

Animal Abuse Doesn't Have To Be Intentional

BY BOB HORNE

The accompanying article about a puppy who was found at a school dumpster points out one unintentional oversight that people should be careful to avoid with puppies or kittens: Don't wrap rope, string, a chain, or even a collar around the pet's neck and leave it.

The pet will grow and, as it does, the wrapping around its neck will become uncomfortable, then painful and finally virtually unbearable. And as the neck begins to grow around the choker, the poor defenseless pet lives in constant pain and agony.

May 6-12 is "Be Kind to Animals Week." In preparation for observance of that special week, and with summer approaching and temperatures already bumping the 90s, Zelma Babson, supervisor of Animal Control for Brunswick County, points out some other traps animal lovers should be wary of falling into:

- Don't leave your pet locked up in a motor vehicle on a hot day, even if you leave the window cracked.

- "Heat affects an animal worse than it does a human, because they have no sweat glands," Ms. Babson says. "The only way they can release the heat is through their tongues and they can't do it while shut up in a car."

- Don't forget to make sure your pet has fresh, cool water.

- "People often forget an animal that is tied or in a pen," Ms. Babson says. "An animal needs shelter the year around, and needs fresh water. And if the water is in the sun, he isn't going to drink it, because it's scalding hot."

- Don't wrap puppies or kittens in bags and dump them out some-

where; instead take the time to give them to someone who will love them. Or take them to the Brunswick County Health/Animal Control Department, but don't leave them at the gate.

"Recently, someone left seven puppies in a tied-up garbage bag at our gate" in the middle of the day, Ms. Babson said. By the time they were found, one had already died from suffocation and heat, she said.

All of these acts constitute animal abuse, although no deliberate acts of cruelty are involved, Ms. Babson said. State Statute 14-360 of the Animal Control Law, titled "Cruelty to animals," reads:

"If any person shall willfully overdrive, overload, wound, injure, torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, cruelly beat, needlessly mutilate or kill or cause or procure to be overdriven, overloaded, wounded, injured, tortured, tormented, deprived of necessary sustenance, cruelly beaten, needlessly mutilated or killed as aforesaid, any useful beast, fowl or animal, every such offender shall for every offense be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable to a fine of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and imprisonment for up to one year."

The statute goes on to specify that it includes every living creature and that the words "torture," "torment" and "cruelty" include acts of omission and neglect "whereby unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death is caused or permitted."

Ms. Babson, who is the county's animal-abuse investigator, emphasizes that an act does not have to be deliberate to constitute animal abuse and urges pet owners to exercise special precautions for their pets every week of the year.

'BE KIND TO ANIMALS' WEEK STARTS SUNDAY Abused Puppy Finds Life With Love, Without Pain

BY BOB HORNE

It was a dreary, rainy March 26, fit for neither man nor beast. Shortly after 1 a.m., Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Joseph Scoggins reported that he, fellow deputy Richard Long and a trainee had found a puppy whose throat appeared to be cut. The filthy, skinny puppy was found at the dumpster at Lincoln Primary School in Leland.

Dispatcher Debbie Somerset explained that the county Health/Animal Control Department could not be called out after hours except for dog-bite cases and asked if the puppy was bleeding.

No, the officer explained, the dog's neck was covered in dried blood but he didn't appear to be bleeding at the time. Then, upon further examination, the officers determined that the puppy's neck had not been cut; instead, there were three or four strands of "some kind of rope or string" wrapped tightly around the puppy's neck. And, Ms. Somerset remembers Scoggins saying, the puppy "needs to be put out of its misery."

This is not a fairy tale, but it is a story with a happy ending. And the discovery of that abused puppy, who was to learn that love does exist in this world after all, provides a natural illustration of the week of May 6-12, which is national "Be Kind to Animals Week."

The officers carried the puppy to the home of Gene Browning, who fed him and kept him in his barn for



"MAC'S" NECK was, and still is, a mass of exposed meat after a string was cut out of it. Mel Kitchens took the photo prior to cleaning him up.

the night. And when Ms. Somerset ended her shift, she left a note for animal control to pick up the puppy the next day. But she could not get that puppy out of her mind.

"I guess I just felt close to him from the beginning," she explained Monday. "But I've got a big heart for animals, anyway."

Two days later, Ms. Somerset called Zelma Babson, supervisor of Animal Control for Brunswick County, to inquire about the puppy and learned that he had been taken

to Dr. W.P. Rabon at Brunswick Animal Hospital.

"The meat had actually grown over two strands of string," Ms. Babson said, explaining that the string had been wrapped around the puppy's neck when he was younger and he had grown, with the string cutting into the neck and the neck actually growing over the string.

Rabon literally had to cut the string out of the puppy's neck, Ms. Babson explained. Because the puppy needed continued special attention, local groomer Mel Kitchens provided a "foster home" for him. She doctored, cleaned and groomed him and allowed time for him to recover from the trauma he had just gone through.

"I want him," Ms. Somerset told Ms. Babson during that conversation, and six days later she picked him up.

McMurphy, which Ms. Somerset's husband Steve named the puppy, after the McMurphy character on the television program "China Beach," or "Mac," which he answers to, is doing fine now, more than a month later, although Ms. Somerset says additional surgery might be needed.

Mac, now a 12- to 14-week-old mixed yellow-golden Labrador retriever who is very friendly with strangers, has to stay inside so his neck wounds can remain clean. Of course, that doesn't seem to bother him at all, as he plays and then lies down and enjoys the attention

heaped on him by his adopted master. And he has gotten used to the scarf that he wears around his neck to avoid repulsing people who might not understand.

Ms. Somerset now has eight cats, three dogs and two birds. And while she says she plans to have children some day, her pets will suffice as her "babies" for now.

She speculates that someone tied the string around Mac's neck when he was very small and at some point came to realize what they had done and panicked, perhaps fearing identification and perhaps not having enough money to pay the veterinarian's bill, and simply dumped him out so they wouldn't have to deal with the problem they created.

She says the puppy still experiences insecurity when he is let out to use the bathroom on rainy nights and won't go unless she puts on her raincoat and goes out with him. "I know he's thinking, 'She's going to leave me,'" she said.

"This puppy didn't know nothing but pain from the word 'go,'" Mrs. Somerset explained. "And I'm sure he was in a litter of four or five and had to fight for every mouthful."

"Now, when he sees food, it's like a new experience; he just eats and eats. That comes from going hungry for so long."

Debbie Somerset realizes the pain and anguish Mac has suffered in his short life and she plans for him to never again suffer or go hungry.

Shallotte Man Treated, Released After Accident

A Shallotte man was treated and released from The Brunswick Hospital Thursday morning following an automobile accident at the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 211 at Supply.

John Wayne Gore, 26, of Shallotte, was traveling north on U.S. 17 in a 1983 Toyota at 6:35 a.m. when the vehicle in front of him slowed to turn right onto N.C. 211.

Gore pulled into the left lane to go around the vehicle when a third vehicle in front of Gore, a 1978 Pontiac driven by Cynthia King Dale, 34, of Delco, began to turn left onto N.C. 211.

Gore's vehicle hit Ms. Dale's vehicle, then struck a utility pole. Gore, who was treated for contusions and released from the hospital, was charged with improper

passing by state Highway Patrol Trooper T.W. Caulder. Caulder estimated damage at \$3,000 to Gore's vehicle, \$2,000 to Ms. Dale's vehicle and \$1,000 to the Department of Transportation utility pole.

In a 4:15 a.m. Sunday accident one-tenth of a mile north of Leland on Rural Paved Road 1435, Cranston Lamont Andrews, 17, of Navassa, lost control of the 1989 Nissan pickup he was driving, and went off the left side of the road. The vehicle then slid backward, struck a tree and overturned onto its top.

Andrews was admitted to New Hanover Memorial Hospital for observation and was discharged Monday. State Trooper C.E. Ward charged Andrews with driving left of center. Ward estimated damage to Andrews' pickup at \$14,000.

Brunswick Authors Gather At College

Seven Brunswick County authors read selections from their works and talked about writing and getting published Wednesday night, April 25, when Brunswick Community College sponsored its first "Night of Brunswick County Authors."

Local authors attending were Dawn Evans Radford, Jean Stanley, Dwarka Ramphal, J.M.M. Holden, Elizabeth Zachary, Hugh Zachary and Elizabeth Tandy.

In addition, Edna Magers, recruiter with the Brunswick Community College literacy program and a volunteer with the Brunswick County Literacy Council, spoke briefly about adult literacy.

The college's library staff spon-

sored the event, which was held as part of National Library Week.

BCC is presently compiling a directory of published authors living in Brunswick County. To be included in the directory, call librarian Sharon Smith at 754-6918.

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May 4 marks the 20th anniversary of employment for Larry Gene Blanton of Shallotte with the E.I. Dupont Company of Leland. A 1968 graduate of Shallotte High School and a 1969 graduate of Southeastern Community College with a diploma in air conditioning and refrigeration, Larry joined Dupont in 1970. Since this time he has completed several courses through Brunswick Community College at the plant site, and in 1975 completed three years of specialized training and was certified by the State of North Carolina in Industrial Mechanics. In 1986 he successfully attained Electrical Contractors License and in 1988 Heating and Air-Conditioning Contractors License.
Larry is the son of Hubert and Ruby Blanton of Shallotte, is married to Gloria Hewett Blanton and has one son, Jonathan Blanton.

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AFTER PROM '90 Junior Wins \$1,000 Cash Prize

A West Brunswick High School junior won the \$1,000 grand prize awarded Sunday morning at the close of After Prom '90, a privately sponsored, substance-free party held at 2001, a nightclub at North Myrtle Beach, S.C., following West Brunswick's junior-senior prom Saturday night.

Sixteen-year-old Sharon Lancaster, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Landis Lancaster of Shallotte, said she plans to put her winnings in the bank as part of a down payment on a car. "I was just in shock," she said of her reaction to winning the 6 a.m. drawing.



LANCASTER

In addition to the grand prize, an-

other \$1,000 in cash was awarded during the party, along with merchandise and other prizes valued at several thousand dollars.

Miss Lancaster was among 136 students to buy tickets for the event, according to Barbara Campbell, one of the organizers of the event. "We had a super turnout," she said. "A majority of the kids — about three-fourths — were still there when we awarded the grand prize. That says to us that the students do want an alternative."

She added that planning for next year's after-prom party will begin in September.

Miss Lancaster, who earlier attended her school's junior-senior prom at Sea Trail Plantation, said After Prom '90 was better than she had expected.

"There were a lot of people there and everybody had fun," she said.

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DEMOCRAT FOR SHERIFF

When asked by the Star News what changes he would make in the way the Sheriff's Department was administered, the incumbent stated, "I don't think I would make any changes."

I found this disturbing after reading reports that placed Brunswick County number six (6) in per capita drug and alcohol offenses among North Carolina (100) counties.

I believe this problem as well as many others must be addressed by the Sheriff's Department. If this means we need to change the way we do things to get the job done, then I'm for change. I'm doing everything that can be done to keep us from being number two (2) next year.

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