

spotlight on animals

the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Over 50 years of caring

Winter 2004

“Why I Give”



Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille

We are fortunate that Alexandria is a City of animal lovers. Concern for the welfare of all living things is an admirable trait for any community and one of the things that sets us apart from many, less fortunate areas of the country. It also helps to define us and make our community a desirable place to live, work and visit.

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

is an organization that was born of a need to improve the inhumane conditions of the City pound. It has grown up and expanded to meet the needs of our City over the last 58 years. In this current period of uncertainty for many non-profit organizations, the League continues to derive strength from its mission to provide high quality care for animals and from the unwavering support from the people of Alexandria.

The League is one of many charitable organizations in our City that relies on donations to provide services that we have come to regard as essential. Tax dollars simply cannot fund all the programs that these organizations offer and by supporting the League with private contributions, you have validated that these services are an important part of Alexandria's unique culture. By integrating those services provided by tax dollars with those that are funded by donations, we are able to elevate the quality of life for animals and people to an enviable standard.

I personally give to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria because I believe what they are doing for animals *and people* is vital to the overall social wellness of our City. The consequence of losing the progress that has been achieved over the last 58 years is unthinkable. Animal Control services, operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter and educating youth about the humane treatment of animals are just a few of those “essentials” provided by the League. I encourage you to get to know one of our City's most highly regarded organizations and learn more about the benefits it offers residents of Alexandria and surrounding areas.

Bewitched by the Twitch

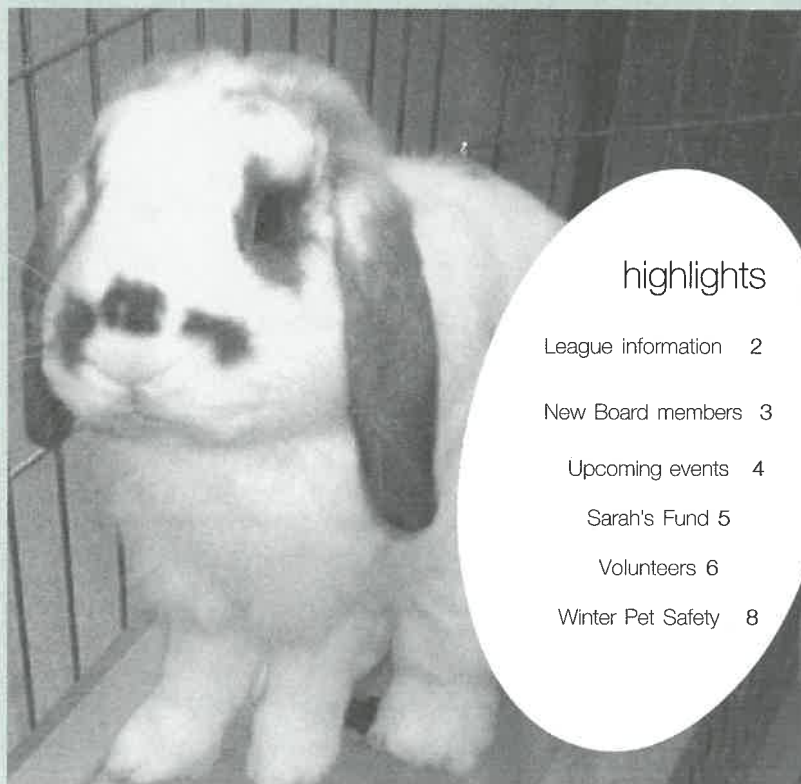
There is good reason why rabbits have moved into the “third most popular pet” space. For years people have looked upon bunnies as soft, delicate container pets, kept primarily for children. But, the news is out and spreading quickly: rabbits are full of character, easily trained, and are often superb with other pets.

In the past few years, living with rabbits has only gotten easier. Many of the best hays can be shipped right to your door, and some of the best bunny equipment can be

picked up in local pet supply stores. There are more veterinarians in the ‘exotics’ practice, so getting a rabbit spayed or neutered is much easier. Also, litterbox training is a breeze once a rabbit is spayed or neutered! Because we have more accurate information regarding what rabbits need to not just stay alive but to thrive, we are seeing happy bunnies living 8 years, 11 years, and in many cases into their teens.

Rabbits have a wide range in personalities and, in the

continued on page 7



highlights

- League information 2
- New Board members 3
- Upcoming events 4
- Sarah's Fund 5
- Volunteers 6
- Winter Pet Safety 8

about the league

HOW TO REACH THE LEAGUE

Vola Lawson Animal Shelter
4101 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304
703/838-4774 Fax: 703/838-4862
www.alexandriaanimals.org
CFC and United Way designee number: # 8372

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday through Friday: 12:00noon to 8:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday: 12:00noon to 5:00 pm
Closed on Wednesdays for adoptions and animal visiting.

ADOPTION PROGRAM

One of our most important programs involves placing homeless companion animals in carefully chosen, permanent homes. Our animal adoption program is one of the most successful in the country and has been praised by national animal welfare organizations. For more information, please call 703/838-4774.

ANIMAL CONTROL and 24-HOUR ASSISTANCE FOR ANIMALS

The League provides animal control services for the City of Alexandria. Our Animal Control Officers enforce State and City laws pertaining to the welfare and control of animals. They are on duty Monday through Saturday from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm and Sunday from 11:30 am to 10:00 pm. At all other times, a trained staff member is on call to respond to animals in need. Please call 703/838-4774 any time you feel an animal needs help.

HUMANE EDUCATION

The League's Humane Educator is available to speak to your group. To schedule a presentation, please call 703/838-4774. The League also offers the Absolutely Awesome Animal Awareness Camp, a summer day camp for children. Visit our website to learn more.

REDUCED-COST SPAY/NEUTER

Through the cooperation of local veterinarians, the League enables all pet owners to have their animals spayed or neutered at a reduced cost. Certificates can be purchased at the Shelter during regular business hours.

LOST AND FOUND

We offer a lost and found program to aid people in finding their pets. Each year, hundreds of lost pets are reunited with their owners through the League.

LICENSING

The League handles dog and cat licensing for the City of Alexandria. For dogs, annual fees are \$30 for each unaltered animal and \$10 for altered ones. For cats, fees are \$10 for each unaltered animal and \$2 for altered ones.

SPECIAL EVENTS

We conduct fun-filled activities for pet lovers throughout the year. Find details of upcoming events in this issue, on our website, or call our Event Hotline at 703/838-4774 ext. 321.

DONATIONS *Can you help?*

The League is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and relies on tax-deductible donations including cash, credit card, stocks, securities and bequests to fund our programs and services. Donations of items for the animals are also greatly appreciated. For more information on giving to the League, please call our Development office at 703/838-4774 ext. 206

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers perform a variety of helpful functions for the League, such as dog walking, cat socializing, helping out at special events, transporting injured or orphaned wildlife and more. To learn more, call 703/838-4774 ext. 322.

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Kevin Byrne - President
Gwen Jennier - Vice President
Gordon Kromberg - Treasurer
Rosemary Pollard - Recording Secretary
Rebecca G. Ellis
Nancy Hamilton
Carlos Mejias
Kasia Mendelsohn
Diana Titus-Allen Waller
Betsy Willis

Unique ways to support the League

iGive.com: When you do your online shopping through iGive.com, a percentage of your purchase amount will be donated to the charity of your choice. You can designate the League as the recipient of your shopping efforts! With over 400 stores, you'll find your favorites selling everything from pet supplies to travel holidays.

Ink Jet Cartridge Recycling Program: Instead of throwing your empty cartridges away, we can turn your used ink jet cartridges into cash for the animals! Drop your used cartridges off (all small ink jet cartridges are accepted) at the Shelter during business hours through March 31.

Wedding Registry: Now JustGive's Charity Wedding Registry allows soon-to-be-married couples to create a list of non-profits that they would like to help. Wedding guests can then choose to go online and make a donation to one of the organizations in lieu of a traditional gift. Details can be found at www.justgive.org.

Spotlight on Animals (© 2004) is published by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization, and has an approximate circulation of 16,000. All articles original to this newsletter may be reproduced without prior permission if credit is given to the League. Please address all correspondence to The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, 4101 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. Please note: The League respects our donors' and friends' confidentiality and we never release our mailing list. This newsletter is printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink.

New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors: Nancy Hamilton and Carlos Mejias. The League's Board consists of ten volunteers who establish, guide and oversee the policies of the organization.



Nancy Hamilton's belief in the strength of the human and animal bond and in the welfare of all animals has led to her lifetime focus on animal issues. As a painter of animals, she strives to convey to the viewer the unique qualities and importance of each individual subject. As a member of the Board, Hamilton hopes to confront and address the special needs of each animal.



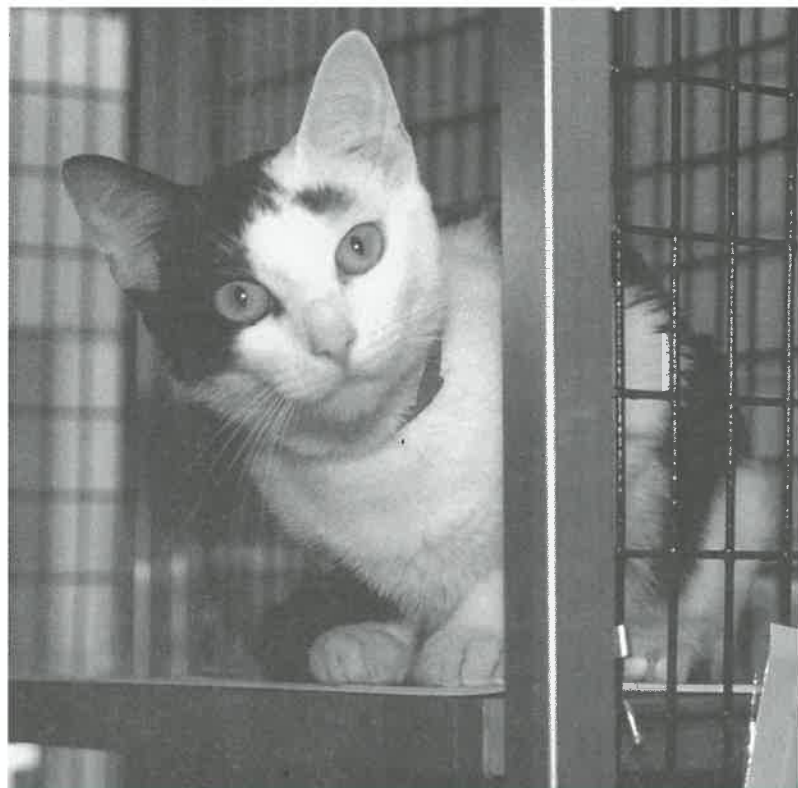
Carlos Mejias has been a well-known fixture in the dog community for years. In 1975 he opened Olde Towne School for Dogs and since then has provided training and care for thousands of our City's four-legged residents. Last year, Mejias helped open Olde Towne Pet Resort, one of the nation's first upscale spas for pets. He has been involved in the creation of many of the League's special events, including Pet Photos with Santa and the wildly popular Canine Games.

Are You Getting E-News?

Join the League's E-News service to keep up with all our animal comings and goings. Our monthly E-Newsletter, *Animal Welfare Matters*, talks about what's new at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, gives you seasonal tips for caring for your pet, keeps you updated on special events and brings you special online offers. To subscribe, send your e-mail address to bwason@alexandrianimals.org or visit our website: www.alexandrianimals.org.

2004 Pet Licenses Available Now

All dogs and cats residing in the City of Alexandria are required to be licensed annually. The cost is \$10 for altered dogs; \$30 for unaltered dogs and \$2 for altered cats; \$10 for unaltered cats. Licensing your pet has many benefits, including helping us return him to you quickly if he is ever brought to the Shelter and ensuring that the City's animals are current on rabies vaccines, protecting both animals and the community. Also, by registering your pet with the City, you are helping the administration allocate the appropriate funding for animal services, including dog parks and animal control. To download an application, visit our website: www.alexandrianimals.org.



Thank you for supporting the League through your workplace giving campaign! Our CFC/United Way designation is #8372.

Wishful Thinking

(the animals may need what you don't)

- ◆ stuffed animals: medium to large size. The League is collecting stuffed animals for use in fire drills and evacuation exercises.
- ◆ blankets for bedding (no sheets or pillows, please)
- ◆ washable dog toys (knotted rope, Nylabones or Kongs)
- ◆ copier paper: any color!
- ◆ shoeboxes for transporting orphaned wildlife
- ◆ cat toys (no fur or feathers)
- ◆ pig ears and rawhides
- ◆ baby food: meat-flavored (unopened)
- ◆ cat litter: unopened, unscented clay litter
- ◆ lumber to build agility equipment

Financial contributions are always needed and always welcome. Donations made in honor or memory of a pet, friend, or loved one will be acknowledged with a card. The dollar amount of the donation will not be indicated. Donors will be sent a separate receipt letter for tax-deduction purposes.

upcoming events

For more information about any of our special events, please call 703/838-4774 ext. 321.

Calendar

March 3 Pet Bereavement Group; free meeting at 7:30 pm at the Alexandria Animal Shelter. Other dates: **April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7.**

March 6 St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show at Market Square in Old Town. See article this page.

April Bone Appetit at Ecco Cafe; see article this page.

April 18 Reduced-cost rabies vaccination and microchip clinic from 2 - 4 pm. See details below.

June Feline Follies; see article this page.

June 9 3rd Annual Eisenhower Avenue Mini Golf Classic; see article this page.

Fall 2004 13th Annual Canine Games! Watch your mail for details.

3rd Annual Eisenhower Avenue Mini Golf Classic

On Wednesday, June 9, plan to get out and putt putt for the animals! This is an event for all ages and will be held from 5-8 pm at Cameron Run Regional Park, located at 4001 Eisenhower Avenue. There will be food, drinks, music, a hole-in-one contest and a silent auction. Proceeds benefit the League and the Eisenhower Partnership. We are looking for sponsors and unique auction items. Call 703/838-4774, ext. 206 for more information.

Rabies & Microchipping Clinic

The Clinic will be held on Sunday, April 18, 2004, from 2-4pm at the Shelter. The Cost is \$10 to vaccinate each dog or cat; \$30 for each microchip. Three-year vaccinations will be given to animals with proof of current inoculation; others will receive a one-year vaccination. No reservation necessary. Cats must be in carriers and dogs must be on leashes.

St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show

Grab your green attire and join us for the 18th Annual St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show on Saturday, March 6 at Market Square in Old Town. Dogs will compete in these just-for-fun categories: Dog with Best Irish Costume, Owner/Dog with the Most Similar Hair, Largest Ears, Biggest Feet, Best Spots, Best



Wag, Most Unique Coat, Best Smile, Most Mysterious Heritage and Most Unusual Ears. All adopted dogs will be recognized. On-site registration begins at 11 am and the Dog Show begins at 11:30 am. This FREE event is held in conjunction with the Ballyshaner's St. Patrick's Day Parade. At the conclusion of the Dog Show, we invite you (with or without a dog) to help the League lead the parade down King Street.

Bone Appetit at Ecco Café

It's a great night out. Mingle with local celebrities, dine at one of Old Town's favorite restaurants and help the animals at the same time. The owners of Ecco Café graciously compensate their regular wait staff so 100% of your tip benefits homeless animals! Seatings will be from 5:30 to 9:30 pm. Reservations are not required, but strongly recommended and can be made by calling 703/684-0321. Ecco Café is located in the heart of Old Town at 220 N. Lee Street. *Date coming soon.*

Feline Follies celebrates Adopt-a-Cat Month

The League has dedicated the entire month of June to honor and promote our feline friends. Each Sunday of the month we will host a local veterinarian or animal care expert who will bring you the latest news on a variety of cat topics. Feline Follies will feature special contests, promotions and prizes at the Shelter ... all for the love of cats! If you are considering adding a cat to your family or already have cats and want to learn more about them, you won't want to miss this. Check our website or call 703/838-4774 x321 for a schedule of events.



Sarah's Fund Helps Mend Lives

Sarah's Fund was created to cover the cost of treating severe medical conditions and injuries in adoptable animals. Since its inception last April, two wonderful animals have benefited from your support.

Inga

Inga was a stray cat found in a trailer park. She arrived at the Shelter with deep, infected wounds on her rear flank and a tail that had been broken, de-gloved, and that had tried unsuccessfully to heal itself. Despite her many painful wounds, Inga purred and snuggled with us while we examined and vaccinated her. The vet who treated Inga believes she was running away from a dog and didn't quite escape. Sarah's Fund provided the necessary surgery, including a partial tail amputation, to put her back in shape. Inga's appearance after her surgery was off-putting and she stayed in our adoption department for four weeks before someone could see past her healing wounds to her special personality. Inga went home in September!

Poppy

Poppy was brought to the Shelter by a Good Samaritan. With a badly broken leg and no owner looking for him, he became one of ours. Our Shelter staff has a wonderful way with comforting animals and we were amazed and won over by how this dog's gentle, trusting manner shone through his obvious pain. It is just this type of personality that makes a dog like Poppy such a dream to place with a new family, but until recently such a severe injury would have made it impossible. Sarah's Fund covered the cost of his medical treatment and made all the difference in the world to this wonderful little dog. Poppy spent the holidays in his new, loving home.

If you are interested in contributing to Sarah's Fund, you can send a gift in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage -paid envelope. Please check the box marked 'Sarah's Fund' on the envelope. Look for more Fund updates in our next newsletter!



Sarah's Fund provided Poppy with a second chance at a healthy, happy life.

Gifts to the League

A larger Shelter means we now have the space to care for more animals. In 2003 we took in over 3,500 animals. That means more mouths to feed, more cages to clean and more bedding to wash. To continue to provide high quality care for the animals, we need your support. We accept donations of cash, securities and stock. We also encourage bequests. By including the League in your will, your caring and generosity will leave an impact on animals long into the future. Donations fund many of our programs, including adoptions and humane education. Many of the things we feel are necessities for the animals in our care are also funded by donations. For example, high quality food and a strict cleaning protocol can be costly, but keep the Shelter animals healthy, happy and ultimately result in more adoptions. We gladly accept donated pet care items to help stretch our budget as far as possible. What we can't use, we pass on to rescue groups and wildlife rehabilitators to make the greatest use of your donation.

Your tax-deductible gift can be mailed in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope or sent to: AWLA, 4101 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. To learn about other giving opportunities, please contact our Development office at 703/838-4774 x206 or bwason@alexandrianimals.org. Thank you for caring.

Spotlight on Volunteers

At the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, we think the world of our volunteers. Their dedication and willingness to help in so many important ways is invaluable. We are so impressed and asked some of our outstanding volunteers what keeps them motivated. Their responses reflect their sincere compassion for animals and genuine spirit of giving. We feel truly blessed to have the support of so many concerned citizens.

Dan Herbers' dedication to working with adoption dogs and helping at special events has been unwavering since he began volunteering three years ago. His positive energy brings smiles to both his two-legged and four-legged shelter friends.



"My volunteer dog-walking career began with the best of intentions. Having adopted two terrific Dobermans from the shelter in the early 90s, I knew AWLA was a quality organization with an excellent staff and operated under the noblest of missions. My intent early on was to give at least a small degree of aid or comfort to those dogs

caught between families. The result is that the love and affection these animals give me is far more than I could ever hope to return to them. There are 168 hours in a week and I can ALWAYS count on at least two of them being wonderful. Having said that, I would like to express my deepest heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the staff of AWLA for all their efforts and hard work. The staff's efforts allow us volunteers to contribute what we can, personally reap the rewards of those efforts while insuring the safety, comfort and physical well being of thousands of animals in need."

Beth Visioli volunteers two days each week at the League. On weekends she focuses on the cats and small animals, working hard to assist the staff with cleaning and caring for them. Then she comes back midweek after work and makes it her priority to exercise the dogs in the adoption program.

"If you are having a bad day, you know when you come home, your pets will be there to love you, no matter what. There are so many animals out there who have been left behind, who still give that unconditional love to you when you visit the shelter. I volunteer to let them know that however sad they feel at being left behind, we love them too, no matter what, and we will always be there for them."



Steve Felber has been volunteering at the League since 2001. He generously offers to be on call every week to transport injured or orphaned wildlife that need to be taken to a licensed rehabilitator. Two years ago he adopted Rudy, his Basset Hound, who thanks him every day.

"I've always thought it was everyone's civic duty to give back to his or her community through participation in a volunteer program. It's also very important for individuals to seek out a community service that best matches their personal experiences or interests. The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria provides an excellent service for housing displaced pets that are in need of new homes as well as assisting wildlife in our community. These services could not be performed well without the network of volunteers available to provide assistance. Each time I return home from a trip that involves wildlife transport, I know that the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria has more resources available to continue their excellent work."



Lynn McNutt is someone that can always be counted on to cheerfully help wherever we need her. She is always willing to help at special events and with office projects as well as coming in twice each week to socialize adoption animals.

"Every time I come to the shelter I experience a range of emotions. Sometimes I am sad if I see the same face there for a long time – the animals that just can't seem to find the right match. But more often I am awed at what a wonderful place the shelter is and how lucky I am to live in a community that works so hard to do right by its animals. Visitors often comment to me about how nice the shelter is and it makes me proud to volunteer. When I come to the shelter tense and tired after a stressful day, playing with cats melts away stress like nothing else. I leave revitalized and my spirit renewed. When I meet adopters who have found a dog that completes their family it reminds me of what a magical place of second chances the shelter really is."



To learn more about the League's volunteer program, call 703/838-4774, ext. 322.

Bewitched (continued from page 1)

proper setting, it can take just a few minutes to pick up the nuances of each rabbit's temperament. We have seen bunnies who are clowns, hopping and popping through the air, flipping their toys as if they were jugglers. We've had Better Homes & Garden bunnies who spend countless hours moving and re-organizing their bowls, toys and litter pans. We recently heard

of a family whose last rabbit learned to "play" the xylophone, could regularly knock down bowling pins with a ball, and could identify about 60 different commands! One of our staff members has rabbits who come when they are whistled for; another has a rabbit who regularly falls asleep upside-down in her lap and also clears a 4-foot barrier in a single bound.



With some attention and a little training, rabbits can be housebroken and make wonderful companions.

What You'll Need for a Rabbit

If you are considering adopting a rabbit, here's a brief list of things you will need:

- A sense of humor. You will find that you are living *with* a rabbit, not necessarily that you *own* a rabbit.
- A hearty vacuum cleaner to withstand the fine hair and bits of hay and litter that easily hitch rides on your rabbit as he comes and goes from his daily activities.
- A roomy cage, dog crate or "exercise pen." In small apartments, the dog crate can be topped with a sheet of plexiglass or plywood to also serve as an end-table.
- A variety of toys and chew things. Our staff has a wide range of inexpensive and creative ideas to keep your bunny content.
- Space for your bunny to kick up her heels. Minimum space is bedroom size. To walk into a home where there is a house rabbit in residence, you might be surprised to see that there's no hutch! Instead, you might find a good-sized dog crate, baby gate, or simply a litter pan placed in a discrete location.
- Litterpan and rabbit-appropriate litter, such as Carefresh or Yesterday's News.
- Hay and other edibles, such as a limited amount of pellets, fresh fruits and veggies.
- A heavy ceramic water bowl or bottle; the same type of bowl for food.
- A good eye for things that need rabbit-proofing plus the tools with which to accomplish this. Our staff can direct you in the use of Bitter Orange, concrete footer tubes, soda fountain lines and such that you may need to prevent any chew-damage.
- A good set of grooming tools, including comb and nail clippers.
- Vinegar and Anti-Icky-Poo to rectify any accidents that may happen while you are litter-training. (Anti-Icky-Poo is a very effective odor-eliminator and is available for purchase at the Shelter.)

When rabbits are adopted from the League, we do a home visit (as we do for all animals being adopted from us) so that we can share even more tips on how to successfully live with and enjoy a bunny. We almost always have rabbits available for adoption, so stop by and we are sure that you too will become "bewitched by the twitch" of these personality-filled pets.

contributed by Suzanne D'Alonzo, adoption specialist.

Winter Pet Safety

When the temperature (and the snow) begins to fall, pets need a little extra care from their owners. The League offers these tips to help you and your pet enjoy a safe winter season:

- We highly recommend that dogs, cats and other small companion animals be kept as indoor pets, especially during the colder months. If this isn't possible, please ensure that your pet has appropriate shelter and clean, dry bedding. Also, a bowl of frozen water can't help a thirsty pet. Check outdoor water bowls often when it's below freezing, and refill with water as necessary.
- Chemicals used to melt snow on sidewalks can irritate pets' paws, so you may need to wipe them off after an outing. There are pet-safe products available. Also, check for ice between your pet's paw pads.
- Antifreeze tastes good to pets, but even just a teaspoon-size dose can be fatal.
- A cat may crawl up under your car seeking shelter and warmth near the engine. It may then get caught in the fan and be seriously injured when the engine starts. Open the hood of your car or slap it noisily with your hand before starting the engine on cold days to startle any animal sleeping there.



Help Light Chewie's Birthday Candles

Our League mascot, Chewie the cat, turns 13 years old in March. To celebrate, we have constructed a large, (non-edible) cake that is displayed in our Shelter lobby. Every donation made during the month of March will put another candle on Chewie's cake and all donations to our general fund will help us care for shelter animals, like we cared for Chewie when he came to us 10 years ago. Help us turn up the heat in March by turning his birthday into a bonfire!

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Alexandria, VA
Permit No. 243

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
4101 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304

