

Spotlight on animals



The Newsletter of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Spring 1997

The Importance of Pet Identification

Every time a stray animal comes into our Shelter, we cross our fingers and hope for some sort of identification. While there are many means of identifying your pet—the traditional collar and ID tag, the new microchip process, a city or county license, or a registered tattoo (see sidebar for details)—unfortunately, most stray animals have no identification on them. This means we have to play what is for both staff and animal a sad waiting game, to see whether an owner appears.

The statistics for lost animals without identification are rather grim. While many dogs are returned to their owners, 97 percent of stray cats without ID are not. In looking at our lost animal reports on a given day, we found the following:

- Total missing cats: 66
- Missing cats without a collar: 48
- Missing cats with a collar: 18 (but only 5 of those had identification on the collar)
- Total missing dogs: 40
- Missing dogs without a collar: 22

Continued on page 3

Basic ID Tools And Techniques

Identification tags. Every pet should wear an identification tag, even indoor-only cats. This is the easiest way to ensure that someone who finds your pet can get in touch with you. The tag should include your name, address, and phone number; many people include a work phone or a relative's number as well. You might include a statement on the back saying, "I'm lost, please call . . ." with your phone number. The League offers ID tags for just \$4 each.

Tattooing. This permanent identification is applied by a veterinarian or a tattoo specialist. Unlike the method used for humans, this tattoo doesn't hurt the pet; in fact, anesthesia isn't even necessary. You then register the information tattooed on your pet with a national organization that maintains a database. Shelter personnel who find a tattoo can call the organization to locate the pet's owner. The tattooed area must be kept free of hair to ensure visibility.

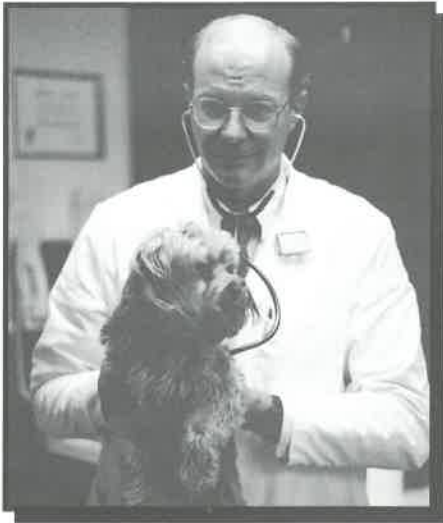
Microchipping. This modern technology involves implant-
Continued on page 2



Maggie (the black cat in center) is living proof of the importance of proper ID for pets. For her harrowing story—and happy ending—see page 4.

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The Medical Necessity for Proper ID



by Richard S. Hawe, DVM
Alexandria Animal Hospital

The front door was left open for only a moment and now, to your horror, your beloved pet is nowhere to be found. How will anyone know that he is on two heart medications, or that she is an insulin-dependent diabetic? Someone finding your dog won't know that he takes phenobarbital for a seizure disorder, or that she is allergic to penicillin-type antibiotics.

As you contemplate all this, you realize that you forgot to put your pet's collar back on after his bath yesterday—so chances are no one will realize your missing pet is a beloved family member and not a stray. Your only consolation, and glimmer of hope, is that you had your pet permanently identified with a microchip.

Miles away, a veterinarian agonizes over what to do with a badly injured pet found by the roadside and brought in by an animal control officer. The pet is in shock, unconscious, and has lost a lot of blood. In addition, there is a ruptured bladder and a badly broken leg; the ani-

mal seems to have been hit by a car.

Resuscitative shock therapy and pain medications are given, but a number of additional procedures—including blood transfusions, antibiotics, oxygen therapy, general anesthesia, and surgery—are needed for repair of the bladder and broken leg. The vet has no way of knowing about any concurrent illness, medications, or drug allergies, making treatment risky.

And there is a big question: does this pet even have a home? But then a hand-held scanner is passed over the injured pet—and a microchip is found! A phone call to the appropriate database company reveals that you are the pet's owner. Your response: "Oh, thank God he's alive. Yes, doctor, please do whatever is necessary for him. He's nine years old, takes phenobarbital for seizures, and is allergic to amoxicillin." Armed with that vital information, the veterinarian knows how to proceed.

Veterinarians are not always this fortunate when dealing with emergency situations. Sometimes they cannot treat an animal properly when they don't know enough details about his history.

Also, Virginia state law gives veterinarians the authority to recommend euthanasia when they are presented with a critically injured or ill stray animal who appears to be suffering unduly if there is no evidence of an owner. In many incidences, identification can mean the difference in the treatment of "stray" animals in emergency situations.

ID Basics

from page 1

ing under your pet's skin, between his shoulder blades, a microchip which can be read by a scanner. Most animal shelters now scan all stray animals for microchips as they come in. Ask your veterinarian for more information about this method.

Licensing. Most communities require that pets be licensed. One benefit of licensing is that it enables shelter staff to trace the tag back to you and therefore reunite you with your lost pet. In the City of Alexandria, licenses can be obtained at the Shelter.

Rabies vaccination tag. Virginia state law mandates that all dogs and cats over the age of four months have a current rabies vaccination, so your pet should always wear his rabies tag. The tag also gives shelter staff another way to trace the pet's owner.

Note: Federal laws prohibit using animals for research if they have a tattoo, microchip, or other form of identification. With many animals being stolen to be sold to research labs, this is yet another reason to ensure that your pet carries proper ID.



Be your pet's best friend—always make sure he's wearing proper ID. It just might save his life!

Proper ID

from page 1

• Missing dogs with a collar: 18 (but only 11 of them had a tag on the collar, the tag usually being a rabies tag rather than an ID tag)

Virginia state law mandates that stray animals without a collar be held for five days; animals with a collar on are held for ten days, which gives owners some time to claim them. After the appropriate period, stray animals can be put up for adoption at the shelter's discretion.

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria does many things to find the owners of lost pets. Whenever a stray animal comes into the Shelter, or when someone calls in having found a stray, we check his description against our lost pet reports. All stray animals arriving at the Shelter are advertised in the *Washington Post*.

Sometimes we act as detectives to reunite lost pets with their owners. One of our Animal Control Officers once picked up a stray dog playing in the Potomac at Jones Point Park. The dog had a collar on and an expired rabies vaccination tag from Pennsylvania. We called the veterinary hospital that had issued the rabies tag but they had seen the dog only once and could give us only the owner's name. So we called information for phone numbers for other animal hospitals in that area. After calling a few, we were finally able to locate the one

where the dog was regularly seen. We then called the owner, who was shocked to learn his dog was over six hours away, in Virginia.

It turned out that the owner's brother, who had been allowed to take the dog hiking in the mountains, had somehow become separated from the dog. The brother had just returned from the trip but had not summoned up the courage to tell the owner about the dog's disappearance. We'll never know how the dog ended up in our state, but we can tell you that the owner immediately got into his car and drove six hours to reclaim his pup. The question is whether the dog would have been missing for so long—and at such a distance—if he had had proper identification on his collar enabling the first person who found him to contact the owner.

People can lose their dogs when an animal digs out from under the fence, breaks a chain or chews a rope in half, panics and slips out of his collar when on a walk; sometimes workmen let a pet out by mistake. It's not unusual for dogs who become somewhat senile to wander away from home without knowing how to get back. When calling in to report a lost cat, owners commonly tell us, "He always comes home, but last night he didn't."

Many pet owners can't imagine their pet would ever wander away. For example, a good samaritan recently brought in a chow *and* a cat she had found running at large together. Moreover, these two par-

ticular animals are world travelers (their owners once spent over \$800 to fly them to Spain during a military transfer) and had never wandered away from their owners before.

Even when owners are conscientious about ID for their pets, things can happen. For example, many people remove their animal's collar at bath time and don't put it back on immediately. Some cats hate collars and take them off repeatedly, to their owner's frustration. Dogs playing together can tear off each other's collars. Sometimes the hook securing the tag to the collar can break. Thus, extra identification such as a tattoo or a microchip are highly recommended in addition to collar and ID tag.

Having your pet wear identification at all times can ensure his safe return to you. Please ensure your pet is never without it.



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Maggie's Travels: A Cautionary Tale

You might have read about Maggie the cat in the newspaper. A few days before Christmas, she was traveling from Vermont to New Mexico with her owner. They stopped in Alexandria to visit her owner's brother. They had some car trouble and her owner had to rent a car. While they were transferring their luggage into the rental car, Maggie—who had been riding loose in the car—got scared and bolted from the vehicle into the surrounding neighborhood.

Maggie's owner was going to New Mexico for a job interview and felt she couldn't take the time to search for Maggie. She called our Shelter and let us know about the situation. Because of the unique circumstances, we contacted the media so that as many people as possible could be on the lookout for Maggie. But there was no sign of her.

About three weeks later, a woman found a pretty black cat sitting on her doorstep. Because the cat was wearing a collar, she brought the animal in to us, certain the cat had an owner. The collar was a unique purple one, making it very easy for us to identify the cat as Maggie. She was in good shape, and a veterinarian determined that she was in good health and able to fly back to her owner in New Mexico.

However, the owner reported that her job in New Mexico had fallen through. Feeling she was financially unable to provide for Maggie, she asked us to find her cat a new home.

Within a few weeks, a wonderful family chose to make Maggie their new companion. The Giovannis told us that it took Maggie about ten days to relax in her new home, but she is now "wonderful and very talkative. She purrs all the time and has become great friends with our other adopted cat. She is a very, very nice cat."

There are at least two morals to Maggie's tale: First, the fact that she was wearing a collar drew someone's attention because collars denote ownership, and indicate that an animal isn't a stray. Second, whenever you travel with your pet, make sure his collar has an ID tag, even if you're just going down the street to the veterinarian's office.

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Spring Special Events Wrap-up

On March 8, the “wearing o’ the green” took on a whole new meaning as hundreds of people and dogs gathered in Market Square for our 11th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Fun Dog Show. Competition in all categories was tough—one owner even fastened fake money to his dog’s costume to bribe the judge.



The crowd roared its unanimous approval as the judge selected the winner of the dog/owner lookalike contest—a grinning pet owner and his bulldog. John Harter, from WJLA-TV7, did a wonderful job as our master of ceremonies, and Judge Daniel J. O’Flaherty took his difficult job as judge in stride.

We added a few new activities this year, including a “clover toss” to win dog biscuits, and a photo opportunity with a leprechaun. After the Dog Show, dogs and owners gathered to help lead off the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Our thanks to the Ballyshaners for allowing us to be part of this festive occasion; to our wonderful volunteers for their help; and to the following businesses for their support: Misha’s, Bilbo Baggins, 219 Restaurant, Chadwick’s, Curzon Hill Antiques, Pet Sage, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, and the Chesapeake Bagel Bakery.



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On March 29, over 300 dogs and their owners turned out for the 2nd Annual Doggie Bone Hunt & Easter Parade at Jones Point Park. After a 10-minute rain, the weather turned perfect. Participants hunted for 3,000 “bones” (actually dog biscuits donated by the Iams Co.) wrapped by local Girl Scout Troop 3044. Next on the agenda were games, including a spoon race, egg roll, musical chairs, and our version of baseball. Carlos Mejias of the Olde Towne School for Dogs gave an obedience demonstration.



As the Easter Bunny led the parade, dogs and owners strolled to music as they passed the reviewing stand to have their outfits judged for the best costume award. We also honored a German shepherd named Radar, who was one of our dogs looking for a home at last year’s Bone Hunt, where a participant met Radar, promptly fell in love with him, and adopted him. This year, a young Lab mix named Jasper was adopted by a couple who met him at the event.



Many thanks to Big Dog Sportswear, who gave us the bags for collecting bones and allowed their mascot to make a guest appearance. Thanks also to the 35 volunteers who assembled at 7:30 a.m. to help, as well as to the following: Misha’s, for contributing the coffee; Record Mart, Bullfeathers, Seaport Inn, Curzon Hill Antiques, the Potomac Riverboat Company, and London Bob for gift certificates used in the raffle drawing and as prizes; Jill Judge for her very popular donation of Beanie Babies; and Chesapeake Bagel Bakery for bagels.

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Coming Up: Exciting League Events

- Aug. 30** 6th Annual Canine Games
- Oct. 4** Paws for Fun Cat Show
- Oct. 23** Annual Dinner
- Nov. 2** Doggie Dash & Stroll
- Dec. 5-7** Pet Photos with Santa

• Details in the next issue of SPOTLIGHT •



* RABIES UPDATE *

The City of Alexandria has extended the rabies alert through fall 1997 in response to the increase of positive cases of rabies since January 1. To date there have been 18 cases of rabies in the City, two of them involving domestic cats; the others were raccoons. The League sponsored nine rabies clinics through March to encourage pet owners to inoculate and protect their companion animals. Over 300 people took advantage of these clinics.

The basics about rabies

Rabies is a virus that affects warm-blooded animals. The symptoms include staggering, lethargy, salivating, and either extreme aggression or fearlessness of humans.

When to call Animal Control

It is normal to see wild animals, especially raccoons, outside at night and even during the day. However, if the animal exhibits any of the symptoms above, or if you find an animal in your home, please call your local animal control agency (see box at right).

How to discourage wild animals from your home

We encourage all residents to attempt to live in harmony with the wild animals that share our planet. However, sometimes wild animals come a bit too close.

Trapping does not work well, because when wildlife is trapped and relocated, others just move in to the vacated niche. But following are some humane deterrents that can make the environment around your home less inviting to wildlife:

- Place ammonia-soaked rags around the perimeter of your yard.
- Use bungee cords to secure outside trash, and encourage your neighbors to do the same.
- Do not leave pet food outside.
- Clean up any branches, brush, and firewood piles.
- Be sure to cap your chimney.
- Place moth balls in socks around the perimeter of your property (but take care to keep pets and children away from them).

If you are bitten or exposed to saliva

If you are bitten or saliva enters a wound or mucous membrane, you should immediately wash the wound with soap and water. Then call your doctor, or go to a medical center or emergency room. It is important that you see a doctor as soon as possible.

Next, call your local animal control agency to report the bite and to have them quarantine the animal. In the event the animal cannot be located, you may need to undergo the post-exposure rabies vaccines as a precaution.

Area Shelters

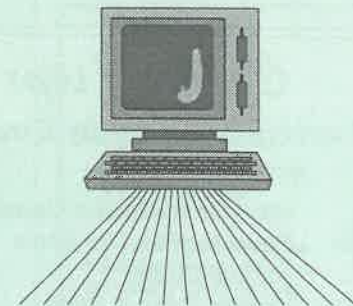
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Arlington County	(703) 931-9241
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Prince William County	(703) 792-6465
Loudoun County	(703) 882-3211
Howard County	(410) 313-2780
Montgomery County	(301) 279-1023
Prince George's County	(301) 262-5625
District of Columbia	(202) 576-6664
Washington Humane Society	(202) 723-5730
Washington Animal Rescue League	(202) 726-2273

THANK YOU!

The League would like to thank the following veterinarians and animal clinics for their assistance with nine reduced-cost rabies clinics held in Alexandria during February and March:

- Dr. Peter Farrell and Dr. Lisa Marsico / Del Ray Animal Hospital
- Dr. Jeffrey Bowersox and Scott Pettyjohn / VCA Old Town Animal Hospital
- Dr. Catherine Ryan / Northern Virginia Association of Veterinarians
- Dr. Richard Hawe, Dr. Don Wilson, Dr. Donna Krochack, and Dr. Marybeth Dearing / Alexandria Animal Hospital

Keep In Touch—
Visit the League's Web Site Often!



Our address is
<http://adoptapet.com/alexandria/index.html>

When You Lose a Pet

- **Immediately call your local animal shelter.** Shelters act as a central repository for missing animal information. Your pet may already be waiting for you at the shelter. Don't wait too long to call the shelter; many cat owners whose cats go outside regularly wait days before calling because they expect the animal to come home. Unfortunately, this means that if their pet was at the shelter, it could already have been adopted by another family or, in some situations, euthanized.

You should call all the shelters near you (see box on page 6). People sometimes take an animal to the shelter with which they are most familiar or which is most convenient for them. One of our Shelter graduates, Gurney, was playing with another dog who bit her collar, which fell off. Before her owner could reach her, Gurney hopped over the fence and was gone. A kind citizen found the dog on I-495 and, because he was on his way to work in Washington, D.C., took her to the shelter there. Her owner had already called that shelter and filed a lost report, so it was just a matter of hours before Gurney was home again.

- **Search the neighborhood where you lost your pet.** Call for your pet, whistle, rattle that special container of treats; talk to people in the area, including postal workers—leave no stone unturned. The more people looking for your pet, the better your chances of finding him.

- **Put up lost pet posters in the area.** The poster should be simple, eye-catching, and easy to read (like our example). Invest in color copies of a recent photo of your pet that you can affix to the posters. But be wary of scam artists, who may take advantage of your situation (see sidebar).

- **Call the veterinarians in the area** to see if a good samaritan has brought in an injured animal matching your pet's description.

Beware of Con Artists

Too often, con artists may read a lost pet poster, call the contact number, and falsely claim to have the animal. When the owner asks for an identifying mark or collar color, the person uses the information that appeared on the poster and then asks for the reward money.

The scam artist may even claim to have been traveling through the area in question, found the pet but couldn't stop, and is now at home in a different state—but unable to afford traveling back to deliver the animal to you. Such individuals often request large sums of money to be wired to them so they can return the pet to the owner.

For this reason, it is recommended that you withhold at least one distinguishing feature about your pet in the information shown on your lost pet poster—an old scar, missing tooth, or unusual patch of color—so that you can be sure the person at the other end of the line actually has your pet.



— Clip and save as a model for future use —

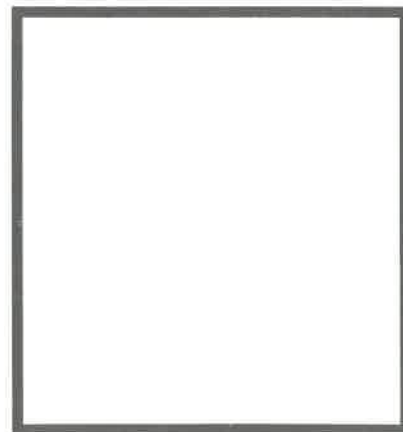
LOST PET

Pet's Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Date Lost: _____

General Description: _____



• IMPORTANT TIP •

It's a good idea to always have on hand a recent photo of your pet showing any identifying marks or characteristics, and to use it on your lost pet poster.

Shelter Graduates: Selected Success Stories

Animals without identification often end up in shelters, waiting for homes. Because the staff and prospective adopters know so little about them, it's often harder to place them. Nevertheless, the many kind people who adopt strays will testify that taking that chance is well worth the risk. The animals featured on this page were all strays who found their way into the homes—and the hearts—of their new owners.



"Ginger was a stray who was found wandering through the streets of Alexandria. She was found thin, hungry, and unloved. Since her previous owners either didn't care, or didn't know any better, she

had no identification on and ended up in the Alexandria Animal Shelter. When she arrived there, her coat was in poor condition. She had a lonely and frightened look in her eyes, and we could tell she longed for a family all her own. While we're sorry that she had to go through such a traumatic experience, which could have been avoided if she'd just had ID on, we're very glad that she's ours. Since we adopted her, she has been our perfect little girl and she has love and peacefulness in her eyes."

—Debbie and Carlos Yanez



"Although 'Pretty Boy' Floyd, shown here celebrating his second birthday, came to us as a stray, he is a very obedient and loving dog. His favorite things are hugs and kisses and cuddling at bedtime."

—Kim Larmee and Faron Fuller



Found on the side of a highway, about to run into traffic, this beagle mix is the light of her family's life.

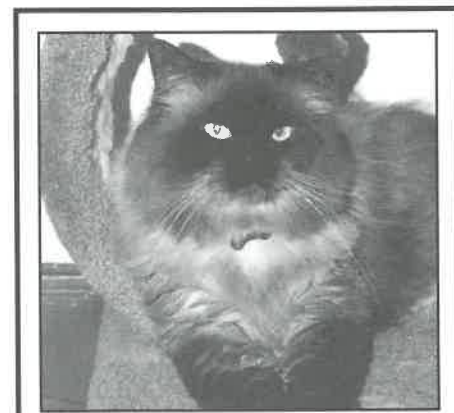
"She is the best. She simply makes everybody's day."

—Stephanie and Jeffrey Marshall



"I'll never understand why no one was looking for Panda. For six years now, I've been able to end every day with a smile when I come home to my silly-looking best friend."

—Ruth Bauer



Chewie, short for Chewbacca, is the Shelter's mascot and has been with us for three years. He was originally a stray, so we didn't know anything about him except that he was very thin. He was adopted by a kind woman who had him for several months; however, when her father became ill, she had to care for him, and unfortunately he lived in a no-

Continued on page 9

If you ever have reason to believe an animal's life is in danger, don't delay—
call (703) 838-4775 immediately.
You could very well save an animal's life!

Chewie

from page 8

pets-allowed apartment so she returned Chewie to us. Upon his return, Chewie indicated that he was very happy at the Shelter and wouldn't mind being a permanent resident, so the League adopted him. He now has quite a fan club. He enjoys assisting potential adopters complete their adoption application, lounging on his cat tree behind the front counter, and napping in whatever new box happens to be on the floor.

Rabbit Seminar Slated on June 22

An informational seminar on rabbits will be conducted by the Friends of Rabbits at the Alexandria Animal Shelter on June 22 from 1 to 3 p.m.

This free program is offered to the general public, regardless of whether you have adopted a rabbit from our shelter.

For more information, call Megan Brooks at (703) 838-4387.



Visit the Shelter Soon!

Are you thinking of adding a pet to your family? There are many bright, beautiful animals at the Shelter who need loving homes. We're the only shelter in the area open seven days a week for your convenience.

Hours of Operation

Animal Visiting:

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday	11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	11 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
Sunday	12 noon-4 p.m.

Business:

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday	8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sunday	12 noon-4 p.m.

Alexandria Animal Shelter
910 South Payne Street • Alexandria • (703) 838-4775

Bits & Pieces

- Pets, like their owners, can become overheated when exercising. Special care is advised during the summer to avoid dehydration and stroke. Try to schedule your outings during evenings or early mornings, the coolest times of day—and

always make sure your pets have plenty of fresh water available to drink.

- Pet licenses are required for companion animals in the City of Alexandria, and may be purchased at the Animal Shelter.

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- Burke Veterinary Clinic (455-6222)
- Companion Animal Hospital (866-4100)
- Del Ray Animal Hospital (739-0000)
- Elpaw Veterinary Clinic (751-3707)
- Ft. Hunt Animal Hospital (360-6100)
- Gunston Animal Hospital (339-7725)
- Hayfield Animal Hospital (971-2127)
- Hybla Valley Vet Hospital (765-9292)
- Kingsview Animal Hospital (971-9292)
- Mt. Vernon Animal Hospital (360-6600)
- Sacramento Veterinary Hospital (780-2808)
- VA-MD Veterinary Emergency Service (823-3601)
- VCA—Beacon Hill Cat Hospital (765-2287)
- VCA—Old Town Veterinary Hospital (549-3647)
- Village Veterinary Clinic (978-8655)
- Woodbridge Animal Hospital (494-5191)

Even in balmy weather, leaving a pet in a car can be dangerous. Temperatures can rise very quickly, subjecting an animal to permanent brain damage or even death. Don't take chances with your pet's life—leave him at home!



REMEMBER:
Next to you, your pet's best friend is his veterinarian!

For the addresses of the veterinarians who participate in the League's reduced-cost spay/neuter program, call (703) 838-4775.

Silent Auction Prizes Needed

Now, there's another way for businesses to help homeless animals in our community. This year, at our Annual Dinner October 23, the League will again hold a Silent Auction, with all proceeds going to care for animals at the Shelter. If you would like to donate a product, service, or artwork for this event, please call Kate Pullen at (703) 838-4861.

THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

What We Do

The League serves the community in many ways:

Adoption Program. The League places unwanted pets in carefully chosen, permanent homes. Our adoption program is one of the most successful in the country and is praised by national animal welfare organizations.

Animal Control/24-hour Assistance for Animals. The League provides animal control for the City of Alexandria. Our Animal Control Officers (ACOs) enforce State and City laws pertaining to the welfare and control of animals. Even when ACOs are not on duty, a trained staff member is on call to respond to animals in need.

Humane Education. The League's Humane Educator is available to speak to your organization or group. Last year she reached over 9,000 people.

Reduced Cost Spay/Neuter Program. In this country alone, nearly 15 million healthy dogs and cats are put to sleep each year simply because there are not enough homes for them. Spaying or neutering makes a real contribution to decreasing pet overpopulation and has many health benefits for animals as well. Through the cooperation of local veterinarians, the League enables all pet owners to have their animals spayed or neutered at a reduced cost.

Grief Therapy. Each month, a trained therapist conducts free counseling sessions for people who have lost or expect to lose a pet. The sessions are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Shelter.

Lost and Found. We offer a lost and found program to aid people in finding their pets. Last year, over 600 lost pets were reunited with their owners through our program.

Licensing. The League handles licensing for the City of Alexandria. Both dogs and cats must be licensed. Fees are \$10 per animal for unneutered animals and a reduced rate of \$2 for altered animals.

Volunteer Program. Volunteers fill many roles in the League's programs, at the Shelter, and at special events. For more information, call (703) 838-4387.

Please note: The League respects our donors' and friends' confidentiality and we never share, sell, or release our mailing list.

Traveling with Pets: Part 2 of 4: Flying with Pets in the Cargo Hold

By Larry Frommer

Flying with a pet traveling in cargo hold is a far cry from flying with a pet in the airline cabin. In the cabin, you're in control. Your pet is with you when you board; he's never further away than under the seat in front of you; and you're there if he requires a familiar, reassuring voice.

But for pets too large to fit under the airline cabin seats and thus confined to the hold, there is little or no human contact. Their fellow passengers are luggage and commercial cargo. Their quarters can be noisy and, during protracted take-offs and landings, temperatures can drop or rise rapidly. They disembark not with their owners but in luggage carts or are carried off by airline employees.

It takes a well-conditioned animal of stable temperament to make the journey in cargo class with relative ease and comfort. And while airlines have become much more sensitive to pets traveling in cargo hold, their priority is to load and unload quickly to ensure on-time departures and arrivals; in the flurry of activity, animals traveling in the hold are occasionally handled like the luggage with which they travel.

The responsibility for making your pet's flight in cargo hold as comfortable and stress-free as pos-

sible lies primarily with you, the owner. Kathy Travers, Director of Animal Affairs and a specialist in animal transportation for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), this begins with the three Ps: Proper Prior Planning.

She recommends purchasing ahead of time a USDA-approved shipping crate from a pet store or airline. It should be large enough for the animal to stand, sit, and change positions. At home, get the pet accustomed to spending time in it, using a familiar or favorite toy. The more time your pet spends in the carrier, the easier the actual journey will be. Her other suggestions:

- Obtain a veterinarian's health certificate dated no more than 10 days prior to departure. Most airlines require the certificate whether an animal travels in cargo hold or in the cabin.

- Try to arrange for nonstop flights. Animals, like baggage, are sometimes left off connecting flights or put on the wrong plane, and also may be exposed to the elements. (If you're connecting from a city to a smaller town on a commuter line, make sure it is willing to transport animals.)

- Ask that your pet be hand-carried to the plane when departing and to the baggage area upon arrival. If, as is often the case, conveyor belts are the sole method of transferring cargo between the building and the plane, go promptly to the baggage area when your plane arrives so you can retrieve your pet immediately.

- Forget tranquilizers. Any pet who needs them should not fly. Such drugs decrease respiratory function and may cause breathing difficulty.

- Feed and water your pet four hours before going to the airline;

exercise him just before putting him into the carrier.

- Write LIVE ANIMAL in large letters on top of the crate and on at least one additional side. Use arrow indicators to prominently show the upright position of the carrier. Then secure the name, address, and destination point of your pet to the top of the carrier.

- Line the crate bottom with some kind of bedding, shredded paper, or towels to absorb accidents.

- Attach food and water dishes to the inside of the crate so they are accessible to airline personnel.

- Ensure that the crate's door is securely closed but not locked so that airline personnel can open it in an emergency.

- Avoid traveling during unusually hot or cold periods.

Airlines charge for carrying a pet in cargo hold, about \$50 to \$125 depending on the airline, the crate size, and the pet's weight. Check with your airline well in advance for specific details. Also, due to possible restrictions on the number of animals allowed in cargo hold, you should book your pet at the same time you make your own flight reservation.

NEXT ISSUE: Traveling with Pets on the Road.



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**Paws for Fun
Household
Pet Cat Show
Moves to Fall**



Our cat show will be moving to the fall! Look for details in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

Pet Portraits By Michael Joseph Returns June 20-22



Noted pet photographer Michael Joseph soon will return to our area to capture you and your pets on film.

The entire \$10 sitting fee 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 for an additional cost.

Sittings will be held June 20 through 22 at the Shops at Shirlington. To schedule your appointment, please call (800) 822-1379. Time slots fill up fast, so call soon!

Camp Reservations Filled

As of April 1, the League's Absolutely Awesome Animal Awareness Camp has been declared full.



While we are thrilled at the enormous popularity of our camp—now in its second year—we are sorry we couldn't accommodate all the children who wanted to attend. We are, however, starting a mailing list for next year, and those who tried but were unable to register this year will be first on our list in 1998.

If you are interested in next year's program, please call (703) 838-5042 and leave your name, address, and telephone number and the age of your child. Our Director of Humane Education, Jeanine Larsen, will be sending out applications next February.

Meanwhile, when scheduling speakers for your school or organization, please keep us in mind. The League conducts presentations at local schools, civic centers, scout meetings, and clubs, and reached over 9,000 people in 1996.

For more information, call (703) 838-5042.

Spaying/Neutering Saves Animals' Lives

You can help alleviate the tragedy of pet overpopulation by having your pets spayed or neutered. This safe, virtually painless surgery has health benefits as well: It can prevent your four-legged companion from getting some kinds of cancer and other diseases.

The League now sells about 1,000 spay/neuter certificates annually. Thus, owners can have their pets altered at any of the 29 area participating veterinary hospitals in our area through the League's reduced-cost spay/neuter program.

For more information about the many benefits of spaying/neutering your pet, speak with your vet or call (703) 838-4775 today.

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