

LEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Cell Dog Director
Luna



ACTF Rescue Cat
Elsa



Deputy Chance



Deputy Shenzi



ACTF Ambassador
Lieutenant Hope



K-9 Kyla

Animal Cruelty Task Force NEWSLETTER

MEET K9 "BIRDIE"

Sheriff Carmine Marceno and the entire Lee County Sheriff's Office welcome "Birdie," a two-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever, to our K9 Unit.

Born in Derby, Kansas, at the Wheatland Dog center, Birdie will be trained to detect the scents given off by firearms, gunpowder and other similar threats.

Birdie will be deployed at local schools, along with her handler, Sergeant Brian Walkowiak.

The use of "floppy-eared" dogs, especially in school settings, has become popular as "pointed-eared" canines tend to be more intimidating and often frighten children. Birdie, with her smile and loving face, will fit in nicely around children and school staff.



Birdie is part of a newer trend designed to train canines to detect all five families of military and commercial grade explosives, explosive cleaning solvents as well as odors associated with firearms.

MARCH 2024

ANIMAL SHELTER DONATIONS

The Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force filled the Gulf Coast Humane Society van to the brim...along with three additional vehicles...with animal



shelter supplies, dog and cat food, toys, leashes, collars and harnesses and so much more following our "Mall Mutts" walk around the Miromar Outlets.



A sincere and heartfelt "thank you" to all residents, guests and businesses for their ongoing generosity and genuine concern for the homeless animals of Lee

County.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office Community Outreach Center at Miromar Outlets will continue to accept animal shelter supplies throughout the year. Supplies can be delivered to LCSO in Suite 190 at the Miromar Outlets.



Q&A WITH DR. MEGAN DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL OPERATIONS AT CAPE CORAL ANIMAL SHELTER

Dr. Megan Davis joined the Cape Coral Animal Shelter as Director of Medical Operations in April of 2022 and oversees the veterinary care for patients at the shelter's veterinary clinic as well as their shelter animals.

Monthly, Dr. Davis kindly takes time out of her busy day to answer questions emailed to the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Question: "Dr. Davis, I have been reading a number of articles regarding Canine Schistosomiasis cases popping up out west and know that some of the Gulf states have had issues with this disease. Can you tell us a bit more about this?"

Dr. Megan Davis DVM cVMA: "Canine Schistosomiasis is a disease caused by a parasite called *Heterobilharzia Americana*.



Dogs become infected by swimming in contaminated fresh water sources that house a particular type of snail. The early life stages of the parasite penetrate the dogs' skin and travel through the bloodstream to the liver where

they mature. The parasite then moves to other organs such as the spleen, lungs and intestinal tract. This migration causes massive inflammation throughout the body resulting in lesions of scar tissue called granulomas.

It takes at least 10 weeks from exposure to the parasite to the eggs being shed in a fecal sample. So symptoms tend to be gradual in onset and diagnosis can be challenging.

Initial symptoms are often non specific; lethargy, poor appetite and weight loss are common. As the disease progresses the granulomas can cause liver failure, coughing, vomiting and bloody stool.

Diagnosis can be made by finding the microscopic eggs in a fecal sample. However not seeing eggs does not rule it out and your veterinarian may have to send stool or biopsy samples to a specialist lab.

The parasite can be treated with a combination of

(Dr. Davis...continued)

common dewormers, however, the disease is often fatal as late diagnosis after organ failure has already occurred is common. At this time there are no studies showing that routine administration of these medications after swimming would prevent the development of illness.

A dog can only be infected by coming in contact with the infected water. They cannot catch it from another dog and owners cannot contract it from their sick pet.



Historically this disease has most commonly been of concern in Texas and Louisiana. However over the past year cases were identified in California for the first time after a veterinarian reported her diagnosis and researchers started investigating. The snails and parasite are known to be present in Florida but canine cases are very rare and I cannot recall hearing of a local case over the past decade of my career. This is not something I would be overly concerned about but I think if your dog enjoys swimming in springs or rivers it's worth mentioning as part of the lifestyle history you provide your vet with."

IF YOU ABUSE AN ANIMAL IN LEE COUNTY...

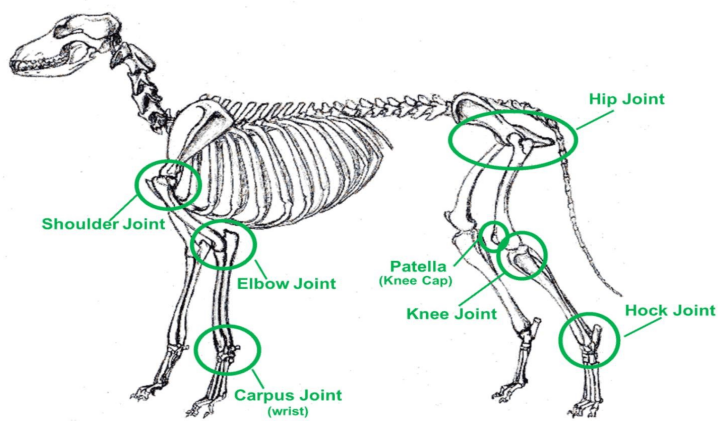


YOU WILL GO TO JAIL.

DR. WENDY PERRA: CANINE JOINT SUPPLEMENTS

“Nutraceutical supplementation for joint health is an excellent means to assist your pet’s musculoskeletal system. Most veterinarians will recommend a quality chondroprotective supplement at the first hint of joint pain. The most common joints afflicted with pain issues are hips, elbows and stifles. While we tend to think about large working breeds as being most affected, small breeds also are subject to joint discomfort. The age at which supplementation should begin is not easily definable, and professional recommendations will vary.

When you supplement your pet’s diet with glucosamine and chondroitin, you are providing the body with the building blocks of synovial fluid as well as decreasing the destructive effects on cartilaginous surfaces within a joint. This viscous fluid is responsible for providing a cushion within a joint capsule, hence not permitting any bone-on-bone contact to occur. If normal synovial fluid is not being made due to a dysfunctional synovial membrane (i.e. hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, luxating patellas, etc.), there will be pain (i.e. lameness, soreness). The body will take the extraneous glucosamine and use it to assist in production of equality synovial fluid, thereby easing joint discomfort.



If there is a known joint issue at an early age, I strongly recommend starting daily glucosamine supplementation for the life of the pet. There is no disadvantage to using it, only potential benefit. If you have a young, large breed working dog such as a German Shepherd or Labrador Retriever that is experiencing no musculoskeletal issues, I will usually recommend considering adding glucosamine prophylactically to the diet around age four to five years. In every senior pet (>8 years of age), I recommend glucosamine supplementation indefinitely.”

BUNNIES AND EASTER...

According to Southwest Florida House Rabbit Rescue, thousands and thousands of rabbits are surrendered to shelters each year. Of the many rabbits purchased as Easter gifts, a staggering 80% are surrendered to animal shelters and/or released into the community.

Domestic rabbits, unlike those residing in the wild, are not equipped to survive when released outdoors.

Rabbits are a 10+ year commitment. While the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force is so grateful to those who choose to adopt homeless rabbits, we respectfully ask that they are not used as holiday gifts.

Each and every year, following Easter, animal shelters are inundated with surrendered rabbits. This is also true for baby chicks and ducks.

Additionally, please be aware that Florida Statute 828.1615 prohibits the artificial coloring/dyeing rabbits.

And, as always, when the decision is made to bring a rabbit (or any pet, for that matter) into your home, please adopt rather than purchasing one.

**A week after Easter,
the candy will be forgotten.**



Sadly, so will the rabbit.

He's not a child's toy: he's a real, live 10-year commitment. If you're not ready to give him ten years of your life, you're not ready to give him as a pet. Don't buy on impulse. Make an informed decision.



RE-FEEDING SYNDROME: FEEDING A STARVING ANIMAL

We have all seen starving and malnourished animals and, as compassionate people, our first inclination is to provide them with all of the food that they can eat.

This practice, referred to as “Refeeding Syndrome,” can prove to be fatal to the hungry animal.

“When the body is starved or malnourished, it undergoes adaptive changes to conserve energy and maintain essential functions,” shared Dr. Sharon Powell, DVM, from the Edison Park Animal Hospital. “When food is reintroduced after a period of starvation, particularly carbohydrates, the body transitions from a catabolic to an anabolic state, leading to increased insulin secretion.”



While numerous stories and anecdotes have been told regarding “Refeeding Syndrome,” one of the most

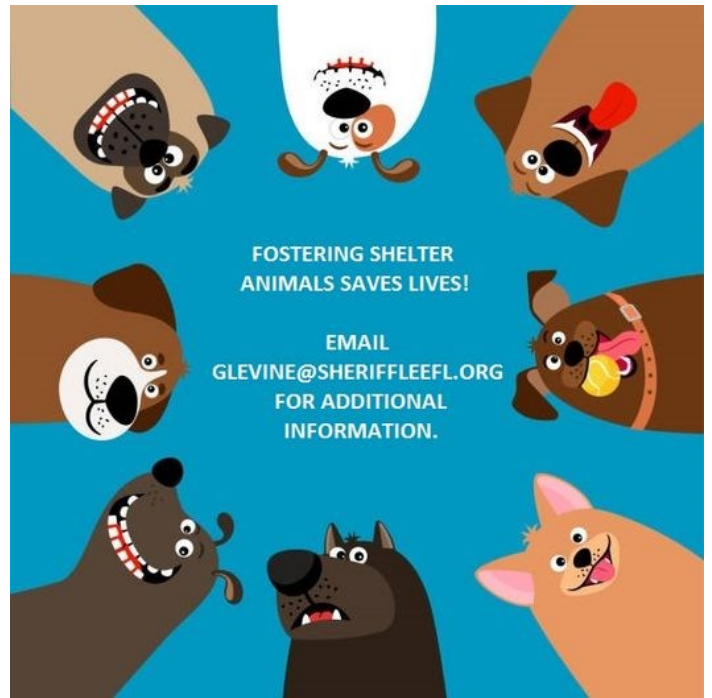
commonly referred to examples involve survivors of the Ebensee Concentration Camp in Austria and lessons learned when attempting to immediately address their hunger.

American military personnel liberated the camp on May 6, 1945, and found severely malnourished prisoners. With the best of intentions, survivors were immediately fed rich soups that ultimately killed them.

Introducing food to a starving animal should be done under the supervision of a veterinarian.

“Refeeding a starving animal requires a cautious and gradual approach to prevent the development of Refeeding Syndrome,” states Dr. Powell.

With a priority on hydration, these animals must be fed small, frequent meals of easily digestible foods.



MEET BRECKENRIDGE...

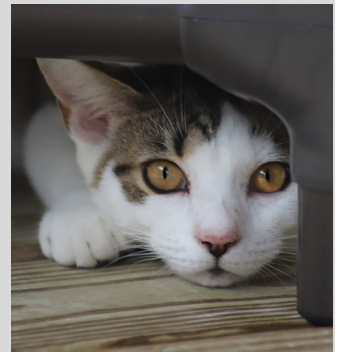
In addition to being a lovely town in the mountainous ski-region of Colorado, Breckenridge is a furry, loving ten-month-old kitty residing at the Animal Refuge Center.

This sweet girl is a well-adjusted, snuggly ball of fur.

Reportedly wonderful with other cats and children, Breckenridge would be an excellent fit for most homes.

Would you like to meet Breckenridge?

Please visit her at the Animal Refuge Center located at 18011 Old Bayshore Road in North Fort Myers or, for additional information, please call (239) 731-3535 between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM.



REPORT ANIMAL ABUSE ANONYMOUSLY...

Crime doesn't pay, but we do! Call with your tips.

SWFL CRIME STOPPERS
1-800-780-TIPS (8477)
ANONYMOUS · CASH REWARDS



ANIMAL ABUSERS DO FAR MORE THAN MISTREAT ANIMALS

Upon the creation of the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force, Sheriff Carmine Marceno consistently reiterated that this initiative was about far more than protecting the county's animal population.

Investigations that were initiated by reports of animal abuse have uncovered domestic violence, child abuse, narcotics sales and usage, illicit firearm possession and much more.

A story that emanated out of the Memphis, Tennessee area serves as a painful example of the links between the maltreatment of animals and criminal activities.

According to reports, Quishon Brown, a 44-year-old male, was arrested in 2022 for setting his dog, Riona, on fire.

Residents along the street in Nutbush, Tennessee, observed Riona, a one-year-old Pit Bull mix, racing down the street engulfed in flames. Quick thinking and access to a children's wading pool helped good Samaritans to extinguish the fire.

Following \$92,000 worth of veterinary care, Riona recovered and has thankfully found a loving forever home just outside of the Memphis area.



Quishon Brown has a lengthy criminal history spanning five states. Sadly, his criminal behaviors did not end with his heinous attack on Riona.

This week, Mr. Brown was, once again, arrested...this time for the rape of a 12-year-

old child.

Dismally, this incident is but one of so many like it.

Sheriff Marceno and the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task force are committed to relentlessly pursuing and arresting any and all individuals who abuse our county's animal population.

SARAH...

This lovely lady arrived at the Animal Refuge Center by way of the county's animal services.



In need of a loving and patient home, "Sarah" will be an incredible addition to most homes.

Sarah has spent the vast majority of her life in shelter care. It breaks our hearts to see her without a

loving home of her own.

Please stop by the Animal Refuge Center, located at 18011 Old Bayshore Road in North Fort Myers or call 239-731-3535 for additional information.

"WALK WIGGLE WAG AND RUN"

The Cape Coral Animal Shelter held their annual, "Walk Wiggle Wag and Run" fundraising event at their location on SW 2nd Avenue in Cape Coral.



The Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force assisted with contest-judging, as well as delivered a carload of animal shelter supplies.

Following a severe weather day with significant rain, this day was one brightened by sunshine and cooled by gulf breezes.

DID YOU KNOW: DYEING OR COLORING YOUR PET IS ILLEGAL IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

The online discussions share opinions ranging from "animal cruelty" to "adorable."

Pet owners in states allowing the coloring of animals claim that it's harmless. Others claim to use "pet-safe" and "botanically-based" ingredients.

Animal rights organizations cite examples of animals that have suffered chemical burns, as well as animal fatalities.



Regardless, artificially coloring/dyeing your pet, in the State of Florida is illegal and violators face being charged with a misdemeanor of the second degree.

828.161 Prohibiting artificial coloring and sale of certain animals and fowls; construction.—

(1) It is unlawful for any person to dye or color artificially any animal or fowl, including but not limited to rabbits, baby chickens, and ducklings, or to bring any dyed or colored animal or fowl into this state.



SPEAK UP.



THEY CAN'T.

ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DOGS IN LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

As per County Ordinance 14-22:

All dogs (cats and ferrets) must have some form of identification indicating the owner's name and current telephone number at all times.

Examples of identification meeting the requirements of the ordinance are:

- Any commercially available tag imprinted with the appropriate information attached to a collar or harness on the dog.
- A current, valid County license/rabies tag attached to the collar or harness.
- An implanted microchip identification device registered to the owner of the animal and with a current name, address and telephone number of that owner.

Please note that no one is permitted to remove the collar and/or tag from an animal for the purpose of preventing or falsifying the identification of an animal .



"I'm proud of the Animal Cruelty Task Force for the positive work they do on a daily basis. They have undoubtedly made a positive impact in our community."

- Sheriff Carmine Marceno

