

Alley Animals

Editor's Note

Again the holiday season has swung open its doors, setting in motion the excitement of festivities and preparations for the festivities so many people look forward to enjoying this time of year. Even mundane tasks have a different feel to them as a cheerful anticipation makes its way into everyday life. I remember well the years past when I was much younger and so eager to join the spirited anarchy of holiday shopping and other aspects of the season. How I loved the decorations, most especially the colored lights.

In more recent years, I watch the happy bustling as if from behind a thin, invisible barrier keeping me at a distance. I read newspaper stories of people who go out of their way to help a stranger in need, and I'm thankful goodness still lives in us. Pieces air on television about neighborhoods coming together to ensure children receive presents or winter coats, and I'm encouraged. After all, seeing the need of others and taking steps to help them is central to the meaning of this season. I only wish we humans would expand our compassionate outreach to other living beings as an integral part of our holiday tradition. It isn't such a gigantic leap, to go out of our way for a shivering, hungry animal as well as for each other, is it?

Doing the work I do now prevents me from being thoroughly immersed in the good cheer experienced by others around me; I wrestle with the familiar conflict that visits me this time of year. Things aren't as I long for them to be. I see in my mind homeless creatures, wholly innocent every one of them, forced to walk the streets in a hostile world; animals who have no person's smiling face to lick or lap to warm.

Cruelty to animals takes no holiday, even at this time of year, and I'm reminded there is still much to be done for the innocent. If I sometimes fear our world is lost to the wicked, deep in my heart of hearts I know giving up is not the path to take. If hope lives at all, even the smallest flicker, then the harder path of pressing on is the right way forward. It's far more difficult to see what horrifying torment animals endure at the hands of humans or the effects of finding little or nothing to eat for long periods of time than it would be to turn away and shut these things out of my thoughts, but what *good* would that do? If I believe the struggle for a compassionate society remains worth the effort, I must be willing to engage in the struggle, difficult as it might be. To turn away because it's hard would be to declare that innocent creatures are no longer worthy of kindness and

mercy.

I so deeply wish for animals to suffer no more, yet I know this is not a realistic vision, not in our world. Wickedness and evil don't stifle easily. But shouldn't we keep trying to push back? Lessening of the hardship gripping homeless and hurting animals will only happen through our working toward it. This is my way of wearing "the spirit of the season," by remembering why I do what I do. I may smile at the bustling cheerfulness, I still enjoy the warm glow of colored lights and I am thankful for the inspirational stories of human goodness. But my way of answering the call of the Spirit is to renew my dedication of walking the hard path and continuing to care about the lowly ones. To stand with the helpless, the forgotten—this is how I align with the Spirit of the season, and hope whatever tiny contribution I may offer in the grand scheme of things will be the right one.

Many years ago when I first entered the field of animal work, I encountered an unpleasant man who scolded me for caring about animals and made known his opinion that I should not work on their behalf. He didn't think he was offering an opinion, but rather an indisputable fact: people should *not* spend time and energy helping animals. I was young and inexperienced, so I'm sure I had no compelling argument to counter his criticism. I don't recall much about the incident other than a strengthened determination that other living beings deserve my respect and compassion, as well as my effort to assuage their pain, and no one could persuade me otherwise.

Some people know they are meant to become teachers, others astronauts; some are drawn to nursing, others discover they have an aptitude for computer science. There is room for all of these and a multitude of other vocations in a world of infinite complexity. I believe it is not for one person to decry another's sense of purpose, with the exception of those based on violence or harming others (human or animal). Working on behalf of homeless animals takes nothing away from the work other people do to help cancer patients or the poor. Indeed, I have come to rest in the outlook that the more kindness we disseminate, the better. Good is not a finite object to be stingily dispersed one piece at a time, but rather a part of life that grows with nurturance.

This holiday season, as I have for many years, I hold close a flickering hope for things to get better for homeless animals. Tempered by an insistence on remaining in

(Continued on page 2)

Editor's Note *(continued)*

the real world rather than a fairyland of my own wishful thinking, my hope is that the Spirit of the season will visit the light of good and the depths of kindness on at least some of those who've known fear and hiding from the world as a way of life. I hope the Spirit will bestow its miracle in the lives of some innocent creatures having borne so much more than their share of pain. May the Spirit live in us and may we share it with those so often passed by and forgotten. This is my prayer and my hope, and as long as I have these I will press on in my belief that offering kindness to innocent creatures, homeless and downtrodden, is to walk with the Spirit of the season all the days of the year.

One Spared

Part 1 by Alice Arnold

It was cold, very cold and the heat in the car wasn't getting my feet warm so I thought I would put the next few alley drops on my side so I wouldn't have to walk so far to put down the food and my feet could have a chance to get warm. In order for me to do this, I would need to start the next strip of alleys from the opposite direction, so I had to drive several blocks and then back-track. I was just about to pull into the first alley when I heard it, a cry—no a scream—and more screams so loud you could hear it for blocks. It sent a chill down me. I also heard a banging sound. I followed the screams as fast as possible and when I got near, I thought they were coming from an abandoned house. I took a flashlight and pot of food with me and walked up the small street when I realized the screams were coming from underneath a car. The banging sound was a woman banging on a door; she could hear the screams, too, but she didn't care, she just kept banging on the door.

I got down on the ground and I could see her, a little calico. I shook the pot of food and she screamed louder as she tried to get up but she could hardly move. I went back to my car and drove as close as possible to her. The woman across the street looked at me a few times and just kept banging on the door. The animal screaming in pain didn't matter to her. I opened a can of food and put it by the car, hoping the smell would bring the little cat out, but she was having a very hard time. I got on my stomach and reached under the car to help her out and I saw one of her front legs was badly ripped with bones and muscle showing. One of her back feet was 2 times its normal size. Her cry of pain told me how she felt, she was shaking so much from the cold and her injury that I thought she was going to die. I've picked up very sick and badly injured animals who die after I get them to the car. Sometimes I think they feel they can leave now, they feel safe and helped, and not alone any-

more, so they close their eyes and go.

I gently picked her up and into the car we went. I sat her on my lap and pet her head. She was so cold, I pointed the heat vents toward her and just like that she became very still as she looked up at me and started to purr. I gave her a kiss on the nose and told her she'll be alright now. I moved the car out of the street and pulled over to park for a few minutes so I could get a better look at the little calico cat. With my flashlight I could see how bad it was, and it was very bad. The cold night air kept the leg from bleeding but the heat in the car was making it bleed, so I slowly laid her on the soft towel in the carrier with a can of food. She licked at it a little before she put down her head and went to sleep.

Part 2 by Lillian G. Leslie

Friend and consummate caregiver, Jeanie, agreed in less than the blink of an eye to take the calico kitty. First however, a trip to the animal emergency room was in order. A gruesome wound covered most of her upper right front leg, revealing its internal components. Muscle, bone, connective tissue, blood, all exposed, but the kitty did not resist being handled, and displayed no fear. I accompanied Alice and the injured little one to the hospital, and I admit I was curiously confident all would go well. In these situations, one can't predict what factors will enter the medical picture; my normal posture is one of impatient anxiousness, no doubt annoying to anyone unfortunate enough to be nearby. I pace, I worry out loud, I pace. This time was different. Perhaps the little cat's own demeanor affected mine as she rested quietly in the carrier—I think she may have slept through the waiting room part of the process as I filled out documents and relayed bits of information to the in-take receptionist.

We were allowed to take the kitty back to the room where she would receive an initial examination, but Alice and I were not allowed to stay, so we returned to the waiting area. A few minutes passed before a technician came out with a clipboard; she had no news, she wanted more information, most of which I had already explained we didn't know. There was no treatment history, no prior veterinarian, no "owner", and we could but guess her age was 4 to 5 months. The technician pressed us for a name, this was essential she said; without thinking I blurted out, "her name is Mercy!" Not the most original or creative of names, but appropriate, especially given the time of year, the season of being thankful for life's blessings.

The veterinarian who examined Mercy delivered a mixture of news, the good aspects easily outweighed the

(continued on page 3)

Alley Animals

One Spared Part 2 (Continued from Page 2)

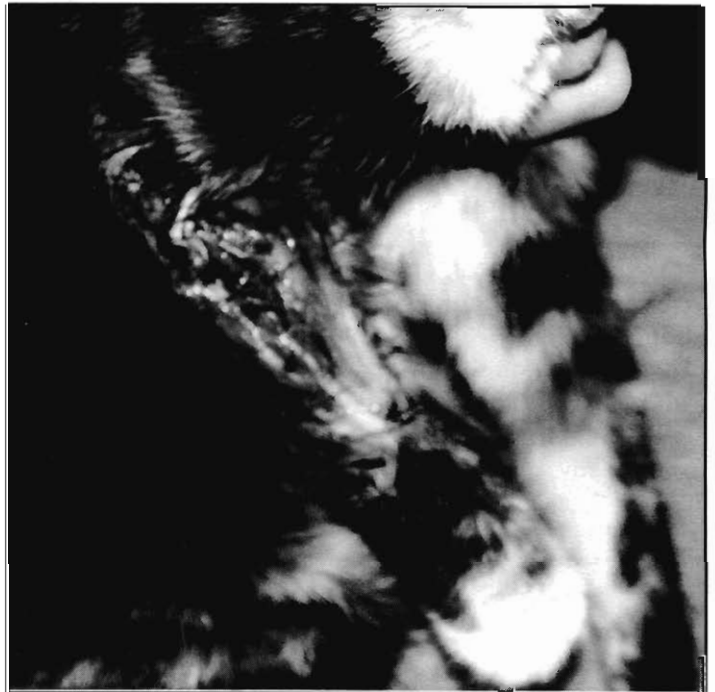


bad. The front leg's wound, although hideous and massive, was not life-threatening, but efforts to save it would involve extensive procedures over a long period of time and probably cause persistent pain. He asked if we objected to amputation. Through the years we've experienced a wide range of medical situations and treatments, amputation among them. Oddly enough, this rather extreme measure is not at the top of my list of dreaded outcomes. I've watched animals cope with a front leg amputation, others with a hind leg amputation; beyond the first weeks of recovery and adjustment to balancing on three legs instead of four, a resilience drives their spirits forward. They don't feel sorry for themselves (as I'm certain I would if I lost a leg), rather they seem relieved to be rid of the source of their injury and discomfort. Medicine aids their body's healing, a triumphant spirit does the rest.

After we spoke with the veterinarian, I called Jeanie to fill her in, and she accepted the possibility of Mercy's losing her leg—she only wanted what's best for this dear little kitty. Jeanie hadn't even met Mercy, but she loved her already and was eager to proceed with whatever care was necessary. The vet told us he would X ray the leg, clean it and apply bandages; further treatment was beyond the scope of emergency service. The vet, Alice, and I all agreed that Mercy's catastrophic injury was probably the result of her trying to get warm by crawling up next to the engine of a car. Maybe she stayed there after the engine lost its heat because she felt safe, hidden away. When someone started the car, the spinning fan blades or fan belt (or both) took off part of her leg and sent her screaming, terrified, and in excruciating pain.

After putting Jeanie in telephone contact with the emergency vet, Alice and I left the hospital with the empty carrier where Mercy had first rested her weary head. Later that day, Jeanie collected the young cat from the hospital. Bandages wrapped her right front leg *and* right hind foot, because Mercy's hind foot had sustained injury, too. It was swollen like a balloon and two claws had to be removed. Ordinarily we unequivocally oppose declawing, the rare exception being a medical circumstance where declawing prevents further injury or complications such as infection, as in this instance.

Antibiotics and pain medication would bolster the physical side of the healing process while Jeanie's tender care would minister to little Mercy's spirit. The next day Jeanie's veterinarian took over Mercy's medical care. He anesthetized the youngster and then went to work thoroughly, meticulously cleaning out the wound. As Jeanie watched the doctor used tweezers to delicately extricate bits of debris, unidentifiable gunk, as well as small pieces of some kind of fabric, and remnants of a fan belt. Yes, bits of fan belt lodged in the exposed tissue of Mercy's leg. Jeanie was at once horrified at what she was witnessing, and overcome with relief that Alice found the little calico screaming for her life in the alleys.



At this stage, Jeanie and her vet were still considering the possibility of trying to save the leg. More X rays, intensive examination of the leg, and much discussion of potential outcomes took place between the vet, Jeanie, and her husband, Geoff, who would also be involved with Mercy's care. Ultimately, everyone realized

(continued on page 4)

One Spared Part 2 (Continued from Page 3)

amputating the front leg was the way to proceed; surgery to save it might not succeed, and consequences such as chronic pain, susceptibility to infection, and other undesirable effects might harm Mercy more than help her.

The appointment was booked and Mercy's leg was amputated two days later. Presently, Mercy is recuperating remarkably well; she's eating, she's interested in her surroundings, and she wants out of the cage where she must stay for a few days while the incision site heals over and stitched edges of skin begin mending together.

She may want out of the cage, but she's a happy girl with an irrepressible zest for her new life and a purr to melt the heart of any person who beholds her. By the time you read these words, Mercy will have taken her first steps as a three-legged cat, a happy, healthy three-legged cat who would have died a horrifying death in the streets had Alice not been there to hear her panicked cries for help. To the blessings for which we give our thankfulness this holiday season, a young calico kitty is added.

We have no way of knowing how many cats, even small dogs, suffer deadly injury from trying to get warm by crawling up next to the engine of a car, but whatever the number, it's too many. If you know anyone who allows his or her cat out, especially in the cold of winter, please try to explain how dangerous this practice can be. Cats and dogs suffer from exposure just as people do; frostbite, hypothermia, and deadly injury from trying to get warm next to the engine of a car, can be avoided if animals are not put outside.

Did You Know You Can Donate Through Our Website

Just go to alleyanimals.org and click on our "Make A Donation" button to donate via Paypal. It's safe, secure and easy, and you don't need a Paypal account to donate.

Wish List

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Cat Food (dry & canned) | Bleach |
| Dog Food (dry & canned) | Paper Towels |
| Large plastic trash bags (30 gallon or larger size) | Unscented laundry soap |

We gratefully appreciate donations in response to our Wish List.

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

YOUR SUPPORT IS THE REASON ANIMALS ARE NOT ALONE IN THE STREETS AND ALLEYS. YOU ARE THE REASON WE'RE ABLE TO TRAVEL THE CITY STREETS NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

Please Consider remembering Alley Animals in your Will. Animals on the streets will go on suffering, and if you have been blessed in this life we hope you will consider sharing your blessings with the least fortunate among us.

Donations Through Paypal In Memory and In Honor Of

We're happy to offer you the convenience of donating through Paypal, but we must make you aware of the need to send us a separate email in the event your donation is in Memory or In Honor of a loved one. Hopefully this additional procedure will only require a minute or two of your time, and it is *necessary*; we have no way to include a "comment section" for on-line donations.

What you need to do is email us at: info@alleyanimals.org, notifying us 1) your Paypal donation is In Memory or In Honor Of, and to whom you're paying tribute, 2) any words of remembrance or honorable mention to be printed in our newsletter, and 3) the name and address of the person or family, if any, you want notified of your tribute.

We hope you'll find the process easy and quickly accomplished. Please bear with us in this: your memorials and honors are *very important* to us.

Alley Animals 410-823-0899

Up For Adoption

Scruff by *Demetria Patras*

My alley partner and I were in the streets Thanksgiving Eve when we spied a small dog running down the street, nose to the ground, looking for food. Sometimes we see dogs who are let out to do their duty and there is usually a person standing by, ready to call them in, but this particular little one had no one watching out for him. He stopped at a bag in the gutter. It was a burger bag, and he pawed it open, snatching up a packet of ketchup as if he found a real treasure.

I pulled the car slowly toward him, and when he didn't move I got out, cautiously approaching him with a pot of food as I talked to him. I could tell he smelled the food; he looked at the pot and then at me and again at the pot of food. I stopped a short

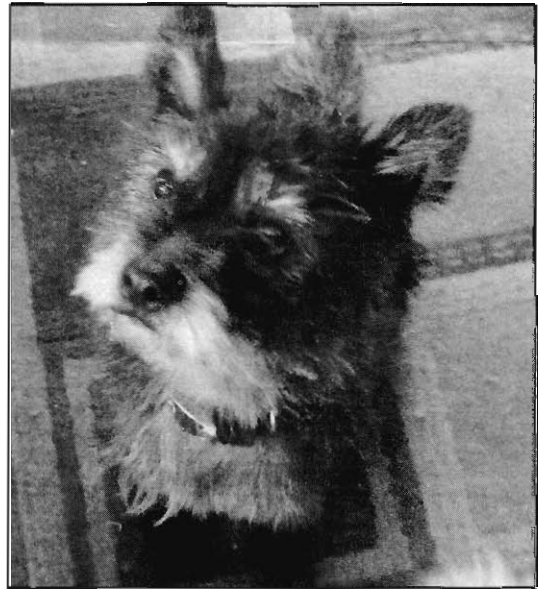
distance from him. I knew he wanted the food and I didn't want him to run, so I held out the pot and hoped the hungry dog would come to me, which he did, with his tail tucked and head down. Gradually, he let me pet him.

I scruffed him up and placed him on my lap in the car as I offered him the pot of food. I could feel his bony ribcage and very bony spine; it was obvious he hadn't eaten a good meal in a long, long time, but he appeared to be good-natured. My partner and I placed him in a carrier where he ate some more and rested.

I agreed to provide foster care for this pleasant little dog, and I started calling him Scruff because of his scruffy appearance. He's intelligent and obedient, and he gets along with other animals. I believe he would make a wonderful addition to a household in need of canine companionship.



Primarily blackish grayish, with tan accents on his face, Scruff's appearance is similar to a Scottish terrier with his square face, half-length tail, and small but sturdy physique. We don't do adoptions during the holidays, but don't hesitate to call for information about Scruff if you are interested in making him part of your family after January 1st.



If Dee hadn't been traveling the city streets and alleys that night, this frightened starving dog's burden of suffering would only have increased. Thanks to your financial help and Dee's diligence, Scruff will never again be forced to scrounge the gutters for a packet of ketchup.

Alley Animals

In Loving Memory Of:

The precious dog who died in the crate.

*Sandy Miller
Bobbie LaSov*

Our beloved **Festus, Genie, Izzy, & Spike.**

Julie Frey, Rose, & Violet

Aspen, Sage, Sara, Amy; four great and loving dogs who brought love and joy every day and are greatly missed every day.

Bill Vogel

Sabrina, for all the joy she brought to John & Shirley Rice and their household.

Jerry Rice

Helen Hart.

Helen Needle

My friend, **Robert David,** who recently passed over, and who loved dogs & cats.

Karen Wolf

Madelon Decker, our mom and a lover of God's wonderful creation—our furry animals. We miss you still.
Love,

Your Family

My beloved wife, **Marian Votava.**

Edward Votava

The dear father of **Suzanne Rogers White.**

Leah Bark

Doris Lowner.

Joan Goeringer

Jewels, dearly loved cat of Linda Skreptack.

Darlene Krawczyk

My beloved wife, **Denise Hamer.**

George M. Hamer

My dear little dog, **Cosette Cosy,** lived to be 15½ years old and was my constant companion. I loved her more than life and I miss her every minute of every day. She was such a good little dog. I hope she will be waiting for me when I cross the Rainbow Bridge.

Regina Russell

Simba, 17 year old Siamese, brother of Neko. They were inseparable, they never left each others' side. Neko cries all the time. Simba had kidney failure and had to be put to sleep. I sure do miss him.

Jane Newberry

Audrey DeVilbiss, a great friend and animal lover, who will be truly missed.

Sheila Akehurst

Audrey DeVilbiss, who cared greatly about animals and worked to improve the lives of alley animals

Teresa Casey

Audrey DeVilbiss, who held the cause of Alley Animals so strongly in her heart.

Karen Frayer & Paul Watkins

Our Friend, **Audrey DeVilbiss.**

Dolores & Frank Sands

Audrey DeVilbiss, a wonderful person, loved by all who knew her. My thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Dick.

Dawn Griest

Audrey, no words say how you will be missed. The animals lost a good friend and so did I.

Alice Arnold

Audrey DeVilbiss, who adopted a cat from Alley Animals 25 years ago. Then everyone at Alley Animals adopted Audrey and her husband Dick, as our lasting friends. One sweet cat who needed a home brought a special person into my life, and I thank you, Audrey, for giving Meggie a home, and for giving me 25 years of knowing you.

Lillian G. Leslie

Mrs. Frances Broder.

*Marti & Steve Tarkington
Millie & Stanley Rosenthal*

Frances Broder, a wonderful woman and friend.

Anna Winslow

My monkey, **Sparky.** Mommy misses you, buddy. I don't think my heart will ever heal. I love you.

Tammy Dickson

Brindle Boy, I will never forget him. *Bobbie LaSov*

Trevor, Rudy, Kelly, Jasper, Birney, Crocker, Gretta, Rufus, Jake, Mickey and Jenna, all still loved by their humans. *Bobbie LaSov*

Jean Dean, my cousin, whose 2 dogs and 2 cats meant the world to her. *Julie Hendricks*

Alley Animals

In Loving Memory Of: (continued)

Jean Dean. *Virginia Demeike*

Elderly brother rats, **Sebastian** and **Alastair**, who crossed the Rainbow Bridge on the same weekend last May. One was euthanized due to illness, and the other passed away shortly thereafter of no apparent physical reason but rather, I am convinced, of a broken heart.

DonnaRae Castillo

Kopi, quiet Chinese hamster, adopted when quite elderly; **Bingham**, chubby white mouse with a real zest for life (and food); and **Tinker**, my adopted sweet mouse buddy. I called him "Goodwill Mouse Ambassador Extraordinaire" because of the times he spent at meet-and-greet events for the small animal rescue group I foster for. He brought smiles to many, adults as well as children. Thank you, Tinker.

DonnaRae Castillo

Teddy, Rusty, and most especially, **Ginger.**
DonnaRae Castillo

Lora Kincade. *S.K. McCullin*

Ben and **Dearie**, our beloved Maine Coons. Rest in peace. We miss you still.

Kristen Mattis

Tots and **Mac Christy**, and their cats, **Midgie** and **Biddie.**
Peggy Williams

All my beloved dogs and cats over the years: **Tippy**, **Sandy**, **Jellybean**, **Scavie**, and **Pirate.**

Peggy Williams

Marty, your Mommy and Daddy miss you very much, but are grateful for every day spent with you.

Patrice Green.

In Honor Of:

My friend, **Mary K. Worrel** *Barbara Willson*

Pete Tinsley's birthday, and his dog, **Sadie.**
Shirley Geddes

All you Angels of Mercy and for all the precious animals who rely on your love and compassion.

Doris Richard

Katie, a.k.a. **Sidekick.** *L.M. Goldsmith*

Noah, Dreamer, and **Kelley.** Enough said.
Bobbie LaSov

My first guinea pig, a sweet boy who was turned in to the small animal rescue group at the age of six years (elderly for a little piggie). What a delight he has been. If only I had discovered the joys of a guinea pig years ago!

DonnaRae Castillo

Goo Goo, the cat. *Ellen Taylor*

My **Dad**: teacher, guidance counselor, and naval officer; in honor of the contribution he made in the lives of the students he taught as well as those he skillfully helped onto a career path, and the service he gave to our country in World War II. I honor all of these, but most of all I honor him as a man of kindness toward people and animals, especially his beloved kitties.

Lilly

My niece, **Mary**, vegetarian chili, giant bubbles, a foundling rose, coconut milk cappuccino, and so many more delightful surprises as special as the person who's shared them with me, a source of light in my life from the time she was an infant.

Lilly

*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
Check here if you wish a tax receipt.

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

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Please make checks payable to Alley Animals, Inc.
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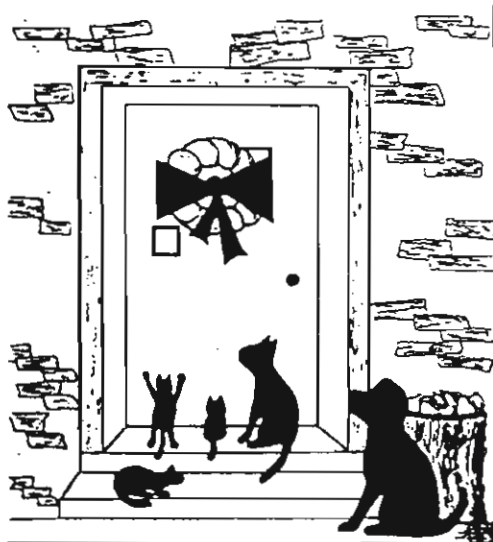
Contributions are tax deductible under Section 501 (c) (3) of IRC.
Our web site: <http://www.alleyanimals.org>
Our email address: info@alleyanimals.org

Alley Animals, Inc.

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Alley Animals

Fall Raffle Winners

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1st Prize | Krista Shifler , Boonsboro, MD |
| 2nd Prize | Julie McClanahan , Waterford, VA |
| 3rd Prize | Ann L. Todd , Odenton, MD |
| 4th Prize | Deborah Adams-Ricks , Hydes, MD |
| 5th Prize | Shirley Schwartz , Baltimore, MD |

I wish I had stronger words than *Thank You!* to let you know how very pleased we are that you responded to our Autumn Raffle fundraiser. Every ticket, every dollar helped open our way back to the city streets; we couldn't travel the alleys without you. Alley Animals is (and always will be) a small, struggling organization, so all donations in response to our raffle fundraisers and our newsletters mean the difference for us. *You* mean the difference to us and to our work.