A Tale of Two Kitties

Two fall arrivals at the shelter illustrate the plight of cats in our community and the rescue efforts that the League is undertaking. There are still probably thousands of free roaming cats in Arlington. Some are abandoned pets and many are descendants of abandoned pets that were never neutered. An unknown number of these cats have never felt a human touch and are completely wild. Once older than three to four months, socialization of these cats is extremely difficult to impossible. While some can be aclimated to being touched, they never seek out attention and if brought inside will spend all their time hiding. Outdoors they survive like any other type of wildlife: hunting and scavenging. Some kind people put out food and water for the cats, but that isn’t enough [see Trap-Neuter-Return on page 2].

On October 11, 2011, a woman walking from her office to the Pentagon City Mall noticed two men looking for something in the bushes. A gray tabby kitten ran out and when she reached down to pick it up the kitten scratched and bit her right hand. She handed the kitten to one of the men who was wearing gloves. The man called animal control, and Officer Chris Peters picked up the kitten and brought it to shelter. We named the kitten Oxford and kept him in quarantine for 10 days as required by the rabies
In 2010 the League’s Board of Directors decided to begin a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program. Then in January 2011 we applied for and received a very generous grant from PetSmart Charities to cover the costs for the first year. At this writing we have neutered and returned 121 feral cats. While TNR programs have been around for more than 20 years, they can still be controversial. The first question that always gets asked is:

Once they have been trapped and caught why return feral cats back into the community, surely we just want to get rid of them, why not just euthanize them?

Many jurisdictions and agencies do resort to euthanizing these cats when they are brought into animal control facilities or shelters, but these are cruel and outdated methods and are ineffective.

Research has proved that when feral cats are removed from an area a “vacuum” is created, and new cats in search of food opportunities move in to establish a new colony and quickly breed and the cycle continues.

It is estimated that there are approximately 50 million feral cats living in colonies throughout the US and it is quite clear that killing them does not reduce their populations.

So TNR…..what does it mean exactly?

All the cats in the colony are systematically trapped in humane cage traps, using food as the bait. The cats are then neutered, vaccinated against rabies and distemper, and ear-tipped. (Ear-tipping is the universally recognized sign of a cat that has been neutered). The cats are then returned to the area where they were caught and dedicated caretakers provide food, water, and sometimes shelter. Nuisance behaviors are reduced or eliminated, and the health of the cat improves because they are not continually fighting over mates. Any new cats that may arrive are caught and neutered.

We began giving the approximately four-month-old kitten his eye medication by picking him up in a towel and wrapping him tightly while we applied the ointment. We took the opportunity while we held him in the towel to pet his head and speak softly to him. Within a few days we noticed that he was less afraid of people. We named him Trapper and decided to see if he would get along with Oxford since they were both recovering. The two kittens hit it off well and seemed to enjoy having feline company.

Both Oxford and Trapper are healthy at this writing. Oxford has already been adopted and Trapper is available for adoption. They are lucky that concerned residents and the League intervened to give them a better life than they would have had as street cats. We are proud whenever we can improve an animal’s life, but we need our community’s help to reduce and someday eliminate free-roaming cats. If no one ever abandoned a family pet to the outdoors and if all cat owners neutered their cats, it would make a huge impact on the welfare of cats in Arlington. We are working to reduce the population of feral cats already here by trap-neuter-return.

Please help by not adding any new cats to our streets.

Trap-Neuter-Return

By Neil Trent, Executive Director

In 2010 the League’s Board of Directors decided to begin a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program. Then in January 2011 we applied for and received a very generous grant from PetSmart Charities to cover the costs for the first year. At this writing we have neutered and returned 121 feral cats. While TNR programs have been around for more than 20 years, they can still be controversial. The first question that always gets asked is:

Once they have been trapped and caught why return feral cats back into the community, surely we just want to get rid of them, why not just euthanize them?

Many jurisdictions and agencies do resort to euthanizing these cats when they are brought into animal control facilities or shelters, but these are cruel and outdated methods and are ineffective.

Research has proved that when feral cats are removed from an area a “vacuum” is created, and new cats in search of food opportunities move in to establish a new colony and quickly breed and the cycle continues.

It is estimated that there are approximately 50 million feral cats living in colonies throughout the US and it is quite clear that killing them does not reduce their populations.

So TNR…..what does it mean exactly?

All the cats in the colony are systematically trapped in humane cage traps, using food as the bait. The cats are then neutered, vaccinated against rabies and distemper, and the tip of one ear is surgically removed while the animal is anesthetized so it can later be identified. (Ear-tipping is the universally recognized sign of a cat that has been neutered). The cats are then returned to the area where they were caught and dedicated caretakers provide food, water, and sometimes shelter. Nuisance behaviors are reduced or eliminated, and the health of the cat improves because they are not continually fighting over mates. Any new cats that may arrive are caught and neutered.

So why does AWLA embrace TNR?

Because it improves the quality of life for feral cats in colonies;

It prevents the birth of more cats, and

It systematically reduces the number of cats in the colony over time.
AWLA Hosts Dog Training Program

In November 2011, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington hosted representatives from the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Loudoun County Animal Care and Control, the Washington Humane Society, local professional dog trainers, and AWLA volunteers at a workshop focusing on behavior modification for shelter dogs. “Playing for Life!” A Behavior Modification and Training Program for Shelter Dogs was presented by Aimee Sadler, a nationally known trainer and Director of Behavior and Training at the Longmont (Colorado) Humane Society, on November 7-8.

Workshop participants learned how well-managed dog play groups can have multiple benefits for shelter dogs, including:

• Exercise and mental stimulation;
• Pack-like bonding to minimize social isolation and dog-to-dog aggression;
• Maximizing resources, with two handlers able to attend to many more dogs in playgroups than they could individually; and
• Better socialization to make dogs more attractive to adopters.

The program was sponsored by The Animal Farm Foundation, Inc., a charitable organization founded to secure equal treatment and opportunity for “pit bull” dogs. Playing for Life is appropriate for any shelter dogs, including pit bulls. “We are very grateful to the Animal Farm Foundation and Aimee Sadler for providing this excellent workshop which gives us the tools to enrich the lives of dogs in the shelter,” said Neil Trent, AWLA Executive Director.

AWLA Volunteer Program Goes Online!

The League has joined other tech-savvy organizations by moving to a web-based volunteer tracking program called Volgistics. The volunteer application can now be completed on our Web site. With this new program, volunteers can log-in from home to track their hours volunteered at off-site events, such as pet therapy or special events. They can sign up for volunteer shifts online and check messages or important announcements. Volunteer trainees are now able to schedule themselves, eliminating hundreds of e-mails back and forth that took up hours of staff time. There were a few glitches getting started, but the program seems to be running smoothly now, allowing our volunteer team to process new volunteers and keep in touch with current volunteers more efficiently.

The League has made many other efforts over the past year to allow pet lovers to keep tabs on League happenings, including the Launch of our iPhone App, Arlington Pets, and more frequent use of other social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. If you would like to read about the League’s happenings via social media, simply go to our Web site and click on the Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or blog logos in the top right-hand corner. You don’t have to join Facebook or Twitter to see our postings. But if you are a member, become an AWLA Fan!

Aimee Sadler, center (in dark jacket), worked with AWLA staff and volunteers on using playgroups to help shelter dogs.
Spay Day 2012

Spay Day USA is America’s first and only national day of action to promote the spaying or neutering of pets. During Spay Day USA, veterinarians and their staff, animal welfare professionals, business owners, and citizens join forces nationwide to provide spay/neuter services and to promote spay/neuter as an essential component of good pet health care, as well as an effective and humane means of decreasing the euthanasia of homeless animals in shelters.

The 18th annual Spay Day takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2012, with events and activities in honor of Spay Day taking place throughout February. During the month of February, the League will be offering discounted spays and neuters to low-income pet owners who need help the most. We are able to offer this service because of your generous donations to the Hantke Memorial Spay/Neuter fund. Please stay tuned to our Web site at www.awla.org in January for more information on how to participate and support the League’s Spay Day 2012 efforts!

Rabbit Neuters Now Done In-House

Dr. Christine Cottey, our shelter veterinarian and Eva Armour, our Licensed Veterinary Technician recently spent a day at Blue Ridge Veterinary Associates in Purcellville, Virginia, for a day of continuing education. As part of our promise to our adopters, our rabbits are spayed or neutered prior to being placed in a new home. For a long time we have been using an outside exotics facility for this procedure. With the addition of our new surgical suite, our goal was to perform all our surgeries under our roof. Now due to the fantastic opportunity Blue Ridge extended to us, we are happy to announce we can now spay or neuter all our rabbits on site. Dr Cottey is very excited to have learned the newest techniques in rabbit sterilization and to provide this service for our animals. Please let your friends know that we always have rabbits available for adoption. They make great pets!

Alfie, a young New Zealand white, is in the holiday mood.

The League is happy to announce that volunteers will be easier to identify both in at the shelter and at outside League events because they will be wearing their new volunteer T-shirts! Volunteers purchase their shirts at volunteer orientation and wear them when training or volunteering at League events. When you are in the shelter and need help, simply look for the volunteer in the green shirt! You may have also noticed our many volunteers walking dogs around Shirlington and the surrounding area—if they are walking a dog that interests you, simply ask the volunteer in the green shirt about the dog and follow them back to the shelter. Volunteers are very knowledgeable about the League animals and programs, and we are happy that they have a very visible presence and impact here at the League! We love our volunteers!
Foster Homes Needed!

We always need foster homes for shelter animals, whether they are kittens too young for adoption, dogs undergoing medical treatment or rehabilitation, adult cats that need a home environment to blossom, or rabbits for which we have no cage space. If you want some face time with animals in need and have the space and time to share, please contact us about fostering at foster@awla.org. The time commitment can be as short as two weeks or as long as several months. There’s nothing more rewarding than caring for an animal in need and then seeing it go to a loving, permanent home.

Kids’ Month Registration for July 2012 begins February 1st!

In July 2011, we held two week-long, one three day and three one-day summer camps during July for children ages 6-13 years old. Participants met many adoptable animals at the shelter, heard area animal experts, helped in shelter projects, and observed sheltering operations. We are still in the planning stages for next summer’s camps, but don’t miss your chance to sign up!

Applications will be available starting February 1, 2012 at www.awla.org (click on Education) and at the League front desk. Registration and waitlists typically fill by the end of February or first week of March. Don’t miss out—mark your calendar now!

League Services

Emergencies in Arlington
We respond to animal emergencies 24 hours a day.

Adoptions
We always have animals who need good homes. If you live in Virginia, DC, or Maryland call us about adopting a companion.

Animal Control & Cruelty Investigation
Animal control officers pick up stray dogs and respond to citizen complaints about animals in Arlington.

Community Services
The League sponsors community services that help people and animals. Visit our Web site at www.awla.org or call (703) 931-9241 x 200 for information.

Lost & Found
Call (703) 931-9241 x 200 or visit our Web site at www.awla.org to report all lost and found animals. We can help find animals’ owners and return lost pets home again.

Wildlife Rescue & Problems
We’ll help get injured or abandoned wildlife to a licensed rehabilitator whenever possible. We’ll also help you discourage wildlife from moving into your home.

Rabies Control
See the calendar on the back cover for clinic dates and times.

Speakers & Humane Education
If your neighborhood is having animal problems or problems with irresponsible animal owners, you might want a League representative to address your civic association. We also present educational programs on many topics to schools and clubs. Visit our website at www.awla.org or call (703) 931-9241 x 213 for information.

Pawpourri, the newsletter of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, 2650 S. Arlington Mill Dr., Arlington, VA 22206, http://www.awla.org, is published quarterly and mailed to League supporters. If you receive multiple copies, please notify us and pass them along to friends.

A COPY OF THE LATEST FINANCIAL REPORT AND REGISTRATION FILED BY THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING the State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23209. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.
Before and After

Many animals enter the shelter sick and/or unkempt. The League often sees animals arrive looking like those in the before pictures. Without proper grooming, some animals’ fur will get much too long and matted, which pulls the skin and can cause a lot of pain. Our shelter staff often grooms animals, and the groomers at the Muddy Mutt in Arlington (2603A South Oxford Street) volunteer their services to help shelter animals. A well-groomed pet is much more comfortable, clean, and healthy.

We also take in stray kittens that have upper respiratory infections, eye infections, intestinal worms, and fleas. Penny Lane needed antibiotics, nursing care, deworming, and flea treatment. She spent three weeks in foster care before she was ready to be adopted. The photos on the right show her transformation under the League’s care. Your generous donations make it possible for us to do much more than “shelter” homeless animals.
This year’s Catsino Night was another successful event, raising more than $60,000 in support of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. More than 250 animal lovers enjoyed an elegant evening at the Historic Lobby A at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on November 5. The glamorous, 1940s era art deco atmosphere of the Historic Lobby A was the perfect backdrop for an evening of live music, casino-style gaming, and competitive silent and live auctions. The Bobcats jazz combo entertained while guests tried their luck at black jack, craps, and Texas Hold’Em poker.

“This year’s Catsino Night drew a record number of guests and was tremendously successful,” said Mark Treadaway, President of the League’s Board of Directors. “The evening had it all—great food by Lebanese Taverna, a terrific jazz band, gaming tables, a view of the National Airport airfield, a silent auction as well as a live auction with Greta Kreuz, local news celebrity and League friend. It was heartwarming to see so many supporters of the League there. This important fund-raiser will contribute greatly to helping abandoned and suffering animals into the future.”

This year we invited everyone to purchase a raffle ticket to win a trip to Elite Island Resort’s St. James Club in Antigua. Even if you weren’t able to attend Catsino Night, you could still support the League by buying a raffle ticket. Thirty-one raffle tickets were sold raising $1,550!

Guests enjoyed delicious hors d’oeuvres from Lebanese Taverna and had a choice of wine, beer, soft drinks, or a martini bar. The silent auction drew enthusiastic bidding on 110 items donated by individuals and businesses in the community including tickets to Redskins games, a package of presidential home tours, and a wine tasting package. The live auction drew fast bidding on our five items: a wine tasting experience, a tour of the ABC7/ WJLA-NewsChannel 8 studios, a seven-night stay at Elite Island Resort’s Palm Island Resort in the Grenadines, dinner with the Fairlington Firefighters, and a five-night stay at any US Hilton Hotel or Resort. Our biggest seller of the evening was the trip to the Grenadines.

Money raised from ticket sales and auction proceeds was significantly supported by the generous sponsorship of several local businesses including Ayrshire Farm. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for making Catsino Night and Silent Auction a tremendous success. All proceeds from the event will help the League protect animals and educate people in our community about animal welfare.

Above Right: Catsino guests enjoyed blackjack and other casino games.

Right: Greta Kreuz of ABC7/ WJLA TV & News Channel 8 conducted the live auction.

Photos by Mark VanBergh
Catsino Night Donors & Sponsors

The League is grateful to the following donors who gave financial support to make this event a great success.

Kathy and Ed Albetski
Dr. Valentina Andaos
Ms. Anna Baker
Diane and Nort Beckerman
Mr. Otto Bergmann
Ms. Nona C. Chalfant
Ms. Jill D. Clark-Foulkes
Ms. Mary Cleary
Ms. Tawanah Edmondson
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Ms. Susanne Wilson and Mr. Bill Judy
Ms. Deborah K. Wood

We offer a special thank you to the following individuals and businesses for sharing their time, expertise, and talents:

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for donating this fabulous space and providing discounted parking

Gay Men’s Chorus of Washington, DC for their registration & check-out expertise

Greta Kreuz as our emcee

Lebanese Taverna for the hors d’oeuvres

“The Bobcats for their musical performance

Jamie Nicholas for the design and printing of our program

Vegas Times for the gaming tables

Wildes-Spirit for the printing of the posters

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Sue Erwin, Animal Communicator
The Firefighters at ACFD Station 7 in Fairlington
Five Guys
Foxfire Grill
Fur-Get Me Not
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Our goal is to combine top-notch medicine, surgery, dentistry, education and wellness care for the lifetime of your pet.
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Quality Veterinary Care In Your Neighborhood

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Quality Veterinary Care In Your Neighborhood
Dine Out at Lebanese Taverna and Benefit the League!

Tuesday, Feb 7th and Wednesday Feb 8th at

Pentagon Row  
1101 South Joyce St.  
Arlington, VA, 22202

Westover  
5900 Washington Blvd  
Arlington, VA 22205

Lunch and Dinner (Dine in or carry out).

Cut out this coupon and the AWLA will receive a 20% donation from your bill (excluded tax and gratuity).

Cannot make it to Lebanese Taverna? No problem, just go to www.lebanesetaverna.com and purchase a gift card. Use promo code AWLA for the League to receive the 20% donation!

Rabies Clinics

Please bring dogs on leashes and cats and ferrets in carriers.

Rabies Shot: $10

January 26 • March 22 • May 24 • June 28 • Aug 23
Sept 27 • Oct 25 • Dec 6 (1st Thurs)
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Please bring proof of a prior rabies shot (a rabies certificate, not a tag) to get a three-year rabies shot. Without it, your pet will receive a one-year shot.

League Hours

Visiting:
Noon – 7:00 p.m. Monday
Closed Tuesday
Noon – 7:00 p.m. Wed. - Fri.
Noon – 4:00 p.m. Sat. - Sun.
Receiving Incoming Animals:
8:00 a.m. – 10:30 p.m. daily
Emergencies: 24 hours a day

Pawpourri

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Susan Sherman & Jen McFarland
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