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aim
animal issues
magazine



"Skye" by Athlyn Horswill

**A Second
Chance**

The Responsible Animal Care Society

TR  **CS**

President's Message: Growth of the Humane Movement

In recent news from Ireland, cruel fur farming has been banned and will be phased out within three years. But that's not the only announcement from the Emerald Isle. According to an upcoming Irish animal welfare bill, which will adopt the principles and five freedoms set out in the Scottish Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006, stag hunting will become history and the culling of badgers will be replaced with more effective and humane methods of control.

Earlier this year, the European Parliament voted to ban imports of seal products from Canada. Endorsed overwhelmingly by the European Union assembly, the bill included a statement that commercial seal hunting, notably in Canada, is "inherently inhumane". Although the Canadian government has vowed to fight this ban by requesting World Trade Organization consultations, we are encouraged by staunch overseas support.

These colossal steps illustrate the movement of society, however slow it may seem at times, toward a more humane world for our non-human friends. All is not bleak in Canada either. We were amazed to hear that on November 6, 2009, the House of Commons passed a motion for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW), and the support for the initiative was unanimous. While we're unsure how this will impact upon the actual practice of protecting animals in our country, it is certainly a step in the right direction and ought to pave the way for modernization of our federal anti-cruelty statutes, which are long-overdue for revision. Consider this statement from Liberal MP Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest): "...the declaration is an agreement among people and nations to recognize that animals are sentient, suffer, have welfare needs, and to ultimately end animal cruelty worldwide" (Private Members' Business). The final outcome, an overwhelming display of support for animals, was groundbreaking. Canada is the first North American country to have expressed support for the UDAW.

Thanks to all of you who make the time to contact your legislators about these important issues as they arise. Your willingness to take action can help pave the way toward positive changes for animals.

On a local level, the TRACS Compassion Fund continues to assist low-income citizens with the cost of veterinary care. Often a cherished companion animal is the only family that an elderly or disabled person has, and we have observed that in many cases, day-to-day care and feeding is not an issue. However, when illness or injury occurs and bills mount high, the situation can become unmanageable. That's when TRACS strives to help, and our efforts have kept companion animals healthy and numerous families together. Additionally, our Compassion Fund assists homeless and at-risk animals. Please take a few minutes to read "A Second Chance", beginning on page three of this newsletter.

**For the animals,
Sinikka Crosland**

New Arrival!

Congratulations to amazing TRACS volunteers Brian, Robyn and Evan on the birth of Roan West Livingstone on November 8, 2009. Welcome, Roan!

A Second Chance

Miracles do happen when we really want them to. Consider a compassionate, dedicated group of people absolutely determined to achieve what appears to be impossible, and that unreachable star becomes close enough to touch.

This is the story of over 100 cats and other animals salvaged from death by two Alberta organizations—Pound Rescue (Okotoks) and Persian Dreams and Canine Themes (Medicine Hat). Who would have thought that a small handful of people could accomplish the rescue of so many animals from a neglectful situation? But happen it did, through sheer will power and networking. This is the letter that TRACS and others received—the letter that “got the ball rolling”:

*Dear fellow animal guardians and rescue groups,
I am writing this e-mail out of desperation. Yesterday I found out about 64 cats that have less than 2 weeks to find placement before they are killed at a shelter. I realize that most organizations are always at capacity but I figured it is worth a shot. My hope is that if multiple groups could take in just a couple than maybe we could save them all....*



Photo credit: Persian Dreams and Canine Themes

The number of cats actually turned out to be far more than originally thought, and the condition of many of them was appalling. TRACS responded by taking four cats under our wing. We encountered respiratory infections, poor dental health, wounds, runny eyes, matted coats, diarrhea, and socialization issues. The thinnest animal was described by one observer as “skin hanging on bone”. Thus far they have seen the veterinarian as well as the groomer. More visits to the veterinary clinic are pending as we seek to resolve dental issues and get them all sterilized. Three of the cats are Himalayans, and one a domestic shorthaired Torti. While they prefer not to be handled, many are surprisingly friendly. All four cats will be up for adoption in the future.

As for the neglectful home, charges could be pending. TRACS is providing testimony on the condition of the cats when they arrived, backed up by veterinary and groomers’ records. Other rescue organizations and foster homes are doing likewise.

To donate to Pound Rescue for the care of numerous rescued cats, please send a cheque or money order to: Box 73, Site 2, RR2, Okotoks, Alberta T1S 1A2. If you are interested in reading more about this incredible story, visit: <http://poundrescue.com/>.

TRACS also welcomes donations for the cats in our care. We are thrilled to have been able to help provide these animals with a second chance, and we commend Pound Rescue and Persian Themes and Canine Themes for the incredible job they've done in salvaging the lives of so many.

Update on Rabbit Rescue Program

The rescue of free-roaming, abandoned rabbits in Kelowna began as a race to save lives, but has since grown into a humane management program that could prove pivotal in B.C. and potentially the rest of Canada.

Prior to receiving the city contract in April 2009, TRACS had already rescued hundreds of rabbits. We had undertaken, without city funding, a program that involved humane trapping, sterilization, adoption, and building roomy pens onto privately-owned land. At this time, more than 650 rabbits are under the wing of TRACS--in foster homes and in sanctuary pens. The city is paying \$11,500 for sterilization during a one year period, or the equivalent of about 165 spays and neuters. Kelowna City Council supports the extension of our contract for another year. Meanwhile, TRACS is working hard at trying to raise the rest of the funds required to sterilize, feed and house the rabbits in our care. Private donors and organizations have extended generous financial assistance even as the program moves forward into its next crucial phase: creating a humane model for other communities to use as a resource.

In early October, a representative from the University of Victoria visited a TRACS bunny sanctuary in order to assess its usefulness within a humane rabbit management program. The university is currently in the process of reviewing and considering non-lethal methods of dealing with rabbits roaming on its lands. TRACS was pleased to share information with the school, and to support the concept of humane rabbit management in B.C.'s capitol city.

Rabbit numbers on the streets of Kelowna have dropped drastically since spring 2008. Sadly, part of this was due to the slaughter that occurred in the city that year. However, more rabbits have now been salvaged by TRACS than were killed through lethal management methods by the previous contractor. TRACS' humane trappers are continuing to remove the last of the bunnies from dangerous urban roads--with the hope that the coming winter will spell the end of Kelowna's bunny challenges. The city also boasts a new bylaw prohibiting the sale of unsterilized rabbits.

The development of a humane rabbit management model to be shared with other communities has begun. TRACS will be offering advice and information, including a cost-effective pen design package, to non-profit animal protection organizations wishing to implement an effective rabbit rescue program. To learn more, please e-mail tracs@shaw.ca or visit www.tracs-bc.ca.

Rabbit Advocates of Kelowna

...a message from Bob & Marie Sherman

Love Rabbits?

We sure do! We have a house rabbit and did extensive volunteer work with Oregon Humane Society in Portland, as well as a group known as Rabbit Advocates in the Portland area. Upon moving to Kelowna in May, we became involved with looking after the sanctuary bunnies and helping in other ways. We admire, and in fact are in awe over, the huge rabbit rescue mission undertaken by TRACS. We think there could be a need for a sub-group or group for "rabbit people" in the Kelowna area. The goal would be to "Promote the Welfare of Domestic Rabbits." Priorities could be such items as public education, outreach adoption, and bringing together rabbit people once a month for information sharing. A new group would be a forum for rabbit people, and a way to expand upon the good work that has been done.

Our friends at Rabbit Advocates in Portland are very supportive of the concept of "Rabbit Advocates of Kelowna." We've had some informal talks and there is the potential to have a section on their website and use the logo! Please take a look at www.rabbitadvocates.org to see what this wonderful, caring group has done, and what our potential could be.

We'd like to have a meeting after the holidays, sort of a steering committee, to see what interest there is in the concept, and chart a direction. Other than a monthly meeting, time commitment would probably depend on what the group wanted to undertake. We're thinking a Sunday afternoon for the initial get-together would suit most people best. If interested, please contact us. E-Mail is best, at rabadvbc@telus.net; or phone (250)491-1800 if that is not convenient. Also, feel free to give us a call if you just want to talk about the idea.

Best Binkies!
Bob & Marie

Excerpts from "Penny's Letter" by Bob Sherman:

"I was part of our family for two years, and had the most wonderful life any bunny could imagine. This happened because of the strong bond that can form between humans and bunny rabbits, and was the case with us. I'm writing this for us to reflect upon our life together, and to also describe this bond for others, so that they might understand..."

"We all enjoyed our time together. I even figured out that my lettuce, cilantro, and parsley came from a big box in the kitchen. I figured out that if I just sat by the big box, you would notice me, and bring me my food from the big box. Who says bunny parents can't be trained?"

Please visit the following webpage to read, in its heart-warming, soul-stirring entirety, Penny's letter to her human family: <http://tracs-bc.ca/penny.html>.

For Jake's Sake

This summer we had the wonderful experience of getting to know Jake, a rescued, hand-raised marmot. Incredibly personable and endearing, Jake thrived in the skilled hands of her caregivers, who had salvaged many birds and small mammals in the past. However, the day came when her foster family decided that Jake would be happier with her own kind. She had grown healthy and strong, and was ready for integration into the wild.

Jake was relocated to a privately-owned acreage in B.C.'s interior that is home to marmots as well as other wildlife. Upon release, she first sought shelter near a woodpile that was close to human habitation. The property owners provided Jake with strawberries, carrots and other tidbits that were familiar food sources to her. There was no shortage of wild vegetation either.



Photo credit: Noreen Nawrocki

In no time at all, though, Jake was spotted in the company of another young marmot. Clearly enjoying her new-found freedom and the opportunity to interact socially with members of her own species, she began her new journey in the wild.

**BUYERS
BEWARE!**

Are You Purchasing Dog and Cat Fur for Christmas?

Over 2 million dogs and cats are brutally slaughtered for their fur every year in China and other Southeast Asian countries. Sometimes skinned alive, many of these animals can even be stolen pets. With China being Canada's second largest trading partner, our nation supports this barbaric practice by importing dog and cat fur into the country. There are currently no laws in Canada that require fur items to be labelled. Cat and dog fur is almost never labelled and people are not even aware that they are purchasing products that originate from companion animals.

Cat and dog fur can be found in items such as the lining for gloves, boots, coats, hats, and even toys for pets. Fur can be dyed and cleverly arranged on an item of apparel, making it nearly impossible to tell the origin. Consumers should also beware of products boasting a "faux fur" label, as these items have been shown in some cases to contain real fur.

On September 17, 2009, Winnipeg Liberal MP Anita Neville tabled a Private Members Bill aimed at banning cat and dog fur products in Canada. Bill C-439 was first introduced in 2006, but was later dissolved when the 2008 election was called. "Products that use cat and dog fur products are banned in countries all over the world," stated Neville. "Yet these products remain legal and can be imported, exported and sold in Canada without any labels; this is a deplorable practice and must be stopped."

Please help bring an end to this horrific practice by not buying any type of fur! Contact your Member of Parliament and ask for staunch support of Bill C-439.

Hard copy letters can be sent to: Hon. Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2.

--Lori Kuntz

References: Winnipeg Humane Society, Fall 2009 newsletter; Fur-Bearer Defenders, www.banlegholdtraps.com.

To the Editor

Editor's note: This excellent piece of writing was originally a speech delivered to a school by Grade 5 student Teanna Pukanich, on March 12, 2009.

I bet everyone here has seen those cute, fluffy little bunnies in the pet store at Easter time. However, have you stopped to think about what sometimes happens to them when they aren't so tiny and new anymore? While there are many caring and responsible rabbit owners out there, there may be just as many irresponsible ones, too.

A huge example of this is the over-population of rabbits in Kelowna, B.C. There are an estimated two thousand feral rabbits running free. Feral means they have escaped domestication and have returned partly or wholly to their wild state. This problem was entirely man made. The irresponsible pet owners just let them go free, because perhaps they were too much work or the excitement wore off.

I've seen this situation last summer when we went to Kelowna to buy our boat. We went on a walk and we saw rabbits everywhere, on sidewalks, under car dealership cars, and on boulevards. It was like we were in Rabbit Land! When we went to leave for home, we asked Dad to let us out of the truck to look at the bunnies one last time. That's when we first saw "her"! The "her" I'm talking about was a bunny. We found her on Enterprise Way in Kelowna. She was hopping around eating grass near the sidewalk.

We noticed her leg wasn't quite right. It stuck out straight as an arrow. Yet she managed just fine getting around. She sniffed my finger as I put it out towards her. I went to touch her and she ran. She was a fast little thing, even with her strange leg. My mom, sister and I eventually cornered her and Mom scooped her up. We brought her back to where my dad was sitting in the truck. We all asked, "Can we keep her?" as my mom held her up to him. Dad said, "I'm so glad I stopped to let you look at the bunnies!"

We went to the pet store and bought her some food. The deal was—we bring her home if we find her an animal shelter. We agreed, hoping that Dad would change his mind and let us keep her. We took her to a vet, who found out that her leg was fractured in two places and healed backwards by itself.

Eventually, in two weeks' time, Dad gave in to all of our begging! Now this homeless abandoned bunny, Bowny, lives with us in the lap of luxury.

Lucky for her we came along! Soon after, we read in the newspaper that Kelowna was killing all of those cute fluffy little bunnies. They were having them shot to try and control the population there. How sorrowful for the rabbits.

Kelowna now has three new bylaws, to help stop this problem:

1. People aren't allowed to feed the rabbits.
2. You're not allowed to sell them unless they are sterilized.
3. You must have a cage or enclosure for them.

In closing, I'd like to ask people to think long and hard before getting a new pet, including rabbits. Read about the animal you want before you get it, because they're a big responsibility to have in your life. So make sure it's the right choice for the helpless animal's sake.

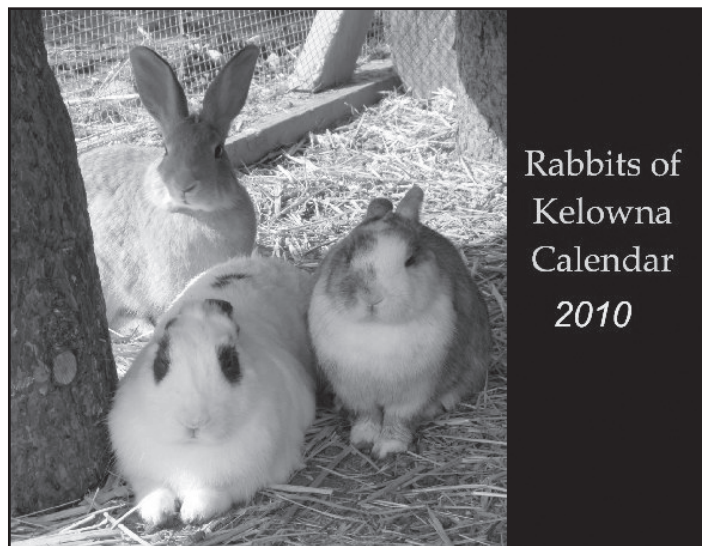


Bowny

2010 Rabbits of Kelowna Calendar Available

This year's calendar is filled with playful pictures of bunnies who have been saved off the streets of Kelowna and have been recently released into one of our sanctuaries.

All proceeds from calendar sales will go directly to food, shelter and veterinary costs for our wonderful bunnies.



E-mail fundraising@tracs-bc.ca for information on where you can purchase one, or call 250-768-4803.

Memorial Page

To my Aunt Judy
From Dolly Werts on her 19th birthday,
May 29, 2007

*Hold me in your arms, Mum
And kiss my face and eyes
Pretend I'm still your kitten
Even though we realize
I'm getting very frail now
My sight is very poor
My bones are rather weary
And my days left are unsure
So hold me tight and think
about our 19 years together
The love we shared, the memories
Through all kinds of weather
(It doesn't get much better)
It's now I really need to feel
Your reassuring touch
As life is slowly leaving me
And your love means so much.
Please hold me close and always know*

*Your Dolly really loves you so
And will forever be your friend
Until time ends.*

"China" Dolly Werts



Dolly Werts gone Feb./08 just before her 20th birthday

Memorial Contributions

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Helen Schiele | In precious memory of Cindy-Lu |
| Judy Werts | Remembering beloved Dolly & Cole |
| Emily Stuparyk | SuzyBear, forever loved, forever missed, forever remembered... |



Cole Werts passed over Rainbow Bridge Nov./08 at 16+ years of age

In Loving Memory

TRACS extends our deepest condolences to Brigitte Norman on the passing of Harold Colbourne on October 5, 2009. Harold was a wonderful friend of the animals, and we will remember him always.

TRACS would like to thank our wonderful supporters and volunteers
for your amazing contributions toward the protection of animals.

May your holiday season abound with peace and joy.



Join TRACS....

Help us continue our crucial work for
the animals—become a member and
receive our quarterly newsletter.



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I am enclosing the following (please check):

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Thanks from the animals!