



Issue 1, July 2008

Improved Animal Cruelty Law Introduced in Legislature

Collaboration between the Nova Scotia SPCA and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture has led to the government proposing changes to the province's animal cruelty legislation to provide better protection for animals. The *Act to Protect Animals and to Aid Animals that are in Distress* was introduced



for the first reading in the Nova Scotia Legislature on May 27, 2008. The Nova Scotia SPCA and the Department of Agriculture have a long standing relationship. In 2006, the Nova Scotia SPCA was involved in its largest agricultural animal seizure to date, removing approximately 150 head of cattle, made possible thanks to the cooperation and assistance of the Department of Agriculture.

The Nova Scotia SPCA had been researching regulations and proposed changes to the current Animal Cruelty Prevention Act for over a year prior to the new legislation being introduced. It was expedited in part due to a high-profile animal cruelty investigation and seizure the Nova Scotia SPCA conducted early in 2008. The case drew the media spotlight and the attention of government officials with the Department of Agriculture, who worked collaboratively with the Nova Scotia SPCA to strengthen

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Nova Scotia SPCA Develops Code of Conduct and Compliance Committee

As the organization tasked with investigating animal cruelty in Nova Scotia, the SPCA has had its fair share of controversy and conflict over the years. Add to this the operation of an animal shelter in the Halifax Metro area, the existence of ten affiliated SPCA branches across Nova Scotia, and dozens of volunteers, employees, and special constables, all of whom interact with the public, and the challenges of handling complaints about Society operations become clear. The Nova Scotia SPCA realized it needed a Code of Conduct to guide the actions of its board members, staff and volunteers, and an arm's length Compliance Officer and Compliance and Ethics Committee to ensure that any concerns or grievances are handled in an objective and timely manner.

Enter Darrell Smith, Nova Scotia SPCA board member and recently appointed Chair of Animal Cruelty Investigations. Darrell has a background in risk management and experience as a compliance officer for a large corporation. When he joined the Board of Directors in February 2008,

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Become a Foster Parent for the SPCA

Everyday, SPCA branches throughout Nova Scotia receive dozens of phone calls from the public requesting assistance with stray, abandoned or homeless animals. To help care for these animals, most SPCA branches in Nova Scotia have a foster program to help with the overflow; some branches do not have a shelter facility and rely entirely on foster parents.

Many people who consider fostering wonder if they will have enough time, if they will do a good job and how they will be able to say goodbye to their new friend once the animal is ready to go to their "forever home." Although these concerns are valid, most people who sign up to foster do so time and

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Branch Spotlight: Yarmouth SPCA

Contributed by the Yarmouth SPCA

The Yarmouth SPCA has the distinction of being the first branch of the Nova Scotia SPCA and was formed in 1900. Our branch built an animal shelter in 1982/83 with an extension added in 1989. In 2006, our shelter was forced to close for 6 months due to mould. The extensive renovations exhausted our building fund account and we appealed to the community for an additional \$60,000 to complete the repairs. The community responded and we opened our shelter again in September of that year with our Grand Reopening held in June of 2007. We are pleased to say that we were able to complete the renovations at a cost of \$130,000 without incurring any debt. Our plans for an expansion are still in the works for the future.

The Yarmouth SPCA animal shelter is the only SPCA shelter west of Halifax and we currently have three full-time and three part-time employees. Our branch and shelter is under the direction of an eleven member volunteer board of directors. One of our employees is a provincially appointed special constable. This special constable investigates approximately 200 cruelty, neglect, or abuse cases per year in Yarmouth town and county, resulting in the



The Yarmouth SPCA Shelter

occasional court case. Most investigations are due to a lack of knowledge of how to care for the animal properly, so instructions are provided and a follow-up visit takes place. The Yarmouth SPCA also enforces the dog by-laws under contract for the Municipalities of Yarmouth and Argyle as well as the Town of Yarmouth.

The Yarmouth SPCA rescues and takes care of abused, abandoned, and homeless animals. We attempt to find good homes for the unwanted and healthy animals in our care. Our shelter has space for approximately 28 each of dogs and cats and is usually full to capacity. All animals up for adoption have been vaccinated, de-wormed, and spayed or neutered. All cats are tested for feline leukemia and treated with Revolution. Every young animal, too young to be fixed at time of adoption, must be spayed or neutered, by the owner, within a time period set by the shelter staff. Our shelter admits approximately 1200 animals per year. Some are reclaimed by their owners, some are adopted,

and others have to be euthanized. Unfortunately, our community has an over-population of cats and dogs because not all pet owners have their pets spayed or neutered.

The Yarmouth SPCA receives no government funding. The expenses of running the shelter are covered by fundraising, memberships, donations, dog control services, and community events. Our shelter is honoured to be a 2008 Pedigree Adoption Drive™ Campaign Partner Shelter. This is a year long program to raise funds and awareness about shelter dogs across the country and to help find loving homes for many wonderful animals in need. You can find out more about the Pedigree Adoption Drive by visiting www.mypedigree.ca. For more about supporting the Yarmouth SPCA please visit www.yarmouthspca.com.



What to contribute an article to a future edition of the Nova Scotia SPCA newsletter? Send us your idea! Email the newsletter editor at nsspasecretary@gmail.com.

The newsletter team for this edition:

Writers: Sandra Flemming, Mary Hill, Roger Joyce, Adina MacRae, Frieda Perry
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Meet the New Chief Provincial Investigator

The Nova Scotia SPCA is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Chief Provincial Investigator, Roger Joyce. Roger will oversee animal cruelty investigations across the province and coordinate a team of Provincial Investigators and volunteer Special Constables.

Born in Nova Scotia and raised on a livestock farm, Roger has had a lifelong interest in working with animals both large and small. He first became involved with the Nova Scotia SPCA as a foster parent for the Metro Shelter. He has been an employee of the Society for the past five years, gaining valuable insight into animal cruelty investigation through his roles as an Animal Control Officer and as a Provincial Investigator.

During his time as Provincial Investigator, Roger traveled throughout the province conducting investigations

and responding to service requests and complaints from the general public. He communicated on a daily basis with Provincial Office staff, veterinarians, police agencies, the Department of Justice, the Department of Agriculture, shelter staff and volunteer special constables throughout Nova Scotia.

As the new Chief Provincial Investigator, Roger recognizes the challenges of conducting animal cruelty investigations with only two paid investigators who respond to approximately 80 complaints a month from across the province. He looks forward to the day when the provincial government provides funding for additional investigators. These additional resources are critical to fulfilling Roger's goal of establishing an inspection team to conduct regular inspections of all facilities where

animals are housed, including rescues, shelters, veterinary clinics, animal control pounds, breeders, boarding facilities and doggie day cares.

Roger is proud of the work the Provincial Investigators and Special Constables have performed over the past few years, and recognizes the important role the Nova Scotia SPCA plays in educating the public and preventing cruelty to animals. He is happy to play a major role in the fulfillment of the SPCA's mandate.

Roger is married with two grown children and resides in Lower Sackville, with his wife Gloria, and their adopted animals, Riley, Boomer, Sami, Fuzzy, Mitzy, and Tinker.

Code of Conduct and Compliance Committee continued...

the Society was experiencing issues with lack of confidentiality, particularly related to ongoing cruelty investigations and court cases. Darrell recommended that the existing Code of Ethics for the Board of Directors be replaced by a comprehensive Code of Conduct, with clearly defined guidelines, expectations and consequences. The Code of Conduct would apply not to just board members, but also to SPCA employees and volunteers, who are often exposed to or deal with sensitive issues related to animal cruelty, animal care, shelter operations and adoption procedures.

Further, it was recommended that a volunteer Compliance Officer position be created to handle complaints from the public regarding the conduct of board members, employees and volunteers. The Compliance Officer would chair a Compliance and Ethics Committee that exists at arm's length from the

Board of Directors. Committee members would be tasked with reviewing complaints, preparing responses, and making recommendations to the Board. The Compliance Officer and the committee would be accessible to the public and complaints or concerns would be submitted directly to them without going through the Board or Society employees. A motion to form the committee was passed by the Board of Directors during a March 2008 meeting.

To develop the Code of Conduct, Darrell reviewed codes used by other SPCAs and non-profit organizations in Canada. A draft code of conduct was reviewed by the Board of Directors and presented at the Society's Annual General Meeting in April 2008. The code describes how employees and board members should interact with each other, the handling of confidential information, communicating with the media,

dealing with conflicts of interest, processes for financial reimbursement and transactions, employee conduct, accountability, whistle blowing, and the roles and responsibilities of the Compliance Officer and Compliance and Ethics Committee.

The Code of Conduct was approved by the Board in June 2008, and the Society is now seeking volunteer applicants for the Compliance Officer position. The Code of Conduct and a job description for the Compliance Officer position can be found on the Nova Scotia SPCA website at www.spcans.ca. The deadline for applications is August 15, 2008.

Foster Care continued...

time again, once they realize how important their role is to the animals.

Most fostering programs will cover the cost of veterinary care, food, litter and anything else the animal requires. The role of a foster home is not to provide financial support, but rather to provide the love and patience the animal may need to regain their mental and physical health.

If you are thinking of becoming a foster parent, there are several things to consider before opening your home to a new friend. All members of your household should sit down together and discuss what fostering a pet would mean to everyone involved. If you have small children or other pets you need to consider how it will affect them. Also, do you work long hours? Do you have a fenced in backyard? Do you live in an apartment and, if so, do you have your landlord's consent? Do you have the time and patience necessary to care for a young or sick animal?

If you think you are ready to become a foster home, contact your local SPCA to get more information on their fostering program. Since each

branch of the NS SPCA operates independently, fostering requirements may differ slightly. You can expect to go through an application process to make sure you and your home are suited to fostering.

When you become an approved foster parent, you can decide which type of animal will work best in your home environment. If it is a dog you are interested in, there are always opportunities to open your home to a young puppy or a dog with medical or behavioral issues that may benefit from a stable home environment and just needs some extra socialization and love in a home before they can be put up for adoption. Sometimes this is the biggest impact a foster home can provide in an animal's life.

One of the most common foster examples is unwanted mothers with a litter of kittens. During the summer months, the number of homeless cats and dogs flooding the shelter soars. The demand on shelter resources is made even greater since many of the kittens that come to the shelter are too young to be adopted. Keeping them at the shelter for up to 8 weeks before



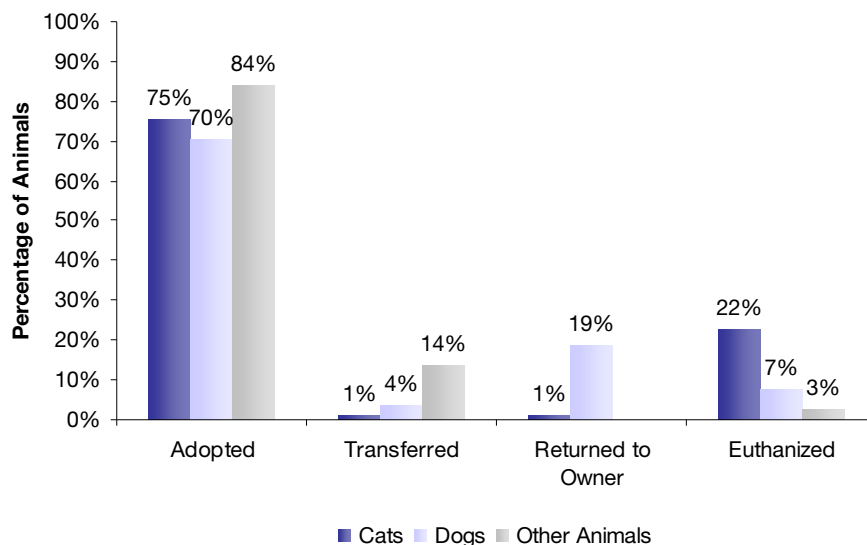
they are old enough to be adopted ties up kennel space, staff and resources. A foster home provides kittens with a quieter, less stressful environment where they can grow into healthy cats.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent or have further questions, contact your local branch of the SPCA and ask about their foster program. Opening your home and heart as a foster parent to an abandoned animal is a rewarding way to become a volunteer! Fostering is a fantastic opportunity to make a hands on contribution to saving animals' lives.

Did You Know?

- Nova Scotia SPCA Provincial Investigators responded to 942 domestic cruelty complaints and 13 agricultural complaints in 2007.
- Over 4500 animals were adopted from SPCAs in Nova Scotia in 2007, and over 400 were reunited with their owners.
- Individual donations comprise 99% of the Nova Scotia SPCA's funding. The Society currently receives only \$3,000 a year from the government, which is directed toward investigating allegations of cruelty related to farming operations.
- There are SPCA branches with shelters or adoption and fostering programs across Nova Scotia. Visit www.spcans.ca for a complete list.

Provincial* SPCA Statistics for 2007



* Includes data from the Cape Breton, Halifax (Metro), LaBaie, Lunenburg, Pictou, Queens and Yarmouth SPCA branches.



Ask the K9 Coach

By Adina MacRae
www.k9coach.ca

Question: Our family wants to adopt our next dog. Would you recommend a puppy or an adult?

Answer: Adopting a dog of any age is a great option but you should consider your lifestyle when choosing a new pet.

Puppy Pros: Being able to expose a puppy to all of the things you would like him or her to enjoy as an adult can decrease future behavioral problems. Puppies are very receptive to learning and you can prevent bad habits from forming. Puppies are usually a good idea for families with children. If a puppy is exposed to children in a positive way, he or she will be less likely to aggress towards them as an adult. Make sure your family schedule will allow for all the attention a new puppy will need.

Puppy Cons: Puppies should not be left unsupervised as they may chew and destroy furniture and can hurt themselves. They have small bladders and for the first few months should not be expected to go longer than four hours without a bathroom break. They require a lot of time and patience to learn proper doggy etiquette. Even if you are committed to properly socializing your puppy, personalities will often change as a dog enters social maturity. This is especially important to remember when considering breeds that tend to be aloof or protective. If you are not an energetic person who prefers to sleep in on the weekends, you work long hours or don't have the financial capacity to pay for the numerous vet visits required in the first year of life, a puppy isn't for you.

Adult Dog Pros: Adult dogs come with personalities that will not likely change. You can ensure your dog's personality compliments you and take out some of the guesswork that comes with a puppy. If you like to sleep in on the weekends, there are a lot of dogs that would like nothing better than to snuggle down. If you would rather be out enjoying the great outdoors then you can opt for a higher energy dog. Adult dogs are usually past the chewing phase and are often house trained so you won't have to be hyper-vigilant. If you don't have a lot of time to commit to training, a laid-back senior dog can be a great option.

Adult Dog Cons: Adult dogs can arrive with bad habits or fears due to lack of training and socialization as a puppy. Depending on your lifestyle, you may have to spend many hours retraining a dog to fit in with your family. Adult dogs, particularly seniors, may come with medical needs that require financial and time commitments. Pet insurance can help with this problem.

Final Thoughts: Regardless of the age you choose, a dog is a life long commitment. Do your breed research and make sure to match energy levels and sociability with your lifestyle for a happy relationship with your new family member.

Got a question about dogs or dog behaviour? Email the newsletter editor at nsspcasecretary@gmail.com, and your question might be answered in a future column!

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Board Notebook: April - June 2008

The Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia SPCA is comprised of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, six to twelve Directors-at-Large, and ten branch representatives from across the province. The Board meets monthly to discuss issues related to animal cruelty investigations, finances and fundraising, educational initiatives, public relations, branch developments, and the operation of the Metro Shelter, which also falls under the responsibility of the Nova Scotia SPCA. This *Board Notebook* feature provides a summary of the Board's activities and decisions during the past three or four months to keep Society members, supporters, and the general public informed about the work of the Nova Scotia SPCA.



The Board of Directors meets the last Monday of every month.

Starting in June 2008, minutes of Board meetings will be posted on the NS SPCA website following their approval by the Board.

You can contact the Board by emailing animals@spcans.ca.

April

In April, the Nova Scotia SPCA held its 131st Annual General Meeting. Financial statements and reports from the meeting can be downloaded from the Nova Scotia SPCA website.

May

The Board met twice during the month of May. The first meeting was to discuss concerns raised by Society members during the Annual General Meeting. The Board decided to issue a press release to clarify the Society's position on issues identified during the meeting and to identify ways for the organization to improve communication with the public.

The second meeting was held to discuss filling vacant positions created by the resignation of two Board members, as well as the vacant Executive positions of Vice President and Secretary. After considerable discussion regarding the number of Directors-at-Large the Board requires and the skill sets that would be desirable, a short list of candidates was put forward for consideration at the Board's next meeting, scheduled for early June. The President, Pamela Keddy, appointed Director-at-Large Nancy Northcott as the new Chair of the Human Resources and Personnel Committee. Nancy brings experience in management and rehabilitation consulting to this role and looks forward to working with the committee on HR related issues.

June

The Board's regular end-of-May Board meeting was postponed by one week to encourage more members to attend. During the meeting, the Board passed several key motions, including the appointment of a Vice President and Secretary, the hiring of a new Chief Provincial Investigator, and the

creation of a new staff position of Fund Development Officer to help grow the Society's donor base and improve donor relations.

Unfortunately, the candidate who was appointed as Vice President subsequently declined the position, so that seat on the Board remains unfilled at the time of publication of this newsletter. The position of Secretary was filled by an existing Board member, Mary Hill. Mary brings to the position experience in communications, quality improvement, documentation development and coordination, and committee leadership through her position as a research officer and quality coordinator for Capital Health.

Following lengthy discussion about the size and structure of the current Board of Directors and the need to embark on a strategic planning process to identify goals and new initiatives for the next few years, and the skills required to achieve them, no new Directors-at-Large were elected during the meeting because the minimum number of Directors (six) was already met.

The President, Pamela Keddy, appointed Director-at-Large Darrell Smith as the new of the Chair of Provincial Animal Cruelty Investigations Committee. Darrell takes over the position from Judith Gass, who announced her resignation from the Board in May. Darrell brings valuable experience to the role as the President of a security and investigations firm and he looks forward to working with the investigations team.

The Board also discussed holding an adopt-a-thon event for the large number of cats and dogs available for adoption at the Metro Shelter. The event will take place Saturday, July 12, 2008, at the Metro Shelter in the Burnside Industrial Park.

Events Calendar

Check out these great SPCA events coming up around the province!

July

July 3-5: Queens SPCA will be running a lemonade stand at Privateer Days festival in Privateer Park in Liverpool. We'll also be selling quilt raffle tickets and offering free pet info. Hope to see you there!

July 12: Metro SPCA 1st Annual Adopt-a-Thon, presented by Three Dog Bakery, and Book Fair. Learn more at www.spcans.ca.

September

September 13: Yarmouth SPCA 15th Annual Dog Jog, Beacon Park, Yarmouth, 10 a.m. Lots of prizes, refreshments and fun! Walk your dog and support a great cause!

September 6: 3rd Annual Yard Sale and Barbeque at the Metro Shelter.

October

October 26: Queens SPCA will be hosting a Kitchen Party and Supper at Beach Meadows Community Centre on the South Shore. There'll be music, food and fun for the whole family. Come for supper and plan to spend the evening!



Animal Cruelty Law continued...

the law that is meant to prevent animal cruelty in Nova Scotia.

The surge in public interest provided an opportunity for the Society to focus its efforts on developing progressive legislation that addressed the weaknesses of the existing Act. In March, a working group of SPCA directors, staff members, cruelty investigators and special constables came together to share ideas and identify changes to the Act. A review of legislation from Manitoba, British Columbia and the United Kingdom provided the inspiration for several of the changes that have been incorporated into first reading of the proposed new law.

Gaining access to personal residences has been a long-standing challenge for law enforcement officers. Under the revised Act, if SPCA Inspectors cannot enter a premises, they will be able to request that a person present the animal for inspection. There are improved descriptions and definitions of what "distress" means, which will give Inspectors greater ability to intervene in suspected cases of animal cruelty.

Veterinarians will be obligated to report suspected animal cruelty.

Under the existing legislation, the Nova Scotia SPCA is responsible for investigating unregistered farms. Under the proposed new Act, the Department of Agriculture will handle all agriculture-related cruelty complaints, including those involving horses, enabling the Society to focus their resources on domestic animals. New funding from the Department of Agriculture to support the hiring of additional investigators for the Nova Scotia SPCA will greatly enhance the Society's ability to protect animals in distress and to educate pet owners.

While many of the Nova Scotia SPCA's proposed changes were addressed, notable items were excluded from the new legislation. The Nova Scotia SPCA sought stiffer penalties for people convicted under the Act, and will continue to negotiate these changes before the legislation passes. Based on the comprehensive law in the United Kingdom, the Society also requested that dog fighting and acts of mutilation, such as tail docking and declawing, be

View the proposed legislation (Bill 186) through the website of the Nova Scotia Legislature:
www.gov.ns.ca/legislature

specifically referenced in the Act. Although these were not listed under the new legislation, the proposed Act would allow the SPCA the ability to add regulations to address these and other issues.

With the strengthening of the Act and the additional funding to enforce the law, the animals of Nova Scotia will reap a great benefit. "The NS SPCA is committed to humane treatment of animals and we look forward to working closely with the Department of Agriculture to put regulations in place under the new Act to ensure a better quality of life for our best friends," states Nova Scotia SPCA President Pamela Keddy. The Nova Scotia SPCA encourages its members and the public to contact their local MLA to voice their support for the improved legislation.

Donate to the Nova Scotia SPCA



Where your money goes:

\$75 helps end overpopulation and aid a cat or dog in getting adopted by paying for spay or neuter costs.

\$100 sponsors a cat to find its way to a loving home after being vaccinated and spayed or neutered.

\$120 helps improve the health of cats and dogs during their stay by paying for one bottle of de-worming medicine in concentrate form.

\$150 sponsors a dog to find its way to a loving home after being vaccinated and spayed or neutered.

\$350 sponsors the work of one part-time Provincial Cruelty Investigator for one month.

\$450 pays the electric expenses for one month.

YES! I will help the Nova Scotia SPCA investigate and prevent animal cruelty in Nova Scotia. My cheque made out to the NS SPCA is enclosed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

I will donate:

\$10 \$25 \$50 Other \$ _____

I prefer to direct my donation towards the care of abused and abandoned animals through the SPCA branch in:

Antigonish Cape Breton Colchester

Halifax (Metro) Hants Kings

La Baie (Clare District) Lunenburg

Pictou Queens Yarmouth

My cheque made out to the branch is enclosed.

Mail to:

Nova Scotia SPCA
1600 Bedford Highway
Suite 422
Bedford, NS
B4A 1E8

Please send me your electronic newsletter to this email address:

YES, I need a tax receipt for my gift of over \$10.00.

NO, I do not require a tax receipt.

Donate online with your credit card through www.CanadaHelps.org.

