

The SPCA NewsPaws

Dedicated to Animal Welfare in Newfoundland and Labrador

Number of Unwanted Animals Hits Record Level at St. John's SPCA in 2007

Over 2000 Animals Receive Help from St. John's SPCA

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador - The number of animals rescued, received or helped by Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) at the St. John's shelter increased in 2007. Over 2000 animals received help from the shelter which marks a sharp jump in numbers from previous years. This figure does not include animals received at the City of St. John's Humane Services.

Out Migration to Alberta a Factor

In cases where animals were brought into the shelter and given up by their owners, one out of every fifteen owners cited a move to Alberta (and other destinations) as the reason for giving up their pet. 2007 marked the first year that the shelter dealt with such high numbers of unwanted adult cats and dogs, often between five and seven years of age and in some cases as old as fifteen.

It is more difficult for the SPCA to find good homes for adult cats and dogs, as many adopting families prefer puppies and kittens. In actual fact, adult cats and dogs make great pets, as many of them have already been socialized with families and other pets. Additionally, most adult dogs come house-trained.

"Two thousand animals is a devastating number for a small shelter to deal with," said Debbie Powers, SPCA Shelter Director. "There needs to be increased public awareness that we have a very serious problem of irresponsible pet owners and pet over-population, across the province. People must act responsibly and consider the expense and lifetime commitment involved with properly caring for a pet," Powers added.

Backyard breeders on the Rise in Province

The SPCA received increased numbers of puppies from owners who had originally purchased their pets from unregistered breeders, also known as "backyard breeders." In some cases, the puppies were given up by their owners due to poor temperament and health problems. A backyard breeder refers to an individual who breeds dogs, cats, rabbits, and other

domestic pets for tax-free cash.

Backyard breeders breed unregistered animals and sell them as "purebreds" without papers. Or, they sell mixed, unique-sounding mixed breeds that are listed under names such as "Pom-Poo" and "Spaniel Terrier." According to the SPCA, the increasing number

of backyard breeders operating in the province is a major contributor to the pet overpopulation problem.

More Pet Stores Open in St. John's

"We developed a great partnership with Petcetera on Kelsey Drive where all the kittens available in their store come from the SPCA shelter," said Debbie Powers. "Petcetera has taken an industry-leading approach to running a modern pet store that is committed to reducing shelter euthanasia and promoting the adoption of animals," Powers added.

"We need to raise the awareness of consumers and the role they play in purchasing animals that are sold regardless of their health, temperament or genetic background," said Powers. "The devastating effect of buying these animals that are produced purely for profit, is that for every animal purchased, one less animal is adopted from a shelter," Powers added.

St. John's SPCA Covers Avalon Peninsula

The St. John's SPCA responded to over 600 complaints of animal cruelty and neglect spanning the entire Avalon Peninsula. From St. John's to Placentia Bay, the Southern Shore and all communities in between, there are two active Special Constables appointed by the SPCA to investigate complaints of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect.

Municipalities on the Avalon outside St. John's do not provide financial support for the services provided by the St. John's SPCA.

"Dumping" Cats at the Dump

Across the province, dumps became a prime destination for abandoning cats and kittens. In St. John's, increasing numbers



Visit our website:
www.spcastjohns.org
 Please recycle this newsletter. Pass it on to a friend



NewsPaws

of unwanted cats and kittens were abandoned at Robin Hood Bay in 2007. Cats that are abandoned on municipal dumps are subject to malnutrition, severe weather, disease and death. Despite their highly independent nature, cats need human care, companionship and shelter.

The SPCA advises that if an animal is no longer wanted, it should be brought into one of the seven SPCA shelters in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The St. John's SPCA statistics for the year ending December 31, 2007 are as follows. TOTAL ANIMALS: 2054

	DOGS - 514 total	CATS - 1281 total
Stray	203	484
Abandoned	21	121
Owners brought in	279	608
Seized	11	8
Adopted	398	505
Euthanized	116	716
PETCETERA adoptions (cats only)		
Total:	60	
OTHER ANIMALS (rabbits, Guinea pigs & other animals)		
Total:	32	
ANIMALS HELPED OUTSIDE SHELTER*		
Total:	227	

* In emergency cases, the SPCA provides outreach services to animals in distress.

Spaying and Neutering: Barriers are Cost and Access to Service in Remote Areas

The most effective way to control the pet population is to have animals spayed and neutered. One cat can produce three litters a year, which results in the shelter constantly receiving

new litters of kittens. When the SPCA polled owners about why they did not have their pet spayed or neutered, cost was cited as the main reason. The additional challenge for pet owners living in remote areas is access to veterinary services for spaying and neutering surgery.

"The cost of having a pet spayed or neutered should be factored into the expenses and lifetime commitment involved with getting a pet," said Debbie Powers. "Spaying and neutering a pet is a major part of the solution to the pet overpopulation problem," Powers added.

How to Help:

Report animal cruelty and suspected animal abuse to the St. John's SPCA at 709.726.0301 Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (1-800-222-8477) or the City of St. John's Humane Services or the Police.

- Sign the online petition against the chaining of dogs at www.petitiononline.com/unchain
- Adopt a Pet - A friend for life is waiting at the shelter.
- Make a donation. The Newfoundland and Labrador SPCA is a non-profit charitable organization.
- Spread the word about the importance of responsible pet ownership, including the spaying and neutering of pets.
- Volunteer. Call the St. John's SPCA at 709.726.0301 or fill out the form online at <http://www.spcastjohns.org/>

About the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - SPCA

The SPCA has been in Newfoundland since 1888 when their early work was focused primarily on horses and the hardship they endured from pulling heavy loads up steep hills from the St. John's harbour.

For many years, the St. John's SPCA operated without a physical building until 1972 when a former dental office was acquired to house animals on-site on RCAF Road. In 1993, the new Shelter known as The Lady Dunfield Memorial Animal Shelter, became a reality thanks to vision of the Late Lady Sybil Dunfield, wife of a former Justice of the Newfoundland Supreme Court.

The mission of the SPCA is to relieve the suffering of animals. Through education the SPCA promotes responsible pet ownership and encourages spaying and neutering.

The Newfoundland and Labrador SPCA provides province-wide leadership on matters relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals and the promotion of animal welfare, and works with its branches to encourage humane and suitable animal care; calls attention to unacceptable practices that harm animals; investigates cruelty complaints; advocates for humane laws; and provides care to all animals in need.

To Submit articles, make suggestions/comments, contact Cheryl at:

SPCA NewsPaws
PO Box 1533
St. John's, NL
A1C 5N8
spcastjohns@gmail.com

NewsPaws is produced by

SPCA STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS,
Cheryl Ellis, Joseph Griffiths,
Liz Crosbie, & Lewis Greenland

Printed in partnership with:

NEWFOUNDLAND POWER

Improve Your Life! Adopt a Pet.

The 50 plus community will find that pet companionship and adopting from the SPCA can be a very rewarding and life enhancing experience. Pets provide loyal, long-lasting friendships and significantly decrease feelings of loneliness, often experienced by seniors - particularly following the death of a spouse. Studies show that pets not only boost physical health by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, they can actually reduce stress and increase a person's overall feeling of happiness.

Researchers in geriatrics at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario recently published a study showing how elderly people who own pets are more active than those who do not, suggesting that pet ownership has positive effects on physical well-being.

In a study published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, the daily activities involved in caring for a dog or cat also reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness in the elderly. Pet ownership was shown to have a "statistically significant effect on the physical health of older people," according to the Canadian team of researchers led by Dr. Parminder Raina. Raina and his team conducted interviews with over 1,000 independently living, elderly Canadians, 286 of whom owned either a dog or cat. The researchers discovered that pet owners were "more physically active than non-pet owners,"

scoring higher in their ability to carry out the normal activities of daily living. The findings also showed that dog ownership, and the regular walks that can entail, was linked to physical activity levels similar to those found in cat owners.

Researchers also report that pet ownership "buffered" the psychological impact of social isolation in some elderly individuals. In fact, the authors found that elderly people who lacked strong social support (for example, family and friends) remained relatively emotionally healthy during life-crises compared with non-pet-owners placed in similar situations. Dr. Parminder Raina and his team believes their findings sup-

port the notion that pets provide real health benefits to the elderly.

Anatole France once said, "Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains un-awakened". But, sadly, thousands of unwanted pets end up in SPCA shelters across Newfoundland & Labrador each year. Some are stray and neglected while others are given up by their owners because of divorce, allergies or moving out of province. The majority of these animals are highly adoptable and in most cases, the adult animals are already house-trained and ready to go to new homes. Sadly, the cold reality is that there are too many animals and not enough responsible homes for them all.

The most wonderful feeling in the world when you adopt

from a shelter, is knowing that you are saving a life. Additionally, by adopting instead of buying an animal, you are not contributing to the serious pet overpopulation problem in the province. The cost of adopting is far less than buying from a breeder or pet store. By adopting a mature cat or dog, 'what you see is what you get' and you can



Edmund Christopher and "Maggie"

avoid the challenges in training a kitten or puppy. Anyone who has ever experienced the unconditional love of a pet knows how much they enrich our lives. It is a win-win situation for all.

If you are considering adopting an animal in need, be sure to visit your local Shelter to discuss with the experienced staff all your options to be sure a pet is the responsible choice for you.

For more information on the SPCA and a listing of the branches, please call 709.726.0301 or visit our website at www.spcastjohns.org. Donations are welcome!

Parvo Fears Can't Trump Socialization

by Glenn Redmond of Billy Nudgel's Pet Services

Anybody who has ever stopped and watched a puppy for a period can attest to the zest for life that they possess. I have often found my mood cannot help but be lifted, when sharing time with a puppy. This is a fun and fragile time, and there are many things that a new puppy owner should be aware of. I am going to discuss two of the biggest here: Canine Parvovirus and socialization and explain why they are in conflict with each other.

Canine Parvovirus, otherwise known as Parvo, is a highly contagious virus that affects the gastrointestinal tract, also damaging the heart muscle of young puppies. Parvo can affect dogs of any age, but it is most common in dogs under one year, affecting puppies under five months of age most severely.

The virus is mainly spread by ingesting the feces of an infected animal. Just one thimble of feces can contain millions of virus particles, so even the slightest amount of feces licked from a dog's paw or smudged from a person's shoe can cause infection. Not only that, Parvo, unlike other viruses, is stable in the environment and resistant to household cleaners, detergents, and alcohol.

Parvo has been recovered from dog feces stored at room temperature even after three months has passed, making it easy to understand why infection occurs so readily. Symptoms of Parvo include lethargy, lack of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea that is often watery and bloody with an unmistakable odor. If not caught early and aggressively treated, the dog becomes dehydrated which can quickly lead to death, usually within seventy-two hours. In puppies, Parvo directly attacks the heart muscle, which can lead to immediate death. On the off chance that the puppy survives, they will most likely be left with permanent damage to their hearts.

Prevention of Parvo in puppies is accomplished by a series of three injections starting at eight weeks and ending at sixteen weeks, at which time the puppy is fully inoculated.

Socialization is the most important process you will embark on with your new addition. Puppies have a critical need for socialization from eight weeks, when most people take the pup home until sixteen weeks when the imprinting stage is mainly completed.

It is extremely important for the pup to be exposed to a variety of situations that they will encounter throughout their lives. These include noises, people, children, textures, other animals, cars, trucks, elevators, leashes, collars, brushes, city life, literally anything you can think of. This process is not limited to around your home. It is essential to get out in public and introduce the world, as we know it. A puppy that is not well socialized by sixteen weeks of age is highly susceptible

to fears and phobias lasting their entire lives. The process to fix these problems after this critical stage is often too difficult, time consuming and expensive for most owners to deal with. But what about that nasty Parvo?

Here lies the conflict. The puppy during this socialization period is also at the highest risk of catching this dreaded disease. Many people taking advice from written material or health professionals forsake the socialization process, keeping their puppies isolated to their house and backyard, because of the chance of sickness due to Parvo. I cannot stress enough. This is the wrong approach. There are too many people in my office with 4 month old shaking puppies asking can I fix their dog, because now they are afraid of everything. Due to the lack of exposure the puppy will now respond in fear to things it does not know.

So, what is the answer? It can be found with a balancing act between these two issues.

First and foremost, keep your puppy away from sniffing feces, or any dogs of unknown health. Stay far away from dog parks or trails where many dogs frequent, as there are usually enough feces to weigh down a large truck. However, do not let fear override good judgment.

Take your pup for a quick car ride downtown. Get out and walk a block or two, you will be mobbed with people wanting to see your puppy. Take a bag of treats and let your pup realize that good things happen in this busy environment.

Allow your pup time with other healthy puppies or well socialized adult dogs, again giving them the opportunity to make positive associations. You do not need hours of work at one time. Short, frequent trips will do just fine. These socialization efforts are the blue print for your pup's outlook on life. Instead of reacting fearfully to new situations, they will embrace them with confidence and vigor.

We cannot forsake mental health because of physical disease, nor should we step blindly into the unknown thinking no danger exists. Balancing both these issues is key to developing a happy healthy companion to enjoy for years to come.

April 19 - Annual Spring Sale & Super Goods Bingo

St. Teresa's Church Hall, Mundy Pond Road

Sale starts at 10am; Join us for Morning Coffee, Baked Goods, Books, Plants, Crafts and Lots of Great Bargains

Super Goods Bingo starts at 7:30pm; doors open at 6:30pm

Great Prizes; Ticket Spins & Canteen Available; Admission \$10 with extra cards available at the Door

Investigative Report

by Special Constable Susan Deir

On November 26/07 Debbie and I headed out over the highway to a community in Trinity Bay to respond to a complaint call concerning "two dogs tied to a tree with no shelter and very skinny". We arrived on a property that we had visited the year before where we had removed a mother dog and a litter of puppies. This time there was a little female dog tied to a tree with no shelter, that was very friendly and next to her, tied to another tree there was a male dog, a little larger than the first but very frightened and barking and growling at us. The male dog had an excuse for a doghouse but it didn't really matter the condition of it as he couldn't get to it anyway. Both dogs had chains on their necks that were



Holly



Harry

twisted and tangled up so they could only move about a foot or so either way. They both were very thin with ribs, hip-bones and shoulder blades all protruding. The dogs were removed from the property and a note was left on the door for the owner.

The dogs now named " Holly " and " Harry " were brought to the veterinarian to be weighed and examined. The vet said that both dogs had a lot of flea dirt, their coats were in poor shape and their ribs, shoulder blades, hip and back bones were all protruding. Holly weighed 13lbs and Harry weighed 17lbs. On a body scale of 0-5 (0 being the worst) Holly was a 1 and Harry was a 2.

The dogs were at the shelter for several weeks to be sure they put on some weight and were healthy enough to place into a new home. When they were rechecked at the vet 3 weeks later Holly had gained 6.8lbs and Harry had gained 10lbs and were doing quite well, therefore were placed into new homes within a couple of days.

Both dogs were adopted to loving families and are doing extremely well.

*Charges in this case are still pending

Holly & Harry at the Shelter before adoption.



The Tiny Green House

by Edna Cranford (St.John's)

Most often when we hear an animal story it is of abuse, abandonment or a situation leaving us to question why so few seem to care. There's story after story. Though a little good does not outweigh the bad, it helps to know there are kind souls amongst us who care deeply for the helpless. One such story is of a gentle man with a big heart and a scruffy homeless little cat.

This story begins in the fall of 2006, just as cold weather began to set in. Out of the blue a small, middle-aged cat appeared on our street. Being a neighborhood where pets live pampered lifestyles, most took immediate notice of the poor fellow. His jet black coat had lost its luster and tufts of brownish fur hung here and there around his belly and lower back. It didn't take long to realize he was on his own. Although dirty, matted and sporting a limp, he carried himself with a certain nobility which demanded attention. His small, perfectly rounded face framed strong, clear eyes and portrayed a confidence not to be pitied. He looked you directly in the eye. He was handsome, smart and determined to survive.

He quickly settled in as people looked out for him and gave him food. He appeared to become happy and content but kept a safe distance between himself and his new found friends. Every possible means to locate his owner was explored but to no avail. A retired neighbor, already sharing his home with five rescued cats, felt immediate attachment. Seeing no way to capture the little fellow without causing further stress, and with winter fast approaching, he decided to build a house so the little cat could come and go as he pleased. A small wooden house was erected which provided heat from an electric lamp with a porch to fend off cold winds. Accommodations included three square meals daily, fresh water and clean linens.

The sound of a spoon hitting metal and our neighbor knee-deep in snow became a familiar sight. It was heartwarming to see him care for and shield the little cat from harm. A distinct bond was developing between the two. Winter passed and the little cat not only survived, but thrived. His coat began to recover nicely and he strolled territorially through the neighborhood like a peacock. He spent time on our patios and sunned himself in our yards but considered the tiny green house to be home.

Weeks passed, spring turned to summer and the little cat seemed to relish freedom but remained proudly attached to his home. Over the months trust had grown and the bond between them stronger, but the devoted man began having doubts. He was struggling with the possibility of doing more to help the little cat. With winter again approaching and promising to be severe, he faced nagging concerns about the right thing to do. While already supporting five cats on a retirement income he decided to provide neutering and med-

ical expenses needed to prepare his friend for the chance of a better life. It was just before Christmas when most were otherwise preoccupied, but he had already made a commitment. So after a soulful search, he began to make arrangements.

A few days went by and there was no sound of the spoon signaling dinner or no light in the tiny green house. We imagined his new home and pictured him under a Christmas tree with a forever family. It is what he deserved. Every animal deserves that. We were happy for the little cat.

Christmas came and all seemed right with the world. It was a time for togetherness. A call on our neighbor expected to find his usual happy-go-lucky self, however, his face told different. There was sad news about the little cat. Necessary test and blood work results were not as expected. The little fellow was sick. He was informed there was no cure and that the little cat had probably been living with this illness for some time. Discussions were held and moral decisions needed to be made. It was difficult. He had cared for and protected him all these months. He had planned a better life for his friend.

On Christmas Eve among family and friends, smiles were forced and meant to cover but his sorrow was evident. He loved the little cat and it had hurt him to say a final goodbye. To have seen him provide for and value what some others may not, a scruffy homeless cat, shows a compassion the world could use more of. If only every animal could be loved just half as much.

The little cat is gone now but not his memory, or his tiny green house. He left an imprint, particularly in the life of one man. We still imagine him surrounded by warmth and a family who love him. We picture him happy and healthy in his forever home in that better place.

Goodbye little one. You will never be forgotten. Take care in your new home dear fellow. Godspeed.

April 21 - Draw Date for Flyaway to Paris

(See insert for details) For ticket locations
call 726-0301 or visit our website at
www.spcastjohns.org

May 31 - Giant Flea Market at St. David's, Elizabeth Avenue

Doors open 10am; Admission \$1

June 29 - Annual Walk for the Animals and Family Fun Day- Bowring Park

For Sponsor Sheets call 726-0301 or email
spcastjohns@gmail.com

Gizmo gets rescued

Hi, My name is Gizmo. My first family had to go to Alberta and could not take me with them.

They brought me to the SPCA where Barbara and Roger found me and took me home.

I have a big garden with an electronic fence which keeps me in, but every once in awhile I get out(three times in three years). On Thursday, February 7, my bubby Fletcher, who lives next door, and I took off down to Quidi Vidi Lake to check out the action and went out on the ice to play with the birds. Unfortunately we did not know about soft ice. We fell in the water and could not get out. Boy were we in trouble in that freezing water. Fortunately for us a nice lady, who lives by the lake saw us and heard our howls when we fell through and called 911.

Next thing we knew there were all kinds of flashing lights and big red trucks and the firemen arrived. They had to get dressed up in their waterproof suits so they would not freeze in the cold water like we were doing. Soon they were coming our way, breaking a path through the ice to get to open water so

that they could rescue us. I was so happy to see him, that when he put his arms around me and lifted me onto the rescue board, I gave him a big kiss!

When we got shore our owners were there with blankets an immediately took us home, dried us off and warpped us in warm towels from the dryer as instructed by our Vet. We were hugged and showered with love for hours and finally went happily to sleep dry and warm in our beds.

We are two very lucky dogs to be rescued so quickly. Here is a picture of me with four of the wonderful brave firemen who got Fletcher and me out of the freezing water so quickly.



Gizmo with firemen from Kenmount Fire Station on Portugal Cove Road



Volunteer Corner *by Joseph Griffiths*

Doreen and Wayne Wells have been volunteers with the SPCA since Doreen retired from teaching in 1994. They help out with all sorts of fund-raising initiatives especially the grocery tape arrangement we have with Sobeys and Dominion Stores. Several thousands of dollars are raised each year for the Shelter thanks to their efforts and the dedicated work of many other volunteers who help with the grocery slip project.

Over the years, Wayne has donated some of his stained glass work for auctions and sales. Recently he has been a part of a Steering Committee trying to lobby government for changes to municipal and provincial legislation with respect to animal protection and welfare.

They are the proud owners of 'Daisy' a 5 year old Terrier mix who of course came from the SPCA.

Wayne, Doreen & Daisy Wells

St. John's Animal Control Regulation

One of the last items of business Mayor Wells put through at his last council meeting on Monday, Feb. 25, 2008, was the new St. John's Animal Control Regulation. Under the new regulation, some new rules are welcome news for animals living within the City's boundaries. Under the new bylaw, the following are some of the rules that will go into effect:

- Pen size rments for outdoor animals (including pens must not be stacked, they must be on the ground or no wire, wooden slat or metal flooring can be used)
- No pregnant or nursing animals can be housed with other animals, apart from their nursing babies
- No choke collars or chains allowed while tied and unattended
- Animals can not be left in cars or other confined spaces without adequate ventilation
- It is the law to clean-up animal feces on public property or the property of others
- Owners must not let their animal bark, howl or meow excessively to the point where it becomes a nuisance
- Animals are not permitted to run at large
- Annual licence fee of \$10 for dogs

All of these regulations are changes that are welcomed by the SPCA, but the Animal Control Regulation still needs major updating and additions in order to protect animals and ensure a high level of public safety for all citizens. A steering committee comprised of SPCA volunteers worked hard to prepare comprehensive revisions to the old animal control regulation that they then submitted to the City to try to get it included in the new Animal Control Regulation. The committee members completely re-wrote the old Animal Control Regulation and submitted their proposal to Mayor Wells and City Councillors in January 2008. Research was undertaken by the committee to look at other modern cities in Canada and the United States that had all implemented updates to their animal bylaws to reflect the nature of their progressive, enlightened and growing cities.

On February 19, 2008, members of the Steering Committee met with Mayor Wells, Linda Bishop, Senior Legal Counsel for the City of St. John's, Candace King, City's Humane Services and Susan Deir. It was during this meeting that Linda Bishop walked everyone in attendance through the revisions that she was legally able to make to the City of St. John's Animal Control Regulation. She and Mayor Wells expressed their

interest in implementing many of the changes that the SPCA's steering committee had proposed. The barriers however, to incorporating the SPCA's revisions to the Animal Control Regulation are wrapped up in the Act known as the "City of St. John's Act".

Here's the scoop on what came out of that very important meeting and we'll try to keep this simple. (All of this information will form very important next steps that the SPCA, the City and the Provincial Government must move forward on, in order to introduce better bylaws to protect animals - and the public.)

The long and short of it from a legal standpoint is that the major revisions to the Animal Control Regulation that the SPCA's committee was pushing for can only be implemented if the City has a new City of St. John's Act using the "natural powers" model. Apparently the City of St. John's Act is "dated" in lots of areas and the City already has a request into Provincial Municipal Affairs asking for a new City of St. John's Act. (How dated is the City of St. John's Act?! Well, we heard there are references to horses and carriages in there and how they can move through the City.)

In order for the City to make meaningful changes to the Animal Control Regulation in the future to really put some next level rules into place, here is what needs to happen, as the committee understood it from Linda Bishop:

1. The Provin Department of Municipal Affairs needs to give the City a new City of St. John's Act - and the new act that the City has asked for is what is called the "Natural Powers" model
2. When the City of St. John's has a new City of St. John's Act, then the Animal Control Regulation can be changed (with council approval of course).

Phew! I hope we explained that correctly. The bottom line then, is that some great progress has been made on the recent legislation the City introduced in February and we commend the City for taking this first step forward. But the next big step is to request that the Provincial Governmental Department of Municipal Affairs give the City of St. John's a new City Act using the Natural Powers model.

In all of this, it is up to all of us to work together in order to navigate through the various levels of government and legislation to do what needs to be done in order to help those who can not help themselves.

If you are interested in getting involved in this very important initiative please contact Cheryl at 834-9181 or email the SPCA Steering Committee at spcastjohns@gmail.com. We need more big thinkers, problem solvers and visionaries to keep the momentum going that we now have underway. We know what our goal is - we just need help to get there.

Letter to the City

Below is a copy of the letter from Debbie Powers to the City that accompanied the revisions provided by the SPCA Steering Committee.

January 23, 2008

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)
P.O. Box 1533
St. John's, NL, A1C 5N8

The Honorable Mayor Andy Wells and Council
City of St. John's
10 New Gower Street, P.O. Box 908
St. John's, NL, A1C 5M2

Your Worship and Councillors,

As the City of St. John's continues to enjoy a strong growth rate, the infrastructure that supports our great city will also be required to grow and shift with the times in order to respond to the demands of building a modern city.

Since the enactment of the existing Animal Control by-laws, other cities across Canada have moved forward to enact comprehensive by-laws that serve the dual purpose of protecting animals against abuse and citizens against dog attacks and property damage.

More than 2000 animals were helped in 2007 by the St. John's SPCA.

St. John's SPCA in 2007. Compared to the previous year, I am sad to report that the number of abused and abandoned animals actually increased, along with the overall pet population, which is out of control. We were forced to euthanize 832 animals, which is a devastating number for a volunteer-run organization. Many animals were abandoned as their owners changed apartments, relationships or towns. Other animals were badly abused and suffered sickening cruelty at the hands of their owners, because we as a City, do not have the proper set of laws in place to protect them.

The above number of 2000 animals is for the SPCA alone. We do not have the exact number of animals that were euthanized through the City's Humane Services, but I suspect the numbers are also very high.

In St. John's there have been a number of highly publicized dog attacks recently where the offenders abandoned the scene with their dangerous animal, leaving distressed, law-abiding citizens to care for their own injured animal and often for their own personal injuries. Each day the St. John's SPCA responds to calls across the entire Avalon to help animals that are so badly abused, the cruelty is unspeakable.

I call your attention to these facts and the brutal reality of the lack of basic care for animals in our City as you review

these revised by-laws provided by the SPCA. What the SPCA has drafted are badly-needed by-laws that can change how animals are treated and equally important - help control the over population of pets throughout the City.

Enforcing some of these by-laws will not be easy. Change is always difficult, but real progress requires determination, strength and resolve. This is where we look to the Mayor and councilors of St. John's to act on behalf of so many animals that live in misery.

Also we ask you to consider the safety of our citizens and to enforce their rights to enjoy a basic level of personal safety on their own properties and on the many trails and walkways in St. John's.

Members of the SPCA Steering Committee spent great deal of time researching where the gaps are that need to be filled with the by-laws. We looked at other cities and studied their by-laws and the processes that have been put in place. Also we consulted with other groups that have been advocating for the humane treatment of animals.

What follows is a summary of some of the key revisions to the Animal Control By-Law.

No Tethering or Chaining of Dogs: (refer to by-law #2: "Animals Outdoors")

Many dogs live their lives on chains as short as one or two feet. In some cases, the chain or rope is so short that the animal can not lie down and rest.

Not only is it inhumane to chain a dog on such a short lead, it is extremely dangerous. Dogs are highly social animals that thrive on interaction. A dog that is chained or caged for long periods of time will inevitably bite out of fear and this behavior is the direct result of lack of human contact and ongoing confinement.

Pen Size for Outdoor Dogs: (refer to by-law #3 "Shelter Requirements")

Many dogs live in outdoor pens that are so small, they can not turn around in the pen. Often they lack adequate shelter against the weather and are invariably filthy with feces. For dogs in outdoor pens, we ask to see a by-law that states that the pen must have a shelter for the dog that can protect him from the cold.

The pen must be a total area that is at least 100 Square Feet for one Dog and where more than one Dog is kept in an enclosure, the total area shall be increased by 10 square feet for each additional Dog.

The pen must not have wire mesh, metal or wooden slat flooring; and can not be stacked with other enclosures and is not located off the ground.

Backyard Breeders (refer to by-law #13 "Non CKC Breeders")

Backyard breeders operating throughout Newfoundland are

the single biggest cause of the over-population of pets in this province.

Backyard breeders, also known as a "puppy mills" do not hold a license to breed their animals. Most of these breeders keep their animals "in heat" so that as many litters may be produced and sold as possible. They use the animals to make extra, tax-free money, so the dogs for instance, are constantly being bred regardless of their health, temperament or genetic background. Most of them end up at the SPCA.

In the current St. John's Animal Control Act, there are no by-laws for backyard breeders at all!

We propose new by-laws for the thriving backyard breeders who are creating the over-population of pets. They need to apply for a license to breed their dog and will only be able to breed the dog one time only.

Licensing of Cats and Dogs (refer to by-laws #4 and #5) Securing Animals in Vehicles

It is not acceptable to transport animals in the open back of pick-up trucks if the animal is not properly secured. It is not safe for the animal. It is not safe for citizens that come close to the animals or are driving behind these trucks on the road.

We request a meeting with you to review our proposed revisions to the Animal Control by-law at your earliest opportunity.

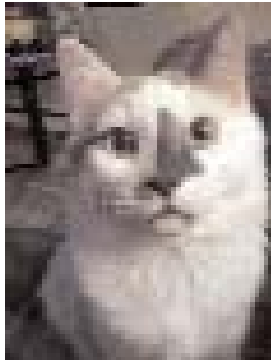
Sincerely,

Debbie Powers
Shelter Director, SPCA Newfoundland and Labrador
Special Constable
(709) 576-0586

LETTERS TO EDITOR

A Change of C'attitude

I adopted Ari from the St. John's SPCA in late September, 2007. I know it's cliché, but it truly was love at first sight. His cotton-like white coat, immense blue eyes and tender purring stole my heart. There he laid - four paws up, allowing me to stroke his exposed belly. "That's odd," I thought. "To most cats, belly rubs are forbidden, even on a good day. Hmm...maybe this one's different."



Ari and I arrived at the shelter the same time that day and during my hour visit, five more abandoned cats followed. The harsh reality of the number of unwanted felines abruptly set in. A wave of emotion swept over me. I had never owned a cat, but somehow felt obligated to give the affectionate adolescent a second chance and make a little room for the long line-up of cats at the shelter door. I promptly filled out an adoption application and headed home to think things through and of course, discuss matters with my dog, Hatcher.

Neither Hatcher nor myself had ever taken up residence with a cat. Although we knew a few, it had only been the past several months that we had decided that they weren't so bad.

You see, I grew up constantly being warned that cats were sly and unpredictable. Many people in the community that I was raised viewed them as bad omens.

I was an animal lover from a very young age, caring for dogs, horses, hamsters, fish and rabbits, but my parents always warned me never to bring home a cat or kitten. Cats

were simply not welcomed due to their supposed independent and devious nature. Although I had rescued a total of eight strays over the years and brought food to the locals at the town dump, I never considered living with one.

The stigma that I had attached to cats was in no way a direct deposit of experience. In actual fact, it resulted from a complete lack thereof. Ari has taught me that cats are social, loving creatures that crave attention and affection. He has also made it known that cats are clever and can even be trained to perform behaviors that dogs often take all the credit for. He has shown me that cats make clean, low-maintenance companions who demand no more than ankle rubs, clean litter, water and food in exchange for services such as routine bathroom inspections, blind dusting and light gardening duties. He has also revealed many of life's simple pleasures; like the sheer joy that an empty cardboard box or paper bag can carry.

Ari's presence is appreciated every day. I just can't imagine life without him. He is a wonderful addition to our family. Hatcher adores Ari just as much as I do. They are fabulous together and it has been remarkable to watch their friendship blossom. As I write, the two of them are snuggled together in their favorite chair.

I would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the SPCA for all of their difficult work and dedication and for giving me the opportunity to share my life with Ari, my wonderful hand-me-down cat. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ari for his contribution to my change of c'attitude. He is my first cat, but he certainly won't be my last!

Sincerely,

Dawn Strickland

Pawsitive People...



The Grade 4 class from St. Bonaventure College donated \$76.00 to us from the bake sale that they had to raise money for the S.P.C.A. Shown here are some of the girls who came to the Shelter with their teachers to present their cheque.



In lieu of birthday gifts, Sydney Boychuk asked her friends to donate supplies for the SPCA.

Sydney's birthday is March 2nd, and she'll be 11 years old. This is her 3rd consecutive year donating to the SPCA. She also donated money raised from recycling and a lemonade stand.



Department of Human Resources Labour & Employment donated proceeds raised from Jeans Day at work (Shown in photo from the Dept: Veronica Simms & Yvonne Upshall)

Thanks so much for your continued support!

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Please join us. Animals cannot help themselves.

They depend on people who care to fight for them.
 The S.P.C.A. is a voluntary organization actively working for the
 Humane treatment of all animals

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ E-mail _____

PAYMENT BY:

VISA

Mastercard

Card #

Expiration Date

Name of card holder _____ Total Paid by Credit Card \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES (PLEASE CHECK)

- \$20.00 Family
- \$10.00 Single
- \$5.00 Senior
- \$5.00 Associate Member
 (Available to members of Branches outside St. John's who want to receive NewsPaws directly.)

DONATION

- Donation \$ _____
- Check if renewing.
- Gift Membership
- Please check here if you are interested in volunteering for the S.P.C.A. Get involved as little or as much as you like.

Annual Membership is due November 1st. of each year.

Please send payment to: S.P.C.A., PO Box 1533, St. John's, NL A1C 5N8

**SIGN
UP A
FRIEND**

Special Message to longtime members! Next time you decide to renew your SPCA membership, why not find just **ONE MORE** new member: maybe your parents, your siblings, a friend or co-worker. The animal problems that we deal with daily are not lessening and the more members we have, the more we will be able to do for the strayed, abandoned and abused animals in this Province.



NEWFOUNDLAND S.P.C.A.
P.O. Box 1533
ST. JOHN'S, NL
A1C 5N8

