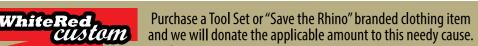


Journal of the Durban & Coast SPCA

December 2015 ISSUE



Help Save the Rhino





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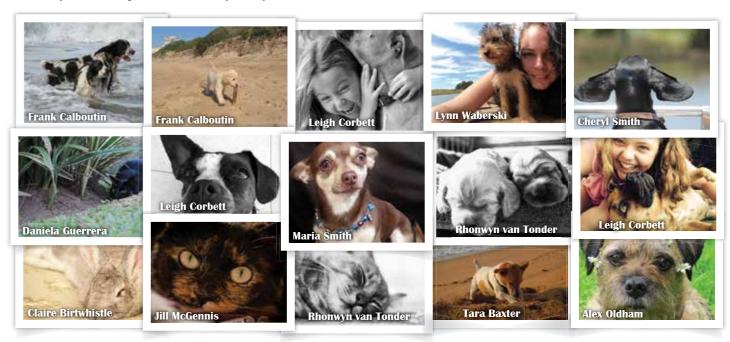


Contents:

EDITORIAL 4	COMMITTEE NEWS	15
PAWS FOR THOUGHT WITH CAROLINE 5	FROM OUR INSPECTORATE Face up to appalling cruelty!	16-17
PIGEON POST6-8	THE DURBAN & COAST SPCA HUMANE EDUCATION Links between the Inspectorate and Humane Education	18-19
'PAWS FOR THE CAMERA' PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS9	ADOPTION STORIES The dog that loves pawpaw Eseltjiesrus, donkey Eden	20-21
PRECIOUS PETS10-11	WILDLIFE Driven Hunting - a legal inadequacy here? Consider adopting an older pet	22
DURBAN & COAST SPCA NEWS 12-15	WHISKERS The story of Sibella	23

Calendar Competition: Highly recommended images:

Our 'Paws for the Camera' Competition created much interest and we had many entries. Sadly not everone could be a winner. For reasons of composition or resolution some of our favourite images did not make it inside the calendar. But we could not let them go unacknowledged. So here is a selection of the 'nearly made it' images. Better luck next year Guys!



Alison Chadwick's puppy Jessie flashes her best smile Judges' Choice of 2015 · 'Paws for the Camera' Competition.

5	'
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Making a difference

Animal welfare is a serious business, and we often have to tackle serious issues on our website and in our publications. We love having happy stories to pass on to you, but that's not our main business. Our main business is the prevention of cruelty to animals in every way open to us. We rescue. We do our best to heal. We are desperate to find homes for as many of our animals as possible, while facing up to the sad reality that the number of our animals far exceeds the homes we are able to find for them.

Our inspectors endeavour to educate as they go about their often heart-breaking work. But we also come across nuggets of pure gold: people who often have very little and yet love and care for their animals; people who in all walks of life identify with the suffering of other living creatures and do not turn and look the other way because "it's too upsetting"; volunteers who give generously of their time and labour. The SPCA could not operate without the generous hearts of its supporters.

One thing we know for sure is that compassion can be taught, just as callousness can be passed on in both a family and a society. The way we behave towards other living creatures either enriches us or diminishes us. This is one of the fundamental messages of our SPCA Humane Education project for primary schools: what you do for other living creatures, you do for yourself as well.

One often hears people say: "I'm just one person. I can't change the world." What a mess we would be in if everyone thought like that. Every small act of kindness matters. One never knows where the ripples will end, and all animals have communication skills. Survival depends on it.

Despite widespread cruelty to animals, including in the callous ways animals are bred, housed, shipped, transported and treated like 'things' in the chilling processes of providing food for humans, there are increasing signs that many people are waking up to the fact that animals are thinking, feeling, intelligent creatures and have many abilities that are superior to our own. Many have complex social structures. Organisations that speak up for animals are springing up all the time, even though impinging on cruel or careless practices can be a slow and heartbreaking process.

Does it matter to us? Yes, it does!

In July came news of a significant victory for those who care about animal welfare: it was announced by the Gadhimai Temple Trust that no more animals would be killed in Nepal's five-yearly ceremonial sacrifice to Gadhimai, the Hindu goddess of power. The Trust had decided that it was time to transform this old tradition and to replace the killing of millions of animals throughout Nepal over the years with peaceful worship and celebration. It was estimated that as many as half a million buffalo, goats, chickens and other animals were sacrificed during the 2009 festival.

The Supreme Court of India had earlier intervened to prevent people from transporting animals from India to Nepal for the world's largest animal sacrifice. As a consequence of this decision, fewer animals were sacrificed last year, but the event did follow the traditional pattern. Now that is over. Why? Because animal advocates all over the world campaigned and because those in charge of the festival listened, re-thought the consequences and the meaning of the sacrifice, and decided

that peaceful worship served the purpose far better. It is recognised that there is still much work to be done, not only in Nepal, but anywhere in the world where sacrifice continues to mar man's religious or cultural ceremonies.

Here in KwaZulu-Natal, there was the re-emergence of the cruel and excruciatingly slow killing of the young bull at the hands of unarmed warrior youths at the Festival of the First Fruits. The NSPCA and other organisations, including international bodies, as well as caring individuals, have fought this for years. A 2009 court decision agreed with its continuation, apparently on cultural grounds, yet the very nature of culture encompasses growth and change. The media have gone silent on the issue of the bull, but the matter needs re-thinking.

The inimitable Justice Malala is among those who have written fiercely against this awful practice. The Witness published my own article on the subject a few years ago. Cultures evolve, and ceremonies change, often to become merely symbolic. In ancient times, even human sacrifice to goddesses of nature or gods of one kind or another was not uncommon across most of the world, but a time comes when ceremonies involving cruelty are questioned and abandoned.

This might involve some bravery on the part of those within the culture who speak up against old traditions. The decision of the Badhimai Temple is not only applauded, but recognised as requiring the particular kind of courage needed when people speak up from within their own culture, knowing that many others within it will not agree.

The question is: how can anyone continue to support deliberate cruelty to human or animal when the darker aspects of many traditions are reflected on? There remain many traditions involving animal sacrifice in the world today, including in our own country, as a little research will reveal. We should outgrow old cultural traditions involving cruelty. Compassion requires that we feel for all creatures. Without compassion, people can use and abuse and feel no pangs of conscience. If there are people who are resistant to the abandonment of cruel practices, then the law should take on the responsibility that they are rejecting.

Humane Society International/India regards the decision of the Gadhimai Temple Trust as a "tremendous victory for compassion". There is some controversy about the decision, of course, because it is pointed out that all over the world billions of animals are killed out of sight of the public every year in processes that often do not bear scrutiny and that, if witnessed at first hand, would make most people into instant vegetarians.

So does the decision made by the Gadhimai Temple Trust matter? Yes, it does. It matters because it is decisions like this that create wider awareness, that make people question beliefs that do not belong in evolving societies, that begin to stir compassion and to raise questions like: 'But is this really necessary?' It's a question we need to be asking about ourselves, including about some of the practices involved in factory farming. If anything consistently has the power to bring out the best in us, it's compassion.

Shirley Bell shirleybell@mweb.co.za



It could be argued that it is an easy job to take over a well-run organisation. But to my mind, it is even harder to do so. It is in my nature to strive for excellence, so to try to perfect that which is already excellent is indeed very challenging!

Having said that, there is always room for improvement and innovation, and I believe that the efforts made in restructuring staff this year have paid off. I am extremely proud of all our staff members, who have admirably adjusted to quite a number of changes made since I became General Manager, not only in being fully supportive, but in stepping up and going well beyond the line of duty to ensure that our SPCA is a branch that we feel immensely privileged to be serving.

I wholeheartedly offer my congratulations to Senior Inspector Candice Sadayan who is now Acting Chief of the Inspectorate department. I have full confidence that Candice's passion and painstaking attention to detail will take her Inspectorate team to new heights, and that they will be inspired to strive to do even more in preventing cruelty.

Our facilities, kennels and catteries are immaculate, and I am always proud when I get positive feedback such as that from a recent visitor who commented that he could have "eaten off of the floors".

Ralph Hayward has been appointed Facilities Supervisor and the combination of his background in electrical engineering and his enduring love for the animals in our care make this an ideal position for him, ensuring very high standards.

We have added some new features, like the personalised kitty boxes and specialised jungle gym for our famous Yard Cats in Coffee Cats Café. We have also introduced a humorous "Yard Cat Pin Up of the Month" to encourage monthly sponsorships to assist with their feeding and care.

We are actively seeking larger, more accessible premises for our Dolphin Coast branch. Booming Ballito has outgrown the small branch, which has only 15 kennels. The North Coast areas are being developed at a rapid rate. Ballito is no longer a sleepy seaside town. It has become a major regional node and has established itself as a key commuter town with a rapidly expanding permanent population. The growth of the local communities means that we must gear up for an increased work load in animal welfare, and for the greater fundraising potential.

We have kept a beady eye on finances, and there has been no wasteful expenditure. Everything we have done, and everything we are planning, illustrates our dedication to our work in a field that is essential in working towards a caring society: a deep concern for the welfare of animals.

I thank our Management Committee for their unwavering support during this year of transition. I am, as ever, humbly grateful for the altruistic contribution of our donors, volunteers, and members. We at the Durban & Coast SPCA strive every day to make ours a cause that you can be proud to support.

Caroline Smith General Manager





Come on People...throw us a bone!

Monthly giving is an easy, efficient way to make a difference all year long. Monthly donations provide a consistent, reliable income which helps to sustain the daily operations of our SPCA.

As little as R50 a month can make a big difference to the lives of the animals in our care... and don't forget, all donations are tax-deductible! Contact the Fundraising team to sign up for your debit order now!

Or sign up online today www.spcadbn.org.za/donate.asp

These lovely banners (designed by the very talented Flying Ant Designs) are used by our marketing team in various shopping centres.

Call us on (031) 579 6500 if you would like to assist in this very worthwhile project.

4 / The Animal Angle / December 2015

Visit our website www.spcadbn.org.za



About loving donkeys



Dear Shirley Bell

We have loved your articles on the Donkey Sanctuary, which is close to our hearts as well, so we hope you will find this letter

We became aware of the Donkey Sanctuary in this way: on a busy Saturday morning at a local supermarket, we noticed a car next to us with the Eseltjiesrus logo on the windscreen. Just then, the driver returned, so we asked her for more details. I made a note of the contact number and spoke to Annemarie, who sent us a photo shoot of eight donkeys needing adoption. Spookie was one of our original four donkeys. We also had Ida, Coco and my very special little donkey, Dinky. Eventually, only Dinky survived of the four, but Annemarie has given us four other precious donkeys over the years.

As with you, donkeys were very much part of my childhood when I was growing up in Namibia. 'Die ou donkiekarretjie' was the only form of transport for many people in southern Namibia and along the banks of the Orange river in the Upington area. I was always sad at the sight of these faithful little animals plodding along, often overloaded.

Our travels in the Middle East made us even more aware of their plight, so Eseltjiesrus was an immediate interest for us. Annemarie sends us quarterly reports and pictures. It has been wonderful and heartwarming to see how the rescued donkeys have improved under the special loving care of her team. What has also fascinated us is the social interaction and the friendships and bondings the donkeys form.

My husband and I have found a new dimension in our lives, a very rewarding and enriching one. I am including photographs for your interest. One is of my very clever little Dinky and Blondie, who is one of Clive's donkeys.

Marianna and Clive Chamberlain

Receiving this letter gave me much pleasure. See Annemarie's reports on Dinky and Blondie in this issue, along with photographs of them at Eseltjiesrus. Ed.



The lifetimes of cats

I am a cat-lover and have just come across an article on how long cats live. It seems that, as recently as twenty-five years ago, cats tended to have much shorter lives than they

An important aspect is whether your cat is an indoor or outdoor animal. Indoor cats tend to live much longer as they are less likely to pick up infections or be exposed to dangerous viruses, be struck by vehicles, or attacked by dogs or other cats. If domestic cats are attacked by feral cats, the likelihood of viral infections is much greater.

The article says that indoor cats live from 12 to 18 years, whereas cats that spend their lives unsheltered probably live around five or six years.

I'm not sure how useful it is to generalise, though. Our family had two cats that lived past the age of 19 years. One was a homebody, and the other often disappeared at night for hours. The homebody was a cat who liked to keep to herself, while the wanderer was a sociable creature, who remained at home all day but frequently took himself off at night. Both had been sterilised.

Bette F (by e-mail)



Protecting bees and bats

The Animal Angle has drawn attention from time to time to the role played by bees and bats in pollination and the concern being shown in the diminishing population of bees all over the world. Bats are also of great importance. (For the Bat Interest Group of KZN, go to http://www.batskzn.co.za)

It was interesting to read in an article by Colleen Dardagan in The Mercury a few months ago that a large number of beehives have been installed in the macadamia nut orchards on our KZN South Coast. Macadamia nut farmer, Dave Mattison, drew attention to the vital role played by bees: "We are so aware of the bees. We don't spray the trees when they are flowering and, when we do, we spray only at night to avoid harming the bee population."

The hives have been installed by private bee farmers at no charge. They are rewarded later when they harvest the honey.

David Mattison reported that he is also having bat "hotels" installed to encourage bats. Since bats eat many harmful insects, it is hoped that larger bat populations will allow nut farmers to reduce their spraying programme.

The problem insects are borer and stinkbugs which damage the nut kernels. Ladybirds are encouraged as they feed on

Macadamia nuts are indigenous to Australia, but the quality of South African macadamia nuts is very high, and most are imported.

We rarely see ladybirds in our gardens these days. I remember how we often found them in the garden when I was a child, and we would sing the ladybird song: "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home. Your house is on fire, and your children have gone."

Millie (by e-mail)



Let's worry about bees

We've been hearing a lot lately about the diminishing number of bees and the possible consequences of reduced pollination. There have many theories regarding loss of bee populations, one being the lavish use of dangerous pesticides.

I have just read that Europe has restricted the use of chemicals called neonicotinoids which could be affecting reproduction in

The article reports that bees could also be taking in nectar that is laced with nicotine-related chemicals in pesticides. These are tasteless and can cause addiction in the same way that human beings can become addicted to smoking cigarettes.

When I was working in my garden and watching two sunbirds feeding from the clerodendrum, which bees also like, it struck me that I rarely see bees these days. I wondered to what extent birds are affected by the nicotine-related chemicals that are apparently affecting bee reproduction and also likely to cause

Beryl Peters (by e-mail)



Family dogs fall victim to bees

We have recently had a swarm of bees removed from our garden by a 'bee man' and re-sited, but soon afterwards the site seemed to be occupied by bees again. Our bee man told us that these were opportunistic 'roque' bees who were taking over the abandoned nest. He then re-located most of these

I read about the Pietermaritzburg incident where a family's dogs, and even their birds, were attacked by bees that were nesting in their garden and suddenly became aggressive. Of the family's five dogs, only two survived. Despite the desperate efforts of their owners, who managed to get the dogs inside, the animals rapidly began going into shock.

The owners phoned the Pietermaritzburg SPCA for help. Inspector Ruan Pretorius responded immediately. He was stung many times, but managed to get the dogs into his vehicle and rushed them to the SPCA for treatment. Three of the dogs did not survive, and the remaining two remained on the danger list for ten days, receiving treatment from the SPCA throughout that time. The bees were removed to a new site by a bee remover.

The message from the SPCA is that homeowners need to have bees humanely removed from their premises as soon as they are noticed in large numbers. The SPCA in Pietermaritzburg has a list of bee removers who will capture the bees and remove them to another area.

There is a serious decrease in bee populations all over the world. Several possible causes are postulated, including the widespread use of pesticides. Bees are vital to cross-pollination and should not be killed.

Eveline Brady (by e-mail)



Clowning around

I always enjoy the Daily Maverick's week-end piece of information relating to some interesting fact they pass on. This week it was about the clown fish, which we learnt about in "Finding Nemo", and the cuttlefish.

The clown fish has a rather unusual attribute: every clown fish is born a male. At some stage many switch gender and will stay that way. The report says that they do this to take the place of a dominant female that has died. (That begs a question about the first female clown fish ever, doesn't it?)

The report goes on to say that the male mourning cuttlefish, on the other hand, "uses cross-dressing to dupe males and attract females". It has sacs of pigment in its skin which enable it to change its colouring. Males are striped, and female are mottled. One wily male was observed to be sporting mottled female colouring on one side of its body and striped male colours on the opposite side to attract a female in his vicinity.

When I read this out to a male colleague, he said, "Well, there you are... cuttlefish are more like humans than we thought...

Hanna Fourie (Bluff)



Only rhinos need their horns!

It was good to see a caring group of people at our beach front in October taking part in the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos. A memorandum was handed over to the Mayor's

A report in the Berea Mail during October stated that every fifteen minutes an elephant is killed for its ivory, and every eight hours a rhino is killed for its horn. Along with this goes the bloodlust of hunters willing to pay huge sums to kill lions and other large animals for their trophy heads and skins, with lion bones as a by-product for others who handle that grubby

On World Animal Day, 4 October, people in over one hundred cities around the world marched against the illegal trade in wildlife and called on governments to take immediate and appropriate action to end poaching.

Since the technology of poachers appears to be clearly superior to that of the officials attempting to foil them, one can only conclude that too little money and too few superior helicopters and vehicles are being allocated to this vital project, and also that many more trained wildlife officers are needed. And this in a country where literally billions float off goodness knows where.

We can't leave this important rescue mission to a handful of people who are willing to risk their lives to save the rhino and elephant from extinction in the wild.

The powers that be need also to take into account that a great many tourists come to our country because of our game reserves with their rhino, elephant, lions, giraffe and other wildlife. It just doesn't make sense to allow craving for ivory, rhino horn and ground bones in parts of the Far East to push our national treasures into extinction.

We're enclosing photographs from the Berea Mail.

Kim and Marsha (Berea)



Sue and Sheilagh Spurgin and Chris de Wit

Visit our website 6 / The Animal Angle / December 2015 www.spcadbn.org.za



The incredible journey of the Monarch butterflies

There are times when one despairs about cruelty and the seeming lack of compassion in the world, but then I look at all the articles about animals, including in The Animal Angle, and see the constant attempts to emphasise that all life matters. When I see my grandchildren saving ants and other insects from the swimming pool, my heart warms, because I know that these little acts symbolise lessons they have learnt even at their

I remember that decades ago there was concern about the fate of Monarch butterflies and the rigours of their enormous migration journey in autumn from America and Canada to Mexico and then back. Their migration journey can be as long as over 7000km, depending on their place of departure.

When I checked to see if there were any protective measures in place, I found that in 1986 the Mexican government had created the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve especially for the butterflies. It was originally 62 square miles of forests in the Sierra Madres, but was extended to 217 square miles in 2000. The government also made the felling of trees in the area illegal to protect the butterflies.

Monarch butterflies need milkweed in order to reproduce, and any serious diminishing occurrence of milkweed is a further threat to the butterflies, especially as milkweed is often seen as a weed and removed. Nonetheless, the Mexican Department of the Environment reported in October that current flights were actually considerably larger than those of the last season.

When I was a child, butterflies were common in our gardens. Now one doesn't see many of them. Too many pesticides, I guess. And when last did you see a ladybird?

Emma Roberts (by e-mail)

Just after this letter was received in October, an article on butterfly gardening,"Create a butterfly wonderland in your garden", appeared in the Berea Mail. Reference was made to the recent release of Gardening for Butterflies by Lindsay Gray and Steve Woodhall, and readers were invited to attend an illustrated talk at the Durban Botanic Gardens Visitors' Centre on butterfly habitats and structuring one's own butterfly garden. Steve Woodhall has redesigned his own garden to encourage butterfly visitors. Lindsay Gray is principal of the School of Garden Development, and Steve Woodhall is president of the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa. Ed.



Something to aim at!

Reader Hilary Ralph re-discovered this among her cuttings and thought it worth sharing: "If you can start the day without caffeine; if you can be forever cheerful; if you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it; if you can take blame without resentment; if you can conquer tension without a pill; if you can sleep with a clear conscience... then you're probably the family dog. JB Towser, Mondeor."



What dogs teach us

I would like to share something I read in the Sunday Times in Debbie Gisonni's column. It was about what really important things dogs can teach us. Here is my version:

Dogs teach us to live in the moment. Dogs are capable of instant joy about the smallest thing. They are just living bundles of love. They just respond to every moment as it happens.

Dogs don't hold grudges. You can stand on a dog's paw or unintentionally hurt it in some way so that it yelps, but the next moment it will be wagging its tail and licking your hand. Remember Bill Sykes's dog in Oliver Twist and how heartbreakingly loyal it was despite his brutal abuse.

Dogs jump for joy when they're happy. When we're feeling really happy and bubbly we sometimes almost seem to feel as though we have to hide it because not everyone is feeling that way. Yet happy feelings can be infectious and make everyone's mood ratchet up a bit.

Dogs accept themselves. They just are who they are. No dog is trying to be better than another dog.

Dogs drink plenty of water. This is actually an important little habit that we should copy. Dogs mostly stop eating when they're full and look for the water bowl when they're thirsty. (Always have two or three bowls of water around the place, as water can easily be spilt, or empty bowls go unnoticed.)

Dogs are loyal and dependable. A dog doesn't keep changing his mind depending on his mood or what went wrong with his day and never gossips behind one's back! He's a member of the pack and always ready to defend or play or just contentedly be there.

Dogs love unconditionally. This is the big one! Instant forgiveness. Enduring love. Infinite loyalty.

How do we live up to such nobility of character?

Hilary (by post) Everton



Driven hunting

In September, our NSPCA Wildlife Protection Unit was alerted to a driven hunt taking place at Alldays in Limpopo. This was the first time we had heard of driven hunts occurring in South Africa and we dispatched a team to monitor the hunt, as we were unable to put a stop to it.

Our team was present for the five days of the hunt, and we are thoroughly investigating this hunting method. We have numerous animal welfare concerns about animals being hunted in this way and firmly believe that 'driven hunting' is unethical and unnecessary. We already have more than enough kinds of hunting in South Africa, and there is absolutely no justification for this kind.

Thanks to the huge public outcry, driven hunting is under scrutiny, and we will do all we can to ensure that it becomes banned in our country. We would like to thank all those who gave us such tremendous support during our response to this ugly incident.

NSPCA



No words can describe them...

Hi, Shirley

Thank you for the most interesting December 2014 magazine. I just loved reading all the info and must tell you that I was so perturbed about what those (unmentionable!) individuals do to bears on the bear bile farms. No words can describe them. It certainly affected me, and I will help as much as I can.

Keep up the amazing magazine. Thank you.

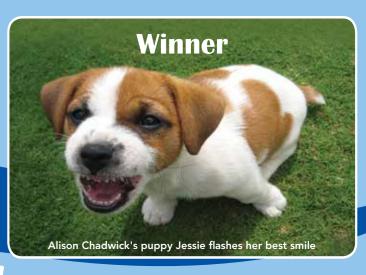
Mary Carey (by e-mail)

You will be so pleased to know of the recent closure of bear bile farms, Mary. People often say "I'm only one person, so I can't do anything about it", but wrongs can be righted when enough people speak up in protest and support organisations that fight noble causes, which is what happened here. Ed.



Durban & Coast SPCA

Introducing our 'Paws for the Camera' photo competition winners



A Calendar with a difference!

Our 2016 Calendar features real pets of real Durban families. This wonderful display of the bond shared between pet and owner is available to purchase at the Durban & Coast SPCA for the price of R180 each.

For further queries contact Lindsey on Lindsey@spcadbn.org.za or (031) 5796546

January



The Ortlepps and their pooches Griffin and Willow

February

Annie Jarvis's adorable princess Minky

March



Heisenberg photographed by owner Kevin Jackson

July



Daisy was adopted in April 2014 by Tanya Fleischer

May



Remi is very clever and learns new tricks in minutes - Lauren Stead



Gareth Hellmann shares a special Sally Mackay captured this moment moment with a new friend



of Dakota and Tazer playing

August

Jordan gives puppy Roxy a love Rhonwyn van Tonder

December

September



Ella's favourite place is the beach, a true Durbanite - Errol Douwes

October



Pimms, a rescue pup, makes us

November

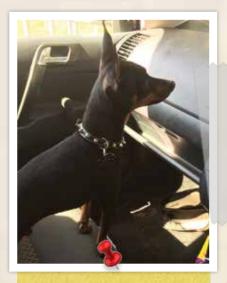


Rocco is a rescue pet. He has a smile every day - Leigh Corbett personality of note - Adele Bromley



Tigger loves running on the beach with mom Cynthia Baxter

PRECIOUS PETS PRECIOUS PETS



"Here is our happy, clever, loving little Zeus. He just loves car rides and going to the beach and gets so excited at all his new experiences. He accompanies us just about everywhere. We would like to say a big thank you to the SPCA for all you do." Nikki Vermaak



Becca adopted Chu in May this year. She says: "Chu is so friendly. He loves having his tummy and chest tickled and is a veritable walkie-talkie. He 'talks' to let you know that he is on his way to you. He sleeps next to me every night. His brother is named Baby, and they think nothing of playing in the middle of the night and waking me up at 3 a.m. I'm afraid they are very spoilt!"

Daniela Guerrera adopted Dennis (the Menace) a few months ago. She says: "Dennis has grown into a mischievous character, forever terrorising his two older brothers, Sushi and Wasabi. He loves chasing anything that moves and stalking us from behind the curtains. He really enjoys company and is always ready to take part in a game of hide and seek." He also loves the catnip plant that Daniela planted for him and his brothers.





"Hello to everyone at the SPCA. I saw your Facebook post and haven't updated you about our precious SPCA baby for a while. Malachi has grown a bit since we adopted him, He's loving the space he now has and the overload of attention. He has become an extremely good one-dog protection unit as he is very alert and extremely protective of us, which we take as a compliment! He will sit on command and give his paw to shake hands. He is well-mannered and doesn't jump on people, but he really loves joining in on hugs. So canine hugs are available to visitors if that is what they like! He lost his doggy sister, Penny, a few months ago, and we miss her so much. Even though we can never replace her, we are keeping a lookout on your webpage for an adopted sister for Malachi. Thank you for introducing us to Malachi. We adore him." Paula Wessels and the Family



From Alke Kruger: "Steffie Kruger was adopted from the Durban & Coast SPCA on 12 August 2015. I think you will agree that this picture shows a very different girl from the traumatised little one hiding away at the back of her kennel behind her basket and not even wanting to have a walk. She now lies on her back sleeping in the sun, totally trusting, or in our arms, with huge sighs of contentment. She is best friends with our old Dachsie, Andy. Andy was a bit wary of her when they first met on the lawn at the SPCA. They each have their own baskets inside our home, but often they end up together in the same basket. Steffie has brought so much joy into our household after our sadness at losing our precious 15-year-old Dachsie, Emma."



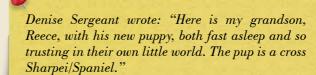
Here are Indi (Schnoodle... medium size) and Russell (mastiff... very large) wearing their bow ties, because it is Andrea and Andrew Speirs' wedding day (16 May 2015). Third of the trio is Impi (Yorkie... very small), who was hiding away at this moment.



Sahara Brijraj tells us: "Here are Ginger and Piper. We had adopted them two weeks earlier. They have stolen our hearts (and our bed!). They are inseparable and love snuggling together at night."



Here is Bolt, who was called Dancer when he was with the SPCA. A very happy boy, his owner tells us (as one could guess from the name given him while he was with us).





Desi Halse says: "This is what Lula, my little Lhasa Apso, does as soon as she hears the rumbling of thunder in the distance. She starts digging around in the nearest cushions and beds down until the thunder stops. Like many animals, she finds Big bang fireworks even more terrifying. When are we going to see action taken against the use of fireworks that create huge explosions with often tragic consequences for animals, including wildlife living in city environments?"





Kimi tells us: "Here is adorable, mischievous, sassy, funny Madam Zoe, adopted from Durban & Coast SPCA on 7 March 2014. She has truly brought joy into our lives. She is a very independent madam and loves her own space. This high-and-mighty kind of girl loves to groom herself all the time. We love this high-class doll to bits!"

Our Bequest Society Luncheon

This always enjoyable annual function to thank our generous bequestors was held at Havana Grill, Suncoast Casino. The Havana Grill, Distell and Mozzie cabs all supported this happy event, for which they have our grateful thanks.

Our popular MC was Peter Chamberlain, who is one of our most loyal supporters and presides over many functions for us, donating his services, including at our annual Bingo Day, which is usually in May.

Our outstanding guest speaker was well-known Durban academic and author, Professor Donal McCracken, who delighted the audience with his stories of the history of animals in Durban and his anecdotes of the vagaries, hazards and happiness of being a devoted pet owner.

Senior Professor of History at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, Professor McCracken is presently acting College Dean of Research and – along with several other positions of note –is chair of the Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Advisory Board. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He has been named South African



L-R: Bequest Society Members, Kenneth Hobson; Heather Hensman; Chief Inspector Candice Sadayan; Joy Schimper; Cynthia Broughton; Alison Chadwick



L-R: Management Committee Chairman, Neil Aubert; Bequest Society Chairman, Dr. Paddy McDowell and his wife Jenny; Bequest Society member, Sandy Harvey; MC Peter Chamberlain; GM Caroline Smith; Special Guest Speaker, Dr Donal McCracken

Genealogist of the Year and has been a winner of the Zululand Historical Society Award. In addition to his impressive achievements, he has the traditional and immensely likeable Irish ability to tell a really good yarn and have listeners avid for more.

A note about bequests

It would be difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the role played in the Durban & Coast SPCA by the generosity of bequestors. A monument to their deep love for animals is our Springfield facility, where our constant striving is to be the best we can.

We long for a magical day when there would be a sufficient number of adoptions to clear our kennels, but that depends on loving homes being available, and this is just far from being the case, largely owing to animals being left to breed freely without any prospect of homes being available. This is one of the agonising realities almost all animal welfare organisations face. But thanks to our bequestors and to generous members of the public, as well as our exceptional volunteers, we fulfil our animal welfare role to the very best of our ability. If you have not already done so, please visit us in Springfield and see for yourselves.

Mary Koen is our dedicated Bequest Liaison Officer.



Guest Speaker: Professor Donal McCracken



Bequesters enjoy the wit and charm of Professor McCracken's address

Footnote: Thank you, bequestor Julie Ford-Haworth, for calling to tell us that you thought the last copy of *The Animal Angle* was the best issue yet and that you absolutely loved reading it. Ed.



Our new website

In October we released a new and improved website. Browsers can view animals up for adoption, learn how members of the public can help their local SPCA in a multitude of ways, make donations, sponsor our yard cats (which have become a feature in themselves), find information for school projects, and read our pamphlets, magazine and online *Animal Angle* column. From the website, people can pick up not only the range of our day-to-day activities but something of the essence of what we are as an organisation, our strivings to fulfil our vision, and the extent of our dedication to animal welfare.

The Durban & Coast SPCA is a vibrant, passionate, evolving entity, trying always to live out its ideals and limited only by the practical issues of upkeep and expenses, since we receive no government funding and are dependent on the generosity of individuals and of private enterprise. Their generosity has allowed us to create a modern and well-run society run by a small, dedicated full-time staff and a host of generous-spirited volunteers.

Visitors are always welcome at the Durban & Coast SPCA. There is nothing quite like seeing for oneself.

Our new Suggestion Box

Our new Suggestion Box has been placed in Coffee Cats Café, because this is where people gather to relax over coffee or a snack or meal. We encourage visitors to give us their opinions (positive or otherwise!), so that we can keep improving the quality of our range of services.

George is a mascot developed by Durban-based design house Flying Ant Designs. He was first introduced at last year's House and Garden Show and was such a hit that he now features on promotional items for the SPCA. He has a friend called Ginger (a rather precocious ginger cat). who also sometimes makes an appearance.



Marula goes home

Five-year-old Marula was handed in as a stray. When he was scanned for a microchip, we found that he did indeed have one and immediately called his owner, Sue-Anne Jones. She was stunned to hear from us, as Marula had been missing for two years! He was found in the very area where his owner lives, so hadn't wandered far. If only animals could tell their stories... and if only all owners would have their pets microchipped.



Thanks to having a microchip, Marula goes home after two years

12 / The Animal Angle / December 2015

Visit our website www.spcadbn.org.za

Charity shops and book sales

Include a visit to our Charity Shop and our monthly Bargain Hunt, and you won't regret it! Donations of items you no longer need and would like to donate towards the upkeep of our animals are greatly welcome... all secondhand goods, including even furniture items, and especially jewellery, for which there is a constant demand.

We have a large selection of books in the Charity Shop, as well as having the following regular book sales:

Queensmead Mall, Umbilo, 8am-12.30pm on the last Saturday each month.

Bluff Spar, 8am-12.30pm on the last Saturday each month. **The Crescent**, Umhlanga Ridge – 8am-3pm on the first Saturday each month.



Why we just love our volunteers!

Our bargain hunts and book sales are renowned. Here are some of the great people who make them possible.







New Appointment



Sarah Chapman

Our new Financial Accountant joins us from Toyota where she was employed as Exports Division assistant manager. We are pleased to have Sarah on board and know she will fit in really well with us.

Bidding farewell

In October, we said farewell to Cynthia McKenzie, who began volunteering in 2011. Her role ranged from walking dogs and sorting, cleaning and pricing books to assisting with our Open Gardens event.

We thank you, Cynthia, for your generous voluntary service in so many areas and may happy and fulfilling times lie ahead for you.



Volunteer Cynthis McKenzie

Our yard cats and kitty hotel



Victoria enjoying her personalised 'room' in the kitty hotel.

Two new yard cats, Jessica and Dora, have joined our yard cat family. Jessica is excessively visitor-friendly!

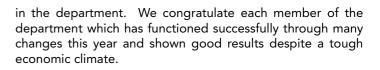
If you visit our Coffee Cats Café, she is quite likely to arrive and curl up on your lap, nuzzle your hand and invite you to stroke her as long as you are willing to do so.

At one end of the Coffee Cats Café is our new deluxe 'cat hotel' where our royally-treated yard cats have their own special place to relax after a taxing day of lying in the sun and occasionally chasing insects or taking a walk to survey their domain.

The hotel comes complete with personalised cat boxes.

Restructuring of Marketing Department

The Marketing Department is at the heart of our financial sustainability. The programmes implemented by this department allow us to continue the critical work of our Inspectorate, Clinic, Hospital and Adoption departments'. The following appointments work to the strengths and skills





Mary Koen,
Bequest and Income
Development Coordinator



Lindsey Fogarty, Income Development and Communications Manager



Klara van Aswegen, Marketing Assistant

COMMITTEE NEWS

Michael Hands retires from our Management Committee

It was with both sadness and deep appreciation for his generous service that the Durban & Coast SPCA said their formal goodbye to Michael Hands, knowing that he will retain his great interest in the work of the SPCA.

Michael was a partner at Shepstone & Wylie, director at De Wet, Leitch Hand Inc, and Head Consultant at Garlicke & Bousfield. His altruistic service on our Management Committee spanned thirteen years, during which he was unfailingly willing to offer sage legal advice and give us all possible support. He also served on the Board of the NSPCA as the representative of the Durban & Coast SPCA as a primary society.

His passion for the Dolphin Coast SPCA and his involvement with it was instrumental in growing this branch and establishing it as an essential service in the community.

The Management Committee now comprises:

Peter Chrystal, president
Neil Aubert, chairman
Tarren Wright, vice-chairman
Bronwyn Lovell, honorary treasurer
Tara Baxter, honorary secretary

Yassien Saib Dr John Morton Victoria McDonald Michael Jackson Yvonne Boden Michael has always been available at the end of the telephone to chat about the wide range of issues that affect the SPCA. His calm, knowledgeable manner in dealing with urgent issues and his vast experience will be greatly missed.

Caroline Smith



Michael Hands was a member of our Management Committee for thirteen years and has given tremendous service to the Durban & Coast SPCA. Here he is seen receiving a Recognition of Invaluable Service Award from the president, Peter Chrystal.

New Appointments



a director at & Bousfield

We are thrilled to welcome two new members to our committee this year: Mr Michael Jackson, a partner with Cox Yeats, and Yvonne Boden, a director at Garlicke

Farewell



had to resign from the Management Committee after six years of service owing to work commitments. Thank you, Tina, for your dedication to animals.

Tina Costas has sadly

ina Costas

14 / The Animal Angle / December 2015 Visit our website www.spcadbn.org.za

FROM OUR INSPECTORATE

New Appointments



Senior Inspector Candice Sadayan has been appointed Acting Chief Inspector.

The Inspectorate is at the nucleus of our activities and we know that Candice's determined ability and attention to detail will take the department from strength to strength.



This month we say farewell to Inspector Dennis Cameron of our Dolphin Coast SPCA. Dennis has given almost 29 years of dedicated service to animal welfare. We thank him for those years of devotion and wish him a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Long Service Award for Roshen

Roshen Rupee, senior inspector, has a passion for animals... and also for aviation. He worked at the airport in various departments from the Apron to Passenger Services and Departure Control.

He had been boarding his dogs with the Durban & Coast SPCA for years and had been one of our volunteers for a year when he saw an advertisement for inspectors at our SPCA. He applied and began working with us in 1994. The rest is history... twenty years of it.

Congratulations to Roshen on two decades of service in our Inspectorate, the department that comes face to face with the daily realities of cruelty to animals, but is also committed to educating owners about animal care, dispelling ignorance, and undertaking rescues in situations that often require sheer physical courage.



Neil Aubert, chairman of our Management Committee, presents Roshen Rupee, senior inspector, with his 20-year Long Service Award

Face up to appalling cruelty!

We do not often confront readers with visual images of the most heartbreaking and wickedly cruel cases, but there are times when this needs to be done, because turning away to protect oneself because "it is too upsetting to look at" avoids facing up to realities and to terrible animal suffering .

This case has highlighted the severity of chaining and the risks involved to animals when this law is contravened.

Please, please, we beg of you... do not fail to report cases of chaining. Educate your employees. Impress on your children that they, as much as any of us, can be the eyes and ears of the SPCA and the protectors of helpless animals suffering at the hands of callous or outrageously cruel human beings. Donate to our Humane Education schools programme. What cruel people do to animals is an indication of what they could be equally capable of towards human beings. Do not look the other way when it comes to cruelty to any living creature.

Inspector Mntungwa of our Inspectorate met the complainant who led him to where the dog lay in severe pain. It had a huge and appallingly severe wound around its neck which had clearly been caused by chaining. When approached, this poor, suffering animal tried to run despite its pain. We cannot bear to think how long it had endured this torture.

Inspector Mntungwa did his absolute best not to inflict more pain in catching it. The dog was beyond help and was mercifully euthanased to end its torment.

Inspector Mntungwa was infuriated and deeply disappointed when he found that the disgusting person responsible for this cruelty was unknown and could therefore not be brought to



justice. He has appealed to the community to try to discover who this person is and to call him should any details come to light.

Be shocked, be appalled, be angry, but, for goodness' sake, don't protect yourself by looking away because it is "too upsetting".

Instead, help us to do something about shocking cases like this. What the community fails to acknowledge, it cannot change.



"I wonder what made me think I needed to climb up here? it doesn't seem like quite such a good idea now..."

Up the pole!

•••••

Inspectors often have to be exceedingly physically intrepid. In this case, Inspector Codie was called out to Quintham Place in Phoenix to get himself up a telephone pole to rescue a stray cat. The rescue was successful.



Dog found trapped in bush in Gandhi Park, Phoenix. Rescued in poor condition but unharmed

Inspector Mntungwa was called out after hours by concerned residents after a dog was heard in distress in the Gandhi Park area in Phoenix . The dog could be heard crying in the nearby bushes, but could neither be seen nor located.

Inspector Mntungwa walked around the Park but could not hear anything. He tried to call the complainant, but kept going to voicemail. After walking to the furthest end of the park, he was, to his relief, able to hear the dog.

After searching the densely vegetated area, he located the dog, which appeared to have broken free after being chained and run into the bushes and then become entangled and trapped within several branches and vines. The terrified and distressed animal was rescued and brought back to the SPCA without injury.

This case has again highlighted the severity of chaining and the risks involved to animals when this law is contravened.

The link between the Inspectorate and our Humane Education Project

It was in looking at the role of the Inspectorate in educating people about animals that we saw the opportunity in 2005 for making a difference by beginning a project to teach animal care in the broader context of teaching about compassion.

Our inspectors play a vital role in educating people who mistreat animals. Ill-treatment often arises out of ignorance. More often it arises when people do not see animals as conscious, loving creatures who feel pain, pleasure, sadness and joy as we do. Instead, they see animals as 'things'. In addition to their work as a rescue service, inspectors explain how animals should be looked after, why chaining is cruel and against the law, how to contact the SPCA to report cases of cruelty, and other practical issues that relate to proper animal care. Society will not impinge on cruelty - like organised dog-fighting, the cutting of ears to suggest 'fierceness', chains embedded in necks, and other inhumane acts - until animals are seen as having valuable lives and as needing protection and love just as humans do.

Over ten years ago, the Durban & Coast SPCA decided to do something extra about the need to encourage compassion, which is often lacking at all levels of society, and so our humane education programme for primary schools began. One of the most effective ways of changing society for the better is to influence children to behave with kindness and to see all life as valuable. So, for us, education is a blend of the educative role inspectors need to play and the inculcation of compassion which is the ideal towards which our project strives.

Our inspectors are constantly responding to calls. Sometimes these are heartbreaking, sometimes they are just straightforward rescues, and on rare occasions they can be hilarious because people will call the SPCA for a variety of reasons that sometimes have little to do with animals, as if the thinking is "If all else fails, call the SPCA!"

We have often talked about the links between animal and human abuse. It is well-known that children who abuse animals are more likely to go on to abuse humans when they are adults.

Cruel childish acts that go unremarked and are not appropriately counselled by parents and teachers lay the foundation for lack of compassion in later life.

Cruelty to animals is sometimes a response to abuse suffered in childhood by the animal abuser or relates to copying the bad behaviour.

Shirley Bell



Laura Pretorius

have managed this year to reach many Zulu learners who live in Kwa Mashu, Umlazi and closer to town. At schools in Merewent, the North Coast Road area and in city areas, I have found the level of comprehension to be fairly good.

What follows are brief comments about some of the schools visited during 2015. Schools vary tremendously. Many are vibrant and improving all the time, and then there are a few with a lack-lustre atmosphere and dreary environment, dispirited teachers and, consequently, children who have no impetus to learn.

Parsee Rustomjee Primary

Although this school is situated in the Merewent area, it gives me another opportunity

to reach learners from Umlazi. Most of them are not aware that animals have feelings, and our programme is the first information they have ever received about caring for animals.

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Greenbury Primary

The Senior Primary maths teacher, Mr Y Moodley, attended two of the talks and commended me for the style, content and appropriate level of the information. I value comments from staff, as one never wants to become stale when imparting information which is essentially repetitive, but needs to be interestingly presented. I try to remain passionate about the subject matter and about helping animals and encourage the children to do the same.

Alipore Primary

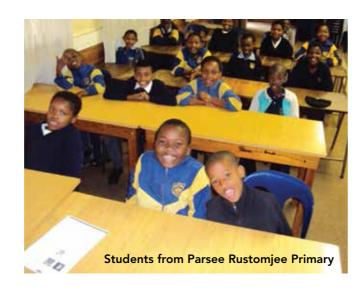
When I returned to Alipore, I found that there had been two incidents of cruelty since my previous visit, both perpetrated by Grade 5 learners who had listened to the presentation earlier. A girl and boy killed a frog by bashing it with a stone. In the other incident, four boys attacked a stray dog, kicking and hitting it on the sports field, with another little mob trailing behind the leader.

Other children called a teacher, as I had asked them to do if they witnessed cruelty. The dog was rescued, but I was so very disappointed to hear about this incident, as I had emphasised to these children that those who abuse animals often grow up to abuse, or sometimes even kill, humans.

On a more positive note, the teacher rounded up all the perpetrators and asked that I address their cruelty directly with them in front of the other children. We went over the consequences of being an abuser as a child, and I told the abusers that if they ever behaved this way again, the next step would be to report them to the SPCA inspectors. I hope this threat will keep them from such behaviour. I also tried to convince them that they could be better than this.

It seems that it is a regular practice to kill snakes, frogs, cats and any other animal they don't like or that they fear. There are times when I feel overwhelmed by the issues one has to address, especially superstitions and common cruel practices.

I try to deal with these by appealing to their sense of decency and to the often small amount of compassion that some can muster. What keeps me going is constant confirmation of how vital our programme is.



These little ones are a treat to teach as they are hungry for information and very appreciative. I am always touched when they come to give me hugs after the presentations, especially as I am strict with them should they misbehave!

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Seaview Primary

I was thrilled to have an opportunity to speak to these learners, because I had not been to this school for some time. I found that there was a really good environment. The teachers accompanied their pupils throughout and commended me on being so passionate! Teachers from the Junior Primary asked whether I could address their children, too. I felt that short presentations could be offered while the older children were writing exams. I don't like to turn down enthusiasm.

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Briardene Primary

Schools depend so much on the Principal. When I visited Briardene about nine years ago, the venue was unsuitable, and the learners' comprehension poor. The school dropped off my list, as the interest rate seemed low, but I decided to return this year and was delighted to find a new venue and a new computer room, as well as good discipline and comprehension levels. The level of Grade 4 English was much more advanced than the average levels I encounter. How good it was to see.

Kenville Primary

The children here hail from the informal settlements situated on the hills close to the Durban & Coast SPCA and the surrounding industrial area. I encourage them not to take on animals and stress the cost of food and lack of a yard, fencing, proper shelter and basic medication. They do all know where the SPCA is situated if they need to go for help in an emergency.

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Wembley Primary

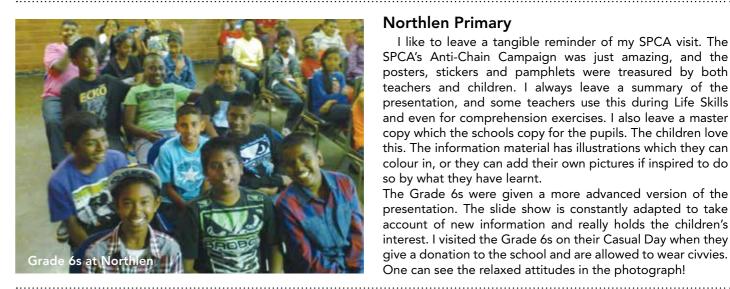
Mrs Laknerain, the Life Skills teacher for Grade 6, was dealing with animal welfare, so contacted the SPCA to find out if someone could visit the school. She sat in during the presentation of a Grade 7 class and told me afterwards that she was thrilled that I had spoken so strongly about fireworks. I was relieved, as this is a subject that could offend some.



Gokul Primary

Gokul Primary is in Isipingo, but is attended by children from several townships, including Umlazi. There is a feeding scheme at the school, as many come from impoverished families.

Although I am always welcomed and supported by this school's management, it is not easy for them to accommodate me. For the past four years, there have been unfinished classrooms on the premises, leaving the school without adequate space. In order to accommodate me, they move learners from class to class. I really appreciate these efforts.



Northlen Primary

I like to leave a tangible reminder of my SPCA visit. The SPCA's Anti-Chain Campaign was just amazing, and the posters, stickers and pamphlets were treasured by both teachers and children. I always leave a summary of the presentation, and some teachers use this during Life Skills and even for comprehension exercises. I also leave a master copy which the schools copy for the pupils. The children love this. The information material has illustrations which they can colour in, or they can add their own pictures if inspired to do so by what they have learnt.

The Grade 6s were given a more advanced version of the presentation. The slide show is constantly adapted to take account of new information and really holds the children's interest. I visited the Grade 6s on their Casual Day when they give a donation to the school and are allowed to wear civvies. One can see the relaxed attitudes in the photograph!

Parklands Primary

This is another example of the cross-section of the different ethnic groups our programme reaches. I think we can feel satisfied that we are making inroads into areas of Durban where no other information of this kind is available. I notice how expressions change when I say something they have never known or thought about before. It is perfectly acceptable in some communities to kill frogs, lizards, snakes and other small creatures. I am currently using frogs as an example and tell them how much I like frogs and how they actually help us by eating insects... up to one and a half of their own weight per day. I tell them that, even if they don't like animals, it is important to leave them to live their lives just as we want to live ours.

Greyville Primary

Here I addressed enthusiastic pupils in their excellent upgraded computer room. Some of the children live in the city area, and I stressed that they should respect the feral cats that help to keep down the rodent population, and also the pigeons that flock to pick up the food dropped during school breaks. I encourage them to put themselves in the place of the animals they encounter and to try to imagine how they would feel if they were living that animal's life, pointing out that animals have no way of asking for help when they are in need or in pain.

Dr Machen Maistry Primary

Situated close to the SPCA, this is probably the poorest school that I visit. Most children live in informal settlements, and some 60% are on a feeding scheme. I gathered that the principal, Mr Sukool, manages this scheme by finding donations. I was very impressed with the upgrading of the school since my last visit: toilets newly tiled, walls clean, the staff room revamped, a functioning hall, and newly planted

I was touched when Miss P Pillay told me that some of the learners had made a coin collection for the SPCA. They have so little themselves, but it is also important that learners, who are used to handouts themselves, learn the value of giving something back... "paying it on" even from their personal positions of vulnerability.

I contacted Lindsey from our SPCA Marketing division to arrange for the donations to be collected from the school, because I felt that these little people, and the school, deserve - and would really appreciate - being recognised for their kindness.

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General

I end the year feeling satisfied about the effectiveness of the Humane Education Programme. When I revisit schools every two or three years, I find that many learners remember my talks with fondness and are keen to hear more.

The Prince and the pawpaw

We have a family of rescued dogs. Our latest acquisition is Prince. The first four months of having 'Princey' with us meant a huge adjustment for the whole family! He is highly intelligent and equally highly demanding.

He could never be called a wallflower, as he sees himself as being in charge and demands to be the centre of attention.

Although I have brought many a strange dog home over the years, I was not prepared for the demands made by Prince. I resorted to doing hours of Internet research about 'dog problems" and tried to apply the acquired information to 'taming' and 'house-breaking' Prince.

I was pretty satisfied with the results, but as he matured there were still signs of aggression that alarmed me. For instance, he would challenge Pickneen, who has the second highest position in the hierarchy, and actually attempted to attack him on three occasions, once drawing blood. Fortunately, I was present and was able to control him.

I shed many a tear about what to do with Prince and at times felt quite desperate about the volatile situation I had created by bringing him home and disrupting the existing order of my pack.

We decided to see if neutering him would calm him down. At the same time, we had the 'Alpha Male', Pupshky, neutered as well, as at times he was exacerbating the aggression.

The combination of neutering both of our 'Alpha' dogs was somewhat dramatic! But to this point we have had no more aggression, and Pickneen has resumed his position as Laura Pretorius

Second-in-command. Prince is now holding the lowest rank in the group, and we try to reinforce this hierarchy in order to keep the peace. Our decision appears to have resolved the aggression issue.

After all the hard work, anxiety and investment in Prince, I am happy to say that he is now a well-adjusted member of the pack. I enjoy his alertness and interest in his surroundings. Even the smallest moth is enthusiastically scrutinised.

He loves watching planes flying overhead and happily munches up pawpaw discarded by the monkeys (see picture).

During the winter, I bought him a really nice jacket. He wore it only a couple of times before he shredded it to pieces!

During the nine months he has lived with me, I have bought him four collars and two harnesses, all of which he has methodically destroyed, as well as my having to replace each of my other dogs' collars after he had chewed them off their necks!

Notwithstanding his exuberant nature, Prince is a very lovable and talkative dog. I am awakened in the mornings with loud yawns and moaning sounds and, if I don't respond fast enough, he puts his front paws on the bed and gently pinches me with his front teeth.

He loves 'kissing' both humans and dogs and likes to nibble any part of one's body or clothing he can lay his teeth on, as if he were eating sweetcorn seed by seed. He is now an irreplaceable member of the family.



Pupshky wearing a nappy to stop him from removing the stitches after the op.



Prince eating pawpaw



Left to right: Our family, Happy, Prince, Pupshky (aka 'the Alpha') and Pickneen (Second-in-command)



Prince wearing his pullover

Eseltjiesrus, donkey Eden (see Pigeon Post for reader's story)

Report on Blondie



Blondie was in a group of donkeys that were sedated for the trip on the trailer. Our vet administered the sedative in the handling enclosure where the donkeys were used to being touched and receiving treats. Our staff supported them on the trailer, and Blondie quickly recovered at our new farm and was soon munching on the fresh grazing.

The donkeys are really happy in their new fields which have a good view of the road between Robertson and McGregor. They seem particularly to enjoy watching cyclists whizzing past.

Once a routine was established on the new farm, we resumed training sessions with Blondie so that she could have her hooves cleaned and trimmed.

During 2014, we introduced two new donkeys to the herd. Blondie took little notice of them, clearly feeling quite happy and secure with her friends and the routine that was familiar to her. She willingly approaches visitors during weekends and soon learned to enjoy being stroked by them.

Thank you, Clive, for supporting her care.

Report on Dinky

Dinky was a star when it came to moving the donkeys to the sanctuary's own farm in November 2013. She and Alphonse were the first two donkeys we led onto the trailer, and they loaded easily. Once at their new home, they wandered off and immediately tested the grazing. Not all the donkeys were moved as easily as this!

Dinky settled well. The donkeys enjoy the open fields with their view of the road to McGregor. Dinky had a dental examination early in the year, and the specialist guessed her to be between 23 and 25 years old. Her teeth are in reasonably good shape for her age and were smoothed to make her more comfortable. She has one molar missing, but copes well with the lucerne and hay that we put out for the herd. Her weight is satisfactory.

She is a happy little donkey with a comforting routine to her days and enjoys the open space, the grazing, and the company. What more could she ask for in her golden years.

Thank you, Marianna, for caring about her.



We have just learnt of Dinky's death. She spent her old age being loved and protected by Eseltjiesrus.

Sharing breathtaking moments in Kruger





21

Durbanite Cedric Pratt took these close-up pictures of one of the largest leopards in the Kruger National Park. A popular figure in his own right, this magnificent creature goes by the name of Vin Diesel and even has a Facebook page of his own! Brenda Pratt told us: "We saw him nine kms from Skukuza camp, an area that he frequents. When Cedric took the photographs, the temperature was 43 degrees."

20 / The Animal Angle / December 2015 Visit our website www.spcadbn.org.za

Driven Hunting:

Is this yet another inadequacy in our animal protection legislation?

Our hearts sank when, in September, thirteen hunters from Europe mowed down wild animals from specially created platforms. The animals were driven towards them by 83 'chasers' walking ten metres apart in an area where the bush had been specially cleared so as to give the hunters a clear view of their helpless prey.

The NSPCA, other animal welfare organistations, and many animal rights activists pointed out that the legal slaughter of "frightened fleeing animals exposes another inadequacy in our animal protection legislation".

It is disappointing that the Department of Environmental Affairs does not find this kind of "mindless slaughter" by wealthy hunters unacceptable, as long as they "comply with regulations". Clearly, the regulations require altering.

The media were not allowed to witness the five-day driven hunting event, and the NSPCA had to get special permission. One just cannot view driven hunting as a 'sport'. It is more a satiation of blood lust.

Paul Oxton, founder of the Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation says: "This is a rich man's thing. It is not hunting and is absolutely shocking."

Simon Matome, head of Communications in the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, said that "hunting is legal in South Africa".

"The farmers have come into ownership of property, with wild animals on the property, through land claims. They generate income through hunting, but first consult hunting associations for control reasons."



The hunters, he said, were mostly from Belgium and the Netherlands and were licensed to hunt: "They started off on a practice range before heading out, but I didn't see a herd of animals being slaughtered like has been reported."

He said the dead animals were taken to the abattoir and the hunters got their trophy heads. "If they are saying we are doing something illegal, let's go to court. What will we be charged with?" He pointed out that no laws were broken and suggested that the NSPCA and other concerned people should put their objections to Parliament.

Many South African hunters are not in favour of driven hunting and regard it as unfair because the animals are terrified and cannot escape. However, the Professional Hunters Association of SA said they did not have a position on it. None of their members had taken part in the driven hunt. The practice is rarely followed in Africa and "occurs mostly in Europe".

Stephen Palos of the National Confederation of Hunters Association of South Africa said that if hunting were banned, huge numbers of animals would end up being culled, and thousands of tourism jobs would be lost. He said that driven hunts "are a common, legitimate practice both here and elsewhere", and that a form of driven hunt called 'Voorsit' is commonly used to hunt springbok in the Karoo.

Regarding driven hunting, what we have to see is that all ugly practices have ugly consequences. Animals are killed for food supply, and this has much about it that does not bear scrutiny, but to kill for pleasure and ego can hardly be justified.

Hilary Ralph

I had been reading an article about adopting an older pet written by someone who said it was "the norm" for them to adopt animals "with unimaginable backgrounds and of indeterminate ages", and that this had brought them only joy. This has been my own happy experience.

Consider adopting an older pet

Pets are given away for many reasons, most of which are neither valid nor acceptable. Sometimes an owner simply grows tired of the responsibility, unbelievable as that sounds.

Sometimes people are compelled to make lifestyle changes, and not all of them try their utmost to make responsible arrangements for the animals that have been their most loyal friends. Other animals are not re-homed when their owner dies or moves away. This is where we can be lifesavers. The reward will be that special love that animals so readily give and the knowledge that one is giving an old and unwanted animal a caring home for the time left to it.







So go on...just do it. Adopt an older pet and feel its instant devotion as its fear fades and it begins to trust again. These photographs are of small wild creatures who came to visit me. They do not require adoption, but do require our protection and kindness... little visitors I welcome with a sense of privilege.

The story of Sibella, queen of the Karoo cheetahs



sibella was the first wild cheetah to live in our Great Karoo for 125 years. She lived in the Samara Private Game Reserve near Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape and became famous all over the world.

On Friday, 11 September 2015, Sibella died when she was gored in the side by a duiker she was hunting. She was found and taken to the animal hospital. The surgeon tried hard to save her, but her injury was too bad. So beautiful Sibella has gone, but what she did to help save our wild animals, especially cheetahs, lives on.

She lived in the wild for 12 years and showed how we can protect our wild animals and how they can live in freedom, bring up their families, and be protected. She was born in North West Province and came close to being killed by hunters when she was only two. She was attacked by the hunters' dogs and had the flesh torn off her hind legs. Then she was badly beaten and locked up in a cage. She would have died, but she was rescued by the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust. After five hours of surgery, her life was saved. It took a long time for her to recover, and then she had to be helped to live in the wild again.

In December 2003, she was taken to the Samara Private Game Reserve near Graaff Reinet, where she became a really good hunter again. Over the years she had 20 cubs in four litters. Cheetahs are very good mothers. Sibella would eat only after her cubs had had their fill. Cheetah mothers prefer to have their babies on steep hill slopes where there are less likely to be large animals that would prey on the cubs. Fortunately, Samara has both mountains and wide open plains that cheetahs like, and there are no lion, buffalo, leopard or spotted hyena, which makes it very good for cheetah.

Sibella never forgot that humans had saved her life and looked after her. As soon as her cubs were old enough, she would take them to visit the people working on the reserve. It was as though she had a special trust in those who had cared for her, even though other humans had treated her so cruelly when she was young.

People who care about wild animals were deeply sad to hear of Sibella's death, but they also knew that she had spent twelve years living in the wild, as all wild creatures should. Her story made many people across the world aware of how important it is to keep wild animals safely in natural wild places. Every one of us can help towards stopping cruelty to animals. Cruelty is one of the most terrible things in the world. People who are cruel to animals often become cruel towards other human beings as well.

We must never keep silent if we know that any animal or person is being cruelly treated.

When people begin to care about animals and about other people, it begins to change the world.



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