Special to the Valley News
Achievement Edition
From: Jim McNamara
Public Relations
Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation. Tel: 485-5771

The control of animals is an ongoing responsibility of the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation, but equally important is the protection and rescue of animals when the occasion demands.

In 1975, such an occasion was the Big Tujunga fire.

In 1971, the West Valley Animal Shelter in Chatsworth was the earthquake refuge for animals turned loose by the temblor. Four years later, the East Valley Shelter in North Hollywood was the harboring and processing base for animals displaced by the fire.

Frightened and disoriented by the Big Tujunga flames, distraught animals were herded to the East Valley Shelter in city owned and private conveyances. The heterogeneous traffic included horses, ponies, dogs, cats, poultry, cattle and goats. A few miles away in the fire area department animal control officers responded where needed. At one fire encircled animal compound, officers rescued and relocated twenty-seven wild animals including cougars, bobcats, wolves and a javelina (wild tusked pig).

On a less dramatic level in 1975, animal control programs in the Valley served to involve the pet owners in activities beneficial to community health and animal welfare.

Dog and cat owners in increasing numbers took their pets to the East Valley Spay and Neuter Clinic for surgical sterilization. During the 1975 calendar year, 7188 pets were either spayed or neutered at the public low cost East Valley Clinic located at 13131 Sherman Way, North Hollywood.

Robert I. Rush, general manager of the City Department of Animal Regulation, views the public participation at the clinic as a healthy indication of growing pet ownership responsibility.

more

"Increasing numbers of Valley pet owners are recognizing the fact that their pets become better pets when spayed or neutered," says Rush, "and, also, they recognize that by spaying or neutering their pets, they are assisting in achieving an animal control level akin to zero pet population growth."

A total of 13,459 dogs and cats were spayed or neutered in three city clinics (including the East Valley Clinic) in 1975.

Valley pet owners wishing to participate in the low cost spay-neuter program ($17.50 for spaying, $11.50 for neutering) may call 764-4411 for information or appointment.

Responsible pet owners in the Valley procured licenses, in 1975, for approximately 120,000 dogs. Of this number, about thirty-seven per cent are spayed or neutered.

Pet ownership responsibility is further reflected in the large number of Valley dog owners who bring their pets to the public low cost anti-rabies clinics conducted in February, May, August and November. In 1975, 11,776 dogs received vaccinations at clinics supervised by the animal regulation department, with the assistance of Valley Volunteers, and serviced by the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association at Valley recreation centers. Clinic schedule information may be obtained by calling 485-5755.

In the area of local wildlife conservation, Los Angeles' Animal Airlift, based at the West Valley Animal Shelter, is credited with relocating 2,522 small wild animals since 1969, giving these creatures a second chance for survival. The wildlife cargos, consisting of raccoons, opossums, foxes, predatory birds, non-poisonous snakes, humanely trapped within urban limits, are transported twice monthly by helicopter to a natural habitat in the recesses of Angeles National Forest.

On the domestic animal front, 55,632 animals were impounded in the two Valley animal shelters in 1975. Of this number, 39,746 were destroyed.

Rush hopes to reduce these numbers through public education, the spay-neuter program and a Humane Education program. The Humane Education program is presented by a team of four animal control officers in the city's Unified School District. In 1975, the instructing officers visited 65 schools in the Valley, and talked to approximately 44,000 school children.