

# Alley Animals

## Editor's Note

First, I want to thank every one of you who entered our autumn raffle fundraiser. Even in a time when so many of us are experiencing financial difficulties, you found room in your budget for our work on the streets. You made room for those who have nothing, who literally fight the battle of life and death very hour of every day in the streets.

One morning a few months ago, while I anxiously waited for my coffee to brew, I flipped through the newspaper and came upon an article with a headline that caught my eye—something about Rover and steak. I don't remember the exact wording, but my curiosity was piqued so I read the piece. The writer drew his commentary around an incident that happened as he exited an upscale restaurant after treating a friend to an expensive dinner.

He was on his way out when a woman, also leaving the establishment, brushed by him without so much as an "excuse me", although his description portrayed her as exceedingly rude as she nearly knocked him to the ground. Her reason for the rush? To bring leftovers to her little dog, held in the arms of a man waiting by a car. Making matters worse for the writer of the piece was the gentle way the man cradled the dog in his arms as the lady hand fed little bits of food to her canine friend.

The article was written near the end of the summer at the onset of the economic unraveling, and the writer expected to take away a larger point, I think, broadening this one incident of "pampering" a beloved little dog, comparing the special treatment of animal companions with the looming economic difficulties about to descend on less-than-wealthy human beings. The writer's words oozed disdain for the little dog. He gave us the distinct impression of the lady as rude and ill-mannered toward other people while tenderly bestowing her bounty and affections on an animal. The writer seemed to shout that mere animals are unworthy of comfort when humans are in for a rough road ahead. (Never mind that animals had nothing whatsoever to do with the sorry state of our economy.)

The writer probably takes a dim view of animals in general, like so many people who "can't stand dogs", or who "ate cats", and so on. Sadly this perspective represents a widespread attitude. In the years I have been involved in humane work, too often I have heard the argument put forward that people who care about animals don't care about other people. This is flawed thinking. I have yet to meet such a person, and I have met a lot of people who care about the suffering of animals. On the

other hand, I have come across quite a number of people through the years who oppose animal work because, they say, we should care *only* about people, not about animals.

I believe true compassion rejects confinement—it lives and breathes in the human heart and leaps over obstacles and boundaries like no other attribute. Artificially limiting good will strips away the inscrutable nature of kindness and respect for those who aren't like us yet whose lives have meaning apart from any benefit we may derive.

Upon finishing the article, I had in my mind the image of two kinds of people, one with a spirit cold and contemptuous, the other's spirit open, warm and caring. For all the writer knew, this lady might be a generous philanthropist, donating large sums of money to charities that help disabled veterans or children with terminal diseases. He was quick to pass judgement according to his own small-minded point of view. Even if the lady simply loved her little companion, sharing with him what she had, so what? Why shouldn't she?

I've seen dogs tethered by heavy towing chains, no food or water bowls, no shelter. I've seen dogs in cement yards, their bodies so malnourished their ribs and hipbones protrude. I've seen dogs with frostbitten ears sentenced to a solitary existence outdoors...I could fill pages recounting the horrifying mistreatment of innocent creatures I've seen with my own eyes. Most of these animals (and millions of others) will experience no relief from their suffering before leaving this world. Shame on anyone who would do these things to another living being, and shame on any person who doesn't care about the pain humans inflict on the innocent..

Recently a lovely gentleman wrote to us a touching letter; in it he said that after his wife passed, his little dog (who had been a constant companion for 15 years) had become his closest companion. Would the writer of the article begrudge this gentleman the comfort and closeness of his dearest friend?

Perhaps we should pity the writer, a man with a spirit only big enough to hold his contemptuous judgement of others along with a narrow-minded view of who *deserves* kindness. But no, this purveyor of darkness does not arouse pity in me, instead he serves as yet another reminder that selfishness and hauteur blacken the heart and infect our world.

Mercy and compassion cannot be calculated, rather they elevate the spirit to embrace even the lowliest among us. Even animals. In the streets and alleys homeless creatures bear a daily onslaught of hardship that de-

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## Editors's Note *(continued from Page 1)*

fies expression. I have seen the wretchedness, the deprivation of their existence and no one could ever convince me that these noble, innocent beings are unworthy of our concern as they struggle under the heavy weight of their burdens.

To you, our supporters, I offer my warmest thanks and highest praise for going against the darkness by refusing to exclude the lowliest from your embrace. You light the way. You care about those who can never repay your kindness on any level, and in this you have achieved a height surpassed by no one. We thank you for blessing us with your support as you have blessed the homeless and hurting by making room for them while so many others coldly turn away.

## Plain Jane *by Demetria Patras*

I received a call from a concerned Baltimore City neighbor about a very pregnant cat who had been hanging around her house for weeks. After she talked to me and we made arrangements for me to come to her neighborhood to fetch this cat, the cat did not appear again. Three months later I again received a call from the same lady saying that a neighbor of hers discovered a litter of kittens under his gazebo. She felt that these were the kittens from the pregnant cat she had previously seen. I immediately jumped into my car with carriers anticipating picking up mom with her kittens. When I arrived we went to the yard where the gazebo was located. Crawling on our bellies, we retrieved seven three-week-old kittens. Mom was nowhere to be found. We drove around the neighborhood, walked around the neighborhood calling, I waited around for seemingly hours. Finally I had to leave, taking the kittens with me. I really hated to take the kittens without the mom but without knowing what had become of mom I needed to be sure the kittens were safe. Thankfully mom returned to the lady's yard the next day and I again made a beeline to her house. This female cat was very friendly and cooperative in going into a carrier and gave me no prob-

lems transporting. The kittens were ecstatic. They did not really like my cooking and attacked mom so vigorously that I allowed only 3 then 4 to nurse the first feeding from her.

I had the privilege of observing Plain Jane as I named her because she wasn't an attractive cat as some can be. She was a plain gray tiger with worn features but was devoted to her kittens. She lived in my basement and took control of the traffic coming and going by my cats. They were not allowed. She rigorously attacked them as they tried to tip toe past her. This put a hardship on my gang because their dry cat food is in the basement along with their litter boxes. I had to provide more upstairs for them because Plain Jane would station herself at the bottom of the stairs and remain vigilant. Even with her attack modes she was still very sweet and allowed me to handle her and her kittens. She looked over her 7 as they ran all around the basement not unlike a life guard who watches over his patch of beach. Her expression was of pride and attitude. It was curious as to how she handled Cid. Cid is my large older male who does not tolerate nonsense. His sleeping quarters are located in the basement and he could not see what the problem was. He had no interest in the kittens. I do believe Plain Jane took note of Cid's size and obvious strength and with respect only suggested that he find other sleeping quarters. She did not attack him like she did the others but kept a watchful eye on him and placed herself between him and the kittens. Cid being laid back and not really wanting a confrontation moved on. It could have been ugly because Cid is very strong in his opinion about everyone's behavior around him.

Plain Jane was the picture of motherhood, proud and confident, the Queen. I enjoyed having Plain Jane with me but I know my gang did not relish her presence. Even though she was with us for only a short time, for a long time after she was taken to a foster home until the kittens could be adopted and she spayed, they still went through the basement very cautiously just in case Plain Jane was still on duty. They would look down the stairs glancing all around before venturing. She made quite an impression on them, and on me.

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We can Save Them From the World*

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Our web site: <http://www.alleyanimals.org>  
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# Alley Animals

## Memorials

### In loving Memory Of:

Scooter Kester. *Wendy Kester*

Rose Marie. *Cheryl Plane*

Doris Lowner. *Joan Goeringer*

Conan. *James & Mae Burnett*

Sam & Miss Kitty. *Jacquelyn Lodmell*

Ellie. *Ned Landis*

Eleanor Karas *Patricia Moss  
The DeWitt Family  
Frances, Mack & Margaret*

Myrtle Scheeler. *Faculty and Staff  
Edgemere Elementary School*

For our beloved **Anita V. Rogers** who passed away on October 19, 2008. *Sandra & Will Placek*

**Anita V. Rogers** who passed away on October 19, 2008. *Edie Malczewski*

The defenseless deer who were killed in Loch Raven. *Lierra Lenhard & Enid Feinberg*

The noble and magnificent deer whose fear and torture at the hands of bow hunters cannot be measured. *Lillian G. Leslie*

My beloved husband, **Graham**, who never turned his back on an animal in need. *Barbara Jamieson*

**Vanessa Sandler**, a loving, wonderful person and friend. Not only did she love people, she loved animals—especially dogs. She will truly be missed by everyone. *Judith Berger*

For my beloved husband, **John E. Norman**, who brightened my life for 52 years and then sadly was taken away in January. *Norma J. Norman*

**Cushi, Albert, Storm, Scooby, Fluffy** the rabbit, and **Dave the 4th**, the gerbil. Thank you for sharing your lives with us. *Sue Nevins & Family*

The precious dog who died in the crate. *Sandra Miller*

My **Perdie** girl, and all of my special ones who are waiting at the Rainbow Bridge. *Theresa Chonoski*

**Candy, P.J., Sammy, Little Boy, Little Girl, and Spats.** Remembering all the warmth and joy you gave us. *The Donlins*

For **Tanner, Gracie, and Sweetie.** Remembering your love and devotion. *J.M. Donlin*

**Madeline Decker**, great mom, grandmom, and friend to all furry four-legged animals. *Patricia Decker*

My wonderful dog, **Alleigh**, who died August 14th. She gave me the will to keep on living and I miss her terribly. My love for **Alleigh** will never die and I hope we will be together again someday. *Carole Schaefer*

**Boy**—I keep listening for you tapping on the doorknobs. Close to human, raised from eyes closed. Passed at 16 years old. Be there when I cross the Bridge... *Wendy South, Forest & Cal*

## In Honor Of:

**Emmy & Hootie.** *Suzanne Meiso*

**Jake & Layla.** *Jennifer L. Merrick*

**Rachel Moriarty.** *Yvonne Engel*

A very happy birthday, **Jane.** *Raymond R. Lang*

God Bless each and every one of you "**Alley Angels**" for your generous hearts and total dedication to the voiceless, suffering creatures who share our planet. *Doris E. Richard*

The thousands of caring people who signed petitions, called and e-mailed Mayor Dixon, County Executive Smith, and Senator Brochin to condemn their support for killing the deer in Loch Raven. *Lierra Lenhard & Enid Feinberg*

**Elke & Tiger**, great pets! *Millie Murphy Berger*

**Jason W. Davies**—Merry Christmas! *Aunt Paula & Uncle Frank*

**Jingles**, my 14 year old "granddoggie", a rescued greyhound. She is ill now. *Doris T. Hendricks*

For **Donald E. Irwin**, in celebration of his birthday. *Mrs. Clare Rawlings*

## Wish List

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

We gratefully appreciate donations in response to our Wish List.

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

To the person who donated large amounts of dry food, paper towels, bleach, and trash bags but left no name with the donation: Thank You Very Much!

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## Mr. Mom *by Alice Arnold*

It was a cold night in the alleys and I saw a cat cross the street about a block in front of me. I rushed forward to check it out; as I turned the corner I saw her go under one car and then another and another—I drove in front of her to put food out for her so she wouldn't run in the street.

When she came to the food to eat, I moved closer to see if she was hurt in any way. When I tried to talk to her she ran down the alley and stopped about 20 feet in and cried. After a couple seconds, I saw a kitten come running out to her and then another and another, three altogether. They rubbed all over her and she licked them. I got a pot of dry food and a can and walked down the alley. When they saw me they all ran into a hole in the side of a house that had fire damage but was still intact. The hole was out of view of people—mom picked a good spot.

I put the food near the hole, backed off, and waited. Mom came out first, then one by one the kittens. She and her little ones were now on my route. Sometimes I pulled into the alley to find her out on the street with the kittens, looking for food in the trash. They were giving me gray hair, I was so afraid I would find them dead in the street as I have found so many before.

One at a time I was able to take the kittens off the streets and I was very relieved. Now to work on getting mom. For a week or two I brought her something special to eat, to let her know I'm a friend. One night she started crying to me, so I got on my knees and held out my hand to her. Before I knew it she was letting me pet her and I slowly brought out a carrier from the car—finally she would be off the streets.

As I gently moved mom into the carrier, my hand brushed her hind quarters. To my surprise, she was a he! I couldn't believe it, "this whole time I thought you were a mom," I said to *him*, but you're a daddy, and a good one at that!

When I finally had him in the car, I wondered what happened to mom. Maybe she was killed and he took over with their kittens. I looked at him in the carrier as he ate and purred at the same time, I said to him, "I'm going to call you Mr. Mom." To this day he thinks he's everybody's daddy, I know he's my big daddy.

The kittens were placed, and Mr. Mom, well let's just say...now I'm his mom.

**Alley Animals 410-823-0899 or  
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*Alley Animals, Inc.*

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