

# IRHS and 4 Paws News

Serving King William, King &  
Queen and Essex Counties

February 2018



## A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY TO EVERYONE AND OUR FURRY FRIENDS

LOVE IS IN THE AIR! FEBRUARY IS THE MONTH OF LOVE – IT IS **NATIONAL SPAY/NEUTER MONTH**. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT IRHS IS VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT.

Indian Rivers Humane Society is a big proponent for spaying and neutering your pets. There are more homeless animals than there are homes that want them. Millions of healthy, adoptable cats and dogs are euthanized because there are not enough homes to place them in. That is why it is so important to have your pet spayed or neutered. Not only does it prevent unwanted litters, but it is also healthier for the animal and can curb a lot of behavioral issues.

In addition to altering those animals we adopt out, we are proactive in helping people spay or neuter their pets they obtained from other sources. We also assist caretakers with feral cat colonies. We need to stop the cycle of unwanted litters. It is a Virginia State Law that all animals adopted from municipal shelter, rescue groups and humane Societies must be spayed or neutered.

Every month we provide transportation from the King William Regional Animal Shelter to Barron's Surgery in Mechanicsville. The surgery cost is about the lowest in the area. If you need to have your pet Spay or Neutered please contact the Regional Animal Shelter at 804-769-4983 and someone there would be happy to assist you.

Our goal is to stop unwanted litters filling up the county shelters. We want you to help us, which in turn helps the whole community. If your pet needs to be altered, call us! We will work with you in any way possible to help. An altered animal is healthier, better behaved and happy.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Connie

## Visit Us At Our Upcoming Events

**Transfer to Spay/Neuter – RAS**  
to Barron's, Wednesday,  
February 14<sup>th</sup>

**IRHS Monthly Meeting –**  
Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm-  
8:00pm, Tony & George's  
Restaurant, West Point



4 Paws Thrift  
801 Main Street  
West Point, VA 23181  
(804) 843-2902

Weds, Thurs & Fridays  
10:00am - 5:00pm  
Saturdays  
10:00am – 3:00pm



# ALL THINGS DOGS

February is Spay & Neuter Awareness Month and

Spay & Neuter  
Awareness Month

Responsible  
Pet Owners  
Month

Responsible Pet Owners Month. Of course, these go hand in hand. Responsible Owners know the importance of spaying and neutering their pets.

Some of the benefits of neutering your dog are:

**Curbing aggression.** They are less aggressive, less likely to fight, less likely to mark territories, and less likely to bite.



**Safety.** Dogs are less likely to roam, escape or wander, less likely to get hit by cars. Research indicates 80% of dogs hit by cars are unaltered males.



**Health.** Altered pets generally live longer, healthier lives. This includes cancer prevention. A dog sterilized before six months of age have an almost zero chance they will develop prostate, testicular, uterine or ovarian cancer.

## DOG CANCER PREVENTION

PREVENTION  
IS BETTER  
THAN CURE

**Curbing anxiety.** Some veterinarians believe unaltered dogs suffer from nervous behavior such as excessive licking, scratching and other unhealthy/undesirable behaviors.



Sterilization does not affect or change your dog's personality, and they do not miss their sexuality or worry about lost parts. It is a simple procedure, and the younger the dog, the simpler the surgery and the faster the recovery.

Most importantly, spayed or neutered dogs don't produce unwanted litters. Every year approximately

8 million abandoned animals are taken to public shelters where many are euthanized. The cost of the spay/neuter surgery is less than the cost of an animal taken to the shelter and euthanized.



If your dog needs to be spayed/neutered, please take advantage of our transfer to the low-cost spay/neuter clinic. Help us help the community by preventing unwanted animals. We and your dog will thank you.

Anne

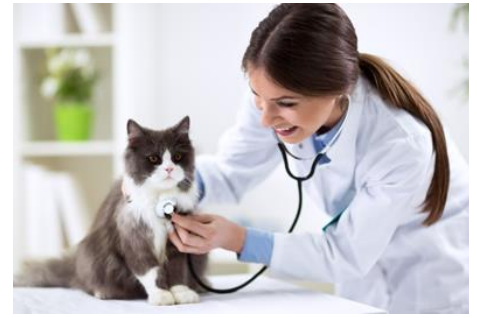


# ALL THINGS CATS

February is **National Cat Health Month**. In recognition of this, it's time to schedule your cat's annual veterinary checkup. Taking your cat to the veterinarian for yearly check-ups helps ensure she stays in the best of health.

## Take Your Cat in for Her Annual Well Check

A yearly checkup is one of the best ways to keep your cat in her best possible health. These annual visits allow your veterinarian to notice any changes in your cat's condition from year to year, and help you catch potentially serious issues early.



## Keep Your Cat's Vaccinations Up-to-Date

At your cat's annual exam, your vet will review any necessary booster shots and updates to your cat's vaccination schedule. These regular inoculations will help prevent your cat from contracting serious illnesses if he is exposed to other cats.

## Neuter Your Cat

One of the best ways to maintain your cat's good health is to have him or her altered ("fixed"). These procedures prevent many illnesses and conditions related to a cat's reproductive organs as well as help eliminate many unwanted behaviors. The procedures also prevent unwanted litters and help reduce animal overpopulation.



## Monitor Your Cat's Weight

The life of an indoor cat can lead to lazy afternoons napping in the sun—and less time being active. Help your cat maintain a healthy weight by making playtime a regular part of his day. Interactive feeders, a rotation of interesting toys, even a feline companion can help get your cat moving. Get involved with playtime with wand toys, doing so strengthens the bond with your cat while he gets necessary exercise.

## Notice Any Changes in Your Cat's Litterbox Habits

Cats are quite adept at hiding signs of illness, but one place where early signs often show up is the litterbox. If your cat's litter habits change (he starts urinating more frequently or urinates inappropriately) or if you notice a change in the condition of the box contents, take your pet to the vet as soon as possible.



## Maintain a Regular Grooming Routine

You can create a strong, loving bond with your cat by brushing or combing her regularly. Such a routine also will help you identify any issues with her fur, skin and claws. Pay attention to any changes in your cat's coat or skin, such as dry or flaky patches of skin, red or irritated skin, missing fur, dull fur or reddened areas around her claws. If you see any of these signs, schedule a visit to the vet.

## Pay Attention to Your Cat's Dental Health

February is also **National Pet Oral Health Care Month** and **Pet Dental Health Month**. To stay healthy, your cat needs a complete and balanced diet that is specifically formulated for felines.

While it is not easy to brush a cat's teeth regular teeth cleaning and exams are an important component of your pet's overall health. Your vet will check your cat's teeth at its annual exam.



## Feed a High-Quality Diet

A high-quality food specially formulated to meet the specific nutritional requirements of your cat's age and lifestyle also can help your cat maintain a healthy weight. Treats can be part of your cat's life, too, but remember that the calories from treats can add up quickly.

## In Memory of Jackie Sykes

Last year, Indian Rivers Humane Society lost one of our original members, Jackie Sykes. Jackie and her husband Steve lived in King William County and were invaluable to this organization. Jackie served on the Board as President and later as Secretary. She fostered animals at her home and worked adoption stands among many other things.

On January 3, a small group of members who had known Jackie from the early days gathered with Steve and his family for dinner. At this time, we shared stories of our time with Jackie and the positive impact she had on each of us and our organization.

Years ago, Jackie thought to include Indian Rivers Humane Society in her estate planning. Steve presented us with Jackie's gift to us: a check for \$50,000.00! This monumental and generous gift will certainly help us as we continue to help our neighbors with spay/neuter and as we continue to help find homes for unwanted animals.

We are all grateful to Jackie for her years of hard work and for this gift to help us continue her work. Steve and their family will always be part of the Indian Rivers family as well.



L to R: Clara Sykes, Angela Sykes, Charlotte Sykes, Steve Sykes, Jr.; Carter Sykes; Steve Sykes; John Jensen, Jean Wightman, Betty Jensen, Anne Mason, Holly Hamel, Phyllis Jones, Kelly Cooke, Jeanne Smith, Kent Cooke. (photo by Gene Campbell)

For those of you who missed the article in a recent issue of **The Tidewater Review**, here it is...

## **Groups address feral cat populations**

**Members of the Indian Rivers Humane Society are winning daily battles and losing others.**

The group sees success in West Point and more populated areas as they fight against feral cat overpopulation. In rural counties, however, the problem is harder to solve. The humane society controls the West Point feral cat population with a trap, spay/neuter and release program. The society serves the town of West Point, King William, King and Queen and Essex counties, but finds the counties' feral cat populations hard to constrain.

Joan Coven, a humane society trapper, volunteer and cat foster, said efforts started in 2010 with the Cat Caretakers Alliance when there was an overpopulation of homeless, or "community" cats, in the area. "It started because some people had about 20 cats around their house and neighbors started complaining," Coven said. "That's how we

got started, because the town's reaction was to — which is not unusual — trap them and euthanize them, which is not fair to the cats." The alliance then joined the humane society in 2011 and expanded their feral cat program, Coven said.

### **Controlling colonies**

"The whole point of this program is to help with the unwanted kitten population, which then turns into a cat population," Coven said. "We see it working in the two controlled colonies that we have. One has gone from seven to two and the other has gone from 12 to seven. You have some die off or run away, but there haven't been any new ones." Coven said that killing the cats creates a vacuum effect. "Other cats come in and fill in because the food supply stays the same," Coven said. "But if you decrease the population by neutering and spaying, a colony almost takes care of itself as far as not letting any new cats in."

The program has treated more than 1,000 feral cat cases, although there's still a lot of work to be done, Coven said. "A lot of that is colonies of 20 or 30 cats that are in these rural counties," Coven said. "Animal control gets called and people say 'We have a bunch of cats here that we don't want.' If we could just tell people that we could stop the population and

hold it where it is, then that would work. Sadly, in most cases, they will get euthanized."

Coven said that one potential solution to the rural feral cat population is to get them fixed and make them into barn cats, which keep small rodents and unwanted vermin out of barns and away from livestock and crops. "If there was a big demand for barn cats, what we would do is take some that probably aren't going to run away and put them in a large cage for three weeks," Coven said. "But some farmers aren't willing to do that. They would feed them there until they know that's where their food is coming from. They can be safe from the elements and not in people's homes and become barn cats."

### **Starting the process**

Coven said that if someone wants to keep a feral cat around and get them fixed, to start the process by calling their cat hotline at 804-885-3109.

"A trapper would then go out and assess the situation," Coven said. "Once we trap them we take them to a vet clinic, we work with the Tri-county Animal Hospital. They get spayed/neutered, then receive a rabies shot, flea treatment and an overall inspection."

Feral cats that get spayed/neutered also get an ear clip while under anesthesia, which is the

universal sign that they have been fixed, Coven said.

When it comes to small kittens, Coven said they are eventually put up for adoption.

"We need more fosters for all kinds of things," Coven said. "Especially in kitten season, which used to be just the spring, although now it seems like it's all year round. I had 13 in my bedroom at one time."

### **Secret colonies**

The feral cats in the program are cared for by the humane society in two locations, where they get shelter and food, Coven said. "We don't want people to know where we keep the feral cat colonies because we are afraid people are just going to dump more cats there, which would upset the cats already there," Coven said. "Having the colony keeps the cats contained at the edge of the town rather than having them in town, so people don't complain."

Funding for the program is provided to the organization in various ways, Coven said.

"We pay for this program by donations and some profits from the 4 Paws Thrift store," said Coven. "We also do fundraisers, like sell Brunswick stew, a golf tournament, a wine and cheese night and a silent auction. We request what we need from the thrift store and that goes

into the main fund at IRHS, which covers a lot of things including dogs, cats and supplies." The town of West Point also provides the humane society with \$2,000 annually from the town budget to support the success of the trap, neuter/spay and release program, Coven said.

Coven stresses that people in rural areas should not hesitate to call them and get their feral cat colony under control.

### **Shrinking population**

Lauri Betts, director of the Regional Animal Shelter, said the number of feral cats from West Point coming to the shelter has dramatically decreased, although they still get a lot from King William and King and Queen. "Since the trap, neuter/spay and release program, the town hasn't been too much of a problem," Betts said. "We still get a lot out in the county where cats come and go. People don't think anything of it and they think it's OK for it to be around to kill mice and whatever. "But then they go into heat, they get pregnant, they have their litters and their litters grow up feral and it just starts the process all over again," Betts said. "It is still a problem. Really the only solution is to have them spayed and neutered."

King William County Deputy and Animal Control Officer Kate Cheney has

worked with animal control for five years and said animal control first tries to find out if the cat has an owner or if it's truly feral. "Occasionally, they will show up at someone's house and reproduce, unfortunately," Cheney said. "People think they are doing them a favor by feeding them, but there's a lot more to caring for an animal than just feeding them."

Cheney also said that allowing them to reproduce spreads diseases and increases the chances of birth defects caused by inbreeding. "They can start having babies at six months of age and can have them every two months, so they reproduce very quickly," Cheney said.

Cheney praises the humane society for its feral cat population efforts and recommends the trap, neuter/spay and release program if it's an option for the complainants. "We will do that as long as they get the adequate care, because we have to go by the code of Virginia," Cheney said. Cheney estimates that half of the feral cats she deals with are saved and adopted, while the other half are humanely euthanized. "If they are adults, or 2 or 3-years-old, they've never had contact with people and they just aren't tamable, we will euthanize them at that point," Cheney said. "Sometimes they have illnesses or diseases, but no

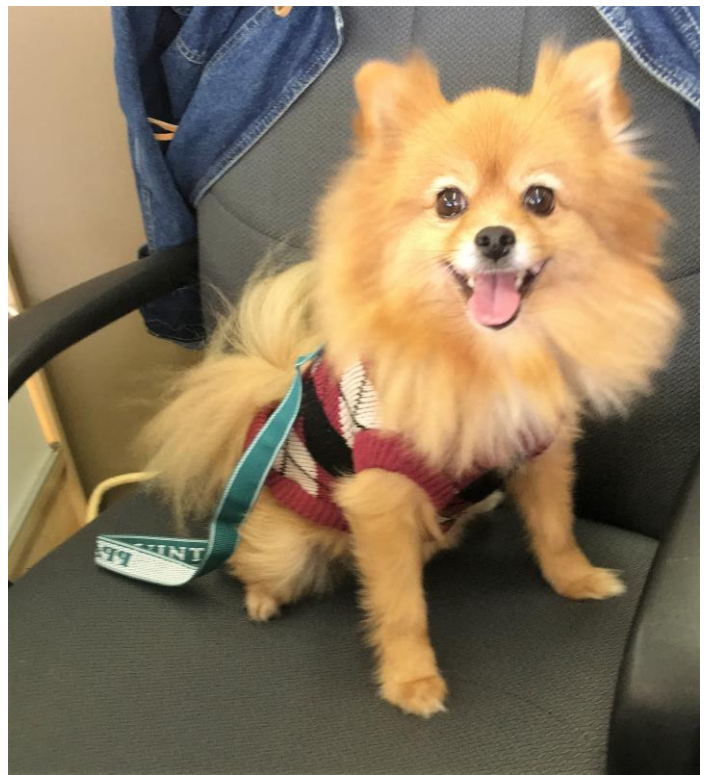


one can handle them, so they can't bring them to a vet." "It's just not practical to think that you can save all of them, there's just too many," Cheney said. "But the ones that may be adoptable are saved."

Want to know more  
Indian Rivers Humane  
Society  
Call: 804-885-3109

## HELP!

Do you have 30 minutes a week you can spare? We are looking for another person to help feed the feral cat colony behind the Food Lion in Central Garage. The caretakers have lost a helper, who normally fed them on Tuesday (if another day of the week would suite you better, that can be arranged). If you can commit to helping once a week, please message us and we will put you in contact with the colony caretakers. Thank you!



Madison recently went to work at 4Paws Thrift for the day with her mom, Jackie! She can't run the register because she has no thumbs, but she's an excellent greeter!

## Note from the Newsletter Editor

Have you adopted a furry family member from IRHS/4Paws? We'd love to share their story and picture in our monthly newsletter.

Have something to share with other newsletter readers? We'd love to read about it.

Send your story/pictures to [kathaurand@aol.com](mailto:kathaurand@aol.com) As space allows, we will include them.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kathy



## Looking for Love for Valentines



Thelma and Louise are sisters and are a bonded pair who must be adopted together. They are great with kids, cats and dogs. They love attention and snuggling with people. For more information, contact Paula at 804-815-3665

4 Paws Thrift is currently having a store-wide sale. Stop by and take advantage of low prices on many great items. All clothes are \$1.00 each !!!

# 50% OFF

# STOREWIDE



# Brunswick Stew Sale Update

We made and sold 429 quarts of Brunswick Stew on January 20th. Thanks to everyone who purchased a quart or more. Thanks to the KW Ruritans who allowed us to use their facility. And thanks to our volunteers who helped with the preparations, stirring the pot, packaging up the quarts, and selling & delivering: Carole, Gloria W., Connie, Gina, Lesa & Barry, John & Betty, Donna & Jon, Jeanne, Margie & Eamon, Gloria D., Gabby, Jean and Anne.



If you were looking for leftovers, there weren't any. So next year, be sure to order a couple more quarts. We make the stew every January.

## Intruder Kitty

Nicknamed "Intruder Kitty", this sweet cat was found in Aylett a couple of months ago.

He has been neutered and has had his rabies shot. He is a sweet, scared kitty. He was someone's pet once upon a time.

He stays outside yet is not afraid to venture inside for a short period of time.

He is very scared of the dog; however, he is not too bothered by other cats.

His right eye is damaged. The extent of the damage is unknown.



Please call Michelle at 804-306-0190 if you can open your heart and home to this lost kitty.



Available for Adoption from TECAS (Tappahannock-Essex County Animal Shelter)

804-443-0726



Ripley



Tim



Pippa



Jax



Joshua

Available for Adoption from RAS (Regional Animal Shelter)

804-769-4983



Cocoa



Caroline



Snowy



Skates



Nitro



Parka



Indy



Sassy



# FEBRUARY PET HOLIDAYS

**NATIONAL  
TRAIN  
YOUR  
DOG  
MONTH**

»»»»»»»» NATIONAL ««««««««  
PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH



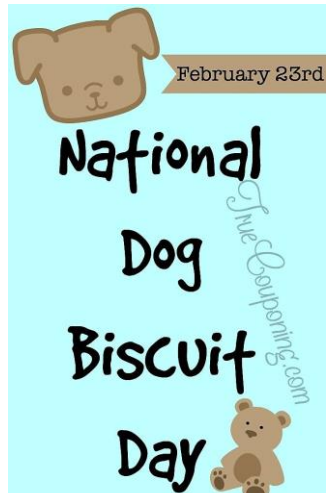
**February is National  
Cat Health Month**



**February is National Prevent  
A Litter Month**



**Prevent a litter.  
Fix your critter!**



**February is Be A Responsible Pet Owner Month**

**February is Unchain a Dog Month and  
February 7-14 is Have a Heart for Chained  
Dogs Week by the Dogs Deserve Better Organization**



**World Spay Day AND Spay Day USA  
February 27<sup>th</sup>**

*Happy Spay Day!* *Happy Spay Day!* *Happy Spay Day!* *Squirrel!*  
*Happy Spay Day!*



**Homeless pets wish every day could be Spay Day.**

