

Friends of the Animal Shelter

the



# Scoop

Winter / Spring • 2013



### Mission Statement

Friends of the Animal Shelter is a nonprofit organization that supports the programs of the Jackson County Animal Shelter. Our mission is to increase pet adoption, to improve the quality of life for the Shelter's animals, to promote spay/neuter and participate in outreach and educational activities regarding responsible pet guardianship and animal welfare.

## THE RETIREMENT OF PANTHER, SHELTER WORKING CAT

**By MARILYN EDWARDS** — If you have visited the Jackson County Animal Shelter anytime in the last five years, you were probably greeted in the lobby by Panther, a huge, handsome black cat with intelligent green eyes. If he wasn't sitting on the counter next to Shelter Staff member Vicki Perdue's work station, he could be found lounging in his three-story luxury kennel by the front door. More recently, in his role as "Uncle Panther," he was often seen in Kitty Korner, refereeing any rough play between cats and kittens available for adoption, and no doubt offering them advice on the ways of the world. Even before Kitty Korner became a fixture at the Shelter, Panther was often seen sharing his kennel for a few hours with another cat or a kitten that either needed a time out or extra cuddling.

Panther was just over a year old when he arrived at the Shelter in September of 2007. At that point, his name was Tom and he was being surrendered by his young owner whose landlord didn't allow pets. "Tom" had been well-cared for – and it showed in the confidence and calmness he exhibited during his early days at the Shelter. After some deliberation, the staff changed his name to Panther and within a month he was adopted by the Shelter to be its Ambassador Cat.

Vicki was there the day Panther was brought in and it was love at first sight for this woman who has always had a special place in her heart for black kitties. Vicki's frequent visits to the cat room to spend time with Panther turned into Panther spending time in the front office with Vicki while she worked. Soon he had a kennel in the lobby, and his own bowl of filtered water on the counter. Yes, filtered!

Vicki tells us, "He and I played hide and seek in the hallways. I brushed his sleek black coat daily and took him for walks. I think that it was during those walks that we established our special bond. In the beginning,



Former Shelter employee Vicki Perdue relaxes at home with Panther, who is now happy to be a lap kitty.

## DOG KENNEL ENRICHMENT AND TRAINING EFFORTS IN FULL SWING

**By LESLIE HUNTINGTON** — Over the past few months, FOTAS volunteers and staff have worked diligently to enrich the lives of the dogs while they are at the Shelter. This has made their days less stressful, and is making them more adoptable. One program recently implemented is the “Train to Adopt” series, designed by Sue Sternberg, nationally-recognized dog trainer and animal shelter manager. The video series teaches positive and nonverbal training techniques to those who work in a shelter environment.



Shelter Volunteers Melinda Kidd and Leslie Huntington pass out stuffed Kongs to the dogs at the Shelter as part of the new enrichment program.

FOTAS volunteer Art Lipski devotes at least three days a week to teach these methods of training to volunteers, who then work with the dogs. One technique is called “sit with attention.” When a potential adopter stops at an individual dog’s kennel, the dog will immediately sit and quietly wait for the person. Many community members who come into the kennels often comment on the wonderful behavior displayed by each dog! These training tools are also shared with adopters.

Thanks to Art and his hard work, the volunteers are employing the training techniques regularly in the kennels. The dogs are quick to learn and eager to show off their good manners. Look for more details about this program in the next issue of The Scoop.

A new kennel enrichment program was recently implemented as well, providing the dogs with a challenging activity to stimulate both their minds and taste buds. Kongs of various sizes are stuffed with a variety of foods, frozen, and then distributed each day. The strong chewers receive bones from a local butcher shop to gnaw on throughout the day. The Kong deployment is enthusiastically received, but the dogs excitement will quickly turn into a focused quiet as they work through the layers of soft and crunchy treats. This has become a highlight of the day for both dogs and volunteers alike, sharing in the joy of a fun activity that goes a long way to reduce the stress in the kennels and provide a positive outlet for the dogs. 🐾

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Board of Directors will hold the annual meeting of members of Friends of the Animal Shelter on Thursday, March 21, 2013, at 6:00 PM at the Jackson County Animal Shelter, 5595 South Pacific Highway, Phoenix, Oregon.

The annual meeting is called for the purpose of electing officers and board members-at-large (directors), and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the members.

The election will take place in accordance with the Bylaws of the corporation. The Board of Directors will present a slate of candidates for positions on the Board. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting. The candidates with the most votes will be elected as directors. A meeting of the newly elected Board will take place immediately following the close of the annual meeting.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting, please call Peggy Moore at (541) 821-8291.



## WORLD SPAY DAY

2013

World Spay Day is Feb. 26th, See the enclosed SNYP flyer for information on how you can participate.

### Friends of the Animal Shelter

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### The Scoop Newsletter

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 Submit newsletter articles and ads for the Summer 2013 newsletter edition by May 15, 2013 to Tracy Gault, The Scoop editor, via email at simplify98@hotmail.com or PO Box 92, Ashland, OR 97520.

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## PANTHER

*Continued from page 1*



**Panther continues to keep watch for visitors while basking in the sunshine at his new home in Salem.**

I used a collar and leash, but realized pretty quickly that they were not needed. Panther would obey my voice commands. We walked twice a day and 'talked' about a lot of things."

Worrying at first that Panther would be lonely when the Shelter was closed, Vicki brought him home with her once or twice. Quickly she discovered that this made him nervous. He just wanted to get back to his Shelter home. Panther had free run of the Shelter at night, and often during the day he sat on the counter checking out all the dogs, cats and people who came through the Shelter doors. As a working cat he took his responsibilities seriously.

Panther delighted everyone: the staff, the FOTAS volunteers and the many visitors to the shelter. He especially liked showing off his "escape from my kennel" trick to visiting school children. It took three locks on his kennel to contain this escape artist. If they weren't all in place, one large black paw would emerge through his door, disable a lock and voila!, he was free – much to the delight of the kids who could hardly wait to "pat the big black kitty." Panther's circle of friends was wide. He was on

a first name basis with the many county personnel who visited the Shelter and always stopped to say hello to him.

As befitted his name, Panther was pretty fearless around dogs, other cats and people. Ferrets, though, posed a challenge for him. One morning before the Shelter was open, a resident, friendly ferret who was allowed out of his cage to play, was seen chasing Panther all over the lobby. Our big black kitty was running for his life, although he would probably have told you that he was just giving the ferret some exercise. Really, Panther?

*"Panther had free run of the Shelter at night, and often during the day he sat on the counter checking out all the dogs, cats and people who came through the Shelter doors."*

Life changed for both Panther and Vicki this last year. Panther appeared to be tiring of his role as Shelter ambassador, so Vicki took him home on occasion. He seemed to unwind there and was more relaxed than when he was at the Shelter. The staff began to think that perhaps it was time for him to retire from his working kitty job. This past October, Vicki and her husband moved to Salem, Oregon. As much as Vicki wanted to take Panther with her, it just didn't seem feasible. Vicki's departure was hard for the Shelter staff and FOTAS volunteers. Everyone missed her and felt bad that she and Panther couldn't be together. It was decided that the best thing would be to search for a good home for this boy who had been a working kitty for most of his life.

Then, in December, our own Christmas miracle occurred! Vicki's

husband was visiting the area on business and contacted the Shelter to arrange for Panther's adoption as a surprise Christmas gift for Vicki. The Shelter staff and volunteers were elated to know that Panther would once more be with his first mom. Panther's send-off from the Shelter was full of excitement, but that paled in comparison to the reception he received when he arrived at his forever home with the mom who had loved him and cared for him for so many years. His reunion with Vicki brought many tears of joy and huge kitty purrs of contentment.

Now settled in with Vicki, Kevin, and their other black kitty, Mrow Mrow, Panther is one happy boy. He has, much to Vicki's surprise, become a lap cat and a sun worshipper. On any given sunny day you will find Panther and Mrow Mrow stretched out on the rug in a patch of sunlight. We'd like to think that in his retirement, Panther is dreaming about the glory of his working days at the Jackson County Animal Shelter. 🐾



Photo: Brooke Turner

**Officer Rydell of the Medford Police Department brings an abandoned 8-week old puppy to the Jackson County Animal Shelter. Thanks to her, little "Archie" found a good home with people who love him.**

## WHO IS THAT MASKED WOMAN?

It was getting close to Halloween, when 250 revelers gathered at the Historic Ashland Armory on October 20th for the 21st Annual Puss 'n Boots Costume Ball & Auction.

Costumed attendees entered a festive ballroom, festooned with ghosts, pumpkins, and lots and lots of balloons. (Decorations by Linda Stickler, Judy Jordon, Lorna Bolton and their crew; balloons arranged and donated by Connie Rainwater.) People were treated to photographs on the big screens of past and present Shelter animals, lovingly put together by our talented photographer June Symens, with help from Brooke Turner.

Our partners at Spay/Neuter Your Pet (SNYP) once again hosted "The Caldron" bar, with all proceeds

going towards their spay/neuter efforts.

The Silent Auction tables called to patrons, thanks to Marnie Norvell, Jeane Lind, Diane Novak and David Berger. More than a hundred items were available for bidding, thanks to the volunteers who solicited items from generous merchants throughout the Valley. Eliza Kauder created the event program with highlights of the evening and live auction items. Our live auction offered unique, quality items, including an exquisite hand-crafted table made by volunteer Tom Peil, a beautiful handmade quilt, an overnight casino and golf package in Lincoln City, a getaway at Ashland Creek Inn, a guided rafting trip and lunch with the Talberts, and other interesting items.

A delicious dinner, catered by Quality Catering at Café Dejunner, fortified guests for the evening and a fashion show of creative, frightening, beautiful and outrageously costumed revelers competed for "the best" in a variety of categories. Rabbitt Babbitt and Cindy Harper judged the parade of

fantastic costumes. Photographer Shauna Griffin donated all proceeds from their professional photo "studio" that night.

Long-time volunteer Matt Warschawsky worked his computer magic to quickly tally up winning bidders in the Silent Auction while the popular band, *The Lincoln Project*, brought people to the dance floor to finish out the evening. Julia Roupp returned as our enthusiastic emcee and kept the evening flowing beautifully. And Eliza, Brad, Peggy, Betsy and their team of runners, made sure the check-out process went smoothly.

The event is the collaboration of dozens of volunteers who work with the steering committee – Jeane Lind, Marnie Norvell and Peggy Moore – to make this event happen. Our sponsors donated more than \$10,000 this year, the most ever, and the generosity of attendees made this one of the most successful Puss 'n Boots in history. Local merchants give generously, so please support them in return.

Next year, we'll do it all again. **Save the date:** Sat., Oct. 26th. 🐾



The Ball was an amazing success, with many creatively costumed attendees.



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Mi Mi & Samson, adopted early 2010 (who refuse to be photographed together)

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## COMMUNITY SUPPORT SHINES THROUGH DONATION DRIVES AND FUNDRAISERS

In late 2012, FOTAS and the cats and dogs from the Jackson County Animal Shelter reaped the rewards from several fundraising and donation campaigns around the Rogue Valley.

In October, the second annual **"Love, Shadrach"** donation campaign for the Shelter concluded with a delivery of supplies that filled the bed of a pickup. Over \$700 of materials were donated and included cat and dog food, and many much needed supplies. Another \$250 was raised for the Shelter's animal medical fund.

The campaign drive was coordinated as a thank you to FOTAS and Shelter staff for their care of Shadrach when he was only 8 weeks old. In September 2010, Shadrach was a puppy who was abandoned and subsequently caught up in the Blackwell Hill Fire near Central Point. Thank you Shadrach, for paying it forward!

The **Jacksonville Veterinary Hospital** also conducted a food and supply drive for the Shelter for several weeks during October and November. Dr. Tami Rogers, veterinarian at the Hospital, organized the event. "We were searching for ways to be involved in the community and decided to have a food drive [for the Shelter]. We got excited about it."

Clients of the clinic and community members responded enthusiastically by generously donating cat and dog food, grooming supplies, collars, leashes, bedding and office supplies. The Hospital had collected so many supplies that they had to make several deliveries to the Shelter during the campaign. And according to Dr. Rogers, the **Hills Pet Nutrition Company** stepped up near the end of the supply drive and matched 100% of every food donation received by the Hospital. As a result, over 500 pounds of food were delivered to the Shelter!

**Pet Country** in Medford held its 7th annual Customer Appreciation Day and Pet Fashion Show in November. The events of the day included a silent auction, barbecue dinner, pet pictures with Santa and a fashion show with the proceeds going directly to FOTAS. The fashion show featured animals decked out in fancy attire that "strutted their stuff" in front of more than 100 onlookers, thanks in part to the coordination of FOTAS volunteer Dee Wollter. And volunteer Megan Perry did a fantastic job of emceeing the event.

Many heartfelt thanks go out to Carol Bryant, Pet Country employee, and Pet Country's other enthusiastic employees for organizing this event. More than \$9,000 was raised for the animals – what an amazing, life-saving contribution! 🐾



From top down: Shelter Manager Barbara Talbert thanks Shadrach for his generous donations.

One of the lucky cats adopted during the fee-waived cat event in October.

Attila the kitty was the only cat to dress up in the Pet Fashion Show, and was a real crowd pleaser!

## PAWS AND REFLECT ON 2012

**By PEGGY MOORE, PRESIDENT, FOTAS BOARD** — 2012 was a year of transition for FOTAS and the Jackson County Animal Shelter. It began with our usual flurry of activity, signing up volunteers for various outreach and fundraising activities, and hosting the well-attended Board-sponsored (we do the cooking!) Volunteer Appreciation Party in February.

In the spring, our wonderful Manager of Volunteer Services for the past four years, Mary Pfister, let us know that family considerations were pressing and she would need to resign her position. Mary is the longest serving Manager we've had, and brought many new ideas and stability to FOTAS.

In May, Colleen Macuk, Shelter Manager for more than 25 years, submitted her retirement letter, and the County invited the Oregon Humane Society (OHS) to visit the Shelter to do an assessment and analysis of how we might improve our processes to save more animals

and increase adoptions. Also in May, we welcomed Sue Meyerott as the new Manager of Volunteer Services, and began to work with the Shelter and OHS to improve our services to the animals.

Amidst all these changes, FOTAS Board President, Barbara Talbert, was asked to serve as Interim Shelter Manager, and after several unsuccessful attempts to hire a permanent Manager, to take over the leadership of the Shelter for up to 18 months. She stepped down as FOTAS President, and I agreed to step back in; a position I held previously for six years.

In June, FOTAS completed building Kitty Korner, where cats and kittens now have a wonderful place to be outdoors safely, stretch their paws and call attention to themselves, as people enter the shelter. Kitty Korner was funded by FOTAS donations.

In October, the Shelter, under Barbara's leadership, led the first ever "fee-waived" CATstravaganza Adoption event in conjunction with the Southern Oregon Humane

Society (SOHS) and C.A.T.S. This event was a HUGE success! Also in October, we held another fun and successful Puss 'n Boots Costume Ball & Auction, netting more than \$24,000.

In November, Pet Country hosted their annual Pet Fashion Show under the leadership of their incredible employee, Carol Bryant. Proceeds from both events helped fill the FOTAS coffers, allowing us to support:

- Two-Fur-One (where FOTAS pays the Shelter the second \$70 adoption fee)
- WOW (where FOTAS pays \$25 toward the adoption of an adult animal)
- SNYP campaigns (low-cost spay/neuter efforts)
- The CATstravaganza Fee-waived Adoption event.

Late in 2012, FOTAS volunteers attended an all-day ASPCA training, sponsored by the County, on animal welfare and adoptions.

*Continued on Page 11*

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## JACKSON COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER UPDATE

By **BARBARA TALBERT, SHELTER**

**MANAGER** — 2012 was a challenging year for the Shelter. Since late August, I have had the privilege of working with the staff to continue efforts to improve care of the animals, reduce the rate of euthanasia, and provide more efficient service to customers. Increased holding times for cats, transfer of animals to other shelters to get them adopted more quickly, increased staff training, encouragement of owners to explore other options before surrendering their pets to the Shelter, and reducing the intake of stray cats are just some of the many changes that were implemented. A new kennel software management system was put in place in January 2013 that is challenging all of us, but we know that in the long-run it will streamline our processes, reduce paperwork, and hopefully free up staff to spend more time to care for the animals.

Although these numbers are still preliminary, we are happy to report that:

- The live release rate for dogs increased from approximately 61% in 2011 to 77% in 2012.
- For cats, the live release rate jumped from 16.5% in 2011 to 37% in 2012.

- The Jackson County Animal Shelter Staff is very happy and proud that approximately 425 fewer dogs and 1,250 fewer cats were euthanized in 2012.
- About the same number of animals were adopted (500 dogs and 414 cats) as last year.
- More animals were transferred to other shelters where they subsequently found homes. 145 more dogs and 131 more cats were transferred to other shelters/rescues compared to the previous year when only a total of 5 animals were transferred.
- 600 dogs were returned to their owners, a decrease of 74 compared to 2011, which was likely the result of fewer stray dogs entering the Shelter.
- 77 cats were returned to their owners, which was an increase of 26 cats from 2011.

These improvements would not have been possible without a hard-working staff, who have been open to new ways of operating. We also formed stronger relationships with our local animal welfare partners: Southern Oregon Humane Society, Committed Alliance to Strays (C.A.T.S.), Sanctuary One, and Spay Neuter Your pet (SNYP) to increase adoptions throughout Jackson County. We will continue this work in 2013 with these partners to educate the public regarding the benefits of licensing, what it means to be a responsible pet owner, and how best to deal

with community cats who are not "owned" but sometimes become nuisances in urban settings. Outside of Jackson County, we formed successful partnerships with several shelters and rescue groups to move some of our hard-to-place animals through our shelter more quickly.

FOTAS remains our most important partner and its role in Shelter operations continues to expand. The awesome FOTAS Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers all stepped up to help with the



**The Shelter staff celebrated with Panther on his day of adoption in December.**

Shelter's challenges and transitions in 2012. Expectations for volunteer training increased and a new group is becoming more informed about pit bull terriers, since they tend to linger longer in our kennels before they get adopted. In 2012, the FOTAS Board continued its very generous financial support of Shelter operations and its publicity efforts continue to positively promote our animals to the public. We

*Continued on Page 11*

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## FLASH

**By BARBARA TALBERT** — Flash is a handsome, white, deaf boxer, who came to the Shelter in late September. Because he was anxious in the kennel environment and wasn't eating, he spent about a month living in my home when I wasn't working at the Shelter so I could make sure that he ate. He bonded very quickly and followed me around the house/yard a lot, probably because of his deafness. I had never worked with a deaf dog before, but over time he picked up on some of my hand signals and I taught him to sit. The biggest challenge was getting his attention if he wasn't looking at me. Even though I knew he couldn't hear me, I still found myself talking to him as I would any other hearing dog and then have to remind myself to go to him and touch his shoulder to get him to look at me.

Flash was eventually adopted by a nice family who cared for foster children. Although the new owner understood that Flash had a high prey drive around cats, it didn't occur to her to let us know she had chickens. Unfortunately, Flash was returned the next day after he broke into the chicken coop and killed a couple of chickens. Flash was later transferred to the Northwest Boxer Rescue, which found a good foster home for this smart and sweet boy. Having worked with other boxers, the family understood his strong prey drive and taught him more hand signals. A month later, we learned that Flash found his forever home and bonded with his new dad instantly. Flash began going to training classes and learned how to get along with the cats in the household, which was a major accomplishment, given his past history with chickens. Flash also gets to accompany his new owner on his jobsites, so it was truly a perfect match! Our shelter also gained a new partner, with the Northwest Boxer Rescue, which will continue to help us with hard-to-place boxers. 🐾



Thanks to the efforts of his foster mom from Northwest Boxer Rescue and his new owner, Flash has learned how to overcome his strong prey drive and live peacefully with cats in his new home.

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## CATSTRAVAGANZA FEE-WAIVED ADOPTION EVENT

*The first ever multi-agency “fee-waived” cat adoption event was held in mid-October in an effort to place adult cats in homes, while reducing the significant overcrowding experienced by the Jackson County Animal Shelter and other animal rescue agencies in Jackson County. The Shelter coordinated the event with the Southern Oregon Humane Society and C.A.T.S. Close to 40 adult cats were adopted from the Shelter, and more than 100 from the three agencies combined.*

**By RABBIT BABBITT** — The CATstravaganza Fee-waived Adoption cat event held on October 13 and 14 was a resounding success, surpassing our wildest dreams. Happily, some cats were adopted the day before the event at regular prices, because people came early and didn’t want them scooped up over the weekend. All but one cat was adopted on Saturday in what proved to be one of the best adoption days ever seen at the Shelter. The last cat was adopted on Sunday! Volunteers and staff worked diligently and the outpouring from the community was phenomenal.



**Rabbit Babbitt says goodbye to one of the many lucky cats who found a home at the CATstravaganza event.**

Prior to the event, all eligible cats were spayed/ neutered, so that they could go home with their new owners immediately. FOTAS supplied six adoption counselors; the Shelter set up five rooms for viewing and counseling, and a group of volunteers helped with crowd control and communication.

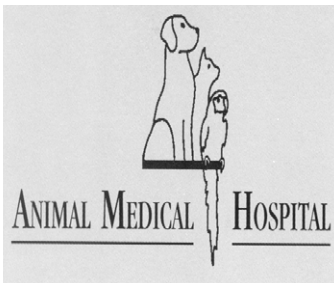
Potential adopters waited patiently outside as we allowed people in, six at a time, with available counselors. Considering that we’d never done this before, it ran pretty smoothly. TV stations covered the bustling event and FOTAS provided pizza for the volunteers, which most of us ate on the go. Despite the high energy, the cats seemed to know this was a good thing for them, and they were patient, engaging and charming, often picking their people. Nearly every person who went into a counseling room with a cat came out to adopt it.

Call it uncanny, or the Cat Goddess smiling down upon us, but it felt magical, with all these feline/human connections happening simultaneously, followed by cats going out the door in carriers to good homes.

I walked around at the end of the day looking at all those empty kennels and had a slight melt down. Every single cat got a home! But I had also said goodbye to three dozen of my little buddies whom I had come to know and love in the prior weeks and months. It was a similar feeling to a parent sending all of their kids to college on the same day!

A big meow of gratitude (catitude) to FOTAS for picking up the \$70 adoption fee for each of our shelter cats, and to all the volunteers who helped that weekend. Many thanks to Brooke Turner, who took photographs of the event that tell it all, and can be viewed on the FOTAS Facebook page.

Of course we couldn’t have done it without our community, who stepped up in a big way! WOW! 🐾



**SCOTT G. KNOX, D.V.M.**  
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**Susan and Ned Babbitt**, in honor of Rabbitt Babbitt  
**Mary Bjorkholm**, in memory of Mike and Sonny, my great rescue dogs  
**Barbie and John Breneiser**, in honor of Jordan Roth  
**Kenneth Brown**, in memory of Max, the best Shelter dog ever  
**Carolyn Burnham**, in honor of Mary and Gary Curtis  
**Nancy and Tom Burnham**, celebrating our adoption of KatMan  
**Nancy Clark**, in honor of Mollie  
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**Marcella and George Collins**, in memory of Muffy  
**Jennifer Davis**, in memory of Elaine Fielder  
**Laura and Ed Fleming**, in honor of Turtle  
**Donna Gilbert-Wagner**, with thanks to the FOTAS volunteers and staff for their compassion, care and unconditional dedication to all the animals in your care  
**Patricia and Raymond Gillette**, in memory of Fred, Chester and K.C.  
**Patti and Rick Gilstrap**, in celebration of our Shelter Kitty, Charles (previously Eros)  
**Leslie Gomberg**, in memory of Bill  
**Carolyn Hennion**, in memory of Kimberly McQueen Hennion  
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**Dianne Quarg**, with thanks to Dianne's students  
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**Marilyn Hanna and Tom Reid**, in memory of our office cat, Apollo  
**Julia and Brad Roupp**, in memory of Truman and Fred  
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**Patricia and William Walls**, in memory of our beloved Becky the Golden  
**Ann Willbrand**, on behalf of Lucky, my Shelter cat  
**Lorraine Winger**, in memory of Misty and Peppi

## PAWS AND REFLECT

*Continued from page 6*

Together, Shelter staff, FOTAS volunteers and staff from SOHS and Sanctuary One are learning better techniques and attitudes that will serve our adoption efforts well.

Under the leadership of Sue Meyerott, several of our volunteers, and the FOTAS Board, many new changes for training volunteers are being implemented. On the technology front, a new computer program – VOLGISTICS – is helping our FOTAS staff work more efficiently, schedule and track volunteer hours, and provide better information to us all.

Thanks to all our volunteers, our wonderful Board, our partners in all these efforts, our donors and the great Shelter staff. Here's to an even more successful 2013!

Peggy Moore  
*President, FOTAS Board*

## SHELTER UPDATE

*Continued from page 7*

could not accomplish all that needs to be done at the Shelter without 200+ FOTAS volunteers working on several fronts.

This fall saw some changes in Animal Control staffing. Dispatcher Vicki Perdue left in October and was replaced in mid-January by Sarah Ulrich, who moved from southern California to be closer to family in Medford. She previously worked for an equine veterinarian as a veterinarian technician. Andrew Swanson was hired to replace Officer Aaron Grissom, who left this past summer. Andrew has lived in the Rogue Valley all his life, held positions in corporate security, and recently adopted a beautiful German shepherd from the Shelter named Mila. 🐾

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE LAURIE CUDDY

**How did you learn about the Shelter and about volunteering?** Soon after I moved here from upstate New York eleven years ago, I went to the Shelter to find some new furry friends. I was chosen by Cisco and Hannah, both large and wonderful dogs who have been my constant companions ever since. I have sent donations throughout the years and always thought about volunteering, but I did not take the plunge until last winter.



Laurie's volunteer efforts with FOTAS include fostering, spending time with the cats and dogs, and doing outreach. Laurie's family recently added Bo, a high-needs foster dog she decided to adopt.

**In what ways, and why do you volunteer at the Shelter?** I started in the Cat Room a year ago, and have been there every Saturday since. I fostered one dog for a short time, and then fostered Bo, a dog with a condition called Megaesophagus, where the muscles of the esophagus do not transport food to the stomach efficiently. Bo has to be fed vertically several times a day. You could call me a "foster mom failure," as I ended up adopting this special boy! I hope to return to fostering someday soon. I just completed the dog adoption ambassador training and plan to start working with the dogs at the shelter as well. I have also transported animals to the vet and participated in a few outreach events. I volunteer at the Shelter because it is a small way for me to give back to homeless animals, in honor of my own adopted ones.

**What are the rewards? What are the challenges?** The rewards are boundless! I can spend time with the animals, who offer unconditional love despite all they have been through. I also get to help make the lives of shelter animals a bit better, and help them find homes. Those are the greatest rewards, but the people are fantastic as well. At the top of the list is my wonderful mentor in the cat room, Jeani Kimball, who has been a wonderful supporter and friend to me. All of the staff and other volunteers are fabulous as well. They have been so supportive and welcoming, and I really feel like I have found a new home for

myself. The main challenge for me is getting too attached to the animals and not being able to take them all home. I used to cry every time I set foot in a shelter because I felt so sorry for all the dogs and cats there, which was one reason why I was hesitant to volunteer in the past. Now that I'm doing it, I've learned that the animals receive so much love and wonderful care while they are at the Shelter, and I feel that I am helping in some small way to make their lives better. And then I have the joy of seeing them leave with a new family to call their own. And I know personally, that there is no better feeling in the world, than to bring home a rescued animal! 🐾

If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, call (541) 482-8172 or send an email to [fotas-scoop@charter.net](mailto:fotas-scoop@charter.net)

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