

Alley Animals

Editor's Note

Last month, when the Westminster Dog Show drew a great deal of attention on both radio and television, I was struck again by the chasm separating pure bred and "ordinary" animals. Television footage showed the exhibition ring with people alongside their dogs prancing in a circle, the people displaying their prized possessions in hopes of leaving with a trophy. I looked at the dogs, freshly shampooed and brushed, all with shiny coats and bright faces while my mind raced to the faces of those on the streets whose sparse coats lack any luster and whose weary faces cannot hide their misery.

Show dogs know the benefit of falling asleep in safety, of daily nutritious meals, and a life of attention and companionship. To show dogs (and cats), falling asleep when they are tired comes as naturally as eating when they are hungry. To homeless and unwanted animals on the streets, sleep is an enemy—asleep, they are vulnerable to the life-threatening dangers all around them. Rescued animals often sleep for three solid days once they know they are safe and can lose themselves in the deep rest their bodies have craved for a very long time.

I realize any comparison between pure bred or show animals and unwanted or ordinary animals will falter. The fact that the pure breed and the ordinary are both domesticated animals of the same species is about as far as any comparison will reach. The differences, however, are vast and varied. I suspect that people who enter their animals in shows believe the pure bred dog or cat is "better" than the ordinary one, and certainly better than those unfortunate souls forced to live on the streets. This human bias is partly driven by a love for rarity; we bestow less value on animals whose numbers are greater. With millions of homeless animals struggling to survive

on the streets, many humans refuse to assign them any value whatsoever.

The other day I heard a lady say, with disgust, that when she puts out food for the birds, the pigeons insist on coming to eat. What's wrong with that, I wondered, until I realized this lady was expressing what many people feel—pigeons are plentiful and ordinary, therefore without worthiness of being fed alongside the "better" birds, possibly without the worthiness of being fed at all. How is it we cannot grasp that each pigeon, each ordinary sparrow, each dog or cat suffering on the streets is an individual, unique unto himself or herself and worthy of being respected, if not treasured?

After the Dog Show ended last month, I heard on the news that one of the dogs—a whippet—was on the motorized luggage carrier taking her to the plane when she escaped from her crate. Bolting across the tarmac, she easily outran the luggage handlers who tried to follow. As an experienced show dog, she was thoroughly familiar with her crate, the luggage carrier and air travel, which led me to conclude she wanted desperately to avoid being loaded onto a plane. (I have a strong opinion against loading live animals into the cargo hold of a plane, but I'll leave that for another time.)

With ingenuity she opened the crate, with speed (and fear, perhaps) she eluded her captors and, in an instant, she fell from the lofty status of the exhibition ring to being lost and on her own, unable to fend for herself. Soon she would be hungry, frightened, unable to restore the life she once knew. Soon she would learn the horrors that ordinary animals go through every day when they are tossed onto the street, banished from the place they believed was their home. No amount of breeding could save her from finding out what it's like to be alone and afraid; no arbitrary design-

(continued on Page 2)

Help Us Help Them

Tickets \$1.00 Each — Drawing Date is 5/20/2006

Please include your telephone number on each returned ticket; additional information would be helpful but not necessary

1st Prize \$500.00 Savings Bond - Donated by Midstate Savings & Loan Assoc. or cash equivalent.

2nd Prize \$200.00

3rd Prize \$150.00

4th Prize \$125.00

5th Prize \$100.00

Call 410-823-3319 for additional tickets.

Leave name, address and number of tickets desired.



Alley Animals

Editor's Note *(continued from Page 1)*

nation of value could exempt her from the pain of hunger or the cold. Here was a rare and very sad example of a point of contact between the life of the elevated and that of the lowly.

The last I heard, after helicopter crews couldn't locate her from the air and the search teams had no luck finding her on the ground, a number of psychics were called in to see if they could get a sense of the lost dog's whereabouts. The dog's owner vowed not to leave New York until she and her dog were reunited. I don't know if they were.

Many years ago, a male cat in one of our alleys captivated everyone who saw him. He was skinny and scraggly with blackish streaks of some unknown substance always smeared on his fur (what little fur he had), his stark features made more pronounced by ears that looked a bit too big and a tail that looked a bit too scrawny. We called him Motley. In the streets, animals are too preoccupied with fighting for their lives to develop personalities, a luxury reserved for animals who are cared for; safety frees them to blossom into the marvelous individuals so long suppressed by their daily struggle to survive. Even so, each time he arrived at the feeding spot, Motley showed us bits and pieces of a charming character eagerly awaiting the freedom to emerge. Together with his unsightly appearance, this endeared us to him all the more. One cold night Motley left the streets forever.

A lovely lady, Florence, adopted Motley who finally knew what it was to be adored and pampered in a home with a person and other animals to love him for the rest of his life. Motley thrived. In fact, so striking was his transformation, Florence entered Motley in the Household Pet section of a local Cat Show. I still remember, these many years later, the day an excited Florence called to let us know that Motley had taken top honors. Best in Show for his category of household pets. I wondered if the judges who evaluated him saw in his eyes the unmistak-

able dignity of one who had long suffered without complaint life's harshest conditions. Here was a rare and joyful example of a point of contact between the lowliest life and that of the elevated.

After Motley's triumph at the cat show, Florence invited me to visit him. When Motley walked into the room, I couldn't believe the change that had taken place in a boy who once feared for his life everyday and knew how it felt to go without water and enough to eat. The difference was truly remarkable. His gorgeous blond coat was full and silky, his features softened. The scrawny scraggly boy from the streets was transformed into an elegant cat with a graciousness about him that comes only after one has lived through the deprivations and pain of homelessness and then been given a new life with blessings abundant.

As long as millions of deserving creatures suffer the horrors of life (and death) on the streets, I cannot lend my support to the practice of purposeful breeding. So many innocent souls will never know the love and safety of a good home the way Motley did because there are far too many of them and nowhere near enough available homes. These animals may not exhibit the physical characteristics bred into show dogs or cats, and the richness they bring to their human (and animal) companions cannot be measured, but it is as real as it is lasting and profound. Their nobleness of spirit, eclipsed only by the pain they've endured, cannot be bred in or judged in a beauty contest, but those who have known the love of an animal, once homeless and unwanted, have experienced a gift of the highest order that a ribbon or trophy can't begin to represent.

Alley Animals
410-823-0899 or 410-785-2665

*We Cannot Save The World But
We Can Save Them From The World*

I want to help. Enclosed is my donation of: \$ _____. Check here if you wish an acknowledgment _____.

Please fill in below if name and address are incorrect on mailing label.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please make checks payable to Alley Animals, Inc.
P.O. Box 27487 Towson, MD 21285-7487

Contributions are tax deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of IRC.
Our web site: <http://www.alleyanimals.org>
Our email address: info@alleyanimals.org

Alley Animals

Memorials

In Loving Memory Of:

My brother, **David**, who died in March of last year and was a friend to animals his whole life. *Marvin Tenberg*

My dear Mom, **Shirley Huebenthal**, who passed away 11/20/05 *Phyllis Huebenthal & co-workers*

Max. *Fred & Helen Hickok*

Jessie Batch. *Shirley B. Rice*

Norman Gonet, who loved Woody and Mitzi, his cats. *Mary Gonet*

My wife, **Stella Ann Wilson**, who died waiting for a liver transplant. She always made sure the abandoned animals in our remote area were taken care of. Many times I had to turn the car around to see if "that was an animal" or just a piece of debris in the road. Stella Ann was a caring, loving person who will be missed. *Donald E. Wilson*

The love of my life, **Carlo**. Taken too soon—he ruled our gang of 11 cats with a soft paw. A Don Juan was he, all the girls begged for his favor and he was always obliging, sharing his bed with one of them. *Monique Anderson*

James R. Gibson. *Charleen Ponton*

Jim Murdoch, whose daughter is a friend of mine. Jim loved animals and would have appreciated the work of Alley Animals. *Wilmina Sydnor & Morgan (the cat)*

For all the dear people in my life, gone now, and all the loving cats and dogs, also gone now, but left such wonderful memories. *Marybelle C. Page*

Frances McKay, a cat lover & rescuer. *Mrs. Gareth Jones*

Ralphie, our loving "purr-baby" for many years—we miss you. *Evie & Ted Tontrup*

Recently departed, wonderful kitty, **Bonnie Leigh.** *Alan & Sandra Pendleton*

BoBo—he came to Molly looking for a home; she gave him one and he said "thank you" a million times over. *Nancy Sword*

Buddie, who was the sweetest and most loving "puppy" any family could ever want or have. She will always love everyone in the Moskovitz family and they will forever love her. *from a loving friend, Judy Berger*

Our "Momma" **Cassie Ann**. She was a great momma cat. We had her for 16 years and she is very missed. *Marlene Peddler*

My dearest cat **Koschka**. She left me on 8-26-05. Although I have many other cats, she was somehow a little more special. *Darlene DeMario*

My friend **Nancy Huntzinger** who was a lover of all animals. *Patricia Ronquest*

On behalf of my sister, **Lisa Feuerberg**, in memory of **Coco.** *Michelle Matuszak*

My hamster "**Twilight Thyme**", euthanized 12-8-05. With all his medical problems he never lost his spirit. He had a big heart and I miss his nose kisses everyday. *Donna Rae Castillo*

Cleocatra and Tiffany, my two lovely cats; gone, but never forgotten and always loved. *Ana Garcia*

Stella D. Wilson, she loved animals of all kinds. *Charles Nolte & Marie Hampton*

Ralph, beloved cat of **Ted & Evie Tontrup.** *Ed & Nancy Foltz*

Jasper, my smooth collie. *Diana Watson*

My mom, **Carolyn Creager**, who passed on 12-30-04. *Diann Creager*

"**Highlander Bear**", a stately, gentleman Newf who graced our lives for 11 years. *Bonnie Kerr*

Griffin, your sweet soul will never be forgotten. I miss you. Cheryl, I will be indebted to you always for caring for Griffin. May both your hearts be at peace. *Heather Chaney*

Vickie Stankowicz, who loved animals. *Dana Reed*

In Honor Of:

My mother, **Elinore Gordon.** *Stefanie Nair*

John Castellano. *Kate Gibbons*

Daisy, Bitsy, Boo, & J.J. *Ann B. Collins*

Regina Smith, of Middleburg, Virginia, for her unfailing devotion to animals. *Jean G. Kaplan*

The anniversary of **Marvin and Zelda.** *from your cousin, Florence E. Brenner*

My sister, **Mrs. Bobbie LaSou.** *Jeanne L. Blake*

The world's best Dad who turns 93 on March 30, 2006. *Lillian G. Leslie*

* The spring raffle is one of our major fundraising events. We hope you will choose to *
* participate by purchasing tickets and possibly winning one of our modest prizes. To all *
* who join in, we offer our biggest thanks; your participation and financial support will *
* make a great deal of difference for homeless and abandoned animals on the streets. *

Alley Animals

Show Your Compassion On The Road Tell The World About Spaying/Neutering

Shirley Keeling has undertaken to help raise funds for Alley Animals as well as raise awareness of the importance of spaying and neutering by launching a license tag campaign. She has agreed to do absolutely all the work involved on our end; all that's left is for you to take action. Please help make this effort a success and the world a little brighter for animals.

Show you care about Animals -
Purchase an Animal Friendly
License Plate and
Help us in our battle against animal
suffering. It's easy!
Just call Shirley at 410-557-0023 or
email her at shirlee@hotmail.com.

Even if you have renewed your registration recently, you can still apply. You will receive your Pet tags with duplicate month/year stickers by mail.

Each applicant will receive a free bumper sticker. In white letters on a royal blue background, it reads:

Prevent A Stray Spay Today



Low Cost Spaying and Neutering

Maryland SPCA — 410-235-8826
300 Falls Road
Baltimore, MD 21211
Humane Society Spay/Neuter Clinic 410-833-4480
Nicodemus Road
Owings Mills, MD
S.N.A.P. 410-885-5783
P.O. Box 686
Chesapeake City, MD 21915-0686

Please Consider

remembering Alley Animals in your will. Animals on the streets go on struggling to survive at all cost, and we will go on fighting to better their lot.

If you have been blessed in this life, you can share your blessings and help us help them even after you're gone.

Wish List

Cat Food (dry & canned) Paper Towels
Dog Food (dry & canned) Bleach
Large plastic trash bags

We gratefully appreciate donations in response to our Wish List.

If you have items to donate, call Dick at
410-823-3319

Clarification

In the last issue of our newsletter, I wrote a story about a mother cat and her four infants who had been put inside a box and left to suffocate. In the story, I told how a kind, elderly gentleman looking for help for the little family called the SPCA and was told he would have to pay a \$25 fee for surrendering an animal. What he did not understand, or was not clearly told, was that the total fee for the mother and infants would be \$25, not \$125 as he assumed.

I did not emphasize this in our newsletter because the point I hoped to get across was that very often, obstacles block kindhearted people from getting help for animals in distress. Helping animals can be hard, whereas hurting them can be done easily and without consequence.

For the gentleman in our story, an older man on a low, fixed income, \$25 might as well have been \$2500—he had barely enough to make ends meet, and nothing extra. Many people in his position would have stopped trying to get help for these gentle creatures, but this man of meager means followed the goodness in his heart and kept going until he found us.

In no way did I intend to cast aspersions on the SPCA—a good organization doing good work. My apologies to anyone who took exception to the lack of clarification in the story; I hope I have set the record straight and made clear that I was not criticizing or judging the SPCA, an organization I respect.

Lillian G. Leslie