



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 46th YEAR

SPRING 1992

Spring is almost here. That means it's time for your dog's annual heartworm check. Heartworm is prevalent in this area, and it can be fatal. Don't take a chance with your "best friend's" life. Call your veterinarian today.

Planning your spring or summer vacation? If so, please consider booking the trip through Yo or Larry Frommer at Frommer Travel Designers, 529 14th St. N.W., Suite 425, Washington, D.C. Yo and Larry volunteer regularly at the Shelter. They are generously offering to donate a percentage of their commissions on travel booked by League members. Some restrictions apply. The next time you plan a trip, please call Yo or Larry at (202) 508-8660.

One of the best things you can do for your dog or cat is to have him/her neutered or spayed. You can almost guarantee your pet a longer, healthier life with this relatively routine surgery. Discuss it with your veterinarian. It could be the best present you ever give your pet.

The Alexandria Animal Shelter is the only shelter in this area that is open seven days a week, plus two evenings. Please visit the Shelter to see our bright, healthy, well-adjusted dogs and cats who are waiting for someone like you to give them a good home.

When you walk your dog, please pick up after him. Your neighbors will appreciate it. Remember, it's not only the courteous thing to do, in Alexandria, it's the LAW.

We thank our many friends who have supported us during the past year. Your generosity has enabled us to find good homes for more animals than at any time in the history of the Shelter. Thank you!



Two of the Shelter's current "residents" recently accompanied Shelter staff on a visit to their friends at City Hall. Pictured from left are Kennel Manager Linda Johnson; Shelter Director Brenda Purvis; City Manager Vola Lawson; Mayor Patsy Ticer; Humane Educator Elizabeth Singleton; and Adoption Program Manager Lisa Brusaw. (Photo by Leigh David)

January 1992 Adoptions Set New Record

As reported in the last *Spotlight on Animals*, in 1991 more animals were adopted from the Alexandria Animal Shelter than in any previous year. Now, we are delighted to report that 1992 started with another "record-breaker." In January we placed more animals—114—in good homes than in any other month in the history of the Shelter. Our January 1992 adoptions represent a 50 percent increase over January 1991.

"Our adoption program continues to improve," says Shelter Director Brenda Purvis. "When we look back to the mid-eighties we really appreciate how well our adoption program is now functioning. For example, our January 1992 figure of 114 adoptions is a 107 percent increase over January 1987, and a 178 percent increase over January 1988. It makes the whole

staff feel great to see these animals being adopted."

The League is very pleased with the way 1992 started off and hopes that the increase in adoptions continues throughout the year. The Shelter staff is doing everything possible to try to place more and more animals in good homes. The Shelter is open seven days a week, including two evenings. Home visits are conducted any day or evening, at the convenience of the adopter. Our animals are given daily physical examinations by the staff, and veterinarians regularly visit the Shelter to provide the best medical care possible to the animals.

The staff spends hours every day cleaning and disinfecting the building to ensure the cleanest possible environment
continued on page 4

Feline AIDS: Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

Patricia A. Donohue, D.V.M.
Alexandria Animal Hospital

Feline immunodeficiency virus was first isolated in California in 1986. It is known to cause chronic and recurrent infections such as diarrhea, gum disease, pneumonia, abscesses and ringworm.

This virus is similar to, but distinct from, the virus that causes similar diseases in cows, monkeys, and humans (AIDS). It is species specific and there is no indication that FIV can infect other animals or humans. Feline AIDS is also a different virus than the feline leukemia virus, although both can affect the cat's immune system.

Risk Factors and Transmission

It has been reported that about 12 percent of sick cats are positive for FIV antibodies. The cats that are at high risk include domestic free-roaming male cats, usually over six years old. Pets that are in poor health due to age or other diseases are more severely debilitated by the FIV infection than are cats in good health. Cat biting is the only proven method of natural transmission and spread of the virus; however, it is present in the saliva, blood and spinal fluid of infected cats. There is no evidence indicating transmission during pregnancy and sexual contact is probably not a primary means of transmission.

Clinical Signs

This includes the formation of tumors and immunodeficiency disease. Any body organs or system can be affected by opportunistic infections.

Some of the most common signs include gum disease, chronic diarrhea, pneumonia, abscesses and chronic ear infections.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based on the cat's clinical signs and a blood test that will detect the FIV virus. This test can be performed at a veterinary



Vet's Corner

diagnostic lab or through your private veterinarian. It is a highly reliable blood test. The virus can be detected as early as eight to 12 weeks after infection or exposure.

Treatment

Currently there is no effective treatment available for feline AIDS. All treatment is supportive. Pets may be sick on and off for six months to three years, and unfortunately the FIV infection is fatal. These pets generally succumb to secondary infections, because of the immunosuppression.

Prevention

The best protection for your cat is to keep him indoors. Catteries and multiple-cat households should test all cats and new cats prior to entering the home, and then remove all FIV-positive cats. There is no vaccine available at this time, and it is unlikely that one will be available in the near future.



Book Your Pet Portraits By Michael Joseph

For the third consecutive year, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria has selected Michael Joseph, the nationally renowned pet photographer, for the annual spring Pet Portraits session. Mr. Joseph is recognized as one of the outstanding photographers in the United States. Over two decades ago, because of his interest in animals and his affection for dogs and cats, he decided to specialize in pet photography.

Since that time, he has photographed over 30,000 pets across the country, and is widely regarded as the foremost pet photographer in the nation. Every year we attract more people who want him to capture their pets on film.

The entire \$9.95 sitting fee will be donated to the League. At each sitting, Michael will take six to eight pictures of you and your pet or your pet alone. He and his wife, Deborah, use techniques developed over 20 years to coax the perfect pose from your pet.

About 10 days after your sitting, you will have the opportunity to view your proofs; at that time you may order finished pictures in a variety of sizes and styles.

Appointments are necessary, and can be scheduled by calling Mr. Joseph's studio at (800) 822-1379. This year, he will be in Alexandria on May 7, 8, 9 and 10 only. So please, arrange your sitting as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

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Spaying and Neutering: It Can Be a Matter of Life and Death

by Brenda Purvis
Shelter Director

A few years ago I adopted a wonderful male terrier named Snoopy. Snoopy had cancer when I adopted him, cancer which could have been prevented if only he had been neutered.

Snoopy's original owner had loved him dearly. She had cared for him well and, understanding the tragic pet overpopulation problem, she made certain he was not allowed to breed. But not realizing the many health benefits of neutering, she had neglected to have this vital surgery performed.

Snoopy was left homeless when his original owner died, and that is when I adopted him. Deeply burying his bones into my flower pots was one of Snoopy's most endearing tricks. He brought joy into my life for over a year before the cancer claimed him. If only he had been neutered, he might still be with me today.

Pepper was a beautiful female, black Labrador retriever recently brought to our Shelter. She was happy, affectionate, and so well behaved. As our visiting vet examined Pepper, he said with dismay, "Oh, Pepper, it's so sad that you have to die for something that could have been prevented." You see, the vet had discovered a mammary tumor. As he feared, the biopsy showed that the tumor was malignant. Pepper's cancer, like Snoopy's, could have been prevented if only someone in her life had cared enough to have her spayed.

Having worked in animal shelters for over 14 years, I have experienced the

elation of seeing many beautiful animals being adopted into good homes. But I have also known the sorrow of seeing many more which had to be euthanized because there weren't enough homes.

Some of my most painful memories are of owners who dearly loved their pets, but who had brought them in to have them put to sleep because they were suffering the final, painful stages of illnesses like those of Snoopy and Pepper. These special people held and comforted their pets until the very end. It was so hard to explain to them that their pet's illness might have been prevented had they spayed or neutered the pet. No, I did not tell them to be cruel, but to save them from the same pain should they again share their life with a special animal friend.

Spaying and neutering not only prevent hundreds of pets from the tragic experience of being born unwanted; the surgery will also enable your pet to live a longer, healthier, happier life. I know I speak for shelter workers and veterinarians everywhere when I say I never want to see another beautiful pet have to die for something which could have been prevented.

On behalf of Snoopy, Pepper, and others like them, we urge you: If you love your pet, please spay or neuter the animal. The League has an extremely affordable low-cost spay and neuter program. Call us—we'll help. And if your pet has already been neutered, please pass this message along to a friend. What better gift than to enable your friend's pet to live a longer, better life?



Tammy

A Note from Tammy

My name is Tammy, and I'm the cutest, friendliest, happiest mixed breed dog you ever did see. I have a wonderful home with a big back yard, a family who loves me, lots of toys and a nice fluffy bed. I think I'm the luckiest dog in the whole wide world!

I asked my friends at the Animal Welfare League to print my message in their newsletter. There's a very special lady that I want to thank with all my heart and lots of wet dog kisses. I don't know her name, or even what she looks like, but this wonderful lady saved my life—with just one phone call.

Luck wasn't always on my side. I was once owned by a very bad person who kept me locked in a dark box so small I couldn't even move. This person starved me till I

continued on page 4

Feeling Lucky? Enter the League Raffle!

Need a break? Do you want to get away from the routine for a few days? The Animal Welfare League has the answer for you.

The grand prize in this year's annual Spring Raffle is a weekend for two in special accommodations at the beautiful Marriott Courts Hotel in Old Town. In addition the winner will be transported by limousine from the Marriott to the elegant Gaslight Restaurant, where they will be guests of the owner for a romantic dinner. The Gaslight is recognized as one of the finest restaurants in the Washington area.

Tickets are \$1 each, and are on sale at the Animal Shelter and other locations in this area. You can also buy tickets at the St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show on March 14. The drawing will be held on Saturday, June 13, at the Shelter, and you need not be present to win. All proceeds will go to helping homeless and injured animals.



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Come to the St. Paddy's Day Adoptions Fun Dog Show, March 14

Get ready for the biggest and best FUN dog show in this area! It's the Sixth Annual St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show, sponsored by the Animal Welfare League and the Ballyshaners, which is the local Irish-American club.

The event is scheduled to begin at 10:15 a.m. on Saturday, March 14, and, as in previous years, will be held at Market Square, 301 King Street, in Old Town Alexandria. The Master of Ceremonies will be John Harter of WJLA-TV, Channel 7. The Judge will be the Honorable Daniel F. O'Flaherty of the Alexandria General District Court.

This year there will be 11 categories: Most Spots, Smallest, Biggest, Longest Tail, Most Unusual Eyes, Biggest Ears, Curliest Tail, Blackest, Whitest, Best Dressed Dog, and Dog with the Best Dressed "Irish" Owner. Certificates will be given to every dog, and ribbons will be awarded to the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Place winners in each category.

A unique event at this year's show will be the on-stage introduction of every dog in the audience that was adopted from any animal shelter. Each of these "Shelter Graduates" will be given a special award.

There will be five beautiful, healthy, personality-plus dogs from the Alexan-

dria Animal Shelter that will be available for adoption. Each of these dogs will have its own handler, who will be familiar with the dog's personality and background, and will answer questions for potential adopters.

A professional photographer will be available to take pictures of owners and their dogs, as well as a calligrapher to inscribe dogs' names on their certificates. Also, League volunteers will be on hand with low-cost spay/neuter certificates and Humane Education literature. Of course our very popular League t-shirts and sweatshirts will be available for purchase.

Dr. Kathy Francis, a veterinarian at the Alexandria Animal Hospital, will be at the "Ask the Vet" booth and will answer questions on pet medical care.

Remember, this is a FUN dog show. Everyone is very cordially invited to join us for a morning of laughs and good times. So wear green, and prepare to enjoy yourself in the best "Irish tradition."

Right after the dog show, the St. Patrick's Day Parade will begin at noon. Parade Chairman Pat Troy says this year's parade will be the biggest ever held in Alexandria. The Grand Marshall will be Redskins quarterback Mark Rypien. For a full day of enjoyment, come to the Fun Dog Show and stay for the big parade!

from page 1

for our animals. The staff and a large contingent of volunteers take the dogs for walks, and give plenty of love and affection to each animal. And, of course, we offer post-adoption follow-up assistance to any adopter who is experiencing any behavior problems with the new family member.

If you are thinking about adding a pet to your family, please visit our Shelter. There are dogs and cats of all ages, sizes and breeds. Most are house trained and some dogs are even obedience trained. These are healthy, well-adjusted animals who will make wonderful, lifelong companions. Call the Shelter at 838-4775 for more information.

Tammy

from page 3

nearly died. One day this person took me outside and was hanging me from my leash and beating and kicking me. The pain was so bad I wanted to die that day. But then this great lady saw how I was being treated and she called the Animal Shelter. They came and saved my life.

I hope this special lady is reading my note and knows how happy I am now and how very much I thank her. And to anyone else who reads this, please—if you know of an animal that isn't being treated right, call my friends at the Animal Shelter at 838-4775 just as fast as you can. The sooner you call, the sooner they can help.

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May 3 Fund Raiser

Mark May 3, 1992 on your calendar. That's when the Johnny Artis Band and Nicky's Restaurant, 642 S. Pickett St. in Alexandria, will hold a fund raiser to benefit the Animal Welfare League. The \$5 cover charge at Nicky's Lounge will be donated to the League. For an evening of dancing and good times, plan to be at Nicky's from 7 p.m. to midnight.

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