



# Paws to Consider



Winter 2000

## HERNDON TRAGEDY LEAVES FELINES HOMELESS

BY SHERRY GARAY



Belle



Timothy

I am sure many of you have seen the news reports about the horrible tragedy that struck a quiet Herndon neighborhood during the early morning hours of November 2<sup>nd</sup>. It has been reported that Richard Hamilton murdered his wife, Bene Svitavsky, and his two daughters Katie, 8, and Sara, 6, before setting fire to the family home and then taking his own life. What most people don't know is that the family owned three cats, Cleo, Timothy, and Belle.

Cleo was a victim of the fire. Timothy and Belle were left homeless with no one to care for them. Fortunately, neighbors began leaving food and water out for them. The only surviving family member, Evan, Bene's son from a prior marriage, was staying with a friend at the time of the murders. Evan was also left homeless and unable to care for the two cats.

Belle spent many days sitting on the front porch of the family home. Upset and confused, she stood vigil waiting for her family's return. She did not understand that her loved ones would never be coming home. Timothy went into hiding and was rarely seen. A family friend who had adopted 3 cats from the SPCA took immediate action. She brought Belle to her home. She arrived with her coat covered in ash and soot, a result of wandering through the fire-damaged house. The persistent friend was able to track Timothy down six days later, enticing him with a can of Fancy Feast.

Belle and Timothy are currently in the care of a loving foster home. She is a pretty five-year-old cat with huge green eyes and a sweet and friendly personality. He is a cute five-year-old gray tabby full of love and affection to share. They are both declawed, do well with other cats and are fantastic with small children. The SPCA is committed to finding these tragic felines the perfect home where they can live together. A home where they can quickly forget the trauma they have suffered.

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The SPCA of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer, non-profit rescue organization. We rely on membership dues, donations and fund-raising activities for revenue. Our Voluntary Board of Directors, committee members and volunteers are responsible for all SPCA activities. We do not have a shelter facility and depend on foster parents to care for domestic animals until adoption.

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Sandra Black

Sandra Black

Edward Marcus

### In Honor Of

In Honor of Carolyn Stork's  
Recent Marriage

## CASEY'S STORY

AS TOLD TO JOAN HUGHES

To tell you the truth, there were times when I thought it would never happen. When you've spent your life on the end of a chain and are alternately neglected and mistreated, you lose hope of ever having a better life.

It was July, 1999, when a report of cruelty to a puppy led SPCA humane investigators Edith von Stuemmer and Barbara Cohen to the home of the pup, where they also found me, two other dogs, and three puppies. The puppies were mine. It broke my heart to see them filthy, bloated, and full of worms, but all of us were sick and dirty.

We were all transported to Suburban Animal Hospital where we got baths and shots and were dewormed. But--bad news. I was heartworm positive. My spay surgery had to be postponed until after heartworm treatment, which requires that a dog be kept quiet and calm. But I was hyperactive and I barked a lot. I know I made things hard for my caretakers. Retesting for heartworms finally showed I was okay and could be spayed. Thinking back, though, I feel sorry for the way I sometimes behaved. All those kind people were trying to help me, and yet I was barking my head off and was aggressive with just about every living thing.

Finally I behaved well enough to be shown at an open house. But there were more disappointments. Many weeks and more than a dozen open houses went by, and nobody applied to adopt me. I don't know why.

I was friendly with people--not all dogs, though--and I had put on some much needed weight and had a shiny coat. It was rough to see other dogs go to good homes while I kept getting passed over. Then one day in August, 2000, everything started to change. Cindy and Terry Miles saw my picture on the SPCA website and called about possibly adopting me. They already had two dogs, Lucy and Buddy, and recently a third dog, Trixie, had crossed the Rainbow Bridge. They could never replace her, of course, but they thought another dog might help all four of them get over their loss. So they came to an open house to see me, and they brought Lucy and Buddy. I almost ruined everything. I wasn't nice to Buddy. Nothing serious, but I did take offense when during our initial dog-introduction sniffing he got a bit too familiar, if you catch my drift. But Cindy and Terry were so nice, and I reminded myself of what was at stake.

They filled out an application, and after the usual interview and house check, I found myself in a real home at last.

Now I have wonderful people who love me and two new dog friends. (Yes, the other dogs that were rescued with me, including my puppies, found homes, too.) We have a big yard to play in, I'm well fed, and life is good. By the way, my name is Casey now. A new name for a new life. I behave myself, although I do indulge in a bit of mischief, such as grabbing an article of clothing Terry may leave lying around, and running through the house with it.

Well, it's been nice talking to you, but I've got to go now. Buddy and Lucy want to play, and I hear some sweat socks calling my name--"Casey!"



## CASSANDRA

By Sherry Garay

This is the story of a beautiful cat named Cassandra and her family of kittens. Cassandra came into our care in August of this year, when SPCA volunteer Penny Moore (founder of the Lorton Cat Project) traveled to Lorton prison to rescue five cats. As Penny drove past the Lorton landfill to the edge of the Lorton Youth Detention Facility parking lot she witnessed a number of feline faces peering at her from the edge of the nearby woods. Penny immediately stopped her car and got out to further investigate the situation.

With very little persuasion, out of the brush trotted a beautiful adult white cat accompanied by three kittens. Penny rounded up the kittens, a white male she named Lucky, a white female she named Suzanne, and a Tortoiseshell she named Mocha. It was later discovered that Lucky is deaf which is a common trait of pure white cats. Penny then picked up the mother cat, Cassandra, who was wearing a very old flea collar. Unfortunately, all of the cats were infested with fleas.

After placing the four cats safely in her car, Penny noticed three more kittens. These last three were timid and untrusting, so Penny set humane traps to safely capture them. Two kittens were easily trapped but one lone kitten refused to enter the trap. After many hours of patiently waiting Penny had to leave because it was nearly midnight!

A facility security guard agreed to monitor the trap overnight. He watched the lonely kitten throughout the night. The kitten was distressed, crying out for Cassandra. Despite its worry, the little kitten refused to enter the trap. By 7:00 am the guard was beginning to get annoyed with the kitten. He sternly told the kitten "I don't want to chase you around!" The scolding worked, the kitten froze in its place and allowed the guard to stoop down and pick it up.

The last three kittens rescued were all male orange tabbies. They were named Manny, Moe, and Jack. All of Cassandra's kittens were quickly adopted into loving homes. Cassandra remained in a foster home where she became a loving surrogate mother to two other litters of kittens!

I am happy to report that Cassandra, like all of her kittens, recently was adopted into a loving and nurturing home.

*"There are no ordinary cats"---Colette*

## *Believing in a Miracle*

By Juli Boyer and Nancy Herndon

### **Miracle**

Who says there isn't a dog for every human and a human for every dog? One of the most rewarding experiences for animal rescue volunteers is finding the special person for a "hard-to-place" dog or cat – especially when the connection is made in the least likely circumstances and when least expected, as it was in the case of the Rottweiler, Miracle, whose picture and story were featured in the summer issue of Paws to Consider. Miracle had been rescued by the Northern Neck Humane Society from an extremely abusive, neglectful situation in July of 1999 and subsequently turned over to the SPCA of Northern Virginia in December.

After extensive medical treatment and obedience training by Lisa Reid in Sperryville, Virginia, Miracle was ready to be presented for adoption. However, because of the lack of socialization in her past, as well as her energy, strength and incessant barking, she generated no interest at the open houses over the next months.

Here's where the special person comes in – actually Miracle was blessed by the intervention and caring of two special people: Debra Barnes, Humane Investigator and President of the Northern Neck Humane Society, the group that conducted Miracle's rescue and prosecution of her owner, gave a lecture to an AARP Widowed Persons Service Group. The topic was helping needy animals, including cruelty investigations. After the meeting, Debra was approached by a gentleman who had been touched by Miracle's story and quite interested in meeting her. He was a retired police officer, who was experienced with larger breeds and would have a lot of time to spend with Miracle as his companion and friend. Since he had been alone for several years, he was ready once again for the companionship of a dog.

Since this man was known to Debra Barnes, as well as the Animal Control Officer, Keith Hoge, who helped with her rescue and rehabilitation for three months until the case went to trial, the process necessary to adopt Miracle went quickly. Tom Wyand was anxious to meet his new companion, and so it was that on November 11<sup>th</sup> of this year, Tom and Miracle met for the first time at the home of her foster family. Miracle took to Tom immediately and curled up with him in the car on their long ride home.

So, Miracle has come full circle. Life in the Northern Neck area of Virginia was harsh and cruel, the first time around, but now that's all behind her, and she's living the good life now with Tom at his two-acre home in Lancaster, Virginia.

*"The best thing about a man is his dog."* --French Proverb

## SPCA SPOTLIGHT



### *Alfie Needs A Home*

We know that you must agree with us that this feline is just way too cute! Alfie is the most handsome shorthaired gray tabby on the planet, with the most gorgeous eyes. Our handsome Alfie is looking for the perfect home, and we are determined to help him find it!

He first came to us as a young kitten in June of 1992. He lived with his Dad for many years, but his Dad suddenly found himself without a home or the means to properly care for sweet Alfie. He was placed in foster care and has been in 3 foster homes and was adopted twice by people who loved him, but they have not worked out for little Alfie.

After living as an only cat for many years and then placed with many felines, he has decided that he wants to be the only animal in his home so that every bit of love and attention can be given to him. He would prefer not to live with small children. As you can see in his photo, Alfie is content in his foster home but not as happy as he wants to be in a permanent loving home.

He is very playful, loving and affectionate, and super intelligent. He will be next to you in bed every night and will meow "good morning" every day. Alfie doesn't like attending cat adoption events but his foster Mom would be more than happy to allow you to meet him at home.

Alfie deserves a home that is full of love and attention. Won't you please give Alfie the permanent home he very much deserves? If you would like to meet Alfie, please contact the SPCA at 703-799-9390.



### **SOS**

Is there anyone out there who has experience in caring for a diabetic cat? "Maggie" came to us as a stray with a severe case of ear mites and dermatitis. We noticed that she drank excessive amounts of water and urinated frequently. The veterinarian found sugar in her urine, and a blood test confirmed that she has diabetes. "Maggie" gets two units of insulin twice a day. Her glucose level is now normal.

She is young, affectionate, beautiful, gets along with dogs, cats, people and is a "lap cat." "Maggie" is looking for that special person who will accept the love she wants to give. If you are that person please call the SPCA at 703-799-9390.

## *In the Spirit of Giving Please Remember the Animals*



*Phoebe*



*Spunky*

The SPCA of Northern Virginia rescues many dogs and cats throughout the year that without our help would never find happiness. The SPCA helps animals every day with veterinary care, adoptions and humane investigations.

Some cats and dogs find homes immediately, while others remain in foster homes waiting for their chance at true happiness. Phoebe, pictured above, is a beautiful blue cream tortoiseshell with shimmering, alert green eyes. She was born in approximately late 1993 but since she was a stray, we don't know her age (and she's not telling). Phoebe is looking for a home where she can be the only animal to rule the roost and in return she will provide her owner with lots of love and affection. This friendly girl will snuggle up to you as you go to sleep and wake you in the morning with a hello meow. Spunky, also pictured above, was rescued as a kitten from a trailer park in Charlottesville. He is 1 1/2 years old and still waiting for that special person, a person who has enough patience and love in their heart to give him the time that he will need to adjust. In exchange for a little patience, he will reward you with many years of love and companionship.

This holiday season while you are rushing around to complete your shopping and preparing a family celebration please take a moment to remember the many cats and dogs who are without a family. Your tax-deductible contribution is our greatest need. All donations go directly to helping the animals in our care.



Donations can be made easily using the form on the back cover or if you would like to make a donation using a credit card please visit our website, [www.spcanova.org](http://www.spcanova.org), and click on the [helping.org](http://helping.org) banner. Your charitable gift will make a lifesaving difference to the animals! Please remember the SPCA of Northern Virginia is a private, non-profit charitable organization. We do not receive any government funding or tax dollars. We are supported completely by private donations.

## *Blacky needs your help...*



This was written by Blacky's human partner, Paul: On October 5th, Blacky, a five year K9 veteran of the United States Capitol Police, was rushed to a veterinary hospital for emergency surgery. Blacky was bleeding internally and an emergency splenectomy was performed. Tumors were found on the spleen and one had ruptured causing the bleeding. A biopsy was performed and on October 12th Blacky was diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma a very aggressive cancer, found common in the German Shepherd breed. To date the cancer has spread to his liver and chemotherapy will not help. Blacky is currently under the care of a holistic doctor, who has found successful results with herbal remedies.

Blacky has been my partner for five years and I am doing everything in my power to give him a fighting chance. If you have any suggestions or know of any research being conducted, please feel free to e-mail me at [beth\\_paul2000@yahoo.com](mailto:beth_paul2000@yahoo.com). The SPCA has started a fund in Blacky's name to help pay for his medical expenses. Any donations will go to Blacky's medical bills and the money left over will go directly to the SPCA of Northern Virginia. We welcome your assistance and advice. Currently, Blacky is still on duty, plays at home with my other German Shepherd, Khan, and seems to be doing well. Just this past weekend my wife and I, Khan and Blacky went on a picnic and a long hike. It is hard to believe that the cancer may take him at anytime. We can only hope that the herbal remedies will add to whatever time Blacky has left with our family.

If you'd like to contribute to Blacky's fund, please mail your check or money order to

**SPCA of Northern Virginia,  
P.O. Box 10504,  
Arlington,  
VA 22210**

In the memo field of your check, please write "Blacky's Fund". Thanks!

*"If a dog's prayers were answered, bones would rain from the sky." ---Proverb*



## *A Dog or Cat is for Life - Not Just for Christmas*

Prospective Santas should carefully consider the decision of giving a pet as a Christmas gift. Adopting a pet is a life-long commitment. People too often make the mistake of giving pets as Christmas gifts. Giving a pet as a gift for someone is not a good idea. Animals need special care and attention when moved to a new environment. Unfortunately, during the holiday season they can quickly be forgotten amidst new toys and games.

Never get a pet on impulse! Often the surprise gift of an animal can turn out to be an unwanted gift. Despite good intentions, getting a pet for someone else is always a bad idea. Most people prefer to choose their own pet. One person's idea of the perfect pet may not be someone else's. Remember, that people must be prepared to care for their new pet for the rest of its life, which could be anywhere from a few years to decades.

The SPCA will not permit adoptions for gift purposes at any time. If you want to share the joy of animal ownership with a loved one, please bring that person to one of our adoption fairs and allow them to choose their perfect new pet carefully.



### *CAT AGES*

*How old is your cat in human years?*

<i>Cat's Age</i>	<i>Human Age</i>
1	15
2	25
4	40
7	50
10	60
15	75
20	105



## HOLIDAY HINTS

Here are some helpful hints, provided by the ASPCA, to ensure that your pet has a happy and safe holiday season:

1. Be careful with holiday decorations. Common yuletide plants such as poinsettias, mistletoe, ivy and holly berries can be poisonous – even fatal. Tree adornments, Christmas and Hanukkah candles can cause choking or severe intestinal problems if swallowed. Exposed wiring can electrocute a curious animal who chews on it. Dogs and cats can be allowed to romp through discarded wrapping paper and empty boxes, but be sure to dispose of all bows, yarn and curling ribbons.
2. Crowds of people and holiday festivities can frighten animals. If you plan to entertain, you must plan ahead on your pets' behalf. Make sure they have a "safe haven" to which they can retreat. If you are a cat owner, note that a disruption such as the rearrangement of furniture around the house for the holidays may cause your feline to stop using the litter box.
3. Pets are not garbage disposals for holiday leftovers. Do not stuff an animal. Poultry bones can splinter and cause blockages, chocolates are poisonous, and any sudden change of diet, even for just one meal, can give your dog or cat stomach pain and diarrhea. This is particularly true for older animals, whose digestive systems are often more delicate and nutritional requirements more strict. Aluminum foil or plastic wrap might be attractive to a pet, but do not let your companion near these – ingestion may cause vomiting, intestinal blockage or even more serious problems.
4. A Christmas tree should stand in a flat, wide base. You might also want to anchor the tree with fishing line tied to drapery rods or the wall. Cats often see trees as fabulous climbing posts. If your feline shows a penchant for this activity, decorate with animal-safe items such as dried flowers, pine cones or fabric and wood ornaments. You also might want to consider putting the tree in a room with doors that close. Tinsel and popcorn strands can be deadly to pets, and glass balls can shatter in an animal's mouth.
5. Please remember that the changes and activity over the holidays can cause an animal stress and anxiety. By taking proper precautions, you can help your pet enjoy the holiday season.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual SPCA Dog Wash



SPCA of Northern Virginia held its 2<sup>nd</sup>



Annual Dog Wash event at Petsmart in Springfield on September 16, 2000 from 11:00AM to 3:00PM. Despite the cold weather, supporters came out with their faithful friends. We'd like to extend a big thank you to Petsmart for the raffle prizes, dog shampoo, tables and for the use of their parking lot. We also want to thank Carpet Décor in Springfield for donating carpet pieces for the tables so the dogs would not slide off and Great American Restaurants for their \$25 gift certificate.

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS CALENDAR -2001

### February 17

**Pet Psychic Seminar** by **Diane Forestell**, Animal Communicator. Westpark Hotel, 8401 Westpark Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102, 3:00PM – 5:00PM. Please come early...Registration/check-in begins at 2:00 p.m. Space is limited. For reservations, please call (703) 799-9390 #5 and leave a message. Or visit us online for registration form at [www.spcanova.org](http://www.spcanova.org). **Pets are not permitted.** However, please feel free to bring a picture. You may be selected for a random reading!!



**Diane Forestell** has over 15 years experience as a respected intuitive consultant and is well known for her exceptional animal communication abilities. She has appeared on television and radio and has been featured in newspaper and magazine articles. She teaches classes in Animal Communication and the practical application of intuitive skills. Diane is the author of two programs on tape: "On Their Behalf: The Language of Animals" and "Find Your Spirit Self". Ms. Forestell founded Future, Inc. in November, 1998, to offer clients professional intuitive consultant services in a professional environment.

### March 24

**Tattoo Clinic** The SPCA of Northern Virginia is having a pet tattoo clinic on Saturday, March 24 from 10am till 1pm at the Weber's Pet Supermarket in Chantilly. Tattoos will be performed by Tommy & Nancy Mantlo from Richmond, who have over 25 years experience in tattooing pets. This is a great opportunity to protect your pets from theft, or in case they get lost. Tattoos are \$15 for dogs or cats if you sign up ahead of the date, \$18 for walk-ins. You'll choose the alpha-numeric combination to be tattooed on your pet, and you'll choose the service to register it with.

## *Meet Our Volunteers*

### *Kristin LeClair*

I began working with the SPCA in 1993 as a cat adoption volunteer. Shortly thereafter, I was asked to take the position of Treasurer due to my work experience as a CPA. In that role, I coordinate our annual audit, prepare our annual tax return, prepare periodic financial statements, attend board meetings and prepare other reports and charitable campaign applications as needed.

When asked why I chose animals as the beneficiaries of my volunteer time, I explain that it's because animals are defenseless victims of their environment when mistreated, and I enjoy being involved with an organization whose purpose is the prevention of cruelty to beings unable to help themselves. In fact, it was my love for animals that began my journey towards becoming vegetarian approximately four years ago.

As for my involvement in rescue, I've realized that I don't have the capacity to perform this duty full-time, but never ignore an animal in need that crosses my path. I've rescued, delivered for medical care, returned to owners, fostered, adopted, and found homes for cats, dogs and one bird over the past few years. Rescue work has many highs and lows, but as our President, Edith von Stuemmer, has told me after an unfortunate turn of events, you just have to move on, and help the next animal.

Pictured here with me are two of my seven roommates, Cody (lab/pointer mix) and Bonnie (shepherd/foxhound mix). I also have 5 cats, including one with 3 legs. I am astonished daily by their resilience and unconditional love.

Thank you for your continued support in our plight to provide better lives for abandoned, neglected, and abused animals.

## *Humane Education*

SPCA Volunteers donate their time for Humane Education at local schools and various children's programs. Pictured here at the Terra Centre SACC Program in Burke, Virginia are **Edith von Stuemmer** introducing her dog Sunshine along with **Sherry Garay's** cat Fluffy to the eager and excited children.