened in one clipping; it will hurt the animal and the nails will bleed. If you have any questions, ask an animal groomer or a veterinarian.

League, KSMET to Sponsor Dog Parade Oct. 12

The Animal Welfare League and KSMET (King Street Metro Enterprise Team) will sponsor the First Annual Alexandria Dog Parade on Columbus Day, Monday, October 12.

The parade will be held in conjunction with KSMET's annual Columbus Day Discovery Festival, which is an all-day celebration conducted by the professional and business community of upper King Street. The day's events will begin with registration for the dogs from 10:30 to 11 a.m. at King Street Garden Park, which is a small triangle-shaped park across from the King Street Metro Station and opposite the new Crestar Bank.

The Dog Parade will begin at 11:15 a.m. and will consist of owners and their dogs (on leash) walking together down the King Street sidewalk to Patrick Street (eight blocks) and then reversing direction and returning on the opposite side of King Street to the King Street Garden Park.

Merchants along the route will welcome the dogs with water bowls and treats as they pass their stores. Every dog that walks



KSMET official Jerry Heib gets a wet one from one of the pets available for adoption from the League. (Photo by Tisara Photography)

will receive an attractive certificate, and we will have a calligrapher available to
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League to Participate in 1992 Combined Federal Campaign

The League is very pleased to announce that we have been selected to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area which begins on September 23.

We know there are many very worthwhile charitable organizations in the CFC this year, and we realize that donors have a very difficult time trying to determine which organization deserves their gift. However, we are hoping that our many friends in the Federal Government, both civilian and military, will consider designating the League for their donation.

The Animal Welfare League of Alexan-

dria, which was founded in 1946, is governed by a Board of Directors of local citizens who establish policies and monitor the expenditure of funds. Our many programs and activities are designed to assist both the human and the animal population of our community.

So when the time comes to fill out your pledge card or to write your check, please remember us, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, CFC designator number 7006. We may not know who you are, but we—and all those innocent creatures who cannot speak for themselves—sincerely thank you.

Dietary Fiber and Your Companion Animal



by David Edinger, DVM
Old Town Veterinary Hospital

Dietary fiber is a frequent topic these days when veterinarians and pet owners consider approaches to the total health care of the animal.

"Dietary Fiber" refers to the plant material in the diet which cannot be digested by the enzymes of the gastrointestinal tract. Both soluble and insoluble fiber are found in vegetables, fruits and cereal grains, and both can play important roles in weight loss and in the treatment of constipation and diarrhea.

Offering your pet a balanced diet high in fiber and low in fat is an excellent approach for achieving weight loss in the overweight pet. The fiber bulk allows the dog or cat to feel "filled up" while eating a diet that has a much lower caloric content.

It is important to remember that weight loss should be a gradual process, over a period of several weeks. An adequate diet plan for your pet should be carefully calculated to provide sufficient energy, vitamin and mineral intake while slowly reducing your pet's weight.

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Jack Steele, *President*
Joyce McDowell, *Editor*

Constipation has many causes, and identifying the underlying factor is the key to managing it appropriately. A high-fiber diet is often helpful in managing constipation. The water-retaining ability

may also decrease the pressure within the large intestine, easing the pet's discomfort.

Most commercial canned and dry pet foods contain two to four percent fiber on a dry matter basis, perfectly adequate in most healthy pets. A prescription diet containing fiber levels from 12 to 25 percent on a dry matter basis may be an important factor in your pet's health management as determined by your veterinarian.

Other useful and available sources of fiber are fiber formula biscuit treats for dogs, fresh vegetables and fruits, canned pumpkin (which many pets like), wheat bran and commercial products such as Metamucil. Consult with your veterinarian when planning a healthy, balanced diet for your pet that includes additional fiber.



Vet's Corner

of the fiber is its greatest asset, softening the stool by drawing and retaining water.

The ability of fiber to correct chronic diarrhea as well as constipation is really not too surprising. Fiber can slow the fast emptying of the intestines associated with diarrhea by stimulating normal intestinal muscle contractions. This prolongs the passage of the fecal material, allowing for further firming of the stool. The fiber

Come to the 'Doggie Dash,' Nov. 8

The League's Second Annual "Doggie Dash," a 1.4-mile walk/run event, will again be held at Ft. Hunt Park in south Fairfax County on Sunday, November 8, at 8:30 a.m. The registration fee of \$15 per canine entrant includes a t-shirt, bandana, and dog treats, and may be tax deductible. All proceeds from this event will go toward homeless and injured animals.

Registration forms will be available at local pet stores, veterinary offices, athletic gear shops, and at the Alexandria Animal Shelter at 910 S. Payne Street. Participants are encouraged to pre-register for this event.

There will be separate categories for walkers and runners, with sponsor-donated prizes awarded after the race. A veterinarian will be on the premises, and water will be provided to the dogs at various points along the race course. After the race, a photographer will also be available to take photos of pets and their owners for a small fee.

An added feature this year will be John Harter of Channel 7, who will be our M.C. for the event. John is very involved in animal issues and has assisted us on numerous occasions.

Ft. Hunt Park is located off the George Washington Parkway south of Alexandria and about one mile before the Mt. Vernon mansion.

Last year's "Doggie Dash" was a huge success, with more than 180 dedicated pet owners who ventured out into icy hail to show their support for the League. This year's event promises to be just as exciting, but, it is hoped, with better weather. However, rain or shine, mark Sunday, November 8, on your calendar and don't leave home without it—your dog, that is!



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Shelter staff celebrate another record with some current residents awaiting new homes. Clockwise from lower left are Tara Blot, Vanessa Williams, Linda Johnson, Brenda Purvis, Charlene Stambaugh, and Don Vaughn; holding sign is Chris Caswell. (Photo by Leigh David)

Adoptions Reach New Record Level

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is very pleased to report that adoptions continue to significantly increase. In July, 120 animals were placed in good homes. This is the most animals that have ever been adopted in a single month in the history of the Shelter. It is a 30 percent increase over July 1991, and a 172 percent increase over the same month in 1988.

The July record follows a steady rise in adoptions throughout 1992, and it appears that this year we will place more animals than ever before in a single year. One very good indicator is that during the first six months of 1992, more animals were adopted than in any entire year prior to 1989.

Shelter Director Brenda Purvis says that everyone at the Shelter had an important role in the increase in adoptions. "Every staff member and volunteer is

totally dedicated to placing as many animals as possible in good homes," she said. "We have no higher priority than animal adoptions."

Ms. Purvis attributes the increase to many factors. First, through our own education programs, our advertising, and through word of mouth, more people are becoming aware that we have wonderful companion animals here at the Shelter. Another factor is that the Shelter remains open seven days a week as well as two evenings. We realize that Alexandria is a "working community," and most people simply can't come to the Shelter on weekdays, so we've adjusted our hours accordingly."

The League invites anyone who is thinking about adding a four-legged friend to the family to visit the Alexandria Animal Shelter. We have bright, healthy, well-adjusted cats and dogs of all sizes, breeds and ages. For more information, call 838-4775.

They're Not Older . . . They're Better!

Every day people come to the shelter asking, "Do you have any puppies or kittens?" Of course we do, but we also have pets which are even better: the adult dogs and cats who also need new homes. Sadly, young, healthy animals are surrendered every day because they have become too big for the owner to handle, or the owner feels unable to devote the time necessary on housebreaking and other behavior problems.

While puppies and kittens are cute and appealing, they also require a tremendous amount of time, patience, and very hard work. Before adopting a young animal, think about how it will feel to come home from a hard day's work and cope with an energetic young animal which must be trained with great patience and care. And, within a few months, the pet is an adult anyway.

So why not start with the best? When you adopt an adult pet you not only avoid the "terrible twos" of puppy and kittenhood, you also know how big the pet is and, most important, what its personality is like. The time you spend with an adult animal will be quality time going for walks, playing and snuggling by the fire. While many people wrongly believe the old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," the truth is that adults animals are much easier to train. They have longer attention spans, are wiser, and, in fact, many of them have already been trained!

For most people—those who work, have children, or are very busy—the best pet is a mature pet. Nearly all cats, and many breeds of dogs, can live for 15 years or even longer. So when you adopt a pet at 2 or 5 or even 10 years old, you still have millions of special moments ahead to share with your new friend.

Most of the people who adopt their pets from animal shelters want not only a pet, but that special feeling of knowing that they have saved and enriched a life. It's even more wonderful to know that you have saved a pet that might otherwise have been overlooked.

When the time is right for you to experience the joy that a new pet will bring to your life, visit us at the Alexandria Animal Shelter. And take a second look at the adult animals—you'll be glad you did!

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League Annual Dinner Slated For Oct. 29

The League will hold its annual dinner and general membership meeting on Thursday, October 29. The dinner will be held at the Banquet Hall in the historic Gadsby's Tavern building, 400 Cameron Street in Old Town Alexandria.

The evening's activities will begin with cocktails at 6:30 p.m. (cash bar), followed by dinner at 7:30. Vegetarian and vegan options will be available. After dinner, there will be a short business meeting, including the election of the board of directors for next year. The highlight of the evening will be an address by Dr. Denise Sofranko, a former veterinary practitioner who now holds a senior position with the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The dinner is not a fund raiser, and the \$15 cost per person is intended to cover expenses. Invitations will be mailed in early October.

The '92 Canine Games: An Olympic Success!

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria wishes to sincerely thank the many citizens, volunteers, and members of the Alexandria professional and business community who made our 1992 Canine Olympics a big success. It is only because of wonderful support like this that the League is able to continue its work in caring for homeless and injured animals.

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Honeybear, a Shelter alumnus who is now settled in a good home, models a Canine Olympics medal and official t-shirt. (Photo by Leigh David)

Parade

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inscribe the dog's name on the award. The Dog Parade will be led by a drummer, and Christopher Columbus himself will follow along.

Other League-sponsored activities during the all-day Festival include a dog obedience demonstration presented by Carlos Mejias, owner of the Olde Towne School for Dogs at 1:25 p.m., an "Ask the Vet" booth, a photographer to take pictures of you and your dog, distribution of humane education literature, selling of low-cost spay/neuter certificates and refreshments. Of course, we will have five beautiful shelter dogs available for adoption.

The Discovery Festival will feature many other activities, including continuous music, presentations by the Alexandria Choral Society, the Little Theater of Alexandria, the Sweet Adelines and the Alexandria Singers; a poster exhibit; face painting; a reproduction of the historic ship Federalist; and a children's renaissance playground.

Come to the Festival! Bring your dog, walk with us in the parade, and then stay for an afternoon of fun for every member of your family.



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