



## Returning To Its Roots

*The SPCA leads effort for the humane treatment of Westchester's most vulnerable equine population: Rental horses*



**By: Leslie Mantrone**

In 1883, Ossining resident Mary Dusenberry was moved by the sight of work horses struggling to deliver heavy loads of coal up the hilly roads of Sing Sing. Her concern led to the creation of the SPCA of Westchester in Briarcliff Manor, the only humane society in Westchester County empowered by the State of New York to enforce laws relating to animal cruelty.

Today, more than 120 years after Dusenberry's groundbreaking advocacy, concern for the treatment of Westchester's equine population remains a top priority of the SPCA.



The SPCA renewed its commitment to protecting the health and welfare of Westchester's large and small animals when in April 2005 it hired Paula Kennedy as the full-time head of its Humane Law Enforcement (HLE) Department. Kennedy, a licensed veterinary technician and attorney, is uniquely qualified to redirect the focus of the department and to direct its expansion. Working with limited funding - the SPCA receives no federal, state or county funds - she has already recruited and trained a part-time volunteer staff of three, with three more in training.

"Westchester is a great place to be a horse," Kennedy said recently, "unless you're a rental horse." Since joining the SPCA, Kennedy has received only a handful of equine-related complaints, each of which turned out to be unfounded upon investigation. (The HLE staff includes members with horse expertise. Kennedy also consults with North Salem based veterinarian Elizabeth Kilgallon on large animal complaints.)

This past summer, however, Kennedy received a number of calls detailing concerns about "rental horses" -- horses rented out by the hour to members of the public. Callers questioned whether these animals were receiving adequate rest and hydration, especially given the hot summer temperatures. Kennedy discovered that Westchester has no laws protecting rental horses and has to rely on the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law general cruelty statute - dating back to 1883 - which is vague and doesn't provide her and her colleagues with the necessary legal authority to address in a timely, proactive manner the adverse conditions under which these animals were laboring.

"In the spirit of not reinventing the wheel, I got in touch with a fellow attorney on the Westchester County Bar Association's

Committee on Animal Law who was instrumental in drafting the New York City's Administrative Code sections which protect working horses, such as rental horses and carriage horses. We used this as the basis for the creation of a Westchester-specific set of protections tentatively entitled the 'Westchester County Rental Horse Licensing Law.'" If enacted, this law would regulate all aspects of the working and living conditions of rental horses, require owners to license their horses annually, provide the SPCA and other agents of the law with access to animals' health and work records, and allow agents to inspect stables at will.

"This legislation would provide the SPCA with the tools we need to ensure the health and safety of Westchester County's most vulnerable equine population - rental horses," said SPCA Chairperson Deborah Mehne. "It's incredible to think that conditions for today's equine population in Westchester could have anything in common with conditions horses faced in the late 1800s. Unfortunately, we're finding that parallels really do exist. The SPCA and our Department of Humane Law Enforcement are passionate about the need to change that."

Kennedy and her staff work hard to forge effective working relationships with all of Westchester's law enforcement agencies as well as the County District Attorney's office. (HLE staff members, who are being recruited from the fields of law enforcement and veterinary technology, must undergo over 40 hours of study in investigating animal cruelty complaints as well as New York State peace officer certification. Once peace officer status has been obtained, trainees must spend a full year of field training to hone their skills under the watchful eye of Kennedy or members of her senior staff.)

The SPCA has set up a 24-hour hot line that is monitored seven days a week. Members of the public can call to report suspected incidents of animal abuse and neglect. The number is (914) 941-7797 and all calls are confidential.

The SPCA of Westchester has established a fund dedicated to the costs associated with equine cruelty cases in Westchester County. Donations to this fund directly subsidize these costs and will support the SPCA as it vigorously pursues and investigates allegations of abuse. Please call (914) 941-2894 ext. 19 to make a donation or visit [www.spc914.org](http://www.spc914.org). 🐾



## SAVE THE DATE

Save the Date for the  
6th Annual Top Hat & Tails  
benefit event!

October 14, 2006

Lyndhurst Castle  
Tarrytown, NY

Dogs and their people stepping out together for an enchanted evening of dinner and dancing to benefit the animals of Westchester County.



Save the Date! For Kids Only  
hosts Spring Into Action  
featuring fun family activities  
offered by the businesses  
along North State Rd. in  
Briarcliff. Help get SPCA  
animals adopted!

June 3, 2006  
12 - 4 p.m.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Below: Special thanks to Marissa Schneider pictured with Mom, Lynne Perman Schneider, for donating baskets filled with dog and cat goodies to the SPCA. Marissa, 13, used the beautifully crafted baskets as table centerpieces at her recent Bat Mitzvah. What a creative way to help SPCA animals!



## Colorful and Warm

A NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steve Diller

Spring is that time of the year where we all begin to thaw out. Somehow, Winter always seems to drag on longer than Spring or Summer. Pets very often do not get the same opportunities to play outside in the cold weather as they would in the warmer months. Many of us find it hard to endure that wicked cold wind while our dogs are blasting around in the snow.

Blue skies and sunshine are upon us leading the way towards much needed quality time with our furry friends. Spring truly enhances our desire to spend time with our pets much in the way Spring opens the petals on wild flowers. Walks in the park with our four legged friends are a joy for both of us. Those of you who do not have walking partners are invited to visit the SPCA and adopt one. We have life partners of every conceivable size, shape and color who are waiting for that chance to keep you company. The personalities of our population are both colorful and warm. I guarantee that your life will be enriched by the genuine love offered by the new addition to your family. Happy Spring.

Executive Director



Since October 2005, the SPCA of Westchester has taken in 48 dogs from Louisiana and Mississippi that were left homeless by Hurricane Katrina. Many of the dogs had been surrendered to local shelters as their owners attempted to get back on their feet, and others were strays found wandering and never claimed. Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the SPCA was able to relocate the dogs, provide veterinary care and adopt them into permanent and loving homes.

*Paw Prints* is published quarterly by the SPCA of Westchester, a 501(c)(3) humane organization located at 590 North State Road, Briarcliff Manor NY 10510. For information, please contact Shannon Laukhuf at (914) 941-2894 ext. 19.

**SPCA OF WESTCHESTER Hours:**  
Monday thru Saturday: 10am to 4pm  
Sunday: 1pm to 4pm  
[www.spcanyc.org](http://www.spcanyc.org)



## Pops Makes His Debut

By: **Lisa Weidner**

Alice Shanahan, SPCA's Volunteer Coordinator, posted the following note on the SPCA volunteer message board: "Wonderful, distinguished, older gentleman named Pops will be our first Golden Outreach cat. He loves to be held and snuggled, is very gentle and a great purrer. Looking for a companion to accompany him to Marymount Convent in Tarrytown on a weekly basis to visit elderly nuns." After reading it, I knew right away I would volunteer to be that companion. After all, cats and elderly people are two of my favorite things in the world.

So the next thing you know, I'm chauffeuring Pops on his first visit. A few long meows as we pull out of the SPCA parking lot fade as I play a meditative chanting CD. The old man calms down and looks content. You see, Pops is a new resident at the SPCA having been picked up as a stray and brought to the shelter. As often happens with old cats, he was never claimed, probably due to his advanced age which must be upwards of 17 or 18 years!

We arrive at Marymount Convent where signs announcing Pops visit grace the halls. The nuns are gathered in the recreation area eagerly awaiting their visitor. Pops makes his grand entrance. I look around the room. All eyes light up. A connection has been made. Pops fits right in, like a seasoned pro, settling down on everyone's lap, receiving treats, loving the attention. As the nuns interact with him, they share stories with me. We converse about cats they had growing up and memories they've carried with them over time. The visit seems to go by fast, and as Pops and I get ready to leave the nuns ask when we'll return. "See you next week. We will be back!"

As I drive back to the SPCA with this special cat, I replay the experience of our visit back in my head...I see the nuns smile, I hear Pops purr, I feel rewarded. Call it the magic of reciprocity, an energetic exchange, a reminder that we are all interconnected. And I am thankful to the Golden Outreach Program for advocating kindness to both animals and the elderly.



Pops enjoys the attention showered on him by the nuns of Marymount Convent.



Author Lisa Weidner and Pops bring smiles with them to their weekly pet therapy visits.

## Beating Boredom

By: **W.R. Shaw**

There is ample evidence that cats who spend their lives entirely indoors live much longer than their outdoor-only counterparts. But keeping an indoor cat happy as well as healthy means providing more than just good nutrition and regular veterinary care - you must also enrich your kitty's environment. Eliciting a cat's natural behaviors with hunting and foraging games can do wonders for your companion's well-being.

With a little creativity, you can keep your cat stimulated and interested, even in a small apartment and on a limited budget. And the good news is that enrichment research has shown that toys that are removed and then returned after several weeks regain much of their novelty; extend your enrichment budget by rotating your cat's toys regularly. Get started with a few of these feline friendly activities, but begin slowly and be sure to get a thumbs up from the kitty's veterinarian.

### Foraging Fun

Separate each day's food rations into small batches. Place the clusters around the house and then toss a few small treats in random directions. Not only will this encourage active foraging, it'll also keep kitty from scarfing down her food too quickly.

### Bird Watching

Attach a suction-cup bird feeder outside your cat's favorite window. Hungry birds will provide hours of entertainment. Don't place feeders too close to the ground as it leaves birds vulnerable to enemy attacks, and be sure to keep the window closed - excited cats can push right through screens.

### Mouse Trap

Leave a ping-pong ball in the bathtub and watch as your cat makes it sail around the curves during her hunt for the elusive orb.

### Crafty Cardboard

Use cardboard boxes as beds, dens, tunnels and mazes. Make a "busy box" by attaching small toys to short lengths of cord and suspending them from the ceiling of a large box. Cut window flaps in the den at various heights.



# VOLUNTEER VENUE

This Letter to the Editor was originally submitted to the Journal News by SPCA volunteer Lisa Jonassen of Cortlandt Manor. In this letter, Lisa eloquently expresses the hopes and dreams of all SPCA volunteers.

**The SPCA is indebted to its volunteers for helping every animal find a new and loving home.**

"How do you do it?" "Isn't it depressing?" "Don't you think they'd be better off dead?"

I am a volunteer at the SPCA of Westchester in Briarcliff Manor. When people say these things to me, my response includes a four-letter word - hope.

When I walk past the cages week after week and those eyes look up at me, they are always filled with hope. Hope that it's their turn for a walk. Hope that today will be the last time they have to go back in their cage. Hope that today is the day they will find the loving home they so desperately want.

What is hope, anyway? As Emily Dickinson said, "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all." Hope is a concept, a mindset and a choice. We as human beings can choose whether or not to be hopeful. During difficult times, hope is what gives us the internal fortitude and courage to face each day. Hope for a better tomorrow. Hope for peace. Hope for humanity. Hope for love and forgiveness.

For the dogs and cats at the shelter, of course, hope is not a choice. For them, it is a way of being. They are innately hopeful creatures. To see this hope is why I do not give up hope for them. Hope that someday they will all find loving homes, and that someday I can walk past empty cages.

Lisa Jonassen, Cortlandt Manor

One of the best ways the SPCA has of reaching into the community is through the special community events that staff and volunteers take part in all year long. Volunteers take animals when appropriate, and always have with them the photo album of all SPCA adoptable pets. Besides being lots of fun, community events also raise money for the shelter animals and spread the word about the SPCA's many services. It takes many, many volunteers to make these events a success. If you are interested in volunteering or have suggestions for other events, please contact Alice Shanahan at (914) 941-2894 X 28 or [ashanahanspca@optonline.net](mailto:ashanahanspca@optonline.net).

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- MAY 20**  
Pleasantville Day
- JUNE 3**  
"Spring Into Action"
- JUNE 4**  
Croton Summerfest
- JUNE 10**  
Ossining Village Fair
- JUNE 17 & 18**  
Clearwater Festival
- JULY 16**  
Italian Heritage Festival



You may have noticed the beautiful photos of SPCA shelter animals that have appeared in the pages of Paw Prints as well as on our website, [www.sPCA914.org](http://www.sPCA914.org). The talented duo responsible for these works of art are Steve Levitsky and Leslie Mantrone. Steve takes and edits the photos and Leslie gently coaxes with a range of noises to get the animals attention. Many who have seen Steve's photos comment that they look like painted portraits. We're very grateful to Steve and Leslie for giving up their Sunday afternoons to take these beautiful pictures which certainly have helped the SPCA adopt as many animals as possible.



## Looking for love...

SHEBA



**Sheba**, a 12-year-old female Pit Bull mix, has suffered a lifetime of neglect as a breeding dog used to constantly produce puppies. Having been seized by the SPCA, Sheba has had her last litter of pups and now needs someone to look after her. Years of poor medical care have left her with chronic ear infections and a large growth on her skull which is life threatening. This sweetheart needs a final home to spend her last days in peace.

MIDNIGHT



**Midnight** is a stunningly gorgeous cat. For all his sophisticated good looks you'd expect this neutered male to be a James Bond sort, but actually, you'd be wrong. Midnight is a let's-stay-in-and-cuddle-and-watch-movies-kind-of-guy. If you make the popcorn, he'll supply the purrs! Midnight loves other cats and gets along with some dogs. OK with young children.

TONY



**Tony** could be described as the quintessential cat: an intelligent and curious creature possessing a hint of the unknown and a dash of pixie all rolled up in an attractive tabby exterior. This neutered male longs for a family to love and a house to explore. He's fine with other cats and even with some dogs. OK with children aged 12 and older.

NUTTY



**Nutty** is fun in a furry package! This gorgeous, autumn-colored, one-year-old female came in as a stray. Playful and energetic in an endearingly kooky way. Kids older than 12 OK. Gets along with some cats but of her own choosing. We are not sure if she gets along with dogs.

LUCY & PHOEBE



**Lucy**, a Dalmatian, and **Phoebe**, a Catahoula Leopard Dog, are originally from New Orleans and have been together since they were pups. After Hurricane Katrina, their devastated owners were forced to surrender them to the local shelter having lost everything, including their home. Both 5 years old, these playful gals were slated for euthanasia, when the SPCA got the call last month that several dogs were in need of rescue from a local shelter in LA that was closing. The dogs were quickly transported to Briarcliff and are still waiting for a kind soul to adopt both of them together. Lucy and Phoebe are wonderful family pets, housebroken and playful. These dogs love everyone!

HENRY



**Henry** was just a puppy when he was seized by SPCA's Humane Law Enforcement Officers due to severe neglect. You see, as Henry grew, his previous owner never loosened the collar around his neck which eventually grew imbedded into his skin. The collar had to be surgically removed. Currently in a foster home, Henry is in need of a permanent family to love him. Playful and exuberant, this one-year-old shepherd mix is medium sized and will need TLC due to his very sad upbringing. Children over 12 OK, no cats.

GRANNY FIGS



**Granny Figs** is a very elderly feline who has lived outside most of her life. Now she needs a safe haven inside to live out her final days. With only 2 teeth Granny is looking forward to a lot of soft serve!

The SPCA of Westchester has a large selection of homeless dogs and cats, each waiting for a second chance. Come by the shelter or visit some of our adoptable animals on-line at: [www.SPCA914.org](http://www.SPCA914.org).



## *The Importance of Well Health Care Exams*

By Steve Diller, Executive Director and Yvonne Szacki, DVM

The SPCA of Westchester in accordance with the most current information available is changing our vaccination protocols (as offered to the public in our twice monthly vaccination clinics at the Simpson Clinic). In years past, veterinary universities and vaccine manufactures recommended yearly revaccination of dogs and cats. Dogs received rabies vaccine as well as vaccinations for other viral diseases such as distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza and parvo-virus. Cats also received rabies vaccine along with feline distemper, calici-virus, rhinotracheitis and panleukopenia vaccine. These medical names are commonly called the 5 in 1 vaccine, when 5 elements are incorporated into the single injection as to maximize on the disease coverage. At times pets are given 7 in 1 vaccines, which would mean that 7 potential virus' are vaccinated against at once in a single injection. The number of virus' we vaccinate against is directly related to the threat of obtaining such disease.

As in human medicine, anti-flu serum changes from year to year as new strains of the flu virus become evident to researchers as they struggle to identify them and produce anti-flu vaccines. Such is the same situation for our pets as new infectious diseases are identified and anti-serum is produced to reduce infection.

Over the past decade we have become accustomed to having our dogs vaccinated for tick borne illnesses like Lyme disease and E-canis. We have begun vaccinating dogs for bordatella commonly known as kennel cough prior to boarding dogs. Cats are being vaccinated for leukemia and feline aids virus. All in all, we live in an ever changing world of potential infectious disease. The good news is, that modern medicine is keeping up with keeping all of us healthy. Part of how health is maintained has to do with natural immunity against disease. Our pets obtain a portion of their immunity against disease from the colostrums they receive from their mothers milk within days of their birth. Historically, puppies and kittens started a vaccination program at approximately six weeks of age and received vaccines every three weeks until they reached sixteen to eighteen weeks old and received their adult vaccine which lasted for one year. Rabies vaccine was typically given at four months of age and repeated yearly. Several years ago, vaccine manufacturers began producing two and three year rabies vaccines which allowed prolonged immunity against rabies disease.

Recently, a growing controversy concerning the possibility of our over-vaccinating our pets took center stage. Veterinary journals, pet magazines, internet articles and pet lovers everywhere suddenly started questioning the need for yearly vaccinations. The veterinary community aggressively pushed for answers to

the question, do our pets need yearly vaccines? Vaccine titers, blood tests that indicate one's immunity to specified diseases, were conducted on a large scale following initial pediatric vaccination protocol. The results indicate that most pets are covered against diseases vaccinated for as pediatrics for roughly three years. Commonly today, pets receive vaccinations for the distemper complex and rabies every three years. While vaccine manufactures still produce one year vaccines, it is imperative to check with your veterinarian as to which vaccine is used in their practice. If there is a question of whether an animal has immunity or not, a titer may be run to determine a pet's immunity.

As many veterinary facilities are vaccinating every three years, too many pet owners have abandoned the yearly visit to the veterinary hospital for well health care check-ups. Pets need to be examined yearly for a number of important reasons. Many medical problems are silent killers as we can't see the problem until it is too late to do anything about it. Tooth decay can lead to a variety of illnesses including heart problems if left untreated. Heart disease is not always evident to an owner but may be found by a veterinarian upon examination and successfully treated when identified early. Internal parasites can plague a pet and cause diarrhea and vomiting or worse yet, cause anemia from blood loss. Certain intestinal parasites suck blood from the animals intestinal track and wreak havoc on their system. A simple exam and yearly fecal exam may help to eliminate the threat. A standard veterinary well health exam includes a thorough going over of the pet. Eyes, ears, nose and throat are examined, heart and lungs are auscultated with a stethoscope. The abdomen is palpated to assure that the doctor does not feel anything unusual in the belly. Skin and hair coat is examined for any foreign lumps or bumps as well as external parasites. Nails may be trimmed if too long. Pets whose nails are chronically allowed to grow too long may develop arthritis from the stress on their feet. Heartworm, and tick borne diseases such as Lyme and E. canis are identified through a simple blood test that needs to be repeated yearly to assure a negative status. Pets over five years of age may be due for a routine blood sample to help identify any internal problems including liver or kidney disease, diabetes or more serious illness.

The SPCA and Simpson clinic have joined in the three year vaccination protocol in an effort to take the very best care of our pet population in Westchester County. We urge every pet owner to please see your pet's veterinarian at least once yearly to assure the health and well being of your pet. Prevention is by far the best cure of all. 