Once again, we come to you with information on our 32nd year of helping animals. Here you will read about our education programs begun in 2017 and our future plans to expand them. You will be updated on what is happening legislatively in Maine and New Hampshire, and with state emergency programs-CART (County Animal Response Teams-Maine) and DART (Disaster Animal Response Teams-New Hampshire). You will also find information on ways and possible ways of locating lost animals which you may find helpful. Never Turn Your Back on an Animal in Need is always included with an inspiring true story of a rescue and the goal of convincing every reader that there is never any time that refusing to help an animal in need is okay. You will also find a story about one of our rescues in need of adoption.

Here, you will learn about what is happening with another rescue group in Oxford County, River Valley Animal Advocates, and what they have been able to accomplish in their area in the past ten years since they were founded.

You also will learn about what is happening in both Maine and New Hampshire regarding animal sanctuaries, as we still hold out hopes to one day have an animal sanctuary ourselves.

Additionally, you will learn how you can become active in dealing with some animal issues in both states. If you have questions or suggestions please don’t hesitate to contact us. We encourage you to get involved. As we institute new programs we are in need of more volunteers. Please join us in offering you voice and your expertise to the animals. You will never regret it.

Ways you can help us to cut costs: If you are now ready to receive emails, let us know. If you have a new email address let us know that, too, so we can continue to send you these newsletters. If you have a new physical address let us know so we can still send our newsletter to you. Our email address is voiceforanimals.1987@gmail and our physical address is PO Box 34 Harrison, Maine 04040.

As we said many years ago when we first began, “Until they speak to everyone as clearly as we hear them through our hearts, there is a great and urgent need for you to join us in becoming a Voice for Animals.”

For All the Animals,
Caryl McIntire Edwards
Finding Missing Animals
Through Animal Communication

Hello everyone! As a psychic for people and pets, I am often contacted to help find missing animals. This is not always easy to do, because they are often on the move and the location can change quickly. Because of this, when I do choose to help someone, I prefer to only have one-point person. I also do this for missing people, and because of the high emotions in the process I will only work with law enforcement if they reach out to me. When someone reaches out, the first thing I ask my guides (the voices in my head) if they’re still alive. If I get a no, I will relay that as gently as I can. With that answer I always ask how they passed and what signs they’re going to give the people missing them.

If I get that they’re alive, I first ask if they’re injured. If I get a yes, I feel what they’re feeling by allowing my body to sense the pain or injuries they are feeling. If they feel injured, I ask if they want to be found. Some animals tend to go to the woods to pass on their own, but I try to let them know that their families really need the closure. Then I ask what they can see from where they are. I get these answers as images in my head. If you think back to what you had for breakfast, you can “see” it in your mind. I “see” the answers the same way. I ask them if they can hear traffic, people, other animals, etc. I ask if they’re close to where they went missing and if not, how far away are they. I ask what direction they traveled in and when they expect to be rescued. This can help people hold on to hope if they dog/cat says that it could be a week or more.

Am I always right? Nope. Am I often correct? Yes. If I wasn’t, I wouldn’t have people referring friends and family to me and this career never would have happened. I will leave you with this. You can talk to your animals by thinking about them or talking out loud. If you ever have a missing pet, imagine a map with the roads leading back to your house all lit up. Energetically you are giving them the path to find their way home. If you do not get the closure by seeing them again, reflect back on what they have taught you. Maybe it was playfulness, worthiness, family, etc. Thank them for being there as long as they were and ask them to send you signs that they are at peace. They always are when they cross over, but I know how brutally hard it is when we lose them.

Sara Moore
www.enlightenedhorizons.com

Another Possible Way of Tracking Animals

For more than twenty years I have wondered why we aren’t making chips that not only identify animals but track them, as well. I have always been told that the technology just isn’t there yet. A relative who works for Garmin, the premier company in this field, has given me direct email addresses to try. Sadly, I have received a response from no one.

At one time an ACO told me he was going to get ACOs across the country along with veterinarians to meet with someone from that company to encourage them to do this, but sadly, at the last minute he told me he was just too busy to get involved.

There is also a Maine mystery writer who always writes about dogs. I contacted him because I felt his voice might be helpful. His response to me was that his dogs were well protected and did not need this. In other words, he did not want to get involved.

There is no doubt but what a coalition of animal control officers and veterinarians could be extremely helpful in advancing this but so far no one has stepped forward to undertake this. The writer could have been helpful, too, but it does not seem that that will happen.

This is something to use in addition to what people like Sara Moore and others with similar abilities are able to do to help us find missing animals.

If an animal control officer is interested in getting involved and advancing this s/he should contact us.

Caryl McIntire Edwards
Subscriptions to Kind News
(The premier humane education magazine for classrooms and homes, Kind News helps students connect with animals and build stronger, more empathetic relationships—From the Kind News website.)

MAINE

Kittery Schools
Horace Mitchell School-3 subscriptions
Mitchell Primary School-1 subscription

MSAD 35
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NEW HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth Schools
Dondero School-1 subscription

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Nancy Loud School -2 subscriptions
Chamberlain Elementary School-1 subscription
School Street School-1 subscription

This is a total of sixteen elementary schools. We have added 7 more classrooms from last year. Our goal is to continue adding more classrooms each year. This is a tremendous way to teach children about kindness to animals.

Caryl McIntire Edwards

Towns That Do Not Allow Fireworks-Update
An examination this year of each state's lists showed no additional towns who have made fireworks illegal at this time.
A point to ponder—Italy has gone to projecting videos of fireworks which have no sound. If this were mandatory across the United States how many animals would be saved from the terror they now experience?

Caryl McIntire Edwards

Voice for Animals of Maine and New Hampshire Against Puppy Mills
Voice for Animals of Maine and New Hampshire (under the leadership of Kathryn Davis) has continued to protest at Little Shop of Pets in Portsmouth, NH and has partnered with James Glover of The New Hampshire Animal Rights League, NHARL, for these events. The new state director of the Humane Society of the United States, Julia Seeley, is also now working with us and Katherine Rogers, a representative from Concord, has sponsored a puppy mill bill for New Hampshire.
The Junior Governor, Lola Giannelli, of New Hampshire for 2020 is a young girl who wants this bill to be her bill to promote. She has already presented before the Girl Scout Expo and is gathering students from her school Sunset Heights Elementary School, Nashua to help her in this. VFA will keep you posted as this progresses.

-from Kathryn Davis and Julia Seeley
Dear Voice for Animals,

Congratulations on your 32nd year of helping animals! I can't even imagine how many animals' lives have been changed thanks to your group.

My name is Rebecca McDonald and I would like to tell you how the VFA has helped 1487 cats (so far) to have access to medical care, neutering, and shots. I joined VFA group in the fall of 2001, soon after the tragedy in New York. I was attracted to the rescues that VFA had done as well as their views on spay/neuter. At that time, I was doing therapy dog work and also had rescued many cats in my area. I live in Oxford County, Maine and the local area is basically from Andover to Turner with Rumford and Mexico being the largest towns there. At that time, we put out change cans for VFA and I was able to network with a number of people who rescued cats. We were able to help with some food and a small amount of spays locally with Don McLean, DVM, who was introduced to us by VFA.

In 2009 we had a founding meeting to form our own group. With much support and mentoring from VFA, River Valley Animal Advocates was born. When we finally had our paperwork finished and applied for our 503(c)(3) VFA paid for our costs thanks to their change cans in our area (Feb. 2010).

There was and continues to be a HUGE need in this area for economical spay/neuter as there are many low income, elderly, and disabled animal owners as well as feral or community cat colonies here. In the years 2006-2009 the local shelter had taken in 697 cats from the Town of Rumford alone, euthanizing 269 of them.

The RVA will be celebrating our 10th year this October. Our major focus has been spay/neuter for cats. When we were able to bring in funds, we started our spay/neuter program. We contacted our local animal control officers to offer our help; trapped, neutered and returned (TNR) a number of cat colonies; and transported cats for people who could afford the veterinary costs. At that time, we were transporting cats from our area to Norway (Dr. Don McLean) for care. It was necessary to travel over 200 miles with cats on the days we visited our “Animal Angel” (Dr. Don). Many cats were picked up and delivered back to their homes as people we were helping had no way of doing it themselves.

In 2010 a revolving loan program was started. As money is paid back to us, it is used for another cat to be fixed. We've done almost 200 loans using these funds.

In 2014 we were awarded a $10,000.00 grant from the Belvedere Animal Welfare Fund to remodel a trailer & for medical/surgical equipment to build a mobile spay/neuter clinic. In the fall of 2015, we had all of our equipment and the trailer 99% ready to start using. My partner, Carlton Welch, had done all the work on the trailer as well as being the driver for the thousands of miles we had traveled to spay/neuter in Norway. Tragedy came to our household in October as Carlton went into the hospital for a routine surgery and suffered a massive stroke. He was in the hospital for a month and a nursing home for another two months. He is home now but partially paralyzed. Our spay/neuter program was at risk of ending. Our “Animal Angels,” Dr. McLean and his assistant, Martha, helped to set up a spay/neuter clinic (with the equipment from the grant) here in Canton in my shelter (Aunt Becky’s) area. We currently have monthly spay/neuter clinics here and still transport animals from the Rumford/Mexico area for care.

In the last 10 years we have been able to help 1487 cats with medical care and neutering, and shots: 701 of them were females who were spayed; 695 were males who were neutered; and 91 had other medical needs. We figure a female can easily produce 15 kittens in one year so the cumulative 10-year total is 52,485 less kittens born because of sterilization. The yearly total is 10,435 unborn kittens in 27 local towns every year. We have been able to go to the town officials and educate them about controlling cat populations and trap-neuter-return. We have
received funding from the animal control budgets in Mexico and Dixfield, as well as funding from Rumford. We have been able to prove to the towns that it is less expensive to put funds into spay/neuter of cats than for euthanasia and cremation. The animal control costs in the local towns have dropped, as have the number of cats showing up at the shelter. The best news of all is that euthanasia of animals is very rare and no longer routine here. The RVAA doesn’t claim to be the only factor for these results, but we have definitely contributed to the effort with education and spay/neuter programs. We have been able to partner with the Cleo Fund and Community Cat Advocates in their voucher programs. The Cleo Fund targeted Oxford County from 2015 to 2017 and we were able to use 168 of their vouchers. Community Cat Advocates voucher program was held in 2019 and we were able to help 62 cats with those vouchers. (Dr. McLean accepts all vouchers.)

Our program continues to be a great asset for this area and it all started with Caryl McIntire Edwards and Voice for Animals. Thank you for all your group has done to help the animals and to support and promote animal welfare programs for RVAA and many other groups just like us.

Sincerely,
Becky McDonald
President, RVAA

P.S.
I just wanted to send this picture that we use on all of our posters/change can covers. This mother cat (Precious) with her litter of kittens belonged to Mr. Roberts from Dixfield. On the request of the animal control officer we started working with him in 2010 and continued into 2012. It was one of our first major rescues with ten female cats on site having forty to sixty kittens every three months. At the time most of the kittens were going wild, with the ACO going there and rounding them up for euthanasia many times per year. Although Mr. Roberts loved his kitties, he had no idea that so many were being killed. He helped us wholeheartedly to get everyone fixed and find homes for the kittens who were born during that time. All of his original cats went back to his home after spaying or neutering. We made a wonderful friend with Mr. Roberts and continued to help him with food for his cats as he had no family in the area. The winter before last Mr. Roberts died due to burns from a fire at his home. As the years passed, many of his cats had passed away but the last one to leave him was Precious from this picture. She had passed away just a few months prior to his death. At the time of his death he had zero cats left. I can't even imagine the nightmare it would have been to rescue cats at that site after his death had we not helped him earlier. Again, thank you SO MUCH for helping us to make all this possible!

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New Hampshire Legislative Update

Governor Sununu signs budget bills, House Bill 3 and House Bill 4, into law! These bills protect animals by creating a cost of care state fund to help towns cover the cost to care for animals in cruelty cases and establishing an equitable regulatory system so all breeders, animal shelters, rescue organizations, and pet stores are held to the same reasonable standards of animal care.
Governor Sununu Signs Budget Bills that Protect Animals From Cruelty

In June of 2017, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), at the request of the Wolfeboro Police Department, assisted with the rescue of 84 Great Danes from an unlicensed breeder. Since then, Wanda (pictured above) has found the safe and loving home she deserves, and we have worked with Senator Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro), Representative Katherine Rogers (D-Concord), law enforcement, and New Hampshire’s animal shelters to strengthen our state’s laws to help prevent future animal cruelty cases. Today, we are thrilled to announce that Governor Chris Sununu has signed into law two budget bills, House Bill 3 and House Bill 4, that will provide critical protections for animals in the Granite State.

Through the passage of House Bill 3, the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food (DAMF) will receive seed money to create a new cost of care state fund to help towns cover the cost to care for animals rescued from cruelty. Through the passage of House Bill 4, all pet vendors, including breeders, animal shelters, rescue organizations, and pet stores, that transfer 25 or more dogs or cats per year must be licensed by the DAMF. Before the passage of this bill, animal shelters, rescue organizations, and pet stores were required to be licensed regardless of the number of animals they transferred, while a breeder was only required to be licensed if he/she sells 10 or more litters or 50 or more puppies per year. This threshold was both significantly higher than surrounding states and nearly impossible to enforce due to the difficulty in proving how many litters someone has sold. Once the budget goes into effect on July 1, 2020, breeders will be held to the same reasonable standards of animal care as animal shelters, rescues, and pet stores to ensure the health and safety of animals and the public.

Since 2016, New Hampshire has seen seven large-scale rescues of dogs from unlicensed breeders housing animals in abhorrent conditions. In each of these cases, if the breeders had been licensed pet vendors, the DAMF would have likely cited them for minor violations before they became major animal welfare concerns. Instead, intervention wasn’t possible until conditions had deteriorated so severely that law enforcement was forced to obtain a search warrant and seize the animals. By signing House Bill 4 into law, New Hampshire will no longer be a haven for unscrupulous breeders.

We are grateful to Governor Chris Sununu, Senator Jeb Bradley, and Representative Katherine Rogers for their leadership in addressing a surge of large-scale animal cruelty cases that has resulted in millions of dollars in costs to taxpayers and nonprofit organizations and the immeasurable suffering of animals. We also thank the New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations, the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Governor’s Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals for supporting this lifesaving legislation. And, as always, we appreciate the multi-year dedication of animal advocates who made the calls, sent the emails, and testified at the hearings to help get these bills across the finish line.

Thank you for helping to make New Hampshire a safer and more humane place for animals. We can’t do it without you!

We are celebrating two additional victories for animal protection legislation in New Hampshire! Governor Chris Sununu signed into law two crucial policies to address animal cruelty: House Bill 459 and House Bill 605. We were thrilled to join Governor Sununu, the New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations, legislators, and several puppies recently rescued from cruelty at the Humane Society for Greater Nashua to recognize these legislative milestones.

Championed by Senator Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) and Representative Katherine Rogers (D-Concord), collectively these laws help address the enormous costs to care for animals who are rescued from neglect; prevent someone convicted of felony cruelty, bestiality, or animal fighting from owning or living with an animal for a minimum of five years; and ban the paraphernalia used in animal fighting. We are grateful to Governor Sununu, these legislative leaders, animal shelters, law enforcement, and countless advocates for their commitment to preventing the suffering of animals in the Granite State.

“Together, these two bills build upon the progress made last term in strengthening animal cruelty laws in New Hampshire by reducing costs associated with animal cruelty cases, preventing animal suffering, and protecting animals from cruelty.” Said Governor Sununu.

House Bill 283: Relative to the Age Rabbits Can Be Transferred This bill, sponsored by Representative David Danielson (R-Hillsborough), raises the minimum age rabbits can be transferred from four to eight weeks, which is the same legal requirement for cats and dogs, which, among other things, allows them to be sexed. Over the past ten years, local New Hampshire animal shelters and shelters nationwide have experienced a significant increase in owners surrendering their rabbits or the unintended litters of those rabbits. One of the primary reasons for unwanted rabbit litters is the difficulty in correctly sexing young rabbits. By providing an additional month of growth, House Bill 283 will help to reduce the accidental pairing of unaltered males and females. This bill also ensures that young rabbits stay with their mother and littermates for an additional month, which adds socialization and behavioral benefits to the individual rabbits and may decrease the chances of surrenders to shelters later in life.

House Bill 361: Relative to Property Settlement Including Animals This bill, sponsored by Representative Debra DeSimone (R-Rockingham), will ensure that the wellbeing of owned animals is considered when granting custody in divorce proceedings. When couples separate, the custody of an animal is determined by who owns the animal. Typically, the owner of an animal is based on whose name is on veterinary records, on the animal’s license, or on paperwork from an adoption or purchase. In situations of domestic violence, in which perpetrators utilize pets as a means of controlling the victim, the perpetrator may put the animal under his/her name. As a result, the victim may be left with no legal recourse to keep the pet even though it’s clearly in the animal’s best interest to be placed with the victim. This bill helps to clarify the conversations that Courts have around pets, so ownership and the wellbeing of animals are considered in the custody decision-making process.

Julia Seeley
New Hampshire State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
Maine Farm Advocates

Maine Farm Animal Advocates is currently caring for a few senior residents living out their lives in peace. We enjoy seeing our residents have the opportunity to grow old as very few farm animals are allowed to do so. Christopher, our bovine family member, turned 15 this year. Liberty, who lost her brother last year, is now in her mid-20’s. The two horses, saved from slaughter many years ago, are now mid-teens and mid-20’s. They have all been together for most of their lives and we feel grateful for that.

As we are still not able to take in new rescues, we continue to partner with DELAS in Cherryfield where Snickers, the steer, rules. Sadly, we lost Norman last winter. If you haven’t visited DELAS, please consider to do so but call ahead to make sure someone is there to guide you around and keep the animals safe. Recently, they created a Safe Haven for Veterans! The Rescue is home to many horses, goats, and pigs!

We are so encouraged by the increasing number of farm rescues and sanctuaries opening up in Maine. Please visit and support them if you can. It’s expensive and challenging to care for farm animals.

New Efforts to Minimize Road Kills in Maine

Maine Audubon and 26 volunteers completed the second of three years of surveys for turtle roadkill on Maine’s public roads. The Maine Turtle Roadkill Project, supported primarily by the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Maine DOT, began in 2018 with the goal of collecting enough turtle roadkill and crossing data to identify the deadliest crossing locations of “hotspots” for turtles on roadways. In 2019 we had over 300 observations that included species of amphibians, birds, insects and other invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, and several “unknowns.” Of those observations, 101 were turtles including 13 nest sites as well as individuals of Painted Turtles, Snapping Turtles, Wood Turtles (Special Concern species), Spotted Turtle (Threatened), and Blanding’s Turtle (Endangered). The Blanding’s Turtle was still alive, and after a bit of patching up by the Center for Wildlife, was as good as new! In just two years of surveying we’ve now had observations of all 7 native turtle species found in Maine. We’re looking forward to starting up again in the spring with two more trainings and another summer of Citizen Scientists on the ground!

On two very positive notes, Route 236 in Eliot finally had fencing installed along the causeway section where dozens if not hundreds of turtles die every year. MaineDOT, working closely with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, installed fencing along both sides of the roadway in order to keep turtles from being crushed by the heavy, high speed traffic on this roadkill. Over the years, Painted Turtles, Snapping Turtles, Spotted Turtles, and Blanding’s Turtles have all been killed along this stretch, and the hope is that this fence will dramatically reduce that mortality. The ultimate goal is to replace the road/stream crossing under the roadway in order to make it large enough and functional enough to allow turtles and other wildlife to cross under the road instead of over it.

Sarah Haggerty

Maine Citizens Against Puppy Mills

Maine Friends of Animals, the animal welfare group in Maine which deals with most legislation, said they were still hopeful that Gov. Mills will act on this bill or let it become law once the legislature has come into session again for three days. The August session was for one day and did not count. MFOA does not think it would be useful to lobby her about this now.

from Maine Friends of Animals via Maine Animal Coalition.
Never Turn Your Back on an Animal in Need

Corduroy’s Story

He just showed up out of nowhere. It was January and the cold and snow were still regular visitors. He was sleeping on my oil tank which is outside of my house. It broke my heart to see this cat and the way he had managed to find some degree of comfort on this metal edifice. That winter day the snow had melted from the top surface of the tank that was now being warmed by the sun. For this sweet yellow boy this was a “good day.” His eyes were what spoke to me immediately...they spoke of sadness, exhaustion, loneliness and despair. Yet they also screamed out for help and a longing for a home and a person to love him.

And so, the story of this yellow boy’s rescue begins. I began with bringing food out to the oil tank and leaving it for him to eat. He would immediately run off, unsure of any human approach. There were times that I could make eye contact with him through my kitchen window when he was warming himself on the oil tank. He would look at me and I sensed he was recalling a time when he had a human to love him and a home in which he could be warm and safe.

Slowly but surely his feedings progressed onto my porch and with some regularity. There were still many cold and snowy days but he was able to get shelter under my mobile home. When he came on the porch, he would eat heartily but always wore that worried expression. His eyes haunted me...somehow expressing “I need help.” Many times, as I opened my front door he would look in as if to say, “I used to have a home” and I felt that he longed for the comfort and love that lay beyond a door.

Ever so slowly a bond was forming, a trust was beginning...and one day I was able to touch his head for a tiny rub!! I did not want to rush things or break the trust, so took it slow and vowed to Never Turn My Back on this Animal!

However, as this precarious closeness continued, I noticed a huge open wound on his neck and this cat was now looking ill and more exhausted than ever. Despite everything, he was attempting to make a home in the surrounding yards. I would see him resting and falling asleep on cold wrought iron steps at a neighbor’s house. One windy but sunny day I was reduced to tears as I watched him... motionless...laying on his side in another neighbor’s yard as the breeze blew leaves around him and ruffled his fur. I had to look closely to be sure he was breathing. He was breathing... but this moment had a huge impact on me. I was beginning to think that his time was limited...he seemed so ill and tired...I was determined to trap him and give him a life of comfort and love however short it may be.

And then one early spring day there was a cold drizzle and a damp chill in the air. This day he was falling asleep on those cold iron steps next door. I had to get a plan in place. I put food and catnip inside the shelter I had made for him out of a Rubbermaid container. I took the top off of the container and placed it in my yard across from where
he was sleeping. To my surprise it was not long until he investigated inside the container. I decided to go outside to try to coax him into my house...but to my amazement he allowed me to pick him up and bring him inside and into the room that was prepared for him upon his capture. It was as if he had decided “I am ready...I surrender...help me”.

And so now this story turns into a happy tale! This intact male comes into my house and is the most gentle, grateful, sweet creature. Not once did he spray or scratch me or show any sign of aggression!!! He let me pet him and purred with delight...he rolled around in comfort on the cat bed. He looked out of the window into the yard which had been his only “home” and seemed to be thinking …” I have no desire to ever return to that life.”

With the help of VFA he was taken to the vets and neutered, vaccinated and given an injection of antibiotics for his wounds. He tested negative for leukemia and FIV and the vet estimated him to be 8 years of age. He is named “Corduroy” after the bear in the children’s book who always wanted a home.

And now the adoption process begins. As much as I loved Corduroy...I could not keep him. My sister had a friend who had told her months earlier, he was looking for a cat so she contacted her friend, Joel. It was as if this was all meant to be...written in the stars. Joel had not yet gotten a cat and was interested in meeting Corduroy. He is screened by Voice for Animals; the two meet and it is a GO! I packed his bags...his favorite foods, his favorite toys, his bed and his treats...even his litterbox! With tears in my eyes, I was bringing Corduroy to his new home. It had been such a journey with this amazing feline and we were bonded. Would he trust another human? Would he think I was betraying him? Alas, the tears did not last long. I was prepared for an adjustment period...hiding under beds...jumping to windows to escape...crying...but none of that was to happen! Instead of hours or days of adjusting...it was a matter of MINUTES! Instead of under the bed, this yellow sweetie jumped onto Joel’s bed as if he had always lived there. These two were meant for each other! Corduroy had a home...his FOREVER home!!!

Corduroy’s story just keeps getting better and better. Joel and Corduroy have the most amazing trusting and loving relationship! We keep in touch and exchange pictures and moments and I visit occasionally! I am filled with happiness and joy knowing these two are a UNIT! So please never turn your back on animal...because every animal out there has a story that needs a happy ending...and YOU can make it HAPPEN!

Debra Chasse
Spaying and Neutering – Not Just for Cats and Dogs!

Some may scoff at the cost of a rescue pet, often exclaiming “I can get one at the pet store for less than half that price!” What many don’t realize is what goes into that adoption fee to set the animal apart from one bought at a pet store or found on Craigslist.

Spaying or neutering is one of the costs that may factor into an adoption fee. At Mainely Rat Rescue, we focus on—you guessed it—rats, as well as other small pets such as guinea pigs, mice, and hamsters. We routinely spay and neuter as many of our rats as we can for their own benefit as well as for adopter preference. To help recoup our vet costs, we charge $80 for a spayed or neutered rat. For those newer to the idea of rats as pets, $80 seems like an awful lot of money to invest in just one animal, especially when rats should always be adopted in pairs or more. In addition, rats have much shorter life spans than do cats and dogs. However, the health and behavioral benefits far outweigh the cost of a spay or neuter.

For males, neutering provides primarily behavioral benefits. Males who are neutered at a relatively young age will have softer fur, be less greasy, scent-mark less frequently, and generally smell nicer. Because neutering reduces testosterone levels, it also greatly decreases the odds of the boy developing an aggressive personality. If the rat in question is an adult and already aggressive, neutering will reduce or even eliminate that aggression, making him much more pleasant to humans and rats alike, and making introductions to new cage-mates much easier. The behavioral benefits are not immediate, but begin around 3 weeks post-op and continue over another month or so while testosterone levels continue to decrease. An added benefit to neutering is that, several weeks post-neuter, males can move in with females, allowing for a mixed-sex cage without the oops litters! Neutering is best when the male is young, ideally between 3-8 months of age, but adults over a year old may still benefit. Discuss with your exotics vet if neutering might be right for your rat.

For females, spaying has well-documented health benefits; the statistics are incredible. Studies show a decrease in overall tumor rate from around 75% to 5% in spayed females as compared to intact ones (1). Broken down by the two most common tumor types (mammary—those in the mammary glands akin to rattie breast cancer, and pituitary—tumors in the brain that cause a lack of coordination leading to the inability to eat or drink), mammary tumors decreased from around 50% in intact females to 4% in spayed females, and pituitary tumors decreased from 66% in intact females to 4% in spayed females (2). Considering how heartbreaking, not to mention financially draining, both of these types of tumors can be, reducing the incidence of these types of tumors to only 4% is priceless! For these benefits to be maximized it is best to spay as young as possible, ideally by 6 or 7 months of age, but you can still reduce your girl’s chances of developing these types of tumors (or of having mammary tumors recur) at any age your vet feels is safe for her to undergo surgery. Research on the positive effects of spaying female rats continue, in fact, 2 of our vets were active participants in a study published in October 2019 (3).

Spay and neuter surgeries can be beneficial for other types of small pets as well. For mice, neutering allows a male mouse to live with female mice, rather than live on his own (male mice should never live together, even if both are neutered, as they will fight—often to the death). In guinea pigs, spaying a female is usually only recommended to decrease or eliminate the risk of uterine cancer, ovarian cysts, or mammary tumors, though flank spays are gaining in popularity in healthy young pigs, and are much less invasive. For the purpose of mixing males and females in one cage, neutering a male guinea pig is a simpler procedure (4).

As with any medical matter, we advise that you discuss elective surgery with your exotics vet before making a decision. It can be beneficial to discuss with multiple vets, as fees for surgery can vary dramatically between vets, and different vets will have different procedures. It is important to find a vet who you can not only afford, but who has surgical methods and success rates with which you are comfortable. For help finding an exotics vet in the northeastern United States, Mainely Rat Rescue maintains a list on our website: http://mainelyratrescue.org/rattieblog2/exotic-vets/. If you are located elsewhere, check with your local rescue or humane society to see who they might recommend. If the up-front cost of a surgery is more than you can afford, there may be low-income options. CareCredit or an exotic pet insurance company may also be able to help you make payments over time.

Just like cats and dogs, rats and other uncommon pets deserve to live their life to the fullest. Spaying or neutering can help make your pet happier and healthier, and may give them the chance to live as long as possible—which
is especially important for these short-lived critters. Rats, guinea pigs, and others have so much love to give. We hope that every small pet adopter will keep these guidelines in mind to make the best decisions for their pets' well-being.


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**Cats, Your Town, and the Law**

In both Maine and New Hampshire, the state says the same thing, “Towns must care for dogs within their borders, but they may care for cats.” Under most circumstances’ citizens don’t know if their towns provide for cats as it is a decision made by the Chief of Police and is not shared with the townspeople at all. (To be clear, feral colonies are usually undertaken by a nonprofit organization, while contact with such a group is often made by individuals who know of the colonies and in a town where ACOs work with cats, they make the referrals, as well.)

While Voice for Animals was working on another project, it learned that there were two towns in York County, Maine and one that we found information on in Strafford County, New Hampshire (there may be more in Strafford County) who do not deal with cats. When an ACO in one of the Maine towns was asked why this was so, his response was, “Because we don’t have to.” Most citizens care about cats and would be concerned if they found their town was not providing for them but generally, they don’t know.

To find out if your town does or does not deal with them you would need to speak with the animal control officer town, Chief of Police, go directly to the animal welfare office at the state, or speak with the shelter that would receive those cats, if they were being taken care of. (Or you could contact VFA.)

To make changes one would have to follow the same procedures that were documented in the 2017 VFA newsletter about what Norway, Maine did to make fireworks illegal there. You would need to get together a group of people who care; go before selectman meetings; talk with the Chief of Police; start a petition; and ultimately put the issue on a town ballot. The first thing to do is ASK the town what its policy is regarding cats.

For more information and advice, feel free to contact VFA.

(voiceforanimals.1987@gmail.com)

_Caryl McIntire Edwards_
Live and Let Live Farm

This year, the Live and Let Live Farm Rescue and Sanctuary, situated on 70 plus acres of land in the small countrified town of Chichester, NH, celebrated its 22nd year of operation. As mentioned previously in Voice for Animals, LLLF provides lifesaving services and efforts to horses, ponies, goats, dogs, cats, pigs, as well as a constantly rotating array of guinea pigs, snakes, chickens, cows, steer, ducks, geese… the list is always changing as animals get adopted out to loving homes, which makes room for near constant procession of new arrivals. LLLF is one of the only, if not the only, independently licensed rescues for agricultural animals in the state of New Hampshire. To the now roughly 500 volunteers who keep the farm running and meeting the endless needs of rescue and rehabilitation, this is their second home.

This is the home and lifelong passion of LLLF’s Executive Director, Teresa Paradis. Having grown up with a passion for animals; caring for them, rehabilitating them, and finding adoptive homes. She started with cats and dogs, but as a young teen began working with horses behind the scenes at Rockingham Race Track, and later Suffolk Downs. In the years since those early days for her, she has grown in knowledge, wisdom, and heart, which led her to start LLLF, and cultivate it to the broad scoped, highly successful rescue operation that it is.

Our collaborative effort with PetSmart continues to be a marvelous and mutually beneficial venture, and highly successful for both entities. Still averaging 70-80 horses, as well as emus, goats, guinea pigs and pretty much anything at any given time, the work is never ending—feeding, watering, haying, medication dispensation, fence mending, mucking of stalls and run outs, building maintenance, vehicle maintenance, filing, record keeping, fund raising, public relations… on and on and on.

LLLF allows for several ways or means in which people can participate or contribute to the vast effort of helping to rescue animals. For those who are afraid of horses or who feel a bit on edge around large animals, they work with our seemingly endless pregnant dog and cat rescue programs, which we coordinate with other rescue operations in other states, mostly southern, that are overwhelmed due to individual economic conditions, individual health issues, or catastrophic weather phenomenon such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or flooding.

Volunteers who, for whatever reason, cannot handle the physical demands of tossing bales of hay or shoveling a few hundred pounds of manure out of a paddock via wheel barrow, find other, often creative ways to be a part and make a difference. Some bring ingredients and cook meals to leave in the “rec room.” Some stuff envelopes or help out with public relations. Some foster pregnant mama dogs or cats at home. Some write checks. All do what they can. It is a remarkable community effort. And one with remarkable results. People who want to help find a way to help, and the bonds formed through friendships at LLLF are as strong as you’ll find anywhere.

As we head into the holidays and the end of 2019 comes into sight, over 40 pregnant dogs have been rescued, which contributed to total of hundreds of dogs saved and adopted, when mothers and all their pups are added together. Additionally, over 25 pregnant cats and litters of motherless kittens have been taken in, rescued, fostered, and adopted out. As we’re sure those reading this are aware, it is a constant dismal tide; discouraging. Gut wrenching. And if we’re not careful and hold each other up, the heart can atrophy.

I’d like to give an example of this, by sharing a personal story of my own. As the sole rescuer/driver along with Executive Director Teresa Paradis of a group of three malnourished, neglected, and severely dehydrated horses, I had the privilege of giving them their traditional “new names” upon arrival at LLLF. It’s sort of a symbolic fresh start. This was in December of 2018, and by January I was working one on one with Dune, sponsoring the sand colored two and a half year old stallion who was in the worst shape of the three, with an eye toward possible adoption in the future.

I was approaching my 10 year mark as a volunteer with LLLF, and while there had been horses that held special places in my heart, I had managed to avoid letting any one horse truly steal my heart. But Dune did just that. Tragedy loomed however, and an aggressive, pernicious bone infection festered in his jaw, and he just did not have the strength to overcome it. On March 22, three months and two days after his rescue, and 48 days before his third birthday, Dune was euthanized. The day was raw and cold and wet, heavy with rain and fog. I had literally been up all night, sobbing at the prospect of saying goodbye to this boy that had latched onto me like no other ever had. Standing there in the cold, with a handful of volunteers, the vet and her assistant, and Teresa Paradis, I stood next to my now sedated Dune, staring straight into his deep green-bronze eyes, as I wanted mine to be the last face he ever saw.

The final injection gripped his blood stream in an instant, and my Dune was gone before he hit the ground. I surprised myself by bellowing like a wounded steer. I fell to the ground beside his beautiful neck, cold and raw mud seeping into my jeans. This small circle of friends gathered around me in support, as if to protect me, if only for a few moments, from any additional external anguish. When my jeans were saturated in mud, and my shirt sufficiently drizzled with the blood that streamed down his neck, I stood up, pulled my coat closed a bit, and cleared my throat. I looked around, and every eye in that small circle of friends, welled with a tear, was fixed on me in silent love and compassion. Most had been in my shoes previously; some several times.
Teresa was the first to break the silence, grabbing me by my wet coat and pulling me into her in a hug, saying, “it’s done, Scott… it’s over. He’s over— he’s passed over now, no more pain, he’s running like the stallion he was meant to be.” I looked up again at my gathered friends, circled around the earthly cage that a moment early had held my Dune, and apologized. There were some teenagers there, and I felt badly; about the last thing they needed was to see a 56 year old man fall apart sobbing.

“I’m sorry,” I stammered, “I thought I got this all out of my system last night.” Teresa, still tethered to me with a hand clutching my shoulder, said, “no… no, we don’t ever want to get that all out.” And she was absolutely right. We don’t ever want to reach a point where we can no longer cry over all that we see in the world of animal rescue.

I removed my 31 year old Stetson hat, and pulled out the liner. Placing the hat back on my head, I handed the liner to Jahsun, and asked if he could see to it that Dune was buried with it. “Something soft,” I said, “for the softness in life he only got to know for a few months.” Jahsun graciously said “of course.” I looked across Dune’s empty cage, steam rising off from the escaping heat, and the vet, instead of getting in her vehicle and heading back to her office, was braiding a length of Dune’s tail. She cut it, banded it, and presented it to me, along with a hug, and teary eyed condolences. I thanked her profusely. By this time, the circle was dispersing, as it was getting dark and there was work to be done. All except Jahsun, who was kneeling in the mud next to Dune, carefully and artfully braiding that liner in his mane.

And this… this is precisely why we do what we do. All 500 of us. Isn’t it inspiring and exhilarating to think of all the rescue operations, all across this great nation, doing what they do? Fighting that same dismal tide? They say good friends are hard to come by. Perhaps they are. But if you want true friends— friends that will stand beside you in the cold rain, while you work out your own grief over the loss of an animal, regardless of how long it takes, hook yourself up with a good animal rescue operation. Give of yourself, and it’ll come back to you, tenfold.

Scott Philbrook

NHDART News

NHDART to Become Program of the NH Dept. of Health & Human Services

To improve sustainability and streamline disaster response resources for animals in disasters, the New Hampshire Disaster Animal Response team is transitioning to become a program under the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). We are thrilled to see this strong partnership move forward. Over the coming months, DHHS will continue to finalize the transition and once completed, NHDART will reach out to regional teams and volunteers from around the state to determine next steps in our efforts to ensure that New Hampshire towns have an appropriate plan for pets in disasters.

Julia Seeley
New Hampshire State Director
The Humane Society of the United States

Maine Legislative Update

GREAT NEWS FOR ANIMALS FROM AUGUSTA: Governor Mills signed LD 64 into law!!!This important bill strengthens our cruelty laws by requiring individuals convicted of the most serious offenses be prohibited from possessing animals for a minimum of 5 years and improves enforcement of ownership prohibitions by making violations a Class D crime.

Two bills passed the House and Senate 1311 - the Humane Pet Shop bill and LD 1442 - Franky’s Law. Gov. Mills has signed Franky’s Law and the person who killed him has received 10 years in prison, as a result. Still left for her to sign is 1311 the Humane Pet Shop bill. There is no information as to why she has not done so. [See further information from Maine Animal Coalition and Maine Friends of Animals in this newsletter.]

Great News - From Falmouth to Kittery, schools plan to improve their vegan and vegetarian options for school year 2019-2020.

Katie Hansberry
Maine Director
Humane Society of the United States
The Vegan Corner
Try these recipes for delicious, cruelty free Holiday cooking.

**Winter Squash Soup**

<table>
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<th>Ingredient</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 cups cooked winter squash</td>
<td>½ cup chopped fresh parsley</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 ½ cups vegetable stock or water</td>
<td>2 tsp. salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup chopped onion</td>
<td>1 tsp. basil</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 lb. fresh spinach, chopped (optional)</td>
<td>1 Tbsp. nutritional yeast</td>
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</tbody>
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Sauté onion in water until tender. Blend or puree cooked squash in batches and put all ingredients except spinach into soup pot to simmer until tender. Add spinach, if desired. Simmer, stirring occasionally until mixture is heated through about 15-10 minutes. Serve piping hot.

**New England Brown Bread**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
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<tr>
<td>½ cup toasted wheat germ</td>
<td>1 cup raisins</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/3 cup maple syrup</td>
<td>2 cups soy milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. baking powder</td>
<td>½ cup molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cups whole-wheat pastry flour</td>
<td>½ cup apple juice concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup corn meal</td>
<td>1 Tbsp. soy flour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mix all ingredients together. Batter should hold together but not be too dry. If too dry, add water, if too moist, add more flour. Pour into large oiled loaf pan and bake at 350°F for 50 or 60 minutes until knife inserted into center comes out clean.

**Holiday Carrot Cake**

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<th>Ingredient</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup grated raw carrots</td>
<td>1 ½ cups + 1 tsp. water</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup raisins</td>
<td>1 ½ cups whole-wheat pastry flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup maple syrup</td>
<td>½ cup toasted wheat germ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tbsp. soy margarine</td>
<td>½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. cinnamon</td>
<td>2 Tbsp. soy flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. allspice</td>
<td>1 tsp. baking powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ tsp. ground cloves</td>
<td>½ tsp nutmeg</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cook carrots, raisins, maple syrup, margarine, and spices, in water for 10 minutes. Cool. Mix all ingredients together well, including cooking water. If mixture is too dry, add more water. Add flour, if too moist. Mixture should be pourable, not runny. Pour into oiled loaf pan. Bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes or until a knife inserted into center comes out clean.

These recipes were supplied by Barbara Bonsignore from her award-winning vegan cookbook, Cooking with Compassion $20.00 postpaid. To get a copy of this book call her at 980-435-0157. (Barbara does not use a computer.) All proceeds go towards the spaying and altering of dogs and cats. (Barbara, who now lives in North Carolina, founded and ran New Hampshire Spay and Alter.)
Maine CART
York County Animal Response Team
The York County Animal Response Team has had a very productive and exciting year of training and increased volunteer membership. Throughout the year the CART team has concentrated training on our primary mission of making disaster shelters pet friendly by working with the local community EMA directors to ensure the relationships are in place and that there are members available to assist when sheltering is necessary. Disaster sheltering is extremely rare in Maine because we simply don’t experience the large storms like many of the southern states do, which is even more important to maintain close relationships with local officials and to constantly demonstrate our capability. Family and pet registration, intake of pets and properly setting up of an animal area within a shelter requires expertise and constant training. In conjunction with the disaster shelter training the team conducted many demonstration sessions with Animal Handling equipment and learned the safe techniques.

Other team training events included understanding Emergency Management 101 and learning what emergency manager’s coordination is necessary during large disasters. With that the team participated in many seminars and completed a FEMA on-line course entitled “Animals in Disasters”.

The team also received Large Animal Rescue Training from Vicki Schmidt which was extremely insightful for both 1st responders and team members – we will be conducting additional training sessions this upcoming training year.

All in all, the CART training was very productive and improved the team volunteers’ skills immensely.

The CART team also participated in the York County Emergency Management Open House where the members had the opportunity to educate 1st responders on their mission and to provide information on how to keep your family and pets prepared and safe during a large disaster.

An important part of our mission is to educate citizens on how to be prepared for emergencies, so we are involved with community outreach and take part in many public events.

The message we like to provide to the general public is:

- Know the hazards in your area.
- Sign up to receive alerts and warnings.
- Have a disaster kit.

This should include everything your family needs to be self-sufficient for at least 48 hours. Include items for any family members who have special needs including children and pets.

Some examples for pets include:
- 3-7 days’ worth of canned or dry pet food
- 3-7 days’ worth of bottled water
- Pet feeding dishes and water bowls
- Can opener
- Collar and ID tags
- Sturdy crate or carrier (ideally, one for each pet) labeled with pet and contact information.
- Recent photos of your pets with you
- Photocopies of medical records, rabies certificates, vaccine history and microchip information
- Medications that your pet requires
- Disposable litter trays-Litter
- Blanket
- Comfort items
- Disinfectant and cleaning supplies
- Garbage bags for clean up
- Poop bags
- Especially for cats: pillowcase, toys, blanket or item with their scent on it
- Especially for dogs: Extra leash, toys and chew toys, cage liner (newspaper or puppy pads)
- Be familiar with evacuation routes, shelter locations and what accommodations there are for pets in your area such as emergency shelters and pet-friendly hotels.
- Never, ever leave pets behind!
- Visit our Facebook and Twitter pages to learn more preparedness tips for pets and humans, alike!
- https://www.facebook.com/YorkCARThttps://twitter.com/YorkCountyEMA
- The York County Animal Response Team meets the first Thursday of every month at 6pm at YCEMA (York County Emergency Management Agency, 149 Jordan Springs Road, Alfred, Maine) and is always looking for new members.
- Please contact Megan Arsenault at mearsenault@yorkcountymaine.gov for more information!

Arthur W. Cleaves, Director
We will keep you posted as this new project progresses.

We have found that there are a significant number of foundations who will award grants for humane education, and we will have found that there are a significant number of foundations who will award grants for humane education, and we will have found that there are a significant number of foundations who will award grants for humane education, and we will have found that there are a significant number of foundations who will award grants for humane education.

We are also hoping to begin providing a humane educator to middle and high schools in both Maine and New Hampshire. We will keep you posted as this new project progresses.

I am a retired special education teacher but am in classrooms very often. Early this fall, a young girl, telling the class what

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