

## Charities & Holiday Giving

As the holiday season approaches, many thoughts turn to helping those less fortunate. In fact, surveys have indicated that over 50 percent of all donations to charity are made between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's important, however, that you don't make charitable contributions indiscriminately. By following a few precautions, you can ensure your generosity provides maximum benefits for the organizations who need your help. Before you donate make sure your money supports a cause that meets your approval. Thoroughly investigate and understand both the animal-related issues and the programs or ideals that your donation will support. Will your donation go directly to help animals or will it be used for administrative costs and campaign funds?

### Suggestions for donations to benefit animals and people:

**American Veterinary Medical Foundation** to fund VMAT (Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams). This group is the first line of defense in responding to animals and their owners in the event of a disaster. Monies could be used for training and instituting SART (State Animal Response Teams) and CART (County Animal Response Teams) programs. Without this team, in North Carolina after Hurricane Floyd, thousands of abandoned animals would have died. With SART in place, their physical and medical needs were taken care of, and once owners were allowed to come home, animals were reunited. Animals that were not reclaimed were adopted out quickly. The SART program made that happen. Donating to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation could make this program a reality in more states, and directly affect those in the greatest need. More information on the Foundation and what they have accomplished can be found at: <http://www.avmf.org/html/index.asp>

**Canine Companions for Independence** - a national nonprofit that enhances the lives of children and adults with disabilities by providing highly-trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. For more information visit <http://www.caninecompanions.org/>

**AKC Canine Health Foundation** - The foundation works to develop significant resources for basic and applied health programs with emphasis on canine genetics to improve the quality of life for dogs and their owners. The foundation funds research and supports canine health scientists and professionals in their efforts to study the causes and origins of canine disease and afflictions in order to formulate effective treatments. [http://www.akcchf.org/index.cfm?nav\\_area=homepage](http://www.akcchf.org/index.cfm?nav_area=homepage)

**The Winn Feline Foundation** - a non-profit organization established by the Cat Fancier's Association, Inc. to support health-related studies benefiting cats. <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/index.html>

**North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission** – Give back to wildlife this holiday season. The online NC Wild Store carries many different products, from books to posters to clothes, that make great gifts for hunters, anglers and other wildlife enthusiasts. Proceeds from each product go to support a correlating wildlife project or program. To see all items available for purchase visit [www.ncwildstore.com](http://www.ncwildstore.com)

**Local rescues and shelters** – normally work on very tight budgets and have extensive wish lists and needs in order to better care for animals waiting for new homes.



## **HSUS Grass Roots Meeting**

Amanda Arrington, NC State Director for HSUS, held the first of several scheduled grass roots meetings in Charlotte on Dec. 2. She claims that HSUS has 250,000 members in North Carolina. In reality, anyone who ever signed up for an alert or sent a donation to help Katrina victims or had any contact with HSUS is added to their “membership” roll.

Arrington confirmed the fact HSUS and PETA share the same goals and regularly share information. HSUS has 5 major campaigns in the US: end Factory Farming, end the Fur Industry, Stop Puppy Mills, end Animal Fighting, end Wildlife Abuse (Formerly Anti-Hunting Campaign). Arrington boasted about the passage of Proposition 2 in California, the ballot initiative to change animal agriculture standards that was drafted and funded by HSUS.

Regarding North Carolina laws, Arrington believes the language is too vague in our criminal statutes.

Upcoming NC bills that HSUS is supporting now or working to introduce are:

- 2 bills mandating animal shelter procedures and euthanasia protocols
- API (Animal Protection Institute) bill to regulate ownership of exotic animals
- Banning Fox and Coyote Hunting/Penning
- Anti-Chaining Legislation (as recently passed in Durham)
- Dog Breeder Legislation and Regulation

Arrington urged those in attendance to contact their legislators regarding animal issues, write letters to the editor calling for humane legislation, and attend local county meetings. She reminded the audience that February 12 is Humane Lobby Day in Raleigh and HSUS will be there in full force.

## **A Note from the Center for Consumer Freedom**

With the passage of California's Proposition 2, more people have come to realize the evolving threat of the power, influence, and growing wealth of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Ballot initiatives and legislation similar to Prop. 2 will soon be introduced in more states. HSUS's massive budget, unwarranted positive public reputation, and deep-pocketed Hollywood friends will only become a greater threat to industry in a post-Proposition 2 business environment. It is crucial that a key broad cross-section of agriculture leaders start managing this nationwide threat now, before it is too late or too expensive to match HSUS dollar for dollar.

## **NCRAOA Website**

Remember to check our website for new articles, links and updates. On the Licensing Issues and Studies page there are new links to position statements on mandatory spay/neuter from several national organizations. Many articles on limit laws, tethering, leash laws, and spay/neuter are available.

Brochures and flyers on a variety of topics, including the difference between animal rights and animal welfare, are available for download and distribution.

# Occam's Razor

By Barbara Axel

I am publicizing this because not too many people have heard about disc rupture that progresses slowly over 11 months, and does not leave the dog paralyzed.

Occam's Razor is the principle derived from the medieval philosopher, William of Occam, that states the simplest explanation is often the best. It was brought home to us recently with a vengeance.

10+ years ago our dachshund Summer whelped her only litter. Halfway through the birthing process she expelled a dried up mummy-like thing that I immediately wrapped in a hand towel and took out of the room before she could see it. I had just walked out when this "thing" screamed at me that it was hungry. Was I ever shocked! I told it that it would be given no special attention, but I would bring it back to see if it would suckle.

First I weighed it: 2 ounces!

Suckle it did, with great verve, complaining only when it was knocked off the nipple by its much larger littermates. As soon as I plugged it in again it suckled away once more with contentment.

This micro-mini survivor grew up normally to become a standard sized dachshund who was breeder-owner handled to the titles of Ch. Camp Guthrie's Cliffhanger L, CD, CGC. He started out healthy and has continued in that manner, never, ever having the least complaint of illness.

Fast forward to 1/2008. Was I seeing something amiss or was it my imagination? Once in a while I thought I saw a skipped step.

By April it was evident that something subtle was indeed going on. A complete vet exam, and thorough palpation of Cliffhanger's muscular body showed no indication of restricted movements or pain, and a chem scan said the dog was in excellent health, but scraped toenails said otherwise. The veterinarian shook his head and said to observe the dog closely. Something was brewing.

As time progressed, so did the out-of-ordinary symptoms, but not in a straight decline. There were hills and valleys, with each valley being lower than the one before, and each hill not being as high. Meanwhile I was doing research, trying to find out what could be wrong. I wrote to several experts on neurological problems in different breeds of dogs and was pleased to get replies from most. All said that the dog did not have that particular problem.

By fall Cliffie was often finding it harder to keep his balance, and using his nose as a fifth leg to right himself when needed. His movement problems were bilateral, front and hind legs all involved, but he could jump up on his cot, and roll around on his back with glee. He was able to shake himself off with energy, and lift his head to bark at squirrels and birds. He had no problems bending his head to eat, or stretch forward for a goody.

Finally I brought Cliffie to our friend Dr. John Sherman, the famous specialist sport vet in Raleigh, NC. He spent two hours examining our dog and talking to us before he announced a tentative determination.

Next came another full blood work up, urinalysis, and fecal exam by our primary vet. All tests showed the dog was absolutely normal, and new scans had not changed since the ones performed in April.

We then traveled back to Raleigh to the Iams Imaging Center where Clifie underwent an MRI. What wonderful people!!!! MRI rather than myelogram because it would provide more information, but vet centers that have that equipment are far apart and usually associated with teaching hospitals. Dr. Sherman armed with the MRI conferred with the radiologist and several veterinary surgeons before telling us of his determination.

Our dog did not have some esoteric disease, but rather the common dachshund problem presented in a rather unusual way. Occam's Razor! They discovered a form of cervical disc injury that in rare cases can manifest itself bit by bit over a long period of time with more and more awkward movement, but no paralysis. Crate rest and medications would not help in this case. The discs in question are Cervical-5-6, very low on the neck, almost next to the thoracic discs. To get to them would be difficult. Dr. David Lee, board certified in both surgery and anesthesia on the staff of the Veterinary Specialty Hospital of the Carolinas performed the operation. In mid November Cliffhanger had a ventral spondylectomy operation and fenestration of every other cervical disc.

A tough operation, but this is a tough dog, with a great attitude that says "I can." We all knew that.

We did all we could to find the best people for the job. But because of the difficulty of the operation and his advanced age we went home with trepidation to find out if our survivor dog would survive this new challenge to his body. The operation that was supposed to have been performed in the afternoon, but due to an emergency actually took place early in the evening. Because of the "iffy" nature we had signed a DNR form before we left the hospital and drove the 5 hours home.

The doctor called late that night. Cliffhanger did survive, and the outlook was a guarded positive. But once again Cliffhanger showed his mettle. The next morning we got a phone call about Cliffhanger from a staff attendant. About 3AM our dachshund let everyone know he was starving.....I wonder just how he did that! They had no choice if they wanted the cacophony to end. He was fed.

Shortly after he ate he walked outside to potty. Less than 12 hours after the operation this dog was walking. Two days later he was transferred to Vethab Rehabilitation Center for a week. His progress was faster than anticipated. His care was superb. The exercises he was given could not be duplicated at home.

Yesterday Cliffhanger came home with specific instructions for his owners.

There is an early Thanksgiving being celebrated at Camp Guthrie this year. 🐾

***Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.***

**Join NCRAOA. See our home page for membership information and application**

*For more information on animal health, training, reports on pet issues, animal sheltering, or to learn the difference between animal welfare and animal rights – visit our website at [www.ncraoa.com](http://www.ncraoa.com)*

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws.

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