

Spotlight on animals



The Newsletter of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Winter 1997

Cats: Teaching Them to Love the Great Indoors

Now, more than ever, your cat needs to stay indoors to protect his health and well-being. In January, two cats—one domestic and the other feral—tested positive for rabies in the City of Alexandria (see story, p. 3). The rabies virus attacks the central nervous system, and is a killer: Rabies can be prevented, but there is no cure. Any warm-blooded animal can become a rabies victim.

Animals suffering from rabies behave unpredictably, sometimes aggressively. There is no sure way to protect a pet allowed outdoors without supervision from exposure to rabies. Even a vaccinated pet who is exposed to the disease must undergo a strict quarantine for several months; for unvaccinated pets, the prognosis is bleak.

The League believes strongly that our busy, congested world is not a safe place for an unsupervised pet. Outdoor cats are particularly vulnerable (see box at right). Here at the League, we see firsthand on a daily basis the tragedies that can befall pets allowed outside. Sadly, the life



Above, a cat who's learned to love the good life—indoors.

expectancy of the average indoor/outdoor cat is only a fraction of that of strictly indoor cats.

Can your cat be content with an indoor life? Absolutely! A kitten who is raised indoors will have little or no interest in the world outside; your house will be his territory. Indoor/outdoor adult cats can be successfully converted. All you need is pa-

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Eleven Important Reasons To Keep Your Cat Inside

*By Andrea Tasi, VMD
Kingstowne Cat Clinic*

- 1. Feline Leukemia Virus.** Although a vaccine exists to help protect against this immunosuppressive and cancer-causing virus, it does not give 100 percent protection. A strictly indoor cat has essentially no risk of catching this common—and fatal—disease.
- 2. Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (Feline AIDS).** Bite wounds from infected cats are the main mode of transmitting this deadly virus. Currently no vaccine exists to help protect cats, so all outdoor cats are at risk.
- 3. Fleas and ticks.** All cats that go outside, however briefly, can pick up these irritating, sometimes health-threatening parasites. There have been great advances in flea and tick control, but the best control is just to avoid the problem entirely.
- 4. People.** Unfortunately, not all folks are cat lovers. Many cats have been shot with BB or pellet guns, or suffered some other purposeful abuse by unkind people.

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Helping Your Pet Cope with Arthritis



by Peter Farrell, DVM
Del Ray Animal Hospital

Arthritis in pets is very similar to the disease in people—a painful condition that usually becomes worse, even crippling, with time. There are several different types of arthritis, but by far the most common type is osteoarthritis. There are numerous causes, but all lead to pain and swelling of one or multiple joints. It's more common in dogs than in cats because of their larger body size. While arthritis cannot be "cured," it is sometimes possible to prevent further deterioration, or at least slow it down.

The process usually starts when the two bones that form a joint begin to move against each other abnormally, due to a congenital problem (as in hip dysplasia), as a result of trauma (torn ligaments), or from problems arising in the cartilage of joints as an animal grows rapidly. The result, however, is always a painful proliferation of bone at the joint as the body tries to prevent the abnormal motion.

Far and away, the most common symptom of arthritis is limping. It's usually worse after exercise. A pet might play normally and then, after resting, have a lot of trouble getting up. After a few steps, he will usually "loosen up" and begin to walk normally again. Sometimes, an animal suffering chronic pain will show a change in personality,

becoming reclusive, inactive, or even aggressive.

The ideal solution to arthritis is to make the abnormal joint normal again. This usually involved surgery, and its success depends on the joint involved and the underlying cause of the instability. In the case of hip dysplasia, there are three or four surgical procedures available, depending largely on age and body weight. Fully grown, large-breed dogs will usually do best with a total hip replacement. The surgery is difficult and expensive, but the overall results are impressive. After healing, the dog can resume normal levels of activity and is pain free for the rest of his life. Smaller and younger animals with severe hip problems can often be treated with less aggressive surgery. Milder cases of hip dysplasia that don't show signs of pain can be treated with medications and "lifestyle" alterations.

A common cause of arthritis in the knees of dogs (and less commonly, cats) is the tearing of one of several ligaments in the knee that keeps the upper and lower bones properly aligned. It commonly tears in animals that overextend their knees, and is more common in animals that are older and overweight. The overextension leads to severe arthritis and chronic pain, since the joint begins to wear abnormally. Most animals need to have the ligament repaired surgically to minimize the progression of arthritis.

In younger dogs, abnormalities of cartilage development can lead to joint pain and arthritis. Cartilage forms a "cap" on the top of bones at the joint. The cap is very smooth and slippery, allowing joints to bend and flex without pain. In some large breed dogs, rapid growth can cause little flaps of cartilage to develop in the joints. As the joint moves, the flap gets pinched and causes a lot of pain. Without surgical correction, arthritis frequently results.

Even with the best of care, animals, like people, will sometimes develop arthritis. At times the underlying cause cannot be corrected, or is corrected too late. In such cases we need to help our

pets deal with the pain and keep it from getting worse. It is very important to control the pet's weight. Arthritis in heavy animals gets worse much faster than in thin pets. Talk to your vet about a weight loss program if necessary. Avoiding traumatic exercise can also slow down the disease. Swimming is probably the best exercise for arthritic dogs. Make sure that arthritic pets have a warm, well-padded place to sleep.

Numerous medications are available to control the pain and swelling caused by arthritis, including aspirin and aspirin-type products. These drugs are usually well tolerated, but can have side effects in some pets. Extreme caution is warranted for cats—*never* medicate a cat without discussing it with your veterinarian first. Even dogs can experience problems with these drugs, so seek your veterinarian's guidance. Used properly, however, they can greatly improve the quality of an arthritic animal's life.

In recent years, new medications have become available. Some claim to provide ingredients that repair and protect damaged cartilage. Others claim to promote the production of the slippery fluid within joints. Controlled studies of these treatments are lacking, although they do seem to help some patients and I have not seen them hurt anyone. Again, discuss their use with a veterinarian.

Some vets are trained in the use of acupuncture. Animals usually accept treatment without discomfort; many respond favorably and rarely do they suffer any side effects. Speak with your vet about referrals to a veterinary acupuncturist.

There are numerous products being sold to treat arthritis that are of dubious value. Most are ineffective and some can be dangerous. Please get sound veterinary advice before pursuing unconventional therapies.

Unfortunately, pets sometimes develop painful diseases as they age. As owners, it is our responsibility to recognize that our friends need help and to get them the care they deserve. ■

Happy to the Max(well)



"We adopted Maxwell in October of 1995, when he was 10 years old. He settled in to our family without much trauma, and even accepted our 16-year-old cat and a 15-year-old dog. He and the dog became friends and enjoyed snuggling together on the rug, occasionally checking each other's breath to see who had had a treat recently.

"Maxwell has accepted being an indoor cat. He has a favorite perch on a couch with a window view for watching the neighborhood.

"One benefit from his becoming an indoor cat is that he's lost weight because he doesn't get treats from the neighbors. He weighed in at 22 pounds when we got him, and is down to 18 pounds now—although he will certainly let you know when his food bowl is empty! He is a happy elder statesman who likes to butt heads with you—but always in a dignified manner."

—Linda Van Reuth

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

For advertising information call (703) 820-6639.

Keep Cats Inside

from page 1

5. **Dogs.** Not all dogs are cat fans, either. While many cats can be good escape artists or put up a good defense, too often cats wind up being injured or killed.
6. **Automobiles.** Being hit by even a slow-moving car can result in serious injury or death. Even a parked car can be dangerous, as cats can climb into the undercarriage and then be maimed or killed by the engine fan when the car is started.
7. **Intestinal parasites.** Exposure to soil contaminated by other animals' droppings, or ingesting infected rodents or birds, can infest your cat with parasites, some of them infectious to human beings—particularly children or folks with weakened immune systems.
8. **Toxic substances.** The outside world is filled with dangerous substances: anti-freeze, motor oil, mouse/rat poisons, lawn chemicals, etc. You can "cat-proof" your house, but you can't "cat-proof" your neighborhood.
9. **Cat fight wounds.** If even a healthy cat bites your cat, pain, swelling, and abscesses are common.
10. **Rabies.** Cats have a much higher chance of exposure to rabies when allowed outside to interact with wildlife.
11. **Extremes of environment.** I have treated cats for heat-stroke and frostbite! Don't bet that your cat will always be able to find a place to get out of the weather, especially if he wanders away from his normal home territory.

RABIES ALERT

Since January 1 there have been six cases of confirmed rabies in the City of Alexandria. Two involved cats and four involved racoons. The League, in coordination with City health officials, urges pet owners to ensure that their pets' rabies vaccinations are up to date. To assist the community, the League set up six reduced-cost rabies clinics in early February. A Rabies Information Hotline was established to provide the most current information about the outbreak and about the rabies clinics. Over 10,000 flyers were posted throughout the City and in residents' doors to educate them about the disease and offer advice on protecting themselves and their pets.

It is important to keep pets confined to the home or on a leash when outside. Call the League *immediately* if you notice a stray animal on or around your property, or if you are aware of any group of feral cats. *Do not attempt to go near any stray or dead animal*, or any animal acting strangely, and teach your children to avoid these situations as well.

Symptoms of rabies can include lethargy, staggering, salivating, or aggressive behavior. This deadly disease is caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system. It is spread from infected animals to humans and other animals through a bite or by saliva entering an open wound, the eyes, nose, or mouth. Only warm-blooded animals can contract rabies; it is prevalent locally in racoons, skunks, foxes, and bats.

If you are bitten by any animal it is important to do the following:

- Don't panic.
- Wash the wound with soap and water, and contact your physician immediately.
- Call your local Animal Control agency to capture the animal and report the bite.

For more information, call the League at (703) 838-4775 and request a brochure on rabies.

Wish List

Your donations of the following new or gently used items will help us care for animals at the Shelter. If you'd like to donate any of these items, please drop them off at 910 S. Payne St. or call (703) 838-4775 to arrange for a pickup.

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Pet Portraits By Michael to Return in June

Have your pet's portrait done and help homeless and injured animals at the same time. By popular request, pet photographer Michael Joseph will return to our area this June to take professional photographs of your pet. He will donate all sitting fees to the League.

The dates for this event are still to be determined, but you can call 1-800-822-1379 to receive more information.



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Coming This Spring—Two 'Can't Miss' League Events!

2nd Annual Doggie Bone Hunt And Easter Parade

Come one, come all! Hop into spring at this fun-filled event! Co-sponsored by the League and the Olde Towne School for Dogs, the Doggie Bone Hunt and Easter Parade offers something for everyone!



- When:** Saturday, March 29, 9:30–11:30 a.m. Onsite registration and packet pick-up: 8:45–9:30 a.m. (Rain date: Saturday, April 5)
- Where:** Jones Point Park (at the south end of Royal Street in Old Town)
- Activities:** You and your dog can hunt for Easter bones (actually dog biscuits donated by IAMS), participate in fun games, watch an obedience demonstration, and join in the Easter parade.
- Dress Code:** We encourage everyone to wear their Easter "fun finery"—such as Easter bonnets, spring clothes, etc.
- Special Appearance:** Meet Big Dog, the official mascot for Big Dog Sportswear, who will also provide special bags for collecting Easter bones.
- Smile!** Have your dog's photo taken with the Easter Bunny or with Big Dog.
- Great Raffle Prizes:** Gift certificates from Lone Star Steak House and Saloon, Bullfeathers Restaurant; the Seaport Inn; Record Mart; Curzon Hill Antiques (Alexandria); a certificate for free spay/neuter surgery; or one of two cruises on the Potomac River from the Potomac Riverboat Company.
- Registration:** The fee is \$10. Proceeds go to help homeless and injured animals. Pre-registration is encouraged. The first 250 pre-registrants will receive a bandanna for their dog.
- How to Register:** Registration forms are available at the Alexandria Animal Shelter, Olde Towne School for Dogs, and local veterinary hospitals. To have a form mailed to you, or to learn more about any of the League's special events, call our Special Events Hotline at (703) 519-1230, or Megan Brooks, our Event Coordinator, at (703) 838-4387.

11th Annual St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show

Please join us for this annual event! Join hundreds of other pet owners and enter your dog in one of ten hilarious categories. Afterward, you and your dog can help lead the 158-unit St. Patrick's Day Parade, which Chairman Pat Troy of the Ballyshanners promises will be "the best parade ever."

- When:** Saturday, March 8; festivities begin at 10:30 a.m. and end around noon
- Where:** Market Square in Old Town
- How Much:** It's free to everyone!
- The Show:** The categories in this just-for-fun competition include Dog/Owner Lookalike, Best Irish Costume, Most Unusual Tail, Smallest Adult Dog, Largest Dog, and many more. Judge Daniel O'Flaherty will be on hand to pick the winners, and our very special guest emcee will be John Harter, popular WJLA-TV7 personality.
- Prizes:** Ribbons will be awarded to first-through fifth-place winners in each category.
- Take-Home Memento:** Every canine competitor will receive a complimentary certificate, and a calligrapher will be on hand to inscribe it, free of charge.
- Say Cheese!** Have your dog's photograph taken with a leprechaun!
- Wait—There's More:**



- Dogs adopted from any shelter will be invited onstage to receive a special "Shelter Graduate" ribbon.
- Meet several Shelter dogs who need good homes—including "Dimples," pictured at left.
- A special activity for kids and a new, fun game for all pet owners.
- Refreshments will be available throughout the event.

- Raffle Prizes:** Gift certificates from Curzon Hill Antiques (Alexandria), Bilbo Baggins, 219 Restaurant, and Chadwick's; a first-aid kit for your pet from Pet Sage; and a certificate for free spay/neuter surgery for your pet.



The Fledglings



Every year, during the early summer months, literally thousands of baby birds are sent from their nests by their mothers. Although this seems cruel, it is part of the process of teaching baby birds (called "fledglings") to fly. Equipped with small feathers and short tail feathers, these babies do not look as if they're ready to fly, but they are. Under the tutelage of their parents, it takes about two days before they are airborne.

However, this time of year is very upsetting for people observing this annual occurrence. We want to help! Many fledglings appear to be injured, as they flop around on the ground with their wings spread out—a very disconcerting sight. Many people, in their desire to assist nature, do the wrong thing—they pick up the fledgling, take it inside, and try to feed it. The correct thing to do, which goes against all our instincts, is still the best: leave the fledgling alone.

There are, however, some things you can do to give the baby bird the best chance possible. First, when you see what appears to be an injured baby, go outside and listen. If you hear an adult bird above making a huge racket, that's mom, and she's telling you to stay away.



At this point, it is acceptable for an adult, using gloves, to gently pick up the young bird and check it over for wounds or injuries. If the bird appears fine, place it back where you found it. It is acceptable to put the young bird in a safer location, perhaps under a bush, as long as it is within a 30-foot radius of where you originally found it. It is a myth that once you handle a bird the mother will abandon it.

If you find an injured bird or fledgling it should be taken immediately to the local animal shelter for evaluation. If the bird can be rehabilitated, the shelter will send it to a certified wildlife rehabilitator. This should be done only if there is an obvious wound or broken leg or wing.

Once you are aware of the fledgling, keep an eye on it; keep children away and alert neighbors who allow their cats outside to keep them indoors for the next few days. This will allow the adult bird to continue the training at hand.

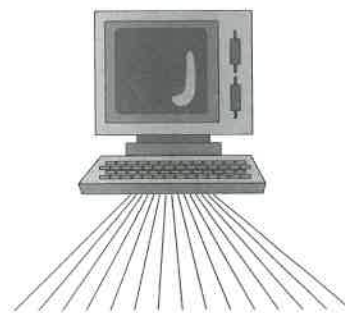
Many people ask, Why can't wildlife rehabilitators teach the fledglings to fly? Answer: The youngsters have a much better chance of survival out in the wild with their parents, as you keep a protective watch. What takes mom a few days to teach would take a rehabilitator two months, and put the young bird in a more stressful, unnatural environment.

However, there are situations that warrant immediate human intervention. If you see a bird that has lost its equilibrium, is bleeding, cold to the touch, or being picked on by other birds, contact your local animal shelter for advice.

Please do not ever hesitate to call your shelter staff for any questions regarding wildlife—we're here to help.

Remember, for domestic and wild animals in need of emergency assistance, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria has staff on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our number is (703) 838-4775.

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



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

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

Business:

Tue., Thu., Sat.	8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Mon., Wed., Fri.	8 a.m.–8 p.m.
Sun.	12 noon–4 p.m.

Animal Visiting:

Tue., Thu., Sat.	11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Mon., Wed., Fri.	11 a.m.–7:30 p.m.
Sun.	12 noon–4 p.m.

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

Some Important Reminders for Owners and Pet Sitters

Scenario 1: A golden retriever and a cocker spaniel were picked up by Animal Control just before Thanksgiving. Both were wearing collars and tags, but when we tried to reach their owners, no one answered. Soon after the dogs were picked up, we got a phone call from the people who had been watching the two dogs while their owners were on vacation. It seemed someone had opened the back gate and the two dogs had wandered out. While all evidence seemed to indicate that these neighbors had every right to reclaim the dogs, they had no proof that they could do so under Virginia State law. The owners had not left their phone number with their neighbors, and unfortunately, the two dogs had to spend Thanksgiving at the Shelter.

Scenario 2: A woman had asked her neighbor to watch her cat—a strictly indoor kitty—while she went on a quick business trip. The cat was very shy and not used to strangers. On the first evening of the woman's trip, the cat panicked when the neighbor entered and bolted out the front door and into the path of an oncoming car. The seriously injured cat was taken to a local emergency veterinary hospital. Many questions arose, such as who was going to pay the costs, would the owner even want surgery done, or would the owner possibly opt for euthanasia? None of these questions could be answered because the owner could not be reached and had not made any prior arrangements for medical care.

These true stories illustrate what might happen when someone else cares for our pets. Whenever we must go away, we still want to ensure that our pets are as comfortable as possible during our absence, and many of us choose to have someone come in to watch them rather than send them to a boarding kennel. Whomever we choose to care for our pets, there are a few things you should cover with them before you leave town.

- Be sure to leave a phone number where you can be reached.
- Leave a letter enabling your pet sitter to authorize medical treatment for your pet, or to pick up your pet from an animal shelter, and giving them permission to be in your home (see form). In case of an emergency, you may want to set some guidelines as to the dollar amount you will authorize for expenses, or perhaps simply say "basic sustaining care" until you can be reached.
- Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with identification tags—even if your

- pet is a strictly indoor cat.
- Leave a written record of the age, sex, and breed of each of your pets. Also include the expiration date of his/her rabies vaccination, as well as the hospital/veterinarian who gave the vaccination.
- Leave the name, address, and number of your regular veterinarian, as well as the closest emergency hospital.
- Note any medical problems your pet might have, such as allergies to bee stings or certain medications. (An emergency hospital would not have these records.)

- The name of a back-up caretaker in case your planned caretaker has an emergency and can't care for your pets. Also, you may wish to jot down notes for your caretaker as to:
 - where cleaning products are, in case of accidents;
 - where in the neighborhood your dog is allowed to play;
 - your cat's favorite toys and place to be scratched.

The League strongly recommends that dogs not be walked off leash without their owners present, even where this is allowed by law.

— Clip and save for future use —

Pet Sitter's Information Form

Pet owner's name _____

I can be reached at () _____

Backup number for a relative () _____

Veterinarian: _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

Emergency Animal Hospital closest to my home: _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

Pet's name _____ Age _____ Breed _____ Sex _____

His/her rabies vaccination expires: _____ It was given by: _____

Special comments about my pet: _____

Backup caretaker: _____ Phone () _____

I, _____ authorize my pet sitter,

_____, to be responsible for taking my pet, _____ to the vet for any medical problem. I will be responsible for the bill. If my pet is taken to an animal shelter, I authorize my pet sitter, _____ to sign for my pet and I will be responsible for all fines paid by my pet sitter. I also authorize my pet sitter to be in my home for the purpose of caring for my animals.

signature

date

This form should be notarized. Without the above information, many veterinarians will not treat an animal that an owner has not agreed to be financially responsible for. Also, according to Virginia law, an animal shelter can release a stray pet only to the owner, not a caretaker. If a pet sitter has this agreement, most veterinarians and animal shelters will be able to deal directly with the pet sitter.

Pet Therapy Program Helps Patients, Shut-Ins

By Larry Frommer

For one magical moment, those afflicted by age or disability or loneliness are able to rise from their circumstances, thanks to a very special group of League volunteers.

Dogs and cats can achieve a powerful bond with the elderly and infirm. Whether because they offer unconditional love, a keen sensibility to human infirmities, or their own desire for attention and affection, pets bring a unique joy to those who need it most.

This is why a rapidly growing number of health care and nursing facilities have incorporated pet therapy into their agendas. The League, for example, works with five such centers to bring volunteers and their four-legged pets to visit with patients and residents.

Not every pet qualifies. As the League's Volunteer Coordinator, Megan Brooks, explains, "We look for a variety of things—how well the owner can control and communicate with the pet, how well the pet conducts itself in public settings, and the temperament of the pet. We look for tolerant, easygoing, people-oriented animals."

All pets accepted for the program must be current on rabies and distemper vaccinations; dogs require a recent heartworm test and cats must test negative for feline leukemia and Feline AIDS.

Pets are formally evaluated at a local long-term care facility and closely observed for their reactions to linoleum floors, walkers and wheelchairs, other dogs, and people. The animals undergo a temperament test to ensure they will enjoy the interaction with the residents and adapt well to strangers and new environments.

In addition, dogs must pass the American Kennel Club's "good citi-



zenship test," which includes, among things, ensuring they are able to sit and lie down on command.

Orientations are also required for volunteers, who are given valuable printed guidelines and rules related to the pet therapy program. Once a pet qualifies, the owner selects one of the facilities and arranges an initial visit without the pet.

The facilities differ in their approach to pet therapy, some being more structured than others; also, some encourage one-on-one visits, while others prefer a group setting. Pets have different comfort zones as well—some prefer one-on-one environments while others are happier in groups.

The "constant" in the equation, however, is commitment on the part of the owners to visit regularly. Residents may no longer be able to own a pet but their love for them is as strong as ever. They often become attached to their four-legged guests and look forward to the visits. If a pet they expect to show fails to drop by, they are disappointed.

To date, 30 League volunteers, 36 dogs, and six cats have qualified for pet therapy. The next pet therapy evaluation session is scheduled for early spring.

If you would like to know more about this highly rewarding program, please contact Megan Brooks at (703) 838-4387.

Join Us May 4 for 'Bring 'Em Back Day'

Did you adopt your pet from the League? If so, you're cordially invited to our 3rd Annual Bring 'Em Back Day on Sunday, May 4. We invite all dogs adopted from our Shelter to an afternoon of fun. We'd love to see photographs of cats or other small graduates.

The event will be from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and will feature dog demonstrations, local vendors, refreshments for both you and your pet, and a chance to share your success story. We will be awarding prizes in categories such as Oldest Graduate, Longest Distance Traveled to the Reunion, Owner/Dog Look-alike, and more.

This is also a great opportunity to bring your friends down to visit the Shelter. Who knows? Maybe next year they'll attend Bring 'Em Back Day with their own adopted friend.

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*.



Extending the Circle of Compassion

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For more information contact:

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Traveling with Pets:

Part 1 of 4: Flying with Pets in the Cabin

By Larry Frommer

Travel with a friend on your next flight. Your best friend, for example.

You can fly almost anywhere in the United States and your dog or cat can come along for the ride, provided you meet the precise specifications of the airlines on which you book.

Of the major U.S. domestic airlines, American, America West, Continental, Delta, Northwest, TWA, United, and USAIR are all pet friendly. Only Southwest Airlines and ValuJet don't allow pets in the cabin.

While airlines welcoming pets may have different regulations, they share three basic criteria: (1) Animals traveling in the cabin are considered carry-on luggage, so they must be small enough to travel in a kennel that can fit under the seat in front of the passenger; (2) pets can-

not be removed from their kennel during a flight; and (3) because domestic carriers permit a very limited number of pets per flight, they must be booked in advance. Individual airlines may have additional requirements, such as veterinary health certification or minimum age of the animal.

Traveling with a pet can be physically and psychologically stressful for the animal, because the animal is abruptly moved from its normal habitat and exposed to a totally strange routine and environment. But many pet owners enjoy consistent success traveling with pets, whether by car or by air. Here are a few tips:

- Start your pet young so that travel becomes a part of its routine. Temperament and adaptability of the pet are key to whether he is a "happy traveler."
- To help make your pet's flight less stressful, see your vet before the trip to confirm your pet is in good health. The effect of sedatives on an animal at high altitudes is unpredictable so they are not advised; but your vet may prescribe a motion sickness pill to head off any ill effects.
- Accustom your pet to its kennel in advance. Our dog has flown in the cabin several times. A week before boarding, we begin a daily rou-

tine of coaxing her to spend some time in her kennel so it is familiar territory during flight. It helps to place a familiar toy in the kennel.

• Ensure that there is room in the kennel for your pet to move freely, whether standing or lying down. If the kennel size required by the airline is too restrictive, the animal should not fly in the cabin. Also, if you don't have a kennel that meets the airline's specifications, the carrier probably has them available for purchase at check-in.

• Before the flight, exercise your pet as much as possible, as he will be confined not only during the flight but at both terminals.

• Make sure your pet's kennel is secure under the seat in front of you and that the bottom of the carrier contains absorbent material in case of accidents. If it is to be a long flight, carry food and water for him.

FAA regulations prohibit removing your pet from his kennel during the flight, but some carriers will allow you to hold the kennel in your lap except during takeoff and landing. Being close to you—even if confined in the kennel—may give your pet a certain sense of security.

P.S.—Though pets are categorized as carry-on luggage, they don't travel free, as your flight bag would. Airline pet fares range from \$50 to \$60 one way.

Next issue: Pets Traveling in the Airline Cargo Hold

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The following area veterinarians are proud to sponsor this ad in support of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria as it commemorates 51 years of helping animals.

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- Del Ray Animal Hospital (739-0000)
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- 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)

Please protect your pet during the cold weather months by keeping him safe and warm. Regularly inspect paws for ice and salt, and keep all animals away from antifreeze, which is deadly when ingested.



**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.

Thank You!

The League is grateful to all our friends who generously responded to our annual Christmas Appeal. Your donations will be applied to our adoption, pet therapy, and humane education programs, as well as other programs to help the injured and homeless animals at the Alexandria Animal Shelter.



On October 17, the League and its supporters gathered for a gala celebration of our 50th year of helping animals in Alexandria. Many, many thanks to the record crowd of 300 friends and League supporters who came to help us commemorate this very special milestone in our history, to our wonderful sponsors, and to all the local artists and businesses who donated prizes for our very first Silent Auction—which was a huge success. We, and the animals at the Shelter, thank you all!

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!

A Shelter Success Story



Bailey the Bulldog and his new friend, Sambuca

“Sambuca (formerly known as Flower) and Bailey the Bulldog became buddies from the first night. It took a few days for each to respect the other fully, but as they're both friendly, curious, and lovable, it was just a matter of time.

“I'm happy knowing when I leave the house that Bailey has someone to keep him company. Bailey really wants Sambuca to play with him (like another dog), and Sambuca tries to accommodate him in his own way. Sambuca has his own feeding area, but much prefers Bailey's water to his own. They both enjoy bathing in the sunshine, which streams through the window in the afternoon, and if they both had their way, there would be no room in the bed for me!”

—Pat Voltmer

Animal Camp: An Awesome Experience for Kids Who Love Animals

The League is now accepting applications for the very popular Absolutely Awesome Animal Awareness Camp of Alexandria, a special program for children ages 10-13 who want to learn all about animals. Four one-week sessions are being offered: June 23-27, July 7-11, July 21-25, and Aug. 11-15. Camps are from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The many hands-on activities are designed to acquaint the youngsters with the Animal Shelter, responsible pet care, how to help animals in need, dog training, careers in the animal field, and other exciting topics. Campers will make birdhouses, design animal T-shirts, have their picture taken with their favorite Shelter animal, and interact with many of the Shelter residents.

Special speakers will include Animal Control Officers, wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians, professional dog trainers, reptile specialists, zoologists, a whale and shark specialist from the Baltimore Aquarium, wildlife rangers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife specialists, and officers and dogs from the K-9 police department unit.

Each session will be limited to six campers. The \$75 fee covers snacks, speakers' fees, materials, and a special T-shirt for each participant. For a complete schedule, as well as a registration and information packet, please contact Jeanine Larsen, the League's Director of Humane Education, at (703) 838-5042.



Kids at last year's camp listen to a wildlife rehabilitator.

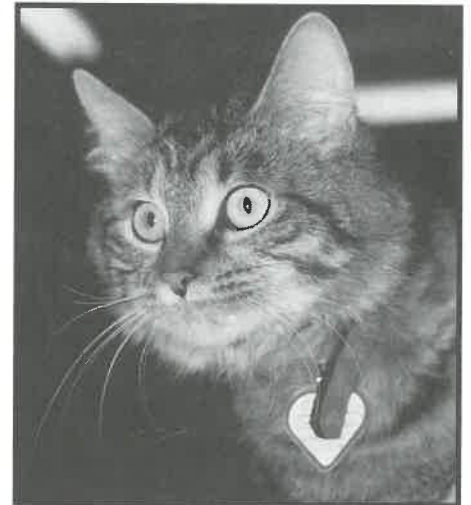
Thanks to a Good Samaritan, 'Lucky' Finds Great New Home

She was found crumpled on the sidewalk of a local apartment complex. The good Samaritan who found her contacted our animal control officer on duty, who rushed her to an emergency hospital. The veterinarian's diagnosis was grim: her pelvis was broken in four places, probably the result of falling from an upper-story balcony or being hit by a car.

Her recuperation went well, but it involved eight weeks of cage rest. She spent four of those weeks in the League's administrative offices and another month in the home of a staff member. Throughout her ordeal, "Lucky," as she was named by Ellie Eagen, the woman who found her, proved to be a courageous, affectionate cat.

Ellie was quite taken with the cat's story and donated money to help the League pay her medical expenses. She also solicited donations from other people in the complex; one of her neighbors, 11-year-old Colin Niewald, donated \$5 from his allowance to help Lucky.

Lucky was adopted by Danielle Cioffi, who had already adopted a cat from our Shelter and was looking for a companion for her. For



Priscilla, formerly known as Lucky, savoring the safety of the great indoors.

Danielle, it was love at first sight. She took Lucky home, knowing that her initial care would be intensive, involving prolonged bed rest and frequent vet visits.

Lucky, now known as Priscilla, has fully recovered and is proving to be a joyous, playful girl. The two cats enjoy each other's company. Lucky's adjustment to becoming a strictly indoor cat has gone very well. She seems quite content to sit next to her new feline friend, where she can enjoy the view from the window.



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The Great Indoors

from page 1

tience and determination. Try keeping a "shake can" (an empty soda can with a few coins inside) or plant mister by the door. When your cat asks to go out or tries to escape, make a loud noise with the can or spritz him on the flanks or rear with water. Only his dignity will suffer, and he'll learn to avoid the behavior that produces this response.

After a while, you may need only to pick up the spritzer or shake can for him to retreat from the door. But be firm—letting him out "just this once" will make you have to start all over again.

Do what you can to make the indoors fun. Many of the most popular cat toys are also the least expensive: empty paper bags and cardboard cartons, ping pong balls, crumpled paper balls, pipe-cleaner "bees" (available at the Shelter), catnip, etc.

Hunting instincts can be safely satisfied with interactive toys on fishing poles or wands. Be creative; use the toy to simulate a mouse's scurrying or a bird's flight. You and the cat will both be entertained. The cat will have healthful exercise, and you'll find that the quality time spent with him deepens your bond. Some cats will even chase the beam of a penlight in a darkened room.

A bird bath or a bird or squirrel

feeder outside a cat-accessible windowsill can be a special delight to indoor cats, who will bird-watch for hours, chattering and twitching tails and whiskers. For a special treat, try one of the little feeders that attach by suction cup to the outside of the window. Many cats are fascinated by videos made specially for cats, featuring birds, fish, and other creatures.

We strongly recommend keeping cats indoors at all times, but if you truly feel that your cat must go outdoors, go with him. Gradually accustom him to wearing a harness and leash (safer and more escape-proof for most cats than a collar and leash), and let him stroll around the yard with you on pleasant days. Please don't tie him outside with you while you do your gardening or other outdoor activities; no harness or collar is truly escape-proof for a cat who is frightened, startled, or otherwise strongly motivated.

Creative do-it-yourselfers have built "cat runs"—totally enclosed exercise areas that are accessed from a window to allow cats to safely enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

Please remember that unscreened windows and balconies are not safe. Cats who would "never jump out" will certainly do so if an irresistible temptation beckons. Veterinarians and shelter workers will testify that cats do *not* always land on their feet. "High-rise syndrome" claims many

feline lives each year.

Another important reminder: Even cats who enjoy an indoor-only life should wear a collar and ID tag (and City license for Alexandria cats) at all times. Accidents do happen—maintenance or repair workers can accidentally let a cat slip outdoors.

Fewer than 5 percent of stray cats are reclaimed by their owners. Passers-by are more likely to notice and feel safe about trying to pick up a cat who is wearing a collar. If you are concerned that your cat might lose his collar, he can be given a permanent and painless ID, such as a tattoo or microchip; ask your veterinarian.

A longer, safer, healthier life awaits your cat in the great indoors! Show him the joys of paper bag ambushes, "cat bee" hunts, and flying feather stalks. He depends on you to love and protect him; surely he deserves this extra measure of responsibility and concern.

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