

PRESSENTATION

Good evening AARF Members and Supporters:

After the AGM last year we took careful note of your comments and complaints, so one of the changes we have made this year is to make this annual report slightly shorter and hopefully sweeter.

In a few weeks time, on September 14th, it will be 5 years since a group of 15 animal lovers met at Paradise Lounge in North Side, to discuss the creation of an animal welfare organization for Anguilla, so our first real milestone is not too far away. Today we have a fully paid membership of 85, and I notice that a few more have been added to that number this evening, so we can assume that our membership is now moving towards the 90's.

In those first months of 2000 we received so much encouragement. We were also given some very well meaning advice from other animal lovers in the community, who refusing to join our ranks, told us that we were wasting our time and did we realize that this was Anguilla, where an organization such as this would never work. Well, 5 years on, and we have to thank both of these factions for their comments. One gave us hope, with their words of encouragement; the others gave us the will to battle on and to show them that we could make a difference.

This year has had its ups and downs – I think those of us involved in the daily “housekeeping” would become totally surprised if life with AARF turned into easy sailing. Even so, I think we will all admit that the teamwork and dedication of the last few months in particular has been quite incredible.

We left the AGM last year after a very busy spay and neuter weekend with our visiting Vets and Technicians from New Hampshire. Our grant commitments and the program for the year were completed at Morlens Veterinary hospital by Dr. Vanterpool & Veterinary Technician Amy Williams with the help of volunteers, who worked weekends and sometimes during the week, when Dr. Vanterpool had the additional available time.. We are pleased to announce that a total of 275 dogs and cats were sterilized at no cost to their owners under our 2004 program.

We have organized and attended many events since the last AGM.

On August 21 2004, AARF promoted the International Homeless Animals Day. With the support of Ashley's Supermarket, who allowed us to have a booth on their property, we had a very successful day. With Education as our theme, Michelle Owen-Vasilis encouraged the children to learn all about AARF while painting their faces with fun animal characters. Of course we also took the opportunity to sell merchandise, attract new members and were lucky enough to find homes for 5 puppies.

In September, Second Chance Pet Adoptions in Carey North Carolina, held a silent auction, and with our help, one of the prizes was a 7-day stay on Anguilla. From the proceeds of this auction AARF received 1380.00 US dollars. We could never have done this without the support of Shoal Bay Villas who donated the accommodation. The prize was made more attractive with contributions from Straw Hat, Roy's, Hibernia, Prickly Pear Dash & Scilly Cay restaurants, and also Cliffside Riding Center and the Anguilla Wellness Center.

At the Soroptimist's Christmas Fair we raised almost 500 US dollars through the sale of merchandise and 10 puppies found new homes.

In January, our annual post office membership drive was very successful. Memberships and merchandise sales raised 777.50 US. Again 4 puppies were fortunate to find new homes.

On February 19, we had our usual booth at the ABC Flower and Garden Show. There was a state funeral that weekend, not to mention the final run-down before the elections but in a few short hours our volunteers managed to raise 570.62 US.

AARF merchandise is for sale year round at Bartlett's Collection at the South Hill round a bout. The support that Lynn gives to AARF is overwhelming; whenever tourists visit her shop she never fails to promote our work, display our T-shirts, hats and bags and to remind them to leave their change in our collection box. Lynn we thank you.

Our spare change drive and collection boxes are a continuing source of income as well, and we have added about 15 collection spots throughout the island. We appreciate all the businesses that support this ongoing fundraiser.

Throughout the past year we have been having great success with our animal adoption days. We have to thank both Ashley's and Lake's supermarkets for their support with this undertaking. Both businesses have been extremely supportive. Through our Adoption Days and Clinic adoptions AARF has been able to place over 100 puppies and kittens, as well as older dogs and cats so far this year. We would like to thank all of those that have opened their hearts and sometimes already

full homes to these deserving animals. To encourage not only the AARF adoptions but also to stop the births of unwanted puppies and kittens each adoption includes a free spay or neuter for the adoptee.

Another program that continues year-round is the Trap Neuter Release program at Cap Juluca. This program is the “baby” of our secretary Suzie Donahue, otherwise known as the Cat Lady. Every day of life you can find Suzie at Cap Juluca feeding and tending the hotel’s cat colony. Since the program started, a total of 15 cats have been trapped, sterilized and released back at Cap Juluca. When Suzie is off-island Mrs. Christine Cutler very kindly takes over and helps maintain the program.

In many ways our biggest challenge of the year was the April 23rd Yard Sale, which because of torrential rain was actually held on 30th! I am proud to tell you that we raised 5,336.99 US. This money will go a very long way to help pay for this year’s spay and neuter program. The Agricultural Department has to be applauded for their patience. After the rains of the weekend of 23rd they allowed our tents, tables and other items to remain on their property until the following week, and after the event they very kindly trucked all of our garbage to Corito. So many people volunteered and helped to make this event possible - those who spring-cleaned their cupboards, closets and storerooms giving us the items to sell, those who sorted, priced, trucked & loaned equipment and tents & those who sweated in the sun putting up & taking down those tents. And of course, those who sold, and those who purchased the items. Thank you everyone.

Our education chairperson Michelle Owen Vasilis again organized the Kathy Melby Memorial project at the Road School. This is an art competition sponsored by family and friends of Kathy, who was a great animal lover and supporter of AARF. This year there were 7 prize winners from grades 1 through 5 with Keri Richardson from grade 3 taking the prize for over-all winner. The children received small cash prizes, a beanie bear and an AARF T-shirt. The over-all winner also received a copy of the book Paddy the Goat that saved Rainbow Island, written by Jo-Ann Mason. Again we have to thank teacher Shelagh Richardson for all her help with this project.

Many people here this evening will be pleased to hear that one of the items addressed over the past few months has been a complete overhaul of the AARF By-laws. The biggest bone of contention in the past has always been the nomination committee and the voting process at the AGM. We had hoped, that this year, more members would have taken the opportunity to make nominations for the executive committee. Fortunately enough people did, and we can present a slate of officers this evening, but maybe next year we will get more and be able to have a real vote. The Policies and Procedures committee is also nearing completion of updated animal release & animal adoption forms, and other clinic policies.

The executive committee has recently authorized other improvements which we hope will encourage more adoptions and assist the community in the control and capture of unwanted animals in their neighborhoods. Play pens for puppies and kittens have been ordered so that the animals can get exercise during the day as well as being on show at the front of the clinic, and dog

traps have been ordered to add to the cat traps already on inventory. The donation of building materials from both Mr. Christopher Cutler and Dr. Patrick Vanterpool has encouraged us to forge ahead with plans for constructing a more permanent dog-run at the rear of the clinic, again improving the environment of the larger animals waiting for adoption.

In March of this year, the S & N sub-committee made an extraordinary proposal to the executive. They did this, after very carefully reviewing the 2004 program. They determined that it was certainly much more cost effective and more efficient to use the services of Morlens Veterinary Hospital than to bring in technicians from overseas. More importantly, smaller numbers at the clinic at any given time, would mean less stress for the animals and volunteers not to mention the workload involved with planning and organization. Female animals could be admitted at any time of the year, rather than having to wait for a specific Spay and Neuter event such as the one held in July 2004, at which time they could be quite well pregnant or nursing.

So, at the request of the S & N sub-committee an Executive decision was made to budget 9000.00 US to the S & N program for 2005. All of this money would be raised by AARF, and no grants or corporate funding from overseas would be requested. We are proud to announce that half way through the year we are well on our way to achieving this goal with confidence. The animals targeted this year will be those that are adopted through AARF as well as those families with need based circumstances

However, this does not mean that we intend to cut all links with grant agencies. In early May of this year Amy and myself met with visiting Pegasus officials in St. Martin, who after hearing our report, urged us to apply for a grant later this year.

On May 11, we were invited to apply to join WSPA [the World Society for the protection of animals], they had heard about us through their affiliation with the Antigua & Barbuda Humane Society. Just last week on June 20th our application was accepted. WSPA is a Global Network that spans 130 countries and includes 557 animal protection societies. AARF is proud to be their newest member. Funding, advice, training and a wealth of educational resources will now become available to us through this membership.

Finally, thanks to all of you here that have supported AARF both with your time as well as your financial assistance. A huge thank you to our student members, keep up the good work & remember we are depending on you to be sitting up here in the not too distant future. We are proud of what we have accomplished but recognize that we still have a long way to go with each spay or neuter, rescue and adoption we know that we are achieving our goal of making Anguilla a better place for the animals.

Thank you!.....

