



VFHS at 40: Celebrating Accomplishments and Looking Ahead

The Virginia Federation of Humane Societies, Inc, founded in 1959 by Pearl R. Twyne, has been a leader of the animal welfare movement in Virginia.

The organization's general objectives include:

1. To act as an advisor to new societies formed in the state of Virginia for the purpose of fostering humane treatment of animals and preventing cruelty to animals;
2. To encourage and support taking action under the existing laws of the state of Virginia to prevent cruelty to animals;
3. To alert member societies and the general public to animal welfare conditions within the Commonwealth and to foster humane attitudes through education and public relations activities with public officials and private citizens of Virginia;
4. To assist, by every legitimate means, any member society with solving a specific animal welfare problem when possible and practical;
5. To strengthen small societies by combining the effort of all member societies toward the goal of constant improvement in the field of animal welfare;
6. To study existing or proposed laws for the protection of animals and the prevention of cruelty to animals, for purposes of informing and educating the membership; and
7. To work toward the elimination of cruelty to animals and pet overpopulation within the state of Virginia.

Accomplishments of the Federation:

- Ensured the passage of the Animal Welfare Act of 1977;
- Established a Humane Investigator Course, administered by the office of the State Veterinarian;
- Influenced the passage of mandatory rules and regulations for city/county pounds;
- Held annual training conferences for members, animal control officers and humane investigators;
- Annually printed copies of the Comprehensive Animal Laws;
- Alerted and educated members of the General Assembly and public to problems relating to animal protection;
- Assisted in the establishment of Action 81, a Virginia based organization that monitored and exposed pet theft nationwide;
- Provided volunteers to serve on study committees in preparation for legislation;
- Assisted member organizations in planning new shelters and renovating existing shelters;
- Assisted member organizations in developing spay and neuter programs, fund-raising projects, shelter operations and volunteer programs;
- Worked to improve the Comprehensive Animal Laws and to defeat legislation that adversely affected animal welfare;
- Developed a model disaster preparedness plan for animal welfare organizations and animal control agencies;
- Provided volunteers to serve on regional committees for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries;
- Provided volunteers to serve on an advisory committee to the Board of

the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries;

- Provided information and assistance to national, state, and local organizations and agencies throughout the United States;
- Provided speakers for the Federation's Annual Conferences and conferences held by other organizations;
- Ensured that localities were responsible for Animal Control Officers receiving basic training and continuing education;
- Provided training courses that qualified for Animal Control Officer and Humane Investigator Continuing Education;
- Worked with state agencies, animal control departments and other organizations to ensure animal protection and further animal welfare education;
- Produced newsletters and provided educational materials to member organizations and others who requested assistance.

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Memorials

In memory of "Mandy," my little poodle mix by Anne Gowdey. She was probably the smartest dog I have ever had. She will be missed.

In honor of the Northern Neck Humane Society by Virginia Turner.

In memory of Mrs. Marilyn Moncure Taylor by Virginia Turner.

Who to contact for:

Annual Conference

Peggy Allen

Change of Address

Dawn Caldwell

Disaster Preparedness

Peggy Allen

Disease Control

Kay Gross, DVM

Humane Education

Peggy Allen

Laws/Legislation

Teresa Dockery

Dale Bartlett

Membership Dues

Anne Gowdey

Newsletter

Sara Brown

Start Up/New Groups

Anne Gowdey

Shelter Designs

Anne Gowdey

This Just In!

The USDA will not change the definition of "retail pet store" as requested by a petition initiated by the Doris Day Animal League. The position requested APHIS, a part of USDA's marketing and regulatory programs mission area, to redefine the term "retail pet store" so that it includes only nonresidential, commercial retail stores, rather than any pet retailer.

APHIS stated that based on their experience enforcing the regulations, that the current definition is sufficient to ensure the humane handling, care, and treatment of dogs and cats and is consistent with the congressional intent of the Animal Welfare Act. They will, however, begin regulating wholesale dealers of dogs intended for hunting, breeding and security purposes. These dealers were previously not licensed and inspected.

A Message from the Presidents

As this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Federation we felt compelled to reflect on past accomplishments and explore the mechanisms that have brought this organization to the position of high esteem that it holds today.

Dedication, determination, compassion, and resilience have all played a major role but unity, cooperation, and vision are the major factors that have advanced the Federation and animal welfare in the Commonwealth. The elements that brought us to this point will be the same that advances us successfully into the next 40 years.

As the Federation works to combine the efforts of its member's organizations so must each organization work to combine the efforts of those in their community or region that are working for the advancement of animal well-being. Local governing bodies must accept the responsibility, mandated by the code of the Commonwealth, of dealing with stray and unwanted animals, and administering animal control services. If localities are allowed the opportunity to put the issue out of sight it will also be out of mind and efforts will not be progressive in the enforcement of animal control laws nor

will every means to reduce the overpopulation problem be utilized.

While localities are held responsible so must each organization that is involved in animal welfare be responsible. Working together to solve the problems of too many animals, too few homes, disrespect of, and cruelty to animals is the only solution. Too often territorial disputes erupt over differences in philosophies. Efforts should be made to work together toward common goals and not work against one another which only reduces the credibility of all animal welfare organizations in the eyes of the public.

The public too must accept responsibility in solving the problems associated with too many animals and continuing cruelty and neglect. While being an exemplary pet owner the public must also establish a bond with the animal welfare community, lending support and encouragement, and standing firm that local governing bodies should not neglect their responsibilities.

Together, we can make greater strides toward the advancement of animal well-being during the next 40 years.

Teresa Dockery and Anne Gowdey
Co-Presidents

Continuing Education

Wildlife Rehabilitators

The Wildlife Center of Virginia, the nation's leading teaching and research hospital for native wildlife, will sponsor its Third Annual "Call of the Wild" Conference for Wildlife Rehabilitators on November 19th and 21st 1999 in Harrisonburg, VA at Massanetta Springs Conference Center and Resort. Over 200 rehabilitators from ten states attended last year's event. This year promises to be even bigger and better!

Lectures and Workshops will include "how-to" rehabilitation strategies for such species as eastern cottontails, raccoons, bats, skunks, songbirds, Canada geese, and barn owls. Other topics to be discussed are the cooperative hunting strategies of Harris Hawks, basic raptor rehabilitation, anatomy and physiology of mammals and birds, parasitology for rehabilitators, wildlife euthanasia, recruitment and motivation of volunteers, and Human dimensions of wildlife conservation. Additional "hands-on" workshops will feature turtle shell repair, wound management, bandaging and fluid therapy.

An Exhibit Hall, open both days of the conference, will feature wildlife supply vendors and non-profit wildlife organizations. Donated door prizes will be given away during the conference!

Pre-Conference Activities: On Friday, November 19th tours will be offered at The Wildlife Center of Virginia beginning at 2:00 pm. Tours last approximately 45 minutes and will be offered throughout the afternoon with the last tour at 5:30 pm. Please call ahead to reserve a space. (Tours are free).

The Wildlife Rehabilitation

Association of Virginia (WRAV) will hold its second annual membership meeting on Saturday, November 20th from 7:00pm – 9:30pm in Knox Hall at the Massanetta Conference Center. The evening will consist of an organized membership meeting, networking, small group discussions and a swap meet. WRAV members and anyone interested in finding out more about this statewide organization are strongly encouraged to attend.

Dates: Saturday, November 20th and Sunday, November 21st 1999

Time: 8:30 am–5:00 pm each day

Location: Massanetta Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA

For more information and registration materials call: 540-942-WILD or email us at vet@wildlifecenter.org

or visit The Wildlife Center's Web site at www.wildlifecenter.org.

1998 Statewide Summary Report

This report reflects the first full year of statewide animal intake and disposition reporting. A total of 246,070 animal were received into Virginia's pounds and animal shelters. Owners claimed 11% of these animals, while 23% were adopted to new owners. 9% died in the facilities and 53% were euthanized.

The Animals Lose a Friend

On September 6, Jim Godwin (President of the SPCA Petersburg-Colonial Heights) lost a yearlong battle with lung cancer. Most of us knew Jim as a dedicated protector of animals, always willing to lend a hand or lead a fight to make life better for the animals. During his life, Jim saved thousands of animals from the hands of cruelty and contributed tremendously to the advancement of animal welfare in Petersburg, Colonial Heights and across the Commonwealth.

Two people who worked closely with Jim remember him:

Whenever I think of the SPCA of Petersburg and Colonial Heights and of the General Assembly I think of Jim Godwin. It is hard to realize that although he was a driving force in the SPCA from 1975 when he returned from Vietnam and moved to the area all the rest of his life he was president for just ten years. Jim's friends will be glad to know from Virginia, his wife of fifty years that he did not suffer and that he died quietly in his sleep. What a marvelous way for this fiercely loyal friend and defender of animals to go! Under Jim's guidance the SPCA prospered and steadily increased its reputation and influence with lawmakers, law enforcement and the entire community. The newsletter that he authored was superb, filled with straight-to-the-point news including strong indictments of any one involved in acts of animal cruelty. Also, many a time he was called on to go before the General Assembly to testify,

work that he loved and that was often crucial to passage of important animal legislation. Jim's life was a crusade for animals. He loved them and he loved the people who worked for his cause. He was valuable in many ways to those of us who knew and worked with him. He was unique and he will be sorely missed.

Liz Sills

From the first year I began working on animal welfare legislation at the Virginia General Assembly, Jim Godwin attended nearly every day to visit legislators, track legislation, and testify on behalf of animal related legislation. We joked about him being my "keeper of the briefcase" because, for the first three years, I carried a folder and two briefcases with needed materials. He carried my briefcases for me everywhere I went. Over the years, Jim could be counted on to "rush" to Richmond whenever needed when meetings or bills came up. Jim was a member of the special working group appointed by Governor Wilder which resulted in legislation that expanded the care an owner must provide for pets and tightened care requirements for animal boarding establishments. He also served on committees which resulted in spay/neuter and dangerous dog legislation. Jim was highly respected by the legislators he dealt with. He was an untiring friend to the animals in Virginia and will be greatly missed by all of us.

Alvina Pitches

1999 Legislation

This past General Assembly Session saw a record number of animal protection bills. Through the combined efforts of the Federation, its members and other interested groups all but one (SB 721) of the beneficial bills passed. Numerous other bills were defeated or amended to be productive for the animals. Unfortunately Senate Bill 949, which allows localities to enact a bounty on coyotes, passed.

Two bills allowing for the convictions of felony charges passed this session. Thanks to the diligent efforts of the folks at the Virginia Beach SPCA and Senator Kenneth Stolle, a second offense of animal cruelty, under certain circumstances, can now be a felony. This effort was further expanded by HB 2322 which allows for the court to order a person convicted of animal cruelty to receive anger management treatment, psychological treatment or other appropriate treatment. Senator Russell Potts (SB 1259) initiated the second bill allowing for a felony conviction. This bill makes it unlawful to kill a domestic dog or cat for the purpose of obtaining the hide, fur or pelt. A violation shall constitute a class 1 misdemeanor. A second or subsequent violation shall constitute a class 6 felony. Additionally, SB 1260 introduced by Senator Potts and HB 2323 introduced by Delegate David Albo prohibits the sale of a garment containing the hide, fur or pelt of a domestic dog or cat.

Senate Joint Resolution 473

Patron—Senator Yvonne B. Miller

This bill requests the Department of Agriculture to study the value of pets.

Status: Striken

House Joint Resolution 523

Patrons—Delegate R. Creigh Deeds and A. Victor Thomas

This bill proposes adding a provision to the constitution of Virginia that people have the right to hunt, fish and take game.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

Senate Bill 721

Patrons—Senator John S. Edwards, Delegate James M. Shuler

This bill amends 3.1-796.93:1 to provide that the definition of “dangerous dog” includes a dog that attacks or bites another dog and causes serious injury to the other dog. Currently, a dog that bites, attacks or injures another dog can not be deemed a dangerous dog. This bill also amends a current provision that allows localities to require owners of dangerous dogs to have insurance coverage for animal bites to instead allow such owners to have a surety bond.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Vetoed

House Joint Resolution 763

Patron—Delegate Harvey B. Morgan

This resolution directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study ways to improve animal care and treatment at pounds and animal shelters. The Department will establish a task force to assist in the study.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate

Senate Bill 851

Patron—Senator Kenneth W. Stolle

This bill increases the penalty for cruelty to animals from a misdemeanor to a class 6 felony for a second offense under certain circumstances. It makes a second offense of cruelty to animals a felony if either offense results in the death of an animal.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

Senate Bill 918

Patroned by Senator Richard Saslaw

This bill allows Fairfax County to enact an ordinance that prohibits persons from training attack dogs on residential property.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

Senate Bill 935

Patron—Senator L. Louise Lucas

This bill increases the fine for the failure to comply with a sterilization agreement signed when adopting an animal from \$50 to \$150. It also allows pounds and animal shelters to adopt animals outside of their locality and outside of their locality’s adjacent political subdivisions provided that the animal is sterilized prior to adoption.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

Senate Bill 949

Patroned by Senator Madison Marye

This bill allows localities to enact an ordinance to permit the killing of coyotes within its boundaries at any time and may pay, out of any available fund, a bounty for each coyote killed within its boundaries.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

House Joint Resolution 989

Patron—Harry H. Purkey

This resolution commends Elizabeth Sills for her accomplishments in animal welfare (printed in its entirety in this newsletter)

Senate Bill 1259

Patron—Senator Russell Potts, Jr.

This bill makes it unlawful to kill a domestic dog or cat for the purpose of obtaining the hide, fur or pelt. A violation shall constitute a class 1 misdemeanor. A second or subsequent violation shall constitute a class 6 felony.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

Senate Bill 1260

Patroned by Senator Russell Potts, Jr.

This bill prohibits the sale of a garment containing the hide, fur or pelt of a domestic dog or cat.

Status: Passed Senate, Passed House, Governor Approved

House Bill 1460

Patron—Delegate W. Taylie Murphy

This bill grants immunity for wildlife rehabilitators permitted by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and volunteers working under their direct supervision from civil damages for any act or omission resulting from the rendering of assistance or advice relating to wildlife that is orphaned or injured.

Status: Left in House Courts of Justice Committee

House Bill 1532

Patron—Delegate William J. Howell

This bill raises the penalty from a Class 4 to a Class 2 misdemeanor if the owner

or keeper of any exotic reptile or type of reptile not native to the Commonwealth of Virginia, including but not limited to the American alligator, keeps the reptile in any manner that will permit its escape or to knowingly permit the reptile to run at large.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 1654

Patron—Delegate Jerrauld C. Jones

This bill removes “organized” from the current language and provides a provision that allows the court to order that those convicted of dog fighting shall not own future companion animals. It also adds a provision to 3.1-796.115 to allow localities to adopt an ordinance to require the owner of any animal, which has been seized, for more than 30 days, to post a bond in surety with the locality. The bond will be for the amount of the cost of boarding the animal for a period of time set in the ordinance, not to exceed nine months.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 1797

(previously House Bill 1525)

Patron—Delegate Alan A. Diamonstein

This bill creates a special license plate for supporters of greyhound adoption programs.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 1906

Patron—Delegate Lionell Spruill, Sr.

This bill allows localities to charge a fee to owners of any poisonous or exotic animal found running at large to cover the locality’s actual cost in locating and capturing or otherwise disposing of the animal.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 1982

Patron—John J. Davies, III

This bill allows a circuit court to revoke the appointment of a humane investigator for good cause shown. Currently, such appointments may only be revoked if the person is no longer able to perform the duties of a humane investiga-

tor, or has been convicted of a felony, Class 1 misdemeanor, or a violation of any law regarding animals. Good cause is defined in Black’s Law Dictionary as substantial reason, one that affords a legal excuse. Any ground which is put forward by authorities in good faith and which is not arbitrary, irrational, unreasonable or irrelevant to the duties with which such authorities are charged, and is not limited to some form of inefficiency or of misconduct on the part of the person dismissed.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 2155

Patron—Delegate George W. Grayson

This bill began with language to allow pounds and animal shelters to adopt animals outside of their locality with no provision that the animal be first sterilized. A substitute bill was adopted that allows pounds and animal shelters to adopt animals outside of their locality or the locality’s adjacent political subdivisions provided that the animal is first sterilized. It also increases the fine for the failure to comply with a sterilization agreement signed when adopting an animal from \$50 to \$150.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 2322

Patron—Delegate David B. Albo

This bill allows the court to order that a person convicted of animal cruelty must receive anger management treatment, psychological treatment or other appropriate treatment. The court may also impose the cost of such a program or counseling upon the person convicted.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 2323

Patron—David B. Albo

This bill prohibits any person from selling a garment containing the hide, fur or pelt which he knows to be that of a domestic dog or cat.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

House Bill 2487

Patroned by Delegate Raymond R.

Guest, Jr. and Delegate John S. Reid

This bill states that the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall employ accepted scientific principles and procedures in the management of the Commonwealth’s wildlife and natural resources.

Status: Passed House, Passed Senate, Governor Approved

Legislation that passed both the House and Senate and was approved by the Governor became effective July 1, 1999.

PetFix Coalition Prevents over 40,000 Unwanted Births

For the fourth year, “PetFix Month” was effectively carried out in Virginia cities and counties from Rockingham County/Harrisonburg to Virginia Beach. Fifty six proactive veterinary offices in Virginia participated in this program.

The Coalition’s goal is to spay or neuter as many dogs and cats as possible during the month of February each year to prevent the births of thousands of unwanted animals. Pet owners were able to call for a reduced price spay or neuter with one of the participating veterinarians in their area. 3,373 animals were “fixed” by cooperating veterinarians during “Petfix Month” preventing, assuming each reproduce 12 offspring during the year, 40,476 unwanted animals from being born this year in Virginia.

In the four year existence of “PetFix” over 10,000 “fixed” pets could have reproduced literally millions of puppies and kittens, many of them doomed to an early death. Through “PetFix Month”, the Coalition has become a humane solution to pet overpopulation.

Currently, twenty-four Virginia animal welfare organizations comprise the PetFix Coalition. To spread these efforts across the state, more organizations are needed to participate. If your organization would like to join the PetFix Coalition and participate in Pet Fix Month contact them at: PetFix Coalition, P.O. Box 35998, Richmond, VA 23235, 804-739-7868 or 1-888-PETFIX1.

1999 Annual Conference

The 1999 Virginia Federation of Humane Societies' Annual Conference was held March 26 and 27 in Waynesboro, Virginia at the Inn at Afton. One Hundred and forty people attended the conference, which was sponsored by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, and PetsMart Charities.

The conference opened with remarks by Co-President, Teresa Dockery and the presentation of the *Bravo Award* to William M. Sims, Jr., DVM, State Veterinarian, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.



Dr. William M. Sims receives the Bravo Award from VFHS Co-President Teresa Dockery

The opening session was followed by concurrent presentations on a variety of topics.

Eric Grant of the ASPCA talked about the "Care and Feeding of Volunteers." His presentation covered the entire volunteer experience including recruitment, selection, interviewing, orientation, training, and management. He emphasized that volunteers should be treated and managed like employees, with files maintained, and conflict management, grievance and termination procedures in place. A successful volunteer program is structured to ensure that volunteers receive consistent training, are given the equipment they need to do the job, and are shown appropriate appreciation.

Suzanne Jenkins, VMD, MPH of the Virginia Department of Health presented an overview and update on rabies and zoonotic diseases.

Chris Champine of the HSUS discussed the "Advantages of Computerizing" the shelter and office. He discussed the capabilities of various software applications designed for use in shelters.

Sharon Adams of the Virginia Beach SPCA began the discussion of "Spay/Neuter Clinics" by challenging the participants to examine the spay/neuter compliance of animals adopted from their organizations; and to work hard to solve the problem of non-compliance in new ways, as the current methods are not always working. She gave a history of the Virginia Beach SPCA's development of spay/neuter clinics beginning in 1972 and the legal challenges that have been overcome. She described the organization's current clinic, established in 1993, which spays and neuters animals adopted from the SPCA at the end of the adoption process.

Kay Gross, DVM, then provided the participants with the logistics of establishing a spay/neuter clinic from understanding the pertinent statutes and regulations, to obtaining necessary permits, to the facilities and equipment required. She also discussed the financial requirements for operating a clinic and the options available for funding it.

To conclude the first day of the conference, William M. Sims, DVM, State Veterinarian, Virginia Department of

Agriculture and Consumer Services, Mark Kumpf, Senior Humane Officer with the Norfolk Animal Management Center and VACA, Alvina Pitches, VFHS, and Teresa Dockery, VFHS, provided an overview of the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws and Virginia Regulations. The presentation included a review of the legislative changes as a result of the 1999 General Assembly, a review of the forms and training requirements for Humane Investigators, and the Animal Summary Report and other reporting standards.

Following Friday's sessions, the conferees were invited to visit the Wildlife Center of Virginia. After a presentation by staff members about the work of the Center, a tour was given of the facility.

Another popular feature of the conference was the *Riders on the Storm* animal rescue vehicle. Participants toured the fully equipped trailer and heard how the organization operates in a wide variety of disaster situations.

Janice Mininberg, Director of Education and Legislative Action for the Women's Humane Society, opened the second day of the conference with an innovative presentation titled "Humane Education in the Classroom." The participants were divided into groups and encouraged to "think outside the box" in developing classroom learning activities for such subjects as euthanasia decision-making,



Conference participants toured the *Riders on the Storm* rescue vehicle.

animal behavior, rabies, myths about cats, parasites, and discomfort in animals. Each group then described the ideas they developed to present their subject in a creative and effective manner.

In a concurrent session, Chris Champine and Mark Kumpf, discussed "Education and Enforcement in Field Services."

Tools to use in the field, creative strategies for handling complaints, identification of proper field equipment, and essential components of a comprehensive animal services program were covered in their presentation.

Chris Champine started the discussion of "Ingredients of a Successful Adoption Program." He listed the ingredients of a successful adoption from screening the animal at intake to the follow-up procedure after adoption. He also described the potential pitfalls of the strategy of increasing adoptions by reducing standards.

Paulette Dean of the Danville Humane Society then described her organization's successful efforts to increase the quality of adoptions, as a result of problems detected by a survey taken. Stricter adoption guidelines were implemented, the adoption contract was revised, a 24-hour waiting period for adoptions was initiated, and a structured phone follow-up schedule was developed. She reminded the participants that caring cannot end when an animal leaves the shelter.

Peggy Morrison-Curtis, Senior Program Consultant with American Humane Association, gave a presentation on "Grant Writing." She described the essential elements for preparing a successful grant proposal and grant sources.

The conference ended with an Open Forum and Networking session.



Dr. William M. Sims with VFHS Co-President Anne Gowdey



Dr. Suzanne Jenkins discusses rabies and zoonotic diseases.



Chris Champine of HSUS and Paulette Dean of the Danville Humane Society

Mark this Date on Your Calendar!

**VFHS 2000 Annual Conference
Friday, March 31
and
Saturday, April 1**

The Federation's officers report that this will be the best Annual Conference ever with more workshops than in past years and top-knotch presenters from around the country. Topics of interest to established organizations will be expanded this year. There will also be special workshops for new and start up organizations, and courses that qualify for continuing education for Humane Investigators and Animal Control Officers.

Virginia Health Department Advises Catching Bats Can Save Thousands

The old expression “bats in your belfry” may describe literally the location of the tiny flying mammals in your bell tower. But if you happen to have bats in your house instead, the Virginia Department of Health suggest how to save thousands of dollars in potentially unnecessary medical cost.

Health Department officials receive numerous telephone calls about bats that take up residence in places normally inhabited by humans. Unless the bat is captured properly so it can be tested for rabies, anyone potentially bitten could have to undergo expensive anti-rabies vaccine treatment. Shots aren't necessary if the bat is captured, tested and determined to be free of rabies. A very small percentage of bats have rabies but no simple way exists to distinguish which ones have it. Bat bites also can be so small they go unnoticed.

Without the dead bat's body intact to verify that it didn't have deadly rabies and unless you're 100 percent certain no person or pet was bitten, costly shots could be required. The series of shots, while no longer as painful as many years ago, is still expensive, ranging from \$1,300 to \$2,500 at an emergency room or physician's office.

Assistant State Epidemiologist Suzanne R. Jenkins, VMD, MPH, cites a 1995 case from another state: A bat had gotten into the bedroom of a sleeping 4-year-old child. “The bat was caught, killed and thrown out, and the child showed no symptoms of a bite wound,” Dr. Jenkins says. “A month later the child developed rabies symptoms and died. The dead bat's remains were recovered later and tested positive for rabies.”

“This child could have been saved if the bat had been captured and tested at the time of the bite and if the child had been given the shots early enough,” Dr. Jenkins says. “In situations where you can't rule out that someone has been bitten, it's very important to capture the bat with brain intact so it can be tested for rabies. This helps to avoid needless shots or to avert a needless death.”

Rabies is incurable and fatal once

symptoms begin, usually within 3-8 weeks but sometimes years later. Preventive is needed, Jenkins says, after a bite or direct contact with a rabid or untestable bat. Anti-rabies shots also are recommended if “reasonable probability” exist of direct physical contact with a bat, such as when a bat is discovered in a room with an unattended young child or a person who is sleeping, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or with sensory or mental impairment.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease affecting the nervous system of humans and other mammals. The disease is spread by saliva from a rabid animal, such as occurs during a bite, or from saliva entering a fresh cut or open wound from handling a rabid animal. Wild mammals, including bats, raccoons, skunks or foxes, can have rabies and transmit it to people or pets. Since 1990 in the U.S., 20 of 27 human rabies cases have been attributed to bats. The most recent case was in 1998 when a Nottoway County, VA prison inmate contracted rabies. He didn't know he'd been bitten, probably while working outdoors.

Catching a bat to have it tested for rabies may sound like a daunting task, but there is a safe way to do it, according to Dr. Jenkins. If professional help—an extermination company specializing in bat removal or an animal control officer—isn't available, here's how to capture the bat when someone possibly has had direct contact:

- Turn on room lights and close windows, doors and closets.
- Wear leather work gloves and approach the bat slowly when it lands.
- Place a coffee can, sturdy box or bucket over the bat.
- Slide a piece of cardboard under the can, box, or bucket to trap the bat.
- Tape up the cardboard tightly to the container.
- Poke holes in the cardboard to allow the bat to breathe.
- Contact the local health department or animal control office to arrange for rabies testing.

If you are sure people or pets haven't been exposed to the bat, confine it to a room with the windows and doors open only to the outside so the bat can safely escape. Bats should be captured only when direct human or pet exposure has occurred.

In lieu of bat catching, “bat-proofing” your home may be an easier preventive measure. You can contact a wildlife conservation organization, animal control officer or the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for advice on bat-proofing. Local DGIF offices employ non-game wildlife biologist who can provide information. Do-it-yourselfers may follow these suggestions:

- Survey your house for holes that might allow bats to come in.
- Because bats are tiny and can squeeze through tight spaces, caulk openings larger than a half-inch by a quarter-inch.
- Use screens on windows, caps on chimneys and draft guards beneath attic doors.
- Use caulking or steel wool to fill in around electrical and plumbing holes.
- Ensure that outside-opening doors fit tightly.
- Cover outside entry points in attics or buildings where bats may roost.

If you already have bats in your attic, watch where they come out at dusk, and then hang bird netting over the holes to prevent reentry. If you exclude adult bats in this manner during the summer, however, young bats that are unable to fly may be trapped inside your home. Because bats leave attics to hibernate during the fall and winter months, choosing this time to “bat-proof” your attic will conserve valuable wildlife and lessen the likelihood of a sanitary problem.

For more information about bats or rabies, call your local health department, especially if someone has had direct contact with bats. You also can visit the Virginia Department of Health website at <http://www.vdh.state.va.us> and click on the Office of Epidemiology.

VFHS Adds Three Members to Executive Committee

A recent amendment to the Federation's By Laws created three new positions on the Executive Committee. Sara Brown, Debbie Hartman and Don Wells were elected at the Annual Conference to fill these positions. While they do not formally begin their term until January 1, 2000 each of them has already begun participating in the Federation's programs. Join with us in welcoming these three wonderful additions to the VFHS team.

Sara Brown has been involved in animal welfare since 1975 when she became involved with the Central Missouri Humane Society in Columbia, Missouri. She served as a member of the education committee, and helped plan and implement a low-cost spay/neuter clinic. She also served as a Board Member and Secretary. She became an active member of the SPCA of Winchester, Frederick, and Clarke Counties after moving to Winchester in 1980. She has served on the Board of Directors as President and Secretary and on various committees. Since 1996, she has been a volunteer with Spay Today. Sara is employed in the Office of Institutional Advancement of Lord Fairfax Community College. She holds a B. A.

degree in zoology from Duke University and a M.S. degree in botany from the University of Arizona.

Deborah Hartman is a 1975 honor graduate of Brants School of Business in Staunton. A winner of several awards, she received the School's Service Award and was recognized in Who's Who in America's Business and Technical Schools for 1975. She has worked as a customer service representative for Virginia Power and been actively involved with the training and caring of Tennessee Walking Horses. During the 1985 celebration in Shelbyville, TN, she rode "Pride's Bold Threat" to Reserve World Championship honors. She served as founding President of the South Carolina Walking Horse, Ladies Auxiliary in 1986 and 1987. In 1991 Deborah became Director of the Augusta County SPCA.

Donald Wells attended John Tyler Community College and served in the United States Air Force. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Surry County SPCA for five years and served as chairman for four of those years. He is also a Humane Investigator for Surry County. Donald and wife, Linda live in Disputana.

Special Recognition

Delegate Andy Guest who sponsored the Animal Welfare Act and the Revised Dog Laws of 1977 has elected not to seek another term in the General Assembly. The Federation wishes to thank Delegate Guest for the support he has given to improving animal welfare over the years. Liz Sills recounts a touching statement that he once made, "animals are like children; they must be treated with kindness, love, humaneness and protection." We wish Delegate Guest luck and good fortune in his retirement.

Animal Friendly License Plate

The amount distributed to localities for sterilization from the sales of the *Animal Friendly* license plate for the latest reporting period, September, 1998–August, 1999, are in and the amount is \$52,395. Combined with the figure of \$9,390 for September 1997–August 1998 brings a running total of \$61,785 for the first two years of the program in Virginia. This is good news!

House Joint Resolution Honors Liz Sills

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 899

Commending Elizabeth Sills.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates,
February 26, 1999

Agreed to by the Senate, February 27, 1999

WHEREAS, one of the founding members of the Virginia Beach Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Elizabeth Sills has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the success of the organization and to the welfare of animals across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Sills has served as executive director of the SPCA and was the organization's president from 1968 to 1974; and

WHEREAS, few individuals have done more than Elizabeth Sills to enhance the humane treatment of cats, dogs, and

other animals delivered to the SPCA; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Sills was active in the formation of the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies and served as its vice president in 1974 and its president from 1975 to 1989; and

WHEREAS, under the guidance and leadership of Elizabeth Sills, the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies prepared articles of incorporation to gain tax-exempt status, added many new organizations and individual members, witnessed the passage of the Animal Welfare Act in 1977, established a humane investigator program, and alerted members of the General Assembly to the problems of animal protection; and

WHEREAS, in honor of her many years of service to animal welfare, Elizabeth

Sills was presented the President's Bravo Award by the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend Elizabeth Sills for her long and meritorious service on behalf of the animals of Virginia Beach and the Commonwealth; and, be it RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Elizabeth Sills as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and gratitude for her manifold contributions to the cause of animal welfare.

House Patrons: Purkey, Croshaw, Drake, Guest, Hamilton, Howell, Jones, S.C., Melvin, Putney, Reid, Robinson, Rollinson, Tata, Wagner and Wardrup

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Participate in “LESS”!

The campaign for “Less” animals, launched at the 1999 Annual Conference, is designed to keep the focus on the long-term goal of every animal welfare organization—to reduce the number of unwanted animals. To achieve “Less” animals, the following tools must be used—”S”terilization, “S”terilization, “E”ducation, “L”egislation.

Sterilization used twice is most appropriate, because it is the answer to the problem, but it can’t be accomplished without Education and Legislation.

Our goals must include:

- Spaying and neutering every animal prior to adoption
- Funding low cost spay/neuter clinics
- Educating the general public about the importance of spaying and neutering

- Convincing local governments to strictly enforce mandatory sterilization of animals adopted from municipal owned facilities and to be progressive in the enforcement of animal control laws and ordinances that prevent dogs and cats from having the opportunity to reproduce

We must further be creative in our means of dealing with this problem and never lose site of the objective of eliminating the overpopulation problem
EVERYONE MUST PARTICIPATE IN “LESS”!

Notice

The Eastern Regional Office of the USDA has moved to North Carolina. At the current time, that office is covering Virginia. The contact number is 919-856-4504.

Notice to Humane Investigators

3.1-796.106:2 of the code of Virginia requires that Humane Investigators record on a form approved by the State Veterinarian every investigation he performs. In addition, each Humane Investigator must file a quarterly report summarizing these records with the State Veterinarian on a form approved by him. A Humane Investigator’s appointment may be revoked if he fails to file these reports. To obtain a copy of the form and update your records contact the State Veterinarian’s office at 804-786-2481.