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Among the flood of telephone calls for help received by the West Valley Animal Shelter the day following the February, 1971, earthquake, was wee from a Granada Hills chicken rancher. He had a flock of 50,000 chickens that needed water immediately.

The District Animal Shelter Supervisor, George W. Mason, called a hasty conference with his staff, and then telephoned the City Department of Street Maintenance. Within a few hours the thirsty flock enjoyed an emergency water supply through the courtesy of street flushers.

The earthquake that took a tragic and costly toll in life and property involved the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation in a peripheral sphere of animal care and control. The East and West Valley Animal Shelters (located respectively at 13131 Sherman Way, North Hollywood and 20655 Plummer Street, Chatsworth) became havens of refuge for all types of animals victimized by the quake. Animals were also transferred from the Microbiological Research Laboratory at Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar to the East Valley Shelter for safekeeping. Even pets of families displaced by the quake were provided food, care and lodging at no cost during the emergency.

During the days immediately following the quake, Animal Control Officers made daily trips to evacuated homes in the imperiled Van Norman Dam area where pets had been left by families ordered to leave. The animals were fed and watered.

Throughout the hard-hit Valley region, broken fences and empty homes led to an explosive increase in stray dogs. The task of canine control became an integral activity in the aftermath of the earthquake cleanup.

The year 1971 marked the first full year of operation for the new West Valley Animal Shelter. With its opening in August, 1970, the shelter became responsible for animal care and control in Valley communities west of the San Diego Freeway. Communities east of the freeway are serviced by the East Valley Animal Shelter. Prior to 1970 the entire Valley was serviced by the East Valley Shelter under the supervision of Ernest Jensen.

In the fiscal year, 1970-71, the West Valley Shelter processed 24,292 animals, the East Valley Shelter, 45,694. These totals represent more than half of the 133,040 animals handled by all six city shelters. There are 150,000 licensed dogs in the Valley, representing 50 percent of the city's licensed pets.

Animal care and control is the primary mission of the Department of Animal Regulation, says Robert I. Rush, department general manager. "The cooperation of pet owners and concerned citizens," he adds, "expedites the fulfillment of this responsibility." Rush estimates that well over 100,000 animals are taken directly to animal shelters by their owners. Not only has this responsibility reduced the costs for animal control, but has established a degree of cooperation not achieved by any other city or county

in the world according to the World Health Organization of the United Nations.

Rush says the department will be self-supporting commencing with the 1972-73 fiscal year. The projected operating budget of the department is estimated at $2,500,000. Estimated revenue for the coming fiscal year will approximate $2,507,200. The estimate includes revenues from adjusted animal tax and fee schedules enacted in the current fiscal year 1971-72.

"Pet owners soon will be paying the total cost of the department's operation," says Rush. "Those persons, receiving services, will be paying for the services rendered, and they are entitled to the best service we can provide."

On an ordinary work day, personnel at Valley shelters impound stray animals, pick up unwanted animals, quarantine biting animals, sell or auction unclaimed healthy animals, issue dog licenses and cat identification tags, investigate reported cases of cruelty to animals, issue citations to violators of animal-oriented municipal codes, and prosecute these violators in court.

Most of these services fall in the category of routine. But routine isn't always the order of the day. Animals open the doors to the unpredictable.

On a warm night in June, last year, a wandering mountain lion was captured by two Animal Control Officers and impounded at the East Valley Animal Shelter. In the wake of modest publicity surrounding the capture, thirty persons claimed the lion as their lost pet. Among inquiries received about the lion were two from San Francisco; one from an animal compound, another from a bank. The compound had lost a big cat, and the

bank had missed a lion used in promotional activities.

After all claims had been carefully assessed, the Department established that the lion belonged to a Long Beach couple who had named it "Stinky Phyllis". Ownership was partially established through an identifying scar on the cat's right hind foot. Further, when the young lady claiming ownership, calmly entered the cage to cuff the cat on the nose for its truancy, shelter personnel were certain the claim was valid.

On a different plateau, Animal Control Officer David Leon of the East Valley Animal Shelter, is also acquainted with the unpredictable. Leon was called to a Valley residence by firemen to control a menacing dog in the house. A woman, at the residence, fearing she had taken an overdose of drugs, had summoned the firemen for assistance. Leon entered the house and secured the dog. As he was leaving the residence, he saw the prostrate form of the woman on the kitchen floor. Although she appeared lifeless, Leon administered mouth to mouth resuscitation. The revived woman was rushed to the hospital. Leon was cited by the Fire Department and the Department of Animal Regulation for saving the woman's life.

In the field of public health, Valley pet owners demonstrated an awareness of community responsibility through lively participation at public low-cost anti-rabies clinics.

A total of 13,226 dogs received their vaccinations at nineteen Valley clinics. Public clinics are scheduled again this year in February, May, August and November. Dates and clinic sites will be announced in the Valley News and Green Sheet. State law requires all dogs, four months and older, to be inoculated against rabies every two years. The clinic vaccination fee is two dollars.

"Valley pet owners can be proud of the health record pertaining to domestic animals in this part of the country, which is a rabies endemic area," Rush said. "The last rabid dog in the City of Los Angeles was reported in 1962, and had been brought to Los Angeles from out of state. The last native dog, infected with rabies, was reported in the city in 1957."

On a warm September afternoon in 1969, Mayor Sam Yorty helped load wild animals on a helicopter at Van Nuys Municipal Airport. The occasion was the inauguration of the country's only Animal Airlift. The program continues to operate and the focal point of the project has become the West Valley Animal Shelter.

Each week, small wild animals, humanely trapped in all parts of the city, are transported to the West Valley Shelter. Under the supervision of Shelter Supervisor Mason, the animals are crated and loaded aboard the copter at the shelter landing strip. Then, they are flown to pre-selected release zones in Angeles National Forest where they are turned loose to seek new homes. The dispersal sites are chosen in terrain where water is plentiful and vegetation provides suitable protection and natural nourishment.

Chauffeuring Mason and his animals on their weekly flights to the wilderness is veteran helicopter pilot Ray Schutte of the Bureau of Transportation, Department of Public Works.

From the opening day of the dramatic project, involving wildlife conservation in action, to the close of 1971, a total of 1,189 wild animals were relocated in a safe and natural habitat. The normal flying cargo may include raccoons, opossums, foxes, non-poisonous reptiles, tortoises and birds of endangered species of predatory habits. The airlift has attracted

national recognition and Los Angeles' wildlife conservation program becomes increasingly important as wildlife dwindles in ecological dissipation.

Speaking of the total operation of the Animal Regulation Department, Rush says "in reviewing the past, we plan for the future. We evaluate criticisms, and weigh them for what they are, valid or invalid. We separate the emotional critiques and unrealistic assessments from the truth, and proceed on a course of positive action. If the truth calls for remedial measures, the necessary action is taken. The Department of Animal Regulation recently proposed a five-point modernization program for City Council approval.

1. Improvement of the veterinary program in the department which would include provision for:
   a. Treatment of sick and injured animals
   b. Preventive disease program for animals sold or redeemed
   c. Medical profile of each animal impounded.
   d. Euthanasia by veterinarians of animals not recommended for destruction by High Altitude Euthanasia
   e. Establish medical treatment units in each District Animal Shelter
2. Continuation and expansion of the public low-cost Spay and Neuter Clinic. (At the present time, the city operates one clinic at the Ann Street Animal Shelter, 215 West Ann Street Los Angeles.)
3. Installation of automated methods for dog and equine licensing, with provisions for incorporating the cat identification program.
4. Installation of automated information systems to facilitate

identification of impounded animals and the return of stray animals to their owners.

5. Secure approval to authorize a General Obligation Bond Fund proposal to finance a comprehensive modernization and replacement program to establish effective animal service centers and a centralized animal hospital. The bond fund requiring approval by the Mayor and City Council would be submitted to the electorate in June, 1972.

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