



NARBONNE ANIMAL CLINIC

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Lomita, California 90717
(310) 325-5850

August 15, 2007

Dear LA city council,

I was unaware that a mandatory spay/neuter law would come before the LA city council. I am a House of Delegates Representative for the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA). Believe me, when I tell you, that this issue was discussed from every aspect at our last meeting. Of course, like yourselves, veterinarians are willing to do everything possible to decrease the number of animals euthanized every year. However, I personally, feel very strongly that a mandatory spay/neuter bill will do more harm than good. I asked for a vote at the last veterinary chapter meeting and only one veterinarian was in favor of this law.

At this CVMA meeting, it was brought to our attention that several counties that claimed their mandatory spay/neuter laws were effective (Santa Cruz) had not accurately reported the numbers. Should you want more information about this, I can provide you with evidence that refutes this "successful" spay/neuter law.

Please allow me to briefly discuss several issues that have influenced my decision to oppose this mandatory spay/neuter law. First, four months of age is too young for major abdominal surgery and anesthesia. What surgeon would choose to take an infant to surgery if the procedure was not life threatening? Animals, at this age, have immature immune systems. They have just undergone the stress of weaning and are struggling to learn the rules of being part of a family. This is the key time in a pet's learning process. I have found increased morbidity (illness) and mortality (death) since early spay/neuter became mandatory at the shelters. For one year, I documented this and presented it to the shelter. Spaying and neutering animals before the age of six months (sometimes even older) is not the current standard of care and is not in the best interest of the animal. You would be forcing us to, in essence, commit malpractice.

It is not my clients who are taking animals to shelters. A law forcing my clients to spay/neuter their pets is punishing people who are not part of the problem. It is vital that each city study the demographics of the animals that are being dumped at their shelter. Every shelter keeps statistics: who is dumping animals and why. It is not enough to quote the number of animals euthanized. You must delve deeper to find a real solution. Often animals are ill and owners cannot or will not pay for medical treatment. Yet these same people are allowed to get a new animal. Then history repeats itself. A very large portion of animals are presented to shelters for behavior issues. The solution here is one of education. Until we teach pet owners that dogs are pack animals and have a need for social interaction, behavior issues will always occur. Often people will dump one animal, who has behavior issues, then turn around and obtain another animal. As they haven't improved their ownership skills, history repeats itself.

The solution to eliminating euthanasia, at shelters, is a social one. It is very difficult, even with loving, well educated men, to convince them that they should have their male dog neutered. We must find a way to convince people it is in their best interest to spay/neuter their animal. Why not send a questionnaire (in English, Spanish or whatever language would be best suited for the area) simply asking why they have not spayed or neutered their pet and what would it take for them to make this decision? It would be more effective if you provided a

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stamped, return envelope so people would not have to identify themselves when they returned the questionnaire. Let's actually listen to people who are causing the problem, so we can find the right solution. A solution for one area may not be the same as a solution for another area.

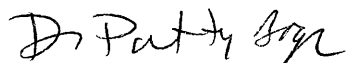
Part of the reason for high euthanasia statistics is the feral (wild) cat population. This law will do virtually nothing to change this situation as many of these cats have no owner. Identifying the source of these feral animals will be mandatory in bringing these numbers down. Just like abandoned babies, making it quick and painless for unwanted cats to be brought to shelters could decrease the number of cats forced to fend for themselves.

Take the time, before you make your decision, to walk through several shelters (unannounced). You will find the vast majority of animals are full grown large dogs, many pitbulls and pitbull mixes. It is unusual to see puppies in our shelters. Which begs the question: if we want to adopt a puppy where will it come from? A pet store? Making pet stores the only legal source for puppies will actually increase the number of animals needing euthanasia at shelters. Pet stores are the worst possible environment to socialize a puppy and puppies are at pet stores during the most formative age for learning. It also makes it impossible to adopt a mix breed puppy. Haven't we all had mutts we loved? Making it difficult and expensive for responsible breeders to keep breeding their dogs in loving, in a well socialized environment hurts the very animals we are trying to help. It sets us up for a situation where underground smuggling of puppies from Mexico can flourish. Then we have puppies raised in uncontrolled, often cruel, environments. We have puppies that can bring disease that not only can be fatal to them and fatal to other puppies but can also pose a public safety risk.

Finally, this law would force me to turn in my own clients. As I am required to submit every Rabies license to the county, that will make my responsible clients easy targets for fines. If clients find out veterinarians are forced to turn them in, they will stop coming to the veterinarian. How does that help animals? Also from a public health standpoint, if people are afraid to come to the vet fear of fines, Rabies will again become common place.

As you can see, a simple decision made from the heart can result in far reaching consequences. Veterinarians have one rule: "do no harm." Decisions must be made from facts, not emotions. I hope this city council and those who intend to study this issue further will also think through the consequences of this decision and "do no harm".

Sincerely,



Dr. Patty Boge

AREA G VETERINARY DISASTER TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL BIOGRAPHY

The Area G Veterinary Disaster Team (VDT) was formed in 1993 when a need to provide care and sheltering of animals impacted by disaster was recognized. Dr. Patty Boge made a commitment to provide these services as well as educate the animal owning public as to what steps they can take to protect their animals before, during and after a disaster.

The Area G VDT is a nonprofit organization that operates solely through monetary donations and donations of supplies. Contributions may be mailed to Area G Veterinary Disaster Team, 25445 Narbonne Ave, Lomita, CA 90717. If you would like to volunteer or make a donation, please call Dr. Patty Boge (310) 325-5850.

The Area G VDT has twenty-six veterinary clinics that have made commitments to provide veterinary care and housing for animals injured or displaced in a disaster. Pharmaceutical companies, veterinary laboratories, pet stores, and other companies donated services, supplies and support. The Area G VDT is structured using the Incident Command System (ICS).

The goal of the Area G VDT is to provide quality veterinary care in a timely, organized manner during a disaster and provide education to animal owners to be self-sufficient for 7 days. The VDT can assist with animals allowing the police department, fire department and all other disaster responders to concentrate their efforts on saving human lives.

Dr. Boge has received the highest honor, the Platinum award, from the California Emergency Services Association and an award from the Emergency Preparedness Commission for the County and Cities of Los Angeles. Southern California Veterinary Medical Association recognized Dr. Boge's contribution to disaster response. She received an award from the Quality and Productivity Commission, a commendation from the Torrance Police Department and the county of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors has recognized the contributions of Dr. Boge with respect to animal disaster response. Senator Bowen named Dr. Boge "Woman of the Year." Dr. Boge received the "Volunteer of the Year" award from Los Angeles County.

We encourage all animal owners to evacuate with their animals.



THE FOLLOWING VETERINARY CLINICS HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO THE AREA G VETERINARY DISASTER TEAM:
EL SEGUNDO-El Segundo Pet Hospital

HARBOR CITY-Animal Clinic West, Laguna Vista Vet Hospital
HAWTHORNE-Avian and Exotic Animal Hospital of Los Angeles County
HERMOSA BEACH-VCA Coast Animal Hospital

INGLEWOOD-Centriuela Animal Hospital, Ladera Pet Clinic

LAWNDALE-Hawthorne Dog and Cat Hospital
LOMITA-Narbonne Animal Clinic, Dr. Valerie Nestrack, Dr. Lisa Pierson

MANHATTAN BEACH-Bay Animal Hospital, Manhattan Beach Animal Hospital, Animal Medical Group

PALOS VERDES-Dr. Jim Giacopuzzi
PALOS VERDES PENINSULA-Dr. Ruth Soback

RANCHO PALOS VERDES-Point Vicente Animal Hospital
REDONDO BEACH-Animal Hospital of Redondo Beach, Dr. Barry Henson, Redondo Shores Veterinary Center
ROLLING HILLS ESTATES-Peninsula Center Pet Hospital

TORRANCE-Animal Emergency Medical Center, Bay Cities Pet Hospital, VCA Clarimar Animal Hospital, Country Hills Animal Clinic, Plaza Del Amo Animal Hospital, Harbor Animal Hospital, Emergency Pet Clinic of South Bay

The following businesses have donated services or supplies.

LABORATORIES: Antech Diagnostics, Avian and Exotic Laboratory, California Avian Laboratory

MISC: A-1 Coast Rental, Aztec Rental-Torrance, Balloon Affair-Lomita, Calif. Marking Device Co.-Hermosa Beach, Campbell Pet Company-Brush Prairie, WA, Coastal Pet Products, CostCo-Hawthorne Warehouse-Lawndale, Cowgirl Communications, D and D Services, John DeVries Stock Disposal, DVM Accounting and Management-Laguna Hills, Fame muzzles, Fleabusters, Four Flags catbags., Glalen Company (ID collars), Hemopet Blood Bank, Hills Petfood, Bob Hubbard Hauling, IAMS Pet Food, King Printing, Krispy Kreme donuts-Torrance, Lamppost Pizza-Torrance, Noah's Bagels in RHE, Panera Bread-Torrance, Print Network-Redondo, Sam's Club-Torrance, Smart and Final-Torrance, Silvio's Photo Works-Torrance, Staples-Torrance, Star Maintenance, Stylette Co., Y & S Manufacturing, TGIFridays in Torrance, Washington Mutual Bank-Torrance

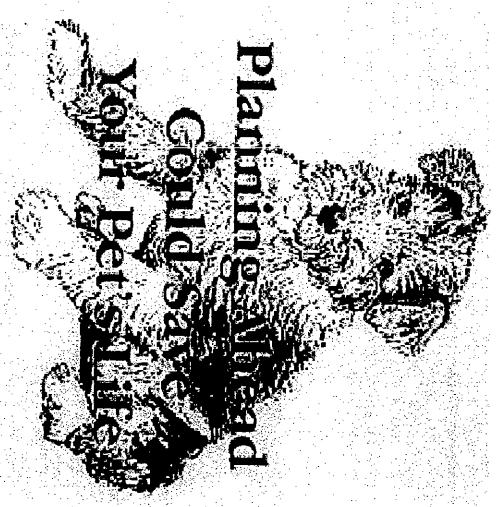
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES: Bayer-Agricultural Division (Advantage for fleas), Burn's Veterinary Supplies, Butler Company, Novartis (Program for fleas), DVM Pharmaceuticals, Mallinckrodt Vet Inc., MWI Veterinary Supply, TW Medical, Pfizer Animal Health, Schein Company, Upjohn, Victor Medical, Western Medical

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AREA G VETERINARY DISASTER TEAM

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR
VETERINARY DISASTER TEAM?

We need caring pet owners,
veterinary clinics, veterinarians,
and veterinary staff to help us
save lives. Please contact Dr.
Patty Boge (310) 325-5850.



****ANIMAL OWNERS SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE THEIR ANIMALS WITH THEM WHEN ASKED TO EVACUATE AN AREA.****

The Area G Veterinary Disaster Team (VDT) is a non-profit group of volunteers with 2 goals: to provide quality veterinary care in a timely, organized manner in a disaster and to educate animal owners to be self-sufficient for 7 days. Your generous tax-deductible donations will allow us to continue to reach our goals. Please consider making a donation to: Area G Veterinary Disaster Team, 25445 Narbonne Ave., Lomita, CA 90717. The VDT serves El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, and Torrance.

BEFORE A DISASTER YOUR ANIMAL WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING IN THEIR DISASTER KIT:

1. Food for seven days. This must be rotated in to use to insure freshness.
2. Water for seven days. A forty-pound dog drinks 1 gallon of water daily. A cat would drink 1 quart of water. Replace water supply every 6 months.
3. Medications your animal takes regularly. Mark your calendar to remind you when to use and replace the medication.
4. Carriers and other travel containers (snakes, lizards, rabbits) for each animal. Store in an easily accessible area.
5. Microchip every animal. You must register with the company who has issued the microchip. Include at least one out of state phone number (friend or relative). Remember that you may not be at your

address and phone number for quite some time. Each year, call the company to request a copy of your information to insure it is accurate.

6. Every animal must have an ID tag and collar/harness/halter. It should have your name, address, phone number, your animal's name and an OUT OF STATE PHONE NUMBER (friend or relative). If your animal is on daily medication, this medication should also be on the identification tag.
7. **KEEP YOUR VACCINATIONS CURRENT (WITHIN THE LAST YEAR) AND KEEP A COPY OF PROOF OF VACCINATIONS IN YOUR DISASTER KIT.**
8. Identify friends, relatives, kennels and veterinary clinics where you and your animals can stay away from potential danger zones.
9. Have plastic bags and scoopers to pick up and store animal waste.
10. Water and food bowls.
11. First aid supplies: gauze rolls for bandaging and making muzzles, towels, blankets, and a manual can opener.
12. Current photographs of all your animals with you and your family in the picture. This will allow you to prove you do own that animal.

DURING A DISASTER:

1. **ALWAYS EVACUATE EARLY WITH YOUR ANIMALS.**
2. Stay calm.
3. Take shelter as directed.

AFTER A DISASTER:

1. Evaluate your animal's injuries. **REMEMBER** your animal may be in pain. You must prevent injury to yourself so you can help your animal. Muzzle dogs by using gauze rolls from your disaster

kit. Place a towel over cats to handle them.

2. **REMEMBER** that even the most gentle animal will respond defensively when frightened or in pain.
3. Often animals will show no evidence of injury or illness. Have your animal examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

IF YOUR ANIMAL IS LOST:

1. **DO NOT RELY ON PHONE CALLS TO THE SHELTER TO LOCATE YOUR ANIMAL. GO TO EACH SHELTER DAILY, IN PERSON, TO LOOK AT EVERY ANIMAL. ASK TO SEE THE SICK AND INJURED ANIMALS.**
2. Check animal shelter websites for animals they are housing. Remember libraries have computers for public to use. Do not rely only on websites or phone calls!
3. Provide descriptions and current photographs to local veterinarians, animal shelters, veterinary emergency clinics and the Area G Veterinary Disaster Team.
4. Do not stop looking for your animals. They are counting on you to find them.

IF YOU FIND A LOST ANIMAL:

1. Use caution when handling stray animals. Notify your animal control agency if an animal acts as though it might injure you.
2. Turn over all strays to the animal shelter so their worried owners can find them.
3. Keep all strays away from any areas your own animals touch.