Protecting All Animals
how the Ontario SPCA saves lives

Do Breed Bans Work?
a perspective from the UK

Animal and Human Heroes
extraordinary pets and people

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Official Magazine
Welcome to the Summer 2005 issue of Animals’ Voice. The beautiful animal on the cover is one of the great survival stories of the past year. About 400 pounds underweight when rescued by Ontario SPCA investigators in October 2004, this thoroughbred is now thriving in a new home, along with a Shetland pony that was part of the same rescue. We are constantly amazed by the willpower of neglected and abused animals to not only recover from their injuries but to regain trust in people, and we hope that you will read many more stories of animal courage and strength that serve as inspiration for the work we do and the support you provide.

Christine Arnett, Editor

Animals’ Voice is published twice a year by the Ontario SPCA. Its contents may be reproduced with consent from the Society and with appropriate credit given. Fully informing our readers about controversial issues involves offering a balanced presentation of conflicting opinions. Readers should not, therefore, infer the Society’s agreement with the views expressed in this publication.

The Ontario SPCA is a registered charity comprised of 27 directly operated branches and 31 affiliated humane societies and SPCAs, its Wildlife Centre, Provincial Office and Ontario SPCA Centre, and the Marion Vernon Memorial Animal Clinic. The Society’s concern is ensuring the welfare of all animals – large and small, wild and domesticated – through cruelty investigations, animal care and rehabilitation, government and industry advocacy, and public education.

Charitable Registration #88969-1044-RR0002

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Summer 2005

Animals’ Voice
Recently we were asked whether the Ontario SPCA has the authority to enforce legislation other than the Ontario SPCA Act and the Criminal Code of Canada, including legislation administered by government agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Ontario SPCA is committed to using the full legislative authority for Section 11(1) of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which states: For the purpose of the enforcement of this or any other act or law in force in Ontario pertaining to the welfare or the prevention of cruelty to animals, every inspector and agent of the Society has, and may exercise, any of the powers of a police officer.

Ontario SPCA inspectors may enforce any law pertaining to the prevention of cruelty to, or the welfare of, animals. Inspectors have laid charges and have convictions under the Animal Inspection Act regarding cruelty to, or the welfare of, animals. Inspectors have laid charges and have convictions under the Veterinarians Act regarding cruelty at a provincially licensed abattoir; a conviction under the Dead Animal Disposal Act related to fallen animals being moved prior to euthanasia.

The Ontario SPCA is dedicated to caring for all animals, wild or domesticated, large or small – dogs and cats, horses, reptiles, birds, farm animals and wild animals. In order to better provide protection to this diverse range of animals, we have developed strong cooperative working relationships with government agencies responsible for animal welfare. The Society values their expertise and assistance, and recognizes that by working together we are all able to make greater strides in animal welfare.

By Brian Pemberton

Ontario’s Breed Specific Legislation: A Perspective from the UK

In May of this year an adult pit bull was found by the side of the road in the York/Durham Line area, just north of Oshawa – with its throat slit; it died shortly afterwards.

In any event, this case, along with thousands of others investigated by the Ontario SPCA, highlights the fact that the province’s animals continue to suffer heinous cruelty and abuse, and effective legislation to protect people and animals is greatly needed. There have been many questions and doubts raised about Bill 132, otherwise known as the pit bull ban, including great concern about the effectiveness of this law to protect the public from vicious dog attacks.

At the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly public hearings held prior to the passing of the Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 54 per cent of individuals – including the mother of Courtney Trempe, the young girl who died from a dog attack in 1998 (not a pit bull) – presented in opposition to the breed ban, along with no less than 43 of 44 “expert” organizations (see www.ontla.on.ca/library/bills/381/132381.htm).

One of those organizations was the United Kingdom’s Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which has had 14 years of experience with very similar legislation enacted in the UK in 1991.

The UK’s Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991 banned four “types”: pit bull, Japanese Tosa, Fila Braziliero and Dogo Argentino, and made it an offence to allow any dog to be “dangerously out of control.”

In April 2000 the owner of Beth, a 13-year-old mixed breed, was prosecuted for her dog being “dangerously out of control” – the equally vague equivalent of the “posing a menace” provision of Ontario’s new legislation – because she had barked at two people passing her home. The owner was acquitted, according to a BBC report, after the court heard that Beth’s owner was faceless.

Judy Marshall, CEO
Animals’ dangerous canine temperament is a product of many factors to achieve – to make your Province safer for its citizenry. A Ontario government in January 2005, “The banning of any spe-
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MEETING THE RISING DEMANDS OF ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ontario SPCA investigators routinely tackle difficult and complex investigations. A task complicated by a variety of challenges, including a lack of effective legislation to help charge and prosecute offenders.

Each year in Ontario there is an ever-increasing number of charges laid, animals removed, orders issued and cruelty complaints investigated – handled by just 205 Inspectors and Agents in the communities served by the Society’s 58 Branches and Affiliates.

In 2004 close to 16,000 complaints were investigated – resulting in 8,851 investigations-related animals being cared for by the Ontario SPCA. Thousands more were voluntarily surrendered by their owners outside of investigations. With shelters typically overcrowded and human and financial resources stretched, providing the necessary care in a coordinated effort is a constant challenge. A challenge met by the dedication of Ontario SPCA staff, the coordination of care among multiple Branches and Affiliates, and the support of compassionate individuals and organizations.

PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS

by vicki quigley, Ontario SPCA Communications Specialist

From cats and dogs, to horses, hens, wolves and wallabies, for over 130 years the Ontario SPCA has been providing protection and care for a diverse range of animals. Although the Society is best known for its sheltering and adopting out of domestic pets such as cats and dogs, a myriad of activities play out behind this familiar scene. In places as diverse as courtrooms, classrooms, barns and backyards, a network of dedicated staff and volunteers, equipped with limited resources but plenty of passion and determination, strive to make the province safer for all animals.
Resources are strained even further when zero, exotic or wild animals are involved in investigations because requiring specialized medical care, transportation, foster care, medical treatment or a lengthy stay. Caring for and relocating 200 abandoned animals (including ibex, weasels, timber and arctic wolves, black bears, Arctic fox, raccoons and a beaver), believed to be from an abandoned wildlife farm near Sudbury, cost over $80,000 - requiring specialized food shipped in from across the province and caring volunteers to devote an hour a day for three years for feeding over a year.  

**MAKING ONTARIO SAFER FOR ANIMALS**

To protect these animals in need investigated by legions of thousands of hours a year following up on individual complaints. The provincial government has dedicated its efforts to eradicating puppy mills, illegal slaughterhouses and unlicensed abattoirs, resulting in large cases against operators of puppy mill operations and other large-scale cases. Operations Unit to crack down on puppy mills, and the help fund an Ontario SPCA Special Operations Unit to crack down on puppy mill operations and other large-scale cases of cruelty in Ontario. The Unit aggressively built large cases against operators of puppy mills, illegal slaughterhouses and unlicensed abattoirs, resulting in thousands of animals being saved from abuse. At the provincial government was shut down when funding ended in 2002.

Increasing the difficulty for investigating to protect animals is the perfection of existing legislations. The strongest provincial laws in Canada are those that criminalize causing unnecessary suffering to animals. While these laws are comprehensive, they need to be strengthened and better enforced to protect the public. Bill C-50 would, among other things, permit lifetime bans on owning or caring for animals. The maximum prohibition available under the Criminal Code of Canada is to breed for sale.

However, the Ontario SPCA Act remains one of the weakest provincial laws in Canada since the only penalties are severe neglect dogs from Cherry Valley Kennels in Waterford, Ontario. However, the worst of the worst is to be removed to a long-term facility where the animals can live out their remaining years in peace. The extensive record of animal cruelty at Cherry Valley Kennels, including the Ontario SPCA Act and other provincial animal welfare laws, makes this an area where the public can make a difference. With the public’s support of Bill C-50 investigations will soon have stronger legal tools to charge and prosecute animal abusers.

**RECENT VICTORIES AS A RESULT OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ONTARIO SPCA ACT**

**A First-time ban for breeding dogs or cats for sale** On July 14, 2004, Minister Monte Kwinter and Bruce Pollock introduced the new Animal Protection Act (2004), which would amend and strengthen the Ontario SPCA Act. The Act provides the Ontario SPCA with the power to inspect “any place” (other than a private home) where animals are kept for sale, hire or exhibition, and any vehicle used to transport animals.

The Ontario SPCA has had many victories and working with the government to strengthen the Act, and in the past eight years that have been achieved. With continued lobbying from the Ontario SPCA, and public support, the Society is hopeful the government will soon recognize the need for change.

**Support the Ontario SPCA’s Lobbying Efforts**

Help strengthen the Ontario SPCA Act and ensure a consistent standard of care for animals across Ontario. Write: The Honorable Monte Kwinter, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 288 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H8.

**To compensate for the weakness in the current provincial legislation, the proposed Animal Protection Act will include raising the penalty for intentional cruelty to a maximum of five years imprisonment (up from the current six-month maximum), and giving judges the authority to seize the goods of someone who causes cruelty to animals. The animal welfare organization that cared for the animal.**

**Ontario SPCA Chief Inspector Mike Draper is hopeful** that with the public’s support of Bill C-50 investigations will soon have stronger legal tools to charge and prosecute animal abusers.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

Take action and return your support for the proposed passage of Bill C-50, which would amend and strengthen the Ontario SPCA Act and other provincial laws, such as the Alberta Animal Protection Act, are much more powerful and comprehensive, providing penalties to reduce all animal abuses and to prevent in excess of.

**Your Member of Parliament:** Find the contact information for your MP at http://canada.gc.ca/parlinfo, or call 1-800-622-6232, and:

- The Honourable Irwin Cotler, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 294 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H8.

**The Ontario SPCA Act:** Finding reason to celebrate The Ontario SPCA Act is the provincial legislation that governs Ontario SPCA investigators their policing powers to act on reports of instances of animal cruelty, issue orders to improve an animal’s living conditions and to remove animals from specific circumstances. After many failed attempts to pass legislation in 2002, the Act now includes standards of care for breeders of dogs and cats for sale (directed to help stamp out puppy and kitten mills) and causes much finer penalties - up to a $10,000 fine for each standard of care that is violated, up to two years in jail and a lifetime ban from breeding for sale.

**The Criminal Code in Action: Victory Leaves Judge Wanting More** Julien Cassey of Stouffville pleaded guilty in June to Criminal Charges of willful causing unnecessary suffering to two thoroughbred horses found approximately 400 pounds underweight, and a Whitney pony found approximately 100 pounds underweight. Due to the severity of his condition one of the horses had to be euthanized. The Bill C-50 is “breakthrough” gives Ontario SPCA investigators their policing powers to act on reports of instances of animal cruelty, issue orders to improve an animal’s living conditions and to remove animals from specific circumstances. After many failed attempts in 2002, the Act now includes standards of care for breeders of dogs and cats for sale (directed to help stamp out puppy and kitten mills) and causes much finer penalties - up to a $10,000 fine for each standard of care that is violated, up to two years in jail and a lifetime ban from breeding for sale.

**The Criminal Code of Canada: Pushing for change** The Criminal Code of Canada is the principal tool used by investigators to bring cases of extreme cruelty and neglect. The maximum prohibition available under the Criminal Code of Canada, which was strengthened further with the expansion of who causes cruelty from “owner and custodian” to “anyone” (excluding distress that happens through “reasonable and accepted ways” of tending on keeping animals such as breeding Santos). And the Act provides Ontario investigators the power to inspect “any place” (other than a private home) where animals are kept for sale, hire or exhibition, and any vehicle used to transport animals.

**SAMPLING OF ANIMALS INVOLVED IN RECENT ONTARIO SPCA INVESTIGATIONS**

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**Additional**

- The animal welfare organization that cared for the animal.**Ontario SPCA Chief Inspector Mike Draper is hopeful** that with the public’s support of Bill C-50 investigations will soon have stronger legal tools to charge and prosecute animal abusers.

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**The Criminal Code of Canada: Pushing for change** The Criminal Code of Canada is the principal tool used by investigators to bring cases of extreme cruelty and neglect to court. However, legislation, oncology and ambulatory with
better protection. Recently the Ontario SPCA worked with the City of Orillia to enforce a bylaw making it unlawful to “harass, beat, abuse or injure any animal,” attracting a $400 ticket or a maximum $5,000 fine. Still, changes to the provincial Act are required to ensure uniform standards of care and protection for animals across all of Ontario.

SHELTER STAFF: PROVIDING COMPASSION AND CARE

Ontario SPCA animal care staff are the kind-hearted and patient souls who feed, exercise, bathe, scoot, play with, and provide comfort to animals. They draw from the strength and skill in the veterinary medicine, administrative professions, and support such animals’ recoveries. They clean and disinfect cages and dishes, launder bedding, and try to provide the most comfortable, stress-free environment possible.

The Ontario SPCA also provides care to injured, orphaned, and abused wild animals at its Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Midland. In 2004, 23 species of mammals, 569 birds, 2,394 cats, and 5,556 dogs were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program. In 2004 over 80 animals were provided with refuge through this important program.

ANIMALS ADOPTED IN 2004 THROUGH ONTARIO SPCA BRANCHES

| Cat | 3,506 cats |
| Dog | 2,394 dogs |
| Other | 569 other domestic animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs |

CONTINUING THE ONTARIO SPCA’S LIFESAVING WORK

Preventing animal abuse, neglect and abandonment; stopping abuse where it’s found; ensuring abusers are punished; rehabilitating and finding homes for animals in need; lobbying for humane laws and making sure to community to encourage compassion — these are challenges Ontario SPCA staff face on a daily basis.

Change, however, is slow. Whether it’s winning a court case or routing out an abused animal — but with the generosity of caring people, selfless with their support, the Ontario SPCA will continue its lifesaving work and provide a safe haven for all animals across Ontario desperately in need of protection and care.

OTHER ONTARIO SPCA EFFORTS

Extending animal protection:

As part of the Ontario SPCA’s ongoing efforts to establish stronger laws and enforcement structures that will provide legal protection for animals, the Ontario SPCA lobbies and works with the government in a number of fronts in an advocacy role to shape expertise, experience and recommendations about existing and proposed legislation. Positive results in 2004 included:

- Animal care and wildlife: The Ontario SPCA Animal Care and Wildlife Services Department provided input to the provincial government and Ministry of Natural Resources on proposals for legislation and regulations related to wildlife. In 2004 comments were submitted to the government on a variety of important issues such as expansion of the wildlife bear hunt and proposed to further broaden hunting of wildlife capacity.

- Most inspection systems:

- As a result of the Ontario SPCA’s involvement in the Ontario Government’s review of the most inspection system in Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment benefited from a number of strong recommendations that will benefit farm animals, including the prohibition of the transport of animals, increased staff and funding to Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) to shut down illegal slaughterhouses, and training for slaughterhouse staff, which the OMAF has started to act upon.

Protecting livestock:

In February 2004, the Ontario SPCA partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) to bolster playgrounds in livestock. Through a grant from the BSE Compensation Fund, the Ontario SPCA was able to purchase captive bolt pistols to allow veterinarians and sales barn inspectors to humanely euthanize compromised animals arriving at sales barns. OMAF also appointed four Ontario SPCA inspectors under the Livestock Compensation Act. As a pilot project to restrict the sale of animals at sales barns, and to conduct traceback investigations to farms.

Bringing compassion to communities:

Many Ontario SPCA Branches and Affiliates provide a variety of community outreach and education programs in their local area to teach valuable lessons about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership, and to help prevent animal abuse.

- Youth and Animal Project

The Youth and Animal Project is involved in temporary housing for the Youth and Animal Project (YAP) — a dog training program that matches hard to adopt dogs with troubled youth, who act as trainers, in an effort to benefit both. The Ministry of Community, Family, and Children’s Services provides funding for YAP, which has completed a total of 14 projects and the past year spent.

Family Violence Assistance Program

Since 1998 the Family Violence Assistance Program (FVAP) has provided temporary housing for the pet of victims across the province for abuse. In 2004 over 40 animals were provided with refuge through this important program.

Stop Nuts

The Ontario SPCA launched the Stop Nuts (now called “Paws”) program in 2004 to provide spay/neuter and vaccination clinics for pets and dogs living in hard-to-reach northern communities: Moose Factory and Moosonee. In November the Stop Nuts team, including a veterinarian, human educators, and veterinary technicians, carried out the project for four days, with 55 animals spayed/neutered and 17 vaccinated. As well, 16 dogs were surrendered to the Ontario SPCA and sent to adoption centres throughout Ontario.

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BETH THE BRITANNIA, AWARD OF COURAGE

When an Ontario SPCA Inspector first saw Beth, a Britanna spaniel, she was shocked by what she saw. Beth had been abandoned by her owners, who had left her tied to a tree in a small park. She had been tied so tightly that her legs were bleeding and she could barely walk. Thanks to Inspector Debbie Hunt—and the witness statements from two young children—Beth was able to get the help she needed.

Thanks to the kindness and care from the Humane Society of Durham Region, Beth now lives with a caring family and enjoys the friendship of a special spaniel sidekick. Beth received the Award of Courage at the Ontario SPCA’s recent Annual General Meeting Awards Luncheon for her courage and will to survive and love again.
Deserve it!" (JoJo the day she was adopted from the Ontario SPCA
Muskoka Branch.)

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Great Pets – Great People

If she was adopted from the Ontario SPCA
York Region Branch

Deserve was adopted from the Ontario SPCA
York Region Branch. In mid-January 2005 three female Shetland sheepdog mixes (JoJo, Mollie and Sadie) were surrendered to the Ontario SPCA. Mollie and Sadie were terrified of people, and JoJo, Mollie and Sadie were pregnant. The staff went to work getting the girls groomed, fed and socialized. Happily, Sadie, Mollie and JoJo and her three puppies, and JoJo’s six puppies were all adopted.

I started fostering JoJo the day she was released from the vet. She still had an open incision, which needed to be cleaned and medicated five times a day. Three weeks later I adopted her. With all the extra care I’d given her throughout her recovery I’d grown to love her – and I couldn’t destroy her hopes we have a lot of years ahead of us and I have the chance to help make up for what Deserve lost a year ago." Susan Harmeri

Love Spencer

Deserve is doing wonderfully in her new home! She follows me everywhere, has figured out what toys are for, and loves to run around with her new big sister, Roya, a nine-year-old chow mix. She no longer carries her tail between her legs, and when people come over she is at the door greeting them. She still shows some hesitation with men, but my forest is helping her overcome this fear. JoJo barks when she wants inside, and rolls over for a tummy rub when someone says "BELLY!". I am so glad I have a chance to make JoJo happy – she deserves it!" Devon Russell

I was a volunteer at the Ontario SPCA Provincial Office and early this year I noticed a pretty, spitz colored cat named Deserve around the office. She spent a lot of her time finding a comfortable place to lounge, and she was always pleased to be given a pat and some kind words. One day I realized I hadn’t seen Deserve for quite a while and I asked if she’d been adopted. I was told she wasn’t.

I went home and I decided that I could no longer bear to think of her without a home. When I went to see her the next day I found out that her owner had died 11 months earlier, leaving no other family, and that Deserve was nearly nine years old. Needless to say, she is now home with me, and this elderly widow and her new feline friend have made a marvelous match.

Part of my decision to adopt Deserve was that there are a lot of older animals in shelters, through no fault of their own, who deserve to live out their lives with a loving, caring owner. Older pets know what they are missing. I could see how much Deserve had been loved and how desperately she wanted and needed a home once more. I hope we have a lot of years ahead of us and I have the chance to help make up for what Deserve lost a year ago."

Beau was rescued by the Ontario SPCA from an alleged puppy mill in 2003 with 25 other dogs including: poodles, Boston terriers, maltese, pekingese, shar-peis, Saint Bernards and Jack Russells.

Beau comes to us in September 2003. At three months he was surrendered to the Ontario SPCA Huronia District Branch. Beau's hair had fallen out, and his coat was matted from neglect and exposure to harsh elements. When we first saw him, he was starting to put on some weight and the Ontario SPCA had treated his health problems. His movement was poor and he had soft tissue compression where the neck meets the shoulder. He never wagged his tail, his ears never...

In January 2005, Spencer, a seven-month-old German shorthaired pointer, was surrendered to the Ontario SPCA Huronia and District Branch, Kara Gaskel and Brian Kish. Beau was examined by our vet and was looking for a new companion. Her sister lived near the Branch and was estatic to help. Beau was a quick study. Most amazing was the complete transformation. He was a little shyer at first, but I”m finally starting to believe it’s my forever home... or at least my forever Mom (because she says we may move some day)."

Mom takes me for lots of nice, long walks! There is a really great park where puppies are allowed off their leashes and I have a great time when we go there, chasing squirrels and birds and playing with the other puppies. Mum and I watch TV at night on the couch. I like to jump-up for cuddles. She says I’m a 40 pound re-dog! I like my new home. I was a little doubtful at first, but I’m finally starting to believe it’s my forever home... or at least my forever Mom (because she says we may move some day)."

In mid-January 2005 three female Shetland sheepdog mixes (JoJo, Mollie and Sadie) were surrendered to the Ontario SPCA Muskoka Branch as a result of a cruelty investigation. All three were thin, dirty and terrified of people, and JoJo, Mollie and Sadie were pregnant. The staff went to work getting the girls groomed, fed and socialized. Happily, Sadie, Mollie and JoJo and her three puppies, and JoJo’s six puppies were all adopted.

In January 2005, Spencer, a seven-month-old German shorthaired pointer, was surrendered to the Ontario SPCA Huronia and District Branch, Kara Gaskel and Brian Kish, Manager, sprung into action, posting Spencer’s photo to the Branch’s website and contacting a German shorthaired pointer rescue group in Michigan. Within the rescue group, Cynthia Hart contacted the Branch. Her German shorthaired pointer and Labador retriever had both passed away within the last 10 months and she was looking for a new companion. Her sister lived near the Branch and was estatic to help.

"I am settling in really well in my new home by the ocean. My Mum takes me for lots of nice, long walks! There is a really great park where puppies are allowed off their leashes and I have a great time when we go there, chasing squirrels and birds and playing with the other puppies. Mum and I watch TV at night on the couch. I like to jump-up for cuddles. She says I’m a 40 pound re-dog! I like my new home. I was a little doubtful at first, but I’m finally starting to believe it’s my forever home... or at least my forever Mom (because she says we may move some day)."
**E**ach year, the Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Midland, provides care and treatment to over 2,500 animals, comprising more than 100 species of mammals, birds and reptiles. Following are some examples of the variety of cases requiring the Centre’s expertise.

**Did You Know…**

The great gray owl is one of the largest owls in the world and is the largest owl in North America. They were first described in 1772 by Johann Reinhold Forster based on a specimen collected in northwestern Ontario.

Popular nicknames for the great gray owl include, “phantom of the north,” “great grey ghost,” and “specter owl.” These names are all based on the great gray owl’s ability to descend on silent wings and seemingly appear from nowhere to locate and capture prey.

Great gray owls are not generally known to fear vehicles and avoid passing cars. For the most part, these owls will ignore passing cars and continue with their usual hunting and feeding activities. However, passage of a car can disturb the owl and affect its hunting behavior.

**Owl Rescue**

Almost every two years, natural variation in small mammal populations forces great gray owls to leave their typical range in northern Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta to hunt for food farther south. The winter of 2004-2005 was one of those rare years when an influx of great gray owls moved into southern Ontario due to a lack of food in their usual home range. Although it is a wonderful privilege to have the opportunity to see these stunning birds, they are also very susceptible to injury due to their lack of habituation to humans.

The Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Midland admitted many great gray owls over this year’s winter months, most of whom were victims of collisions with vehicles. In their normal habitat, great gray owls are not generally exposed to people and cars, as they do not know to fear vehicles and would rarely come into contact with human-made objects.

The Latin name for great gray owls, *Neboroides* which means misty or foggy, was chosen by 17th century naturalist Linnaeus.

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**Opinion Rescue**

During one of Pelican’s lengthy cold periods, a Virginia opossum was found in a parking lot in Barrie. The opossum was shivering from the cold temperatures, had signs of previous frostbite damage on her tail, and was very cold. A group of people standing nearby observing the opossum also noticed her significant stress. It was clear that this opossum was not handling the winter conditions very well and needed some assistance. Agent Rachel Banks from the Ontario SPCA Barrie Branch picked up the opossum. She was transferred to the Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre on January 23, 2005. Although the opossum had obviously suffered some effects from the Canadian climate, her prognosis was excellent. She spent about three months at the Wildlife Centre where she was provided with a warm, indoor den and was given a nutritious diet to help her gain weight. By the end of April the opossum had doubled her admission weight and was healthy enough to be returned to the wild. She was released on April 26, 2005.

**Porcupine Rescue**

In early May, a very young and valuable patient arrived at the Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Midland. A female porcupine was hit by a vehicle in the Owen Sound area and, after being hit, gave birth to a baby on the side of the road. The mother and baby were admitted to the Wildlife Centre in need of immediate intervention and care. Although she was injured herself, during their first night in care, the mother porcupine was able to feed her newborn baby. This was especially important because female mammals provide their young with important maternal antibodies in the early stage of their lives which help protect them from disease and illness.

The Virginia opossum has traditionally been found primarily in the southern United States. Over the past several years, opossums have expanded their range and moved into many areas of southern Ontario. Due to their origins in warmer climates, opossums are vulnerable to Ontario’s cold weather and it is not unusual to see these animals with frostbite damage on their ears and tails.

Opossums are sometimes referred to as “living fossils” because they are one of the most primitive animals living and have survived since the age of dinosaurs by continually adapting to habitat change and human interference.

Opossums are the only marsupial living in North America. Marsupials are mammals that have pouches used to carry and nurse their young. Large teeth are often a after a gestation period of only two weeks. Opossums begin life as one of the smallest mammals in North America and are only about the size of a house mouse when they are born. Baby opossums remain in their mother’s pouch for two to three months prior to emerging.

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**Did You Know…**

Opossums are adapt climbers, mainly due to their strong tail and opposable “thumbs.”

**Did You Know…**

Porcupines are primarily vegetarian. In the warmer months, porcupines may consume leaves, buds and hedges, while in the winter, they subsist on bark.

In Ontario, the porcupine’s range spans across most of the southern and central portions of the province. Porcupines are not generally found in extreme southwestern or northern Ontario.

There are approximately 30,000 quills on a porcupine’s back and tail. Porcupines do not throw their quills, as is often suggested, however, the quills are easily dislodged when a porcupine averages one to seven hours. When porcupines are born, their quills are soft but the quills become rigid approximately one hour after birth. Baby porcupines are also born with incisor teeth and they can begin consuming an adult porcupine diet of vegetation before they are even one month old.

Porcupines can swim and are excellent climbers.

Porcupines are the second-largest rodents in North America.
Protecting animals through gifts of life insurance

How to use your life insurance as a charitable gift

Traditionally, life insurance is used to provide prepaid burial expenses. However, as children age or we become financially secure, the reasons for purchasing life insurance turn into opportunities to make a lasting impact on the lives of others.

By making a new or existing life insurance policy to The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Ontario SPCA), you can help ensure abandoned, neglected and injured animals receive the care and comfort they need, for as long as they live. The gift of life insurance to charities is a wonderful and affordable way to leave a lasting legacy of compassion and care.

The gift of an existing policy

If you have a life insurance policy you wish to donate, you may wish to consider donating it to the Ontario SPCA. You may choose to donate the entire policy or part of the policy. This option provides an immediate charitable deduction, allowing you to use your life insurance policy today and make a lasting impact on the lives of animals in need.

The gift of a new policy

Many donors decide to purchase a new life insurance policy in their name. A gift of $100,000 in a life insurance policy may be purchased for as little as $75/month. You can designate the Ontario SPCA as the owner and beneficiary of the policy, ensuring that your final gift will provide financial support for the animals in need.

Endowment funds

For more information, please contact Stefanie Hundle at 1-888-868-7732 or email: stefanie@ospca.on.ca.

Tips for making a gift of life insurance

Gift of an existing policy

Purchase a $100,000 life insurance policy for $75/month. You will receive a tax deduction for $100,000 upon your death.

Designate the Ontario SPCA as the owner and beneficiary of the policy.

Stay the owner and designate the Ontario SPCA as the beneficiary of the policy.

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Working in the Front Line

Every day in Ontario SPCA Branches across the province dedicated animal care staff provide for the rehabilitation, care and socialization of thousands of animals. The ultimate goal: to get the animals adopted into loving homes. Jennifer Scott is one of the nearly 200 Ontario SPCA staff working in the front line of animal care.

From the moment a dog arrives at the Ontario SPCA York Region Branch — to the day it wildly wags its way out the front door with its adopted family — Jennifer Scott is involved in every aspect of its recovery and care. Whether it’s the occasional 18-hour shift, or a week spent grabbing catnaps at the Branch on a cot, Jennifer has the day-to-day task of ensuring each animal receives the care it needs. Along with the other animal care staff, Jennifer works diligently to meet the diverse needs of anywhere from 100 to more than 300 animals sheltered at the Branch at one time.

How would you describe your role as Animal Care Coordinator?
I make sure that every dog in the building under my care has a happy stay — and we start early as possible. While I work primarily with dogs, my days can include everything from cats to pigs to raccoons. My responsibilities range from ensuring the animals get the appropriate healthcare, exercise and diet — to helping socialize animals, determining when they’re ready for adoption and finding them the right home. I also coordinate communications between staff, the veterinary clinic and investigators. I think it’s important to give our investigations updates about the animals they rescue because they don’t usually get to see the happy endings.

What was your first position at the Ontario SPCA?
I was hired as a part-time animal care assistant in 2002. My third day on the job I had a puppy mill seizure. It was completely overwhelming. There were 70 dogs and three shelter workers. The Branch facility was too new so we didn’t even have a public yet — and we were already taking care of more than 30 cats. We worked from eight in the morning until eight or nine at night feeding, grooming and coordi- nating veterinary care. A total of 231 dogs came in over the next week. I only went home to sleep — and then the next day I was back at the shelter doing it all over again. Ontario SPCA Inspectors, Agents, staff from other Ontario SPCA Branches and everyone in our provincial office came in to help with the dogs.

Four years later, what keeps you inspired to do the work you do?
A couple days after the puppy mill seizure I was sitting in the lunchroom and saw people lined up at our reception door — a huge line of people who had heard about the seizure and were giving donations to help us understand my experience. When you’re working directly with the animals sometimes you feel like you’re the only one in the world affected by it. But the community is aware from media reports and shows their support. From the first week of my employment I saw the importance of the Ontario SPCA to animals and the public. It was really a feeling of teamwork with our organization and the community. You don’t get that feeling everywhere. It inspires me every day.

What is your greatest challenge with dogs coming to the shelter?
A lot of the time the dog is scared. Either they’ve been abused or they haven’t been socialized with people or other animals and they come into an environment that is really overwhelming to them. So it’s important we take it slow and give them time to adjust. Only a little bit of cable cross, was brought in through investiga- tions. It took the Inspector 20 minutes just to get close enough to put a leash on her. She was terrified. She spent four days at the shelter frightened and backing away from us before we were finally able to take her outside for a walk. After that she realized we weren’t there to hurt her. We ended up adopting her to a wonderful family. As well, we get in 15 or 20 dogs who are one week old — but not necessarily medical attention.

You speak very passionately. What is it you love about animals?
I love the diversity of them. So many animals we care for are abandoned or abused — yet they’re filled with love. Every time I see you I know they’re ready to give you the first time. They’re so excited. They live this new life. They make me look at life in a different way.

How does it feel to be named Staff Member of the Year in 2004?
I have a special feeling being presented from everyone else. I’m only able to do the things I do because I have an organization behind me. My coworkers and I are there for each other. Part of working is a reminder that everyone doesn’t have the power to do everything — but we work together to accomplish as much as we can.

Join the Animal PAC Monthly Giving Plan
Please consider committing to monthly gifts in order to help the animals in our care. We appreciate the support of our donors.

Animal PAC Monthly Giving Plan
I would like to spread my support for the work of the Ontario SPCA throughout the year by making monthly gifts.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ____________________________
Postal Code ____________________________
Home Telephone _____________
Fax _____________
E-mail ____________________________

- I hereby authorize the Ontario SPCA to deduct ________________________ from my checking account on the 1st of each month, until I give you notice to stop.
- I hereby authorize the Ontario SPCA to deduct ________________________ from my credit card on the 1st of each month.
- I hereby authorize the Ontario SPCA to deduct ________________________ from my debit card on the 1st of each month.

Signature ____________________________
Date ____________________________
Society News

Animal and human heroes honored at Ontario SPCA awards ceremony

Amber, a dog who saved the life of her young owner in a car accident; Beth, a Brittany spaniel who survived severe neglect and brought public awareness to animal abuse; and incredible Ontario SPCA staff and volunteers who have dedicated their lives to the prevention of cruelty to animals – received awards at the Ontario SPCA Annual General Meeting and Awards Luncheon, held June 11 at the Holiday Inn in Barrie. Award recipients included:

Amber, Animal of the Year

Amber, a gentle and loving family dog who enjoyed swimming and playing at the cottage, saved her young owner, Lauren Arnold, in a car accident. While the family was driving to their cottage on May 14, 2004, Amber, who had been lying on the floor beside Lauren, jumped on to her lap moments before they were involved in a fatal car accident that killed Lauren’s dad and grandma and injured Lauren. Despite suffering a broken back, Amber came over to where Lauren lay in the ditch and lay beside her. Amber later died from her injuries. A police officer told Lauren that Amber saved her life by protecting her like an airbag during impact. “That’s why she deserves an award – for saving my life,” wrote Lauren. “I’ll always love her.”

Beth, Award for Courage

When Inspector Debbie Hunt (Humane Society of Durham Region) first saw Beth, a Brittany spaniel, three weeks after animal control found her and brought her to an emergency clinic, she was shocked by what she saw: “I couldn’t believe she was alive. It was the worst case of emaciation I’ve ever seen.” Bones protruded through her skin, open infected sores covered her body, synovial fluid leaked from her joints, and she had over 200 ticks. Featured on Citytv and in The Globe and Mail and Toronto Sun, Beth’s courage and spirit to survive touched the hearts of people across North America, bringing public awareness to the issue of animal abuse and inspiring letters of support from as far away as Nova Scotia and Maine.

Thanks to Inspector Hunt – and the witness statements from two young children – four months after Beth was found in August 2004, the owner, a registered breeder, plead guilty to the Criminal Code charge of failure to provide adequate care. His sentence included surrendering six other Brittany spaniels he owned, being prohibited from owning an animal for two years, allowing the Investigations Department of the Humane Society of Durham Region to inspect his property four times a year for two years, and paying $1,000 in restitution to the Humane Society of Durham Region. Today Beth, now lovingly known as Bess, lives with a caring and compassionate family and enjoys the friendship of a special spaniel sibling.

Honourable Monte Kwinter, Chair’s Award

An award is presented annually at the discretion of the Chair of the Ontario SPCA Board of Directors to acknowledge a significant contribution to animal welfare in Ontario.

Over the past year the Honourable Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and his staff met with the Ontario SPCA to discuss needed legislative reform to the Ontario SPCA Act, the provincial legislation that gives Ontario SPCA investigators their policing powers. He also listened intently to the Ontario SPCA’s concerns related to the then proposed Bill 132 – the legislation to amend the Dog Owners’ Liability Act, and about the financial challenges of the Ontario SPCA and its affiliated organizations. Minister Kwinter also demonstrated that he believes strongly in the role of the Ontario SPCA, and helped greatly in ensuring that the Society was able to continue providing essential services. Additionally, he voiced his commitment to developing a long-term strategy for animal welfare in Ontario. All of these thoughtful and valuable contributions to the Ontario SPCA – as well as the animals of Ontario – earned Minister Kwinter the 2004 Chair’s Award.

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Society News

Karen Hewitt, Ontario SPCA Orangeville and District Branch, Staff Member of the Year

Nominated for her passion, drive and dedication to animals, Karen Hewitt has been an Animal Care Attendant with the Ontario SPCA Orangeville and District Branch over five years. In addition to providing care, training and leadership for animal care staff and supervision of co-op students, Karen takes initiative to find ways to improve procedures and animal care, and is always ready to work extra hours when the shelter is short-staffed. In 2003 (in the absence of a Branch Manager) Karen assumed the role of Branch Coordinator – looking after various administration tasks while also completing her animal care duties. The gentle touch and respect she shows shelter animals, her own pets, and the special needs animals she fosters until they’re ready for adoption, demonstrates her exceptional love and concern for animals.

Jennifer Bluhm, Ontario SPCA BruceGrey Branch, Volunteer of the Year Award

A tremendous year with many accomplishments – and a history of doing all she can to protect animals – earned Jennifer Bluhm the Inspector of the Year Award. Her accomplishments included laying over 40 provincial and criminal charges in 2004, becoming an integral part of the Inspector training curriculum due to her proven talent to teach and instruct others; 2004; becoming an integral part of the Inspector training curriculum due to her proven talent to teach and instruct others; and playing a critical role in the Ministry of Natural Resources’ decision to revoke a substandard roadside zoo’s license – a major step in combating roadside zoos. And playing a critical role in the Ministry of Natural Resources’ decision to revoke a substandard roadside zoo’s license – a major step in combating roadside zoos.

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A tremendous year with many accomplishments – and a history of doing all she can to protect animals – earned Jennifer Bluhm the Inspector of the Year Award. Her accomplishments included laying over 40 provincial and criminal charges in 2004, becoming an integral part of the Inspector training curriculum due to her proven talent to teach and instruct others; 2004; becoming an integral part of the Inspector training curriculum due to her proven talent to teach and instruct others; and playing a critical role in the Ministry of Natural Resources’ decision to revoke a substandard roadside zoo’s license – a major step in combating roadside zoos. And playing a critical role in the Ministry of Natural Resources’ decision to revoke a substandard roadside zoo’s license – a major step in combating roadside zoos.

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If you are considering adding a new pet to your life the Ontario SPCA’s Friends for Life campaign encourages you to make adoption your first option. Now in its second year, the campaign’s goal is to find homes for the thousands of wonderful animals in Ontario SPCA adoption centres across the province. It estimates that just 17% of companion animals are obtained through adoption. The Ontario SPCA and its Friends for Life sponsors, Global & Ryan’s Pet Foods and Westmont Hospitality Group, aim to boost that number by informing the public about the adoption option. Cats and dogs of all ages, shapes, sizes and breeds, as well as birds, rabbits, guinea pigs and more are waiting in hope for a home, someone to share life with, someone to love them, and to love back many times over.

“Adopting an animal is one of the most important and thoughtful decisions anyone can make,” says Lisa Veit, Director of Animal Care and Wildlife Services. “It is the opportunity to give rescued, homeless animals a second chance while adding an immense source of love and fun to your life.”

Ontario SPCA adoption staff will help you find your perfect pet match, and are always available for any post-adoption questions you may have. As well, when you adopt a cat or dog from the Ontario SPCA you get great value – your new pet will be spayed/neutered and vaccinated, plus you will receive helpful literature on caring for your new pet.

In celebration of the Friends for Life campaign, beginning in July an animal-themed magnetic photo frame will be given out with every pet adoption from an Ontario SPCA branch adoption centre. Global & Ryan’s Pet Foods is also providing pet adopters with discount coupons for pet food and supplies, and Westmont Hospitality Group is providing $15-off coupons for visits to their pet-friendly hotels across the province.

“This year-long promotion will help spread the word about the benefits of animal adoption, as well as remind people that the animals we bring into our lives truly do become our friends for life,” says Veit.

To see the many wonderful animals awaiting adoption visit an Ontario SPCA animal adoption centre in your community or www.ospca.ca and click on “Adopt an Animal.”

On July 31, 277 dogs and their owners joined the Toronto Blue Jays at the ballpark to cheer for the home team in a specially designated “dog zone.” Not only were the dogs welcomed into the Rogers Centre stadium, but all ticketed participants were also invited to take their dogs for a pre-game parade on the field.

The fun-filled day included special pet-related activities before and during the game, a Cat & Dog McFarlane Toy giveaway (plastic collectable figurines featuring Frank Catalanotto and Orlando “O-Dog” Hudson), and an exciting 5-1 win for the Blue Jays over the visiting Texas Rangers.

Ontario SPCA staff and volunteers helped to make the event a success by providing “doggie patrol” in the stands to ensure the comfort and safety of the dogs, managing dog watering stations, providing dog sitting for dog owners who needed to leave the “dog zone,” and registering owners and their dogs at the gate.

“We greatly appreciate the Blue Jays’ support in helping to raise awareness of pet adoption and the strong bond between people and their pets,” says Ontario SPCA CEO Judy Marshall. “This event gives people a chance to involve their dogs in such a fun aspect of their lives – you can’t beat enjoying a great ball game with your best friend by your side. The Ontario SPCA looks forward to continuing this event with the Blue Jays in the future.”

The Ontario SPCA Orangeville and District Branch has opened a Paws and Claws Thrift Shop in Shelburne at 115 Main Street West, downtown across from the Jelly Craft Bakery and Cafe. Run by volunteers, it has a wide array of great items for sale including books, clothes and fashion accessories, glassware and china, kitchen items and collectibles. Come in and meet the volunteers and discover the great bargains! Proceeds will be used to care for abandoned, unwanted and injured animals, providing them with care and food until new homes can be found. For more information call 519-925-9956.
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PETS

by charlene schafer

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Are you prepared for a major emergency, evacuation or natural disaster? How about your pets? Making arrangements beforehand can increase your pets’ chances of survival and greatly reduce the fear and anxiety your pet will experience.

In Ontario, we are each responsible for our own safety and survival during the first 72 hours of an emergency. Responsibility for the safety and survival of pets ultimately rests with pet owners throughout the entire duration of an emergency. Police officers, fire fighters and paramedics are generally not trained to assist pets in an emergency. This is not to say that they will not help animals in distress, however they may simply not have the time or resources to assist pets due to other priorities.

Here are some practical tips about how to best prepare for the safety of your pets during emergency situations.

DEVELOP A FAMILY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

This includes setting a primary and alternate meeting point away from the home in case of evacuation, listing emergency telephone numbers where all family members can easily find them (including the name and number of your pet’s veterinarian) and putting together a family emergency survival kit.

Test the plan regularly (two to three times per year ideally) with all family members – including pets – involved. For example, prepare your cat for a potential evacuation by putting him in a carrying cage in a quick and calm manner. Simulate a real emergency environment and conduct your drill at night to allow pets to become accustomed to the chaos, uncertainty and disruption that will accompany an emergency situation.

CREATE A PET EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

Keep your pet’s kit with your family’s emergency survival kit for quick and easy access (preferably on the top shelf of a closet near your front door, away from the reach of small children).

Some things to include are:

- 72 hour supply of food, bowls, and can opener
- 72 hour supply of bottled water
- Blankets/towels (more than one in case they get soiled)
- Small toy
- Leash, harness
- Litter pan, litter, plastic bags and scooper
- Pet carrier for transportation
- Medical records, especially proof of vaccinations (most boarding facilities will not accept pets without proof of current vaccinations recorded)
- Medications and pet first aid kit
- Current photo of your pet in case he gets lost

Information on your pet’s feeding schedule, behavioral/medical concerns, and special instructions in case you have to board your pet

List of boarding facilities in your area, hotels/motels that accept pets and friends and relatives that you and your pet can stay with (pets are generally not allowed inside emergency shelters designated for people, with the exception of service animals such as guide dogs)

ID tag (microchipping is also recommended)

Flashlight

Check the kit twice a year (an easy way to remember is to do it when you check your smoke alarms bi-annually) to ensure freshness of food, water, and medication, and to restock any supplies you may have “borrowed” from it.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Always bring your pet indoors at the first indication of an emergency.

If you must evacuate your home, take your pet with you if it is safe to do so. This greatly increases your pet’s chances of surviving the emergency.

Place a Rescue Alert Sticker by your front door in case you have to leave your pets behind. The stickers can be obtained from your local humane society or animal shelter and are placed on your front door to alert police, fire fighters, and paramedics to the type and number of pets in your home.

Designate a back-up caregiver for your pet in advance in case you are away from home when emergency strikes. Some things to keep in mind:

- Choose someone who lives close to your residence, someone who is usually at home while you are at work, and someone who has access to your home;
- Familiarize your pet and caregiver with each other;
- Be sure to have a 72 hour supply of food and water.

IF YOU HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR PET BEHIND

- Close the windows and door;
- Turn off all water and gas;
- Turn off all electricity;
- Do not leave any food or water in the house;
- Leave a note for whoever is taking care of your pet;
- Leave a list of phone numbers of trusted friends and family who can “bail out” in case of emergencies;
- Leave a copy of your pet’s medical records and a list of medications in case of medical emergencies;
- Leave a key with your trusted caregiver;
- Leave a current photo of your pet in case you get separated.

If you are unable to leave your pet behind, do not leave your pet alone in the house when you evacuate. Pets cannot survive for long periods without water, food and human contact. They are also more likely to be injured by the stress of an emergency. If you are caught in an emergency situation and must leave your pet, make every effort to take your pet with you so that you will not be separated for a long period of time.

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Ensure that your pet's caregiver knows the location and contents of your pet's emergency survival kit, and any special instructions for looking after your pet;

Provide your pet's caregiver with the name, phone number and location of your pet's veterinarian;

Establish a primary and alternate designated meeting spot in order to reunite with your caregiver and pet.

RETURNING HOME WITH YOUR PET

When returning to your home with your pet after an emergency, there are some important considerations.

Do not let your pet go outside unattended, as there could be post-emergency dangers such as downed hydro lines, hazardous material spills or contaminated food and water. If possible, leave your pet with a friend or boarding facility and conduct a safety check of your home and surrounding property and clean up any dangers prior to bringing your pet home.

Monitor your pet's behaviour after an emergency for any signs of emotional disturbance – including lack of appetite, lethargy or being easily frightened. If you are unsure if your pet has experienced emotional or physical trauma, take him to a veterinarian for proper diagnosis and care.

Remember you are ultimately responsible for the well-being of your pet in an emergency. You now have the tools and resources to assist you in meeting this responsibility. Your pet will thank you for it and one day just might save your life in return!

Charlene Schafer's background is in the field of emergency management and policing. She worked for Emergency Management Ontario in a variety of roles and is currently working for the Policing Services Division of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, where she is responsible for the policing component of the animal-welfare portfolio. Charlene prepared this article as a personal initiative based on her experience in the field of emergency management and her love for animals.

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