

Kennel Quarterly



Rochester Police Department
Animal Services Unit

Adoption Numbers

Compared to last year's third quarter, adoptions were lower than expected for dogs but showed a slight increase for cats. Of the 617 dogs impounded between January 1 and March 31, 147 (23.8%) were adopted. This was markedly lower than the adoption rate for dogs during last year's third quarter when we adopted out 204 (27.5%) of 741 dogs impounded. Once again, the Unit had fewer dogs impounded

this year compared to last.

Cat adoption numbers demonstrated a positive change from last year that we can only hope will continue. During this third quarter, Animal Services adopted out 139 (26%) of the 535 cats impounded. Last year during the third quarter, Animal Services adopted out 119 (22.5%) of the 528 cats impounded. Two years ago during the third quarter, Animal Services adopted out 109 (17.6%) of the 618 cats impounded.

During the fourth quarter, Animal Services will again increase promotion of the adoption program through outreach events, festivals, television appearances, and advertisements. The Unit hopes that both dog and cat adoptions will increase with the added expo-

sure planned for the fourth quarter.



Animal Services shelter in spring



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Spay/Neuter Surgeries Increasing

Since establishing the on-site spay-neuter clinic in July 2004, Animal Services has steadily increased the number of sterilization surgeries performed at the shelter. In general, the number of surgeries corresponds with the number of adoptions. However, with the establishment of the Low-Income Spay-Neuter (LISN) program, feline surgeries exceed cat adoptions because increasingly more owned cats are being sterilized.

During this third quarter, Animal Services sterilized 135 dogs. That represents 91.8% of the 147 dogs adopted during the same period. The differ-

ence is due to a small percentage of dogs having previously been sterilized prior to entering the shelter.

As for cats, Animal Services sterilized 104 during the third quarter. Additionally, eight cats had previously been sterilized. That means that 112 cats or 80.6% of the cats adopted from the shelter were sterilized. The percentage of cats sterilized prior to release was lower than compared to that for dogs, because kittens may be adopted out below the minimum weight for surgery (2 lbs). Such kittens hopefully will be sterilized within six months of their adoption as outlined in the adoption agree-

ment and as encouraged with the refundable altering deposit incentive.

In addition to the 104 adopted cats that were sterilized, the unit also sterilized 46 owned cats through the LISN program. This program is aimed at reducing the abundance of stray and feral cats in our community and the numbers of unwanted kittens surrendered at shelters. The program should continue to grow in the new fiscal year with the addition of two new veterinary consultants.



“We must all take responsibility to spay and neuter our pets and to encourage others to do the same.”

Shelter Statistics

	<u>Dog</u>	<u>Cat</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>January</u>			
Impounded	188	163	11
Adopted	44	65	1
Redeemed	41	3	0
Transferred	11	18	8
Euthanized	96	69	4
Sterilized	35	45(+22)	0
<u>February</u>			
Impounded	187	179	9
Adopted	53	46	1
Redeemed	47	2	0
Transferred	23	25	9
Euthanized	75	94	0
Sterilized	53	33(+7)	0
<u>March</u>			
Impounded	242	193	8
Adopted	50	28	0
Redeemed	41	2	0
Transferred	13	61	0
Euthanized	104	112	7
Sterilized	47	26(+17)	0

Rochester Animal Services temporarily houses approximately 6,500 animals annually. We are committed to reuniting owners with missing pets and to placing animals in new homes, however it is impossible to find homes for all of them. Some animals are euthanized due to illness or injury. Others may display vicious or aggressive temperaments. Currently, the City of Rochester does not authorize the adoption of “pit bulls” from the shelter, so those that are not reclaimed are euthanized. Sadly, many animals are euthanized because there are just far too many stray and unwanted animals in our community and we do not have space to house them all. We must all take responsibility to spay and neuter our pets and to encourage others to do the same. If the number of animals coming in declines, then we can devote more time and energy to those animals we do shelter, we can increase adoptions and redemptions, and decrease euthanasia.

Sterilization figures for cats are separated into adopted cats and owned cats sterilized through the Low Income Spay Neuter (LISN) program, with the latter presented in parentheses.

Animal Services’ Vision

During the third quarter, Animal Services attempted to provide some extra attention to its mission, its vision, and its goals. Realizing that the Unit frequently becomes consumed with maintaining the status quo, the management team has made an extra effort to recharge the operation and identify some additional motivation for the entire Unit to strive to improve and expand programs and services.

Shelter staff began meeting more frequently to improve internal communication and teamwork within the facility. Supervisors continued their monthly meetings and incorporated items related to vision

and goals into their discussions. Although not within the third quarter, the Unit had its first full staff meeting in mid-April as a direct result of these earlier discussions and meetings. The meeting was attended on a voluntary basis and discussion was focused on establishing a vision and goals for the Unit.

Employees produced the following vision:

Animal Services is a dedicated team of well-trained, compassionate, energetic professionals with the facilities and resources to provide animal care, control, and education for the City of Rochester.

With that vision, the group identified the following goals for the coming quarter and fiscal year:

- (1) Increase dog adoptions by 10%,
- (2) Increase cat adoptions by 10%,
- (3) Add dogs to the LISN program,
- (4) Increase outreach/education by 25%,
- (5) Temperament test all dogs up for adoption.

The Unit plans to focus on achieving these goals during the coming months. Subsequent issues of this newsletter will document the progress towards these goals.



From the Director's Chair

This past quarter was a challenging one to say the least. The shelter was operating with a vacancy in the ACT title and then another ACT went out on extended leave and has yet to return. Such vacancies and absences compound the challenges already faced by the shelter staff. At the same time, Sue Filetti, our receptionist/adoption counselor remained on leave for much of the quarter necessitating coverage of those duties by shelter managers. It looks like those challenges are behind us as we progress into the fourth quarter. Sue has returned to work and the ACT vacancy has been filled.

Another major challenge arose with the State denial of the City's petition to grant the

Animal Control Officer title permanent non-competitive status. The announcement came as a surprise to the Unit and to the ACOs in particular, most of whom believed they had been hired as "permanent non-competitive" employees in June 2000. The result of this denied petition is that the incumbent ACOs are provisional employees and will be expected to take a Civil Service exam for their title next spring. The surprise nature of this announcement has had obvious impacts on the incumbents who have expressed a variety of emotions including anger, mistrust, and resentment. Officer morale has undeniably been affected, but the ACOs have continued to function effectively and profes-

sionally despite the distraction. I believe in our ACOs. I believe that they are the best trained, most skilled, and most professional animal control officers in the State. I am confident that they will excel on the exam and continue to excel in their jobs.

I think it's important for all of us to remind ourselves why we do this work, what our mission is, and to keep sight of our vision and our goals as discussed on the previous page. We are committed to helping people and helping animals everyday. This is an admirable profession.

As always I welcome your comments regarding our programs, services, and procedures and any thoughts about this or any past or future issues.

Chris Fitzgerald



Chris conducting press conference

"Pit Bulls" a Challenge For Animal Services

Pit bull type dogs seem to be one of the preferred dogs owned by Rochester residents. This fad has been increasing since the late 90s and is a national, and even international, phenomenon. Pit bulls are a large category of dogs that includes Staffordshire bull terriers, American Staffordshire terriers, and a variety of bull terrier and mastiff mixed breeds.

During the last four years, the proportion of dogs impounded identified as pit bull type dogs has hovered around 30% with 1,233 (33.1%) of 3,720 dogs in FY01/02, 935 (28.9%) of 3,232 in FY 02/03, 989 (32.1%) of 3,083 in FY03/04, and 746 (33.9%) of 2,200 dogs impounded through March of FY 04/05.

More disturbing than the impound numbers are the euthanasia figures. Although some 1,000 dogs may be redeemed from the shelter each year, only about 35% of the pit bull type dogs are redeemed by owners

which means that the rest are humanely euthanized. Animal Services euthanized 786 (63.7% of pit bulls impounded) in FY01/02, 611 (65.3%) in FY02/03, 627 (63.4%) in FY03/04, and 587 (78.6%) through March of FY04-05.

Providing care for these animals for several days and then euthanizing such a high percentage of them is extremely difficult. The shelter personnel carry a heavy burden despite the understanding that the owners are ultimately responsible and the dogs may receive the best care of their lives during their stay at the shelter. Animal Services is working on addressing this issue through a variety of efforts including expanding education efforts and promoting responsible pet ownership and possible policy and legislative changes.

The high proportion of pit bulls among the dogs seized also represents an added challenge for Animal Control Offi-

cers who are the first responders to all calls for service except for those involving animals surrendered at the shelter. Dogs that are running at-large are generally more difficult to seize and restrain than are leashed or otherwise contained dogs. Loose pit bulls pose an even greater challenge given that the majority must be seized with a catch pole as opposed to a soft rope leash. The catch pole is a rigid restraint unfamiliar to most dogs and it is used whenever ACOs observe aggression or question a dog's temperament.

ACOs take this extra precaution for a number of reasons including public safety, personal safety, and protection of the animal. Given the severe injuries that pit bulls can inflict on bystanders and ACOs, the pole is used to ensure that the dog does not make contact with anyone once seized. Furthermore, the dog is thereby protected from becoming a victim

of a collision with a vehicle or from being immediately euthanized as a public threat.

Over the last four years, the percentage of pit bulls seized at-large has declined somewhat but the numbers are still high. Of the 1,233 pit bulls seized in FY01/02, 965 (78.2%) were at-large. The numbers were 684 (73.2%) of 935 in FY02/03, 689 (69.7%) of 989 in FY03/04, and 464 (62.2%) of 746 through March 2005. Perhaps the decline in pit bulls at-large is a positive sign, however there is still a long way to go. A combination of enforcement and education are being employed to address this challenge.





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Get personal. Adopt a pet.

Animal Services is a municipal animal care and control unit within the Rochester Police Department that is committed to improving quality of life and safety for city residents, the promotion of responsible pet guardianship, and the reduction of animal overpopulation to reduce animal suffering and euthanasia. Animal Services enforces all New York State and City of Rochester ordinances pertaining to animal control. We operate an animal shelter for stray, injured, menacing, and disowned animals. The shelter serves as a resource for locating lost pets and as an adoption center. We strive to provide the best possible care for all animals in our charge.

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WWW.ROCHESTERANIMALSERVICES.COM

Volunteer Corner

The volunteers did a great job during the third quarter getting the dogs walked and socialized, cleaning cat cages, and helping the shelter staff keep up with the never-ending laundry. A special thanks to volunteer Jan Hunsinger and the Friends of the Humane Society for their gracious offer to purchase a new washing machine for the shelter. We really appreciate your continuing support.

In the coming months, Animal Services will once again have information tents at the Corn Hill Arts Festival, the Park Avenue Festival, the Puerto Rican Festival, and several home Rhinos soccer games. We also plan to attend the 1st Annual Western NY Pet Expo and the 19th Ward Square Fair and Parade. At each event we depend on volunteers to answer ques-

tions, distribute brochures, and promote our adoption program and other services. These are great opportunities to spread awareness and boost adoptions. Sign-up sheets are posted in the shelter lobby. Please sign up now!



New Faces

Paul Sobotzick was born in Rochester, New York. He received an A.S. in Liberal Arts from MCC and a B.S. in Criminal Justice from RIT. Paul worked as a security officer for Ginna Power Plant and as a volunteer with Webster's Auxiliary Special Police for a number of years before becoming a Dispatcher for the town of Webster in 1981. In 1993, Paul was hired by the Office of Emergency Communications (now ECD) as a Telecommunicator. At the same time, he got involved with dog control in Webster on a part-time basis. Paul was hired as an Animal Care Technician in late December 2004. He continues his involvement with the Webster Police Department and also operates a private nuisance wildlife business.

Emily Aldridge was born in Honeoye Falls, New York. She lived in Oregon for 10 years where she volunteered at the Oregon Humane Society (OHS) as a dog



Paul with Sassy.

walker and a member of the animal-assisted therapy team. As a volunteer, Emily and her dog "Tiva" visited retirement homes and represented OHS at fundraisers. Emily was hired in March as a part-time Animal Care Technician.

Please help us welcome these new members of our team!



Emily with Benson