

Tails of the City



The Newsletter of the San Francisco Department of Animal Care and Control

Fall / Winter  2009



Arthur was left behind when his owner/guardian had to move away.

Rachel was surrendered to the shelter because her owner/guardian could no longer afford to care for her.

Brat and Smoke were left at the shelter when their owner/guardian could not afford veterinary care to treat a mild eye infection.

Animals aren't recession proof

Kat Brown, Deputy Director


The recession—it doesn't just affect us humans. With the exception of the period following Bay Area's Dot Com bust, over the years Animal Care & Control noticed a slow decline in the numbers of animals that San Francisco's Animal Control Officers picked up as strays, and a decrease in the amount of animals coming through the shelter's front doors as lost or owner surrendered pets.

Spaying and neutering was working. Companion animals were gaining value in our culture. The public sought other options to re-home their animals when necessary, using the municipal shelter as a last resort for surrenders.

But, beginning in August of 2008, the banks started to fail and shortly thereafter, Americans began to experience the symptoms of the economic downturn—job loss, home loss, tighter budgets. In turn, Animal Care & Control started to see an increase in the number of animals arriving at the shelter. Especially troubling was the number of owner surrendered animals.



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Jane Tobin, President of The Friends of Animal Care & Control, at a microchip clinic at ACC. Dogs licensed in San Francisco and cats living in the city can get free microchips implanted at the 'Friends' sponsored clinics held several times a year at ACC.

To date, the number of owner surrendered animals has not stabilized. In fact, it has continued to increase. We thought January of 2009 was going to be one of the worst months with a 35% increase in the number of owned animals coming to ACC. In June 2009, however, the number of owned animals coming into the shelter went up a stunning 50% over what it was in June of 2008. That meant, for just that one month, 99 more animals needed homes compared to this time last year. Our staff consistently hears from people that they have been forced to give up their animals as they look for work or because they don't have enough money to pay their pet's medical bills. We've taken in animals from people who have lost their homes and are forced to move where they can't take their pets—it is heartbreaking. Rescue groups report that foster families and adoptive homes are harder to find. In 8 of the last 12 months, people have been surrendering their animals at an alarming rate. This, at a time, when people need the comfort of companion animals more than ever! The devastation of this separation affects both humans and their animal companions.

And yet, thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, the wonderful animal rescue groups and our long-time partners, the San Francisco SPCA, our live release rate (the rate of animals that find placement) has gone up 3% to 86% for cats and dogs during our last fiscal year (compared to a national average that hovers around 30–40%). We also have an 80% live release rate for all animals—cats, dogs, small and exotic animals, reptiles, fish and birds. But, in the summer of '09, we've found it necessary to euthanize more animals than during the same period last year. The math is clear: higher intake of animals results in a higher number of animals facing euthanasia, regardless of percentiles.

All of us have been following these recession-related events: job losses, foreclosures and work furloughs...even in San Francisco. We've all seen empty storefronts, more apartments for rent, the retail stores not as crowded and businesses closing. Let's remember, a poor economic climate impacts everyone, whether they have two legs, or four.



Here's how you can help animals in the community during (and after) the recession

Adopt! Donate! Foster! Volunteer! Animal Care & Control and the following groups help animals in many ways—and you can help them. You can be part of the solution during these tough economic times:



The Friends of San Francisco Animal Care & Control The

FSFACC provides valuable services to the animal community by holding free microchipping clinics several times a year, providing grants to animal rescue groups and by funding programs that directly help the animals at Animal Care & Control. **To learn more and donate:** www.helppacc.org



Toni's Kitty Rescue

Toni's Kitty Rescue works in partnership with Animal Care & Control to save underage, abandoned

and orphaned kittens by managing a network of foster homes. The volunteers of Toni's Kitty Rescue care for kittens in their homes until they can be returned and adopted from Animal Care & Control. During the 2008 kitten season this group saved over 900 kittens who were facing euthanasia. **To learn more and donate:** www.toniskittyrescue.org



Grateful Dogs Rescue Grateful Dogs

Rescue takes numerous dogs each year from Animal Care & Control.

Many of these dogs need medical attention that Grateful Dogs Rescue provides at their own expense. This group has taken hundreds of needy dogs from Animal Care & Control and placed them in loving homes. Adopters, foster homes and donations are always needed. **To learn more and donate:** www.gratefuldogsrescue.org



Rocket Dog Rescue

Rocket Dog Rescue works daily with Animal Care & Control to take dogs facing euthanasia. Rocket Dog Rescue has taken hundreds of dogs, many with behavior or medical issues that they solve at their own expense. Adopters, foster homes and donations are always needed. **To learn more and donate:** www.rocketdogrescue.org



Give Me Shelter Give Me Shelter

gives a second chance at life to cats facing euthanasia at Animal Care & Control. They work with the shelter daily to rescue cats, some with medical or behavior issues that Give Me Shelter works on at their own expense. Give Me Shelter has rescued hundreds of cats and placed them into loving homes. **To learn more and donate:** www.givemesheltersf.org



Save A Bunny

Save A Bunny's work has given hundreds of rabbits a second chance at a happy life. This group works with Animal Care & Control to take rabbits facing euthanasia because of shelter overcrowding and for health or behavior problems. **To learn more and donate:** www.saveabunny.com



Mickaboo Mickaboo Companion

Bird Rescue—and MickaCoo Dove & Pigeon Rescue—have saved hundreds of birds facing euthanasia at Animal Care & Control. This group takes ill or injured birds—and birds that are at risk due to over-crowding at the shelter. **To learn more and donate:** www.mickaboo.org



The **SF SPCA, Muttville, The Urban Cat Project, Rattie Ratz, Wonder Dog Rescue, A Leg Up Rescue, Home At Last, Hopalong Animal Rescue, California**



Chins—plus many more—are all regular visitors to Animal Care & Control and have all helped to make a tremendous difference for San Francisco's animals in need. Questions about finding species specific rescue groups can be directed to acc@sfgov.org

If you would like to help animals and volunteer at Animal Care & Control, please call 415-554-9414 for information and to sign up for a new volunteer orientation.

Animal Care & Control works with many other rescue groups, including purebred dog and cat rescues. Please consider learning more about animal rescue groups and helping in any way possible. Working together as a community will give more animals a chance at life during these challenging times—and beyond.



Farewell after 20 years of service to animals and the community *Carl Friedman*



It was the early 1970s and unbeknownst to me at the time, an event happened that suddenly brought me into the animal welfare world. As I was sitting in the Donut Hole at the corner of California and Fillmore, drinking my morning cup of coffee and waiting to catch my bus to my job at Yellow Cab when I saw a little St. Bernard puppy running in and out of traffic. I quickly whisked the puppy up and brought him into the café. I contacted the SPCA, who at that time contracted with the City to perform animal care and control services, and told them about the puppy and asked them to pick him up. They said that they did not provide a transport service and that I would have to bring him to them. This posed a dilemma since I would be late for work and I had to take the bus, which at that time, did not allow animals. Ultimately, someone in the café offered to take the dog down to the SPCA.

I was relieved for the dog but disappointed that stray animals seemed to be at risk in our community. I felt that something had to be done to correct this. After thinking about it all day, I spoke to my wife that evening and we decided a 24-hour lost and found switchboard was needed to

of persons we reunited with their animals. We provided this service for almost 3 years and received 40-50 calls a day from individuals who desperately needed our guidance. Around this time, the SF/SPCA experienced a change in leadership and hired a new president. With this change, I determined that the best place to continue this service would be through the shelter that receives lost, stray and abandoned animals. Thus, I reached out to the SPCA and they asked me to set up my system on a volunteer basis at their facility. This was an exciting time at the SPCA where many changes were happening and they were eager to bring in additional programs that directly benefitted animals. Within a few months, they offered me a paid position with the organization and I continued to run the lost and found program and became the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator. Throughout the next few years I worked directly with the president and executive team and took on more responsible positions, culminating in the Director of Animal Control and Welfare position as well as my appointment to the City's Commission of Animal Control &

“As you may know, this has been more than a job or career for me. I feel a strong commitment to overseeing animal welfare here in San Francisco.”

reunite lost pets with their owners. Within 3 months, we rented a space in the back of a flower shop on Chenery Street and set up our switchboard, Protect-A-Pet. I worked with a variety of established animal welfare agencies to get the word out that if someone lost or found a pet or needed a referral for animal services, they should call our number for assistance. As a 24 hour operation, we relied on volunteers to help us since our only income came from the sale of ID tags and from donations





than 200 animals were brought into our shelter. Thus began my journey into the wonderful, wild world of animal care and control.

I have been so fortunate not only to start a new City department from the ground up, but to have spent 20 years making it a model municipal animal control agency that has not only received innumerable awards but has been emulated throughout the country. Whatever success this agency has is directly related to the fact that we have over 40 of the most dedicated, passionate and hard-working individuals in the City and County of San Francisco. They have kept this place a bastion of caring and commitment to protecting animals and citizens of this great city. Of course, I must also acknowledge the wonderful volunteers and animal welfare and rescue organizations that have provided us the support to pursue our mission. Without these volunteers

and our partner agencies, we could not have succeeded to such an extent. As you may know, this has been more than a job or career for me. I feel a strong commitment to overseeing animal welfare here in San Francisco. Accordingly, in early June 2008, the Mayor's Office detailed me to the Recreation and Parks Department to assist the SF Zoo in overcoming the challenges it currently faces. As I move on from my dearly loved department, I feel extremely pleased that under the new leadership of Rebecca Katz, the agency will continue providing quality service and assistance to all residents of San Francisco, both human and non-human.

Thank you for 20 of the best professional years of my life. And to all of the friends I've made over the years—I will see you on the streets of San Francisco.

Welfare. What exciting times we had starting new programs and being much more proactive and responsive to our citizens and their companion animals. A number of years later, I determined to move on from the SPCA but I remained on the City's Animal Control & Welfare Commission. Then, in late 1987, the SPCA determined to relinquish their long-term contract with the City and County of San Francisco for animal control services within two years. Since California had a state law requiring counties to take responsibility for animal control programs, the City had only two options: find a new contractor for these services or start a City Department to do so. Since there was no outside contractor that had the infrastructure or desire to take on this responsibility, the City decided to start its own agency. San Francisco's Chief Administrative Officer Rudy Nothenberg asked me to lead that department. Thus, in 1988 we began planning the many tasks necessary to take over animal control services by the beginning of the next fiscal year. On July 1, 1989, we opened our doors. I vividly remember that day, when more



Animal Care & Control celebrated its 20th Anniversary on July 1st by dedicating the shelter animal park to outgoing Director, Carl Friedman.





Welcome to ACC's New Interim Director

Rebecca Katz



Perhaps my becoming the Interim Director of SF Animal Care & Control was inevitable. My earliest childhood memories of growing up in Berkeley include many feathered, furry, and finned family members—at one point, we had 3 dogs, 4 cats, several hamsters, countless fish, one rabbit, and a duck. Most of these animals were rescued. The most notable rescue was the dog who came to us a year after I was born. We found him by the side of the road and, in truth, he adopted us when he lovingly laid his head on my dad's foot. Despite advertising the lost dog in many newspapers, Jethro (named after Jethro Tull by my rock-loving cousin) was destined to join our family. Our neighbors in Berkeley thought we were a bit unusual but our friends loved coming over to “the zoo.”

My passion for animals led me to consider a career as a veterinarian. I worked at a vet clinic during high school. While my aversion to dissecting a cow eyeball in biology class deterred me from pursuing this career path, my love for animals has never ceased. In law school, I had frenzied moments of hiding my cat before my landlord arrived. Sadly, here at the shelter, we see so many owner-surrendered animals because people have taken them home in violation of their housing contracts (despite good intentions).

Ultimately, I pursued a career in law because I wanted to become an advocate for those who are underrepresented. As a Deputy City Attorney with the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, I was assigned to work with the Department of Animal Care & Control. I was excited to be provided with the opportunity to work on matters that are so important to me. As counsel to the ACC, I worked on policy issues and drafted legislation to improve the lives of animals and those who care for them.

Additionally, I had the great fortune to work with a client who has a huge heart, tremendous insight, and who is a leader in his field as well as an

excellent manager- Carl Friedman. As most of you know, Carl founded this agency and has devoted his career to protecting animals from inhumane and unjust treatment. He also takes his responsibility to humans very seriously and is dedicated to preserving safe relationships between humans and animals. Carl is an outstanding mentor and friend. I am very grateful to him for enabling me to find my dream position. Carl inspired me to pursue this position as he moves on to new challenges himself. I feel privileged to be able to carry Carl and ACC's legacy into the future as an advocate for those who do not have a voice and who need our protection. I also appreciate the chance to work with the tremendous staff, volunteers, and partners he attracted to help fulfill our mission of promoting animal welfare.

I am honored to be able to serve in an agency that makes such a difference for so many and look forward to working with all of you in the community who care so much about the City's animals. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas, suggestions and even stories about ACC.

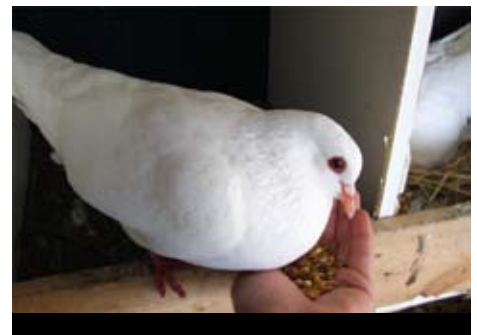
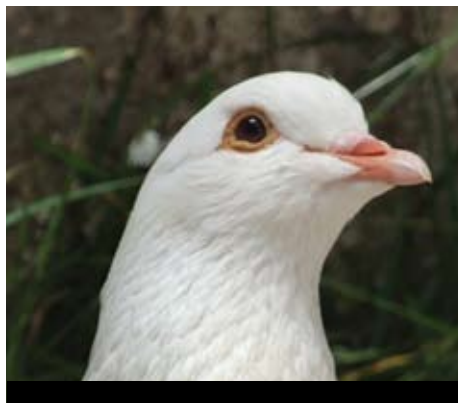


MickaCoo



MickaCoo is a division of Mickaboo Companion Bird Rescue dedicated to rescuing doves and pigeons from shelters and educating the public about these wonderful birds. Doves and pigeons are intelligent, loving birds and are sadly overlooked when adopters are searching for a companion. Animal Care & Control impounds numerous pigeons and doves each year, and the staff is grateful for MickaCoo—and especially ACC Small Animal Volunteer Elizabeth Young—for their care and dedication to these beautiful birds.

www.mickacoo.org





Monkey Business...

Officer Andrea Runge



As an Animal Control Officer for a City as diverse as San Francisco, people always ask me about the crazy animals I encounter. Most of my stories, as with all animal control officers, are not suitable for those with delicate ears, eyes or stomachs. Believe me, you don't want to ask us how our day went at the dinner table. The easier topic of discussion is when someone asks "What is the most unusual animal you've dealt with?" Well... let's see. There was the guy with a horse and a donkey riding across the Bay Bridge on his way to Jerusalem (he forgot to Mapquest). The Jersey calf I picked up from a backyard near Dolores Park. The forty-nine (49!) pigeons that were living in a shopping cart in the Civic Center Plaza. Or the fox, skunks, hawks, falcons, raccoons, opossums, gophers, wild parrots, coyotes, rats, snakes, ducks, chickens, gulls, goats, sheep, rabbits, guinea pigs, pot-bellied pigs, hamsters, ferrets, alligators, fish, lizards, llamas, piranhas and... oh yes... dogs and cats, that I have had the pleasure of meeting during my 12 years on the job.

One of my most memorable animal stories involves a critter that has long filled me with spine-tingling terror. Everyone has irrational fears. For some people it's large dogs. Others are terrified of snakes. Not me. I would gladly take a cross country trip in a '72 Pinto packed floor to ceiling with venomous snakes than come face to face with my biggest fear: the dreaded MONKEY. Monkeys creep me out. Monkeys want our candy and will do anything to get it. I can see it in their eyes. They mean business. I do not want anything to do with monkeys or their business. So when the police called Animal Care & Control out to Park Merced to pick up a pet monkey, wouldn't you know, it was me who was on duty to take the call. Eep.

Little did I know when I walked into that home that I would soon fall in love with my arch enemy. The police had been called out to the house to take a robbery report and when they got there, they found the family had been keeping a marmoset in their living room. His name was "Lilo" and they said they found him on the street seven years ago. He was becoming

territorial and had taken a keen dislike to the men in the family. There are few things worse than having an angry monkey chasing you around your own home, even if it is a tiny marmoset. It is illegal to keep primates in San Francisco (and for good reason), so I seized "Lilo" and his little rabbit cage and assured the family that we would do everything we could to find him a new place to call home. But since no one back at the shelter knew

company that sells marmoset food in a can. We supplemented his diet with meal worms and fresh fruit. A three-story ferret cage was to be his new home and we decorated it with a tiny hammock, tree branches and a mirror. "Lilo" was a Black-tufted marmoset from the genera *Callithrix*, which in Greek means "beautiful fur". Boy, did the ancient Greeks get that right. "Lilo" was as handsome as they come. And those eyes! One look into those

"Monkeys want our candy and will do anything to get it. I can see it in their eyes. They mean business."

anything about marmosets, let alone if a "marmoset haven" even existed, we had some learning to do.

First off, we needed to know what a marmoset was. Marmosets are one of 23 New World monkey species and live in the rainforests of Brazil. Their diet consists primarily of tree sap, fruit and insects. The shelter was fresh out of tree sap, but luckily we located a

thoughtful and curious eyes and I was hooked. Inside that tiny body was a sentient being who melted my heart and I soon began spending as much time as I could with him. No longer did I fear for the safety of my Butterfingers and I found myself searching way too many marmoset sites on the internet to learn everything about my new favorite animal. Did you know they sell marmoset clothing? How wrong is that?



Lilo is now enjoying his new home at the Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation sanctuary. He is living wild, in a spacious enclosure with other marmosets, and has no contact with humans. For more information: www.wildlife-rescue.org

And although “Lilo” would have looked fantastic in the tiny, yellow Minnie Pearl dress I picked out for him, I was horrified that people were allowed to keep these beautiful animals as novelties. Marmosets are wild animals, not dress up dolls. This goes for all wild animals. I’m a firm believer that they should never, ever, never be kept as pets.

“Lilo” spent a month with us as we searched for a sanctuary for him. The local zoos couldn’t take him, which was a good thing, and after many phone calls, we found the most amazing rescue center that would give him the new life that he deserved.

“Lilo” flew to The Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Center, a 187 acre wildlife sanctuary in Kendalia, Texas. Once he arrived, he spent a couple of days in quarantine and then was given a vasectomy so he could join his new family of marmoset friends. “Hello, ladies!”

WRR sent us pictures of “Lilo” in his new, roomy outdoor enclosure, sitting proudly on a branch with the other marmosets. He had come a long way from that living room in San Francisco and was now living the good marmoset life in the Texas sunshine. I am grateful that I got to know “Lilo”. He helped me see monkeys in a new, less

scary way. He was a beautiful little guy that I loved to feed blueberries to while grooming his gorgeous coat. He opened my eyes to the world of responsible wildlife rescue organizations. Enjoy your tree sap and sunshine, “Lilo”. You deserve everything and more.

Lilo gave me an awesome story to tell the next time someone asked “What was the craziest animal you ever picked up?” Until...did I tell you about the one when I was called to remove a fish from a movie theatre?

We’re Going Green

Starting in 2010, Tails of the city will become a thoroughly electronic publication and paper copies will no longer be produced. This plan will allow us to reduce costs and send out shelter information more

frequently. If you would like to ensure that you remain on our mailing list for the new electronic version of ‘Tails of the City’, please send current e-mail contact info to: ACC@sfgov.org



Animal Care & Control Remodel



Animal Care & Control staff, volunteers and rescue groups proudly participated in the San Francisco LGBT Pride Parade in June.



The shelter recently underwent a makeover and was transformed with bright, upbeat colors. The newly added awnings help to keep the shelter temperature comfortable for our animals.



The Tile Project has been installed on the walls of Animal Care & Control. Organized by volunteers Fran Durr and Cindy Arnold, the tiles honor participants' past and present pets and helped raise funding to aid shelter animals.



Animal Care & Control recently upgraded their veterinary facilities to meet state codes. The room contains a new sterile surgical suite and better equipment to help our veterinary staff do their best to help our shelter animals.





Mr. Pickles was born in the ceiling space over Mark (of Pet Food Express' "Michael and Mark") office. Our Daly City store fell in love with Mr. Pickles and adopted him as their store cat.

Make your pet a local hero!

Since 2003, we have displayed the photos of hundreds and hundreds of Bay Area pets participating in the My Mutt Program; resulting in animal shelter and rescue donations totaling over \$400,000 while raising the awareness of the importance of these wonderful organizations.

Participate in the My Mutts program and help The Friends of Animal Care & Control and the animals at the shelter. Make a donation of \$250—and up to \$5000—and your contribution will be matched by an anonymous donor. Your pet will be professionally photographed and the striking poster will be displayed in a Pet Food Express location.

For more information on the My Mutt Program, email mymutt@petfoodexpress.com. Log onto petfoodexpress.com for store locations, adoption info and more!

—Michael & Mark

Make your dog a



HERO



**It's more than just a quick trip back home for a lost dog.
A dog license makes a difference for San Francisco's less fortunate animals!**

Revenue from the sale of dog licenses helps Animal Care & Control, San Francisco's open-door animal shelter.

Lost, abandoned, injured, ill, and abused animals get a safe, clean place to sleep, meals, veterinary care, and enrichment and affection at Animal Care & Control.

A dog license proves that you are a responsible pet owner/guardian and helps the animals at Animal Care & Control find loving homes.

www.animalshelter.sfgov.org





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Thank you to everyone who helped make
Pet Pride Day 2009 a great day for animals!

