

Animal shelter in need of support

By: Valerie Sluder

I am writing on behalf of one of Rockcastle County's newest additions, the Rockcastle Animal Shelter. I hope to put a little more information about the shelter and request the support of the community for this much needed facility.

As many of you may recall, the dream of a safe place for displaced pets was started about five years ago by a group of dedicated volunteers known as R.A.A.P. This "group" primarily consisted of two loyal members. I think thanks should be given to Terry Lance and Vickie Myers for all the hard work they provided to get this project started. After being turned down for all the grants and loans that were applied for, the county offered to take over the matter, as they would be eligible for financial support. I believe this also may have helped the county out of a lawsuit that had been filed by the Tricie Foundation regarding the lack of a county shelter. So it seemed a win-win situation and for the sake of the animals, R.A.A.P. chose to turn over their property and their plans to the county. As a result, Rockcastle now has a very nice facility, which is in desperate need of community support.

I know that R.A.A.P. had difficulty gaining supporters, but did end up with a handful of very concerned and giving individuals and businesses. I am asking anyone who ever showed support along the way to please step forward now and help to make this shelter a success story for the betterment of our four-legged friends, instead of just a dumping ground for irresponsible pet owners. And for those of you who were hesitant to help before, now would be a wonderful time to do something, anything, to provide some much needed support.

I believe the county has been hesitant to promote this facility because they believe nobody is interested. I was told the only way to get the

county more involved with running a first-class establishment, was to show that there is public support. I was told all decisions are made by Judge-Executive Buzz Carlifolia and the County Magistrates and that I should call these people and express my concerns. Therefore, I would like to ask that, at the very least, anyone concerned please call these folks, or tell them face-to-face, that this is an important issue and we all want to see more support, more advertisement information and more concern given to this matter.

In the meantime, for those of you who are able and willing, there is an immediate need for many things. First, and foremost, spread the word! The shelter has been full of pets since before it even officially opened. Without any advertisement or promotion, they draw attention to these animals; their fate is almost certain to be death. These animals are only allowed to remain at the shelter a few days before being disposed of. I believe that many people do not even realize the shelter is open with so many pets available for adoption. I know for sure that very few people know where the shelter is. We must change this lack of knowledge if any of these beautiful pets are to find the homes they are deserving of. Let's all start talking "up" the shelter, suggest to friends and family that they go to the shelter to adopt their next family member. If anyone out there puts out any type of newsletter or publication, please take it upon yourself to mention and promote the shelter.

The shelter is located off Hwy. 25 on Old Sigmon Road to the first road to the right, named K-9 Run. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 10:30 to 3:30 and Saturday 9:30 to 12:30. However, the shelter is currently being managed by a very caring and giving person, Chris Trump, whose main goal is to find homes for these animals; there-

fore, she will meet anyone interested in adopting a pet at any time on any day, including evenings of late at night, if that's the only time you can get there. All you need to do is give Chris a call at 256-1833 and she will set up an appointment at your convenience.

There are many wonderful older dogs and cats and several puppies all ready and waiting to join someone's home for the holidays. Please consider creating "Christmas Magic" for these hopeless helpless animals who were unfortunate enough to be born unwanted to uneducated owners, who either do not have enough sense to spay and neuter their pets, or they are unwilling to shell out a few dollars to do the right thing. I would encourage everyone to spay and neuter their pets (and maybe someday we wouldn't even need the shelter), and for those of you who open your homes and hearts to a shelter pet, Dr. Chiam has generously offered to give a 15% discount towards the operation. He also will give a free vet exam after you first acquire your new pet so you can rest assured you have a

healthy new friend. He will also give a \$2.00 discount on the much required rabies vaccination. So please, please give a pet a home for the holidays. They will give you so much in return.

Besides the need for public exposure, the shelter has some pressing tangible needs. There is a need for bedding, especially for this winter. Please gather up any old blankets, towels, sheets, rags, robes - anything that is soft and clean that could be put on the cement floors to provide a "nest." Dog food, cat food, cat litter are all needed right now and will always be needed. Small metal buckets for water are needed, as are large food storage containers. First-aid items are needed: alcohol, peroxide, cotton balls, gauze, etc. Chris would also be very appreciate of some brushes and nail detachers and some muzzles to help make everyone more presentable. The last time I spoke with Chris, which was a couple weeks ago, she was in desperate need of a washer (a dryer was donated) and a refrigerator. If you have either of these, please call Chris to see if there

is still a need.

To sum-up, we have a very nice facility to help the creatures we have domesticated, the creatures we are responsible for, God's creatures. We must now support this endeavor. I know of no shelters that are self-sufficient. They all depend on donations and community support in order to survive. Those of us who have a kind heart, and a good moral upbringing, have been having to "pick up" after those of you who are heartless and without morals, for all of time in Rockcastle County. Our homes runneth over with appreciative pets, but there comes a time when we cannot properly care, for any more of these abandoned animals. There is no longer any excuse for anyone in this county to dump pets that they never should have had to begin with, along our roads. However, should someone make this choice again, there is also no excuse for any of the rest of us to drive by and leave a scared and confused animal on the side of the road awaiting a slow death of starvation of the sometimes quicker method of death by automobile, per-

haps causing an accident in the process. We have been forced to endure this situation long enough. This shelter is a blessing and everyone needs to recognize the valuable role it could have in this community. All the political hopefuls seemed real big on improving, updating, beautifying Mt. Vernon - we must have change they all said.

Well, let's change the way we deal with the animals entrusted in our care. Let's count on age, let's get educated. Spay and neuter. In the meantime, support this shelter any way you can. Please let these politicians know you want to see some publications information being given to the community. Please give anything you can - bedding, food, medical supplies, etc. Please, please consider giving the biggest gift of all, a good home to these lonely pets whose time, it always running out.

* Important note: If your pet becomes lost, please remember to check the shelter quickly and often. Your pet will only have a few days at the shelter, just as all the animals there, before it will be gone forever.

Merry Christmas



Front row from left: Danny Ford, Dusty Wright and Roy Adams.
Back row from left: Danetta Allen, Sam Ford, David Henderson, Jeff Cromer and Clarissa Hodge.

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