



PET CONNECTION

SUMMER 2014

Alison and Charlotte Civerolo took their dog Sammy to the Pops for Pets concert at the Lubber Run Amphitheatre on June 29.

Pops For Pets

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PHOTO BY VERONICA BRUNO/THE CONNECTION

The
Arlington
Connection

‘Animals Are So Resilient’

AWLA and SPCA help pets and their families in the Arlington area.

BY KARA COLEMAN
THE CONNECTION

One of the top reasons couples surrender their pets to an animal shelter is because they are expecting a new baby. Animal Welfare League of Arlington tries to prevent that from happening by offering a Baby Ready Pets class.

“The class is for people to prepare themselves, their home, and their animals for introducing a baby to the home,” Kerry McKeel, AWLA communications manager, said. “It includes behaviors they can watch for in their animals, and acclimating them to sounds associated with a new baby.” Couples walk away from the class with a CD of sounds that they can play in the house in the weeks leading up to the arrival of a new baby.

That is only one aspect of the work AWLA does for animals and their families in northern Virginia. AWLA provides animal adoption programs to the D.C. metro area and rescue services to Arlington County. McKeel estimated that 3,000 companion animals benefit from the shelter each year, and that 92 percent of the animals AWLA takes in are either adopted out to new families or reunited with their former families.

Last year, AWLA took in 1,618 animals and adopted out 1,136, said McKeel. One of those animals the group took in was a cat named Delilah. Delilah had previously belonged to a boy who had had anxiety issues. The boy’s mother gave him the cat to help relieve him of his anxiety, and when the boy grew up and moved to college, where he couldn’t take Delilah with him, he decided she needed a chance to help another family who needed her.

Delilah is currently up for adoption through AWLA.

In partnership with Arlington County, AWLA also has a disaster relief trailer which will provide care for companion animals in the event of a natural disaster. “The trailer was an outcome of Hurricane Katrina,” McKeel said. “We would set up and work in conjunction with a human relief center in case of something like that, and our trailer



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Baby Ready Pets classes offered by the Animal Welfare League of Arlington help pet owners and future parents prepare their pets for welcoming a new baby into the home.

would be dedicated to companion animals. That way, people wouldn’t not leave their homes for fear of abandoning their pets.”

On a smaller scale, AWLA offers a safe-keeping program which will take care of pets for two weeks if a family is going through a hardship like a house fire, according to McKeel. This allows for a pet to be taken care of while a family puts the pieces of their life back together, and the service is available to residents of Arlington and Falls Church.

AWLA is a county shelter and provides animal control services. McKeel said that when animal control officers catch stray animals, they always scan to see if the animal has a microchip with the owner’s contact information embedded in them.

“Our officers came across an animal listing in Florida,” McKeel said. “The pet had originated here, and they were able to find the missing owner via microchip.”

McKeel said that while people have their information on a pet’s microchip when first adopting the animal, oftentimes they forget to update the information if the family moves. “So it’s no good,” she said. “It requires a lot of digging, but our officers are really good at that.”

THE SOCIETY for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Northern Virginia (SPCA



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Volunteers for SPCA NOVA bathe dogs during last year’s Dog Spa.

NOVA) is a rescue group based in Arlington whose primary goal is to rescue stray and abused animals.

“We were founded by our licensed humane investigator, Edith von Stuemmer,” said



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

AWLA has a pet shelter for use in caring for animals during an emergency, such as in the aftermath of a hurricane.

SPCA President of Board of Directors Dana Meeker. “Sometimes, a person would rather give up their animal than go to court. We rehabilitate animals, take care of their medical conditions, and adopt them out.” Meeker said that the group also helps local shelters when they need help housing animals.

SPCA is a foster-based rescue that houses cats in foster homes and dogs at the non-profit kennel Ragged Mountain Dogs in Sperryville. Last year, the group cared for 339 animals and found homes for 220, according to Meeker. So far in 2014, SPCA has placed over 115 animals in homes.

SPCA NOVA was founded in 1994 and merged with Spay Inc. about 10 years later, according to Meeker. Spay Inc. has a network of veterinarians who offer spaying and neutering at a discounted cost, and recipients of the service don’t have a required income level, said Meeker.

Because SPCA takes in animals that are stray and abused, the group, which is composed mostly of volunteers, takes care of animal medical needs. “Last year, we received a call about a feral cat who had a broken leg from being hit by a car,” Meeker said. “We had to amputate the leg. Then we got a call about a kitten with a broken leg, and it had to have surgery.”

Meeker said that SPCA gets a lot of cases where a cat has eye damage from a severe ear infection. One of the group’s cats, Miracle, had to have one of his eyes removed because of an ear infection he had as a kitten.

“Animals are so resilient,” Meeker said. “They don’t realize they’re missing an eye or a leg. They just go on with life.”

Finding Loving Homes for Loving Animals

Homeward Trails held an adoption event at Wylie Wagg, 2509 Franklin Road, Arlington. The animal rescue organization takes animals out of high kill shelters and places them in foster homes. Homeward Trails holds dog adoption events almost every weekend to introduce dogs to potential adopters. If interested in adopting a dog or a cat, visit homewardtrails.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE RAMSE

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PET CONNECTION



Remodeling with Pets in Mind

Keep pets safe during construction projects created for man's best friend.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Home remodeling projects often come after considerable planning and expense. One factor that can be overlooked is the family pet. While the end result of a remodel is often a new, updated or enlarged living space, the road to that improvement is often filled with dust, debris and inconvenience — which can be upsetting and even dangerous to dogs and cats.

Homeowners should be aware of the added traffic that comes with a construction project. “The biggest risk during a construction project could be that the pet could escape because workers might not be aware of doors or gates or windows being left open,” said Carol Petit, hospital manager at VCA Old Town Animal Hospital in Alexandria.

“There are many more cars and trucks going back and forth,” said Josh Baker, founder and co-chairman, BOWA in McLean. “The driveway should be off limits to pets.”

Actually, the entire construction zone should be off limits. “Pets, especially dogs, will eat anything,” said Petit. “There are construction materials. They could eat leftover food from construction workers, which could be toxic or contribute to weight issues, depending on the pet.”

Additionally, “dust can affect eyes and lungs just as it can in humans,” said Petit. “Home improvement project materials like paint and glue can be toxic. It can be the fumes, or if the dog or cat licks paint, it

“Dust can affect eyes and lungs just as it can in humans. Home improvement project materials like paint and glue can be toxic. It can be the fumes, or if the dog or cat licks paint, it could be lethal.”

— Carol Petit, hospital manager at VCA Old Town Animal Hospital

could be lethal.”

“If any pet owners feel that their pet is acting oddly or like they might have consumed something that they shouldn't have, the best solution is to take them to the vet to make sure that everything is OK,” she said.

Petit added that pets could become fearful because strangers are in the home. That fright, she said, could either increase separation anxiety or trigger a pet's basic protection instinct, leading him to become aggressive.

“There are a lot of things to consider,” said Baker. “It's not unlike thinking about small children.”

AND WHILE THINKING about pets, some builders incorporate features into a home project designed specifically for a pet.

One set of clients “wanted to be able to cordon off the tiled area off the side entrance, to contain the dog when he comes in wet or dirty,” said Danielle Frye of Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. in Cabin John, Md., referring to a recent kitchen and mudroom renovation. “It also provides a dedicated place where he can eat without damaging the new hardwood floors in the kitchen.”

Architect George R. Bott was able to create a nook for the dog's food and water bowls, as well as storage space for his supplies and accessories. In fact, say builders, pet feeding stations can incorporate modern conveniences and high-end materials.

“We can add custom cabinetry,” said Baker. “We can bring in a waterline to supply instead of having to refill the water bowl in the kitchen. There is also potential automation where the bowl is kept full.”

Mudrooms and garages can be designed to include pet bathing spaces as well. “In terms of showers, they're custom built with a hand held sprayer so you can control the temperature,” said Baker. “We can also choose a height so you can reach it without hurting your back while you're bathing the dog.”



PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

Architect George R. Bott of Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. was able to create a nook for the dog's food and water bowls, as well as storage space for his supplies and accessories in an Arlington home.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWA

During a construction project, homeowners should keep pets away from the construction site.

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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Concert Brings Out the Dogs

Pops for Pets benefits Animal Welfare League of Arlington and the Arlington Philharmonic.

The dogs were in full force at the Pops for Pets concert at the Lubber Run Amphitheatre in Arlington. A joint venture with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, the Arlington Philharmonic put on a show that pets and owners could enjoy alike on June 29.

With mild weather and the companionship of lots of dogs, the audience was treated to Aaron Copland's "An Outdoor Overture," John Philip Sousa's "The Washington Post March," Bob Lowden's (arranged) "Armed Forces Salute," Johann Strass Jr.'s "Overture to Die Fledermus," as well as Camille Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals" selections. It wasn't out of the ordinary to hear dogs singing along throughout the outdoor concert.

The concert was free and open to the public but donations were accepted for the Animal Welfare League of Arlington and the Arlington Philharmonic.

— VERONICA BRUNO



A. Scott Wood, conductor and music director for the Arlington Philharmonic, leads the orchestra in pieces by Copland, Sousa, Strauss Jr., and Haydn.

PHOTOS BY VERONICA BRUNO/THE CONNECTION



Shawn Janze holds his dog Odin, who was excited about the festivities.



Craig B. Teer, stage manager for the Arlington Philharmonic, demonstrates sounds with sandpaper blocks while "in costume" during the Sandpaper Ballet of Leroy Anderson's The Animals of the Orchestra.



Skeeter Pancito sang along to the music of the concert, to the delight of those around him. Holding him is his owner Marnie Russ from Arlington.



Max is all ears during the concert.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY KARI McNULTY

"Peanut" with Aiden McMorrow



PHOTO BY MICHAEL McMORROW/THE CONNECTION

"Grif" with friend James Schwind.