



Paw Prints

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The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Newsletter

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WHAT'S INSIDE

OAW hosts first-ever Animal Rescue Summit

Page 2

BVSPCA opens adoption center in Dover

Page 3

Delaware Animal Services takes compassionate approach to animal control

Page 4

How to find and recover a lost pet

Page 6

QUOTE OF NOTE

You can judge a man's true character by the way he treats his fellow animals.

– Paul McCartney

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A Moment's Paws ...

By Hetti Brown
Executive Director

Lifesaving through collaboration – that was the theme of the opening workshop at the May 19 Animal Rescue Summit, hosted by our office, for the dedicated people who work to help homeless animals (read more about the summit on the next page).



While the session was focused on interpersonal relationships and strategic networking in the field of rescue, it made me think about all the other lives saved in Delaware through the shake of a hand, an offer to help, or a healthy conversation in the endeavor of creating positive change.

Every major milestone that has been accomplished for animals in recent years was the direct result of collaboration. A great example is the State Spay & Neuter Program that was created through legislation in 2006. The program was established after animal shelters, policymakers, veterinarians, state agencies, and mentors from other programs in other states successfully implemented a pilot program and used what was learned to draft the final legislation. The program has now

served more than 9,000 Delawareans, sterilized more than 21,000 animals, and ensured all dogs and cats are fixed prior to adoption.

The State Shelter Standards Law is another great example of lifesaving through collaboration. All shelter directors in Delaware identified ways to advance the field of animal sheltering. From vaccinating animals against the most deadly, communicable diseases upon intake to establishing standards for humane euthanasia and defining a mandatory stray holding period so owners had time to find missing pets, shelters worked with policymakers to create healthier shelters and increase the chance every homeless animal has for a new family.

In this newsletter, you will read about recent alliances that have been created for the purposes of saving our community's homeless and abused animals.

Through partnerships between our Animal Welfare officers, a group of committed volunteers known as Delaware Friends of Animals, and local animal shelters including our shelter partner, Brandywine Valley SPCA, we are doing more than ever to enhance animal care in the home, keep animals out of shelters, prevent animal cruelty, and find new homes for homeless animals.

There truly is strength in numbers.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Public Health
Office of Animal Welfare

Animal groups, individuals come together for first-ever Rescue Summit

Animal rescuers from across Delaware came together May 19 for the first-of-its-kind Animal Rescue Summit, hosted by the Division of Public Health (DPH) Office of Animal Welfare (OAW). More than 100 animal rescue representatives, including non-profit organizations and volunteers, attended the free, day-long summit held in Dover.

A networking breakfast kicked off the day of presentations by regional and national animal welfare experts. A plenary lunch session sponsored by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and breaks between seminars offered additional networking opportunities.

“The goals of the summit were to bring animal rescuers in Delaware together and provide them with additional tools to help animals,” said OAW Executive Director Hetti Brown. “Most rescuers operate with limited resources. The Animal Rescue Summit offered a day to collaborate with others in the field and learn tips on best practices from regional and national leaders.”

Seminar topics included Lifesaving through Collaboration presented by Heather Cammisa of St. Hubert’s

Animal Welfare Center; Targeted Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return by Bryan Kortis of Neighborhood Cats; Strategies for Difficult-to-Place Animals by Daisy Balawejder of Hello Bully and Linda Reider of Bucks County SPCA; Adopters Welcome by Suzanne D’Alonzo of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS); Building Volunteer and Foster Networks by Daisy Balawejder of Hello Bully and Suzanne D’Alonzo of HSUS; Disease Prevention and Management by Dr. Brittany Watson of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine; and Fundraising for Rescue Organizations by Erika Mathews of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

In addition to the HSUS lunch sponsorship, several other generous donations allowed the event to be offered for free to those involved or interested in animal rescue. Event space was provided at no charge by the Maple Dale Country Club and presenters waived speaking fees. The Delaware Veterinary Medical Association sponsored the networking breakfast. Raffle items were donated by: Beaverdam Pet Food, Concord Pet Foods and Supplies, Michaels of Christiana, Fenwick and Millville Pet Shops, Tail Bangers, Petco of Christiana, Mars Pet Care, Hello



Heather Cammisa, president and CEO of St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare Center in New Jersey, talks about how to save lives through collaboration during the opening keynote at the May 19 Animal Rescue Summit. Shauna McVey photos

Bully, and Willey Farms of Townsend.

“We are grateful to those who donated so we could host this event,” said OAW Program Coordinator Shauna McVey. “Many businesses jumped at the opportunity to provide items and services to benefit animals. In the end, the Rescue Summit, and all our work at the Office of Animal Welfare, is about improving the lives of animals.”



Carmen LeComte, an independent animal rescuer, brainstorms with Lou Montgomery of Delaware Friends of Animals during the Disease Prevention and Management seminar presented by Dr. Brittany Watson of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.



Claudia Girty of Purrfect Haven Cat Rescue won a basket of cat items from the Fenwick and Millville Pet Stops during the Animal Rescue Summit. Fifteen donated prizes were raffled off to the animal rescuers in attendance.

Brandywine Valley SPCA now offers pet adoptions in Dover

Some animals picked up or rescued by the Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) Delaware Animal Services (DAS) unit will now be available for adoption in Kent County. Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA), the OAW shelter partner, opened a satellite location June 21 at the PetSmart Charities® Everyday Adoption Center inside the PetSmart store in Dover.

BVSPCA shelters stray, homeless, or abused animals brought to their non-profit organization by DAS. BVSPCA also contracts with kennels in Kent and Sussex counties to house animals retrieved from those areas.

The PetSmart Charities Everyday Adoption Center is located at 1390 N. DuPont Hwy. and will house approximately 15 dogs and 15 cats while they wait to find their new forever homes.

Adam Lamb, Chief Executive Officer of BVSPCA, said the organization is excited to have a place to adopt out pets in Kent County.

“It is an opportunity to serve more animals in the central part of Delaware,” he said.

PetSmart Charities’ Everyday Adoption Centers are part of a nationwide initiative to save homeless pets. Through these unique in-store centers located in PetSmart stores, PetSmart Charities and its animal welfare organization partners, like Brandywine Valley SPCA, have helped save more than 8,000 pets through Everyday Adoption Centers throughout the country.

In addition to opening the Everyday Adoption Center, PetSmart Charities® provided BVSPCA with a \$44,000 grant for a transfer vehicle equipped with built-in crates and air conditioning. The vehicle will be used to transfer pets for adoption from the main BVSPCA Delaware location in New Castle and should be on the road by August.

For more information, visit www.bvspca.org.

Community cat spay/neuter is free at BVSPCA

The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) recently launched a free sterilization program for community cats at its Delaware shelter. Community cats may be brought to BVSPCA at 600 South St., New Castle, Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., to be spayed or neutered at no charge, with no appointment necessary.

Community cats sterilized at BVSPCA will receive rabies and feline distemper vaccines, and an ear tip to designate that they have been spayed/neutered.

Additionally, the BVSPCA will loan humane traps for free. To borrow a trap, stop by the BVSPCA New Castle shelter Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. or Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

For more information, call 302-516-1000.



Adoptable Pet Spotlight

Name: Yogi

Shelter: Brandywine Valley SPCA, New Castle

Yogi is a 4-year-old male terrier mix who walks great on a leash, even when other dogs bark at him. He knows basic commands and also how to give hugs. He loves treats and would love to snuggle with a human. Yogi is cat friendly.

Yogi is neutered, up-to-date on his vaccines, and microchipped. He would love to go home to someone who will take him for regular walks. To adopt Yogi, contact BVSPCA at office@bvspca.org or 302-516-1000.

Delaware Animal Services marks six months with compassionate approach to animal control

By Shauna McVey
Program Coordinator

They can be found with pet owners in local parks, at community meetings or engaged in one-on-one conversations in neighborhoods throughout the state. Delaware Animal Services (DAS) is about much more than enforcing animal welfare laws – it’s about approaching animal control with compassion.

DAS Chief Mark Tobin said his team of animal welfare officers regularly offer education, information, and resources to the public. The officers evaluate each complaint and look for opportunities to provide necessities, such as food or housing, and other beneficial items like collars and chew toys. Many of these items come to the Office of Animal Welfare through a Delaware Friends of Animals Amazon.com wish list (see next page for more).

“Our main goal is to see if enforcement is the only way to fix a situation or if we can provide compassionate resources to enhance the animal’s wellbeing and the people’s wellbeing,” Tobin said. “Our unit takes pride in having a balance between community needs and enforcement needs.”

Sometimes, Tobin said, DAS officers are able to pull other agencies together to help when a complaint is received. During the investigation of a cat hoarding case, a homeowner’s retired military hat led an officer to contact Veterans Services, which then dispatched resources to help get the house in order. The officer then worked with low-cost clinics to have the cats spayed and neutered.

“This case was a success because we used all the community resources that were available.” Tobin said. “That’s a perfect example of what our vision is as an enforcement team.”

He said the officers pull expertise from each other, too, to creatively solve issues in their day-to-day caseload.

“We have some who have law enforcement experience,

some who have sheltering experience, and some who have veterinary experience,” Tobin said. “Everybody has different expertise that helps in cases.”

On one patrol, DAS Officer Jess Vitela noticed a woman who was struggling to walk a dog named Angel.

“I pulled over and showed her how to use her leash as a harness so the dog won’t pull so much,” Vitela said. “She mentioned that Angel chews everything. I had a Kong toy that was donated so I offered it to her. I told her how to stuff it with peanut butter and treats, and put it in the freezer so it will give [Angel] hours of entertainment.”



While on a routine patrol, Delaware Animal Services Officer Jess Vitela stopped to show Connie Brooks how to turn a leash into a harness for better control of Angel the dog. Jess Vitela photo

Animal law enforcement

DAS officers have handled more than 5,079 calls for service in the six months since it launched Jan. 1. Some cases were tragic; DAS has already secured multiple convictions for violations of animal welfare laws.

Delaware Animal Services is the first animal law enforcement unit in the state. DAS officers have full authority to serve search warrants and conduct investigations in cases where animals are being abused or neglected.

Each officer has more than 200 hours of training, including training as Delaware State Constables, expert animal handling and control, and community policing techniques for animal control officers. Officers also receive ongoing field training.

One priority for the new unit is to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies throughout Delaware to explain the role of DAS and the services it provides. Tobin has met with police chiefs and supervisors from state, county and municipal police units. DAS also provides regular assistance to other law enforcement units and works closely with the Attorney General’s Office on animal cruelty cases.

Contact Delaware Animal Services

To report a stray or abused animal, or an animal that is injured or endangered, contact the Delaware Animal Services 24-hour hotline at 302-255-4646. All rescued stray animals are placed on the DAS Lost & Found Pet Registry at animalservices.delaware.gov.



Volunteer network works to support compassionate animal control mission

By Shauna McVey
Program Coordinator

As OAW launched Delaware Animal Services (DAS) at the end of 2015, Nancy Horisk-Sherr launched Delaware Friends of Animals (DFOA) in support of the new animal control mission.

Horisk-Sherr said the initial goal of DFOA was to support the OAW's compassionate approach to animal control by providing animal care necessities and volunteer resources. Now DFOA works both in tandem with and independently of the OAW's DAS unit. DAS officers can identify individual needs during case investigations and ask DFOA to help, or DFOA's network of volunteers can step in before a situation escalates to an animal control or cruelty complaint to DAS.

"This very much complements the mission of the Office of Animal Welfare," Horisk-Sherr said.

Horisk-Sherr launched DFOA in December 2015 with an Amazon.com wish list that allows the public to purchase items some pet owners can't afford. Purchases are shipped directly to the OAW and are distributed by DAS officers to those in need. The wish list has items like dog houses and crates; flea, tick and heartworm preventative; cat litter and litter boxes; and cat and dog food. Donations are tax-deductible.

In the first five months after the launch of DAS, DAS officers provided 122 Delawareans donations from DFOA and local businesses.

"It's really all about helping pet owners and caregivers to better care for their pets," Horisk-Sherr said. "The last thing we want to do is force people to relinquish their pets and increase the

burden on animal shelters to take them."

Horisk-Sherr said the volunteer network grew as DFOA meetings were held throughout Delaware, and most of the volunteers are already active in animal welfare in a variety of capacities.

"We ask anybody who does volunteer work to have a non-judgmental approach," she said. "I think that's really important if what we're doing is helping people to help their pets. We can't forget the helping people part."

Horisk-Sherr coordinates the group in northern Delaware, while volunteer Karen Clark does so in southern Delaware.

"I think people generally care about animals and, especially in Sussex County, since we had such a lack of services for so long, people really wanted to jump in and help," Clark said. "When the call for help goes out, they respond."

Now, more than 50 volunteers are available to help DFOA. If an animal in need comes across her desk, Horisk-Sherr sends an email to volunteers and posts the situation on Facebook.

During a bitter cold snap last winter, OAW reached out to Horisk-Sherr in need of straw to keep animals living outdoors warm.

Within an hour, straw was donated to the OAW office, and DAS officers delivered the straw to animals in need.

For More Information

To contact Delaware Friends of Animals, email delawarefoa@gmail.com or visit Facebook.com/delawarefriendsofanimals.



Delaware Friends of Animals works with the Office of Animal Welfare to create several donation solicitation advertisements that are then shared on social media.

Horisk-Sherr said DFOA volunteers also often help facilitate spay/neuter surgeries for community cat colonies.

Clark said volunteers in Sussex trap one colony of cats each week to be sterilized at the Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) New Castle shelter. DFOA volunteers meet a BVSPCA employee at the Smyrna Rest Area to transfer the cats to be sterilized. After the surgeries, the cats are transferred to DFOA volunteers for release back downstate.

While DAS calls on DFOA when officers in the field identify needs that the volunteer group can meet, DFOA also helps mitigate situations before they become an animal control or cruelty violation.

"There are lots of people in our volunteer network who are seeing these things for themselves, maybe before the officers are even called in," Horisk-Sherr said. "I can see where it could work in the reverse where we're out there trying to help anybody and it has become or is becoming criminal neglect. I see it as a two-way street."

How to find and recover your lost dog

By Kathy “Kat” Albrecht
Pet Detective

This is the second article in a three-part series of articles about missing pets written by Kathy Albrecht, a former police bloodhound handler, crime scene investigator, search-and-rescue manager, police-officer-turned-investigative pet detective, and national leader in the missing pets field. The first article in this series may be found in the OAW Spring 2016 newsletter.

I’ve always had a deep love for and fascination with dogs. I’ve considered myself to be a very responsible dog owner. Although my dogs were all microchipped and wore collars with identification tags, it never occurred to me that one of them would want to leave home without me. Yet, as is the case with many dogs who have a fascination with scents, my bloodhound A.J. was born with wanderlust.

While I was ultimately able to eliminate A.J.’s habit of escaping by reinforcing the bottom of the fence with chicken wire, preventing dogs from becoming lost is only one of several components that help to solve the lost dog problem. The methods used to recover a missing dog are different based on whether the dog is simply lost and calmly exploring an area versus in the “fight or flight” mode and running in a blind panic. In this article we will discuss how to recover these two most common types of lost dogs.

Calm Explorations

When lost, dogs that have a calm and friendly temperament will typically be found closer to their escape point than dogs that are bolting in fear. That’s because wiggly-butt, friendly dogs are more inclined to go directly up to the first person who calls them. Gregarious dogs are often “adopted” by individuals who find them.

A dog that digs out from a yard to explore a scent will tend to travel a short distance before it is found — meandering and doubling back as it explores a scent. A dog that escapes on a beautiful spring day may travel farther than one that escapes in a snow storm. Extreme weather conditions, such as snow, hail, rain, or sweltering heat, will decrease the distances that lost dogs travel.

A dog that escapes in a residential area will not travel as far as a dog that escapes in a mountainous area. Fences that create barriers will influence a dog’s travel since a dog will tend to take the “path of least resistance” when traveling. Heavy brush and steep cliffs can be barriers that influence whether a dog continues on a path or changes directions.

What a dog looks like can also influence how quickly it will be picked up by a rescuer. In general, most people are less inclined to pull over and attempt to grab an ominous-looking dog versus a friendly, wiggly dog. Also, size matters: people are more inclined to pick up small dogs — they look vulnerable and are easier to transport and house than large dogs.

Population density also makes a dif-



Some missing pets can be recovered with a dog trained to track lost pets. Photos courtesy of Kat Albrecht.

ference. A dog that escapes in the city will travel a shorter distance than will a dog that escapes in rural farmland. When dogs escape into areas with a high number of people, their chances of being found close to the escape point are increased. But in areas with an extremely low number of people, they tend to travel further and their chances of being found close to the escape point are decreased. A dog that escapes in the middle of the night will travel farther before being seen than a dog that escapes during rush hour traffic.

In addition to using lost pet websites, such as the Delaware Lost & Found Pet Registry at animalservices.delaware.gov, Craig’s List, and social media alerts on Twitter and Facebook Lost and Found pages, the primary method that has proven to be the most successful in recovering lost dogs has been the use of giant, neon “REWARD LOST DOG” posters placed strategically, and legally, near the escape point. These capture the attention of drivers better than the typical white, 8.5- by 11-inch flyer that most dog owners post. Studies have shown most people don’t even notice small white flyers due to a behavior called “Inattentional Blindness” which means that if something does not capture our

Summer and Holiday Celebrations

Many pets run away during summer and holiday celebrations due to unfamiliar people and sounds, such as fireworks. To reduce the chances of this happening, crate your pet, turn on the television or radio to help limit sounds and make sure guests are careful not to leave a door or gate to your yard open.



attention, it is not perceived, meaning it is as if it is invisible.

If you want the person who has found your lost dog, who has seen your dog, or who knows who else has your dog to call you, your posters must be obvious, readable, and even obnoxious. If your community does not allow posters or flyers due to sign ordinances, there are other methods listed on [Missing Pet Partnership's](#) website that can help you get the message out that your dog is missing.

Panicked Dogs

Dogs with skittish, fearful temperaments are more inclined to travel farther and are at a higher risk of being hit by cars. In many cases, the fear in these dogs is due to genetics and a lack of socialization. Due to their cowering, fearful behavior, people who find skittish dogs typically assume that they were physically "abused" because of the exhibited behavior. Even when a skittish dog has ID tags, finders often refuse to contact the previous owner, assuming the behavior they see is the result of abuse. Some of these panic-stricken dogs are so afraid that they will even run from their owners.

Dogs that are skittish because they

were born that way can be challenging to capture. While some dogs can ultimately be coaxed or even baited to enter a large humane dog trap, other skittish dogs require innovative trapping methods. Many of the volunteer dog rescuers trained in the Missing Animal Response (MAR) course I teach have used various innovative methods and traps that include homemade barrier pull nets, kennel traps, guillotine traps, house as trap method, magnet dogs, and the use of "calming signals."

Even when I tell people "Do not call a stray dog" they still do it. Yelling at or calling "Here boy!" is a natural reaction when people see a stray. You see a "stray" loose dog and you assume they will come to you when you call it. And when that dog bolts, most people don't know what else to do besides run after the dog. But chasing after a dog typically makes matters worse. It puts the dog at risk of running into traffic, of running farther away from his home or escape point, and makes the dog more prone to bolt and run the next time that someone yells out or whistles after him.

You never want to look directly at a panicked dog. You can watch the dog out of the corner of your eye as you



The Missing Pet Partnership recommends collecting your pet's scent and DNA and keeping it in a safe place. In the event your pet goes missing, it can be useful if a dog trained to track lost pets is utilized.

face another direction, but remember direct eye contact is threatening to a dog.

When you see a loose or stray dog, you really have no idea of knowing whether the dog has a friendly temperament and is exploring a scent or whether he is super skittish and will bolt and run from you if you call, whistle, or clap your hands. Rather than approaching the dog, contact the Office of Animal Welfare Delaware Animal Services at 302-255-4646.

Sometimes making minor adjustments in what you've been doing in the past can make all the difference in the world, and in the world of a panicked, lost dog.

Missing Pet Partnership Tips for Recovering a Missing Pet

BEFORE YOUR PET BECOMES LOST:

Collect your pet's scent and DNA.

Use a gauze pad to wipe the body of your pet and collect a whisker or fur from your pet, then put these items in a plastic bag for safekeeping. If a dog trained to track lost pets is utilized, these items can be useful.

Have a good photo readily available.

It is a good idea to have current photos of your pet on hand to use in case your dog becomes lost. Like with humans, animals change in appearance as they age.

Have proof of ownership.

Proof of ownership is critical in case a person who finds your pet does not want give it back to you. While a microchip is the first line of defense, pictures of special markings or scars can also serve to show who a pet's owner is.

RECOVERING A MISSING PET:

Make a poster with the Five + Five + Five rule.

The Missing Pet Partnership states on its website that most drivers will only look at a sign for five seconds. The site states to make signs giant, fluorescent, and brief. Include an image of your lost pet.

"Tag" your car.

A "tagged" vehicle can help get the message of a lost pet out to its community. Write your animal's breed and description, and your location (city, street or neighborhood) and phone number over three or four lines in fluorescent markers. The Missing Pet Partnership website suggests the "NEOMarker" by Neoplex in orange, yellow, pink, green, or blue.

For more tips, visit www.missingpetpartnership.org.

Animal fighting added to Delaware's racketeering law

Gov. Jack Markell signed legislation June 15 at the Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) that enables the prosecution of animal fighting under Delaware's Racketeering and Organized Crime statute. [House Bill 220](#), sponsored by Rep. Sean Lynn and Sens. Karen Peterson and Colin Bonini, includes animal fighting in the definition of "racketeering" and strengthens the ability of Delaware's Department of Justice to prosecute those who abuse animals.

"Here in Delaware and across the country, people engaged in animal fighting are almost always connected to other serious criminal activity, such as drug dealing, gang violence, human trafficking, illegal gambling – the list goes on," said Rep. Lynn, the bill's lead sponsor. "By adding animal fighting to our state's racketeering statute, we've given law enforcement the tool they need to connect this crime to other ongoing criminal enterprises, and the teeth to punish those who abuse and exploit animals."



Rep. Sean Lynn and his daughter, McKenzie, pet Athena, who was a victim of dog fighting. Athena was brought to the Brandywine Valley SPCA after she was found in a park injured, hungry, and cold. She has since been adopted. Photo courtesy of Arlene Boles of BVSPCA



Adoptable Pet Spotlight

Name: Jeff **Rescue:** Brandywine Valley SPCA, New Castle

Four years never looked so good on a cat. Jeff is a handsome domestic male with a stunning black and white long-haired coat. He is playful and gets along great with his fellow furry felines, so he has a lot of fun in the community cat room at BVSPCA's New Castle shelter. Jeff would do well in a home that has other cats because he craves companionship and would love to have a furry best friend to call his own.

Jeff is neutered, up-to-date on his vaccines, and microchipped. Want to give Jeff the attention he deserves? Contact BVSPCA at office@bvspca.org or 302-516-1000.

THERE'S A NEW WAY TO GET LOST AND FOUND ANIMALS BACK HOME

Animals rescued by Delaware animal welfare officers are now posted to the new Lost & Found Pet Registry. Anyone can visit the registry to look for a lost pet or post a lost or found pet notification.

Find Delaware's
Lost & Found Pet Registry
online at
animalservices.delaware.gov

