



THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 49th YEAR

SUMMER 1995

This time of year, the number of pets brought into the Shelter goes up—a poignant reminder that there are not nearly enough homes for all the animals who need one. Do your part to alleviate this senseless tragedy of pet overpopulation—have your own pet spayed or neutered. The League can help: We offer reduced-cost spay-neuter certificates that are honored by 28 participating veterinary hospitals. The surgery is virtually painless, safe, and can prolong your pet's life. Please ask your vet about this important surgery soon. Call 838-4775 for more information about the spay/neuter certificates.

The heat we've experienced this summer is a killer, particularly if you subject your pet to waiting for you in a parked car or make him stay outside in the sun. Please don't risk your pet's life—bring him indoors, and make sure he always has plenty of fresh water available.

Cruelty takes many forms, and one of them is leaving an animal alone and chained outdoors. One such dog was a gentle creature who endured 16 years of being chained outside in her yard. When her owner finally brought her to the Shelter to die, she was riddled with fleas and suffering from a severe, untreated flea allergy.

Because she never got any grooming or exercise, her nails were long and painfully warped. She was thin, malnourished and ill. Surely a neighbor saw her suffering, but said nothing. Sadly, it's too late to help this poor creature, but there's still time to save other animals like her. No dog deserves to live this way. If you see a pet chained outside, or suspect other cruelty, please notify the League by calling 838-4775. You can save an animal's life, and free him of his chains, by getting involved. Your call will be treated in confidence. You don't even have to leave your name.

Join Us for Fun, Frolic at the 1995 Canine Games Sept. 2

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and the Olde Towne School for Dogs will present the 1995 Canine Games (yes, the name has changed) on Saturday morning, September 2, at Jones Point Park in Old Town (rain date: September 3). Bigger crowds than ever are expected this Labor Day Weekend.

Jones Point Park is located under the Woodrow Wilson Bridge in Old Town Alexandria, at the southernmost end of South Royal Street. In case of bad or questionable weather, call (703) 519-7230 for up-to-the-minute information. Registration and packet pick-up will begin at 7:30 a.m.

The Canine Games will consist of a number of competitive events for dogs. Special medallions will be presented to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each category.

Coffee and other refreshments will be available. As at all League events, we will be distributing humane education literature and presenting five beautiful Shelter dogs who need homes.

In addition, a veterinarian will be on hand to address questions you may have concerning your pet's health.

The morning activities will begin with colorful opening ceremonies at 8:15 a.m. The competition will start at 8:30 and will include the following events:

- **Water Retrieval**
- **Obedience** (novice and subnovice categories)
- **Frisbee**
- **40-yard Run**
- **Obstacle**
- **Fetch and Return**
- **Dog Tricks and Ball Catch**

Additional events are being developed and will be announced at the event.

The registration fee for each dog is \$20,



A 1994 competitor tackles the obstacle course.

which entitles the dog to enter any or all the events. (Incidentally, there's no charge for watching, so please come even if you don't enter a canine competitor.)

The first 250 owners who register their dogs will receive a high-quality Canine Games t-shirt. We are indebted to the following for donating this year's t-shirts: Alexandria Animal Hospital, Del Ray Animal Hospital, Elpaw Veterinary Clinic, Fort Hunt Animal Hospital, Hayfield Animal Hospital, and Old Town Veterinary Hospital.

A certificate, suitable for framing, will be given to every dog who enters in recognition of his participation in the day's event, and a calligrapher will be available to in-

Continued on page 5

Treating Canine Skin Allergies



by Peter J. Farrell, D.V.M.
DelRay Animal Hospital

Allergies in dogs, just as in people, can be a frustrating problem to manage. In dogs, over-sensitivity to a particular substance usually affects the skin. Licking, chewing, and scratching are typical symptoms. If they go untreated, a skin or ear infection often results, and this in turn can cause more irritation and itchiness, escalating the problem.

Allergies usually emerge in young adult dogs, with late summer and fall the worst times in this area. The problem can get progressively worse in ensuing years and, in the most severe cases, the symptoms may continue year-round.

Like people, dogs are allergic to a wide variety of substances, but by far the most common allergy seen by veterinarians is to flea saliva. In a highly allergic dog, one or two flea bites are enough to make dogs miserable for a couple of weeks. Dogs with flea allergies tend to chew mostly around the base of their tail and to scratch at their flanks. For those dogs, a strong flea control program, developed with your veterinarian, is an absolute must.

Allergic dermatitis in dogs also results

from inhalant allergies. Pollens, grasses, and house dust mites are common sources of irritation. This problem tends to be somewhat hereditary in nature, affecting some breeds more than others. Golden retrievers, West Highland white terriers, and Dalmatians are among the most susceptible. These dogs tend to lick and chew at their feet and to rub their face and ears. Recurrent ear infections are a common result of inhalant allergies, which are often seen in combination with flea allergies.

Food allergies, while less common, are being diagnosed more frequently. Dogs



Vet's Corner

typically develop an allergy to the same food over a period of time rather than to a new diet. It's not the brand of food, but a particular ingredient (chicken, beef, corn, wheat) that causes the reaction. Affected dogs will scratch at their face and ears, and also may have symptoms of intestinal distress, such as vomiting or diarrhea.

The first step in successfully controlling allergies is to ensure you're not dealing with other problems that mimic their symptoms, such as mange or ringworm. Both of these diseases can look similar to allergic dermatitis and confuse its diagnosis. It is also important to diagnose and treat co-existing problems that frequently aggravate allergies, such as bacterial skin infections and thyroid problems.

Diagnosis. To a veterinarian, the right symptoms seen at the right time of year and in the right breed of dog often are assumed to be allergy related. However, there are some specific tests available, including a simple blood test that detects antibodies to specific inhaled and ingested allergens, although the accuracy of this test is often questioned. Intradermal skin testing is considered the "gold standard" for allergy diagnosis. It requires shaving a large area of fur and injecting tiny amounts of allergens

to see which cause a local allergic reaction. For food allergies, the only reliable test is an extended trial with a hypoallergenic diet.

Treatment. The best way to treat allergies is to avoid whatever it is that you're allergic to. This works well for food allergies, but is less practical for inhalant and flea allergies. Another way to manage allergies is to hide the symptoms with medications while waiting for the season to change or for a flea problem to be brought under control. Antihistamines may be prescribed, but they are often not very effective; their biggest advantage is that they can be given safely for long periods of time without severe side effects. Steroids (cortisone-type drugs) are effective in almost every allergy case, but carry the risk of both short- and long-term side effects.

A final treatment method involves repeated injections of small amounts of specific allergens in an attempt to build up an immunity to them. This method works best for inhaled allergies.

Unfortunately, allergies in dogs are difficult to manage. They tend to be lifelong problems that often get worse with each passing year. However, all veterinarians in this area have a great deal of experience dealing with allergies and can help devise an individualized treatment plan for your dog.

1995 Rabies Clinic

The League will sponsor its annual Rabies Clinic on Sunday, Oct. 15, from noon until 2 p.m. at the Shelter. The rabies injections are \$5 each.

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria **SPOTLIGHT ON ANIMALS** (© 1995) is published four times a year and has a circulation of 24,000. Address all correspondence to The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, 910 South Payne Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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

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REGISTRATION FORM

***** 1995 CANINE GAMES *****

presented by the
Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
and the **Olde Towne School for Dogs**

Jones Point Park • Alexandria, Virginia
Saturday, September 2, 1995 (Rain Date: Sunday, September 3)

Owner's name (please print) _____
Last First

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (h) () _____ (w) () _____

Pet's name _____ Breed _____

Pet's age _____ Sex: M F Size: S M L

Date of last visit to veterinarian: _____

Date of last rabies vaccination: _____ () 1 year vaccine () 3 year vaccine

RULES

1. All dogs must be current on distemper and rabies vaccinations.
2. Dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs.
3. Dogs must be kept ON LEASH at all times except when competing. No retractable leads, please.
4. The League has the final authority in determining the suitability of any animal to compete.

MANDATORY DISQUALIFICATION

1. Overly aggressive behavior by dog
2. Female dogs in any stage of heat
3. Pregnant dogs
4. Dogs in poor or questionable health
5. Mistreatment of dog

MANDATORY WAIVER

Knowing that participating in the Canine Games (the Event) is a potentially hazardous activity, my dog and I enter and participate in this event certifying that we are medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a Canine Games official relative to my ability or that of my dog to safely compete in the race. I also assume any and all other risks associated with competing in the Events including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other pets and their owners, the effects of weather, including heat and humidity, traffic and the conditions of the grounds. Knowing these facts, and in consideration of your acceptance of my entry, I hereby, for myself and my dog, my heirs, executors, and administrators, waive, release, and covenant not to sue and forever discharge the Canine Games sponsors and any and all parties associated with the Event from any and all claims for damages, or liabilities of any kind arising out of our participation in this Event even though such liability may arise out of my own negligence or action or that of my dog. This release extends to all claims of every kind or nature whatsoever, foreseen or unforeseen, known or unknown.

The undersigned further grants full permission to this Event and any organization conducting the Event and/or agents authorized by them to use any photographs, videotapes, motion pictures, recordings, or any other record of this event for any purpose.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send completed, SIGNED registration form with entry fee check for \$20, made payable to AWLA, to 1995 AWLA Canine Games, 912 W. Timber Branch Pkwy., Alexandria, VA 22302-3230. The first 250 registrants will receive a 1995 Canine Games t-shirt. Proceeds from this event will go to help homeless, abused, and injured animals. For more information, call the Canine Games Hotline at (703) 519-7230.

Cat Licensing Ordinance is Passed

On June 17, the Alexandria City Council unanimously passed a new City ordinance mandating that all cats 4 months of age or older be licensed. The ordinance also limits the number of cats per household to four. This legislation is a result of changes in the way the public views cats.

Historically, cats have not been subject to laws governing companion animals. Now, however, cats are regarded as companion animals and have even surpassed dogs as America's most popular pet, especially in urban areas like Alexandria. More and more jurisdictions and animal control agencies have come to feel that the laws which apply to dogs should now include cats. This enlightened attitude is a first step toward greater protection of cats and controlling the tragic pet overpopulation problem.

Under the new ordinance, which takes effect October 1, cats must be current on rabies inoculations in order to be licensed. This requirement will protect not only cats who might otherwise contract the disease, but also the community as a whole.

We are indebted to Mayor Patsy Ticer

for her leadership in enacting this ordinance. In acknowledging the life-saving potential the law confers on cats in the community, Mayor Ticer noted, "I hope that licensing will spur people on to having their animals spayed or neutered. With so many cats—1,566 last year alone—turned in to the Animal Shelter, it breaks my heart that there are not enough homes for them. I hope that this new licensing requirement will lead our community to better care for and healthier animals. I urge everyone to license their cats when the new law becomes effective. Remember, responsible cat ownership is being a good neighbor."

Expanding the pet licensing laws to include cats will enable lost or stray animals to be identified as pets and returned to their owners. In the City of Alexandria, an average of 86 percent of stray dogs brought to the Shelter are returned to their owners; only 5 percent of lost cats ultimately are reunited with their owners. Licensing cats increases the possibility that lost felines will be returned home.

Although the City ordinance does not



Mayor Patsy Ticer's leadership was instrumental in securing the passage of the City's new cat licensing ordinance.

mandate that cats wear a collar, the League encourages cat owners to equip their cats with a "breakaway" collar with the license attached. Just think of it as his "ticket home."

The four-per-household limitation on cats will take effect later this fall, but if you have more than four cats, relax. They can remain in your home provided they are properly "grandfathered" in under the new law, and properly licensed.

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Send Us Your Pet's Photo for Our Annual Dinner Display And Join Us on October 19

Don't forget—world-rekknowned naturalist, author, and radio/television personality Roger Caras will be the featured speaker at the League's Annual Dinner on Thursday, October 19, at 7:30 p.m. We'll provide more information about the exciting program being planned in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

Meanwhile, if you have adopted a pet from the League, we'd love to have a photo and a few sentences about what your adopted pet means to you.

Your photo and statement will be used in a special display, which last year was extremely popular with our guests.

To give us time to prepare the display, we need your submissions by September 20. Please mail them to the Shelter, 910 S. Payne St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or drop them off when you're in the area.



Water retrieval is a great way to cool off while competing for a medal.

Canine Games

from page 1

scribe the dog's name on it at no charge.

Beautiful gold, silver, and bronze Canine Games medallions on red, white and blue streamers will be presented to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each category. Afterward, a raffle drawing will be held for several prizes, including two football tickets to a Redskins game at RFK Stadium this fall, restaurant certificates, pet foods, and pet services.

Registration forms are available on page 3 of this issue of *Spotlight*, at the Alexandria Animal Shelter at 910 S. Payne St., numerous local veterinary hospitals, the Olde Towne School for Dogs, For Pet's Sake Grooming Shop, and, of course, at Jones Point Park on the morning of the event.

If you're interested in purchasing or selling raffle tickets (\$1 each or \$5.00 for 6), please send payment with a self-addressed stamped envelope to 1995 AWLA Canine Games, 912 W. Timber Branch Pkwy., Alexandria, VA 22302-3230. Make checks payable to AWLA.

All proceeds from the Canine Games and the raffle will go to the League's programs for helping injured and homeless animals. Everyone is invited to come to Jones Point Park on September 2 for a morning of fun and competition. For more information, or to learn how you can be a vendor, sponsor, or volunteer, call the Canine Games Hotline, (703) 519-7230.

Third Annual 'Paws for Fun' Household Pet Cat Show

The 3rd Annual "Paws for Fun" Household Pet Cat Show on June 26 showcased 125 fancy felines from the Northern Virginia area and as far away as Long Island, N.Y. Exhibitors, vendors, volunteers, judges and the audience all had a great time.

The "Best in Show" award went to "Poe," a beautiful short-haired brown tabby owned by Leigh Hopke. "Damien," owned by Becky Denning, received "Second Best," and "Third Best" went to "Tibbett" Roberts and "Landon" Smith. The Best Decorated Cage, in keeping with the Fourth of July theme, was awarded to Eleanor Herman, owner of "Leon Papootya," a League adoptee. The winner of the Owner-Cat Lookalike contest went to a pair of redheads: Marion Brooks and "Wiley." The Mayor's Choice award went to "Flakey," a brown tabby shorthair owned by Shirley Cleary.

A special thanks to all the volunteers who organized and manned the show, and to the four Ring Sponsors: Beacon Hill Cat Hospital, Old Town Veterinary Hospital, P.T. Moran, and VA-MD Veterinary Emergency Service. Our major sponsors of the Food Court this year were Barcroft Cat Clinic, Beacon Hill Cat Hospital, Fort Hunt Animal Hospital, Hayfield Animal Hospital, and Kingstowne Cat Clinic. Thanks, also, to everyone who donated those outstanding prizes awarded in the raffle.

Finally, here's to Dr. Nancy Suska of Beacon Hill Cat Hospital, who with her team of volunteers was the primary organizer for the event. They put in lots of hours and hard work to ensure that this, the 3rd Annual Cat Show, was flawlessly planned. As always, they did a spectacular job!

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My Story

by Oliver Turchen

Although I am only 3 years old, my life has sometimes seemed a very long one. I have lived with two families and I have had two names.

My first master was cruel, and kept me tied up on a rope in his back yard, and I was very lonely and bored. But then one day, a terrible thing happened. I got loose—I don't remember how—and before I knew it, I was running in the street, which I'd never done before. Suddenly something huge hit me and I went flying up into the air. I don't remember what happened after that.

After what seemed like an eternity, I found myself in a small room. I hurt everywhere; I had had surgery. Kind strangers wearing uniforms put me in a cage. I thought I would have to live there forever, but a few days later a girl and her mother came to see me. The girl whispered a lot of sweet words to me.

They left, and soon the people in uniforms came and took me out of my



Once abused and ignored, Oliver is pampered and loved after being adopted from the Shelter. Every pet deserves the contentment and happiness that Oliver found in his new home.

cage so the girl and her mother could take me for a long walk. When we returned I had to go back into my cage and they left. But a few days later, was I ever excited when they appeared again and took me out—this time for good!

When we left the Shelter, I heard the nice people remind my new owners that I had three broken ribs and to treat me gently. It made me feel good to know that the people at the Shelter cared so much about me.

As we arrived at my new home, I was really nervous, and afraid of being tied with a rope again. But instead, my owner had a great back yard for me to romp and play in, with lots of interesting smells and neighbor dogs on both sides of my fence I can talk to. (My new girlfriend next door is named Alex.)

The girl's Mom decided to call me Oliver. At last I had a new name, a new home, a new family . . . and best of all, lots of love.

Joelle Fishkin and her 8-year-old daughter, Alissa Turchen, adopted Oliver two years ago, following the death of their previous dog, Skye, who was adopted from the Alexandria Shelter in 1981.

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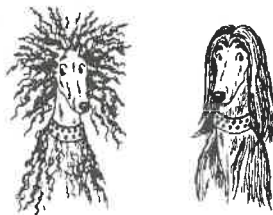
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IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of Mrs. Vivian Willis, a great lady whose contributions to the League spanned more than three decades.

As a longtime member of the League's Board of Directors, Mrs. Willis was instrumental in shaping the League's philosophy, and will be remembered for her tireless work in service of the organization, often above and beyond the call of duty. Until just a few years ago, for example, she assumed responsibility for hand-addressing some 3,000 Annual Dinner invitations every year.

She personally made it her business to see that the conditions at the Shelter were pleasant for both animals and staff, and often donated furniture and other items that were needed. It is a measure of her humanity that Vivian expected neither thanks nor acknowledgement of her contributions.

She is survived by her husband, Walter Willis.

We at the League will always be indebted to Vivian for her example and



Mrs. Vivian Willis

dedication. In her quiet, humble way, she did much to leave the League a stronger and better place than when she found it. All of us will miss her.

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After only a few minutes in that car, your pet can suffer irreparable brain damage—even death.

In the City of Alexandria you can be *fined or sent to jail* for leaving your dog in a hot car.

If you see a situation you feel is critical and you believe the animal's life is in danger, don't hesitate—call 838-4775 immediately. It could save a life!

508 Oronoco St. Phone: 836-2548
Old Town Alexandria



La Moustache
HAIR DESIGN

Neighboring the
Olde Towne School for Dogs

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

1995 Memorial Contributions: An Enduring Legacy to Animals

The League often receives contributions in memory of beloved relatives, friends or pets. These donations are used to expand our adoption program and to develop our outreach efforts aimed at assisting pets and their owners in our community. Beginning with this issue, *Spotlight* will acknowledge memorial contributions made to the League. Following are donations received in the 1995 calendar year to date.

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