

## 2008 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 24TH

*The 7th Annual General Meeting of the Anguilla Animal Rescue Foundation was held on Wednesday September 24th at Roy's Bayside. The members were welcomed by President Chris Carty, and the meeting opened with the AARF Prayer. Below is the text of President Chris Carty's address, the Treasurer's report presented by Jackie Pascher and Suzie Donahue's introduction of the Board for 2008 - 2009 and presentation of the Volunteer of the Year Award.*

### **President Chris Carty:**

This is the seventh annual general meeting of the Anguilla Animal Rescue Foundation, and eight years since the first group of people gathered to discuss its formation.

This year with the advent of our own shelter space and office facilities at Morlens Veterinary Hospital, not to mention the impressive work done by Sally our volunteer co-ordinator, we have been blessed with many new & enthusiastic volunteers willing helping out. Just as it was in the year 2000, what makes this organization really tick are dedicated people willing to volunteer their time, offer their own unique specialities and talents, or just pull up their sleeves and clean those cages! Our volunteers are the life-blood.

I thought it might be interesting to hear, very briefly, about some of the early days, the rocky roads, and how the hard work of volunteers has helped to fashion the AARF of today.

To my knowledge, the idea of forming an animal welfare society in September 2000 was certainly nothing new. Amongst others, Drs. Berglund, Tyhe and Vanterpool, had all discussed the subject at one time or another, but whether it was lack of community interest, not the right time, or whatever, nothing took off from these various discussions. A year or so before AARF became a reality, Mrs. Barbara Billington, did an enormous amount of research and planning largely in conjunction with the UK based RSPCA, but sadly she left Anguilla before her work reached fruition.

So what happened on September 14th, 2000 that was so different? The timing might have been right, and the group who met were surely motivated people, willing to pull up their sleeves and offer their unique talents, in other words – VOLUNTEER.

They joined together as a group, talked, made decisions and as is often said, the rest is history!

Progression from that first simple meeting into a more complex evolvement has sometimes been turbulent & in those early days we had all of that, and more! The Anguilla Animal Rights Foundation, the original name, was within weeks in the middle of a fracas when the soon to be opened Dolphin Discovery became major news; an event which almost caused AARF to close down before it ever started. Thankfully this situation was resolved when another group was organized which was to spotlight the dolphin predicament, and those who preferred to focus on the welfare of homeless and stray companion animals joined the re-named AXA Animal Rescue Foundation.

Around that same time Pit-bulls became prevalent, it was a common sight in those days to see one of these poor creatures labouring up George Hill or along Queen Elizabeth Avenue with two concrete blocks roped to its collar, taking its daily exercise. Many people believed that AARF should and would wave a magic wand and the problem would go away, but before that feat could be organised..... Government legislation was proposed. An educational forum was held on the "Talk Your Mind" radio program at which Dr. Vanterpool, as the Government Vet, was asked to be a guest speaker unfortunately shortly following this event an attempted arson attack was made on his clinic. Since that time we have been very conscious of the advice from the Department of Agriculture and the Police Task Force, not to get involved and to report all and every

case of dog fighting or animal cruelty to the appropriate department. At present all cases of cruelty reported to AARF are immediately directed to Dr. Vanterpool or to the Police Department.

2000 and early 2001 AARF members concentrated on the legal formation of the Society, and the Bye-Laws were drafted & AARF was officially registered under the Friendly Societies Act in March 2001.

Brochures were soon designed and printed, membership dues were collected.

On March 29th 2001 our first web-site, was launched. Today, thanks to Suzie, our newsletters are interesting and comprehensive and give a clear chronicle of the day to day events of the Society.

In May 2001 a graphic artist from Texas kindly designed the AARF logo for free. Soon after

Tee shirts were ordered with the new logo and Caribbean Silk Screen did all of the set-up work at no charge and sold us shirts at a reduced rate.

Much needed finance was beginning to trickle in.

You may be wondering.....What about the animals?

Long before the formation of AARF, Morlens Veterinary Hospital had been caring for the homeless animals of Anguilla – this they continued to do, but at long last in July 2002 AARF was able to reimburse them for the boarding, surgeries and drugs used during the previous 2 years.

To this day AARF and Morlens Veterinary Hospital work in close conjunction. Since mid 2005 we have relied on them to perform all of AARF's spay and neuter surgery and before the introduction of our own shelter space this year, all of AARF's animals, not in foster care, have been housed there.

Obviously in 2001, fundraising became somewhat of an obsession. In April of that year AARF made its first formal grant application to the William and Charlotte Parks Foundation for Animal Welfare, we were soon turned down. Too new – apply again next year!

So what did those stalwart AARF volunteers do? They sat outside the post-office & attended each and every community function going on, whether we were invited to or not - selling merchandise, soliciting memberships, selling raffle tickets and promoting the mission of the organization.

Wooden collection boxes were made & these were placed at business places, the airport, and some hotels.

At the end of May 2001 AARF had EC\$2311.71 in the bank – we were so proud!

In September 2001, AARF received its first substantial donation – US\$1000.00 from Cove Castles Hotel & it is of note that every year since a donation has been received from Mr. Goldfinger. Cap Juluca Hotel and the Flag and Viceroy projects have all donated generously to AARF and over the years & we have consistently received donations from businesses, residents and visitors alike, most often in cash, but also much needed supplies.

AARF has developed its fundraising expertise to the extent that for the last few years we no longer have to apply for overseas grants or aid. In 2003 we held our first yard-sale where everything collected was stored in Amy's spare bedroom, and it took two cars and a pick-up, only one trip each, to deliver to the site. The following year we had to move to Heather Wallace's store-room at Essentials, and presently we enjoy the luxury of a donated 40ft container, and a fleet of trucks is needed for transport, on the day of the sale – Gayle now informs us that soon we shall need our own store!

AARF is also famous for its fun filled Bingo nights; together with the yard sale these 2 events raise a substantial part of the annual budget.

But guess what? These events would not be possible without VOLUNTEERS.

In 2002 AARF was introduced to John and Sherry Morral, a young American couple from Connecticut who had already visited Anguilla many times and who had already taken back homeless puppies to be re-homed in the US. For a time their organization, Puppy Angels helped us enormously by re-homing many dogs & puppies. American Airlines, Caribbean Transportation, Save a Sato and the Second Chance Animal Rescue in P. Rico as well as Roy Bossons and Bob Turner with their own planes, all helped with transportation. In 2003 Puppy Angels was instrumental in introducing AARF to the Pegasus Foundation and in June of that year we held our first spay and neuter programme jointly funded by AARF, and the Pegasus Foundation and Puppy Angels. Our relationship with the Pegasus Foundation continues today, we are a member of their Caribbean Animal Welfare group & we attend and contribute to conferences and educational workshops arranged by them, WSPA, of which we are also a member, and the Humane Society International.

In June 2001, Michelle Owen-Vasilis opened discussions with the education department on Anguilla; she had such a difficult time in those days persuading the teachers & head-teachers that humane education would have a positive impact on the children. However that early groundwork must have been effective, our volunteers today, are welcomed into the schools and this is certainly an area where more volunteers would be welcome. Educational highlights have been the Kathy Melby art project at the Road School introduced in April 2004, and the much enjoyed animal “fun-page” which ran for a while in the Anguillian Newspaper in 2005. Again dedicated volunteers offering their unique talents.

Recently, Suzie wrote an article on change, and mentioned a change in attitude. Before the advent of AARF unwanted puppies and kittens were for the most part left in the bush to die or become feral, or were inhumanely killed. Not many pets were vaccinated and very few were treated for heartworm, fleas and other parasites. AARF volunteers have played a monumental part in effecting the change that now prompts some people to bring their animals to the shelter and surrender them for adoption, to have their animal spayed or neutered and to ask about vaccines. Maria and her team of volunteers labouring outside various grocery stores on adoption days should be very proud of the part they have played in helping to educate and bring about these changes.

And now we have another change with the advent of new shelter premises all adoptions will take place there, we feel this will insure that the person who is interested in adopting has come solely with that purpose in mind, and more importantly it will be much less stressful on the animal and our volunteers.

To all AARF volunteers, of the past, the present and to those of the future, we salute you.

And last but not least, Amy, for the past 8 years, 24/7, 365 days each year. Whatever we say to you can never be enough.....we all support you, and wish you every blessing in your future endeavours. Everyone please join me in a round of applause for Amy!

Thank-You

### **Jackie Pascher: Treasurer's Report for 2008 Annual General Meeting**

For purposes of this financial statement all figures are expressed in U.S. Dollars. All E.C. transactions have been converted using an exchange rate of \$2.68.

For the calendar year January 1 – December 31, 2007 we had the following:

Income      \$46,792.26

Expenses    \$27,799.21

Surplus      \$18,993.05

Combined Bank Balances as of 31 December, 2007 was:

Total        \$27,564.25

Our fund raising events for 2007 included 2 bingo events which generated \$17,898.00 in revenue with \$5435.34 in expenses and our annual yard sale which generated \$5316 in revenue with \$745.24 in expenses for a total of \$23,214 minus expenses of \$6180.58 for a net of \$17,033.42. We received \$12,356 in donations and drop box donations of \$4819. Adoptions, membership dues and merchandise sales provided additional revenue in the amount of \$8320.

In 2007 AARF paid \$17,549 for spay & neuter, room & board and medical care for animals brought in for adoption.

Another major expense in August, 2007 was the expenditure of \$20,000 for the purchase of an X-Ray machine to be used at Morlens Veterinary Hospital in exchange for space at the hospital for the AARF Shelter.

Overall 2007 was a very good year for AARF with a significant increase in revenue from our successful fund raising events and the generous donations from our friends and visitors. We thank all of you, our members, for your continued support and for volunteering at the events.

**Suzie Donahue:** Good evening ..... It is my pleasure to introduce the following members of the 2008 - 2009 executive board.

Gayle Gurvey – Vice President and Fundraising – Gayle begins her second term as fund raising chairperson with a bingo night scheduled for November 29th and our annual yard sale in April. Please continue to drop off items at the AARF container at Anguilla Techni Sales. Gayle plans to have an initial sort and organizational event soon, so sign up to join us - it's almost like going to the Mall!!

Kimberly Fleming – Secretary – This is also Kimberly's second year on the board preparing agendas and meeting minutes and maybe we can get her to adopt another kitten as well!

Jackie Pascher – Treasurer – Jackie begins her third term as treasurer and we so appreciate her keeping our finances organized! This term she has an "assistant treasurer" who won't be serving on the board, but who has volunteered to help Jackie with her treasurer duties – thank you Rebecca!

Linda Gratton – Member at Large & Education Linda has agreed to a second term as Education Chairman after a productive year. We hope to have an active committee of "school captains" assigned to each of the primary schools that will work with Linda. Our goal is to visit all the primary schools more frequently to continue our program of teaching the children about pet care. We firmly believe it is through the children that we will see permanent change in the way animals are thought of and treated.

Sally Baumwell – Member at Large & Membership / Volunteer Coordinator. Sally as Membership Chair is responsible for keeping an accurate membership list & sending out dues reminders. As our Volunteer Coordinator she manages an updated list of volunteers for the committee chairs to access when needed for AARF projects and also organizes the shelter volunteer schedule for the AARF Shelter at Morlens Veterinary

Hospital.

The other board members are:

Maggie Mitchell – Policies and Procedures – Maggie will guide us again this year with our policies and guidelines regarding adoptions, the AARF shelter, and AARF bylaws.

Bethany Riskin has agreed to serve as the AARF Adoption Chairman. She has some wonderful ideas to increase visibility of the animals we have available for adoption. Now that we have all adoptions from the AARF Shelter we are working diligently to change the mindset of the community so that they will come to us to adopt.

Mark Baumwell has agreed to replace me as Communications Chairman. He will now take over management of the website, publication of the newsletter and other publicity articles in the papers and Anguilla Life, emails to the membership, lost pet reports and other announcements to the radio stations & flyers, as well as thank you notes to our contributors. Mark has a long association with MAC computers and we look forward to some pizzazz in our communications – not to mention a “guy•s” view on our board!

Amy Williams – will continue as a trustee - safeguarding the assets of the foundation.

Last but not least is Chris Carty our past President – who with all her experience and knowledge I am sure I will depend on frequently.

So let•s• give a round of applause to the Executive Board of AARF for 2008 - 2009. Thank you!

### **Volunteer of the Year Award**

Since we began presenting this award several years ago, we have always had an unwritten rule that if you are a board member, you can't be a “Volunteer of the Year”. It doesn't say that anywhere – we just always thought it was a good idea and we still do, however, this year there are a few “buts” regarding our choice. This year we are presenting the award to a family – “but” part of the family is on the board, “but” only recently, which made it OK in our minds to present the award to a board member!

I am privileged to announce the Volunteers of the Year are

Sally & Mark Baumwell

who unfortunately can't be with us tonight.

Sally is AARF's newest addition to the Executive Board taking over in March as Volunteer Chairperson for Maria and Membership Chairperson for Gayle. We decided to combine these two positions (Volunteer and Membership) when Maria had to resign and Gayle had plenty on her plate with fundraising.

Sally and her husband Mark have been constant volunteers since they returned to Anguilla last August! I remember them sitting in the back at the AGM and then signing up to help on every committee! Sally & Mark have been supporters of AARF for many years and in fact I met them for the first time when they volunteered at the Christmas Fair back in 2003! In the process of dealing with the many challenges that go with remodeling their home, they have both found time to volunteer at every turn. Working at bingo, sorting on Thursdays at the container, manning a table at the yard sale, fostering, organizing the shelter volunteers and training them, more fostering, assisting in updating the AARF forms, more fostering and being active shelter volunteers - often three times a week! Sally and Mark also help with communications by producing and distributing flyers on animals up for adoption and lost & found pets. We are extremely grateful for all that

they both do and can't wait for them to return home to Anguilla in a few months. Thank you & Congratulations Sally & Mark!

### **Appreciation Award:**

Finally I would like on behalf of the new board and the previous board and all the members and contributors of AARF to thank you Chris for your many years of service and dedication. Chris has served as our president for the past 3 years, as well as advisor to our previous presidents. She has also served as secretary and was a founding member of AARF and she and her husband Lenny let us keep the AARF container where we collect items for our annual yard sale in their business yard! Now that is dedication!! We have counted on Chris so many times and she has never once let us down! As a small token of our appreciation I would like to present you with this gift for all that you have done and will continue to do in the future. Thank you Chris!

**Closing:** As Chris mentioned, we finally opened our own shelter this year and I have been thrilled with the volunteers that have come to join us and assist with adoptions, socialization and animal care – we have a great committed group and I would like those volunteers that are here to please stand.

AARF has made great strides in education, our adoption program is a success with 166 adoptions this year and 130 spay and neuter surgeries. I have been told that reports shouldn't include "boring numbers" but I contend that our successes can only be measured by these figures and I am pleased to share them with you. Since we began our spay/neuter program in the summer of 2003, AARF has sponsored over 980 surgeries – that makes me extremely proud to be a part of AARF – and you should feel that way too!

However, as you all know, since the beginning of August we have been facing certain issues regarding staffing at Morlens. We are hopeful that a positive solution is in the works. With our dedicated volunteers, our committed board and you - our members and supporters, we will continue to work hard to control the births of unwanted kittens and puppies, educate the public on the wonderful gifts that our companion animals can give to us and through our own example prove that we can make Anguilla a better place for the animals that live here. The future is ours – all we have to do is volunteer to be part of the solution!

Thank you!