



SPOTLIGHT on animals

IN OUR 44th YEAR

WINTER 1990

League Honors Dog Rescuer in City Hall Ceremony

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria recently honored a local hero. In a January 5 City Hall ceremony the League presented a plaque to David Perriello, an Alexandria resident, who rescued a dog from the Potomac River.

On December 27, while the dog, named Sassy, was being unloaded from a plane, she broke loose from her sky-kennel and ran across the ramp and runway, delaying aircraft both on the ground and in the air. The terrified dog was pursued by a number of airport workers, including Mr. Perriello, who is a TWA employee. When Sassy reached the river's edge, she continued out onto the frozen river until she reached a point where the ice could not support her, and she fell into the freezing water.

Mr. Perriello did not hesitate a moment; he waded into the frigid Potomac and brought the little Sheltie back to safety. Although the air temperature was only 22° at the time, neither Mr. Perriello nor Sassy sustained any serious injury.

In the January 5 ceremony, which was arranged by the League, Mr. Perriello was lauded for his bravery by League officials, Mayor Jim Moran, and City Manager Mrs. Vola Lawson. The ceremony was attended by many other city officials, members of the League's Board of Directors, Shelter staff and others. The event was extensively covered by the area media, including channels 4, 5, 7 and 9, *The Washington Post*, and the Alexandria *Gazette-Packet*.



Sassy, the lucky dog who was pulled from the frigid Potomac by a TWA employee, poses with her owner, Carol Hallene. Sassy's rescuer, David Perriello, displays a plaque he received from the League. Other participants at the January 5 ceremony were (from left) Jack Steele, President of the AWLA Board of Directors; Ray Cline, TWA Station Manager for Washington Operations; Mrs. Vola Lawson, City Manager; and Mayor Jim Moran.

Don't Miss the St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show!

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria again will sponsor the Annual St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show. This year's event will be held on Saturday, March 10 (the Saturday prior to St. Paddy's Day) at 10:15 a.m. at Market Square, 301 King Street, Old Town Alexandria.

This is a *FUN* dog show, and whether your dog is a purebreed or a Heinz-57, whether or not he knows "sit" from "come," whether he's big or small, he's invited to participate. This year we will have 15 categories to include the dog with the most spots, the dog with the longest tail, the biggest dog, the smallest dog, the "most Irish dog," and many others.

There will be awards for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each category,

and every dog entered will receive a certificate from the League. A photographer will be on hand to take pictures of dogs and their owners, and of course coffee, soft drinks and doughnuts will be available. One of the highlights of the morning will be the presentation of five homeless dogs from the Shelter for whom adoption applications will be accepted.

After the Fun Dog Show everyone, including the dogs, is invited to march with the League in the St. Patrick's Day Parade down King Street. The parade begins at 12 noon.

So if you've never been to the St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show, mark your calendars *now* for Saturday, March 10. You're in for a memorable experience!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Canine hip dysplasia
- Grooming your pet
- New Animal Wardens
- Area animals get 'photo op' with Santa

Causes, Diagnosis and Treatment of Canine Hip Dysplasia

by Don S. Wilson, DVM
Alexandria Animal Hospital



Canine hip dysplasia (CHD) refers to an abnormal developmental condition present in the coxofemoral (hip) joint of dogs. The condition most commonly affects large breed dogs, *i.e.*, shepherds, retrievers and giant breeds.

Although hip dysplasia has been diagnosed in the cat it is uncommon.

CHD begins to show itself during the rapid growth period from birth till about two years of age. During this time, the hip undergoes rapid growth along with the rest of the musculoskeletal system; however, the abnormal growth in the hip joint results in a hip socket that is malformed, too shallow, and, consequently, a loose joint. When the dog is young the condition is usually not a severe handicap. The symptoms of CHD are most pronounced in dogs over six years of age.

Causes of CHD. Genetics is probably the most significant cause of CHD. There is good evidence that the condition is inheritable, and that the incidence of CHD can be reduced by careful breeding programs that do not mate dogs afflicted with the condition.

Second, research indicates that nutrition plays a role in the condition. It is generally believed that there is a relationship between overfeeding and supplementing the large breed dogs and the incidence of canine hip dysplasia. Feeding diets that promote more rapid growth and increased size, especially in susceptible breeds, is thought to influence the incidence, age of onset and severity of the dysplasia. The puppy should be fed a high-quality balanced ration to allow for normal growth without overfeeding or oversupplementing the puppy to enhance growth rate or size of the adult dog.

Symptoms. The symptoms associated with CHD are variable and depend on the severity of the condition, age of the patient and whether the symptom is acute or chronic in nature. The most common complaint in the younger dog is lameness in the rear limbs following strenuous exercise or play. In dogs over six years old, the condition is more insidious and the symptoms may include abnormalities in gait, lameness, inactivity, trouble getting up from the floor, difficulty walking up

the stairs, or other subtle symptoms associated with chronic pain. If any of the above symptoms are evident, the dog should be examined by your veterinarian.

Diagnosis and treatment. The diagnosis of CHD is made by physical examination, with emphasis on the musculoskeletal system, x-rays, and possibly blood tests to rule out other causes of the problems.

At this point, if the veterinarian is suspicious of CHD, he or she may recommend x-ray studies of the hip joints. These usually require heavy sedation or general anesthesia, since the patient must lie on his back with legs extended as far as possible to accomplish the best x-rays. This procedure is safe and not painful to the patient.

The veterinarian then can diagnose the presence of CHD, and grade the severity of the malformation and arthritis present and suggest the best course of treatment for individual patients.

Once CHD has been diagnosed, the

Vet's Corner

type and extent of treatment must be determined. Most patients can be managed conservatively; only the most debilitated require surgical intervention to alleviate pain.

The cornerstone of conservative medical management revolves around controlling stress on the hip joint by decreasing and controlling the patient's weight. Many patients can return to pain-free, near normal behavior by reducing their body weight by 10 to 15 percent. Once the weight loss has occurred, most patients benefit by moderate exercise like walking, which improves muscle tone of the rear legs and pelvis, allowing the muscles to absorb some of the stresses usually placed on the hip joint. The weight control and exercise program should start only after consultation with your veterinarian.

In conjunction with these treatments, certain drugs—especially non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin—can be used to control the inflammation and pain associated with CHD. *Only drugs recommended by your veterinarian should be given.* Dogs cannot tolerate many of the human anti-arthritis drugs, and some are poisonous to dogs.

If medical management fails to provide relief from the pain and debility of CHD, then surgical intervention may be

indicated.

Accepted surgical procedures fall into three basic categories: removal of the femoral head, remodeling of the pelvis and hip socket, and complete replacement of the hip socket and head of the femur (thigh bone) with an artificial joint.

Modern veterinary medicine has made progress in the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, and conscientious breeders have decreased the incidence in some breeds. However, a great deal of work remains to be done, especially in the areas of public education, to eliminate this condition.

Sgt. West Reassigned

Sgt. Kathy West was recently reassigned from the Police Department's Special Operations Division to the Patrol Division. Sgt. West was the City's project officer for the Animal Shelter, and was the liaison between the City and the Animal Welfare League.

As a former Acting Director of the Shelter, Sgt. West was extremely knowledgeable about sheltering and animal control activities, and provided valuable assistance to the League during the Shelter's transition from City to League operation. While we know we will see less of Kathy, we still hope she occasionally will stop by the Shelter to say hello.

Good luck, Kathy, and thanks for everything!

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria SPOTLIGHT ON ANIMALS is published four times a year and has a circulation of 14,000. Address all correspondence to The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, P.O. Box 20050, Alexandria, VA 22320-1050.

Copyright 1990



Ungroomed Is Unloved

by Karen M. Carroll

Jackie Barchesky, owner and proprietor of For Pet's Sake on Quaker Lane in Alexandria, feels strongly that caring about a companion animal is reflected by attention to the pet's needs for regular grooming. A graduate of the Maryland School of Dog Grooming in Silver Spring, Maryland, Jackie recently shared some pointers on grooming for the benefit of *Spotlight* readers.

It's important, Jackie says, to accustom dogs early to a grooming routine in order to train them to accept the experience. She adds that a good combing and brushing twice a week, with a professional grooming consisting of a bath, dip, and trim up to every six to eight weeks, should keep even long-haired dogs looking and feeling their best.

The combing should be done gently, and you should be able to comb easily from the skin out to the end of the coat. This will discourage mats and stimulate and distribute oils which will keep the coat from becoming dry and dull. One caution: mats eventually pull the animal's skin, causing itching and trapped moisture and leading to serious skin problems. A small expenditure of effort day to day will spare your pet discomfort and distress and save you an expensive veterinarian's or groomer's bill.

Another aspect of grooming which deserves attention is proper attention to your dog's paws. Because most dogs spend their time mostly on carpet and grass, as opposed to the terrain of the wild, their paws need regular attention. Nails must be cut or they eventually will curve back on the paw, cause the toes to spread and cripple the feet. Because there are blood vessels in the nails, you must exercise great care when working in this area. The hair between the pads must also be trimmed to prevent moisture retention and fungus growth. Veterinarians as well as professional groomers will perform these services at a minimal cost.

Grooming should be viewed not as a chore, but as an opportunity for the companion animal and human to enjoy a physical interaction which furthers reinforces their bonds, as well as the leadership position of the human. Twenty minutes is a good average length for a session. Talk to your pet and praise him for cooperation while you're working. Break up the grooming session with a brief, gentle massage or play period so that your pet will be conditioned to receive grooming as a pleasant and stress-free experience.

Finally, a word to those whose favorite friend is a cat: Even shorthairs benefit from regular brushing. This will remove loose hair and stimulate their skin, as well as eliminate hair that would other-

continued on page 4



Police Lt. Harry Lane (front row, left) presents warden's badge to Brenda Purvis, as Ruth Bauer receives her new badge from Chief of Police Gary Leonard. Looking on from back row, from left: Deputy Chief of Police John Streeter, Shelter Director Guy Bush, Warden Julius Campbell and Warden Roger Townsend.

New Animal Wardens Appointed

In a recent ceremony, Alexandria's two newest Animal Wardens were presented with their badges. Ruth Bauer and Brenda Purvis had been appointed to their positions by the City Manager, and were sworn in by the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Ms. Bauer has 13 years of experience working with animals and is a recent graduate of the Animal Control Officers' training program, sponsored by the Humane Society of the United States. Ms. Purvis has over 10 years' experience in animal sheltering and animal control; prior to coming to Alexandria she was Supervisor of Cruelty Investigations for the Washington Humane Society.

These two appointments increased the number of Animal Wardens to four, which

is the most the City has ever had. They will join Wardens Julius Campbell and Roger Townsend in enforcing the City's animal control ordinances, and investigating animal cruelty cases. These four Wardens now provide Alexandria with one of the most qualified and experienced Animal Warden teams in the area.

Vice Mayor Visits Shelter



Vice Mayor Patsy Ticer paid a visit to the Shelter on January 10. She noted that she was "very pleased" with the outstanding work performed there. After touring the facilities, she was presented with one of the League's new sweatshirts, whose caption reads, "Love Comes in All Sizes." At left is caretaker Linda Johnson.

VIRGINIA-MARYLAND VETERINARY EMERGENCY SERVICE

2660 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/ 823-3601

Treating small animals and exotics.

* Clip and save in case of emergency *

Area Pets Get 'Photo Op' with Santa Claus

by Ben Cross

The League wishes to express its gratitude to Carlos Mejas, owner of the Old Town School for Dogs, and his staff for generously donating their time to making the second annual "Pet Portraits with Santa" a smashing success which resulted in a \$5,400 contribution to the League. The show was held on December 2-3 at the school, which is located at 529 Oronoco Street in Alexandria.

Carlos began planning for the event in September, taking on the task of advertising for it as well. Carol Harrison, a commercial photographer, was contacted and was happy to give two days of her time to be the resident photographer. Cheryl Levite, a decorator with Warehouse Antiques, volunteered to set up the background for the photos. Carlos also arranged to get all the film at a discounted price and found a packaging company to put the completed packets together for the patrons.

The show was booked two weeks in advance, with sittings every five minutes from 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. both days. According to Carlos, there was such an overwhelming response by the public that there was a waiting list for those who could not get an appointment. Jerri Davis and Joannie Ansheles were a great help in organizing all of the necessary paperwork and checking people in for their sittings.

Carlos and his staff spent the two days working with the animals, using squeaky toys to get the animals' attention for the pictures. Carlos also had ribbons and bows for the animals to wear, and he donated chew toys that were given to them as Christmas presents. Howard Bontz, Joe Cannon, Jerry Hales and John Legge



Carlos Mejas, owner of the Old Town School for Dogs, presents a check for \$5,400 to Adoption Officer Becky Nelson.

posed as Santa for the pictures. These men worked very hard and did a wonderful job.

Thanks to all of the help we received, this year's show was a wonderful success. Plans are already under way for next year's show, which we hope will be even bigger and better.

Grooming

from page 3

wise contribute to hairballs or be shed on furniture. Most cats enjoy the attention, and it makes a pleasant interlude for both you and your pet.

Dog Dies Unnecessarily

It has happened again right here in Alexandria—a dog wearing a choke collar was left unattended for a short time. The loose end of the collar became hooked on a fixed object. When the dog tried to free himself by pulling away, the choke collar tightened around his neck; this further frightened the dog, and he pulled more and more, all the time tightening the collar until the dog finally strangled.

Never, under any circumstances, leave a choke collar on a dog while he is alone—even for a few minutes. The choke collar is designed as a training and control device, and it should be removed immediately after the training session or exercise. Always view the chain link choke collar as a noose around your dog's neck.

Cold Weather Pointer

With the snow and ice season upon us, pet owners are cautioned to check pets' paws for salt and chemicals and rinse off any residue. These substances burn, particularly if ice has lodged between the pads and caused cuts or abrasions.



For Pet's Sake

PROF. ALL BREED DOG GROOMING
RETAIL SUPPLIES

1529 N. Quaker Ln. By Appointment
Alexandria, VA 931-2600

**Animal Welfare League
of Alexandria, Va., Inc.
P. O. Box 20050
Alexandria, VA 22320-1050**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Alexandria, Va.
Permit No. 243

