



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

# SPOTLIGHT

IN OUR 41st YEAR

SPRING 1987

*To reduce the number of unwanted cats and dogs, your league operates an active spay/neuter program. Pets can be spayed or neutered at a reduced cost. If you know someone with a pet that has not been spayed or neutered, please tell him about our program. Call the Shelter at 838-4775 for details.*

*Have you ever considered including the Animal Welfare League in your will? It is one way of ensuring that the work of caring for neglected, injured, and abused animals will continue after you are gone.*

*Pictures of shelter animals now appear regularly in three Alexandria papers, the Gazette, the Journal, and the Packet. This has helped our Adoption Program considerably. Please call the editors of these papers and express your appreciation.*

*Our deep appreciation goes to Mr. Larry Davis, well-known local professional photographer, who has helped the League with his camera skills on more occasions than we can count. Larry and his family also have given a home to two dogs from the shelter. Thanks, Larry!*

*Hot weather has arrived! Don't take your dog with you in the car if you are going to leave him for a few moments. Even with the windows cracked, the temperature can reach oven intensity in a very short time. Please, on a warm day, leave your dog at home.*

*As hard as we try, we can only find homes for a small percentage of the animals at the shelter. This is very sad because the vast majority of all animals at the shelter are bright and healthy, and would make wonderful pets. Many dogs are not only house-trained, but some also are obedience-trained. Sadly, many people will pay a considerable amount of money at pet stores while at the same time there are dozens of healthy cats and dogs who desperately need homes waiting at our shelter.*

## Something Precious . . .



### FINDING THAT SPECIAL PET

For Mr. and Mrs. Bill Moffett, the Animal Welfare League's Adoption Service has a very *precious* meaning.

As a retired couple, Mr. and Mrs. Moffett decided that adopting an animal would enrich their lives. "We've always loved pets, but never had the time for one," remarked Mrs. Moffett.

Their first stop in the search for a pet was the Animal Shelter. "We really didn't consider any place else at the time."

"When we first arrived at the Shelter, one dog was really making a lot of noise. He frightened me at first but I took him for a walk and he was the sweetest little dog

I'd seen," observed Mrs. Moffett.

Coincidentally, the dog had already been named Precious.

"He seemed to take to us right away," said Mrs. Moffett.

The Moffetts decided to keep Precious—and his name. "He was just what we were looking for and his name fits his personality," remarked Mr. Moffett.

The League's Adoption Service enriched the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Moffett by introducing them to a very special animal. Mrs. Moffett says, "The League Adoption Officer was kind and helpful, and I'm sure she can help others find that extra special pet."

## Springtime - Think Heartworms

by Mary W. Keisler, DVM

With the onset of warm weather and mosquito season, the questions about heartworm disease always arise. It is this time of year when most dog owners are advised to check their dogs for heartworm infection. All dogs must be checked prior to starting the preventative.

Canine heartworm disease has spread to virtually all parts of the United States. In the past 10 years, the numbers of positive cases in this area have dramatically increased.

Canine heartworms infect dogs of any age or any length haircoat. The adult heartworms live in the heart and adjacent arteries of the lung. The adult heartworms can produce babies, called microfilariae. Mosquitos ingest the microfilariae when they bite an infected dog. After about 2 weeks in the mosquito, the microfilariae become infective larvae. When the mosquito bites another dog, the infective larvae are transmitted. The infective larvae migrate throughout the dog's body until they reach the heart. It takes about five and one half to six months from the time the dog was bitten until the adult heartworms can produce babies. As most routine heartworm tests check for the microfilariae, it may be five and one half to six months until the infected dog can be identified.

It is important to understand the life cycle of the heartworm in order to understand testing and prevention. A routine blood test screens for the microfilariae. (It should be noted that some dogs can have adult heartworms without having microfilariae. Diagnosis of adult heartworms in these cases can be more difficult.) Prevention is aimed at killing the infective larvae before they reach the adult heartworm stage.

Considering the serious nature of the disease, early detection is very important. Annual tests, even for dogs on year-round

heartworm prevention, are recommended. Realizing the six month life cycle of the heartworm, spring is considered by most the ideal time to test.

Symptoms noted with heartworm disease include coughing, listlessness, tiring, breathing difficulty, and weight loss. Often these symptoms do not appear until advanced disease has occurred. If not detected and treated, heartworm disease may lead to congestive heart failure and death.

Today, the majority of dogs with heartworm disease can be treated. The treatment, however, can be complicated as well as expensive. Prevention certainly is the recommended avenue.

There are several forms of preventative currently available. The most widely used products include an ingredient Diethyl Carbamazine Citrate (DEC). DEC is available in a liquid form, a pill and a chewable tablet. This product must be given every day and dosed according to the weight of the dog. DEC is considered very safe as well as effective. (Before starting any of these products, a heartworm microfilariae test must be performed. Any dog having microfilariae which is started on prevention could have an allergic reaction and die). A new preventative product has just been introduced. This product contains the ingredient Ivermectin. The product's name is Heartgard. Heartgard is a pill which is given once a month. Heartgard also seems to be quite effective. It may be contraindicated in certain breeds, especially collies and collie crosses. Before choosing a form of prevention, you should consult your veterinarian.

Heartworm disease is an extremely serious, potentially life threatening disease. It affects dogs in this area as well as all over the United States. All dogs should be on some form of prevention.

## Night Emergency Service

by Richard T. Yery

Could a couple of squirrels get down into your furnace and chew up some wires at a late chilly evening hour so that a furnace repairman can't do a repair job to get the heat back on until the offending critters are removed? Could you chance upon a seriously injured animal out on the street while taking an evening walk? Or an obviously stray dog?

Animals get into trouble in many types of situations. There are sources for assistance for these animals. The City operates an Animal Shelter with several Animal Wardens who are on duty for assistance to residents and animals during daylight hours (telephone number 838-4775). At night, it is your Alexandria Animal Welfare League that maintains an emergency service to assist residents and animals. The League has been providing this service since 1946.

The League employs trained animal workers to rescue injured or distressed animals of all kinds. Stray dogs are brought to the City Animal Shelter to provide a temporary refuge. Unfortunately, all too often puppies are abandoned and must be rescued for later adoption. Some residents have problems with wildlife entering their homes seeking warmth or food. Our night workers are trained to handle these wildlife problems and provide sound advice on avoiding reoccurrences.

Night emergency care is just one of the many activities provided by the League and supported by your donations.

*The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria SPOTLIGHT* is published four times a year. Address all correspondence to: The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, Va., P.O. Box 20050, Alexandria, VA 22320.

William Fleitz . . . . . Editor  
Jack Steele . . . . . President

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## Membership Drive

As you know, the League has been a strong voice for animal welfare issues in Alexandria since 1946. We want to continue and expand our work but the only way this can be done is through the strength of a large and active membership.

One of our goals in 1987 is to increase membership. The most effective way to do this is for every current member to enroll one new member. If you know a neighbor or co-worker, or friend who has a pet, or has expressed interest in animal welfare issues, please ask him to join the league. Explain what we do in promoting our spay/neuter program to reduce the number of unwanted dogs and cats in our city; point out that we operate one of the finest animal adoption programs in the country; tell your friends about the League's Education Program whereby our Education Officer visits schools, and youth groups to explain to young people how to care for animals and to develop in them a sensitivity toward animal welfare.

Explain that the League is the only Alexandria organization that responds to night emergency calls for injured animals. The League has trained people on-call all night, 365 days a year, ready to care for injured animals.

We try to stretch our very limited resources to provide care to abused, injured, and neglected animals and, through education, to eliminate the causes of such abuse and neglect. What your League needs right now is your support. If you are a member, bring in one more member; if you are not a member, please join. We need your help now!

### *Thanks, Carol*

Our sincere thanks go to Carol Hunley for the countless hours she has dedicated over the years to publishing the League Newsletter. Carol is one of the League's most active supporters, and served on the Board of Directors for many years. While Carol will remain active in the League, her talent and dedication in assembling this newsletter are already missed.

## Eulogy for Old Drum

*Gentlemen of the Jury, the best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name, may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has, he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to do us honor when success is with us, may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.*

*The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer; he will lick the wounds and sores that come in contact with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.*

*If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies. And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away, there by the graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad, but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death.*

*Hon. George Graham Vest  
United States Senator (KY)  
in defense of the honor  
of a dog at trial in  
Frankfort, Kentucky.*

MAIL TO:  
Animal Welfare League of Alexandria  
P.O. Box 20050  
Alexandria, VA 22320

YES, I CARE ABOUT ANIMALS AND I WANT TO SUPPORT THE LEAGUE IN ITS WORK.

Enclosed is my 1987 membership dues.

\$15 Individual                       \$25 Family                       \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*The League is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization established in 1946.*

# Don't Forget Wildlife

by Sandy Green  
League Wildlife Officer

There goes another tree. That makes about 170 trees downed this week in a place that used to be a beautiful patch of woods, in the name of progress, to make room for some more town houses. I wonder how many baby squirrels, possums, raccoons, and birds were killed that were nesting in those trees?

If there were any survivors, hopefully, they were taken to the Alexandria Animal Shelter. The Alexandria Animal Welfare League will insure they are given to a licensed wildlife worker to raise, rehabilitate, and release back to the wild in a safer place.

The Alexandria Animal Welfare League has several volunteer licensed wildlife workers that help them out with the wildlife that comes into the Shelter. It is against the law for anyone to hold wild birds and mammals in their possession. A licensed wildlife worker is licensed by the state and federal government, takes classes to learn how to take care of wildlife, and has contacts with the right people to answer questions on difficult cases. If an animal needs to go to a veterinarian, they know which veterinarians will work with wildlife. There are several wildlife cen-

ters that work with the wildlife workers. These animals are cared for and then released back to the wild. They are not kept as pets. Wild animals are just that—wild. They do not make good pets. In some instances, an animal may be permanently injured and cannot go back into the wild. They are placed with other disabled animals.

What can you do to help wildlife?

Teach your children to respect wildlife.

Be extremely careful using poisons such as pesticides.

If you don't want nesting birds or mammals in your house, secure vents and chimneys before they start nesting.

Large windows are death traps for flying birds. Put decals, tape, or ornaments on the inside of the window or hang mobiles, metal pie plates or strips of material on the outside near the window.

Put rabbit wire around your garden to keep turtles, rabbits, and other wildlife out.

Put fake snakes, strips of material, metal pie plates, or net on fruit trees to keep birds away.

Vaccinate your pets—dogs and, especially, cats—against rabies.

Don't let your cats run wild, especially during baby bird season in the spring.

Don't rescue a baby bird that is just learning to fly. These baby birds are called fledglings and are learning to fly. The parents are usually nearby. Wait and make sure the bird really needs to be rescued.

If you discover a nest of baby rabbits, leave them alone. You won't see the mother, but she is around and feeds the babies at night. Keep children and pets away from the area.

If you find a baby squirrel on the ground, wait awhile to see if the mother comes to pick it up. Babies fall out of the nests often and the parents will put them back in the nest.

Many babies really do not need to be rescued. The parents are around. If they do need to be rescued, pick the baby up with gloves and keep them warm. Call the Alexandria Animal Shelter for advice at 838-4775 or bring them directly to the Shelter.

## ANNUAL DINNER—OCTOBER 29, 1987

Mark October 29, 1987 on your calendar! That's the date of the League's annual dinner. It will be held again at the American Legion Hall adjacent to Gadsby's Tavern in Old Town Alexandria. The details are still being worked out, but the date is firm.

As you know the dinner is not a fund raiser, but rather an opportunity for League members and their families to get together in a social environment. Plan to attend.

The Animal Welfare  
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