



# Animal Chatter

Washington Area Humane Society **SPRING 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**

## ★ Wish List ★

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

## They Could Have Thrown in the Towel

I adopted a dog from you several years ago. He had come in as a stray and not much was known about him at the time; however, I think he may have been abused. Anyway, the staff had named him Axel. Being a huge Guns N' Roses fan, my husband insisted that we keep the name. It was tough in the beginning with Axel. He liked to chew and chew and chew, and he was not



## Want Stress-Free Pups?

If you have recently adopted – or plan to adopt – a shelter or rescue dog, some gentle petting may help ease your new pet into home life.

An animal shelter can be a stressful environment for a dog. In a study, however, shelter dogs receiving 20 minutes of daily petting and human interaction over the course of eight weeks experienced significant reductions of the stress hormone cortisol, in their blood levels. Petting your new pet frequently may help your dog make a calmer transition to domestic life, too.

— DogAge® *Tip of the Week*

## Ooops!

We inadvertently failed to acknowledge the sponsorship contribution by All About Kids located on Route 19 in McMurray in our Fall 2008 article recap of the WAHS golf outing.

housebroken — did I mention he liked to chew? My husband wanted to return him after only two weeks. Deep down, however, I knew Axel was a good dog. After all, I chose him as a gift for my son based on his demeanor and interactions with him over the course of several visits. I

wasn't ready to give up on Axel without really trying. I mean really, what was two weeks? I think we as a culture have developed this attitude or expectation that life is easy and that you don't have to work hard to get what you want. This "giving up" attitude, "we'll just get a new one" attitude, "it's too hard" attitude, and the "it's not worth the effort" attitude was just not a message I wanted to instill in my son.

Anyway, I think it's hard to imagine what any of these animals have gone through in their previous lives. I was determined to give Axel the time and patience that he deserved. Well, I am happy to tell

you that Axel's chewing days are over (knock on wood). He has learned what he is allowed to chew and what he is not. Oh, and yes, he has learned to go to the bathroom outside as I knew he would. I am also happy to say that Axel is my husband's best companion. He takes him to work, takes him running, and couldn't imagine not having him in our home and in our hearts.

Thank you for all that you do for the animals at the shelter. I've done volunteer work on occasion with you and I know how attached one can become to some of the animals.

— Susan Ranier-Beil

## A Quarter Century of Volunteering

In 1981, I first met Patty Gregg when she was on the WAHS Board of Directors and asked me to join. At that time we had very few fund raising activities. The president was the society editor of the Observer-Reporter and she occasionally put ads in the paper but that was all.

Shortly after I became a board member, Pat asked me to inoculate pets in two rabies clinics per year. In those times, we were the only show in town offering rabies vaccinations, and sometimes over a thousand people showed up. The police would have to direct traffic for us.

Then Pat had the idea of starting a spay/neuter clinic, and asked me to order the equipment and operate the clinic. Once again, we were the only organization in Washington



*Patty Gregg*

County with a surgery clinic. Pat began to recruit volunteers to help with adoptions, walk the dogs, and pet and cuddle the cats so they would become less afraid of people. She also set up socialization clinics for the animals.

Pat started representing the organization at summer events, such as the Washington County Fair, Jacktown Fair, Pike Days along Rt. 40, Canonsburg's Fourth of July special, and many, many others, using all our volunteers as well. She

came up with the idea of having human foster parents for our animals, with the purpose of bottle feeding young puppies and kittens whose mothers had died and to free up kennel space for animal receiving.

Pat initiated the Humane Society Police program, and was largely responsible for turning WAHS into a "no-kill" shelter. She and I recommended that we host the state-wide convention of humane societies about 16 years ago, which was a great success. When I served as president from 1995-2000, I realized more than ever that the very existence of our shelter was in large part due to Patty Gregg.

As animal lovers and people dedicated to "our favorite charity," we should be everlastingly grateful to Pat for many

thousands of days (and nights) she has spent in helping us to keep our doors open.

Join me in thanking Patty Gregg for a lifetime of service to the Washington Area Humane Society.

*by John C. Hansell, VMD*

## Lucky Ducky



A humane call came in from a concerned social worker, and the WAHS shelter manager was able to get the owner to surrender four of his cats who were in need of medical care, including one whose leg had fallen off after a suspected tangle with a raccoon!

Ducky, pictured above, has two deformed front legs, however he gets around quite splendidly. He was only about seven weeks old and had a bit of an upper respiratory infection. Adorable Ducky was adopted on the spot by a staff member who can manage his special needs, knowing he will be unable to defend himself or play "normally."

## Hello Bully Shared Some Pointers to Help Avoid "Pit Falls" for Shelter Dogs

In January, Daisy and Amy from the North Hills-based "Hello Bully" — a nationally recognized and well-respected pit bull advocacy group — gave a free seminar to WAHS staff and volunteers. They have made their mission to educate, inform and thwart breed-specific legislation by speaking to shelters, holding seminars and distributing literature about pit bulls.

A police raid in addition to a slew of recent strays and abandoned dogs rescued by our humane officers have brought the number of pit bulls at our shelter to an all-time high. These misunderstood, media-maligned dogs may be spending more than the average amount of time in kennels because of the lack of proper homes for them and it is particularly frustrating and tragic for these affectionate dogs. People-loving and bright, these "terriers" need to be mentally stimulated as well as physically active. They also need a daily dose of attentive petting and snuggling, so if you have the time, please visit these pitiful pitties and find out how loving and loyal they truly are.

## Eagle Scout Decks Out Falconi Building

There are always "improvement projects" on the WAHS wish list that are waiting for someone to pick up on and run with. Usually they require a particular amount of expertise that is not in the skill set of the average volunteer. As a result, it can be a long time before the wish becomes a

complexity of the project which needed to be executed well, Adam wrote up his proposal, submitted it to WAHS board members and his scout leader, and it was slated for production.

Late in the fall of 2008, Adam, and a group of supportive helping hands



*Adam Pokorski stands on his Eagle Scout project*

reality. Such was the case of the wish for a way to traverse the uneven hill from the parking lot staircase to the back of the Falconi Building which must be accessed several times per day to care for the dogs housed within.

When Adam Pokorski asked if there was a project he could take on for his Eagle Scout accreditation, the deck had bubbled up to the top of the list. Seemingly unfazed by the size and

broke ground. Over two days they constructed the approximately 20-foot long, all-weather deck. It has been an enormous help during the winter in sidestepping the uneven ground and ice making the trips to the building much easier for staff members.

We are lucky that dedicated volunteers like Adam think of WAHS and are so instrumental in improving the shelter for everyone.

Do you know an Eagle Scout who wants to help the Humane Society? We still need the kennels painted.

## Our Overdue Royal Flush

The sound of a flushing toilet is not normally a time for celebration, but when that sound is backed by the confidence of a new sewer tie-in, it carries the "sweet smell of success" in the proverbial sense, of course.

For our 100-year-old organization, it has been a marathon to modernize even in this most rudimentary way — an exorbitant expense planned for years in advance.

Our overburdened septic system was failing. Both pumps had to be replaced in 2008, and the leech fields located behind the shelter where walkers

lead the dogs were, well ... leeching beyond their leech reach. So full of waste by-products, the ground was mushy and smelled like the unhealthy muck that it was just under our feet. With permits, plans, engineers and a sizable purse scrimped and saved for years, WAHS and its neighbor, the Spring House were finally able to tap into the North Strabane public sewer system. In the long run,

the benefits will be realized—the back area will dry up, the sewer backups that have plagued the facility will be history and our water bills should be reduced.



## 21st Century Catch-up

It was a wish list item in our winter 2006 newsletter. A volunteer stepped forward to answer the call to update our antiquated computer system.

Kelly Leach got the ball rolling by researching software, testing and tweaking it to fit the shelter's needs. When her real job had her traveling too much to continue the complex task, Arch McIntyre and Tracy Hawkins stepped in to keep the project moving. Arch acquired the hard-

ware and oversaw the implementation of the new system, replacing the green screens that had been in use for about 20 years. Tracy trained the staff, customized programs, and continues to act as the software help technician, trouble-shooting software issues remotely as they crop up.

Yes, progress can be slow, but it does happen thanks to dedicated volunteers who want to see improvement and are capable of making it happen.



## Little Has Changed in 45 Years

I am a writer and historian who bought several vintage Sears catalogs at an estate sale. I looked at items that the company sold in the index under "DOG." A vintage collar, miniature dog collar lock or even a leash could enhance my website articles, so I looked through all of them in search of something I could use.

I was shocked to see that in the 1962 spring – summer catalog, Sears actually sold puppies! The least expensive that could be ordered were Beagles and Cocker Spaniels at \$37.47 each. The most expensive were Miniature Poodles and Miniature Schnauzers at \$129.95.

The pups were AKC registered (meaning the sire and dam are known and documented) but that does not predict temperament or health. The catalog mentions that the dogs are from kennels specializing in one breed.

The other breeds sold were popular for the period: Pekingese, Collie, Pomeranian, German shepherd ... but the disheartening aspect of

this was that the shipping points of the breeders are the same areas where puppy mills exist today – midwestern and northeastern states like Illinois, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan and Iowa.

It's been 45 years and little has changed in regard to the location of puppy mills, and sadly, our state is among them. Sears stopped selling canines by the 1970s according to searches through my available catalogs, but internet sources have stepped in.

Any pure-breed dog should come from a breeder who will show the parent stock of the offspring and will offer a health guarantee.

Backyard breeders are often clandestine about their sire and dam and they don't offer any health guarantees. They are in business for profit, not breed enhancement. Even worse, backyard breeders rarely report their hobby income to the IRS. They severely hamper a shelter dog's chances of adoption. Those who breed or buy animals are taking away

homes from deserving shelter animals.

Shelters are the best places to get dogs and cats. They are health and often temperament tested, microchipped, vaccinated and spayed or neutered, all for a fraction of the market costs of those procedures. Private

donors subsidize these procedures with their generous support to our charity. The Washington Area Humane Society does not get state or federal support!

The trick to finding the perfect shelter pet at WAHS is to visit often and keep an open mind.

## Free Feral Free Fur-All

There are always some cats at our shelter who have not been properly domesticated through interaction and socialization with humans. We make every effort to spay, neuter and find homes for all cats at WAHS, but some are very difficult to place. Therefore, instead of confining these cats to cages, we ask for compassionate people to make a better life for these forgotten animals.

For patient and understanding animal lovers who can co-exist with an aloof, self-reliant cat whose life up till now has been one of hard knocks and scavenging, we offer these cats for free. WAHS

expects these special adopters to provide food, shelter and veterinary care when necessary. In exchange for adopting one of these cats, WAHS will provide it vaccinations for rabies, distemper and feline leukemia for the duration of your pairing. And many ferals over time, warm up to their caretakers.

### Our Partnership

Adopter Agrees to Provide:

- food for cat
- shelter for cat
- vet care as necessary

WAHS Agrees to Provide\*:

- rabies vaccination
- distemper vaccination
- feline leukemia vaccination

*\* all services will be performed at the Washington Area Humane Society by appointment at no charge to adopter.*

If you would like to adopt one of our feral cats, please leave your name at the front desk and you will be called when a cat is available.



## Cupids and Canines 2009

Camp Bow Wow had more than 350 guests for Cupids & Canines Casino Night on February 7! The net proceeds going directly to charities including WAHS was \$10,564.20.

Camp Bow Wow south in Castle Shannon has helped many of our shelter dogs and is currently hosting Missy.



JOIN THE

**1,500  
CLUB**  
\$ 1.00 x 365 DAYS

It costs \$1,500.00 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 assure our \$500,000 annual budget all in one fell swoop 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 during the last week of November. WAHS would like 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.

## Volunteer Voices ...

"When you volunteer, you don't expect rewards for it. Your rewards come from serving your community and the greater good."

If you would like to help "Share the Load" ... a team effort to contribute on a case by case basis for costly medical procedures that WAHS shoulders for the animals, please fill out the form on the right and return it to us. Or send an email to [washahs@fyi.net](mailto:washahs@fyi.net)

## 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.

# Community Kicks in to Save the Horses

The Washington Area Humane Society received numerous calls of concern about a horse farm in North Franklin Township where the animals were being starved by their absent owner. Humane Officer, Matt Walsh's encounter at the Bedillion Road farm on Friday, February 20th left him shocked at the sight of their emaciated frames. Worse than that were the horses that were dead on the frozen ground.

"Although a creek runs through the property," explains Walsh, "it has been contaminated by the decaying carcasses of the dead horses."

WAHS issued a press release about the horses. Within the hour emails streamed in offering help. Top of the list was Kristin Herman of Coventry Equestrian Center with an offer of 36 bales of hay and 500 pounds of grain that she dispatched the next morning.



Walsh and WAHS Manager, Lorie Schooley, also a humane officer, quickly put their hands on some hay bales and hauled them to the starving animals. As soon as the government buildings opened on Monday morning, Walsh obtained a "seizure in place" warrant that allows for helping the horses without moving them immediately. It also barred the owner from the property.

Communication efforts were exacerbated by a phone outage at the shelter due to recent windstorms. The patient and diligent managed to leave messages and send emails offering manpower, boarding space, feed, horse expertise and monetary support.

When Walsh returned to the farm on Tuesday, the 24th, he found that approximately a dozen of the 37 horses had

vanished. A few others did make it through the night even though emergency provisions had been brought in.

Veterinarians from Canon Hill were on-site assessing the condition of all

them. A WAHS volunteer worked to coordinate the foster efforts — contacting those people who wished to take in one or more of the horses temporarily. Just as we vet the foster people who

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## ***Communication efforts were exacerbated by a phone outage at the shelter due to recent windstorms.***

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the horses and five of the remaining group were in critical condition. Over the next few days, the vets cleared the other horses for transport to foster homes. When they are well enough, they will be made available for adoption. Even with that positive news, there are ongoing issues including skin disease, rain-rot and parasites to be dealt with. The vets convened again to develop a managed care plan for the five critical horses in the barn.

Meadows Racetrack delivered water troughs and arranged regular water delivery to the farm while the horses remained there. Meadows Racetrack also donated bales of hay and money towards the veterinary bills that will be ongoing.

So many people, including residents of Ohio, New Jersey and as far away as Texas have stepped up for these sad horses, donating money and offering foster and permanent homes for

take in dogs and cats, we thoroughly check all "foster parents" for the horses. We thank everyone for their patience while we sift through the onslaught of good Samaritans who have been so wonderful during this difficult event.

Another aspect of this huge undertaking is that our shelter staff have been stretched inordinately thin. They travel to and from the farm located 20 miles away, checking on the horses, providing food and medication, shoveling the manure, and cleaning the stalls daily. Other staff members have been returning hundreds of calls and emails with the intention of maintaining a base of contacts for the future.

At this writing, 21 horses are currently in foster homes. Charges of animal cruelty are pending against the owner. Check the WAHS website for periodic updates as we follow the progress of these horses.

## Linked for Love Business Program

### Linking for the Love of Animals

Link your business to a homeless dog or cat at the Washington Area Humane Society, animals who may be staying in a kennel or cage for a long time while they wait for that special someone who will take them home forever.

Linked for Love is geared to businesses who wish to be associated with one or more adoptees at our shelter. When your sponsored animal is viewed, your business website link and generous donation are seen by visitors.

Each adoptable dog and cat featured on our website is also featured on three other much larger and well-recognized websites: Petfinder (owned by Animal Planet), Adoptapet.com and Pets911.com. These sites are very popular and heavily utilized by adopters nationwide expanding the pool of people who view our animals.



### Here's How it Works

- Choose the dog or cat with whom you would like to be linked.
- Fill out the pledge form and mail it back to WAHS.
- Your specified web link will be placed at the end of your chosen dog/cat's bio on his/her profile page. You can even create a special page for visitors who click on your link.
- Your link will remain on the profile page for as long as he/she is available for adoption.
- Hyperlinks will be removed when the dog or cat has been adopted.
- When adoptions are complete, WAHS will mail your pledge form to you with a remittance envelope reminding you to complete your promised donation.
- Make checks payable to WAHS.

## Companion Animal Speaker Series 2009

Sponsored by the Washington Area Humane Society

### ■ Humane Society Police Officer Case Studies

Wednesday, April 29, 2009, 7pm

Presented by WAHS HSPO Matt Walsh

### ■ Urinary and Bladder Problems in Dogs and Cats

Wednesday, May 27th, 7pm

Presented by Dr. John C. Hansell V.M.D.

### ■ How to Read Dog Body Language

Tuesday June 30, 2009, 7pm

Presented by Trinetta Kern, Animal Behaviorist

### ■ All About Vaccinations

Wednesday, July 29, 2009, 7pm

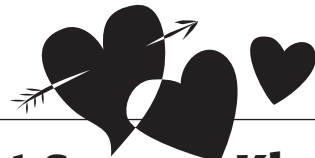
Presented by Paul E. Volz, D.V.M.

**Location:** Washington Public Library, Multipurpose Room 2  
55 South College Street, Washington, PA 15301

All Lectures will be approximately 45 minutes followed by a question and answer session.

WAHS Members: Free | Non-Members: \$5.00 donation  
Space is Limited. Reserve your seat today: 724-260-0495

Future Lectures are planned. If there is a topic that would interest you, please let us know.



## Sweet Success Kissed the Valentine Fundraiser

Volunteer, Linda Caputo and two co-workers from Eckert-Seamans thought they could possibly make a few hundred dollars for the shelter by creating custom valentines. Little did they know that this "simple" fundraiser would keep them busy as bees for a month and that the final profit from valentines and donations would approach nearly

\$4,000.00! Forms for the valentine orders were at several local Washington businesses. Senders could choose any of the dogs or cats on the WAHS website to be the featured photo "messenger." For \$5.00 each, more than 600 valentines were lovingly created, stuffed, addressed and mailed to recipients for arrival by Valentine's Day. Sweet!

## Save that Golf Date!

**Mark July 11, 2009 on your calendar to attend our Second Annual Charity Golf Outing at Lindenwood.**



# L.A. Spay/Neuter Law a Starting Point in U.S.

As of October 1, 2008, cat and dog owners in the city of Los Angeles are required to get their dogs and cats age four months old or older, spayed or neutered. There are a few exceptions, of course.

Pets that compete or show as breeds approved by the Animal Services Commission get a pass, as do service, guide, police, military, and rescue dogs, and those that have earned or are working towards a special title in herding or agility. In addition, licensed vets can certify that an animal should not be altered for health reasons.

The L.A. City Council sought to reduce the number of pets abandoned and euthanized each year. Fines for violations start at \$100 and increase from there.

Sterilizing a pet is not cheap, so the City Council also approved an ordinance that would provide the service for free, or at a discount, for pet owners who can't pay the vet full price.

This is just one example of government trying to apply reasonable controls for responsible pet ownership.

## Gotta Suggestion?

We've gotta box for that! The dogs and cats at the shelter are the silent recipients of our efforts, unable to tell us how to make life better for them, so we turn to members of the community that we serve.

A suggestion box hangs in the breezeway at the shelter with a pad of paper in a holder on the right side and a handy pen. Please share your constructive criticism with us, including your name and contact info so that we can discuss your thoughts in depth if necessary.

**Rabies Clinic,  
Sunday, April 26  
1-3pm at WAHS**

If you receive more than one newsletter, please let us know by sending us an email at [washahs@fyi.net](mailto:washahs@fyi.net)



**SQUEAKERS**

I was abandoned along with 30 other cats. I am so afraid to come out of my cage, even though I love to be petted and brushed. I will even roll over on my back. If someone would adopt me and give me a second chance, I would be so happy and show my gratitude with much love and affection for my new family.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EIGHTY FOUR, PA  
PERMIT # 4

Washington Area Humane Society  
P.O. Box 66  
Eighty Four, PA 15330

## Long Stay at the Shelter for These Three



**POKEY**

Three years ago, Pokey was brought to the shelter by our HSPO with an embedded metal collar in his neck which required surgery. After a long stay he was finally adopted but his family recently had to move to a pet-free home, tearfully surrendering friendly, playful Pokey with a shiny black coat and pleading brown eyes.



**SPECKLES**

Speckles, a stray, was very scared when she arrived. She did not have a clue about leashes but she seems to be getting the hang of it though she prefers to be a big lap dog. Speckles was returned after a brief adoption for jumping a fence and going after a neighbor's cat. She may need a bit more supervision, but she is a truly delightful dog.