



Ronnie Casey has been volunteering with the Tehama County Animal Care Center since relocating in 2011. A retired R.N., she strives to help animals in need within Tehama county. She can be reached at rmcredbluff@gmail.com.

Heartworm positive dogs could use a second chance



Kirby is one of several dogs available for adoption at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

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A few weeks ago, I discussed the revamped foster program that the Tehama County Animal Care Center (TCACC), had and how all of us involved hoped you would consider joining us in giving animals in need a second chance for a better life. Right now at TCACC there are four heartworm positive dogs who could really use your assistance and that much needed second chance.

Unfortunately for them, their chances to be adopted have been greatly diminished. The reason, in addition to the recent “shelter at home” directives and the resulting decreased adoptions at the shelter, is that many potential adopters do not want to deal with the short period of extra care required. While the cure for heartworm can be a bit taxing for some people, it is important to realize it does not make these dogs any less worthy than any other dog.

All dogs can get heartworm without preventative medication, and most dogs who contract the disease can live long and active lives by receiving the appropriate treatment. The difficulty is that heartworm therapy takes time, and dogs must be kept on low activity during the rehabilitative process. All of which, during the best of times, can be a bit challenging for the shelter.

But, with just a couple of months of some extra care, these heartworm-positive dogs can lead a healthy, normal life and with your foster help, the way will be paved for them to get the loving homes they richly deserve.

Each one has their own unique personality, just as we do, and after meeting and spending time with them, I will attest to the fact that they are just as wonderful as any of the other dogs available. However, do not take my word for it, come and meet them yourself.

Brando (01-21-20-21) is a compact bundle of love and volunteer favorite. His foster, or adopter, will need to ensure he stays calm and gets his exercise through leash walks only, which Brando absolutely worships. He is an incredibly smart, and affectionate fella, who does love his treats. When you add his award-winning personality and smile, it is extremely hard to avoid adoring this boy.

Scooter (03-11-20-03) is a “Big on personality” Border Collie/Corgi mix. For such a small package, he holds his own with the big dogs. He is happiest in a home with female dogs who ignore his “top dog” attitude. Scooter ran on his own for a long time, but now would enjoy nothing more than to traveling down the highway of life with his own special someone. All he requires is that extra “heart” help from a caring human.

Sterling (02-20-20-04) is a typical laid-back Dobie. Sensitive Sterling, as we all like to call him, is an easygoing guy looking for a big comfy couch to hang out on for a few months. He knows how to sit and shake, and is super affectionate. Sterling is good on leash, will take those yummy treats gently, and over-all is a pretty mellow fella, so keeping him calm should not be an issue.

Kirby (02-28-20-06) has the sweetest of temperaments. He is a perfect well-behaved gentleman who walks great on a leash and is not one of those “jumping-bean” dogs. Even though Kirby has heartworm, he still likes to play, and he really enjoys getting scratches and treats. You would never realize he was Heartworm positive, because he seems like any other happy dog.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there is no reason to believe that dogs can contract or spread COVID-19. In addition, be aware that Heartworm disease is spread by mosquitoes and not by dogs. Let’s face it, who wouldn’t like a companion to hang out with, especially if that entity is not going to get you sick? If you require other reasons regarding why now is the perfect time to foster, consider that outside socialization has just been thrashed, so having the company of an animal can be quite beneficial. Pets not only help us stay on a schedule, they also help maintain some semblance of normalcy in an insane world. Therefore, during this unprecedented event, why not seriously consider sharing your life with one of these dogs?

The Center will provide food, supplies, veterinary care, etc., and will guide you through the fostering process. In addition, there are experienced veteran fosters who are willing and ready to be a support system. Help is just a phone call or email away. If you are interested, I implore you to contact Christine McClintock, TCACC Manager, at 530-527-3439, as soon as possible. She will be delighted to answer any questions you might have regarding fostering one of these amazing dogs.

To cure a heartworm positive dog is to give that dog its life back. It is the ultimate second chance for that animal, and second chances are what the Tehama County Animal Care Center is all about.

Please open up your heart and home so Scooter, Brando, Kirby and Sterling's hearts can be healed.

National Pet Poison Prevention Month



Herman is a year old, neutered, Mountain Cur who is quite playful. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: March 20, 2020 at 4:31 p.m. | UPDATED: March 20, 2020 at 4:32 p.m.

March is National Pet Poison Prevention Month. Even the best pet owners are sometimes not as quick as their nimble furry friends. As quick as can be, your pet can gobble down a potentially harmful poison. Understanding what those poisons are is the first step to keeping your pet safe.

The next step is to act quickly if he's eaten something poisonous. When a pet is poisoned, rapid action and correct advice are critical to the pet's well-being. The first thing to do is to identify what your pet either ate or was exposed to. Even if your pet appears to be fine, immediately call either your veterinarian, the Pet Poison Helpline (855-764-7661) or the ASPCA Poison Control Center (888-426-4435). They can determine if the item is toxic. Do not give anything to your pet unless instructed to by a veterinarian. If it is decided that medical care is necessary take the animal, without delay, to the closest veterinary emergency facility.

According to the Animal Poison Control Center, in 2018 nearly 20% of all cases had to do with an animal consuming over-the-counter medications. It is extremely important to keep all prescription and over-the-counter medications, even those in childproof bottles, out of harm's way. Closed cabinets, not easily accessed by prying

paws, are the best for storage. Drugs containing acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol), NSAIDs (e.g. Advil, Aleve and Motrin) and antidepressants such as Prozac and Paxil are examples of medications that can be lethal, even in small quantities. Pets can also incur vitamin toxicity, especially with iron, Vitamin D and alpha-lipoic acid. Additionally, there have been several cases involving xylitol poisoning from sugar-free multi-vitamins. Supervise anyone who may require assistance taking medications, in order to prevent pills from being dropped and easily accessed by pets.

As a last note, do not think it is cute to get your pet “stoned.” Narcotics, including marijuana, can create a life-threatening risk to your pet.

Veterinary products accounted for 9.3% of 2018’s cases. Over-the-counter supplements for joints and prescription pain medications were the largest portion of these cases, simply because they are manufactured to be “tasty treats” to make it easier to give them to Fido nor Fluffy. Unfortunately, this means that pets do find them enticing to eat.

Household products like paint, glue, and cleaning supplies contribute to tens of thousands of poison cases each year.

The key to safety lies in following the directions for proper use and storage. If the label warns, “keep pets and children away from area until dry”, follow the guidelines. Products containing bleach can cause stomach upset, vomiting, diarrhea or severe burns if swallowed, and respiratory tract irritation if inhaled. Mothballs, potpourri oils, fabric softener sheets, dish detergent, batteries, cigarettes, and hand and foot warmers are also potentially deadly to pets.

Automotive products such as gasoline, oil, and antifreeze should be secured away from inquisitive mouths. Antifreeze in any amount is lethal to dogs and cats. While antifreeze products containing propylene glycol are less toxic than those containing ethylene glycol, they can still be quite hazardous to pets. In addition, other substances typically stored in the garage include insecticides, fertilizers and weed killers, which can threaten your pet’s health if ingested. When applying any agents outside, be sure to keep your pet away for the manufacturer’s recommended time. If they are exposed to chemicals or granules that adhere to their body, they may lick them, resulting in serious problems.

Mice and rats are problematic, but the poisons can be just as toxic to pets as they are to the pests they are supposed to kill. In 2018, nearly 6.3% of all cases were from rodenticides. Only one type of mouse poison has an antidote. The rest do not and are much more difficult to treat. Remember, too, that a poisoned rodent carcass is a serious hazard, as well.

Certain foods can be potentially deadly to pets. I recommend that you commit the following list to memory: alcoholic drinks, avocados, chocolate, coffee grounds, any fatty foods, tea, macadamia nuts, moldy or spoiled foods, onions, garlic, raisins and grapes, table salt, yeast-based dough, and any food product containing xylitol, which is an artificial sweetener.

They may be pretty, but both indoor and outdoor plants, along with bouquets, can be poisonous to your pets. Be sure to understand the toxicity of them before putting them

in or around your house. Some of the most common include certain types of lilies, oleander, tulip/narcissus bulbs, cyclamen, chrysanthemums, English ivy, philodendron, hibiscus, hydrangea, rhubarb leaves and certain varieties of mushrooms.

While accidents can and do happen, the less accessible any of the above items are, the less likely your pet is to get into them. To help you stay informed on potential pet toxins, download the ASPCA Poison Control Center free mobile application (<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/apcc-mobile-app>) In addition, for more information regarding poisonous substances go to the Pet Poison Helpline (<http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/>).

Are your pets safe from coronavirus?



Vertigo is an adult, neutered, male German Shepherd recently at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By RONNIE CASEY |

PUBLISHED: March 13, 2020 at 4:03 p.m. | UPDATED: March 13, 2020 at 4:06 p.m.

Hong Kong authorities stated Feb. 28 that a pet dog of a Hong Kong COVID-19 patient tested “weak positive” for the coronavirus. The dog was tested because its owner has COVID-19, not because the dog was showing any signs of illness. On March 4, they updated their report that the dog showed some level of virus in its nose and mouth. A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said the dog, which was tested several times, was still under quarantine but not sick. The dog will remain in quarantine, the authorities said, until its tests are negative.

Last week, the World Health Organization declared that the coronavirus was now a global health emergency. In the panic that ensued, people became worried, not only about their own health, but the health of their pets as well. In photos across social media, dogs wearing face masks were posted, thus causing hundreds of pet owners increasing concern.

Coronaviruses belong to the family Coronaviridae. Alpha- and beta-coronaviruses usually infect mammals, while gamma and delta coronaviruses usually infect birds and fish. Canine coronavirus, which can cause mild diarrhea and feline coronavirus, which can cause feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), are both alpha-coronaviruses. These coronaviruses are not associated with the current coronavirus outbreak.

Until the appearance of the coronavirus (SARS-Cov-2), which belongs to the beta-coronaviruses, there were only six known coronaviruses capable of infecting humans and causing respiratory disease, including the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS) identified in 2002-2003, and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS) identified in 2012. The disease caused by the SARS-Cov-2 was named 'Coronavirus Disease 2019' and abbreviated to "COVID-19". It is suggested the pathological features of COVID-19 are similar to those caused by SARS and MERS. And while emergence of this recent coronavirus is reminiscent of the SARS outbreak in 2002-2003, both the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that there is no hard evidence that companion animals such as dogs or cats can contract COVID-19.

So, what does all this mean, in light of the recent concerns and false information spread?

Viruses need to attach to cells to infect them, and they do this by binding to specific receptors on the cell. If a virus cannot attach, it cannot infect. Some receptors are very specific to an individual animal species, while some are more general. These differences in receptor binding explain why some viruses only infect one species (or cell type) while others can infect more. Understanding how a virus attaches to cells can assist in determining what types of cells and what species can be infected. Therefore, if the dog is a "weak positive", is it infectious to others? The answer is that while dogs can test positive for the virus, it does not necessarily mean they have been infected. It does mean, however, that the virus could be present on the fur of a dog, even if the dog has not actually contracted the virus.

Even though the virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, the current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human-to-human transmission. Therefore, there is no reason to think that any animals, including any pets in the United States, might be a source of infection with this virus. At the time of this writing, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it is always an exceedingly good practice to wash your hands after touching any animal. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>)

In addition, you should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would with people. Other precautions to take are to have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. Since animals and people can sometimes share diseases (known as zoonotic diseases), it is recommended that if you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, it is imperative that you wash your hands

before and after you interact with pets and handle their food and supplies. Also wear a facemask if possible.

Unfortunately, there is a bigger issue than the potential spread of coronavirus to or from pets, and that is the spread of irrational fear. According to a New Scientist report, during the 2003 SARS outbreak, cats were being taken from the owners and killed by those worried that the animals were spreading the disease. In addition, there was a documented increase of abandoned pets. Both veterinarians and animal experts agree that in a state of panic, people could abandon or kill their pets, with others persecuting people who have dogs. Fear does influence how we react to media coverage of health hazards.

The bottom line is that COVID-19 is like any flu. Thus, washing your hands frequently is the most important thing you can do to prevent its spread, along with staying at home when you're sick, and making sure your sources for information are credible to avoid panic.

Keeping your pets safe from rattlesnakes



Buttercup is a spayed, female adult labrador and boxer mix at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: March 6, 2020 at 1:28 p.m. | UPDATED: March 6, 2020 at 1:29 p.m.

After the dreary winter months, many of us are eager to get outside and enjoy the sun's warming rays. Snakes are no exception. Outside temperatures between 70-80 degrees will encourage these reptiles to emerge from their underground habitats to also partake of the nicer weather. Although most native snakes are harmless, the

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/>) recommends giving these venomous snakes a wide berth. I could not agree more.

Pit vipers (family Crotalidae) are common throughout the US and include rattlesnakes, copperheads and cottonmouths. Their bites are responsible for 99% of the 300,000 estimated venomous snake bites sustained by domestic animals every year. The rattlesnake is California's only native venomous snake, with all nine species being widespread throughout the state. The most widespread rattlesnake in California is the western rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus*), found from sea level to 7,000 feet. These reptiles typically range in size from 3-5 feet long, with some reaching up to 7 feet. Most rattlesnakes will forage for prey in or near brushy or tall grass areas, rodent burrows, around and under surface objects and, occasionally, in the open. As you can see, they can be everywhere. Generally, they are not aggressive and will retreat if able. Most bites occur when a rattlesnake is poked or accidentally touched.

Therefore, in order to avoid any encounter with a rattlesnake it is wise to follow a few safety precautions, especially when hiking or taking Fido out for his daily walk. First and foremost, always be on the lookout. Like all reptiles, rattlesnakes are sensitive to ambient temperature. After a cool night, they will attempt to raise their body temperature by basking in the midmorning sun. To prevent overheating during summer's hot days, they will become more active at dawn, dusk or night.

Rattlesnakes blend easily into the environment, so stay on cleared and compacted trails, avoiding the tall grass, weeds and heavy underbrush where snakes may hide. In addition, never go barefoot or wear sandals or flip-flops when walking in areas where you cannot clearly see where you are placing your feet. Wearing hiking boots and long pants offers an extra layer of protection from any unexpected encounters. Step on logs and rocks, never over them, and be especially careful when gathering firewood. Also, be aware that snakes crawl along the edges of buildings where they are protected on one side. Never grab "sticks" or "branches" while swimming in lakes and rivers. Rattlesnakes can swim. At night when walking, carry a flashlight. Teach children early to respect snakes and to leave them alone. Do not touch or disturb a snake, even if it appears dead. Remember that being still is their mechanism to catch prey. In addition, even freshly killed snakes can inject venom.

Any breed of dog is susceptible, but dogs with high prey drives and those with rural or hunting lifestyles are more likely to find themselves in harm's way when it comes to being bitten. For dog owners, a venomous snakebite is a true emergency. The venoms these snakes inject are strong neurotoxins (nerve poison) and hemotoxins (blood cell poison). The most common signs that Fido has been bitten, with the face and extremities being the most typical sites, are: a sudden onset of swelling, one or two puncture wounds with accompanying pain, bleeding, and limping or flinching when the affected area is touched.

A rattlesnake bite is generally "hemotoxic" which means that it destroys blood cells by disrupting the integrity of blood vessels. The swelling is dramatic with up to 1/3 of total blood circulation being lost into the tissues in a matter of hours. The toxin further disrupts normal blood clotting mechanisms, leading to uncontrolled bleeding. This kind of blood loss induces shock and, finally, death. Dogs who receive more of the neurotoxin in the venom tend to experience more life-threatening reactions, including rapid paralysis that can affect the respiratory muscles. Facial bites are often more

lethal, as the swelling may obstruct the throat and impair any ability to breathe. Again, it is a serious life-threatening injury and immediate veterinary care is necessary in order for the animal to survive.

For humans, carry a cell phone and hike with someone who can assist in an emergency situation. Make sure that family or friends know where you are going and when you will be back. In the event of a bite, stay calm but act quickly. Constricting blood vessels near a rattlesnake bite can lead to amputation so, if possible, surface-wash the wound with water, and remove wristwatches, rings or anything constrictive. Do not elevate an affected extremity, keep it below heart level. Get to the nearest medical facility immediately, as life-threatening symptoms can occur within minutes. Bites can produce extreme pain and swelling, excessive bleeding, nausea, swelling in the mouth and throat making it difficult to breathe, lightheadedness, drooling, and even collapse and shock in rare cases. Do not cut the wound and try to suck out the venom. In addition, the use of ice, cold packs, and the application of a tourniquet can be potentially harmful.

Remember, the outlook for a rattlesnake bite is good as long as both canine and human receive emergency care as soon as possible.

Fosters really do save lives



Bay is a young female DSH Tabby available for adoption at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: February 28, 2020 at 12:48 p.m. | UPDATED: February 28, 2020 at 12:48 p.m.

Can we talk? Or, rather, can I talk and you listen? I promise I won't take too much of your time.

As we all know, spring is around the corner and love is in the air. It's great for some, but not so wonderful for others. You see, as the weather warms, many kittens and puppies being born end up without having a parent to take care of them. At the

Tehama County Animal Care Center (TCACC), the ability to take in these animals is often directly related to the number of reliable foster volunteers it has because, like most humane organizations, it does not have enough personnel to provide the very special attention these adorable bundles of fur require. Even if they do not have any other special needs, they do not have fully developed immune systems and, because of the unending inflow of other animals, they are at an increased risk of becoming ill. As diligently as everyone will try, some will die. But these tiny lives, and others, can be saved.

Shelters are very stressful places for pets. Shelters also know that well-run foster programs can increase their life-saving capacity for care. If they can provide a less stressful environment, they can often speed recoveries, minimize behavior issues, help little ones survive, and increase the chances of adoption for all. The Tehama County Animal Care Center truly understands this. That is why I am excited to tell you that they are in the process of building a revamped, robust foster program. There already have been resultant successes from the positive changes occurring. For those of us involved, the excitement continues to build, and we all hope that you will consider joining us on this wonderful venture.

Fostering really is an important step on a homeless pet's journey to finding their forever home. A safe home environment is the best possible place for an animal's overall health and well-being. Fostering allows the cats and dogs to thrive, practice forming bonds, and improving necessary skills. Fosters allow the shelter, and ultimately adopters, to gain additional insight into a pet's truer personality as a result of being in a more natural, nurturing environment. It also enables the foster to take more accurate pictures which, in turn, aids prospective adopters to envision the pet in their own home. Foster care also frees up space at the shelter, allowing the staff to spend more time with those who remain. Fosters really are the first step to a second chance of a better life for an animal in need.

The animals that would typically be fostered at TCACC are dogs or cats. They may be infants, "teenagers", ones who are a little "gray" around the edges, or moms who are pregnant or who are nursing newborns. Or perhaps the animal may need a quiet place to rest in order to recuperate from a recent surgery. With the TCACC Foster Program, in addition to the food, supplies, and veterinary care the Center provides, they will support you throughout the fostering process, whether you are a "newbie" or an "experienced hand".

They want you to think of the Center as your "partner", sharing the same goals as you in providing the best possible care for the animal and finding the best possible forever loving home. To accomplish those goals, they will help you select an animal for foster based on your lifestyle, experience, and comfort level. They will always be responsive to your questions, because help is as close as a phone call or email away. They will be honest in their expectations. They will provide guidelines and informative materials to assist you in your life-saving endeavor. Also, experienced Center foster volunteers are willing and more than ready to be a support system for you, by offering advice, providing helpful tips, and sharing their experiences. Everyone's goal is for you to succeed.

In addition to the above, there is an exciting new resource which, at the touch of a finger, that also helps foster caregivers by providing answers to many questions and

challenges faced. Maddie's Pet Assistant (<https://www.maddiesfund.org/mpa.htm>) is a free application developed by Maddie's Fund to provide you with valuable support after you bring a dog or cat home. Whether or not you are a seasoned foster, this app will not only help, but maybe even teach you a few new "tricks".

Fostering is a labor of love that will leave you with great memories to cherish long after the animal has been adopted. If you are interested in learning more and seeing some of the Center's current fosters, check out 'Buster's Paw Prints' (<https://www.facebook.com/busterspawprints/>) on Facebook.

Fosters do foster hope. Fosters do foster health. Fosters do foster happiness. Fosters really do save lives. So, please don't wait a moment longer, call 527-3439 now to become a Foster caregiver at the Tehama County Animal Care Center.

Dental health just as important for pets



Maggie is a 3- to 4-year-old spayed female shepherd and rottweiler mix at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) | February 21, 2020 at 2:37 p.m.

We all hate smelling bad breath. While animals may not have the best breath, do yourself a favor and do not turn up your nose to Fido or Fluffy if they are a little more odorous than usual. It could be a warning sign that they have periodontal disease. Just like us, if left untreated the bacteria resulting from the disease can spread to other organs and cause a host of other illnesses. Therefore, it is vitally important to take proper care of our four-legged friends' teeth.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) who sponsors National Pet Dental Health Month every February, more than 85 percent of dogs and

cats over four years old are affected by periodontal disease. Like us, the disease starts with plaque which hardens into tartar. Tartar above the gumline can often easily be seen and removed, but plaque and tartar below the gumline is damaging and sets the stage for infection and damage to the jawbone and the tissues that connect the tooth to the bone. Treatment involves a thorough dental cleaning and, possibly, x-rays to determine the disease's severity.

Apparently, it is not only us humans who need their pearly whites checked at least once a year by a professional to see if there are any signs of impending problems. During the routine exam, the veterinarian will first take a history, asking if anything unusual has been noticed such as: bad breath; broken or loose teeth; teeth that are discolored or covered in tartar; abnormal chewing, drooling, or dropping food from the mouth; reduced appetite or refusal to eat; signs of pain in or around the mouth; bleeding from the mouth; and any swelling noted in the areas surrounding the mouth.

Next, he will examine the animal, including checking the head and neck for anything out of the ordinary. While checking the pet's teeth and gums for redness, bleeding and inflammation, the veterinarian will also be on the lookout for tooth loss, cracked teeth, tartar buildup, as well as any potentially cancerous lumps and bumps. Typically, this part of the exam can be done without any sedation. However, unlike us when we go to the dentist and understand that what is being done is meant to help, our pets do not comprehend the benefits of this dental check-up, thus they may react by moving, by trying to escape, or by becoming aggressive and attempting to bite.

To thoroughly examine and clean your pet's teeth and gums, most veterinarians will recommend the pet have a general anesthetic to perform any in depth dental procedure. It allows for a better teeth cleaning because the pet is not moving and the risk of injury to all concerned is minimized. Also, if x-rays are required, it ensures that the animal remains still for good film to be taken.

We have often heard that pets can clean their teeth themselves by gnawing on dental chews, toys, raw bones and antlers, but that isn't exactly accurate. Bones and antlers are extremely hard and can break the teeth of dogs who are known as vigorous, aggressive chewers. When a tooth breaks it exposes the nerve endings in the innermost layer of the tooth, the pulp. The broken tooth can be put back into service with the removal of the damaged pulp (a root canal), and a crown put over the remaining portion. However, to do so is expensive. In addition, certain bones can get caught in the dog's mouth and cause injury. Instead look for toys that are not as hard, like rubber balls, as well as toys in which you can hide treats.

There is also a belief that dry food is better than canned for dental health because it helps to scrape off tartar. While there is some truth to it, that does not mean your pet should get only dry food. There are many pet products marketed with claims that they improve dental health, but not all of them are effective. Talk with your veterinarian about any dental products, treats, or dental-specific diets you're considering for your pet, and ask for their recommendation. Also, check for the Seal of Acceptance from the Veterinary Oral Health Council (http://www.vohc.org/accepted_products.htm) to make sure that whatever alternative you choose meets the standards for effective plaque and tartar control.

Regularly brushing our pet's teeth is considered the most effective thing we can do to keep their teeth healthy. I understand that with enough patience and plenty of tasty rewards one can turn the action into a bonding experience with the goal being a daily tooth brushing. Unfortunately, I must admit it is not an experience that I have shared with either my dogs or cats. Even though it is not as effective as regular brushing, we do provide treats, toys and food designed to help maintain healthy gums and teeth, and of course, do the regular checks and periodic deep dental cleaning by our veterinarian. As a final note, please be aware that human toothpaste is not safe for our animals, so be sure to use a toothpaste specifically approved for pets.

Do your part during Unchain a Dog Month



Beefcake is an American Bully male about 6 years old. He is a laid back, easygoing guy and available for adoption at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: February 14, 2020 at 3:19 p.m. | UPDATED: February 14, 2020 at 3:19 p.m.

We recently celebrated Valentine's Day. Some of us included the dogs in our home in this festivity of love and commitment. Unfortunately, for an overwhelming number of canines, their life is lived without the warmth of the human bond, much less a loving home. So this month, also known as Unchain a Dog Month, is dedicated to bringing awareness about those animals forced to live alone, chained outside without the love, care, and companionship they crave.

Dogs are social beings. Put a dog on a chain and leave him alone in one area for days, months, or even years and he will suffer both physically and mentally. These dogs endure unbelievable hardships. They suffer from erratic feedings, overturned water bowls, and have no, or limited access to, adequate medical care. Often a chained dog becomes starved, dehydrated, and ill because the chain to which it is tethered, entangles and prevents him from accessing any food or water. They suffer from extremes in weather. During winter's cold months there is no warmth. Rarely is there adequate shelter to shield them from heavy rains or snow. When temperatures

soar to triple digits, they do not have the necessary protection from the sun, or the extreme heat, or sufficient clean water to quench their parched throats. Moreover, because they are in a very confined area, not only do they sleep, defecate and eat all in one place, but often it is nothing but a patch of hardened dirt or mud that is rarely, if ever, cleaned.

In many cases, the ropes or collars encircling their necks become embedded, the result of years of neglect and constantly straining to escape their bond of confinement. Chained dogs do not receive affection, simply because their owners can easily ignore them. Because they have no socialization, approaching them becomes difficult, if not almost impossible. If one takes a friendly dog and keeps it continuously chained, the animal often becomes aggressive. Unable to distinguish between friend and foe when confronted with a perceived threat, and unable to take flight, they feel forced to fight, attacking anything unfamiliar entering their territory.

In addition, they are vulnerable to other animals and other cruel people. Some are shot, others set on fire, poisoned or tortured beyond endurance. They are targets for thieves looking to sell them or use them for dog fighting. As a final indignity, the dog's chain, which is easily tangled, can slowly strangle him to death. Chaining is an inhumane practice.

Under California Health and Safety Code, it is illegal to tether, fasten, chain, tie, or restrain a dog to a doghouse, tree, fence, or any other stationary object. It is further prohibited to tether a dog to a running line, trolley, or pulley with a choke or pinch collar. It is legal to tether a dog for any activity, provided the restraining of the dog is necessary for completion of a task, is temporary, and lasts for no more than three hours in a 24-hour period. Depending on circumstances, violation of the dog-tethering laws in California is either an infraction, punishable by a fine of up to \$250 per illegally tethered dog, or a misdemeanor, with a possible penalty of up to \$1,000 in fines per dog, six months in county jail, or both.

What can you do to help a chained dog?

Call local animal control if you see a dog that is chained to a stationary object day in and day out. An official is required to investigate the situation if the dog's guardian is breaking the law. In the city limits of Red Bluff, call the Red Bluff Police Department (527-3131). In the city limits of Corning, call the Corning Police Department (824-7000). Anywhere in Tehama County other than the above locations, call the Tehama County Sheriff's Office (529-7900 ext. 1). If you do not receive a response within a reasonable period, do not hesitate to contact a supervisor. If you are still not getting an appropriate response, contact the Tehama County District Attorney's office (527-3053).

In addition, raise community awareness of the problem. Unchain Your Dog, <http://www.unchainyourdog.org/>, offers free downloads and multiple ideas for educating the community at large. Help educate the dogs' owner, with the hope they will learn to treat their pets better. You may not be able to convince the owner to unchain or even relinquish the dog. Nor may you be able to convince them to make any changes, themselves, to improve the dog's life. Nevertheless, you can try to be sure water and food are easily reached and available, that there is some modicum of

adequate shelter and that you are relentless in bringing the situation before the authorities.

Be a chained dog's champion. Be his voice. That dog is counting on you.

Ronnie Casey has been volunteering with the Tehama County Animal Care Center since relocating in 2011. A retired R.N., she strives to help animals in need within Tehama county. She can be reached at rmcredbluff@gmail.com.

Hearts, love and a wagging tail for Valentine's Day



Peggy is a 4-year-old, spayed female German Shepherd at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)
By RONNIE CASEY |

PUBLISHED: February 7, 2020 at 1:57 p.m. | UPDATED: February 7, 2020 at 1:57 p.m.

“Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make me a match, Find me a find, Catch me a catch...” are famous lyrics from a song from the musical “Fiddler on the Roof.” The fiddler of the title is a metaphor for surviving in a life of uncertainty, life being as unstable as a fiddler on a roof who is trying to play a simple tune without breaking his neck. Next week, when we observe Valentine’s Day, many of us will celebrate the love and devotion of special relationships in our lives. However, many will also be hoping to find a special “catch” that will help them negotiate through all of life’s uncertainties.

In addition, for some, the crux of love and companionship is to find that one true cohort who can help make you whole. The entity that would be the yin to their yang. For those of you who want that perfect companion, then as matchmaker I ask that you consider a dog. “He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart...” I do not know who originally said this, but I doubt anyone who has a dog would dispute the sentiment.

Long, truly committed relationships between humans are rare in this modern age, but who can debate the loyalty, the unwavering devotion of a dog? The examples are endless, one being a favorite tear-jerking film titled “Hachi: A Dog’s Tale.” It is a story based on a real dog named Hachikō, and is about an Akita who greeted his owner at a train station every day. After the

owner died, the dog returned to the station at the same time every day until he also died, nine years later. Don't we all long for a companion as devoted as Hachi?

Don't we all wish to be loved? To have someone devoted to us enough to be there when unwelcome circumstances darken our door, and to warm us when the world turns cold and unfeeling. Unfortunately, sometimes when real problems emerge, those we thought were committed comrades fall far from our expectations. Dogs, on the other hand, stand by our side whether we are rich beyond measure or destitute and homeless. It makes no difference, whether they are small or large. Where we go, they follow no matter the reason. They watch over us, ever vigilant in their safeguarding, even if it means the forfeit of their own life to protect us from harm. They do not weigh the odds, nor hesitate with questions. Dogs are the epitome of selflessness.

There may be no absolute definition of what constitutes a friend. However, when we think of friendships, we think of traits like loyal, faithful, non-judgmental, trustworthy, supportive, and enjoyable. A friend can calm us, make us laugh, and lift up our spirits during difficult times. I would venture to guess I have also just described the dogs with which we share our homes. I will also wager that our dogs are far more accepting of all our faults than even our husbands, lovers, other family members, and best friends are. I know, my dogs may on occasion give me a "dirty look" when I ask them to do something they do not want to do. But the nice thing is, they have never once pointed out my mistakes, told me what my character flaws were, or endlessly harped on any shortcomings I might have.

Vincent Van Gogh is quoted as saying, "If you don't have a dog ... at least one ... there is not necessarily anything wrong with you, but there may be something wrong with your life." Research has indicated that owning a pet can help us live longer, feel healthier, and help us in dealing with the numerous and diverse stressors of today's world. Because of dogs, countless lives have been saved or at least been markedly improved.

When you are single on Valentine's Day, all the romantic advertising can make you feel that you need a date to be happy. However, according to a Reuter's poll, one in five people would prefer to spend the approaching holiday with their pet rather than a significant other. Of course, dogs have some annoying habits, like drinking out of toilets and snoring louder than anyone else. But they will let you talk for hours without interrupting. There are no arguments about politics, religion, money or who ate the last doughnut. There is a reason they are considered man's best friend. They pretty much love you unconditionally.

Therefore, in the spirit of Valentine's Day I, and the staff and other volunteers at TCACC, would like to play matchmaker to help you find that amazing "catch". The only caveat is that he or she may be a tad furrier than expected and will have more than two legs. After all, a perfect match comes in many shapes and sizes. However, I will guarantee that there is a good chance you just might find a bit of the unconditional love you seek, and the enduring companionship you require, at the Tehama County Animal Care Center, at 1830 Walnut St. in Red Bluff, 527-3439.

Ronnie Casey has been volunteering with the Tehama County Animal Care Center since relocating in 2011. A retired R.N., she strives to help animals in need within Tehama county. She can be reached at rmcredbluff@gmail.com.

February is the month for responsible pet ownership

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: February 15, 2019 at 3:36 p.m. | UPDATED: February 15, 2019 at 3:37 p.m.

These days are still cold and dark, and it is not uncommon to hear that snow is on the horizon. As much as we may not believe it, the warmer days of spring are rapidly approaching. The coming of spring, however, heralds for most creatures the start of breeding season. Unfortunately, as a result, shelters and rescues throughout the country will experience an unmanageable increase in animal intake.

That is why February is designated as Spay/Neuter Awareness Month, Responsible Pet Owner Month and National Prevent a Litter Month. In addition, there is World Spay Day and Spay Day USA, which occur on the last Tuesday of February. As you can surmise, the overall goal is to encourage people to have their pets sterilized.

The decision to sterilize your pet is an important one and is one of the best decisions made for long-term pet welfare. If you truly love adorable, fluffy kittens and sweet, cuddly puppies, then understand that spaying and neutering does help to reduce the number of homeless animals in shelters, and ultimately decreases the need to euthanize any of them. It also improves overall pet health, assists in reducing unruly behaviors (another reason why pets end up in the shelter) and can save on unwanted pet care costs.

In 2017, 2,327 cats and dogs were admitted into our undersized local shelter. According to the 2016 California Rabies Control Activities Annual Report, 362,994 dogs and 311,909 cats were admitted into the 58 reporting agencies in California. In addition, it is estimated that in 2017 approximately 6.5 million cats and dogs entered animal shelters nationally. I don't know about you, but I find all these figures appalling. These animals will sit in shelters for days, weeks and months waiting for loving homes and, sadly, quite a few will never get one. Many others are abandoned, left on the streets to wander aimlessly, to suffer from disease, starvation and other forms of undue cruelty. So, if you do not believe spaying and neutering saves lives, then think again.

Just in case none of this convinces you to spay and neuter (S/N), let me continue and discuss some of the more common arguments against doing this life-saving procedure.

"It's better to have one litter before spaying". It is a common thought that female pets should have a litter of before being spayed. Here is a news flash, animals do not think like human females, therefore they will not be emotionally yearning to become a mother, nor will they have any regrets about not having babies. For them, there are

absolutely no physical or mental advantages to having a litter of puppies or kittens. Since you do not need to worry about paying for years of emotional therapy, you can feel free to go ahead and make that S/N vet appointment.

“I want my children to experience the miracle of birth”. To this I say, “rent a movie.” There are numerous educational films available, not to mention the multitude of animal programs on T.V., zoos, etc. where junior can visualize the “miracle” without contributing to the overpopulation. While the birth of baby animals may teach children a love of life, this lesson can be learned in many other, more humane and positive ways. Wouldn't a better lesson be to teach them that all life is precious and that it is everyone's responsibility to insure that no animal and offspring needlessly suffer?

“My pet will get fat and lazy”. Most pets, like humans, get fat and lazy because they eat too much and do not get enough exercise. An animal may put on some weight after sterilization, but not because of the surgery. Male dogs and cats have a tendency to roam less, thus burning fewer calories. If it happens, reduce food intake and increase activity sessions.

“I want to breed my pet because it is a purebred” or “because I want another ONE just like him”, plus, “I can get good homes for the rest I don't want.” No matter how amazing you think your pet is, others may not be so impressed and that could leave you with a large number of animals that will take over your life and your wallet. Ask any shelter or rescue how easy it is to find homes for adorable puppies or kittens. If it was easy, everyone could do it, and apparently they can't. Shelter census doesn't lie. Once animals become older and not as cuddly, the job of placement becomes increasingly more difficult. The harsh reality is that many of the animals resulting from these litters will not remain in the same home for the rest of their life, and will die somewhere else, unwanted and homeless.

“I don't want their behavior to change... I don't want my male pet feeling less manly... I want them to be protective...etc.” Neutered males fight less and wander less, greatly reducing their chances of being injured or lost. And, unlike male humans, do not feel their “manhood” has been compromised. Again, no need for a therapist.

If you want what is best for animals, then just don't pay lip service to the idea, take action, and spay or neuter your pets. It really is that simple.

The origins of Groundhog Day



Tank, a mastiff mix, is about 4 years old and great with dogs big and small. He is at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By RONNIE CASEY |

PUBLISHED: January 31,

2020 at 1:01 pm | UPDATED: January 31, 2020 at 1:02 pm

One of my favorite movies is the 1993 classic “Groundhog Day,” starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. The film is not only included in multiple listings of best comedy films, but the term “groundhog day” is now commonly used in the English language to describe a recurring situation.

Since tomorrow is Groundhog Day, it would be the perfect time to watch the movie if you have not already seen it and, in celebration of both, I thought it might be fun to provide a little background information.

On February 2, 1887, the day featuring a rodent meteorologist is celebrated for the first time at Gobbler’s Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. A newspaper editor belonging to a group of hunters, called the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club (<https://www.groundhog.org/>), declared that Phil, the Punxsutawney groundhog, was America’s only true weather-forecasting groundhog. According to the tradition, if a groundhog comes out of its hole on this particular day and sees its shadow and runs back into its burrow, six more weeks of winter weather is predicted. If there is no shadow, an early spring will ensue.

Groundhog Day has its roots in the ancient Christian tradition of Candlemas, when clergy would bless and distribute candles needed for winter. The candles represented how long and cold the winter would be. It wasn’t until this tradition was introduced to Germany that an animal became part of it. According to German lore, if a hedgehog saw his shadow on Candlemas Day there would be a “Second Winter” or 6 more weeks of bad weather. As German immigrants came here to settle, so did their traditions. With the absence of hedgehogs in the United States, a similar hibernating animal was chosen, which leads us to today’s Punxsutawney Phil.

Groundhogs, ‘marmota monax’, also known as woodchucks, typically weigh 12 to 15 pounds and live six to eight years. Marmots make up a genus of ground squirrels, and groundhogs are among the 14 distinct Marmota species. Marmots typically inhabit ranges in cool, mountainous areas including Alaska, Siberia and the Himalayas. Just one species of marmot, the yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*), inhabits California. This species enjoys warmer and drier

habitats than its cousins. These stocky, robust herbivores whistle when they are frightened or looking for a mate, thus earning them the moniker of “whistle pig”. Not only do they climb trees and swim, they go into hibernation in the late fall. During this period, their body temperature will drop significantly, their heartbeat will slow from 80 to five beats per minute, and they will lose about 30 percent of their body fat. In February, male groundhogs emerge from their burrows to look for a mate before going underground again. They typically come out of hibernation for good in March.

While Phil may be America’s most famous groundhog, there are other towns across North America that have their own weather-predicting rodents. Buckeye Chuck (<https://www.facebook.com/THEBuckeyeChuck/>), Staten Island Chuck (<http://www.statenislandzoo.org/>) and Shubenacadie Sam in Canada (<http://wildlifepark.novascotia.ca/>) are a few of the more notable ones.

According to studies done by NOAA’s National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) , (<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/>) and the Canadian weather service, Punxsutawney Phil has a dismal success rate of approximately 40 percent in predicting the weather. However, Staten Island Chuck, is accurate almost 80 percent of the time. Although Charles G. Hogg, better known as Chuck, is not as famous as his rival Phil, he did manage to gain notoriety in 2009 when he bit New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg on the finger during the city’s Groundhog Day event.

The other notable Chuck, Buckeye, does not have great prediction success either. Since 2006, Buckeye has been correct in predicting either an extended winter or an early spring only twice. But the Ohio legislature made Chuck the Buckeye state’s official groundhog in 1979 which helped propel him to his stardom.

Farmers despise groundhogs due to their vegetable eating habits and the holes dug by which livestock are prone to get injured. To illustrate, in 1936, a Middletown, Maryland, newspaper publisher formed the Anti-Ground Hog Association, which urged President Franklin Roosevelt to start a New Deal agency that would put the unemployed to work killing groundhogs. In addition, a 1951 editorial by The Washington Post denounced the groundhog as “a cadger, a deadbeat, a bum” and quoted the National Geographic, which called the beast “a menace to America’s food supply”.

However, these days the groundhog is more popular, thanks largely to the celebration in Punxsutawney each year. And that Groundhog Day celebration is more popular, drawing crowds as large as 40,000 from around the world, an influx nearly eight times its year-round population. All of this is due largely to the popularity of a movie called “Groundhog Day.”

What it means to be a ‘no kill’ shelter



Pictured is Dozer, a young, domestic longhair female, available for adoption. She is a quiet girl who loves to be petted. (Contributed)

By RONNIE CASEY

PUBLISHED: January 24, 2020 at 2:38 pm | UPDATED: January 24, 2020 at 2:39 pm

According to the news, in Governor Newsom's 2020-2021 budget proposal (<http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf>) is a \$50 million grant to be issued to the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program to give California's animal shelters the training and resources they need to meet a no-kill goal in 5 years for the state of California. If accepted by the California legislature, it is reported by the Governor's office that California would be the third no-kill shelter state in the country after Delaware and Michigan.

Before you get all excited, however, please be aware we are not comparing "apples to apples". In 2019 California had 250 organizations (out of 555 registered) that opted for transparency in providing their data to the public, and reported to Shelter Animals Count (<https://shelteranimalscount.org/home>) a total intake of 417,826 dogs and cats with a live release of 319,710. Delaware had 4 organizations, out of 13, reporting an intake of 8,925 with a release of 8,108, and Michigan had 65 organizations, out of 98, reporting an intake of 45,008 with a release of 35,850. The difference in numbers, alone, between the 3 states should give some pause.

In addition (pay attention), the \$50 million is not being issued directly to the shelters. The actual verbiage is "The budget includes an increase of \$50 million

one-time General Fund for the University of California Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program to develop a grant program for animal shelters. The program will include interactive group training for approximately 100 shelters, selected on a voluntary basis and prioritized by need; California and regional best practices summits; and an online resource library available to all shelters. Over a five-year period, this program will provide expertise, support, and local assistance to help local communities achieve the state's longstanding policy goal that no adoptable or treatable dog or cat is euthanized."

The most common accepted definition of a "No Kill" shelter is not that it never kills, but that it is a shelter with a live release rate of no less than 90 percent. The core goal is to end the euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals. However, even by those involved in animal welfare, there is no unanimous agreement regarding definitions of "healthy" and "adoptable". In addition, there is no certifying body that bestows a no-kill label. To further complicate the issue, the term "No Kill" sets up an unrealistic public expectation that "no" means no euthanasia, ever. Anything else is believed to be a gross, unacceptable failure.

Recommendations for programs and services to achieve "No Kill," such as low cost spay/neuter and vaccinations, increased adoption events, varied offerings to increase pet retention (such as training), a foster network, etc. are all valid. The implementation of them, however, presents massive challenges. Let's face it, if we could already do all of this, there would not be a problem. Success is dependent upon not only already challenged shelter staff, but also on heavily committed public involvement in the forms of volunteers, fosters, adopters, donators, etc. which are all in meager supply. We must realize that a small municipal shelter is not an animal sanctuary, nor does it have the luxury of infinite space. For those of you not involved, understand that when discussing the euthanasia of animals we need to know why it is so hard to succeed. A majority of cities that have achieved "it" have done so with a huge amount of assistance from the private sector in the form of funds and people. A cruel fact is that most public (government-run) shelters are handicapped in abilities, especially in rural underserved areas (20.9% of Tehama county's people live below the poverty line, which is substantially higher than the national average of 13.1%). Our public shelter is no exception.

The primary purpose of our local government is to protect the welfare of its citizens. Pets are not citizens, therefore their lives are low on a list of government priorities. Although it is possible that the supervising government agency will make the shelter a priority and give it the resources necessary to reach a consistent goal of “No Kill”, do not begin to assume it will happen. The private sector needs to take on the major responsibility for creating and sustaining a “No Kill” environment. Unfortunately, the ugly truth is that many of our residents prefer to either pass-off that responsibility or simply not get involved. In addition, a government shelter is not in the business of fundraising. Yet funds are necessary for things like advanced veterinary care, comprehensive spay/neuter programs, viable TNR programs for feral cats, increased staffing, modern facilities with up-to-date equipment, etc. All of which means the money must come from somewhere. Again, it is unrealistic to expect the shelter will get the funds necessary without the help and support of the public it serves.

Therefore, my statement to you is that our shelter cannot increase its live-release rates without total community support and commitment. Until each individual shares in the responsibility and fate of the unwanted animals the shelter houses, any discussion regarding “no-kill” becomes moot. It is critical that all of us actively work towards decreasing the number of animals entering the shelter. In addition, we must ensure that shelter has adequate resources to provide programs and services that can affect live release outcomes. Finally, understand that there are extenuating circumstances where euthanasia may be the most humane action to take and the true goal, really, is to do what is best for the animal.

Change a Pet’s Life Day

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: January 17, 2020 at 1:10 pm | UPDATED: January 17, 2020 at 1:10 pm

In 2009 “Change a Pet’s Life Day” was introduced by a group who wanted to not only recognize the hard work that shelter staff and volunteers do in order to improve the lives of homeless pets, but to also encourage adoption and raise awareness about the issues facing those animals.

Each year thousands of pets end up in shelters across the country, and our own shelter is no exception. But we have the power to affect those numbers and do not have to wait until next Friday, January 24, to change a homeless pet’s life. Almost any day is an opportunity to get involved at the Tehama County Animal Care Center (TCACC), located at 1830 Walnut Street, Red Bluff (530-527-3439).

If you truly wish to “Change a Pet’s Life”, consider adopting a homeless animal. I am constantly stunned at the array of amazing animals that end up at TCACC. Each

animal is extraordinary in its own unique way. All of them have taught me a thing or two about the resilience of spirit and how precious each life is. The tangible and intangible rewards of adopting are numerous in ways you might never expect.

However, if you have not done so before, when contemplating adding another member to your family, please think about this: when you adopt an animal from a shelter, you are changing two lives for the better. You are providing a home and love to an animal that may have had neither before. You are also providing a haven of safety for an animal that will take the vacated space at the shelter. You end up giving very precious gifts to both of these animals.

If you do not know what kind of pet you want, or there are other constraints, then adoption may not be the long-term commitment you desire or need. Fortunately, fostering is a viable option to consider. There are multitude of reasons animals require a bit of temporary extra-special home care. The animals typically fostered at the shelter are dogs and cats and can be seniors, young adults, orphaned babies, or moms that are either pregnant or who are nursing their newborns.

In addition, there are animals who may require medical treatment or just need a place to recover from a recent surgery. Some animals do not do well in a shelter environment because they are frightened and need a place that is a little less scary to them. Whatever the reason, and whether you foster once or decide to do it often, I cannot state it enough, "an animal will be helped through a most difficult period in its life because of your efforts." If I have tweaked your interest and you are interested in learning more about the Center's foster program, please contact Christine McClintock, Manager at 530-527-3439.

If you are unable to open your home up to a pet, then consider volunteering. Volunteers are extremely vital to the animals and are a blessing for the staff at the shelter. By spending time with the dogs and cats, you add a richness to their existence that may have previously been unknown. Many of pets are scared and confused. Therefore, any time spent with them helps calm them and increases their chance for adoption.

If actual hands-on with the animals is something you prefer not to do, chances are you have a skill, talent, or interest that can still be extremely helpful to the critters. Whether you are social butterfly or someone who prefers solitude, whether you are an internet guru or can barely use a computer, whether you are way past the age of consent or not quite there yet, amateur or professional, your abilities are extremely valuable and can be used to help a creature in need.

If you are willing to take one small step to get involved, then please call 530-527-3439 for more information regarding volunteering. Better still, why not join us at TCACC and attend an orientation class that is held every Tuesday at 3:30 pm.

If you would like to "Change a Pet's Life", but do not wish to adopt, foster, or volunteer, then a donation can be just as effective. Often the shelter's residents require medical care that the county budget simply cannot afford. Extra funds provided for special needs animals can go a long way in making a pronounced difference in their existence.

If you prefer not to make a monetary donation, then contributing an item or two also benefits them. Items always welcomed are: All sizes of Frontline Flea and Tick Control for dogs and cats, Pill Pockets, small dog treats, all sizes of dog and cat collars, small plastic cat toys, gallon Ziploc bags, Clorox Wipes, Feliway Spray, Dawn Dish soap, Purina Kitten Chow, Purina Puppy Chow, Royal Canin Babycat Cat Food, KMR Powder for Kittens, Pet nursing bottles and extra nipples, Pet Microwavable Plate-sized Heating Pad, towels, wash rags and blankets, paper towels, and bleach.

Do not wait until next week. You can start to “Change a Pet’s Life” now.

PETS: Making a brand new ending



Juan, a shepherd mix, is one of several dogs available for adoption at the Tehama County Animal Care Center. (Contributed)

By [RONNIE CASEY](#) |

PUBLISHED: January 3, 2020 at 2:25 pm | UPDATED: January 3, 2020 at 2:26 pm

In the 2006 movie “Peaceful Warrior” a character named Dan Millman was led on a trek to a remote location by his mentor, Socrates. Dan was excited about the trip because he expected something of significance at the trail’s end, but when all he saw was an ordinary rock, he was greatly disappointed. However, after reflection, he said the following to his guide: “The journey... the journey is what brings us happiness... not the destination.”

Part of my journey began when I started volunteering at the Tehama County Animal Care Center and joined the PETS organization. Those venues opened my eyes, educated me, pulled on my emotions and introduced me to a wider scope of people and views. Both assisted in fulfilling my desire to help those who cannot help themselves. While this particular “journey” has been filled with valuable lessons, hardships, and many heartaches, the trek has also brought me happiness through the very special moments of accomplishment gained in aiding vulnerable beings in need.

There are those that believe a New Year represents a new beginning. It is thought of as making a fresh start. Personally, I believe more in what author James R. Sherman wrote, “There’s nothing you can do now to change what has already happened... You can’t go back and make a new start, but you can start right now and make a brand-new ending.” The journey to make a new ending may not always be smooth; in fact, there may be a multitude of challenges. Some of them will test the courage of your conviction, the strength of your determination, and the moral fortitude you believe you have.

Courage is the willingness to stand up for your beliefs. The world today needs more people who are willing to go against the flow when truth and public consensus are not the same thing, or when wrongdoing is ever present. Blind acceptance of the status quo is wrong when it means the tolerance of unacceptable behavior. To create a new ending, we must have the courage of conviction to be a voice for change. Our actions can make a difference. We have already seen how public pressure has been responsible for many improvements in animal welfare, but there is still a great deal to accomplish. If we wish to ensure that animals are treated with respect and dignity throughout their lives, then it is our responsibility, as individuals, to have the courage to act. Whether it is informing the authorities of instances of cruelty and neglect, or increasing public awareness about detrimental animal-related issues, each step in the right direction can mean a new improved ending for a creature who does not have a voice.

Determination is the desire to get the job done and includes characteristics such as initiative, persistence and drive. People with determination are willing to assert themselves, they are proactive, and they have the capacity to persevere in the face of obstacles. People who have “strength of determination” are not those who have never failed, or even those who have failed multiple times. They are those who get up and keep going, despite all obstacles. They have “grit”. Do you have the grit to work with others to establish programs that will address difficult problems such as feral cats, pet over-population, and how to supply food and medical care to pets for those who cannot afford either? Do you have the grit to volunteer at our local shelter or one of the many rescue organizations in the area? Do you have the grit to stop talking about what is wrong with the shelter, animal control, and every other agency dealing with animal welfare within our town, county, state, etc. and do something to improve whatever situation you are complaining about? Do you have the grit to get the necessary work done?

To have moral fortitude is to have the courage to speak out and act for what is right, even in the face of opposition. It is having the strength of character to do the right thing, even if it is not popular. It is a willingness to take a stand. In its most mundane form, it is merely the act of doing the right thing when it is much easier to do otherwise. If we truly believe that animals are to be treated with respect and dignity

throughout their lives, then it is our moral fortitude that ensures that the following “Five Freedoms” are provided to them: Freedom from hunger and thirst; Freedom from discomfort; Freedom from pain, injury, or disease; Freedom to express normal behavior; and Freedom from fear and distress. If these “Freedoms” are lacking, then it is our moral responsibility to work towards remedying their situation. Any animal, whether pet or product, must be protected from unnecessary suffering.

The New Year brings us a golden opportunity to make a “brand new ending” not only for us, but also for those who are dependent upon our courage of conviction, the strength of our determination, and our moral fortitude. Every positive step we can take towards the greater good, no matter how small, will move us all closer to becoming more humane. Everyone can benefit from the “journey” we choose to take this year.
