

**AUGUST /SEPTEMBER 2012**

**NEWSLETTER BY MERYL HARRISON AND THE VAWZ TEAM**

**Speaking of animals, St Francis of Assisi said “Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission – to be of service to them wherever they require it.**

Lacey is a 6yr old Ridgeback bitch that VAWZ Inspectors confiscated from a local security company, she was emaciated, depressed, had biliary and weighed only 13kg.

After a week of excellent care at Avondale Vets, Lacey decided life was worth living. Paula and Brad Wheeler very kindly offered to foster her until she was fully recovered. Thanks to them she has made a full recovery and now weighs 25kg.



**We are looking for a “forever” home for Lacey, she is very good with other dogs, but having been too ill to even glance at a cat or chicken, she now thinks they are fair game! Please contact Charlene on 0779692810 for more details.**

## **STAFF**

VAWZ has pleasure in welcoming Bakhulisengomusa Ncube to our team. “Musa” is a vet nurse who since qualifying at the University of Zimbabwe has been working in South Africa but wanting to return to this country to get involved in animal welfare – good news for VAWZ !! **He told us he can also rustle up a mean Chow Mein as between jobs in Joburg he worked in a Chinese Restaurant.**

Our small office at the Wild Life Unit on the Borrowdale Road, will be a little crowded, but my departure at the end of September should make things easier – (also a lot quieter!)

## **EDUCATION**

Inspector Bernard Ndlovu continued with his education programme and has spoken to another 12 Primary Schools including children from Nyabira and Magunje Barracks. Once the schools reopen more visits are planned. VAWZ has also recently conducted Workshops for two local Security companies where we specifically target their Dog Masters and Dog Handlers. These have proved to be very successful with all the participants receiving a certificate. We continue to distribute copies of the Cruelty Act to Police Stations throughout Zimbabwe together with dramatic posters of Cruelty cases reminding the ZRP that cruelty to animals is a CRIME.

## **RECENT CASES.**

**DOGS.** New cases involving dogs = 102 – including thin mothers and pups, off properties, continuously crying/barking, being beaten, abandoned, unwanted dogs and pups, large numbers, tied up/confined, and road traffic accidents. Follow-ups and re-checks are standard procedures.

**CATS;** 5

**SECURITY DOGS:** 14 Checks, several prosecutions for cruelty.

**CATTLE TRUCKS:** 9 cases, 3 prosecutions.,

**GOATS/SHEEP:** 3 Cases.

**PIGS:** 2 cases (including prosecution of an employee for killing a sick sow with a 14lb hammer).

**CHICKENS/GUINEA FOWL/RABBITS:** Vendors, cages of birds confiscated off the top of a Kombi, chickens being carried upside down by their feet. Inspectors from VAWZ visited Sezhube Growth Point in the Esigodini area of Matabeleland to see how the FAO/World Vision Project for rabbit and guinea fowl breeding was going. Several Agritex officials were present as was the local Councillor. Much questioning convinced us all that the scheme was well meaning but a potential disaster. When the Norwegian FAO(ZW) arrived he agreed that from the animal welfare point of view the project had not been thought through. For instance, in an area where the villagers are not even able to grow crops for their own use, they are expected to grow grain for their guinea fowl and vegetables for the rabbits. Also many of the recipients are elderly women who will be unable to walk 10ks to the nearest water source. Donors had given the villagers receiving 3 rabbits, a bag of rabbit pellets, a small roll of wire netting each, a shovel and a plastic spray gun but the recipients of the 2 guinea fowl were not given the promised grain and had no idea what they would feed them on.

This area had no rain last year and their crops were a right off.

**PET SHOPS:** conditions for birds being kept in captivity (one case going to the High Court).

**HORSES:** 5 cases.

**LIONS IN CAPTIVITY:** One case going to Court.

**RESEARCH ANIMALS:** VAWZ continues to provide greens and bedding to rabbits and guinea pigs and mice

**PUPPY VENDORS:** still receiving reports, particularly along Simon Mazorodze and Lomagundi Roads – several pups confiscated, one arrest and prosecution. VAWZ has recently had a meeting with the Harare Municipality and requested they draft an amendment to the City By- Laws making it illegal for live animals to be sold at the side of the road. They have agreed to do so.

**HYENAS/BABOONS:** poisoning of Baboons in plantations in the Eastern Highlands and hyenas in the Plumtree area, continues to raise concerns – VAWZ is opposed to the use of poisons which cause animal suffering.

**CROCODILES:** continued inspection of farms at Binga, Vic Falls and Kariba.

**DONKEYS:** In the last week of May, Bernad and Meryl traveled a distance of 2211 Kilometres was traveled treating 157 donkeys in the Bulawayo, Gwanda, Beitbridge areas, donating harnesses, distributing education pamphlets and putting reflective tape on the back of scotch carts – the majority being in Beitbridge where cruelty cases are escalating and donkey welfare needs urgent attention. The Police take little action against the cruelty perpetrators, the Government Vet is concerned but has no vehicle and limited resources. VAWZ believes there is an urgent need for a permanent Donkey Clinic or Sanctuary to be set up in the area – to treat and educate- but atleast the Council there has installed a borehole at the Municipality Pound after many months of meetings with VAWZ.

**MEETINGS/INTERVIEWS:** Meetings have been held with Dr. Majuru-Vet Dept, Govt. Vets-Marondera, Municipal Police. Interviews with a local farming magazine and a radio station.

**BREEDING PUPPIES:** Of concern are the numerous adverts in supermarkets and veterinary surgeries and emails advertising puppies for sale and male dogs for stud. Harare By-laws state:- “No person shall breed a dog or keep an unsprayed bitch in the council area unless he is a registered breeder”.

## **PROSECUTIONS:**

1. Puppy Vendor – Pleaded guilty – Fined \$20.
  2. 2 owners of over-loaded Cattle trucks – fined \$20 each.
  3. Employer of worker (who fled back to China) fined \$40 for his employees crime of beating a Boerboel dog.
  4. Worker on small holding who killed a pig with a hammer – fined \$20. Owner still to be charged when he returns from the U.K.
  5. Part owner of 7 lions kept in captivity in the Chiredzi area – pleaded guilty to cruelty but appealed and was then Warned and Cautioned. Because of political interference we were sadly not able to bring justice to “Cubby” and the other 6 lions, who sadly lost their lives.
- We have another 9 cases pending.

## **HARARE AGRICULTURAL SHOW:**

For two weeks VAWZ Inspectors made daily checks on all the animals and during which they organized the euthanasia and removal of a badly injured cow; monitored a cow which gave birth to a still born calf; and another which gave birth to a healthy calf whose owner was eventually forced to return in a truck with a canopy to transport it home as opposed to their trying to load it into an open truck already fully loaded with drums, sprays etc. Police, Army

and Prison horses were all regularly checked as were the crocodiles, pythons, tortoises, pigs, chicken and rabbits. Food and shade material also supplied where needed.

Water continues to be problem and a permanent solution must be found as shortages are unacceptable especially with high temperatures. A list of concerns will be put forward by VAWZ to the General Manager of the Show Society.

## SPCA CENTRES

Recently Meryl visited 6 SPCA's to deliver the final tranches of money that a friend of hers in the UK had been sending to her for the past two years for distribution to various centres. In addition VAWZ donated catching poles, syringes, needles, blankets, wound spray, Thiopentone, Euthapent, and latex gloves to these SPCA's. VAWZ particularly wanted to help the Gweru centre as staff there are keen to have an SPCA that plays a meaningful role in the community in preventing cruelty to animals. (There would be no SPCA in Gweru if it was not for volunteer Shirley Pornss and Kennel Manager Robert Munongo).

Having heard from them what Gweru SPCA was desperately in need of, Charlene our wonderful volunteer contacted all her friends at Avondale Sports Club who then donated in cash or kind. Last week VAWZ drove to Gweru and handed over 350kg of dog and donkey food, uniforms and wellington boots for the staff, Disinfectant, Jik, fly traps and fly smear, toys for the dogs and cats and many other goodies.

## TELL ME WHERE IT HURTS

an excellent read by Veterinarian Dr. Nick Trout who graduated from vet school at Cambridge University in the UK and is now staff surgeon at the Augell Animal Medical Centre in Boston USA. He writes with great feeling about just how much pets mean to us. "Pets devour the loneliness. They give us a purpose, responsibility, a reason for getting up in the morning and a reason to look to the future. They ground us, help us escape the grief, make us laugh and take full advantage of our weaknesses by exploiting our furniture, our beds, and our refrigerator. We wouldn't have it any other way. Pets are our seat belts on the emotional roller coaster of life – they can be trusted, they keep us safe and they sure do smooth out the ride".

After the above – think it is a good time to mention

## FUNDRAISING

Our stall at the Bike Show brought in \$784; the Motor Show where we manned the gate swelled the coffers by \$1635 with Toyota generously giving up their portion of the takings; the stand at the Borrowdale Fair brought in \$954 due in no small part to our administrator Gwen Wawn doing the rounds especially where folk were imbibing alcohol and would not take "No" for an answer! – well, apart from one irate lady who said she would never give to Meryl Harrison (not that the funds were for her!)- "She told my maid that our dog must be put to sleep" – what Meryl actually said was "Where does your dog sleep?" – JUST SHOWS YOU CAN'T WIN THEM ALL.

The Golf Day fundraiser was a great success bringing in much needed \$10,600. A very big thank you to Di Fynn – an organizer par excellence!; and to all the players, sponsors and of course to our hard-working Fund Raising Committee.

All sounds good but taking VAWZ average monthly expenses of \$5000 – a great deal of help is still needed.

Further fundraising events are planned as we head towards the festive season.



## THE WISH LIST

Cotton Wool; Jik; Buddie Cards; Fuel coupons; 2<sup>nd</sup> hand dog dishes; Photo-copying for our education pamphlets (we can supply the paper); tinned dog and cat food. If you are able to help with any of these items, they can be dropped off at the Chisipite, Kamfinsa or Avondale Vets.

**THANK YOU** to the following:- Cold Chain; Ram Petroleum; Border Service Station, Beitbridge; Jo Cochrane; Dawn Duly; Heather Rose; Jenny Gardener, Jane Rawsthorne and Michelle Delaney; Golfing & Giving; Vicky Windsor, USA; Signs of the Times; Dunlop Zimbabwe, Gael Vaughan, Donna O'Connell and the RSPCA (UK); The Trauma Centre; Lindy Knee; Charlene Blignaut; Mike Engelbrecht; Brian Watson G & M Tarpaulins; Ryan Rusike; Colin Roberts; Northern Tobacco; DHL; Graham Knight; Janice Gatherer; Avondale Sports Club members; Kennel Club of Harare; Woodrow; Paula Wheeler; Di Fynn; Ant Fynn; Crystal Wynn; Sheena Povall; and all the many individuals and companies who gave so generously for the Golf Day. Finally a very special thank you to Dr Bruce Fivaz who approached VAWZ offering to carry out low cost spaying for two months. Thanks to this generous offer, a total of 27 dogs and cats have been sterilized at very low cost to their owners. We would also like to thank Kamfinsa Vets for providing their Surgery and after care for this very worthy cause.

## SAD FAREWELLS

It was with very great sadness that we learnt of the death of Dr Stuart Hargreaves, after a long battle with cancer fought with dignity and fortitude. For many years and up until the time of his death he was Principle Director of Livestock & Veterinary Services, a much loved veterinarian respected and revered around the world. His passing is a huge loss to the veterinary profession.

Another loss to the animal world is the death in a fire of Rita Miljo in South Africa. In 1989 Rita established The Centre for Animal Rehabilitation & Education – “CARE” – was established in a remote region in the Kruger National Park, a sanctuary for Baboons – primates that she once referred to as “nature's unwanted little people”. Although she had retired Rita remained it's most visible presence.

## FROM MERYL:

“Firstly, Thank You to all the folk who attended my fairwell party at the Kennel Club and for the beautiful painting by Ant Fynn of African Painted Dog“

“I leave Zimbabwe with a heavy heart at the end of September but know that Mel, Bernard, Edmore, Stella, Charlene and Musa will continue to run VAWZ with integrity and professionalism and know too that you will give them the same wonderful support that you have all given me – THANK YOU ALL. I have been appointed as a Trustee of VAWZ and will of course continue supporting them from the U.K. (Only an email distance away)

MERYL.”

## FROM THE VAWZ COMMITTEE:

The departure of Meryl is a great tragedy and very sad day for the Animals of Zimbabwe for whom she has worked tirelessly and been totally committed. Apart from her health not being 100% her departure to the UK has been hastened by animosity, and back biting on the part of other animal welfare organizations to the extent she feels she has to go. Her courage and dedication during all the farm invasion animal rescues, her determination to prosecute no matter whom was involved, and her continued work for the good of all creatures is an example to all. She leaves behind a legacy, secure in the knowledge that VAWZ will continue to do good work under the guidance of Mel Hood, who has understudied Meryl for the past year, and all the other loyal VAWZ staff.

WE hope that you all will continue to support the cause, as you have done so wonderfully in the past.

## VAWZ Banking details:-

Local: CABS Platinum The Veterinarians of Animal Welfare Trust”  
a/c No 9015153557.

External: Standard Bank Graaf-reinet "Veterinarians for Animal Welfare in Zimbabwe"  
a/c No 186623062; Swift No:SBZA.ZA.JJ; IBAN No: 051001.

Direct transfers may be made via [www.standardbank.co.zw](http://www.standardbank.co.zw)