



Animal Chatter

Washington Area Humane Society **FALL 2009**

1527 Rt. 136 | Eighty Four, PA 15330 | 724-222-PETS | washingtonpashelter.org

A No Kill Shelter Giving Pets A New Leash On Life Funded By Your Contributions

A Purrrfect Adoption

by Bernadette M. Luketich-Sikaras

September 4, 2009 marks one year since we took Billy Bob from the shelter into our home.

Billy Bob was a cat of unknown age and origin featured on the WAHS website for quite some time. He was brought to the shelter after being hit by a car which resulted in the loss of his four front teeth, an eye injury and the amputation of his front right leg.

When I met Billy Bob in person, I could immediately understand why he was passed over by shelter visitors. It had nothing to do with his physical appearance or disabilities – this cat wanted nothing to do with humans. He not only hissed at me, he growled

like a dog! Billy had little chance of being adopted and it was that realization that made me decide to give him a home.

The first few months were tenuous at best. Billy hid under the bed, in the fireplace, behind our pants in the closet and in any nook and cranny he could find. Two days after the adoption, I thought he got outside. I searched for hours, check-ing all his hiding places, but could not find him. I dreaded the thought of calling the shelter to tell them that I lost my cat after only two days, but we caught sight of him in the house the next day. Billy was a pro at hide and seek.

Once Billy began regularly taking refuge in the litter box (a place that cats go when they are anxious), I would pick him up gently, wrap him in a towel, slowly stroke his face and whisper softly to him. I did this in small intervals for months. Then he began to peer at me from around the corner or walk near me on the bed while I was



BillyBob Cozy Under the Christmas Tree

sleeping. I didn't move towards him because he would bolt just when I looked at him.

Eventually he took to lying on the floor or on a couch out in the open. If we so much as took a step toward him, he was off like a rocket. So when Billy was lounging around the house, we made it a point to walk by him, ignoring his presence and making no eye contact.

When the time to try to "capture" Billy came, I found that he absolutely feared being picked up off the floor. Even a year later, when he wants to be picked up, he jumps on the couch or counter or any surface for which I don't have to bend down to take hold of him. And now he does that daily.

Today, Billy loves to be held and enjoys long grooming and cuddle sessions. He accepts treats even though he has trouble taking them

because of his missing teeth. When I hold him

★ Wish List ★

- **Natural Balance Dog Food**
- **Dry Cat & Kitten Food**
- **Kitten Milk Replacer**
- **Clay Cat Litter**
- **Frontline Plus**
- Bleach (*we use a lot*)
- Laundry Detergent
- Paper Towels
- Baby Food (*meat only*)
- 38 Gallon Trash Bags
- Postage Stamps

Volunteers Are the Cats' Meow *By Max Botkin*

I'm a lucky cat. After having been surrendered to the shelter twice, I was finally adopted into a loving home in August 2008. Although I'm no longer at the shelter, I'm in touch with my feline friends who go to Petco or PetSmart with dreams of getting adopted.

volunteers tell the folks ALL about them, and if they'd be a good fit for a particular home. Placing cats into loving homes with owners who will be patient during the adjustment period is foremost in their thoughts.

Most cat volunteers donate their time at either Petco or PetSmart.

to a couple hours a week cleaning cages and caressing us. At Petco and PetSmart, helpers have assigned days. But if they can't make it one week, they can switch days with someone or get a person from the sub list to fill in. One of the cat volunteers always comes forward to help when needed.

to be a cat volunteer (just adore us and be dependable), the cats appreciate people who can help in special ways. Alicia Jankowski, who volunteers at Petco Thursday nights, is a fantastic photographer. Her photos of our cats capture their true beauty, helping them get adopted. Click on Alicia's link on our website to view her beautiful photos.

Patty Rupe makes colorful cozy bed pads for our store cages. She even picks up the soiled beds, washes them, and returns them to the stores.

Perhaps the most important cat volunteer is Natalie Wittik who leads the cat volunteer team. She trains and schedules people, emails them about the cats, their conditions, and informs volunteers when a cat's been adopted (her happiest task). She writes cat bios and recruits volunteers for offsites. Natalie recalls, "I used to volunteer at PetSmart four days a week because we didn't have enough volunteers. I'm thrilled we now have such a dedicated, fantastic group of people."

"Think 25 volunteers is a lot? It's not! With almost 100 cats at the shelter, we need all the help we can get," says Natalie.

To become a cherished cat volunteer, see the volunteer training schedule on our website. Become a volunteer! You'll be the cats' meow!



Alice Wancowicz, Tim Kelly, Alyza Grimm, Garrett Grimm, Tressa Swanson, Sara Kelly holding Zak, Fran Starek, Shayla Sims, Jean Kronz, Kim Blackhurst, Aimee Ripper, Tamara Swanson, Natalie Wittik, Melissa Oswald, Alicia Jankowski, Tyler Evans, Barb Botkin, Patty Binkert, Patrick Kelly, Kim Graham, Rita Zimmerman. Not shown: Judy Bonaparte, Jenny Difilippo, Bridget Hartley, Jamie Ivanac, Roxanne Keffel. Karen Lewis, Diane Norris, Adaira Rufer, Marybeth Staub, Susan Steele, Tammy Underwood, Darlene Wise, Tammy Young

I speak for all the shelter cats when I say that we owe the cool cat volunteers of WAHS at least a few of our nine lives. Cleaning cages, food bowls, water bowls, scrubbing litter boxes and, my favorite part, petting and brushing are loving gestures these men, women, and children do on a daily basis at Petco and PetSmart. And when customers peer into the cages to ooh and ahh at the captivating kitties, our

WAHS keeps cats at those stores because it frees up space at the shelter and gets our name out there with the public. And the two stores provide lots of supplies. Petco gives us litter, beautiful modern cages, food bowls, toys, scratch posts, litter scoopers, some beds and even a play cage. PetSmart is another great store that kindly houses our orphaned cats providing cages, food, and litter. Volunteers spend anywhere from 45 minutes

Rita Zimmerman is the longest-serving volunteer. She's been caring for cats at PetSmart since they opened — around seventeen years. Wow! Not many volunteers stay with us for THAT long.

We even have entire families who volunteer. The Kelly family heads for Petco every Saturday morning. Young Tim plays with the cats while his parents, Sara and Patrick, clean cages.

Although you don't need any special talents

All Ways Moving to Help WAHS

Seeking Sponsors

Sponsorship is extraordinarily helpful to WAHS. It is a way to prominently support the shelter via the underwriting of some key items including the printing of event programs, the lottery calendar, mailings, signage and even this newsletter. For such substantial donations directed at specific projects, we promote your generosity and good will in a noteworthy way, whether it be an ad in the calendars or a statement in your own words about your business or contribution. Underwriting loosens up funds for necessities and gives the shelter more visibility in the community.

If you or your business would like to sponsor one of our projects, call Faye Kennedy at 724-969-0186 for details.

All Ways World Wide Moving has been a full service provider of high quality packing, moving and storage services based in the Pittsburgh, PA area since 1920. On April 1st, 2009, All Ways World Wide Moving launched a new program dedicated to helping charities, one of which is the Washington Area Humane Society.

Relocation Coordinator, Kim Graham-Moore and her husband Tim fostered and then subsequently adopted a shy dog now known as "Lily" from WAHS in March of 2007. Kim also volunteers her time helping with WAHS offsite events, handling dogs when she can.

All Ways Moving customers get to choose from several charities

when their relocation is complete, and a portion of the proceeds benefit their charity of choice. In the months that the program has been in place, WAHS has received more than \$900.00 in donations from All Ways Moving and their caring customers.

For more information about the company visit www.allwaysmoving.com.

Custom Cat and Dog Ornaments From Artist Susan Castriota

Designed by artist Susan Castriota exclusively for the Washington Area Humane Society, these double-sided full-color, glazed, porcelain ornaments are approximately 2-1/2" diameter and come with a ribbon hanger. Ornaments are \$15.00 each (includes tax and shipping) and can be ordered on our website. All proceeds benefit WAHS.



Sydney the Cat was brought to the shelter in February because his family was moving to a place that did not allow pets. Sydney has since been adopted.

Patches the Dog and his buddy Goddard were surrendered when their family lost their home. Goddard was adopted soon after, and Patches was adopted at the end of September.

We hope that this will be the first of many years of signature porcelain ornaments featuring dogs and cats from our shelter.

Quick Notes:

- Over the summer Barbara Colditz and Doris Rider donated four microscopes to WAHS.
- Dorothy Davis from Upper St. Clair donated a Horse Trailer in May.
- Richard Kern and family of Bethel Park purchased and donated a new trailer for hauling our aluminum cans to the recycler.

Summer Survey Results: *When would you get another dog after your dog died?*

63% of respondents said they would get another dog within 3 months. 9% each said they would wait 6 months and a full year. 18% said they would not get another dog. The average age of respondents was 57 and 91% of respondents were female.

I Know Not My Neighbor's Dog ... or Cat

My husband and I were heading to the grocery store mid-morning on a Saturday. Only a quarter-mile from our suburban house — about 15 houses away, a stray dog caught my eye. Standing just a foot from two streets at a “T” intersection, the thoroughly engrossed dog had his nostrils deep in the boundary strip of grass on the corner inhaling

and saw no person to whom this dog could be attached. He had a blue collar, but no tags. I called to the dog, knelt down and clapped my hands lightly. At first he was startled, but he bounded towards me like we were old friends.

The medium-size, reddish-brown dog had a familiar look. I had never seen him before, but I had seen many examples

garage door where I could see bikes and tools. This must be it. He must have come from this garage and they just don't realize he is wandering around by himself. I went to the front door with my new buddy and rang the bell. A woman answered and I asked if this was her dog. “No,” she said and told me she had never seen that dog before and had no idea where he lived. I brought the happy dog back to the car, opened the back hatch and he jumped right in. Though the Washington Area Humane Society does not take stray animals directly from the public, they could scan him to see if he had a microchip. They had no empty kennels, so I was working out what the next steps should be if he had no identifying microchip. I could bring him home and he could hang out with my dogs who have been very gracious to many a dog guest at different times. But I knew that loose dogs, particularly well-adjusted, friendly ones like this one often are within a mile of their homes. If I took him too far away, he may not hear his owner calling for him.

We turned around and started to drive home slowly while I kept my eyes peeled for any sign that would pinpoint the home of this dog. A woman opened her front

door and walked towards the street with purpose in her steps. We stopped the car, “Are you looking for a dog?” I yelled over. “Yes, I am,” she replied. I opened the hatch and pulled out my new charge with leash still attached. We walked up the lawn and I unclipped the leash and she took hold of the dog's collar. It was only two houses away from the home with the open garage — a real indictment of suburban living! No sidewalks to connect the neighborhood, every home an island and few people know their neighbors, let alone know their neighbor's pets. I mentioned that I checked the dog for tags, and the woman said he was microchipped. A microchip surely would have saved this dog at some point but I told her that I would have called the phone number or delivered the dog to the address had such a tag been on his collar.

I had always emphasized to people how great microchipping a pet is in case he/she was lost. But now I realize that there is no substitute for identification tags. Not only does it give you vital information at a glance, you can tell if a dog (and even more importantly a cat) has an owner. I would never hesitate to try to corral any stray animal sporting a collar with tags.

Found a Stray Dog? Some Things to Consider:

- The dog may live within a mile of where he was found.
- The owner may have called the police, local kennels and newspapers to report a lost dog.
- The farther you take the dog away from where you found him, the harder it is for his owners to find him.
- Lost and found animals are listed on websites including telephonenumber.org, dogdetective.com and missingpets.com.

What You Can and Should Do:

- Contact your local animal control.
- Ask neighbors if anyone can identify the stray.
- Take photos of the dog and post flyers in the area where the dog was found.
- Place ads in local papers. This is often free.
- Contact local shelters and provide a detailed description and a photo, if possible.
- Ask to be added to the WAHS waiting list or try to place the dog at another shelter. There are “open admission” shelters who will not turn away any dog. If the dog is highly adoptable, he will have a good chance at finding a new home.

the wonderful world that only dogs can smell. “Pull over,” I said to my husband who knew we would not be shopping anytime soon. I jumped out of the car and opened the tailgate where I always have a leash. I looked around

of his handsome pit bull features at the shelter over the years. I firmly said “sit” and he sat. He wagged and wiggled while I attached the leash to his collar. Now what?

I looked around at the two houses on the corner and one had an open

SPECIAL
FUN-RAISING

FALL 2009



JOIN THE

1,500
CLUB
\$ 1.00 x 365 DAYS

It costs \$1,500 per day to run the Washington Area Humane Society. That includes utilities, building upkeep, medicine, food, veterinarian services, insurance, postage, payroll, gas, vehicle maintenance and everything else required to run a normal business. No money is spent frivolously. We re-use and recycle.

We have no steady stream of income upon which we can rely. We rely on you. When money dribbles in, it is already spent. How wonderful it would be to have money we could draw on for the whole year. That's what the 1,500 Club is meant to be — a reliable way to secure the annual budget all at one time so we won't have to decide day-

to-day whether to purchase flea and tick medicine or pay the water bill.

Become a member of an exceptional group of supporters who pledge a dollar a day annually to our Humane Society. Place a checkmark on the adjacent form to pledge and become a 1,500 Club annual member. Mail it back, email us, or call us with your pledge.

All 1,500 Club members will be contacted the last week in November to collect all tax-deductible pledge donations via check or credit card during that week. Just a dollar a day from 1,500 animal-loving, caring people will keep our shelter in business for another year.

Just Wondering ...

Opinions and tempers fly when you ask whether dogs or cats are more intelligent. What do you think?

- Dogs are smarter than cats
- Cats are smarter than dogs
- They are about the same intellectually
- Pigs are smarter than both dogs and cats

Please give us a little demographic info about you:

Male Female Your Age: _____

Results from this casual survey will be printed in our next newsletter. See pg 3 for survey results from last newsletter.

Thank You For Making A Difference

Tear off and mail back with your tax-deductible contribution.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Enclosed is my donation:

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$Other

_____ Apply my donation to a WAHS membership.*
* \$25 Minimum. All members may vote at the annual meeting.

_____ Save a stamp. I don't need a thank you note.

_____ I want to be a Member of the 1,500 Club.

_____ Contact me about fostering animals.

_____ I would like to help with offsite events.

_____ I would like to help with fundraisers.

_____ Contact me about in-store Collection Banks.

_____ I will help with the cats at PetSmart and Petco.

_____ Contact me about including WAHS in my estate.

_____ I will "Share the Load" for injured animals.
Add me to your mail or email list. My email is: _____

I would like to Join P.A.T.H.S. as indicated:

I pledge to send \$ _____ per month to the Washington Area Humane Society's **P.A.T.H.S.** Program. My first envelope will be mailed to me the last week of the month in which I enroll. I will mail it back as soon as possible. If at any time I wish to stop my tax-deductible donation, I will contact WAHS at 724-229-0404.

Please make checks payable to: WAHS

Or pay by credit card: _____ MC _____ VISA

Card No.: _____

Exp. date: _____ / _____ 3-digit code: _____

Signature: _____

Name as it appears on credit card: _____

Make all donations payable to WAHS.

Projects that Propel Life Scouts to the

We are all used to meager rations at the shelter. It is so basic and bare that even the addition of a mop and squeegee hanger is cause for a triumphal touchdown dance. When aspiring Eagle Scouts come-a-calling we shoot for the moon and stars,

Build it and They Will Jump On It
 Jeff Champ took on our request for agility equipment for the dog play pens. He researched a variety of pieces, and together we chose five items. Jeff constructed an A-frame, Ring Jump, Dog Walk, Pole Weave and Bar

Ferguson of a double shade roof over the front two kennels that are adjacent to the Falconi Building. These rectangular pens are for the ease of staff to take out the dogs in that building which does not have outdoor access for them.

outside for both shade and to duck the rain and soon snow.

Three is a Charm
 More shade has been provided thanks to Grant Nissly who wrapped up his shelter built for the third exposed dog play kennel. Greg and his team spent two weekends building the shelter for the enjoyment and comfort of both dog walkers and their playmates.

The sun beats down on the two front pens making the brief outings for the dogs in the summertime uncomfortable. But building a large shade roof that complemented the aluminum building was a tall order. Josh and his family were undaunted by the challenge. Collectively they spent several weekends working on the project — from post to rafters — finishing just in time for the family vacation.

More from Number Four
 Never one to run out of projects, the shelter has had a fourth young man, Bill Margiotti step up and build six sturdy picnic tables and benches to furnish our large pavilion. This will allow us to seat our new volunteers at orientations as well as expand our ability to host other events.

The dogs now have a roof over their heads



Jeff Champ (center) and helpers show off the A-Frame for dogs.

tossing out difficult, but much-wished-for ideas to those earnest teenagers and dutiful Dads who stand at arms length with poker faces trying not to grimace at the level of difficulty each project presents. This past summer has been a watershed of helpful young men and their crews working at the shelter.

Jump that were placed strategically among the three play kennels. Accompanying Jeff was his Aunt, an authority on agility training who lent her expertise to show staff and volunteers how to tease the dogs into using the various items to focus their concentration and test their skills.

Since the agility items have been in place, many of the dogs have surprised us with their knack for jumping right in, literally!

Another Cool Project
 Overlapping the agility installation was the construction by Josh



Josh Ferguson (left) and family worked long and hard to put a roof over the heads of the dogs in the Falconi Building.



Happy "Hurdle" doing hurdles

Scouting around for a project? Call Rob Simonin at 724-255-9107 and see what is in our pipeline of shelter wishes.

Next Level – Eagle Scout



Bill Margiotti and crew constructing picnic tables and benches

Going for the Silver

Andrew Smith led a group of eight in de-rusting, cleaning and re-painting the chain link kennels, improving not only the appearance, but also the safety which is a necessary part of our kennel inspections.

Thanks to Jeff, Josh, Greg, Bill and Andrew, not only have the dogs had their temporary home at WAHS enhanced immeasurably, the staff and volunteers have improved "digs" that add to their comfort and ease. It is young men like these who inspire others and make us all very proud.



Grant Nissly and helpers working in dog play area

Fed-Ex Delivers to WAHS

FedEx Ground encourages its employees to contribute and give back to local communities. Since the majority of their nine-member volunteer group are animal lovers, they couldn't think of a better place to volunteer than at the Washington Area Humane Society.

On September 25, 2009, they headed to WAHS with donated items from FedEx Ground

employees, even those who were not participating that day, and to assist in whatever projects WAHS needed. They cleaned the lunchroom, painted a bathroom, and the best task of all—walked and played with the dogs. "We had a great time and are very thankful we were able to assist the WAHS," remarked Senior Manager, Karen Sullinger.

In Memory of a Caring Volunteer

Over the summer the employees in *Benefit Quality Assurance (BQA)* of Highmark spread their wealth of volunteerism. They had a special reason to give back; to honor their co-worker who passed away this year.

"This activity was so much more important to us because we were doing it in memory of our co-worker, Jim Stewartson," said Kristin Ritts, BQA 3. "He truly loved animals and would have been so proud that we chose to honor him with this project"

In February, Jim passed away suddenly, and his death left a mark on the department. He volunteered for WAHS for many years, so when the team decided to coordinate a volunteering day, they knew there was no better place to go.

The employees headed to the Humane Society on May 21 ready to make Jim proud. They spent all day working with the organization to mow acres of lawn, plant flowers, bathe and walk dogs, paint rooms, paint the front counter and organize closets.

"I helped pull weeds around the grounds, which was hard work on my back and knees, but it was very gratifying to see how much better the area looked," said Anita Sheffey, BQA 2. "The dogs now have more room to walk and aren't cramped into the small space they had before."

The team also wanted to do something special to honor Jim while at the site. Before the event, they collected money from their co-workers



BQA employees donated the memorial bench.

and purchased a bench to donate to the WAHS. The team put it together, painted it and marked it with, "In memory of Jim Stewartson."

"If he were still here, he would love to have gone with us," said Tammi Deorio, BQA 3. "This organization was so near and dear to his heart that it was just the perfect choice."

To arrange a WAHS group outing, email Alice at wahsoffsites@gmail.com

Opt-in and Never Miss Happy Adoption News

Our email list has been growing over the years and now more than 1,400 people get the bi-monthly news on which dogs are new arrivals at the shelter and which have been recently adopted. To our supporters, volunteers and animal lovers, nothing matches the delight at finding out who has found a new home. The email also features a flyer that



details three new arrivals at the shelter and with the help of our recipients, those fliers are printed and hung on bulletin boards in offices, churches, gyms and hospitals far and wide. They are also forwarded to friends and cumulatively can make a big difference to a dog still waiting for a home.

If you would like to receive these regular emails, please go to our website and use the Opt-in form on the bottom left of the home page.

If you receive more than one newsletter, please let us know by sending us an email at washahs@fyi.net

Puppy Mill PA Progress

Last year, Pennsylvania passed a set of laws designed to protect dogs from abuse and neglect. The Canine Health Board, created by the legislature, is charged with the oversight of temperature, flooring requirements and lighting specifications in commercial kennels.

The Board has created new regulations that are currently under review by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). During the regulatory review process there is a comment period which provides for citizens to support the proposed regulations.

If you would like to be heard on this issue, visit action.savingpuppies.com. Choose the Take Action link at the top to email your legislator.

Long Stay at the Shelter for These Three



No doubt I got my name for my gray muzzle and calm ways, but I don't consider myself a senior dog. My gray muzzle is just icing on my gray-splashed brindle coat. But watch out, 'cause I can pull like a tractor when I want to! I am a very sweet, slightly shy girl who will come for treats and appreciates some good old-fashioned lovin'.



I was at the shelter for a long time before I was finally adopted in 2004. Recently I was surrendered back to the shelter almost twice the size that I was when I left, I'm not going to live a long healthy life without losing weight. And I can't get exercise in a cage. My personality is as big as my girth, but I do prefer to be the only cat in a home.



I was abused and neglected as a young dog. Then I spent a long time in the shelter, frustrated and fearful. Finally I was adopted but then given away to people who were not allowed to have dogs. My face is low to the ground and I snort—a cross between a pig and a rhino! I'm housebroken and adore (an truly need) loving attention.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
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