

spotlight on

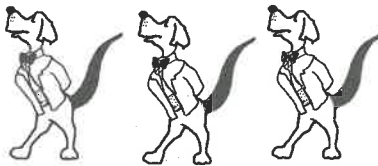
animals

the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Over 50 years of caring

Winter 2005

Black



On Saturday, February 12, Alexandria—the dog-friendliest City in America—will be home to a new event worthy of that title! **Black Tie & Tails at the Torpedo Factory Art Center** brings together humans and canines in Alexandria's first formal dog event.

The event has already created a buzz in this dog-loving community with local celebrities enthusiastically giving their support. Former Alexandria City Manager **Vola Lawson** and her dog, Jack, will serve as Honorary Chairs; U.S.

Congressman **James Moran** with dog, Beezer, will be the Auctioneer, **Carlos Mejias of Olde Town School for Dogs** is orchestrating a fashion show of canine couture, Brecher Designs has contributed unforgettable graphics and Torpedo Factory artist Jacqueline Ehle has created a painting that will be the show-stopping centerpiece of the live auction.

This is an exclusive event, limited to 300 people, and dogs are welcome! From 8-11 p.m., the night promises to give everyone something to talk about with gourmet delights for humans and canines, champagne, dancing—there will also be canine massage and “Pooch Smooch” souvenir photos. Proceeds benefit the outreach programs provided by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and Friends of the Torpedo Factory.

Big Dog Tickets for two people are \$250 and include entry into a special drawing to win a stay for your pet at Olde Towne Pet Resort with limousine service. Individual tickets are \$100 each and reservations must be made in advance. Canines are free – one dog per guest – however, dog registry is limited to the first 100 dogs: Black tie is optional; formal attire for canines and humans is encouraged. For tickets, call 703-683-0693 or 703-838-4774 x206.

Caring About Cody

Last Winter, one of our Animal Control Officers responded to a citizen's call regarding a dog running at large. When the officer arrived in the area, she spotted a Cocker Spaniel. The officer called to him and as the dog got closer, she was startled by an awful smell. When she got a leash on him and was putting him in the animal control van, she realized the smell was coming from his ears and his coat; he obviously had something horribly wrong with his skin.

Before bringing him back to the shelter, she opted to take him first to the emergency animal hospital. The veterinarian on duty agreed that he was suffering from extensive skin and ear infections. The odor was the smell of yeast from the long-term bacteria on his body and the veterinarian concluded that this must have been going on for some time.

Medicines and a cleaning protocol were prescribed, and then our officer took the

Spaniel back to the Shelter where our Animal Care Technicians began to make him as comfortable as possible, which was very difficult considering that he was constantly scratching his body and his ears.

A few days later, an owner called in a report for a lost dog. The description and the location matched the Cocker Spaniel, and we learned that the dog's name was Cody. We confirmed that the dog was safely in our shelter, and also conveyed that because we had taken him to the veterinarian (something which probably should have been done a long time ago), that there was a hospital bill, which we were asking that the owners pay for.

For the next few days, we waited for the owner to pick up Cody. We were learning from concerned neighbors that Cody was truly suffering from a lifetime of neglect. Apparently he lived under the owner's front porch, day and night, regardless of the weather. Kids in the

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State Senator Patsy Tier greets Cody at the League's Annual Dinner & Silent Auction.

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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.alexandrianimals.org

CFC and United Way designee number: # 8372

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday through Friday: 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.
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 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. 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 Community Outreach Coordinator is available to speak to your group. To schedule a presentation or Shelter tour for children or adults, please call 703/838-4774. The League also offers 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. Annual fees start at \$10 for dogs and \$2 for cats. Multi-year licenses are available.

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 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

Gordon Kromberg - President

Gwen Jennier - Vice President, *ITT Industries-Advanced Engineering and Sciences; Angel Dog Music*

Betsy Willis - Treasurer

Rosemary Pollard - Recording Secretary

Patricia Donohue, DVM, *Alexandria Animal Hospital*

Nancy Hamilton

Carlos Mejias, *Olde Towne School for Dogs*

Kasia Mendelsohn, *U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration*

Diana Titus-Allen Waller

2006 Pets of Alexandria Calendar Call for Entries

Plan ahead to make sure that your pet is included in the League's 2006 calendar. Any pet residing in Alexandria or that has been adopted from the League is eligible.

Pets may only be entered once and ALL entries will appear in our full-color calendar. The entry fee of \$10 per photo includes one calendar. [Voting will take place at the Canine Games on October 8.](#) Start recruiting family and friends now; there is no charge for people to attend the Canine Games and every vote counts. The top vote-getter will appear on the cover; the next 12 will appear as 'pets of the month.'

The 2005 calendar raised over \$10,000 for the League through entry fees, votes, and calendar sales! Advertisers covered the cost of printing. Help us make the 2006 calendar the best yet!

Print the entry form from our website or pick one up at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter.

Spotlight on Animals (© 2005) 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. Photographs include images by Kelly D. Swedick.

Sarah's Fund Gives Hope to Homeless Animals

Sarah's Fund was created to cover the cost of treating severe medical conditions and injuries in adoptable animals. Last year, your donations to Sarah's Fund provided a second chance for ten Shelter animals, all who are now living new lives, in new homes.

Babe Ruth

Babe Ruth, a stray Beagle, was brought to the Shelter with filthy ears, a dirty coat and a fist-sized tumor on his hindquarters. The veterinarian who initially examined him felt that the tumor was simply a fatty lump that should be removed because of its sheer size. Sarah's Fund made that procedure possible. When it was removed, the veterinarian who did the procedure also felt it was a fatty lump, but suggested it be biopsied as a precaution. Babe Ruth was put up for adoption and soon he had an application from a family that had been waiting for a mature Beagle. Before Babe Ruth was to go home, the biopsy report came back and the results indicated the tumor was malignant. With a heavy heart, we called the adopter to relay the bad news and after careful consideration, they decided to go ahead with the adoption. Babe Ruth is doing fine. Talk about a home run!

Lulu

Lulu, a tiny toy poodle, was brought to us because her owner had become ill and was no longer able to care for her. It turned out that Lulu had a chronic problem with a dislocating shoulder. Thankfully, she was not experiencing discomfort, but it meant that she needed to receive supportive joint care for the rest of her life.

When she was at the hospital, the veterinarian also found that every single one of her teeth had to be extracted due to neglect. Sarah's Fund covered Lulu's medical expenses.

During her recovery at the Shelter, she won the hearts of everyone who visited her. This five-pound cutie now lives with a couple devoted to providing her with all the appropriate medical care and love she could ever need.

If you are interested in contributing to Sarah's Fund, you can send a gift in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope. Please check the box marked 'Sarah's Fund' on the envelope. A donation to Sarah's Fund is a thoughtful way to remember a beloved family pet or to honor a special occasion. Look for more updates in our next newsletter!



Turner's heartworm treatment was covered by Sarah's Fund.



The League Welcomes a New Board Member

Dr. Patricia Donohue began her work at the Alexandria Animal Hospital eighteen years ago. A native to the local area, Dr. Donohue was raised in Great Falls. In 1976 she graduated from Virginia Tech with a B.S. in Animal Sciences. Her next step was at Tuskegee University in Alabama where she graduated *Sum Laude* with her degree in Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Donohue spends her free time with her husband Stan and her three cats, Peedee, Ellis, and Bonnie. She also volunteers for the League and was one of the principal volunteers who helped run the Doggie Dash. When time allows, she enjoys a good game of golf or tennis with her husband.

Wishful Thinking

(the animals may need what you don't)

- ◆ **BLANKETS! BLANKETS! BLANKETS!**
- ◆ **COMFORTERS! COMFORTERS! COMFORTERS!**
- ◆ **Kleenex, paper towels**
- ◆ **Bathmats with and without rubber backing**
- ◆ **Copier paper: any color**

**Please no sheets, pillows or plastic litter pans.
Newspaper accepted as space allows.**

upcoming events

For more information about any of our special events, visit www.alexandriaanimals.org or call 703/838-4774 ext. 321.

Calendar

February 2 Pet Bereavement Group; free meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. Other dates: **March 2, April 6, May 4.**

February 12 Black Tie & Tails (see cover story!)

March 5 St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show (see details this page)

April 10 Reduced-cost rabies vaccination and microchip clinic from 2 - 4 p.m. See details this page.

June Feline Follies

June 8 4th Annual Eisenhower Partnership Mini Golf Classic, 5 - 8 p.m.

October 16 Reduced-cost rabies vaccination and microchip clinic, 2 - 4 p.m.

October 8 14th Annual Canine Games

November 12 Annual Dinner & Silent Auction

December 2-4 Pet Photos with Santa at Olde Towne Schol for Dogs

Reduced-Cost Spay/Neuter

The best way to put an end to pet overpopulation is to eliminate unwanted litters of companion animals. Spaying (females) or neutering (males) has many benefits to you and your pet. It also helps save lives by reducing the number of homeless animals that end up in shelters.

Through the generosity of local veterinarians, the League's reduced-cost spay/neuter program is open to everyone. Certificates are sold at the Shelter and brought as payment when the surgery is performed. Prices and restrictions vary for each hospital and for different types of pets. Please visit the Shelter during regular business hours to review the program participants and their prices.

St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show

Grab your green attire (humans and dogs) and join us for the 19th Annual St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show on Saturday, March 5 at Market Square in Old Town. Dogs will compete in many just-for-fun categories like dog/owner look-a-like and best Irish costume; Judge Daniel O'Flaherty will award first place ribbons in each category. There will be adoptable dogs, a raffle to benefit homeless animals, coffee and donuts for sale, and plenty of good, green fun with our emcee, John Harter from Channel 7 News. On-site registration begins at 10:30 a.m. and the Dog Show officially gets underway at 11:15 a.m. 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. Don't forget your camera!



4th Annual Eisenhower Partnership Mini Golf Classic

On Wednesday, June 8, plan to get out and putt putt to help homeless animals! This event is loaded with fun for all ages and will be held from 5-8 p.m. at Cameron Run Regional Park, located at 4001 Eisenhower Avenue (next door to the Shelter). There will be food, drinks, music, a hole-in-one contest and a silent auction. The Shelter will be open from 5-8 p.m. Proceeds benefit the League and the Eisenhower Partnership. Registration details coming soon! Sponsored by Residence Inn by Marriott, Old Town Alexandria and Alexandria Courtyard by Marriott.

Rabies & Microchipping Clinic

The clinic will be held on Sunday, April 10, from 2-4 p.m. 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 dose. No reservation necessary. Cats must be in carriers and dogs must be on leashes. *Tip: For a much shorter waiting time, arrive between 3-4 p.m.*

'Indogural Events' take center stage at the 2004 Canine Games

Over 500 dogs, their owners, friends and spectators gathered at Chinguapin Park in Alexandria to participate in the largest dog event of its kind in Northern Virginia. Alexandria Vice Mayor Del Pepper, along with Bailey Bulldog and his owner, Pat Voltmer, officially opened the games where dogs of all shapes, sizes, breeds and abilities competed in 18 different, fun "Indogural Events." This year's theme took its cue from the Presidential election. Dogs raced around obstacle courses, caught Frisbees, tried bowling and even ate ice cream as fast as they could, all in the quest for a gold, silver or bronze Canine Games medal. Spectators enjoyed the music, food and all kinds of pet merchandise from top-notch sponsors and vendors. Attendees had the opportunity to vote for their favorite photo and the winning contest entry is featured on the cover of our 2005 Pets of Alexandria calendar. Proceeds from this annual event benefit the League.

Our Special Events Committee and so many volunteers make the Canine Games a fun event for all who attend!

2004 Event Sponsors: Alexandria Animal Hospital, Olde Towne School For Dogs, Belle Haven Animal Medical Center, Breeder's Choice Pet Food, Fort Hunt Animal Hospital, Mount Vernon Voice, Fox & Hounds Ltd., Fur-Get Me Not Pet Care, Hydrant Dog Barkery & Boutique, Long Fence, Olde Towne Pet Resort, Hayfield Animal Hospital, VCA Old Town Animal Hospital, Self Storage Plus and WMAL.

In-Kind Donations: Bugsy's Pizza, CarrHomes, Del Ray Dreamery, FBI Flyball Invaders, Misha's Coffee House, Old Town Post Box, Penske Truck Rentals, Randy Worden Rentals and Scout's Sensational Treats.

2004 Annual Dinner Celebrates Caring

Three hundred people gathered on November 13 at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites to "Celebrate Caring" at the League's Annual Dinner & Silent Auction. The silent auction was better than ever, with bids totaling over \$17,000! In the spirit of the evening, PetSage provided each guest with a gift bag full of goodies and guest speaker Colman McCarthy proved inspirational by reminding us all that it's not enough just to say you care, it takes action to bring about change.

Thank you to following sponsors:

Best Friends: Alexandria Animal Hospital, Patricia Fitzgibbons, Fox & Hounds Ltd., Gayla & Mike Horn, Gordon Kromberg, PetSage and Katherine Ward.

Cat's Meow: Mount Vernon Voice and VCA Old Town Animal Hospital.

Fine Feathered Friends: Chesapeake Veterinary Cardiology, DC Smiles, Peter & Melanie DeMayo, Elpaw Veterinary Clinic, Dan Herbers, Diann Hicks, Mrs. Freeman Jones and Giovanna Sparagna.

Special Thanks to the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, ABR Mailing Services, Blair, Inc., Brecher Design Group, Suburban Printing, VetScribe Solutions Ltd., Carol Carson, Peter DeMayo, Tammy Kukla, Fran & Susan Mardula, Deidre Schexnayder and Sandy Yamamoto.

2004 PAWSitive Impact Awards



At our Annual Dinner & Silent Auction in November, PAWSitive Impact Awards were presented to a select group of people whose compassion and dedication has truly made a difference in the lives of animals. From left to right: League President Kevin Byrne with Carol Carson, Aileen Selmececi, Christine Matthews, and John Harter. Not shown are Yong and Janet Choi, owners of Ecco Cafe.

2004 at a Glance

It was a busy year at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter! We started it off right by breaking our own record for number of animals adopted in one month. Below are the numbers of animals we received in 2004, not including wildlife.

- 3660 animals received at Shelter
- 1,391 animals adopted into permanent homes
- 303 lost pets returned to their owners

Most of the animals received are dogs and cats, but there were some unusual visitors as well, including a Caiman (a type of crocodile), a stray chinchilla, and seven lizards. As a proactive effort to reduce the number of animals received at the Shelter, all of the League's programs emphasize education about pet care and the importance of spay/neuter.

Gifts to the League

Your tax-deductible donation can be mailed in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope or sent to: AWLA, 4101 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. Gifts can also be made online at www.alexandrianimals.org. To learn about other giving opportunities, please contact our Development Office at 703/838-4774 x206. Thank you!

spotlight on volunteers

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is very fortunate to have such a great bunch of energetic, committed, and loyal volunteers! Our volunteers play many roles each day including making sure every animal has nice warm bedding, exercise and plenty of toys. Our dog walkers are always greeted with happy wagging tails when they walk through the kennel doors and our cats and other small animals are provided with plenty of TLC. A sincere thanks to ALL of our volunteers!



When people walk through the Shelter doors, they are greeted with a big smile and a cheery "hello!" **Marnie Moore** has been volunteering with the League for over two years and works at our front desk. Not only does Marnie meet and greet folks, she performs duties critical to the well-being of animals and people in our community.

"I have been with the shelter a little over 2 years. I work at the front desk, greeting people, answering questions, answering the phone and helping to complete the paper work for the adoptive parents. I really like working at the Shelter; I like the people I work with, love the animals and love seeing them go to new homes. I also enjoy helping people who have lost their pets or have concerns about them. I think the people who work at the League are great! Those in kennels, animal control, the ladies I work with at the front desk, the administrative office and the many volunteers."

Diann Hohenthauer joined the League last year as a volunteer. She shares her home with four wonderful cats, two of whom have been adopted from the League. Diann's love of animals, energy and willingness to learn new things has allowed her to put her talents to good use in many different positions, including cat companion and adoption specialist. In fact, Diann will jump in and help out wherever help is needed!

Diann also helps with many of our special events, including the St. Patrick's Day Fun Dog Show, Canine Games, Feline Follies, and our Summer Camp! What would we do without Diann?!



"I enjoy making friends with people who feel similarly about the welfare of animals and have made the decision to put their feelings into action. In addition, there is a real sense of satisfaction in making a difference in the lives of Alexandria's animals and people.

The best times are when people have completed the application

process and have come in to pick up their adopted companions. They are so excited! It's extra special when an animal that has been living at the shelter for a long time finds the right home. I'm proud of the part I play in seeing our animals go to wonderful, permanent homes. There are so many ways to contribute to animal welfare through the League. Every contribution, every donation, every volunteer position results in better lives for the animals."

When you see our sparkling clean dog kennels and cages, with warm bedding, toys and food, you can be sure that **Diane Reece** has played a big part in that! For the past two years, she has spent every weekend power washing our kennels, keeping the washer and dryers full and spinning, and making sure all our animals have plenty of fresh water to drink. Then, once the kennel work is done, Diane heads over to walk and socialize our dogs. After the pooches have had time and fun stretching their paws, it's time for the cats to enjoy Diane's TLC!



"I began volunteering here because I love animals, and wanted to do something constructive, positive, and fun. I love knowing I'm making the lives of disadvantaged and transitioning animals better. They really respond to us and crave human contact. I also love working with the shelter staff and fellow volunteers. The shelter's training programs and videos really taught me a lot more about how to care and interact with the dogs and cats. Recently I was walking a dog up to the doggie park. On the way back, while he stopped to sniff something, I began petting him and talking to him as I usually do to help make each dog's stay at the shelter more pleasant. He then just leaned up against my legs in total affection and appreciation, and stayed there for a little while--like a doggie hug. I felt so blessed that he trusted me and that he had picked me as a cherished friend the first day we met." Diane shares her home with 2 awesome cats: Chester and Magnolia.

In the past three years volunteering at the League, **Misty Stahr** has been a cat companion, dog walker, worked on special projects and special events! Currently, Misty's big smile and warm heart has all the dogs jumping for happiness. When Misty walks into the kennels, tails are wagging because it's time for happy walks!

"When I started volunteering at the Shelter, I assisted with license renewals and then I worked in the cat room. While in the cat room I groomed the cats and answered various questions from visitors. Last summer I started walking dogs. It is the highlight of my week to walk the dogs; they are always so excited to see me. No matter what kind of day I have had, the dogs always put me in a better mood. I get so excited when I find out a dog has a home visit, because I know he/she may soon be with a loving owner. I also volunteer at the special events like the Canine Games. Who wouldn't love watching dogs and their owners participate in bonding activities?" Misty lives with two adorable ferrets, Lilo and Stitch, that she adopted from the League.



To learn more about the League's volunteer program, visit our website or call 703-838-4774, ext. 322.

Caring About Cody (continued from page 1)

neighborhood would open the front gate, call the dog out, and then throw rocks at him. He wasn't neutered and we had already learned that he had been neglected.

One evening, Cody scratched his neck so hard that he ripped a long wound in it, which just wouldn't stop bleeding because his skin was just so thin and unhealthy. We rushed him to the emergency hospital. It would have seemed appropriate for him to have been aggressive or frustrated in such a busy place, especially in the presence of young children. Out of the blue, a young girl plopped down next to Cody and (before anyone could react) she put her hand on his head. Cody started wagging his tail happily and put his head on her lap in delight--What an amazing sight! This dog, who had endured having rocks thrown at him by kids on a regular basis, thought that this young girl was just wonderful. Moments like this make us realize how forgiving and trusting these animals can be.

The next day, we were finally able to reach Cody's owners, who told us that they didn't want to pay the medical bill, they didn't really want him and that we could keep him.

Over the next few days, Cody started to show a great deal of improvement, enough that we could do his behavior evaluation without him scratching all the way through it! He proved to be a charming gentleman and again showed us that, despite his former life, he was very willing to forgive and to trust. We learned that he liked to cuddle, he liked to be brushed, and that he really enjoyed playing with toys.

When we put him up for adoption, we knew it was going to take a special family to fall in love with Cody. He still didn't look very good. He had many bald, raw spots on his body that were healing. His ears were still inflamed, although now they were just pink as opposed to the fire-red color they had been when we found him. He was going to need someone who would be willing to monitor the progress of his skin infection, treat it as necessary and perhaps deal with it on a long-term basis.

What happened next is one of those stories that we marvel about. The Morgan family was not looking for a dog (at least Mrs. Morgan wasn't). Her two adult sons were home from college for winter break and were really encouraging their parents to get a dog. The Morgans had always had Cocker Spaniels, and their last one had passed away a few years ago. Julie Morgan was just not sure that she was ready for another dog, but somehow her sons convinced the Morgans to visit our Shelter. When they came in, we pointed them in the direction of the adoptable dogs and after a few moments they came back out, asking to visit with Cody. Nothing we said about this dog's former life and his medical needs could dampen the light shining in Julie's eyes.

One of our adoption counselors conducted a home visit the next day. Afterwards she was certain that the Morgans would do everything possible for Cody. They picked him up that afternoon and Cody's life changed forever.

He is a gentleman, and extraordinarily well-behaved. Julie tells us that she can't imagine why someone wouldn't let him in the house because he's been so well-mannered. He is friendly, tolerant, good-natured, and as she says, "just the dearest thing!" After a recent visit with a specialist, they think his skin condition is finally under control. He has learned a few tricks and has earned a spot in our hearts forever.

canine contrasts

by Lesa Miller, Community Outreach Coordinator



We live by them every day, but it is sometimes difficult to appreciate the many advantages of our local laws relating to animals in Alexandria. I recently traveled to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, and

the contrast between our neighboring country and our own community was startling. Having always heard stories about the stray dogs running loose in the streets of Mexico, my travels to more rural parts proved those "stories" true.

They weren't in large packs, but in small groups of two to five dogs. They were sleeping in parks, loitering around sympathetic tourists at Mayan ruins while shyly begging for scraps, or on route to parts unknown. Their coats were not clean and shiny, their ribs more apparent, and their eyes lacking trust more than the average American dog. They wore no identification of any kind. Any quick movement would cause some to sprint away, tails tucked and ears back. Others seemed more eager for physical contact, which I fought hard to resist. (Since these dogs have no vaccine history, one bite or scratch would result in a number of unpleasant post-exposure rabies shots.) There are no apparent animal control laws there to keep "problem" animals in check or protect animals from acts of cruelty. The poor economic conditions for so many don't allow much room for benevolent gestures on a grand scale--only individual acts of kindness. I did see a veterinary clinic in the downtown area, but am uncertain if it was actually open for business. The door and windows appeared barred up, perhaps for security reasons. Nonetheless, it was not inviting and user-friendly like most animal hospitals we have in the Alexandria area.



In the past 10 years, the U.S. has made considerable headway with regard to improving animal protection standards; most of this country is fortunate enough to have a set of codes by which it sets standards and guidelines to help protect animals and people. Many other countries do not, and consequently, methods of control vary greatly from city to city, region to region. One thing is certain: the few laws that govern companion animals there and those that govern them here are extremely disproportionate. Organizations like the League reflect humane philosophies and practices. I can only hope that our efforts will set an example for other countries to follow--for the sake of its animals and people.

Help Light Chewie's Birthday Candles – Again!



Last year, the candles on Chewie's Birthday cake brightened up the Shelter lobby. Every donation made in March will be represented with a candle for Chewie.

Our League mascot, Chewie the cat, turns 14 years old in March. To help celebrate this special occasion, every monetary donation made to the League in March will be represented by a candle on a giant (non-edible) cake displayed in the Shelter lobby. Of course, donations can also be made specifically in honor of Chewie. Last year, Chewie's friends plastered his cake with so many candles so that it was difficult to see any cake at all! All those candles brightened up the Shelter lobby and the donations helped the League care for homeless animals.

We want to make Chewie's 14th Birthday even brighter. Donations can be made in the enclosed envelope, at the Shelter or by calling 703-838-4774 and pressing '0' to reach the receptionist. Thank you!

We'd love to help make your pet's Birthday special, too! Enroll your pet in our **Best Friend Birthday Club**. Details and

an enrollment form can be found on our website and are also available at the Shelter. Club membership is \$10 and funds many of the League's programs and services.

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