

Caring

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Animal Compassion Network

Helping homeless pets through rescue,
adoption and spay/neuter education since 1997

Spring 2004

Volume 1, Issue 1

Join us at ACN's annual extravaganza

Adopt-a-thon slated for May 1-2

By Krista Luck and Angie Buie

For the 7th straight year Animal Compassion Network (ACN) will join more than 2,000 animal shelters and welfare organizations throughout the world for the National Pet Adopt-a-thon.

Spread the word and plan to attend our extravaganza from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., May 1-2 at SuperPetz across from the Biltmore Square Mall in

Asheville.

Several other area animal shelters and purebred rescue groups will join ACN to offer pets for adoption by loving homes, such as Schnauzer Rescue of the Carolinas, Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue, Jackson County Humane Society, Madison County Friends for Animals, Midnight Sun Sanctuary Spitz Rescue and Catman-2.

Along with adoption activities, experts will be on hand to give advice and help select the best pet for a family.

We need volunteers for a variety of tasks! For information about this event call 258-4820 or access the Web sites at www.a-cnet.org or www.petadoptathon.com.

Welcome Eileen Bouressa

ACN hires full-time Executive Director

By Angie Buie

When you're watching the beloved holiday broadcast of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, think of Animal Compassion Network's new Executive Director.

"My husband calls it the island of misfit animals," laughed Eileen Bouressa as she discussed her new position which she accepted last summer. "I seem to always get the ones, for whatever reasons, who have found their way to me and they're here for keeps."

Originally from Rhode Island, Bouressa has lived in Asheville for nine years and has proudly fostered more

than 60 animals in the past four years alone.

"...Of those 60 only one has become my own and that was after two failed adoption attempts," she said. "I have finally gotten to the point where I can separate my role in their life. I am a temporary haven for them until they go on to where they're supposed to be."

ACN hopes Bouressa will be anything but a temporary addition to the quickly growing organization. She is the no-kill group's first paid employee, and formerly served as Executive Director of the Haywood Animal Welfare Association (HAWA).

Bouressa sees many inherent strengths in ACN's different approach.

"When I was with HAWA, our animals were all shelter animals. We were working with a lot of emotional issues where we would lose a lot of the ones we were trying to save because they only had four days," Bouressa said. "What I love with ACN is that the majority of our network animals were on the way to the shelter anyway. We just intervene before they get there. By accepting animals from the public, we are able to find out the history. 'Is that dog good

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Upcoming events:

- Fundraising Committee Meeting, 6:30-8 p.m., Apr. 27, at At Play with Sparky
- Adoptathon, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., May 1-2, at SuperPetz
- Shot Clinic, 1-4 p.m., May 15, at A Good Dog's Life
- Fundraising Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., May 25 at At Play with Sparky
- General Membership Meeting, 7-9 p.m., June 1 at Earth Fare
- Adoption Day, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., June 5, location TBA
- General Membership Meeting, 7-9 p.m., June 15 at Earth Fare
- Fundraising Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., June 29 at At Play with Sparky

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around cats? Has he had his shots the first five years? We are able to find out more about the animals' personality, and save them from all the trauma associated with having to go to the shelter first. It makes our job easier and we do a great job of placing animals with a suitable adoptive home."

As Bouressa works to expand ACN and its impact on Western North Carolina's unwanted pet population, she has set several goals to overcome the animal welfare community's obstacles.

"Our biggest challenge is the number of calls we get from so many people in need," Bouressa said. "The limits to our programs don't allow us to help every animal. What I want to see happen is for us to increase the number of dogs and cats we can take into the network from

Cash for Critters

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60 to 75, a goal already in the works at press time."

"Even though we are the largest no-kill, non-profit animal welfare organization in Western North Carolina, there's still so much more to be done," she added.

Bouressa is also itching to expand the group's spay/neuter program and its related educational outreach.

"There are a lot of available funds out there for spaying and neutering," Bouressa said. "We need to get that information out to the general public better. Every Saturday in October we were at a festival or carnival, selling spay/neuter vouchers, letting people know that we are here to help."

Bouressa explained that ACN makes no profit on the spay/neuter vouchers and in fact loses money despite "selling" them. She went on to describe several programs which can cover up to 100-percent of the cost of spay/neuter, all for the asking.

"Financial limitations are no longer an excuse to not spay and neuter," Bouressa said.

Bouressa can't hide her pride at ACN's mission and performance in the past six years.

"We are in the forefront of what's being

recommended by animal care experts," she said. "As long as we have the money and the volunteer base, I would love to see (ACN) become a viable alternative to the shelter to everyone who calls for our help."

Bouressa is also a certified wildlife rehabilitator and former volunteer for the WNC Nature Center. She lives with her husband and son in Asheville, as well as Samson (husky/coonhound mix), Angel (poodle mix found along I-240 with a hole in her back), Greta (Black Lab/Chow mix), J.B. (Beagle mix, aka 'Joe Beagle') and her cats Moxanna (13), Magpie (3) and Lucille, a 4-year-old former feral kitten who Bouressa says is "now the sweetest and tamest cat in the household."

Bouressa can be reached at 258-4820.

Just one more reason to keep your cat indoors

Tick-borne disease can kill pet cats

Cytauxzoonosis rears its head in central North Carolina

Two last



By Angie Buie

pet cats near Raleigh died May after being bitten by American Dog Ticks. These are the first documented cases in the state, although other southeastern states are well-acquainted with Cytauxzoonosis.

No symptoms appear in the first three weeks after a bite,

but 3-7 days before dying, an infected cat will stop eating suddenly, followed by "anxiety cries and profound weakness."

The disease can be treated within the next 36 hours after the onset of these symptoms but after 48 hours, success is unlikely. The cats die of massive organ failure and bleeding disorders.

If your cats go outside, the N.C. Veterinary Medical Association advocates strong tick control measures (designed for cats only!). Humanely eliminate the ticks' food sources such as mice, moles, rabbits, etc. Keep grass and bushes cut back to inhibit the ticks' ability to attach. Do not let your cat out after rain or on dewy

mornings, because ticks love moisture.

Or keep your cat indoors! The average lifespan of an indoor cat is 18 years; 18 months for outdoor cats. And you spare them the dangerous pesticides in the topical flea/tick treatments.

For more information go to www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/clerk/dailey or call 919-581-5859.

(reprinted with permission from Best Bites for Pets' spring 2003 newsletter)

From the Director's Desk – A six-month retrospective

A regular contribution to 'Caring' by Executive Director Eileen Bouressa

I can hardly believe I've already been with Animal Compassion Network for six months, but then I look back at all that we've accomplished and wonder how we did it in so little time. Our many achievements are testament to our dedicated volunteers, members and sponsors.

Some very exciting things have taken place since autumn. The Humane Alliance invited ACN to present a program at last September's conference entitled "How to Open a High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic". During the conference, we happily received accolades from the Humane Society of the United States and Best Friends Animal Sanctuary for our cutting-edge adoption and spay/neuter voucher programs.

In November, the Asheville Humane Society and the Mimi Paige Foundation petitioned the Buncombe County commissioners to approve an amendment to the county Animal Control Ordinance. The new ordinance proposed mandatory sterilization for all dogs and cats not possessing an "intact-animal permit". Knowing that aggressive sterilization is the first real step towards ending the senseless killing of unwanted animals, the Network mobilized and bombarded the commissioners with phone calls, faxes and emails voicing support for the amendment. After a rambunctious de-

bate at the December commissioner's meeting, the motion carried.

Buncombe County animals are already reaping the rewards. Area animal welfare agencies have seen a dramatic increase in requests for spay/neuter assistance. The shelter has also experienced a sharp decline in owner turn-ins. We can speculate that the enormous attention surrounding the initiative may have encouraged some owners to rethink their views of animals as disposable property.

More attention was brought to the issue of spay/neuter through ACN's First Annual Dining For Pets. During the highly successful spay/neuter fundraiser in February our wonderful restaurant sponsors reported lines out the door (details below)! More importantly, the media attention surrounding the National Spay Day event continued to hammer away at our message to Spay and Neuter your pets – It's the law!

And of course all of this was accomplished while adopting out more than 200 animals, hosting three shot clinics where we dispensed 921 low-cost vaccines, and initiating seven fundraising projects to fund our lifesaving programs. All of this in just six months.

We have exciting plans on the horizon, including new Volunteer Orientations, Pet Therapy, Corporate Sponsorship op-

portunities and "Caring For Life."

This last venture will offer guardians the opportunity to register their pets for our foster care/adoption program should the owner become too ill to care for them. This program is near to my heart; I can think of nothing sadder than a terminally ill guardian worrying about their pet's future at such a trying time or of a pet alone and scared at the shelter after an owner's death. Please watch for our announcement, kicking off "Caring for Life" enrollment!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first six months with ACN and am proud to be associated with such an outstanding organization and with all of you who make this work possible. I am anticipating a 2004 in which we will continue making huge strides in improving and saving the lives of so many unwanted animals.



Spay/Neuter education/ fundraising

'Dining for Pets' a tremendous success

Plans already in the works for 2005 fundraising event

Restaurants had to turn away enthusiastic diners on Feb. 24 because of the overwhelming response to Animal Compassion Network's first annual 'Dining for Pets' event.

Thanks to the generosity of participating restaurants, a portion of all receipts that day went to the Animal Compassion Network's Betty Fund which provides spay/neuter services for indigent pet owners, as well as helping to underwrite ACN's bi-

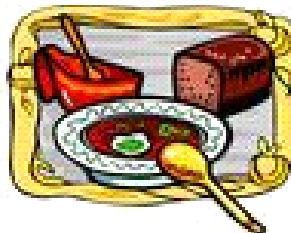
monthly sale of low-cost spay/neuter vouchers.

ACN Executive Director said the \$3,000 profit was just part of the day's windfall.

"I know we got the word out that we are here to help," Bouressa said. "Several people with whom I spoke were thrilled to know about our programs and were excited to pass along the information to others in need."

Thanks to:

Anntony's Caribbean Café, Bennies Little



Dog House, Bistro 1896, Cats & Dawgs, Charlotte Street Grill and Pub, Early Girl Eatery, Grovewood Café, Ideal Market, Los Volcanes, Tupelo Honey, Trillium, organizer Krista Luck, Julie Wunder of WLOS, the Costume Shoppe, the Asheville Citizen-Times and Mountain XPress.

Animal Compassion Network

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Helping homeless pets through rescue,
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- Pet Supplies Plus
- REACH Hospital
- SuperPetz
- The Soapy Dog

ACN Success Story

~ July 5th, The Day We Were 'Smudged'

*By Gail Hubbard and Susan Wilson
Edited by Angie Buie*

Gail Hubbard and Susan Wilson, owners of A Good Dog's Life dog training school, were working on a new facility last summer when a small black and white kitten hobbled up. They scooped him up immediately, seeing his kinked tail and severe limp.

Animal Compassion Network was having its monthly adoption day at Super-Petz so the women left their project to get help. The kitten melted into Susan's arms as Gail drove to the store. They named him "Smudge" for the black mark under his chin.

The helpful ladies in ACN's cat trailer shared sympathy and concern for the kitten; they provided a carrier and advice about caring for him.

No less than three baths would eliminate fleas off of his tiny body. The women also noticed dried blood near his toes. They guessed the previous owner had ripped his claws out or cut them much too short, which would have

caused "Smudge" tremendous pain. Wondering how could anyone abuse a little trusting animal, Hubbard and Wilson watched as he fell right asleep.

Smudge soon traveled to the Cat Care Clinic of Asheville for x-rays and an exam which found a broken tail, a crushed hip and a broken back leg. On July 10th Smudge underwent surgery. The vet installed a pin in his back leg to stabilize the hip and shortened his tail to reduce the pain of the broken joint. The staff at the clinic also quickly fell in love with Smudge. After all he had been through he was still an amazingly loving cat. A simple six-week recovery period would give the kitten a chance at a good life.

Smudge's trials hadn't yet ended, however. In September the women took him to Charlotte Street Animal Hospital where vets diagnosed him with kidney failure. He improved little in the next two weeks and vets warned the women he might live less than six weeks.

"We were broken hearted. Smudge had

limped into our lives as a good luck charm and stole our hearts," Hubbard and Wilson said.

A dietary change gave Smudge new life and in late October, another kidney panel showed the kitten's organs functioning at normal levels. Smudge had overcome another huge setback.

Smudge was meant to live. He made two dog loving trainers into cat loving trainers too.

Hubbard and Wilson send many thanks those who donate time and money to the Animal Compassion Network, especially the volunteers in the Cat Trailer. They also thanked the Cat Clinic for the reduced rate for the care and surgical procedures which fixed Smudge's broken bones. Finally, they thanked Charlotte Street Animal Hospital for not giving up on Smudge.