



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 49th YEAR

SPRING 1995

Alexandria got its Irish up in style at the March 11 St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show. Thanks to the hundreds of people (and their four-legged friends) who made the event so much fun. It just keeps getting better every year!

We can't overstate the importance of establishing a relationship with a good veterinarian for your pet. There is no substitute for regular examinations by a vet who knows your animal and is familiar with his medical history. If you'd like to have a list of the fine veterinarians who participate in the League's programs, give us a call today.

The arrival of warmer weather is welcome, but for pets it brings special hazards. It's tempting to take him along on errands, but such outings can be very dangerous: Even on balmy days when it doesn't feel hot outdoors, the inside of your car can turn into an oven fast. Within moments, the temperature can rise high enough to cause brain damage or death to an animal. So please don't take chances with your pet's life—leave him home.

We see them every spring—the kittens and puppies no one wants. Litters of them are brought to the Shelter, where they are cared for until homes can be found—for the lucky ones. The rest must be humanely euthanized—more victims of the senseless tragedy of pet overpopulation. Won't you resolve now to spay or neuter your pet? Ask your veterinarian today about this humane, painless surgery and the health benefits it brings to your four-legged companion.

Another sign of spring is the number of bunnies brought to us right after Easter—presents that turn out to be unwanted after all. If you'd like to adopt a homeless Easter bunny, please stop by the Shelter soon.

Show Off Your Feline at the June 25 'Paws for Fun' Household Pet Cat Show

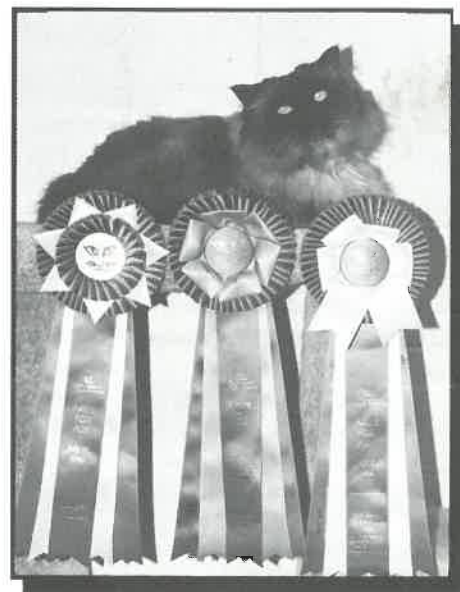
The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is pleased to announce that the Third Annual "Paws for Fun" Household Pet Cat Show will be held on Sunday, June 25, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., at the Northern Virginia Community College Cultural Center. This spacious 12,000-square-foot air-conditioned facility will allow an entry limit of 250 cats with additional space for vendors offering food and soft drinks as well as cat food, supplies, novelty items, jewelry, crafts, and clothing. The Center is located at 8333 Little River Turnpike in Annandale, just 20 minutes from the Alexandria Animal Shelter.

All cats—whether purebred or mixed breeds—over 7 months old are welcome. However, certain requirements apply: **They must be spayed/neutered and they must be current on vaccinations.** In addition, they should be free of fleas and mites.

Longhairs will be judged separately from shorthairs. Divisions will be based on coat pattern, with ribbons awarded for color classes within each division. The two "specialty" rings will award rosettes to the top 10 longhairs and the top 10 shorthairs. The All Breed ring will award rosettes for the top 15 long- or short-haired cats. Best In Show, 1st and 2nd Runners-up rosettes also will be awarded. Alexandria Mayor Patsy Ticer will be on hand to judge a special category.

This year's Cat Show is sure to please all cat owners, for it will feature numerous special just-for-fun categories for judging, including Oldest Cat, Most Unusual Eyes, Most Toes, Owner-

Continued on page 3



Chewie, the Shelter's popular mascot, poses with some of the ribbons to be awarded to the winners at the 'Paws for Fun' Household Pet Cat Show at the NoVA Cultural Center on June 25. A convenient registration form appears on page 3 of this issue.

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Cat Quarrels . . . and Consequences



by Nancy Suska, D.V.M.
Beacon Hill Cat Hospital

Spring is here. The flowers are blooming, the birds are chirping, and perhaps your cat—like other cats in the neighborhood—is longing to go outdoors. If you let him outside, your cat, being territorial by nature, will try to defend his territory from invasion. A fight results (as you can tell from the screams, growls and hisses), but your cat seems fine.

Two days later, "Kitty" is not eating well, seems feverish, and may be limping a little. This is the standard scenario that leads to one of the most common warm-weather afflictions: Cat bite abscess.

An abscess is a pocket of infection under the skin containing pus (a disgusting, greenish-yellow, foul-smelling thick fluid). It may be large or small, single or multiple. The skin feels hot, looks red and swollen, and is painful. When another cat's teeth break through Kitty's skin, they bring a host of unwelcome bacteria. The punctures are very small, and often go undetected under the cat's fur. In addition, a scab forms quickly, sealing the

wound from air.

For many bacteria, this creates an optimal, oxygen-free environment for growth. Left untreated, the pocket of pus gets larger, eventually putting enough pressure on the skin to cut off its blood supply. Without the nourishment blood brings, the skin becomes thin and weakened and eventually dies. At this point the abscess bursts, and this is when most owners bring the cat to the veterinarian.

Treatments can vary. An early abscess (within 12 to 24 hours of the bite) can often be treated medically with anti-

biotics and hot compresses. Older wounds generally require surgery under anesthesia. First, abscesses must be drained of all pus. Also, any dead tissue in the skin and the layers under it must be thoroughly cleared away. A drain is then placed under the skin in the abscess area; it remains in place for 3 to 5 days, allowing for maximum drainage.

Flushing the abscess around the drain with a sterile anti-bacterial solution helps clear any new pus that forms. Packing the wound with an antibiotic ointment further helps fight infection. If the abscess has already burst, the resulting skin defect may require reconstructive surgery as well, in order to heal properly.

Oral antibiotics are an integral part of the treatment. Even though your cat may feel better after a few days, it is essential that they be administered for the full 10- to 14-day recovery period to assure complete resolution of the infection.

There are numerous other infectious diseases to which an outdoor cat is exposed. Cat bite wounds are the most efficient means of transmitting the terminal diseases Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

from one cat to another. Both diseases suppress the cat's immune system and make him more susceptible to even the most minor infection. Moreover, FeLV causes tumor growth and bone marrow suppression, leading to anemia and/or leukemia. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine against FIV, but your cat can be protected against FeLV.

Bite wounds from infected wild or domestic animals are also the most common means of transmitting rabies, but fortunately your cat can—and by law must—be vaccinated against this deadly disease.

If your cat goes outside, these are only a few of the health risks he or she faces. Internal and external parasites, trauma, unwanted pregnancy, poisoning, and adverse weather conditions are also potential hazards. Many cats get lost, never to be found again. Those who are found are usually in poor health, and are turned in to the already overcrowded animal shelters in this area.

Moral: Cats are better off staying indoors. Owners who allow their cats outside must understand the risks and take responsibility for often tragic consequences. Outdoor cats are in danger of being hit by cars or contracting diseases such as Feline AIDS, for which there is no cure.

The romantic notion that cats should be allowed "freedom to roam" is a deadly fallacy. It is much easier than you may think to convert your cat to a totally indoor lifestyle—and it will safeguard his health.



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The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
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Cat Show

from page 1

Lookalike, Longest Ear Tufts, and others. There will also be a special judging for cats adopted from any animal shelter. An "Ask the Vet" booth will be set up to enable participants to seek cat care advice from local veterinarians.

The day-long event is sponsored by the League. Dr. Nancy Suska, a veterinarian affiliated with the Beacon Hill Cat Hospital in Alexandria, is Chair and Show Director. All net proceeds from the event will benefit the League's adoption, humane education, reduced-cost spay/neuter, and other programs.

The entry fee is \$18 for the first entry and \$15 for each additional cat from the same household. A complimentary show catalog is included with your first entry. **The deadline for entries is June 12, so call for your registration forms today.** Completed forms should be returned with the entry fee to Dawn Shiley, Entry Clerk, P.O. Box 6509, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Due to the need for an exact count

prior to show time, walk-in entries cannot be accepted. Entry forms are available at the Alexandria Animal Shelter, or by calling (703) 780-1956.

In conjunction with the Cat Show, a photo contest will also be held this year. You can submit your favorite pictures of your cat with a nominal \$2 entry fee per photo. The winner, first and second runners-up will each receive a fresh homemade catnip toy.

Photos should be sent to Entry Clerk Dawn Shiley at the address shown above. (NOTE: Please be sure to put the name of the cat and your name and address on the back of the photo. You may enter as many photos as you wish.)

Even if you don't have a cat, you can still bring the whole family to the show and have a great time. Tickets are \$4 for adults, and \$3 for children 9 and older. Children under 9 are admitted free.

P.S.—Why not bring a favorite photo to convert to a Memory Mug during the show? The mug makes a great gift, and is perfect for coffee, tea, or many other uses—and it's dishwasher safe. A portion of

the \$15 cost is donated to the League to help homeless and injured animals. The photo will be returned to you undamaged before you leave the show.



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AWLA 1995 'Paws for Fun' Household Pet Cat Show ENTRY FORM

Check one: Show Entry Photo Contest Entry Both
 (Photo Entries: Include name of cat and your name and address on a label on the back of the photo. Enter as many photos as you wish.)

Your name (print or type) _____

Address _____ Daytime phone () _____

City / State / Zip _____ Evening phone () _____

Cat's name _____ Cat's breed _____

Color and pattern _____ Longhair Shorthair

Male (Neutered) Female (Spayed) Birthdate (if unknown, approximate year) _____

If adopted from a Shelter, name of the Shelter _____

ENTRY FEES: 1st entry \$18.00 Extra cage(s) \$10.00 each
 Additional entries \$15.00 each End of row \$10.00
 Photo contest \$ 1.50 each

I enter my cat(s) at my own risk and agree to abide by the rules set forth by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. AWLA, Show Committee and Show Officials cannot be held liable for loss of property or accidents to cats or exhibitors. I understand the decisions of the judges are final.

 SIGNATURE OF OWNER

Complete and sign form and return with entry fee check payable to AWLA to: Dawn Shiley, P.O. Box 6509, Alexandria, VA 22306. Make copies of this form for multiple entries.

Police Dept. Honors Animal Control Officer And Kennel Manager for Cat Rescue



On April 5, Animal Control Officer Roger Townsend (r.) and Kennel Manager Ruth Bauer (l.) were presented with Outstanding Performance Awards by the Alexandria Police Department "for exceptional efforts to rescue a cat trapped inside the engine compartment of an automobile on January 16." Pictured in the center is Deputy Police Chief David Baker. Following the rescue, the cat was checked by a veterinarian and returned to its owner.

Pet Portraits By Michael Returns June 16-18



Noted pet photographer Michael Joseph once again will be in our area to capture you and your pets on film.

There is a \$10 sitting fee, all of which is donated to the League to help homeless animals. When you view your proofs later, you may select from a variety of portrait packages available at an additional cost.

Sittings will be held on June 16-18 at The Village at Shirlington. For directions and to make your appointment, please call (800) 822-1379. Booking times fill up early, so call early to avoid disappointment.

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ODDS and ENDS

Heartworm is a tragedy that doesn't have to happen. Don't risk your dog's health—take him to the vet soon for his annual heartworm test.

Remember Homeless Homer? The campaign is still going strong. By clipping the Homeless Homer logos from Cycle pet food products, you have brought in \$150 to the Shelter thus far. Keep up the good work!



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A 'Dog With a Past' Finds Her Future

by *FiFi Stewart*

I am a dog with a past. I have been adopted twice. My first master was a tyrant, and I became a street bum.

My second master picked me off the street, but after a short time, and through no fault of my own, I found myself "behind bars"—at the Alexandria Animal Shelter.

There were about ten of us in residence at the time, but we were in good hands. Every day, well-intentioned humans came and stared at us as my kennel-mates barked for attention. The days passed; some of my neighbors went and new ones arrived.

I remember, it was a Saturday when a lady came and stayed with us a very long time. She stopped at every cell, reading the "report card" that described our histories and speaking to each of us.

I was intrigued, and on my best behavior. I sat quietly and stared right at her, pressing my body so hard against the door that my hair passed through the holes.

She left, but a few minutes later she returned to take me for a short walk. I was lopsided, as she noticed right away. I didn't want to alarm her, and bravely trotted along, waving my furry tail. When she returned me to my kennel, she took my head in her hands and promised: "I shall be back to pick you up." As if to reassure me, she repeated: "I shall be back."

I waited and waited—an eternity, it seemed—but she did come back, took me in her arms, and said: "Let's go home."

She gave me three names, because no one knew my previous ones. In the morning, I am Frisky FiFi. She will say, "Come, Frisky FiFi, it's time for our walk." During our long walk, far, far away in the open field, I am simply FiFi. Then, later, when we lie together on the sofa, reading, napping, or watching television, with my nose in her neck and my body resting in her arms, I am Sweet FiFi.

I am about 5 or 6 years old, but no one can tell. People salute me with a "Hi, Pup." I don't speak, of course, but I do know at least 50 words, and the names of five of my toys. She says: "FiFi, you're a genius." It nearly makes me blush!

I've been with her for a year and a half now, and with those great walks to keep me in shape, I should be able to keep her for another 10 years. It's a wonderful dog's life indeed! 🐾



FiFi—a "dog with a past"—has a good home at last. Her owner, Ann-Mary Stewart, adopted FiFi from the Shelter on July 23, 1993.

A hind is a terrible thing to chase.

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Oops!



The League's November Doggie Dash was an unqualified success, thanks in large part to the support of businesses in our community.

In the Winter issue of *Spotlight*, we neglected to acknowledge a valuable contributor, Pacers. This local running store has helped each year with this event, and we apologize for the oversight.

Therapy for Shut-Ins Goes to the Dogs

by Cindy Miles

"People need people," goes a popular song, but there are plenty of local nursing home residents who would change that line to "People need pets."

Lucky residents of the Lincolnia Senior Center, the Lincolnia Day Health Care Center, and the Fairfax Army Retirement Community can now enjoy the company of four-legged visitors. Larry Frommer and his tiny, eager companion, Cho-Cho, are regulars at the Lincolnia facilities.

"Cho-Cho has been doing this for three years and she can't wait to get there," says Larry, a longtime League volunteer. Cho-Cho entertains with tricks, plays ball, and has quite a fan club.

"This is a very positive experience," says Larry. "The people learn to anticipate the arrival of the dog and question where we were if we miss a session. Regular visits are very important for anyone who undertakes a pet therapy project."

To get the residents as involved as



A nursing home resident takes her turn tossing a ball to Cho-Cho, a very special Shelter volunteer.

possible, Larry encourages the residents to toss balls to Cho-Cho, pet and hold her.

The League, which has always been interested in finding ways to help senior citizens and shut-ins, started the Pet Therapy program several years ago. Originally there were eight volunteers, but now there are only two: Larry

Frommer and Joan Tackett. Joan and her male standard bred poodle, Gillie, are "regulars" at the Woodbine Nursing Home.

Larry Riley, a trainer at the Olde Towne School for Dogs, and a pet therapy volunteer himself, helps to evaluate potential pet therapy animals for behavior and temperament for the job.

"I'd love to see pet therapy programs in more places," he says. "Pets bring out something special in people. They ease tension, help people control their tempers and anger."

Riley and his Rhodesian Ridgeback, Macho, visited the Fairfax Army Retirement Community for two years. "All dogs love attention," he explains, "and my dog was really charged every Wednesday night!"

Potential pet therapy volunteers and their animals should be aware of special considerations. For example, if the sessions are geared for an elderly population, the pet should be able to navigate around obstacles, such as walkers and wheelchairs.

Also, pets can be harder to control if they are working with children, who tend to have quick movements and high, loud voices.

To be a successful "pet therapist," an animal cannot be aggressive; he or she must have a mild temperament and be comfortable with people.

Both Larrys agree that pet therapy is a commitment, and volunteers must visit their people on a regular basis. Both children and adults quickly learn to anticipate the sessions and are disappointed if you miss one.

"The expressions and emotional feedback are amazing and overwhelming," says Larry Riley, "especially when the people start talking to you about the pets in their past."

Giving to the community—that's what pet therapy is all about, although volunteers often argue that the visits are really therapy for them, too. What better way to foster respect and love between people and animals?

If you are interested in helping with this program, call the League's Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanine Clarke, at (703) 838-5042.

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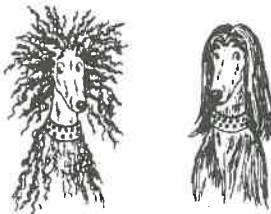
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A Shelter Wish List

Alexandrians have always had a way of coming through for the Shelter animals and the dedicated staff who care for them. If you'd like to donate any of the following items, please drop them by the Shelter at 910 S. Payne St., or give us a call at (703) 838-4775 and we'll pick them up.

Microwave oven

Booda velvets

Blankets and towels

Dog and cat toys

Cat clay litter

Video camcorder (please ask for Kate)

Copy paper (white or color)

Laminating machine (ask for Kate)

We could also use:

- outdoor seating (such as a park bench) for the area where potential adopters become acquainted with our animals;

- a bird bath for our wild bird feeding station; and



- a small under-counter type refrigerator for storing vaccines and other medications for the animals.

If you have such items and would be interested in donating them, please give us a call.

New League T-Shirts Now Available



Shelter staffers Pam, Marie, Marja and Randi show off our new multi-color T-shirts. You can get yours at any League event or by stopping by the Shelter. The cost: a bargain at \$8.

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Thank You!

The League is grateful to Benson McKee, General Manager of M.C. Painting Co., who came through for us on a cold March day.

Two Shelter employees, responding to a call about a kitten in distress at a Cameron Street location, found the animal high in a tree and had no way to reach it.

Mr. McKee, who was working nearby, generously allowed the rescuers to use his extension ladder and the kitten soon was safely back on solid ground. So hats off to Mr. McKee—we appreciate his help . . . and so does one lucky feline!

This sort of thing does happen from time to time, so we're wondering: Would anyone out there care to donate a 24-foot ladder to keep in our van for when nice painters like Mr. McKee are not available? If so, please give us a call at (703) 838-4775. Other "Wish List" items appear on page 6 of this issue.

1995 Canine Games



— Saturday, Sept. 2 —
See the next issue of *Spotlight* for all the exciting details!

REMEMBER: If you ever have reason to be concerned about the welfare of an animal, please call the League at (703) 838-4775.



910 South Payne Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

An Important Announcement About Our Annual Dinner

It's not too early to mark October 19 on your calendar, because you definitely won't want to miss the League's 1995 Annual Dinner. Our guest speaker will be naturalist Roger A. Caras, noted author, TV personality and President of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Look for details in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

You can also share in another important part of the event. Last year, our display of Shelter Success Stories was a huge hit at the dinner. If you adopted a pet from the Alexandria Shelter, you're invited to submit a photograph and a sentence or two describing the way your adopted pet has changed your life (or a note from your pet about life in his new home). It's a great way to pay tribute to your pet.

To give us plenty of time to prepare the exhibit, we ask that you send your submission no later than September 5.

Please put your name and address on the back of the photo, and be sure to include the pet's name.

Yet another highlight of the dinner will be the unveiling of our new logo (see box at right).

As you can see, the evening promises to be an exciting one, filled with animal lovers and fellowship, and featuring a memorable program. So mark your calendar now, while you're thinking about it, and plan to join us for an evening you'll remember for a long time. Invitations will be mailed sometime before Labor Day, so watch your mail.

Logo Contest: An Update

The League received over a dozen entries in its Logo Contest, announced in our Winter issue of *Spotlight*—a wonderful response to our request for submissions.

Many, many thanks to everyone who devoted time and thought to creating a new image for the League. The enthusiasm and creativity of the contestants—as well as the number of entries we received—have prompted us to assign a special committee to review the merits of all the submissions and the way they reflect the League's mission.

Judging from the phone calls we've had, everyone is eager to see our "new look." But patience has its rewards. The new logo will be unveiled at the League's Annual Dinner on October 19, and the contest winner will be honored at the event for his or her lasting contribution.

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