

AMIGOS DE LOS ANIMALES de Guanajuato, A.C.

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Tulu gets a haircut

We could not believe our eyes. The gray mop in the corner of Cantarranas next to the locksmith and the stairs to the *Subterraneo* did not appear to be alive—until its tail moved ever so slightly. The poor fellow was encrusted with dreadlocks that imprisoned him like a straitjacket.

It was Carlos who found him—or rather it was Millie, Carlos's neatly groomed and well-mannered poodle. They'd been on their usual morning stroll through the Centro, when Millie spotted or sniffed Harry, as we immediately began calling him. Millie is not too interested in socializing with other female dogs, and so she must have recognized a male dog under that solid mass of filthy fur. She wagged her own tail in response, and the two of them touched noses.



Carlos always carries a Swiss Army knife, one with all the fancy attachments. He opened it to the scissors, got down on his knees, and began snipping away at the clumps of dreadlocks. Curious onlookers arrived, and soon Carlos had help at this awkward task. It being Sunday, there were no veterinary clinics open, and so a proper haircut would have to wait until the next day.

Carlos agreed to take Harry to his and Millie's house for a good meal and a bed for the night. The next morning he delivered the scrawny pooch, whose face Carlos had still not been able to liberate from the matted fur, to Can-Cat Clinic on Calle Alonso, where Harry submitted to an extreme haircut, a bath, treatment for parasites, vaccinations, and sterilization. When we next saw him, he had been transformed into a surprisingly handsome dog. Carlos paid for the bath, parasite treatment, and haircut; Amigos paid for his vaccinations and operation.

Two days later Harry found a good home with Nancy Judith Yruz Hernández, who promised to keep the fellow's coat under control and to give him the attention and affection that every dog deserves. She told us that at first Harry, whom she renamed Tulu, was frightened and had little appetite, but slowly became accustomed to his new surroundings and now is quite content.

Tulu's was an extreme case of neglect. He was lucky to survive his ordeal and find a good home. We see many others that are so weakened by hunger and disease that they must be mercifully sacrificed.

We are grateful to people like Carlos who come to the animals' rescue before it is too late, and to people like Nancy Judith for adopting and caring for a homeless dog. We only wish that all pet owners would act compassionately toward the animals they have the power—and responsibility—to protect.

Nancy Judith and Tulu



City's Animal Control Center Opens

Toward the end of April there will be a day of celebration here, when Mayor Eduardo Romero Hicks and other city and state officials inaugurate the city's new Animal Control Center (ACC). The mayor has made the construction of the center a priority of his administration, and its design and planned operation reflect an enlightened concern for the welfare of the dogs and cats that come under the control of the city. Located at the far end of the sports field of Yerbabuena, the complex replaces a depressing compound where captured dogs and cats used to spend a few terrifying days jammed together in unsanitary, crowded conditions before being drowned, shot, or electrocuted.

The ACC is to be managed by a veterinarian, Dr. Luis Alberto Hernández Ferro, who gave us a tour of the new complex before it opened. We were impressed by the buildings' features. The kennels for dogs and cats are spacious, and the building in which they will be housed is well ventilated. It includes a surgical unit, where Dr. Hernández and his staff will treat injured animals and sterilize those that are reclaimed or adopted. Animals that are not reclaimed by their owners and are too old, ill, or injured to be candidates for adoption will be humanely euthanized. Several isolation units away from the main kennels will be used to assess new arrivals.



Above: Main building of new Animal Control Center.



Right: Some of the dog kennels in the facility. Smaller kennels will house cats.

The ACC will attempt to reconnect lost pets with their owners. Because the facility is located on the outskirts of the city, each animal will be photographed when it arrives at the center and the photograph put on a Web site so that owners can easily check whether a lost pet has turned up there. People interested in adopting a dog or cat can also use the Web site or visit the center. People with complaints about the neglect or abuse of animals can report such cases to the center, and the cases will be investigated and, if appropriate, charges pressed against owners.

A major focus of the center will be education about pet owners' responsibilities under the city's recently enacted regulations to protect domestic animals. The ACC, with support from the city's Health Administration, will conduct an education campaign, in which Amigos plans to participate.

The day we visited, Dr. Hernández was interviewing applicants for jobs at the center and asked us to tell them about our philosophy and activities. We gave a brief PowerPoint presentation. Afterward, we learned during our tour that the city hopes to secure additional funding to acquire a crematorium and add a second storey to the main building, where it will offer grooming and boarding services to the public. Eventually Dr. Hernández hopes the name of the center will be changed to the Animal Control *and Health* Center, reflecting its mission of improving the well-being of the city's animals.

Now We're Vaccinating Dogs in Adoption

At our annual meeting, Amigos members approved the Board's recommendation to routinely vaccinate rescued dogs against often fatal communicable diseases before offering them for adoption. We have been treating dogs and cats for intestinal parasites and to prevent mange, which is endemic though not fatal. But several dogs we have rescued, treated for parasites, and sterilized have subsequently died of canine distemper or parvovirus. Although posing no danger to humans, both diseases are highly contagious and almost always fatal to dogs. The city vaccinates dogs and cats against rabies during its annual campaign.

The multiple vaccines we have begun using protect dogs from disease caused by canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, canine adenovirus type 2, canine coronavirus, canine parainfluenza, and canine parovirus. We estimate the cost of the vaccination program at \$1,300 USD for the current year. We are redoubling our fundraising effort to be able to afford this vital new service.

Happy Birthday to US!

We celebrated our eighth birthday on February 14 with a party at Guanajuato's popular Café Zilch, raising 48,500 pesos (US \$3450) to help support our rescue, spay/neuter, and education activities for the year. About 200 people attended the event, which included an Indian dinner, live entertainment, a silent auction, and a raffle of terrific prizes. Given the length of time that people remained at the event, it seemed everyone had a great time.



Musicians Dan Scholl, John McGah, and Rod Murillo



Amigos presidents Eduardo Rodríguez ('09) and Sandra Ward ('08)



Dancer Cathy Gielis

The entertainers featured host Michael Severens, a member of the Symphony Orchestra of the University of Guanajuato, playing classical cello; John McGah on banjo, Dan Scholl on Irish drums, and Rod Murillo on harmonica performing American folk music; Cathy Gielis dancing Egyptian style in a traditional Arab costume, and the jazz group Tuba Jam jamming to beat the band.

The classic East Indian dinner, prepared by Ron Mann (chicken curry), Anita Rodríguez (saffron rice), Liz Mapelli (lentil *dal*), Jolene Gailey and Jacquie McKenzie (cucumber and yoghurt *raita*), Dan Scholl and Lori Wilson (the Indian bread *naan*), Rod Murillo and Lisa Bennett (rice pudding flavored with cardamom), and Lalo Rodriguez (agua de Jamaica) was enjoyed by 124 guests. Leftovers were shared with the Good Shepherd Women's Shelter.

Our silent auction featured paintings, prints, jewelry, textiles, and sculpture donated by artists and artisans, and numerous services donated by businesses. The raffle included 15 terrific prizes, including tickets to the winner's choice of a film shown by the University of Guanajuato's Cine Club's, dinner by two contributed by the restaurant Sabor y Arte, an autographed copy of the beautiful book *Mexicocina* by Betsy McNair, two-nights' stay for two people at the restored 18th-century House in Guanajuato offered by host Carl Haskett, and—always a favorite—a ride for two in the hot-air balloon belonging to Sam and Jean Edwards.

We are extremely grateful to the volunteers, donors, and all those who attended the party for their support. We thank you with all our hearts, and we are sure that the animals we have rescued would thank you too if they could.

Members Elect Board for 2009

During the annual meeting of Amigos members on March 22, members expanded the Board of Directors from seven to nine members, filled four vacancies, and elected new officers for the year. Elected for two-year terms were Jolene Gailey, James Pyle, Julia Salido, and Lori Wilson. All but Jolene have served on the board previously. Members also elected Eduardo Rodríguez as president, Bernardo Calzada as vice-president and treasurer, and Sandra Ward as secretary. The terms of Marlene Davis and Verónica Mares Flores will continue this year.

Eduardo Rodríguez was vice president of Amigos in 2008 and has been affiliated with our association for two years, participating in sterilization campaigns, transporting dogs and cats to rural communities for adoption, and organizing fundraising events. He is active in other service organizations, including the shelter for family members of patients at the General Hospital of Guanajuato, of which he is the current treasurer, and the Lions Club of Guanajuato, which he served as president during 2007–08. Professionally, he works in the area of international education and is the director of the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), Mexico.

Bernardo Calzada served as Amigos treasurer in 2008. Besides handling the finances of the association, he has participated in our sterilization campaigns, intervened in cases of animal neglect, and been active in educating municipal authorities and the public about our activities. By profession he is a realtor.

Sandra Ward was president of Amigos during 2001–04 and again during 2007–08. She served as secretary of the association during 2005–06. As president and secretary of Amigos, she has organized our sterilization campaigns, maintained statistics on our sterilization and rescue cases, prepared reports and news articles on our activities, published our newsletters, and written grant applications. By profession she is an editor specializing in demographic studies.

What We Did in 2008

At the annual meeting, outgoing president Sandra Ward presented a report to the membership on our achievements in 2008. Highlights of the report follow. Copies of the complete report may be requested by writing to amigosanimalqto@yahoo.com.

We continued to focus our work on three main areas: sterilization (spay/neuter), rescue, and public education. We also cooperated with other organizations, expanded our contacts with city and state officials, and held several fund-raising events.

Sterilization

- Thanks to the local veterinarians who participated in our clinic program and to the local and visiting veterinarians who volunteered their services during our campaigns, we neutered 678 animals (432 dogs, 246 cats), 435 of them through the clinic program and 243 during the campaigns. A total of 4,398 animals had been sterilized through the end of 2008.
- We held three campaigns—a one-day campaign in April in the village of Llanos de Santana (82 animals), another one-day campaign in the village of Paso de Perules in September (65 animals), and a two-day campaign in the city barrio Cerro de Cuarto in November (96 animales). Nine volunteers from New York City took part in the November campaign.
- We received material support for the campaigns from the State Secretariat of Health, the Urban Health Center, the Municipal Health Administration, and various medical suppliers. We also received the cooperation of the State Secretariat of Education, the directors and teachers at the schools where the campaigns were held, and the villagers themselves, many of whom offered their assistance and prepared meals or donated food for the volunteers.



Drs. Cristóbal and Cuello at our November campaign



Lana, on right, finds a home with Caroline and her dog Buster in Port Alberni, B.C.

Rescues and adoptions

- Amigos volunteers rescued 332 dogs and cats, many of them puppies. By sex, the rescues were 161 female dogs, 59 male dogs, 65 female cats, and 47 male cats. The animals were taken to the clinics of participating veterinarians, where they were bathed, treated for intestinal parasites, in some cases treated for mange, neutered, and then offered for adoption. The rescuers paid for the baths, treatment, and boarding; in most cases Amigos paid for the surgeries. A few homeless animals were brought to our campaigns, neutered, and adopted afterward. A total of 1,740 animals were rescued by Amigos between 2001 and 2008.
- We continued our partnership with Mex-Can Pet Partners, founded by Amigos board member Marlene Davis. Mex-Can placed 36 rescued dogs in Canadian homes. Marlene accompanied most of the dogs to British Columbia and arranged for their foster care prior to adoption. The adopters paid the travel expenses of all the dogs transported outside Mexico.
- We began collaborating with a rescue group in San Miguel de Allende called Save A Mexican Mutt (SAMM). Through SAMM we arranged for six dogs rescued in Guanajuato to be adopted in the US. Amigos sterilized and vaccinated the dogs and provided SAMM with health certificates for them before SAMM volunteers drove the animals to their destination cities.
- As we have no shelter, Amigos volunteers and veterinarians in our program provided foster care to rescued animals awaiting adoption.

Public education

- We published six articles in the popular weekly newspaper *Chopper* and three issues of our newsletter. The newsletter, published in Spanish and English, is disseminated principally through the Internet to a mailing list of more than 300 recipients.
- Our volunteers talked with numerous children and adults and handed out literature about the advantages of sterilizing pets, the responsibilities of pet owners, and the city's new regulations for the protection of domestic animals.
- Last spring we focused our educational efforts in the village of Mesa Cuarta, where some 60 rescued dogs and cats had been adopted. Amigos volunteers met with adults and visited the kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools to discuss the animals' care.



Board member Julia Salido talks with village school children about caring for their pets



A child receives a puppy from Amigos in Mesa Cuarta

- We delivered PowerPoint presentations about Amigos to the city's Commission on Health and Social Affairs and at a Sister Cities Conference that was held in Guanajuato and attended by representatives from Europe, Asia, the US and Canada, and Latin America.

Cooperative activities

- Early in the year we met with city officials to discuss their plans for the planned Animal Control Center and to make recommendations about its design and services.
- We invited the director and deputy director of the City Health Administration, both MD's, to participate in our spay/neuter campaigns.
- We continued sharing information with other animal-welfare groups. Our contacts with the three organizations in San Miguel de Allende have been mutually rewarding. Two veterinary technicians in San Miguel regularly participate in our spay/neuter campaigns. Currently we are collaborating with the three societies on a request for medical supplies collected by a group in the US.
- We submitted monthly reports about our spay/neuter activities to health officials for the national data base.
- We offered advice to other groups and individuals in Mexico seeking to establish animal-protection organizations or place animals for adoption.

Fundraising

- Our income in 2008 totaled USD \$7437 and MXP \$105,111, the total equivalent to MXP \$194,355, compared with MXP \$144,716 raised in 2007. The devaluation of the Mexican peso over the year accounted for part of the increase.
- A lavish breakfast in February 2008 raised 17,920 pesos.
- A fundraiser in New York City organized in July by a former visitor to Guanajuato raised USD \$1000.
- The Sociedad Protectora de Animales de San Miguel de Allende donated to Amigos 15,000 pesos of the money it had raised during its annual fundraiser.
- In November we submitted an application to become an affiliate member of the Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Social (National Institute of Social Development), known as INDESOL, on the grounds that our work promotes human health. If successful, our membership will entitle Amigos to matching funds.
- In December we received a USD \$1000 donation from a family gift fund in the US.

Members

At the time of the annual meeting Amigos had 159 members: 7 "best friends," 31 benefactors, 9 business members, 29 family memberships, 16 individual members, 59 volunteer members (including veterinarians), and 8 "other" contributors. Many of the paying members are also volunteers.

Recent Memberships and Donations

We depend upon the donations we receive from our supporters to provide services to the community. Our sincere thanks go to the following donors and volunteers for their recent support:

Best Friends: Linda Logan and Jim Edney, Richard and Lynn Hill, Kelly Karger, anonymous family gift fund

Benefactors: Joyce Cymerman; Joan Graham and Adrienne and Ben Bierbrier in honor of Sol Bierbrier's 80th birthday; Pat, Sol, and Louie Bierbrier in thanks to Dr. Lori Bierbrier; Mariana Grobet; Nancy Hager; Jes and Susan Merrell; Paco and Rosa Roseth; Sandra Ward in memory of Joan Summers; Edith Zagona

Business memberships: R-Sea's Castle,

Family memberships: Sterling Bennet and Dianne Romaine; Pat, Sol, and Louie Bierbrier in memory of Liebe Friedman; Heie Boles; Losanne DiMiceli; Kim Duchak; Ruth Johanesmeier; Ron Mann; Mark and Kay Noguchi in memory of Boomer; Simone Rodrigue; Carla and Donald Seifman in commemoration of Sol Bierbrier's birthday; Kim I. Young

Individual memberships: Max Sampson, Carolyn Waite,

Auction and raffle donors: Academia Falcón, Sereno Aguilar, Alma del Sol B&B, Ruth Burchard, Cine Club de la Universidad de Guanajuato, Susan Cofer-Jones, Sam and Jean Edwards, Julie Favella, Todd and April Fell, Dean Gazeley, Pepe García, Gene Byron Museum, Carl Haskett, George Holt, Ron Mann, Verónica Mares Flores, Marina Club de Marfil, Claude Mathey, Jacquie McKenzie, Betsy McNair, Orquesta Sinfónica de la Universidad de Guanajuato, Anita Rodriguez, Sabor y Arte, Julia Salido, Susi Seidel, Ruth Steinberg, Ana Trucha, Lori Wilson

Government support: Bajío/León International Airport, Centro de Salud Urbano, Dirección de Salud

Volunteers: Nancy Hager, Nina Johnson, Max Sampson, Annie Smith, Austin Starr, Maria Chan, Edward Schiff

Special thanks to Tom Reavley and Martha Roberts for translating this issue into Spanish for us. If we have neglected to mention any donor or volunteer, please accept our sincere apologies.

*Please help us continue our work.
You can donate through PayPal
at our Website (below).*

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