



Since 1986, speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves

Winter 2008

327 Surgeries in 2007

Animal Welfare Community Comes Together

On November 14 the new director of the Metro Public Health Dept., Dr. William Paul, invited a number of individuals from the animal welfare community—including PFA Board Members Ann Logan and Nancy Whittemore—to participate in a vision and strategy session. He wants us “to describe what a complete ‘system’ of animal care and control for Davidson County should look like and to define key strategies that we can pursue together to achieve that vision over the next five years.” In his role as director, Dr. Paul has the ultimate responsibility for Metro Animal Care & Control (MACC) and is “committed to making continued improvements in the performance and efficiency” of the program. He believes that it will take the concerted efforts of many organizations and individuals to make the kind of progress we all want to see. **Dr. Paul has taken a very ambitious and bold first step and we admire and applaud him for that!**



Dr. William Paul, Director
Metro Public Health
Department

With Mayor Karl Dean, Sheriff Darren Hall, Chief Ronal Serpas, Rep. Janis Sontany, Councilman Eric Cole and Emmylou Harris as panelists who opened the meeting, the tone was set for the expression of ideas and pragmatic strategies to emerge. We accomplished the mission for that day and had the first follow-up meeting in January.

Too often, the animal welfare community is divided rather than united and reactive rather than proactive. Dr. Paul’s challenge has presented an opportunity for us to come together and “get it right” for the animals. “Getting it right” means that our strategies must be proactive. With strategies of legislation, education, and spay-neuter, we can address problems of abuse, ignorance (even among otherwise intelligent people), and the high birthrate of cats and dogs. These strategies not only address the *quantity* of lives, they also address the *quality* of lives. PFA is eager to continue the dialogue that has begun and to be a part of the changing system of animal care and control in Davidson County.

PEOPLE FOR ANIMALS is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit animal protection organization dedicated to preventing intentional or unintentional harm to all animals in our community with a focus on dogs and cats. Founded in 1986, our goal is to enhance pet quality of life and reduce the number of healthy pets euthanized in shelters with programs that

Reduce the birth rate of unwanted puppies and kittens

Help people make a lifetime commitment to responsible, caring guardianship of their pets

Promote adoption from shelters

Support animal-friendly legislation.

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Message from the President

PFA is now in its third decade. Those years have provided opportunities for perspective on progress against the deadly disease of pet overpopulation. Looking back, I recall a time when shelters seemed overwhelmed by incoming litters. Now there are fewer litters and more adolescent, adult and elderly animals. That suggests that spay-neuter is having an effect, but also that we are NOT making a lifetime commitment to our pets.

Although everyone seems to acknowledge spay/neuter benefits, the animal welfare community still expends only a small percentage of its total effort in prevention of the pet overpopulation problem. And so, **there are still more animals than good homes. If we do not act until they are born, it is mathematically impossible to find good homes for them all no matter how badly we want to or how desperately we try. How callous it would be if we continued with the reactive priorities of the present pretending that we will finally get a different result. We must change our priorities.**

PFA believes that hope lies in continuing to prevent births through spay-neuter AND in fostering responsibility and lifetime commitment through education and awareness. Carl Pope of the Sierra Club said, “We cannot let the future

be dictated by those who care only about the present.” In fact, the future IS dictated by the actions of today, and they must not be “only about the present.” Therefore, **more individuals and organizations must shift their priorities to PREVENTION—legislation, education and spay-neuter-if the coming decades are to be more humane than the previous ones.**

Can you imagine the strides humans could make in eliminating the suffering of pet overpopulation if our priority were prevention rather than cure? Changing priorities will require us to demand a pro-active approach from our tax-supported shelter programs, to challenge the priorities of private programs, and as we are able to make our own direct contributions of time or money to prevention.

I ask you now to think creatively about meaningful gifts we can give to those animals who know no peace. Speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves, I offer this: *“Please prevent my suffering whenever possible, rather than relieving it. That truly would be the greatest gift of all.”*

For the animals, *Ann Logan*

2007 Legislative Update

In Tennessee we are making slow, but sure, progress toward providing protection for animals. In 2007 the Tennessee legislature took these steps toward that goal.

A Spay-Neuter Resolution (HJR 99) introduced by Rep. Charles Sargent was passed. While a resolution is not law, it creates a record of opinion by lawmakers. This resolution lists the costs to Tennessee communities and the suffering endured by animals as a result of failure to spay and neuter pets. It concludes with **“...in recognizing the importance of spaying and neutering pets, we strongly encourage Tennesseans to be responsible pet owners and spay and neuter their pets.”** People For Animals spoke on its behalf.



SB136, known as the “hog dog” bill, adds “swine” to the list of animals (dogs, bulls & bears) that cannot be fought for sport, amusement or gain. It is now a felony. In other legislation SB487 makes it an E felony to have sexual contact or conduct with an animal.

Also SB1161 expands the definition of abuse to include threat to a pet of an adult or a minor, which is often used as a tool of control in domestic violence situations.

Finally SB637 states there can be an element of cruelty to animals by knowingly tethering or restraining an animal resulting in suffering or injury.

This year legislation regarding dangerous dogs is contained in SB2676, SB2685 and SB2738. Track them and other animal bills online at www.legislature.state.tn.us.



SNAP Stories

Every day, 365 days a year, a PFA volunteer “picks up” calls from our SNAP phone line from pet owners needing financial assistance to spay or neuter their pet(s). Different levels of assistance are offered based on need and are paid directly to veterinarians when a surgery is done.

These are thumbnail sketches of conversations that provide support, education, **and** financial assistance.

- A young couple who had fallen behind on their bills and feared losing their home still loved and cared for their three dogs. We assisted them with one spay and two neuter certificates.
- For years a woman had been single-handedly rescuing animals. As her financial burden reached the crisis point, she heard about PFA and called. Her neighbor’s dog had had multiple litters and in another Good Samaritan gesture, she had volunteered to help her. We were delighted to help all three of them!
- Employees of Williamson Co. Solid Waste Division had been feeding a stray cat that came to their location. They decided that they wanted to continue caring for her but knew that for their plan to work, she had to be spayed.

They called PFA for help. It is especially gratifying to us when we help with a surgery **and** a homeless animal is cared for.

- An elderly couple on a fixed income called when a homeless little dog “found them.” After a few days, they decided that they would keep him, get his vaccinations, etc. but needed some help with his neuter. Another surgery complete with adoption!
- A pit bull, named China, was rescued by a family when they found her tied to a tree, but their love for her was not enough. Their lack of money and knowledge created more hardship for China. Fortunately a group of animal advocates came together to educate the family and provide needed assistance. PFA did the spay!

China



Before

After

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

PFA SPAY/NEUTER ASSISTANCE 794-8925

ADOPTION

Metro Animal Services 862-7930

Williamson Co. Animal Control 790-5590

REPORTING ANIMAL BITES/INJURIES

Metro Animal Services 862-7930

Williamson Co. Animal Control Emergency Services 790-5590

EMERGENCY VETERINARY SERVICES

Cool Springs Pet Emergency Clinic 333-1212

Nashville Pet Emergency Clinic 383-2600



PEOPLE FOR ANIMALS

Visit us at www.PeopleForAnimals.net
Email us at PeopleForAnimals@comcast.net



Pet Vaccination Debate



In recent years considerable controversy has developed about pet vaccination protocols. The current debate is not so much about whether to vaccinate, but about the frequency and content of the protocol used. **Vaccines trigger protective immune responses in pets and prepare them to fight future infections from disease-causing agents.** Vaccines can lessen the severity of future diseases and some can prevent infection altogether.

But which vaccines are needed and in what intervals vary with breed, geography, lifestyle, your pet's age and health, and your vet's own protocol.

Your responsibility is to educate yourself which we hope this article will help you to do. Read the research and **ask your vet questions.** What are the prevalent diseases in your area? How are they transmitted? Are they treatable and what percent recover? There is no one protocol that fits all pets in all parts of the country. The small dog or cat who lives inside and gets carried from doorstep to car has less risk than the lab who visits the dog park. **Vaccine protocol for your pet should be just that...for your pet.** We used to believe that if we didn't get "shots" for our animals every year, we were not good guardians of our pets' health. We diligently showed up and presented our pets year after year for a cocktail of vaccines administered together whether needed or not. Oh, how things have changed!

Vaccines are not 100% effective and many variables determine their effectiveness. For example, vaccines are not as safe or effective if given at the time of illness or even surgery. **There can be side effects and some risks as well.** The most common are fever, sluggishness and reduced appetite. There may be temporary pain and swelling at the injection site. In cats, an association between the area of the vaccination and sarcoma (form of cancer) has been established and is being taken seriously by the veterinarian community. **In all cases, if any adverse response lasts longer than a day or two, consult your veterinarian.**

Vaccines are indeed lifesavers but must be used wisely and cautiously. Currently, veterinary protocols vary but most have acknowledged that yearly boosters are not necessary in most cases and can be potentially harmful long term.

In our area **"core" vaccines for dogs** are often DHLPP (distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvo, & parainfluenza) and rabies. Rabies, as a matter of public health, legally requires annual or triannual vaccinations. In Tennessee the three-year rabies vaccine is acceptable. "Non-core" vaccines, such as bordetella, should be given as local conditions and individual exposure present a special risk of a certain disease. In our area **core vaccines for cats** are often FVRCP (feline rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, panleukopenia, & chlamydia psittaci), feline leukemia, and rabies. Veterinarians do vary in vaccines given and protocols used. Be informed and ask questions!

If for any reason (health/age) you need to avoid vaccinating your pet, titer testing is a useful tool to help determine when and if vaccines are given. This is a blood test that measures the level of your pet's immunological response to a viral disease. It measures existing immunity, both vaccine-acquired and naturally-acquired immunity.

Thoughtful Tips: Visit your well-chosen vet yearly even if it isn't "vaccination year". There are other wellness checks that can catch problems early and will give your pet the best quality of life possible *and* save you money and worry.

Don't vaccinate sick animals. There is already a challenge to the immune system battling the illness. Vaccination could compromise both the disease fight and the desired immune response to the vaccine.

Consider not vaccinating elderly animals. If vaccinated in younger years, they are probably sufficiently protected.

Be very skeptical if a vaccine is recommended solely on the basis that, "It can't hurt 'em." When you finish your research, you will know in some circumstances that it can.

Last but not least, **"Ask your veterinarian questions."**

www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc Cornell Univ. Feline Health Center
www.healthypet.com American Animal Hospital Assn.
<http://www.avma.org> American Veterinary Medical Assn.



Other Important Health Issues

Spaying and neutering is widely known to be a solution to pet overpopulation and to provide health and behavioral benefits to dogs and cats as well. Spaying of females is the surgical removal of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus, traditionally done at six months of age. Done before the first heat cycle, it greatly reduces the chances of developing mammary cancer later in life. It also *eliminates* uterine infections and pregnancies.

Neutering of males is the surgical removal of testicles traditionally done at 6-12 months of age. (Both spaying and neutering can be done at younger ages.) Male pets' tendency to "mark" their territories is greatly reduced when neutered. It may also reduce aggressive behavior and make your pet less likely to roam. Neutered males are less likely to develop prostate disease and have *no risk* of testicular cancer and infections.

Obesity is a very common disease among pets in the U.S. According to recent studies, 30 to 40 percent are overweight. As with humans, if they eat too much and exercise too little, our pets will be overweight and may experience respiratory problems, diabetes, arthritis and heart disease. Spaying and neutering may reduce metabolism. Adjust calories and provide exercise accordingly.

Walking is great exercise for healthy dogs—and their humans—while cats may be more inclined to chase a piece of string or the light from a laser pointer. Often in multiple animal households some of the best exercise comes from playing with each other. In any case, use common sense and your vet's advice when starting any exercise program and **MAKE IT FUN!**

Hopefully you've already heard from your vet about the value of dental care for your dog or cat. If your pet has bad breath or reddened gums, gingivitis may be the cause. Gingivitis is caused by tarter build-up and can lead to bleeding gums, loss of teeth, and serious infections of the heart or kidneys if untreated. Your pet may also find it painful to eat and lose weight. To prevent or address dental disease, your pet can have his teeth cleaned. Done under general anesthesia for pets, the procedure is otherwise similar to that for humans.

A diet of dry food and a brushing routine will make maintenance of a healthy mouth easier. *If implementing a brushing routine, never use human toothpaste.* Check with your vet or the web for more detail.

The aging process varies considerably among cats and dogs and depends on breed, lifestyle and quality of care. Generally cats are considered senior at 10-14 years, small dogs (under 20#) at 10-13 years, medium dogs (21-50#) at 8-12 years, large dogs (51-90#) at 7-10 years, and giant dogs (over 90#) at 5-9 years. **Once of senior age, your pets should routinely visit your veterinarian every six months.** Prior to this time it is important to have established baseline test values (e.g. blood & urine) for your pet so that they can be compared to test values as your pet ages.

During the senior years, watch your pet very carefully for changes in behavior, appetite, water intake, urination/bowel movements, and weight. **Do not dismiss changes in your pet as "just part of the aging process."** They may be signs of serious but treatable illness. It is also true that many typical symptoms of aging can be greatly improved if addressed by your veterinarian. That can extend your pet's quality of life for many years. Age should not be an excuse for your pet's needless suffering!

Event Raises \$ for Spay/Neuter

On Oct. 7 the Nashville Riders held a "Hills & Hollars Run" fundraising event benefiting PFA. Prizes were donated by Texas Roadhouse, Puckett's, Lillie-belles, Subway and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. Special thanks to all the donors and to Kit Connor and her sidekick Bridget for all their hard work putting the event together.



Photo: L to R, Kit Connor, Bridget, Ann Logan



When It's Time To Say Good-Bye

“We who choose to surround ourselves with lives even more temporary than our own, live within a fragile circle, easily and often breached. Unable to accept its awful gaps, we still would live no other way. We cherish memory as the only certain immortality, never fully understanding the necessary plan.”

Irving Townsend

For those of us whose lives are so closely intertwined with our pets, there are more benefits than those without those special relationships can possibly imagine. We experience joy over the warm welcomes each time we arrive home, daily delight from their individual antics, the companionship of a most loyal friend, often a bedfellow who snuggles in a totally predictable way every night, and, of course, the knowledge that their love is unconditional and enduring. In exchange for everything they give, hopefully they belong to a human who takes seriously his/her responsibility for loving and caring for them.

That responsibility is a lifetime one for us humans. It is with us from the day an animal comes into our lives. Maybe their unconditional love and our responsibility to them partially explain the depth of our pain when we even think of losing them. Specifically *because* they are an animal, we are sometimes allowed to make decisions about how and when they leave us. Though that is perhaps the most horrendous choice we can envision, Albert Schweitzer reminded us, *“To put an end by mercy killing to the suffering of a creature, when that suffering cannot be alleviated, is more ethical than to stand aloof from it.”*



Dedicated to the memory of Otis Whittemore and Annie Logan.

Regardless of the circumstances of losing a devoted animal companion, when one is gone and our final grieving process begins, we must find our way through it in our own way. That does not mean we must do it alone. Having trust in our veterinarian is crucial and consoling. If family and friends are helpful, reach out to them. Sometimes even our other animals share our grief. As with all things, time itself will bring comfort. We hope that when you need them, the lists of resources below will also be comforting to you and those you know.

Pet Loss Resources

Support Lines

- Pet Loss Support Hotline-University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine 1-800-565-1526
- Iowa State University Pet-Loss Support Hotline 1-888-478-7574
- Sheba Pet Loss Hotline 615-724-0228

Books

- Greene, Lorri A. *Saying Good-Bye to the Pet You Love*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Rylant, Cynthia. *Dog Heaven, Cat Heaven*. Blue Sky Press
- Rogers, Fred. *When a Pet Dies*. Penguin Putnam Books

Websites

- Pet Loss Support www.petloss.com
- Memory Jewelry www.pet-loss.net
- Pet Loss Helpline www.cvm.uiuc.edu/CARE/
- Pet Loss Support www.lightning-strike.com
- Pet Memorials www.ourpals.com



Special Gifts and Memorials

For all of us who make a lifetime commitment to our pets, that last day does come; and unless it comes suddenly, we will be faced with a decision. Certainly it is a solemn decision to be made with your veterinarian's advice and your own love and commitment to your animal companion. But what greater gift of unselfish love could you offer?

In Memory of . . .

Patton-your big, gentle, sweet spirit will always be with us.

Scooter----gone eight years----but in my heart always--Much love...Pam Humes

Alex the beloved cat of Bill & Vi Elsey...Vicky & Larry Carter

Our beloved **Great Yellow Ged**.....Kim McDoniel

"Beau" and "Earl". Beau the basset hound was the sweetest dog who ever lived---he died at age 14.5 years and is missed every day. Earl the orange tabby cat had a wonderful personality and was constant companion to Beau. He died at age 16 years and is missed every day and so many dear and loved pets over the years. So lucky to have had them in our lives....Fred and Linda Barnes

Joanna Burke, whose love and commitment to all animals, but especially to her elephants, was and continues to be a source of inspiration to those of us who were fortunate to have had her touch our lives...Allen Powell and Ed Thaden

Patsy and Dottie---they were sisters who were rescued by Anne Knauff after being abused and abandoned as puppies. Anne made sure the rest of their lives were good and safe. They were great creatures and we loved them both.....Rosemary and Jon Renswick

Lulu our pooch of 15 years.....Carol Lea-Mord and Kevin Morehead.

Otis— In two short years you brought much happiness and joy to my life. You still make me laugh when I think of the funny things you did--and I cry when I think about how much I miss you. I love you so much and will hold you in my heart forever....Nancy Whittemore

"Wilbur" the best dog friend anyone could ever have & loyal companion of Billie Rutledge...Judy Flatt

In Honor of . . .

Our Scottie **Watson**, who fills our life with love and loves to give all visitors a special Scottie howl welcome Martha Wilson

Goldie and her new family.....Sammie and Brown Taylor

Rosi and John Renswick for their faithful care of Poppy... Anne Knauff

Our mother, who continues the work of caring for rescued cats that she and our late father started. **Barbara and Wally**, you are and were our role models....Donna Keefer and Ed Thaden

Spencer, who, despite the trials and tribulations of feline diabetes continues to amaze with his steadfast resilience and loving disposition...Ed Thaden

People for Animals truly appreciates those who understand the special bond that forms between animals and people. We dedicate this space to those fortunate enough to feel that kind of love. PFA sincerely thanks all members and friends for their generous gifts.

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

All donations are tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. You can now make your donations, honorariums, and memorials online at www.PeopleForAnimals.net

Special Gifts: Honor your special animal or human friend with a gift to PFA!

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____



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People for Animals is a not-for-profit animal protection group serving Davidson, Williamson, and surrounding counties. All members are unpaid volunteers dedicated to ending the tragedy of pet overpopulation. Donations are tax-deductible and welcomed in any amount.

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PFA Funding Sources

- Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
- State of Tennessee Animal Friendly Grant
- Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign
- Private Spay/Neuter Foundation
- Individual Donors

Photo: L to R, Jerry Williams, CFMT Board Member; Ann Logan, PFA President; Nancy Whittemore, PFA Secretary/Treasurer; Ellen Leahman, CFMT President.