

city memorials  
10-27-09



Dear Mayor, City Council Members, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Evans, Mr. Mandley and Ms. Boyd:

Thank you for forwarding Ms. Czop's email regarding the AWLA to us. We have responded to Ms. Czop's highly critical but inaccurate and misrepresentative blog when we first were made aware of it, and have since responded to the few concerned emails and phone calls we received that were generated by her blog. Her response to our letter (reviewed by Tony Castrilli and Andrea Blackford) that we posted on her blog as well as emailed to her is pasted below:

Thank you for sending. I do not restrict the comment lengths, every website has limitations, and I have no control over that. Please recheck our email traffic; there is no mention of a tour. I did not reject anything, all I said was that email was easier than a phone call. I've been to your shelter numerous times and actually did a fundraiser for you about 18 months ago before I learned about the euthanasia numbers. Your statements about me were, ironically, misinformed. I've posted below my response to your comments; I plan on chatting with City Council at this point. If you feel like addressing the actual issue of your testing methods and your lack of work with rescues (both questions I asked before I wrote the story), I'd be happy to revisit, but the response from the shelter has shown me that I need to do more than just speak with you to help the animals in Alexandria.

We are more than happy to invite the Mayor, City Council, City Manager's Office, General Services or other agency to visit the shelter and gain a greater understanding of our policies and procedures. We believe that you will find that the League serves both the citizens and the animals of our community well and that our policies and practices are based on nationally accepted standards and are consistent with those of other area animal shelters. We would like to correct two inaccuracies in Ms. Czop's email below:

1. "It makes no sense for taxpayers to pay to kill dogs when there are rescue groups and No Kill shelters willing to save that animal's life at private expense."

The AWLA works with numerous humane organizations in our area. In talking to these groups, we often find that they themselves limit intake to only the most adoptable animals—young, healthy animals with no behavior concerns. Even healthy and behaviorally sound dogs whose owners can no longer keep them are

often turned away from rescue groups or "no kill" shelters because their owners are told that they must wait weeks or even months before the group is able to admit the animal. These owners, who have been turned away from other groups, often come to the League because they know we will take their pet.

2. "The euthanasia numbers reflect two problems. First, many of the animals being killed are not aggressive and secondly, a sloppy temperament test includes the possible (*sic*) that both friendly dogs are being killed and truly vicious ones are slipping through the cracks and being put up for adoption. You want a test with rigor that can do both, as well as an administrator that can thoughtfully produce reliable results. "

As we stated in our correspondence with Delegate Englin:

As an open admission shelter, we never turn an animal away regardless of the animal's behavioral or medical issues. However, we also have a legal as well as ethical responsibility to make sure that every animal adopted from our shelter is not an aggressive animal who may inflict injury or death to the family that adopted that animal or to visitors or neighbors of that family. The majority of the dogs euthanized (69 of 76) in June 2009 (the month cited in Ms. Czop's article) were evaluated several times by our certified and well-qualified Behavior and Training Manager and two to three other staff members as well as one of our Visiting Veterinarians; and 6 were found to have major health problems, 3 were heartworm positive (treatments for heartworm run between \$600 and \$1000), 5 were advanced in age and had health issues, and the rest were euthanized due to behavioral issues ranging from severe separation anxiety, unsocialized (a critical factor in a dog's early life and his/her ability to bond with the owner), or highly aggressive to people and/or other animals.

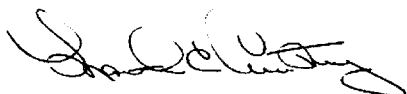
Our Behavior and Training Manager is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer and is currently attending the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) annual conference in Oakland, CA. The APDT's certification and ongoing education programs include training by world-renown veterinary and applied animal behavior experts whose methods greatly contribute to the League's training and evaluation principles.

The evaluation protocol implemented at the AWLA is modeled after and is in line with evaluation procedures at other reputable open-door shelters across the country such as Marin County Humane Society, the Potter League for Animals, the Denver Dumb Friends League, Monadnock Humane Society, Rondout Valley Animals for Adoption and others. Since January, our Behavior and Training Manager has visited and observed evaluations at ten of the most respected humane organizations to ensure that our evaluation procedures are true to industry standards. Moreover, we want to be sure that we provide potential adopters with the best information possible regarding their new family members.

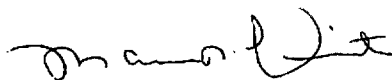
Almost all dogs, excepting those with severe aggression or major health problems, are evaluated several times with different staff present and different stimuli to ensure that we are making sound assessments of each individual

animal. Decisions on whether a dog should be moved into our adoption program, evaluated again, moved into foster care, or euthanized are also made by a team of staff members from three different departments to ensure that no "friendly dogs are being killed" and no "truly vicious ones are slipping through the cracks and being put up for adoption," as Ms. Czop alleged.

The AWLA considers itself to be a progressive organization, open to new ideas and always looking for the best methods to care for animals and while providing needed services to our community. We welcome suggestions and are happy to meet with any interested community members; however, we stand by our sheltering decisions which are based on years of actual study and experience. We are disappointed that Ms. Czop continues to make incendiary comments while still declining our offer to visit the shelter and engage in true dialogue. We appreciate the City's support and backing as we address these unfounded claims. As always, our door remains open, should you have any questions.



Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director



Maurice R. Levite  
Chairman, Board of Directors

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria  
703-838-4774

Monthly Animal Intake - Dogs and Cats - 2008 & 2009									
2008 Dogs					2009 Dogs				
Month	Stray	Own Rlq	Trns In	Total	Stray	Own Rlq	Trns In	Total	% increase
Jan	32	49	5	86	20	44	26	90	5%
Feb	14	43	5	62	39	44	7	90	45%
Mar	20	46	7	73	23	45	10	78	7%
Apr	19	55	16	90	26	64	19	109	21%
May	39	48	5	92	22	40	14	76	-21%
Jun	18	58	9	85	31	65	22	119	40%
Jul	26	61	13	100	28	53	10	94	-6%
Aug	24	50	7	81	25	73	26	124	35%
Sept	23	45	6	76	26	52	18	98	23%
Oct									
Nov									
Dec									
Total									
2008 Cats					2009 Cats				
	Stray	Own Rlq	Trns In	Total	Stray	Own Rel	Trns In	Total	
Jan	18	54	6	78	14	59	12	85	9%
Feb	14	41	9	64	42	32	9	83	30%
Mar	16	43	23	82	26	66	10	102	24%
Apr	52	44	10	106	53	78	5	136	28%
May	41	61	8	110	33	92	0	125	13.60%
Jun	40	68	5	118	46	97	2	145	23%
Jul	30	56	9	95	37	84	4	125	24%
Aug	81	69	31	181	53	104	0	157	-13%
Sept	76	76	1	153	67	103	19	210	27%
Oct									
Nov									
Dec									

[illegible]



# AWL OF ARLINGTON

## Adoptions

*Our total adoptions increased this year from 1,186 in FY2008 to 1,219. We significantly increased our transfers of small companion animals to rescue groups from 77 in fiscal 2008 to 131 this year. We also increased our transfers in from other shelters and rescue groups from 76 dogs and 75 cats in 2008 to 100 dogs and 104 cats.*

*The staff works hard to help adopters choose pets that will become members of the family. We provide post-adoption support and counseling for the lifetime of the pet. In fiscal 2009 we held dog obedience classes in the League's education room for 31 dogs and their adopters.*

### Animals Sheltered in Fiscal 2009

INTAKE	DOGS	CATS	SMALL COMPANION ANIMALS
Beginning shelter count -July 1, 2008	22	86	52
Animals in foster care	0	22	0
Owner surrenders & strays	655	1158	337
Transfers from other shelters & rescues	100	104	17
Total Intake + beginning count	777	1370	406
OUTCOME			
Adopted	315	765	139
Returned to owner	272	62	9
Transferred to rescue group or shelter	15	3	131
Euthanized due to health or behavior*	141	356	86
Died in shelter, in foster, or at vet	7	21	11
Total outcomes	750	1207	376
Ending shelter count-June 30, 2009	26	110	30
Animals in Foster Care	1	53	0
Total outcome + fosters + ending count	777	1370	406
Positive outcome rate (Adoptions, returns to owner, and transfers divided by total outcomes)	80%	69%	74%
Average days in shelter (Does not include time in foster care)	13	20	45
The League provided at no charge owner requested euthanasia for health or behavior*	105	93	17

\*21 small companion animals were euthanized due to a lack of space and adoption interest



Celebrate **Adopt-A-Dog Month** at  
the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria!  
Visit us at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter or  
see us at these upcoming events:



**October 1<sup>st</sup> First Thursday** in Del Ray (6 - 9 pm along Mount Vernon Ave, Alexandria). Meet adoptable dogs and bring your questions to League staff at Barkley Square (2006 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria).



**Oct 10<sup>th</sup> All Paws on Deck** (2- 5 pm) at Mango Mike's (4580 Duke St., Alexandria). Dogs are welcome. A raffle and lots of fun!



**October 13<sup>th</sup> Community Builder Award Ceremony** (reception begins at 6:30 pm) at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial building.



**October 18<sup>th</sup> Reunion** for canine AWLA graduates (2 - 5 pm at the shelter). Did you adopt your pooch from the League? Come back for an afternoon of fun, dog games, and photo ops with other shelter graduates, League staff, and volunteers.



**October 29<sup>th</sup> HOWLoween** at Hotel Monaco from 6 - 8 pm (480 King St., Alexandria). All dogs are invited to this happy hour. Costumes for people and their pets are encouraged! Donations will help our shelter friends.



**October 25<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> Trick or Treat Week** at the League (during regular visiting hours). Bring a box of unopened dog or cat treats to share with shelter residents. Come in costume on Halloween and receive a treat in return!

4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304  
[www.alexandrianimals.org](http://www.alexandrianimals.org)  
703.838.4774



Animal Welfare League  
of Alexandria



fall

# animal welfare matters

A publication of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria



Animal Welfare League  
of Alexandria

## Our Mission

"To inspire compassion for all living things, to provide shelter to animals in need, and to promote adoptions, animal welfare, and responsible pet ownership in our community."

## Vola Lawson Animal Shelter: Hours for Animal Visitation\*

Monday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tuesday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Thursday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Friday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Saturday & Sunday	12:00 noon - 5:00 PM

\*The shelter is closed for animal visitation on Wednesdays

We are open for surrendering owned and stray animals and other emergencies from 9:00am to 8:00pm Monday-Friday and 9:00am to 5:00pm Saturday-Sunday.

After more than 13 years of tireless work, the AWLA's former logo has gracefully retired. Please look for our new logo on our printed materials and website. Our newly-designed mascots will be busy representing the League throughout the community.

## From Puppy Mill to AWLA – Thirteen Success Stories



*After living in a puppy mill, Wheat needed time to become accustomed to human handling. Now she is part of a loving family.*

Following a two-month undercover investigation, The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Humane Society of the United States seized more than 200 dogs from Almost Heaven Kennels on June 23. The dogs were then transferred to several different humane organizations operating in the Mid-Atlantic region, including the AWLA.

Staff members worked to gain the trust of each dog who ranged in size from a 10 pound miniature Poodle to a 70 pound Labradoodle. In order to help the dogs become acclimated to human interaction, staff and volunteers sat in the dogs' kennels with them, fed them tasty treats, took them for walks and allowed the dogs to spend time in staff members' offices relaxing on dog beds with their human office mates.

The dogs responded very well to their new human friends and were available for adoption within weeks of their seizure from the puppy mill. Most of the dogs were adult female poodle or poodle mixes, and all of the dogs needed bathing, grooming and medical care. All were altered prior to their placement in new homes.

On June 25, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria accepted custody of 13 dogs from a puppy mill in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. After weeks of extensive care and attention from AWLA staff and volunteers, all 13 dogs found loving adopters in the Alexandria area. These dogs were among the more than 200 kept in deplorable living conditions in a Pennsylvania puppy mill before their June rescue.

AWLA Executive Director Martha C. Armstrong said, "The AWLA volunteered to assist in sheltering these dogs who were rescued from a life without hope of having a loving family. We were committed to doing everything in our power to assist these animals to find a forever home where they would be valued as family members, not simply as breeding machines."

*Coco's adopter calls her "a complete delight."*



*continued on page 6*



## *A Message from the Executive Director & Chairman of the Board*



*Each year, we typically receive 3000 homeless or surrendered animals – dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, hamsters, ferrets and more.*

*Our intake numbers are up by almost 30 % in the first seven months of 2009.*

**A**s most of our friends know, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter under contract for the City of Alexandria. The AWLA is focused on community responsiveness, professional animal care, dynamic education, compatible adoptions and a philosophy of compassion in all we do. We are proud to be an open admission shelter which means that we welcome any animal brought to us in search of food, shelter and loving care.

Each year, we typically receive 3000 homeless or surrendered animals – dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, hamsters, ferrets and more. Many are brought in by our animal control officers or residents who find a stray in their backyard or on the street. Others are relinquished because of the pet's medical or behavioral issues or because their owner was moving and could not take the pet to the new home.

The economic downturn has greatly increased the numbers of animals coming into shelters across the country. The ALWA is no exception. Our intake numbers are up by almost 30 % in the first seven months of 2009. Most of the increase can be attributed to pet owners who have lost their jobs, lost their homes or simply cannot afford to care for their pets anymore.

The rising number of pet owners and their companion animals seeking assistance from the AWLA has subsequently increased our costs to provide care and shelter for our furred, feathered, or finned friends. Our operating budget for FY 2010 is \$2.4 million. We receive \$1.054 million from the City of Alexandria to provide animal care, control and sheltering services for our community. The League must raise almost 3/5 of its total operating revenue to continue to provide the same level of care that we have always given to our animals.

Your support of the Animal Welfare League is more critical than ever in this tight economy. We appreciate your past gifts and hope that you will continue to give generously and encourage your friends and family to support our vital work of caring for homeless animals and finding forever families for each one of them.

Thank you.

Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director

Maurice Levite  
Chairman of the Board

### *Board of Directors*

**Dr. Sophia Chiang**

**Linda Couture**

**Gayla Dodd Horn**

*Vice Chair*



## Sarah's Fund Leads to a Great Recovery

Many people know that the AWLA vaccinates and sterilizes all pets before they head to their adoptive homes. Sometimes, however, we meet pets who need more extensive care. Sarah's Fund is a specially-designated fund which enables the League to provide additional medical care for pets who need it most—including one loveable young puppy from West Virginia.

Last winter, the League welcomed a mixed-breed puppy named Milkshake. This young dog was brought to us from the Potomac Highlands Animal Rescue (PHAR) based in Mathias, West Virginia. While hiking, two visitors to PHAR's service area found a puppy struggling along the roadside. She appeared to have been hit by a car and was in considerable pain. While driving for help, Milkshake's new friends shared their lunch leftovers with the injured puppy—most of which was a milkshake—and so she was named!

Local police connected the visitors with PHAR. Realizing that she would need treatment, PHAR volunteers thought that the puppy's best chance would be to make the journey to the League, and hoped we could help her. After her arrival at the League and a medical examination, it became clear that Milkshake would need extensive surgery to repair a badly broken hip, but was expected to make a complete recovery.

With the help of Sarah's Fund, the League was able to schedule Milkshake's surgery. Following her surgery, volunteers and staff members assisted Milkshake every day with physical therapy and enrichment activities to keep her mind active while she recuperated.

Finally, after almost three months, Milkshake found her dream adopter: Stephanie Schwartz, a physical therapist! Together, Milkshake, now called Raja, and Stephanie continue her stretching exercises to ensure that Raja retains leg strength and flexibility. Raja is doing well and running all over the house like a true adolescent.



*Now that she is back on her feet, Raja races around her new home and keeps her adopter excellent company.*

"Believe it or not, though, her favorite thing is to curl up in your lap. She loves to snuggle," Stephanie said.

Stephanie also reported that Raja is no longer the little puppy we knew. Raja now weighs 80 pounds—50 pounds bigger than when she first arrived at the League.

Stephanie and Raja also attended Charm School at the League and continue her training at home. Raja can now shake hands, sit pretty and is learning how to roll over. She also likes to carry her own leash when going for walks!

The League receives pets with many different medical conditions, some more serious than others. In cases such as Raja's, a medical procedure can make all the difference for an adoptable pet, and the League will stretch resources to help every animal we can.

Donations to Sarah's Fund directly help pets who need this extra medical attention and give the League the ability to provide the best care possible for our animals in need. Please consider making a donation to Sarah's Fund (or one of our other dedicated funds listed below), and know that pets like Raja will benefit!

Other dedicated funds at the League:

**Seniors' Fund** provides routine medical procedures (such as dental cleanings and blood work) for older pets.

**Spay/Neuter Fund** helps community members be able to afford sterilization of their pet.

ctors

Gordon Kromberg  
Nancy Lasley  
Vola Lawson  
Maurice Levite  
Chair

Cathy Anne "CAM"  
MacCormac  
Carlos Mejias  
Rosemary Pollard  
Secretary

Deidre Schexnayder  
Treasurer  
Tykie Tobin  
Sandy Yamamoto





*Robert Frost found a new home during our Certified, Pre-Owned Cats event.*

## Certified Pre-Owned Cats

Like many shelters across the country, the AWLA expects a large influx of kittens, young cats and pregnant or nursing mother cats from April through August, traditionally known as "Kitten Season." This year, though, kittens began to arrive at the League in February—launching a kitten

season made remarkable by its length and the number of cats appearing at the shelter. In response, League staff and volunteers found ways to market our fantastic felines to potential adopters.

To celebrate June's Adopt-a-Cat Month, staff and volunteers generated creative ways to reach adopters and market our adult cats—who are often overlooked during kitten season. We needed to highlight the advantages of adopting adult cats. This led us to our Certified Pre-Owned Cats promotion.

Working with our friends at Lindsay Lexus and Don Beyer Volvo, we devised a marketing strategy that tied the

attributes of our "previously owned" adult cats to those of luxury automobiles. We created flyers, posters, newspaper ads, and press releases that highlighted some of the many "extras" our cats come equipped with, such as built-in lap warmers, up to 9600 PPMs (purrs per minute), keyless starters, racing stripes, and more.

At a press conference held at the shelter on May 29th, we featured luxury pre-owned vehicles from Lindsay Lexus and Don Beyer Volvo/Don Beyer Range Rover in the shelter parking lot with comparably equipped luxury Pre-Owned Cats in the League's "cat showroom." Shelter staff and visiting Veterinarian Dr. Katy Nelson provided the media with more information about the benefits of adopting adult animals.

The story was aired several times on NBC4 newscasts on May 29th and 30th and was later covered as part of an extensive story by the CBS Early Show's Dr. Debbye Turner Bell on the impact that the recession has had on pet owners.

Our Certified, Pre-Owned Cats promotion helped hundreds of our feline friends find homes this summer.

## Wish List: Big & Small

In addition to our normal wish list of items needed to help animals....such as blankets and towels, bath mats and throw rugs and good old peanut butter..... we thought we would "dream big" and ask for a few larger items as well. For this newsletter, we have TWO wish lists for our generous donors and supporters to choose from:

### AWLA's Small Wish List

- Washable blankets and comforters (no sheets, down comforters, or pillows, please)
- Towels
- Washable bath mats, throw rugs
- Gently-used, washable cat beds
- Washable cat toys
- Kong-type toys
- Paper towels
- Peanut butter
- Hot dogs
- Canned broth, chicken soup
- 3/8", cotton, unbleached, un-dyed, rope (for home-made cat toys)
- Gift cards to Pet Supply Stores, Target, Home Depot (for odds and ends that always need replacement and upkeep).

### AWLA's Big Wish List

- Industrial sized shredder – The League currently pays \$41 per box to shred and recycle confidential documents. A shredder will enable us to do this ourselves. Cost: \$800 to \$1200
- Refrigerator/freezer – The fridge where we keep special treats and food for our canine and feline friends is ready to retire. A new or gently-used fridge would keep things fresh for our shelter friends. Cost - \$1,200
- Cat condos – We would love to purchase more cat condos to accommodate our increased cat population at the shelter. Cost - \$750 per condo. The League would like six of these condos.
- Small animal housing – What do you do when 13 guinea pigs are relinquished to the shelter in one day? Hope for a donor who will sponsor the purchase of one or more small animal habitats! Cost - \$3500 per unit for six housing areas. The League would like four of these units.
- Stainless steel cages for our isolation areas – Helping our animals recover from illness requires good veterinary care and clean housing. Some of our stainless steel cages are rather old and need to be replaced. Cost - \$1500 per 6 unit cage. The League would like six units.



## A Word to the Wise

By Katy J. Nelson, DVM

*As an annual sponsor to the AWLA, Alexandria Animal Hospital provides information on pet care and health for readers of the League's newsletter. Dr. Katy Nelson works at Alexandria Animal Hospital and also volunteers as a Visiting Veterinarian, helping animals at the League.*

During tough economic times, everyone watches their spending. We should never cut corners on our health or the health of our pets, however. Skimping on nutrition, heartworm prevention, flea and tick prevention, vaccinations, or routine dental cleanings should not be something that we even consider. Preventative medicine is critical to keeping pets healthy and happy.

Good nutrition is essential for a healthy pet. Ingredients in high quality pet foods help fight off disease, prevent nutritional deficiencies and promote the proper function of the digestive system. Improper feeding habits can lead to obesity, dental disease, heart disease, liver disease, pancreatitis, arthritis, and/or inflammation or bleeding in the intestines. Avoiding table scraps, high fat foods and foods that cause choking are simple ways to keep your pet healthy.

Periodontal disease is the most common ailment of domesticated animals. Infections from decaying teeth can spread directly to the sinus cavities or the eyes. Bacteria from dental infections and/or plaque accumulation can even spread to the heart, liver, kidneys or other internal organs. Preventative care, such as feeding the proper diet, regular tooth brushing and periodic check-ups should help to prevent formation of dental calculus, the leading cause of periodontal disease.

Many infectious diseases can be prevented or lessened in severity with a proper vaccination protocol. The vaccinations recommended for each pet depend on many factors such as your pet's risk of exposure to particular diseases and what diseases are common in the area in which you live. The best advice is to find a veterinarian whom you trust and follow his or her recommendation. Keep in mind that the veterinarian's examination at the time of your pet's vaccination is just as important to catch diseases early and begin therapy in a timely manner.

Finally, preventative medications should also take priority when caring for your pet. Many heartworm preventatives also guard against a number of intestinal parasites and are critical for both dogs and cats. Flea and tick preventatives are also extremely important as these parasites can carry of life-threatening diseases. Prevention is easy, inexpensive when calculated per dose, and can help to save your pet's life.

Although these suggestions may sound expensive at first, remember the old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." By investing in your pet's preventative care, you may be able to avoid a serious, and expensive, illness down the road.



## New Partnership Benefits AWLA Animals

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria recently joined forces with 1100 other animal shelters cross the country by partnering with Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc. as a Hill's Science Diet Shelter Partner.

Through this program, the League is supplied with Science Diet® pet food for our cats and dogs. New adopters are also given a free trial size bag of Hill's Science Diet when they go home with their new family member.

AWLA Executive Director Martha Armstrong also serves on the company's advisory board along with ten other CEOs of shelters across the country, including the leaders of the Dumb Friends League in Denver, the Houston SPCA, and the Potter League for Animals in Newport, Rhode Island.

Hill's is also sponsoring three major League fundraising events: Olde Towne Dogge Walke, Pets Calendar for 2010, and the 2009 Annual Dinner and Silent Auction. As with our other annual sponsors – Alexandria Animal Hospital, Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Old Town School for Dogs and Kingsview Animal Hospital, the League is extremely grateful for this valuable support. We welcome Hill's Pet Nutrition to our family of supporters.

Thank you, Hill's!





## PAWSitive Peers Bring Training Results



*Duchess is one of the many dogs helped by PAWSitive Peers.*

Last fall, a group of at-risk teens asked to volunteer at the AWLA. At the same time, Abbie Hubbard, AWLA Behavior and Training Manager, was developing a training program for dogs waiting for adoption. Eager for helping hands and excited at the prospect of youthful energy, Hubbard welcomed this group, called the PAWSitive Peers Training Club.

The PAWSitive Peers have worked with a variety of dogs in the past year—including one of their favorites: Duchess, a young Pit Bull mix. Many of the PAWSitive Peers are fascinated with Pit Bulls and eager to work with them. Duchess gave Hubbard the chance to talk with the teens about this often misunderstood breed.

Duchess was a typical adolescent dog. She was full of energy and often forgot herself around people, invading their personal space and overwhelming them with her zest for life. The PAWSitive Peers met her and immediately saw her potential.

"Training dogs using positive reinforcement is equally rewarding for both the trainer and dog," Hubbard says. "I knew the dogs would benefit from the

training and I hoped the teens would too. The biggest surprise is that I believe I have learned more from our teen trainers than they have from me."

Hubbard challenged the teens to reward Duchess for sitting as an alternative to jumping on people. In an hour and a half the teen trainers taught her to sit, crawl and speak on cue.

"They instantly connected with her", says Hubbard. "Where I might have stopped, they kept going. They saw her potential and then encouraged her to concentrate and really work. I was humbled by their faith in Duchess."

Duchess was adopted and returned due to extenuating circumstances. "I was worried that the teens would think we had failed her or worse, lose the faith they had in her," explains Hubbard.

Instead, the AWLA was able to offer an important lesson to the PAWSitive Peers; sometimes mistakes happen and when times are tough, we have to keep trying. Duchess spent a few more weeks at the AWLA working with the PAWSitive Peers. She is now happily enjoying her days with a new family, showing off her manners and tricks.

The PAWSitive Peers Training Club works with dogs on a weekly basis at the AWLA. Their open minds and can-do attitudes make a tremendous difference for our adoptable dogs.

## From Puppy Mill to AWLA – Thirteen Success Stories

**continued from page 1**

"Each dog was evaluated for physical and behavioral soundness and adoptability before being placed up for adoption. We're pleased to say that despite their rocky start in life, each dog was sweet and gentle and very anxious to join their new family," Armstrong said.

Dog lovers wanting to add a companion animal to their home should always avoid purchasing animals raised in puppy mill conditions. For those interested in a specific breed of dog, approximately one-third of the dogs available for adoption through the League are purebred, and many are under one year of age. If your ideal dog is not currently at the shelter, please check other area shelters or ask to be put in our request program to be notified if that type of dog becomes available for adoption.

*Stella is happy to be in her new adoptive home.*





# Partners in Helping Animals Locally and Globally

The AWLA is fortunate in the support we receive from our friends and community. The League is in constant communication with other area humane organizations and offers assistance when needed. Whenever we are able, we support other humane organizations—believing that homeless animals everywhere deserve our care and concern.

Locally, the AWLA has a long-standing partnership with the Potomac Highlands Animal Rescue (PHAR), helping to find homes for some of their adoptable animals. The League also has become acquainted with the work of two international animal welfare groups. In our own small way, we hope to promote animal welfare through every open avenue.

## Local Partners

For more than 13 years, the AWLA has partnered with the Potomac Highlands Animal Rescue (PHAR) based in Mathias, West Virginia. PHAR is completely volunteer-run and relies solely on donations to help hundreds of animals each year. PHAR does not have a shelter, and instead places adoptable dogs and cats in volunteers' foster homes. At any given point, PHAR has more than 150 pets in its care.

Many of PHAR's dogs and cats have never lived inside before. For example, PHAR takes in hounds who were unsuccessful hunters, litters of kittens born outside and dogs who have spent their lives chained to a tree or dog house. PHAR's hope for these pets is that they find comfort and love in their adoptive homes.

PHAR volunteer Chestina Merriner said that she wants people to realize these pets' potential to be excellent companions. Although they may need a few days to acclimate to their new homes, they adjust quickly and take the changes in stride.

When we are able, the League accepts animals from PHAR and makes them available through our adoption program. Because of our quicker turnover of adoptable pets, the League can welcome a limited number of pets (primarily dogs) from PHAR and help them find homes here in Northern Virginia.

Additionally, any donated items we are unable to use at the League are passed along to PHAR or local wildlife rehabilitators. Everything is put to good use!

## Global Partners

Through a long-time supporter, the League learned of two animal welfare groups operating overseas: Romania Animal Rescue and Afghan Stray Animal League. As in many developing countries, the overwhelming number of street dogs and feral cats make spay/neuter programs critically important. Both groups provide low-cost veterinary care and pet sterilization and also operate adoption programs for unwanted pets.

The League is exploring simple ways that we can help our shelter friends across the globe. Our first step was to transport a supply of dog collars which the League received from an out-of-business pet store. As we receive other item donations, the League will save those items which we cannot use, but that can be sent overseas.

To learn more about these groups, visit their websites at:

### **Romania Animal Rescue**

[www.romaniaanimalrescue.com](http://www.romaniaanimalrescue.com)

### **Afghan Stray Animal League**

[www.afghanstrayanimals.org](http://www.afghanstrayanimals.org)

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is proud to assist our fellow humane agencies by spreading the word about their good work on behalf of homeless animals and offer any assistance we can.







*After being found in a van by an animal control officer, Ling-Ling and Fortune were placed foster care.*

about cats found in a van. He found two flea-infested kittens, each weighing less than a pound. One kitten did not have a rear foot and was missing most of her tail.

After arriving at the League, the kittens were examined by animal care technicians. Both kittens suffered from upper respiratory infections, appeared to be three weeks old and needed to be bottle-fed. The kitten with the missing foot and tail presented additional concerns. All of these challenges could be better met by placing the kittens with a caring, knowledgeable foster caregiver. Claire Moran accepted the responsibility.

During their six weeks in foster care the kittens, named Ling-Ling and Fortune, grew to become affectionate and playful. At first they required bottle feedings every few hours around the clock. Soon they were taught to eat wet and then dry kitten

## Fostering Success for Ling-Ling and Fortune

Every journey begins with a first step. For two tiny kittens, the journey from the dangers of outdoor living to the League's foster program and into a loving, permanent home began in the arms of an animal control officer.

On a chilly afternoon in April, Officer Pete Fitzgerald responded to a citizen's call

food. Claire and her family nursed them through their illness and brought them to the League for a series of vaccinations.

Ling-Ling was seen by two visiting veterinarians who determined that her missing tail and foot, whether from an accident or birth defect, were not likely to create future problems. Both kittens were ready for their next step.



*Now called Koda and Inca, the two kittens have found the perfect home—and a great new feline friend, Merlot.*

The kittens were up for adoption for almost three weeks before they were spotted by Christina and Peter Caporale. The couple was looking for companionship for their older cat and found just what they were looking for in the two cuddly kittens. Two days later, the kittens were in their new home.

The kittens have new names and a wonderful new life. Now called Koda and Inca, they are one example of our foster program's ability to save at-risk animals.

If you would like to help animals by fostering, please contact our Foster Program Coordinator at 703/838-4774, extension 216.

## Upcoming Events

Fall is a festive time at the AWLA. We will be celebrating Adopt-A-Dog Month in October and then helping ALL our shelter friends find new homes in time for the holidays. Whether you are looking for a new friend or not, stop by the shelter for one—or all—of the following events.

### **Sunday, October 18, 2 to 5 p.m. Canine Reunion**

As part of Adopt-A-Dog Month, the AWLA welcomes all its canine graduates to come back to the shelter for an afternoon of games, treats and photos.

### **Sunday, October 25 to Saturday, October 31: Trick or Treat Week**

Help our shelter friends have some fun by bringing in treats for our pets all week. If you come to the shelter in costume on the 31st, you will receive a treat in return!

### **Sunday, November 8: Rabies and Microchip Clinic**

Volunteer veterinarians will administer rabies vaccinations and microchip pets for a reduced cost. One-year rabies vaccinations cost \$10 and microchips cost \$30. No appointment necessary.

### **Friday, November 13: Change Their Luck Day**

None of us are superstitious—we know how great black cats are! Adopt a black (or mostly black) cat and receive a LUCKY discount on Friday the 13th.

### **Friday, November 27: Black Friday**

Rather than spending all day in crowded shopping malls, why not come to the shelter for the cheer that only animals can bring? If you meet a new best friend and he or she happens to be the color black, all the better!

### **Saturday, December 5, 12 and 19:**

The shelter will be open from noon until midnight, with festivities beginning at 5 p.m. Spend your Saturday night at the shelter singing songs, watching movies and taking part in holiday-themed activities to benefit our shelter residents. These family-friendly nights are great opportunities to spread holiday cheer! If your group is interested in caroling, please call extension 245.





# animal welfare MATTERS

Summer 2009

## ABOUT THE LEAGUE

### OUR MISSION

"To inspire compassion for all living things, to provide shelter to animals in need, and to promote adoptions, animal welfare, and responsible pet ownership in our community."

### HOW TO REACH THE LEAGUE

Vola Lawson Animal Shelter  
4101 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
703-838-4774  
703-838-4862 (fax)

### BUSINESS HOURS

Monday through Friday:  
1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday:  
12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
The League is closed on  
Wednesdays for visiting  
animals and adoptions.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Officers:

Maurice Levite, Chair  
Gayla Dodd Horn, Vice Chair  
Deidre Shexnayder, Treasurer  
Rosemary Pollard, Secretary

#### Members:

Sophia Chiang, D.V.M.  
Linda Couture  
Gordon Kromberg  
Nancy Lasley  
Vola Lawson  
Cathy Anne "CAM" MacCormac  
Carlos Mejias  
Sandy Yamamoto

## League Welcomes New Executive Director



*Martha C. Armstrong with Alexandra,  
a League graduate.*

What's new at the League these days? A new executive director! The AWLA is pleased to welcome Martha C. Armstrong as the new executive director. Although Martha may be new to the League, she is neither new to sheltering, nor to the area.

Martha brings with her 32 years of experience as an animal sheltering professional. She has served as executive director of shelters in Tennessee, California and the nearby Animal Welfare League of Arlington. She has also held positions as

Director of Advocacy for the Massachusetts SPCA, and Senior Vice President of Companion Animals for the Humane Society of the United States.

Working as a consultant to shelters across the country for the past two years, Martha said, "I missed the day to day work of being in an animal shelter." When she heard from a friend that the AWLA was looking for a new executive director, Martha thought, "This is a golden opportunity," and sent the Board of Directors her resume.

Since her January 5th start date, Martha has been busy assessing the League's financial outlook in this tight economy as well as staffing needs and the demographics of the many different populations the League serves. Martha says she plans to advance the League's animal care and customer service programs, as well as to enhance the physical plant and fundraising programs.

Martha is very eager to spread the message that not only does the League have great animals for adoption, but the League also provides a variety of services to the community ranging from help with pet behavior problems to reduced-cost spay and neuter programs, extensive educational programs and fun opportunities for volunteering.

She hopes community members see the Shelter as, "Not a sad place, but a place for new beginnings."

Martha and her husband Bob have adopted four shelter dogs over the years. They currently share their home with Angus, an 8-year old black Labrador who was found as a stray in the summer of 2002.



### **ADOPTION PROGRAM**

Every year, the AWLA places more than 1,200 animals in new homes. In addition to cats and dogs, we place pet birds, guinea pigs, gerbils, snakes, turtles and many other pets. Each adoption includes a free wellness check with a local veterinarian, microchip identification, a consultation to discuss animal care and behavior and ongoing support as your pet acclimates to his or her new home.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL AND 24-HOUR ANIMAL ASSISTANCE**

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. Officers 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.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Each year, the League reunites hundreds of lost pets with their owners. If a pet is lost, please advise the pet owner to contact the League to file a lost report.

### **REDUCED-COST SPAY/NEUTER**

With the cooperation of local veterinarians, the League enables all pet owners to have their animals sterilized at a reduced cost. Certificates can be purchased at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter during regular business hours.

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

AWLA Volunteers provide a variety of services ranging from dog walking to cat socializing to assisting with special events and general office work. If you would like to explore volunteer opportunities with the League, please call 703-838-4774, extension 225.

### **DONATIONS**

The League is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and relies on tax-deductible donations to fund our programs and services. We also greatly appreciate items donated for our animals. For more information on giving to the League, please call our Director of Development at 703-838-4774, extension 206. United Way designee number: 8372 CFC designee number: 92767 CVC designee number: 8068

## Thanks to Alexandria Animal Hospital: AWLA's First Platinum Sponsor

Every day, Alexandria Animal Hospital supports the League—treating our sick and injured animals, sterilizing pets who are to be adopted and providing expert advice on a variety of pet health care concerns. The Hospital recently extended additional support to the League through an annual sponsorship. The League is pleased to announce that Alexandria Animal Hospital has become our first annual sponsor at the Platinum giving level.

Unique within the veterinary community, Alexandria Animal Hospital is a full-service companion animal practice that operates 24 hours a day and has been providing comprehensive medical, surgical and dental care since 1942. Like the League, Alexandria Animal Hospital strives to help individuals and families learn how to keep their pets happy and healthy throughout their lives.

For years, Alexandria Animal Hospital has partnered with the League. In 2007 and 2008 alone, the Hospital donated approximately \$100,000 per year in veterinary services for the animals in our care. Additionally, several AAH veterinarians volunteer their time as Visiting Veterinarians—diagnosing and treating animals on site at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. On both a professional and a personal level, everyone at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria truly appreciates this commitment to our animals and to the community.



*In addition to annual sponsorship, Alexandria Animal Hospital provides tremendous medical support to League residents. Speaker, a young Airedale puppy arrived at AAH with a severely fractured leg. After extensive surgery, AAH sent Speaker to the League where he recovered before being adopted by Susan and Fran Mardula, longtime AWLA supporters.*



## From Over the Fence at Alexandria Animal Hospital .....

### Alexandria Animal Hospital Fights Pet Obesity Through "Pawsitively Fit"

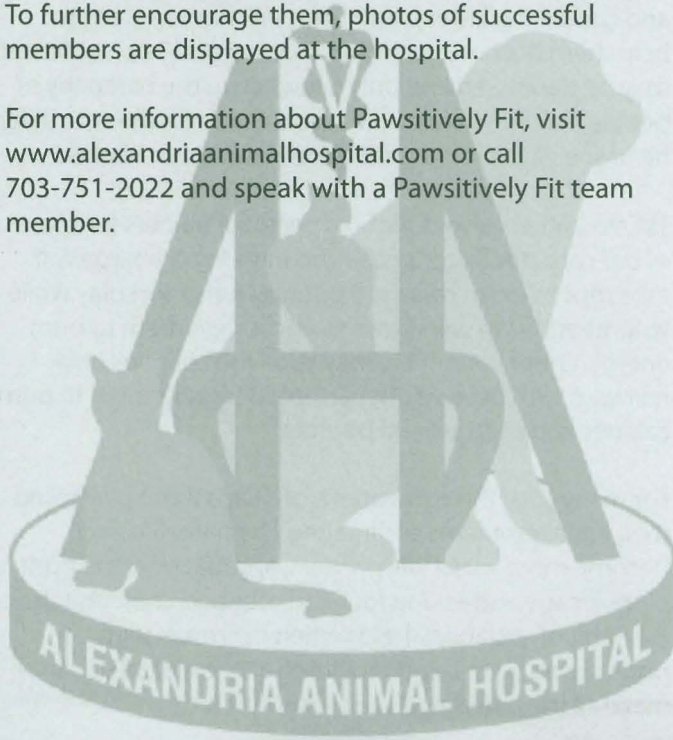
**A**s an annual sponsor to the AWLA, Alexandria Animal Hospital provides information on pet care and health for readers of the League's newsletter. If you would like more information about this program, please contact AAH directly.

Obesity is a major medical problem affecting dogs today. Overweight dogs are predisposed to injury, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The doctors at Alexandria Animal Hospital (AAH) are committed to helping patients and their owners maintain a healthier diet and lifestyle with a proven program of activities and special medications.

Last year, Alexandria Animal Hospital launched a fitness and weight loss program called Pawsitively Fit. The program consists of a veterinarian consultation and several follow up visits with a licensed veterinary technician. During these visits, the pet's health is assessed and a diet and exercise plan is designed for that particular pet. In addition, owners are given useful tools, counseling and support to help their pet meet the desired goal.

Pawsitively Fit has helped many owners change their feeding and activity habits, while making the weight loss process a positive experience for patients. To further encourage them, photos of successful members are displayed at the hospital.

For more information about Pawsitively Fit, visit [www.alexandriaanimalhospital.com](http://www.alexandriaanimalhospital.com) or call 703-751-2022 and speak with a Pawsitively Fit team member.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### JAY HOFFMAN

**T**he League extends sincere thanks to Hubert "Jay" Hoffman III and his family for their generous contributions to the League over the past year. The Hoffmans' love for animals and kind hearts have helped the AWLA reach even more animals and their owners in the Alexandria area.

At the League's Annual Dinner in October, Mr. Hoffman received the Pawsitive Impact Circle award, recognizing his commitment to animal welfare. More recently, with the loss of his mother, Peggy Lois Hoffman, the League has established a memorial fund in her name. Discussions of how best to allocate these funds are ongoing, but will honor Peggy's lifetime of dedication to animals.

Mr. Hoffman, a great animal lover and supporter of many animal welfare groups has made it possible for the League to purchase two transport vans: one to bring animals to local veterinarians for surgeries and another for the League's attendance at outreach events.

Always interested in our "special needs" cases, Mr. Hoffman helped several of our dogs requiring extraordinary medical care. Milkshake, a St. Bernard mix puppy had been hit by a car and needed significant hip surgery to allow her to walk. Several other dogs came to us with heartworm, requiring extensive treatment. The League is happy to report that all these dogs have been adopted and are enjoying life with their new families.

Mr. Hoffman has also dedicated funds for sterilization procedures for intact animals and extra blood screening for our older residents, to ensure their overall health.

Mr. Hoffman's care and dedication have helped hundreds of AWLA residents in the past year. The League is honored to partner with such a compassionate friend.



*Last summer, Brandy and four other dogs arrived at the League and tested positive for heartworm. Thanks to Mr. Hoffman's generous donation, all five dogs were treated and adopted into loving homes.*



## Dogs Star in AWLA Movie Night

Some of the League's volunteers have unusual dates planned: they are taking dogs to the movies!

Every month, the League hosts Movie Nights for adoptable dogs to spend the night lounging with volunteers eating popcorn and enjoying a fun movie. Most nights, however, the volunteers actually watch the movie, while their canine companions chew rawhides, work on Kong toys or simply fall asleep next to their volunteer.

Abbie Hubbard, the League's Behavior and Training Manager originally organized these nights as an opportunity for adoptable dogs to have a break from their kennels and relax with a human companion.

While our dogs certainly enjoy the walks they take with volunteers every day, they also relish the chance to sit on a comforter and snuggle with a warm friend. The room's calm, quiet atmosphere mimics a normal home, and the dogs are often able to relax more completely than when in their kennel, surrounded by the routine Shelter hustle and bustle.

Hubbard explained that every dog benefits from a night at the movies. Adolescent dogs need the opportunity to sit and settle. Dogs who have been at the League for a long period of time enjoy the break from the daily routine. Dogs with medical conditions or restricted exercise requirements (because they are recovering from surgery or are being treated for heartworm, for example) can spend relaxing time out of their kennel without expending too much energy.

Volunteers who have participated in Movie Night have been thrilled to help the dogs, while having a relaxing evening themselves.



*AWLA volunteer Olesya Pronyaeva and Raven enjoy some snacks while relaxing at a recent Movie Night.*

## TLC Program Helps Cats Make a Smooth Transition



*Angelina arrived at the League quite shy and reserved. After time in a staff office and attention from our TLC volunteers, Angelina's affectionate personality emerged and helped her to find great adopters.*

Imagine living in a comfortable home for several years, and then moving into a small cage for weeks, waiting for a new home. For many cats, this transition is difficult to make, and facing strangers every day is even harder. To help these cats acclimate to life at the League, Suzanne D'Alonzo, Animal Care Manager created the TLC Program.

A small group of volunteers with particular interest in helping special needs cats meet with D'Alonzo to review specific cat behaviors and handling techniques. These volunteers then work with resident cats who need extra socialization or time to acclimate to their new surroundings.

For example, a litter of semi-feral kittens may be comfortable being petted, but not held. Volunteers hold and cuddle the kittens, and even talk to the kittens to help them become used to human voices. Or, an older cat may be depressed and only eat when in the company of people. TLC volunteers will sit and chat with the cat while he or she eats, providing the companionship needed.

TLC volunteers also double as personal trainers for some of our cats. Adolescent cats who have extra energy will take trips to exam rooms to bounce, jump and play while volunteers wave wand toys to encourage them to burn energy. Other volunteers may stroll the League's back hallways with overweight cats, encouraging them to burn calories and shed several pounds.

For many cats, this extra attention helps them overcome their initial problems acclimating to shelter life and become more social with visitors, approaching the front of their cage and asking for head rubs and chin scratches. Every bit of sociability helps when cats meet with potential adopters, and providing a little extra TLC can make all the difference!



## Charm School Brings Dogs and Adopters Together

Not only does the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria care for companion animals, the League sends them to finishing school as well! For the past year, League staff and volunteers have conducted a canine etiquette course called Charm School to help our dogs polish their manners while waiting to find a new home.

While at the League, adoptable dogs receive extra attention from specially-trained staff and volunteers who work with them on a daily basis. They learn how to sit, lay down, and walk nicely on a harness, among other things. Volunteers and staff record progress notes on the dog, and even have an online chat room where they discuss different dogs' behaviors.

The dogs benefit in a variety of ways. They learn better self-control, receive more individual attention and their days pass more quickly. Often, after a short training session and walk, the dogs are mentally tired, and take a relaxed nap in their kennel. Staff and volunteers comment on the improvement each dog makes while in Charm School.

Following their adoption, all of our dogs are invited back to the League for four free Charm School training lessons with their new families. During these small group lessons, handlers use treats and praise to encourage good dog behaviors.

In addition to reinforcing basic commands, dogs and their handlers practice loose-leash walking, coming when called and even take a turn on an agility course. Class size is limited to four or five dogs, ensuring plenty of one-on-one time with Abbie Hubbard, the AWLA's Behavior and Training Manager.

Hubbard said, "Classes are fun—and we encourage all family members to take part. Many times, some of our youngest trainers are the most dedicated."

One adopter wrote, "Charm School was a wonderful added feature (to our adoption). It allowed me and my dog to immediately bond and it was also helpful to see how other participants interacted with their dogs."

Come to the League and meet several of our charming canine students!

### *Charm School in action:*

*Finney (top) is one of our original Charm School graduates. He and many other League alumni such as Little Fella (middle) and Luna (bottom) worked with volunteers to polish their manners before going home. After adoption, all AWLA dogs are welcomed back to the League for four Charm School sessions with their adopters.*





## League Welcomes PIC Members in June

On Wednesday, June 3rd, the League will host its annual Pawsitive Impact Circle (PIC) reception at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. The reception will be held between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. and will include a private, behind-the-scenes tour of the Shelter. Guests will also have the opportunity to meet with members of the staff and Board of Directors. Invitations to the event will be mailed in May.

As a non-profit, 501(c) (3) charity, the AWLA relies on donor support for 54% of its operating budget. While the City of Alexandria funds the AWLA as part of our contract to provide animal sheltering and animal control services to the city, the League relies on donations for its other programs such as adoptions, humane education, reduced-cost spay or neuter certificates and extraordinary medical care for animals in need of urgent care.

AWLA donors who contribute \$500 or more in cash in one 12-month period are eligible for membership in the Pawsitive Impact Circle. For more information about the Pawsitive Impact Circle please contact Lisabeth Adams, Director of Development at (703) 838-4774 ext. 206.

Thank you to all of our 2008 Pawsitive Impact Circle Members.

Robin and Jennifer Adams  
Chuck and Deanna Akre  
Alexandria Animal Hospital  
Alexandria Pet Care, Inc.  
All Friends Pet Care  
Aitan and Dannie Ameti  
Tom Amontree  
Joel Anderson and Johanna L. Cheney  
Donna and Lee Anderson  
Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic  
Anne B. McCormack Foundation  
Mary E. Arnold  
Grace Ascolese  
Association of American Railroads  
John and Diann Austin  
Priscilla Aycok  
Barkley Square  
William and Karen Elizabeth Bates  
Belle Haven Animal Medical Centre  
Tuppence Blackwell  
Bombay Curry Company  
Thomas L. Bosworth  
Ronald Bradley  
John and Elizabeth Brigden  
Lisa Brock  
Patricia Broida  
Joyce W. Brown  
Keirn Brown  
Larre and Patricia Brown  
Donald and Eunice Bumgardner  
Anne Cabiniss  
Dianna Campagna  
Carolyn Campbell  
Campbell & Ferrara Outdoor Living  
James and Marcia Carlson  
Chinquapin Park Recreation Center  
Thomas and Linda Clark  
Mark Colley and Deborah Harsch  
Carol Conjura  
Kevin Connelly  
Cotton & Company  
Cotton & Company LLP

Charles and Jacqueline Cottrell  
Stella Cove  
Marguerite Cudahy  
Kay Culver  
Michael Danis  
Kendra Davis  
Jan Delaval  
Peter Denholm  
Franklin and Rhea Dixon  
Dogography  
Colleen Dougherty  
Michael and Ann Duff  
John F. Edwards, Esq.  
Charles and Marja Edwards  
Donald and Nancy Elder  
Jennifer Ellett and Bill Davis  
Inge English  
Estate of Lorna E. Bridenstine  
Estate of Jack Steele  
Estate of Ms. Alice Ann Pettit Jackson  
Estate of Ruth S. Price  
Estate of Vera Fairchok  
Miguel and Laury Gordon Estrada  
Rebecca Eyster  
Richard Faircloth and Alan Campbell  
Fannie Mae Foundation  
Vivian Feagan  
Suzanne Fedder  
Joan M. Ferrill  
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
Patricia Fitzgibbons  
Jodie Flakowicz and David Bodner  
Harriett Forster  
Foxhall Capital Management, Inc.  
Barbara L. Francis  
Francis C. Hammond Middle School  
Freed Photography & Videography  
Kindy French  
Constance H. Frogale  
Tim Gainor  
Sharon A. Gardiner  
Edward and Elsa Garrity

Pamela Garvie  
Gene and Ruth Posner Foundation  
Genentech Employee Giving Program  
Glenn Gerhardt  
Kerry Gourley  
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Michael and Tracy Gregg  
Gregory Fine Portraits  
Nancy Hamilton  
Sara Hanks and Lonnie Henley  
Jean Veeder Mac Harg  
Hawthorn Suites LTD Alexandria  
Annie V. Hendricks  
Nancy Herndon  
Christine Hess  
Diann Hicks  
Hubert N. Hoffman, III  
Thomas and Diann Hohenthanner  
Holiday Inn Alexandria  
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
Lynn C. Hooper  
Scott and Christina Hopkins  
Gayla Dodd and Michael Horn  
Hotel Monaco Alexandria  
John Timothy and Debra Howard  
IDI Management, Inc.  
Denise and Thomas Iles  
International Dairy Foods Association  
Laura and Michael Jamroz  
Gwen Jennier and Peggy McCraw  
Freeman and Anne Jones  
Anhar Karimjee and David Travers  
Tanya Sue Kennedy  
James William and Susan Kilpatrick  
Ronald Kindelberger  
Kingsview Animal Hospital  
Kositzka, Wicks & Co.  
KPMG Washington Foundation  
Marcia Krause  
Gillian and Frank Kroggman  
Gordon Kromberg  
Michael and Karen Krzmarzick



Land Rover Alexandria  
Ann Langley  
Nancy and Ward Lasley  
Vola Lawson  
Susanne Mackie Lee  
Rita D. Lefler  
Victoria Ann Leignadier  
Edward and Anna Lenz  
Bruce Leonard  
Charles and Jean Leonard  
Tina Leone  
David N. Levine  
Maurice and Cheryl Levite  
Lindsay Automotive Group  
William and Elizabeth Livingston  
Robert S. Lohr  
The London Bob Hair Design  
David Loneman  
Melinda Lyle  
John and Christa Lyons  
Rachel Madden  
Janice Magnuson  
Mapleshade Animal Hospital  
Scott Mastro  
Jonathan A. Mazur and Jennifer O'Boyle  
Carol A. McBain  
Daniel and Mary Jane McCann  
Alana McCullough  
Mary McIntosh  
Sharon McMichael  
Michele Melick  
Rhoda Messer  
Microsoft Giving Campaign  
Millie A. Miller  
Neil and J.C. Milner  
Misty Falls, LLC  
Dan Monahan  
Moran For Congress  
Morgan Stanley  
John and Nancy Mullett  
Timothy Muris and Pamela Harmon  
Cornelius and Diane Murphy  
Betty Murphy  
Pamela Murphy  
Dolores Murray and Brendan Hanlon  
Mystique Jewelers  
Dennis Nagy and Gaetana Saletta  
John and Peggy Nasir  
Nearman Financial Consulting, Inc.  
Kristin Neubauer and Brad Ulery  
David Normand  
Blythe and Roger Norris  
Marianne and Hugh O'Boyle  
Olde Towne School for Dogs  
Richard and Holli Palmer  
John and Chandra Pappas  
Beth Patridge  
Charles Patterson  
Jon and Patricia Paul  
Anne Paul  
Cynthia Pearson  
Piaggio's Loft  
Pamela Pilkin

Amy S. Platnick  
Frances H. Pratt  
Charles Price, Jr.  
Katydean Price  
Radiance Medspa of Old Town  
Peter Ramsberger  
Resolutions, a Division of JSS Productions, Inc.  
Georgeanne Reynolds  
John and Barbara Roberts  
Harry Roupas  
Ashley Ruch  
Salem Associates  
SAP Matching Gift Program  
Daniel and Carolyn Scarfo  
Lisa Schlosser and Sherri Brown  
Stephen Schroeder  
Orva and William Lewis Schultis  
Securitas Security Services USA, Inc.  
Robert Sennewald and Susan Horne  
Mary Smedaker  
Thomas and Kazuko Smith  
Southwest Airlines Co.  
Mark Spivey  
Barry and Margaret Stauffer  
Sterling Portraits  
Harry and Debra Stonecipher  
Strickland Foundation  
Barbara Sumner and Monika Mitchell  
Alan and Suzanne Sundburg  
Teamwork Group, Inc., The  
The Hope Center for Advanced Veterinary  
Medicine  
The IDI Foundation, Inc.  
Helga Thomas  
Lisa Thorne  
Thorney Point Foundation  
Stephen Underwood  
United Technologies  
Wayne Van Nostrand  
Sharon Vannucci  
Verizon Foundation  
Daniel and Linda Vilardo  
Visa GivingStation  
Patricia Voltmer  
Wachovia Matching Gifts Program  
Paula Wachsstock  
Thomas and Barbara Walczykowski  
Katherine Ward  
Betsy Wason  
Julian and Elizabeth Watson  
We Grow Companies  
Peter Webb  
Webers Pet Supermarket  
Sandra Welch  
Ann Welden and Ergun Ar  
Elizabeth Westerburg  
Andrew and Karen Wise  
Wiygul Automotive Clinic  
Geoffrey Wolfe and Laura MacLean  
Eleanora Worth  
George and Christine Wysor

## We Need Your Help

Since 1946, the AWLA has helped lost and owned animals throughout our community. As an open-admission shelter, the League welcomes any animal who arrives at our doors, regardless of age, size or breed. In order to provide our services, we rely on donor support.

The League values every type of contribution. Please consider one or all of the following types of support.

**YOUR TIME:** The AWLA has a vibrant volunteer program. Dog lovers can walk our dogs, and cat lovers can socialize kittens. Volunteering does not stop there, however. Contact our Manager of Volunteer Services for more ways to help.

**YOUR TALENTS:** Do you enjoy organizing events? Speaking to groups? Please consider sharing your talents with the League. The AWLA appreciates the variety of skills that our supporters bring to our events and the League's general operations. Please contact Dolores Murray for more ways to help.

**YOUR TREASURES:** Whether you donate \$5 or \$5,000, the League appreciates your donation and will apply it to care for all our animals. We also gladly accept stocks, bonds and contributions made through the United Way and Combined Federal Campaign. Our Director of Development can help you determine the easiest way for you to make a contribution.

Your generosity can help the League care for thousands of animals each year and extend outreach services to our surrounding community. Simply use the reply envelope enclosed with this newsletter or click on the "Donate Now" button on our website at [www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org) to make a contribution.



## Visiting Veterinarians Make "House Calls" to Shelter Animals



*Dr. Laura MacLean recently examined a League resident to ensure he was recovering from kennel cough.*

One recent week, a Visiting Veterinarian examined our Shelter dogs for kennel cough and flaky skin and then switched gears to check the dental health of an older cat. At a different time, a different Visiting Veterinarian administered 20 rabies vaccinations in one afternoon! Visiting Veterinarians provide comfort and

help to our animals every time they make their Shelter "house calls."

Seven veterinarians from five local animal hospitals (Alexandria Animal Hospital, VCA Old Town Animal Hospital, Critter Fixers Mobile Veterinary Care, Hollin Hall Animal Hospital and Woodbridge Animal Hospital) volunteer their time at the League, working on a weekly rotation. These dedicated individuals provide on-site veterinarian care for League residents who need assistance but do not require urgent care. (Those animals are immediately transferred to Alexandria Animal Hospital for more specialized care than we can give here at the Shelter).

On an average day, one Visiting Veterinarian will see approximately 25 animals. With Visiting Vets' help, AWLA staff are often able to treat many animals without having to transfer the animals to a hospital. Not only does this save the

League money, but the animals are far less stressed than they would be if they were transferred to another location.

Director of Shelter Operations, Robin Travers said, "Our Visiting Vets are a tremendous help to our animals and staff. They will examine any animal we bring them and do their best to provide an accurate and realistic assessment of the type of relief and treatment we can provide here, on-site. The savings to the AWLA is exponential."

Dr. Laura MacLean, Medical Director at VCA Old Town Animal Hospital has volunteered her assistance at the League for the past six years. Dr. MacLean said, "I enjoy volunteering here. The League has a wide variety of animals—from dogs to cats to birds to bunnies... I believe in the work the staff does, and I strongly support the League's mission."

## Shelter Volunteer Makes Tracks to Help AWLA Dogs

When you ask AWLA volunteer Joan MacKenzie how she first became interested in dog behavior and training, Joan says, "I adopted a dog with every possible problem. It was the classic situation of getting involved and then realizing you love her."

Three years ago, Joan met Sandy, a scared Tibetan Spaniel who had been found as a stray. Realizing the amount of training and work that Sandy needed, Joan began learning about different training methods to use with Sandy.

Joan took special courses in applied animal behavior, spent weeks with Sandy at special dog camps and invested countless hours of training with local behaviorists. From the fearful, bedraggled dog she had been, Sandy has grown into a spunky Spaniel who competes in agility, rally and flyball. One of her favorite activities, though, is tracking.

In January, Joan offered a two-day seminar in scent-games and tracking at the League. This popular dog sport involves the

handler laying a scent trail and planting an object at the end of the trail for the dog to find.

At the seminars, Joan demonstrated with five AWLA graduates that dogs can pick up a trail with very little encouragement. After just two sessions, all the dogs were tugging their handlers to the hidden objects.

Sandy is not the only dog who benefits from Joan's love of training. Every week, Joan, a Charm School volunteer, comes to the League to handle adoptable dogs. Because of her work with Sandy, Joan finds working with fearful and shy dogs to be particularly satisfying.

During her volunteer sessions, Joan will take a dog who needs a break out for a longer training session—teaching them to track, or letting them lead her on trails that they themselves uncover. Joan calls these, "Sniffing trips."

Joan also spends considerable time socializing League dogs—taking them



*In her January seminar, Joan MacKenzie demonstrated a tracking exercise with Roxie, a League graduate.*

to locations with many distractions and helping them become comfortable as bicycles pass or as children play in a playground. With treats and patience, Joan helps her AWLA charges remain calm when encountering something new. This critical socialization helps dogs make a smooth transition in their new home.

The staff and the dogs at the AWLA appreciate Joan's time and talents!





## Helping pets and their owners through a wide range of services

- Pet adoptions
- Behavior advice and support
- Animal control and licensing
- Animal surrenders
- Wildlife assistance and rescue
- Reduced-cost spay and neuter certificates
- Special events
- Volunteer opportunities

*The AWLA is an open-admission shelter.*



## Animal Welfare League of Alexandria operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter

4101 Eisenhower Ave.

Alexandria, VA 22304

Phone: (703) 838-4774

Fax: (703) 838-4862

[www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org)

**United Way: #8372**

**CFC: #92767**

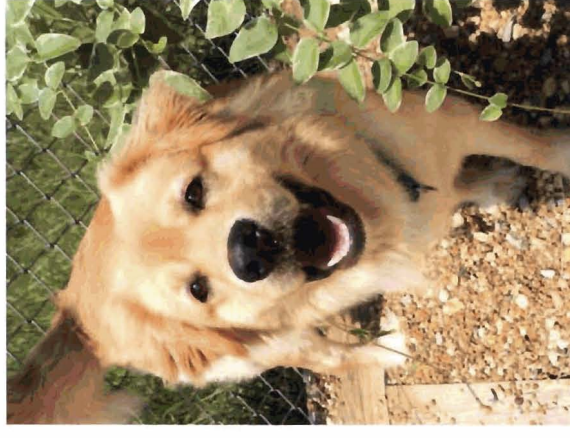
The AWLA is pleased to partner with Alexandria Animal Hospital and thanks AAH for its generous support.



# Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

*Matching People and Pets*

*For a Lifetime of Love*



Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

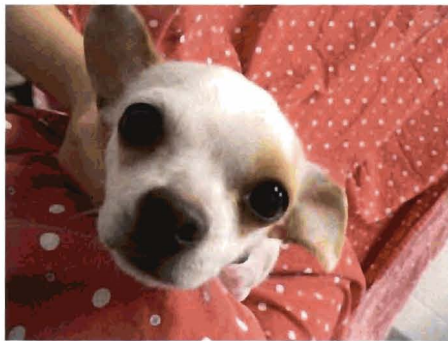
## PROMOTING ADOPTIONS

The League supports adoptable animals in many ways.

**Volunteers:** From dogs to cats to guinea pigs, our volunteers ensure that each animal receives extra attention—every day.

**Fostering:** Some animals need a quiet place to rest and relax. AWLA's foster families help our adoptable animals before they head home.

**Special Events:** Microchip clinics, dog walks and calendar contests are just a few of the special events the AWLA hosts. Your donations along with event proceeds directly support our animals. Come—join in the fun! Our staff and our animals thank you!



## ADOPTING A PET

Every year, the AWLA finds permanent homes for more than 1,200 animals. Visit the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter to meet the animals and speak with staff about choosing the right pet for you. Our wide variety of adoptable animals includes cats, dogs, rabbits, birds and many other small animals.



### Step one

**Meet our fantastic animals.** Every week, you will see new faces on our adoption floor. If you are looking for a particular breed or type of pet, let our staff know.

### Step Two

**Complete an adoption application.** Bring your family members or roommates to meet your new pet and confirm the adoption with your rental agency.

### Step three

**Prepare for your pet.** Our counselor will review your pet's medical history and provide tips to help your pet make a smooth transition. Finally, **take your new best friend home!**

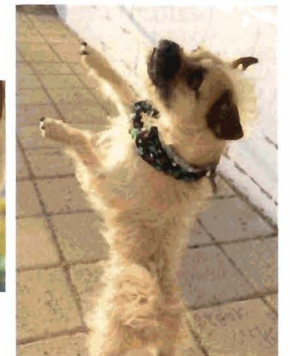
## ONGOING SUPPORT

The League believes that adoption is just the first step in creating a lifetime bond with your new companion. To help new adopters, the League offers a variety of post-adoption support.

**Charm School:** All dogs adopted through the League receive four free training lessons in Charm School. Handlers use positive reinforcement training to help their new pets learn obedience basics while having fun.

**Behavior Advice:** Every adoption leads to questions: How do I exercise my kitten? Will my dog be lonely during the day? Can house rabbits be trained? Our experienced staff can provide valuable advice for all your pets. Our staff members have faced similar challenges—we are all adopters too!

To view some of our adoptable animals, visit our website at [www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org)



city mgr orals  
10-27-09


**Martha Armstrong/Alex**

10/28/2009 08:53 PM

To Rose Boyd/Alex@Alex

cc alicia.hughes@alexandriava.gov, council@krupicka.com,  
delpepper@aol.com, elaine.scott@alexandriava.gov,  
frank.fannon@alexandriava.gov,

bcc

Subject Re: COA Contact Us: Request to meet concerning Alexandria  
Animal Shelter 

Dear Mayor Euille, City Council Members, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Evans, and Mr. Mandley:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you last evening during the City Council meeting. I hope that the material I provided to you in the packet as well as my talk addressed the issues raised in Ms. Czop's email (below). I've attached another copy of the letter we included in the package last evening and we would be more than happy to address any additional questions you or other residents of our community may have regarding the AWLA, its adoption and euthanasia statistics or other programs or policies of concern. As I stated last evening, we welcome any suggestions or ideas on how we can reduce the numbers of homeless animals in our community, increase the number of animals adopted and decrease the numbers of animals we must euthanize.

Again, our thanks to each of you for your ongoing support of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter.

Best regards,

Martha C. Armstrong

Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director  
Animal Welfare League of Alexandria  
marmstrong@alexandriaanimals.org  
703-838-4774 ext. 215

**Rose**

**Boyd/Alex**

10/22/2009

05:14 PM

To Lisa Czop <examinerlisamarie@gmail.com>

cc alicia.hughes@alexandriava.gov, council@krupicka.com, delpepper@aol.com, elaine.scott@alexandriava.gov,  
frank.fannon@alexandriava.gov, jackie.henderson@alexandriava.gov, kerry.donley@alexandriava.gov,  
paulcsmedberg@aol.com, william.euille@alexandriava.gov, Martha Armstrong/Alex@ALEX

Subject Re: COA Contact Us: Request to meet concerning Alexandria Animal Shelter [Link](#)



Dear Ms. Czop,

The Council has received your e-mail. I'm copying Martha Armstrong, Executive Director of the Animal Shelter, on this response. The Animal Shelter has a contract with the City of Alexandria to manage the Shelter and that contract is administered by the Department of General Services.

Rose Williams Boyd  
Director of Citizen Assistance

**Lisa Czop**  
<examinerlisamarie@gmail.com>

10/22/2009 12:28 PM

Please respond to  
Lisa Czop  
<examinerlisamarie@gmail.com>

To william.euille@alexandriava.gov, frank.fannon@alexandriava.gov, kerry.donley@alexandriava.gov, alicia.hughes@alexandriava.gov, council@krupicka.com, delpepper@aol.com, paulcsmedberg@aol.com, rose.boyd@alexandriava.gov, jackie.henderson@alexandriava.gov, elaine.scott@alexandriava.gov

cc

Subje COA Contact Us: Request to meet concerning Alexandria Animal Shelter  
ct

**Time:** [Thu Oct 22, 2009 12:28:31] **Message ID:** [16328]

**Issue Type:** Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members  
**First Name:** Lisa  
**Last Name:** Czop  
**Street Address:** 4860 Eisenhower Avenue Unit 294  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** Virginia  
**Zip:** 22304  
**Phone:** 703-431-5508  
**Email Address:** examinerlisamarie@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Request to meet concerning Alexandria Animal Shelter  
Good afternoon. I am writing to request a meeting with the City Council  
and/or the Mayor to discuss the issues I have found at the Animal Welfare  
League of Alexandria. I wrote an article in my online column  
(<http://www.examiner.com/x-3605-DC-Animal-Welfare-Examiner~y2009m10d14-Alex>

andria-shelter-faces-scrutiny-after-euthanasia-numbers-revealed) about my findings and received an amazing response, both positive and negative, to the report that I posted. I believe that as our City Council, you have a responsibility to investigate this issue.

This is not only about the welfare of our city's animals; this is also about fiscal restraint, public safety, and liability. It makes no sense for taxpayers to pay to kill dogs when there are rescue groups and No Kill shelters willing to save that animal's life at private expense. CA has a law making it illegal for a shelter to kill an animal if a rescue group or other shelter is willing to save that animal. It passed on the fiscal arguments above with broad bipartisan support. The transfer comes with an immunity of liability which attaches to the transferee.

**Comments:**

The euthanasia numbers reflect two problems.

First, many of the animals being killed are not aggressive and secondly, a sloppy temperament test includes the possible that both friendly dogs are being killed and truly vicious ones are slipping through the cracks and being put up for adoption. You want a test with rigor that can do both, as well as an administrator that can thoughtfully produce reliable results.

I would appreciate the time to speak with you to discuss my suggestions that will save money for the city as well as improve the welfare of the domestic animals in our community. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Marie Czop





Dear Mayor, City Council Members, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Evans, Mr. Mandley and Ms. Boyd:

Thank you for forwarding Ms. Czop's email regarding the AWLA to us. We have responded to Ms. Czop's highly critical but inaccurate and misrepresentative blog when we first were made aware of it, and have since responded to the few concerned emails and phone calls we received that were generated by her blog. Her response to our letter (reviewed by Tony Castrilli and Andrea Blackford) that we posted on her blog as well as emailed to her is pasted below:

Thank you for sending. I do not restrict the comment lengths, every website has limitations, and I have no control over that. Please recheck our email traffic; there is no mention of a tour. I did not reject anything, all I said was that email was easier than a phone call. I've been to your shelter numerous times and actually did a fundraiser for you about 18 months ago before I learned about the euthanasia numbers. Your statements about me were, ironically, misinformed. I've posted below my response to your comments; I plan on chatting with City Council at this point. If you feel like addressing the actual issue of your testing methods and your lack of work with rescues (both questions I asked before I wrote the story), I'd be happy to revisit, but the response from the shelter has shown me that I need to do more than just speak with you to help the animals in Alexandria.

We are more than happy to invite the Mayor, City Council, City Manager's Office, General Services or other agency to visit the shelter and gain a greater understanding of our policies and procedures. We believe that you will find that the League serves both the citizens and the animals of our community well and that our policies and practices are based on nationally accepted standards and are consistent with those of other area animal shelters. We would like to correct two inaccuracies in Ms. Czop's email below:

1. "It makes no sense for taxpayers to pay to kill dogs when there are rescue groups and No Kill shelters willing to save that animal's life at private expense."

The AWLA works with numerous humane organizations in our area. In talking to these groups, we often find that they themselves limit intake to only the most adoptable animals—young, healthy animals with no behavior concerns. Even healthy and behaviorally sound dogs whose owners can no longer keep them are

often turned away from rescue groups or "no kill" shelters because their owners are told that they must wait weeks or even months before the group is able to admit the animal. These owners, who have been turned away from other groups, often come to the League because they know we will take their pet.

2. "The euthanasia numbers reflect two problems. First, many of the animals being killed are not aggressive and secondly, a sloppy temperament test includes the possible (*sic*) that both friendly dogs are being killed and truly vicious ones are slipping through the cracks and being put up for adoption. You want a test with rigor that can do both, as well as an administrator that can thoughtfully produce reliable results. "

As we stated in our correspondence with Delegate Englin:

As an open admission shelter, we never turn an animal away regardless of the animal's behavioral or medical issues. However, we also have a legal as well as ethical responsibility to make sure that every animal adopted from our shelter is not an aggressive animal who may inflict injury or death to the family that adopted that animal or to visitors or neighbors of that family. The majority of the dogs euthanized (69 of 76) in June 2009 (the month cited in Ms. Czop's article) were evaluated several times by our certified and well-qualified Behavior and Training Manager and two to three other staff members as well as one of our Visiting Veterinarians; and 6 were found to have major health problems, 3 were heartworm positive (treatments for heartworm run between \$600 and \$1000), 5 were advanced in age and had health issues, and the rest were euthanized due to behavioral issues ranging from severe separation anxiety, unsocialized (a critical factor in a dog's early life and his/her ability to bond with the owner), or highly aggressive to people and/or other animals.

Our Behavior and Training Manager is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer and is currently attending the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) annual conference in Oakland, CA. The APDT's certification and ongoing education programs include training by world-renown veterinary and applied animal behavior experts whose methods greatly contribute to the League's training and evaluation principles.

The evaluation protocol implemented at the AWLA is modeled after and is in line with evaluation procedures at other reputable open-door shelters across the country such as Marin County Humane Society, the Potter League for Animals, the Denver Dumb Friends League, Monadnock Humane Society, Rondout Valley Animals for Adoption and others. Since January, our Behavior and Training Manager has visited and observed evaluations at ten of the most respected humane organizations to ensure that our evaluation procedures are true to industry standards. Moreover, we want to be sure that we provide potential adopters with the best information possible regarding their new family members.

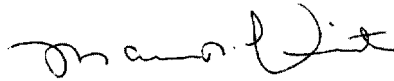
Almost all dogs, excepting those with severe aggression or major health problems, are evaluated several times with different staff present and different stimuli to ensure that we are making sound assessments of each individual

animal. Decisions on whether a dog should be moved into our adoption program, evaluated again, moved into foster care, or euthanized are also made by a team of staff members from three different departments to ensure that no "friendly dogs are being killed" and no "truly vicious ones are slipping through the cracks and being put up for adoption," as Ms. Czop alleged.

The AWLA considers itself to be a progressive organization, open to new ideas and always looking for the best methods to care for animals and while providing needed services to our community. We welcome suggestions and are happy to meet with any interested community members; however, we stand by our sheltering decisions which are based on years of actual study and experience. We are disappointed that Ms. Czop continues to make incendiary comments while still declining our offer to visit the shelter and engage in true dialogue. We appreciate the City's support and backing as we address these unfounded claims. As always, our door remains open, should you have any questions.



Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director



Maurice R. Levite  
Chairman, Board of Directors

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria  
703-838-4774