

Elpida 38

October 2015



Striving to improve the welfare of animals in Greece

Dear Friend

In this period of terrible and increasing economic hardship for the people of Greece, GAWF is continuing to work to relieve suffering and improve the lives of animals all over the country. Although it is tempting to dive in with dramatic interventions in the face of so many reports of need, we consider our responses very carefully to ensure that our programmes and projects don't act further to undermine a society that already feels humiliated. That's why you won't be seeing headlines about us telling you of a spectacular but all too brief mission of mercy; here today and gone tomorrow. Instead, we are quietly getting on with what we have been doing for many years now... caring for animals while building the capacity of Greek professionals to deal with welfare issues in their own country; guiding them to take responsibility, and helping to build the whole community's self-respect. One of the most important ways we do this is through teaching people better ways of looking after their animals.

Meet Garry. He's one of the UK's leading equine dentists and has been coming with us on some of our outreach visits for years, dealing with the many dental issues – sometimes life-threatening ones – that donkeys, mules and horses frequently face. As I write, he is packing to leave for a few days on the island of Hydra, where equines replace vehicles as the only mode of transport. Naturally, working alongside our vet and farrier, Garry will be dealing with the dental problems of any animal that needs his help. But that isn't the only thing he'll be doing. He will also be examining the work of two, young Greeks he has been training, with GAWF's support. He has every hope that they have now reached the required standard of theoretical knowledge and practical skill that will enable him finally to certify them as qualified professionals in their own right. This is the last gift of GAWF to the future of Greek animals... Greek people who not only care but also know how to do the job properly... and who will one day pass on their knowledge. Here today but not gone tomorrow.



In this issue of ELPIDA we are proud to present some aspects of what we have been doing over the last few months and to introduce you to some of the remarkable people who are already doing great work for the animals. It is groups like the one in Ilioupolis (page 4), and individuals like Vasili (page 8) who we want to be able to go on supporting. If you are able to send us a donation today we will be able to help them immediately to go on with their vital work. But even if you aren't able to, you might wish to consider helping us... 'tomorrow'. That is why we have included our new Legacy Leaflet with this issue. It tells you about some of the ways in which you could leave GAWF something in your will. If you do, we'll be here. GAWF for the animals of Greece: Here today *and* here tomorrow.

Thank you,

Brian

Brian Cowie, Chair GAWF/Animal Action Greece

NB: all money raised from this appeal will be used to fund our campaigns and projects.



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Welcome to Elpida 38

Farewell Amalia...welcome Daphne

We are bidding a fond farewell to former CEO Amalia Sotirhou and extending a warm welcome to Daphne Mavrogiorgos.

We would like to share this letter from Amalia:

Dear friends,

I've worked for GAWF/Animal Action for 5 years but with regret, this experience, which has been one of the best professionally and personally must come to an end.

I had the privilege to lead one of the largest animal welfare groups in Greece and to work towards improving the life of all animals in Greece. It was a privilege to join an organisation that has been fighting since 1959 to achieve this vision and a personal honour to be part of this team.

Each end signifies a new beginning and as I start a new chapter in my life, I look forward to seeing GAWF go from strength to strength. Thank you all for your help, support and cooperation with our campaigns and for all of the hard work you do for animals in Greece. Amalia Sotirhou

We are very pleased to welcome our new Chief Executive Officer. Daphne Mavrogiorgos was born in Athens in 1977. She holds a BSc in Biology from the University of Massachusetts and an MSc in Geography-Environmental Change & Management from Queen Mary & Westfield College, London. She is an avid mountaineer and has had a strong presence in the Greek and European non-profit, nature conservation sector for many years, coordinating projects and policy. Her adopted stray dog Throubi is very proud of her taking on her new role as Animal Action/ GAWF CEO. Daphne will be based in our Athens office.

Daphne with Throubi



Winnie's story

We received an urgent call from Wind - a leading telephone company in Greece that sponsors our neutering programme for strays in Athens – informing us that a kitten was trapped in their basement parking lot.

We asked our contact Athina, who lives in the area, for immediate help. Athina said later, "this was the easiest rescue ever, the guard was able to pick the little kitten up from the floor and she instantly started purring" - probably from the combination of stress and the relief of being rescued from her frightening situation by Athina, who has a certain way with cats!

Lucky little Winnie, as she is now known, is currently living with Athina and we are covering all of her expenses while a permanent home is sought.



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Neutering Update



From the 1st of April to the 15th of May, GAWF/Animal Action neutered a massive 200 stray cats with the funds we received from Animal Friends Insurance.

A total of 115 volunteers participated in this successful programme and helped by driving the stray cats to the vets we work with all over Athens. We would like to thank them all for their help - together we have changed lives! We hope we will soon have more positive news to report from another

mass neutering programme and will of course report this in the next issue of Elpida. Grateful thanks go to Animal Friends Insurance for their continued support.

In addition to the mass neutering in Athens, we've been working with groups and individuals to help them tackle animal welfare problems in their areas. Here's just some of the work we've done:

- 12 dogs and 16 cats were neutered in Lefkada in March
- 29 bitches and 10 female cats were neutered in Chalkidiki in July
- We paid for 10 cats to be neutered for a lady who is currently unemployed and unable to fund the operations herself, in Athens in June
- 37 bitches, 14 male dogs and 37 cats have been neutered in Fyli, Athens and we have plans to continue our focus in this deprived area

Brian Sewell

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of one of our regular supporters – the art critic Brian Sewell. Mr. Sewell was well known for his wit and humour and was a passionate advocate for animal welfare. Each year, a generous cheque would arrive from Mr. Sewell and in one of his letters to our office he wrote 'I last had a holiday in Greece in 1975. Appalled by the widespread distress of animals, I have never felt able to return. I immediately became a supporter of GAWF'.

We, and many others are deeply grateful for his unwavering support and we send our condolences to his friends and family.



GAWF's veterinary team



- We paid for 6 stray female dogs who are being fed daily by a volunteer in Mandra, Attiki to be neutered (May-July)
- We paid for 5 cats from Flisvos cats, a cat welfare group in Faliro, Athens to be neutered (May)
- We paid for a life-saving surgery on a stray cat with advanced ear cancer in Ierapetra, Crete (June)
- We paid for 15 cats and 15 dogs from the Nea Filadelfia shelter, Athens to be neutered (May-July)
- We paid for a stray bitch from Korinth to be neutered in June
- We paid for 4 bitches from Chalandri, Athens to be neutered (June-July)
- We have committed to neuter 5 cats per month in Neo Faliro with the aid of local volunteers

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We all know that times are very hard for both people and animals in Greece. But we are inspired by and grateful for the efforts of the many individuals and groups giving their time and money to help the animals in dire need in their neighbourhoods. We are proud to support their work and thank them all for everything they do. In this issue, Evgenia Mataragka speaks to Ilioupolis Animal Welfare Union about their struggles, successes and one very lucky dog called Billy.

Why, when and how did you start your group?

Ilioupolis Animal Welfare Union (ZEH) was founded in 1997, with the aim of helping the stray animals of Ilioupolis, which is a southern suburb of Athens.

Since 1997 the group has been one of the most active organisations in Greece. We are all volunteers and our duties include rescuing, fostering and finding homes for more than 200 dogs and 200 cats each year.

How does GAWF/Animal Action support your work?

GAWF/Animal Action helps by offering us free neutering for the dogs and cats in our care. It's important to mention that we do more than 180 neutering procedures per year for dogs and 500 for cats but still we have a huge problem on our hands when it comes to controlling the cat population.



What are the biggest challenges you have faced?

There are so many! A major one is the mentality of Greek people towards adoption – instead they opt to buy animals. Many still

believe that a stray animal will not be suitable for them. They expect to face behavioural and health problems if they take on a stray. They are also dubious about whether a former stray will adapt to living in a home and be capable of offering affection. We try very hard to highlight the terrible plight of puppies in puppy farms and we attempt to educate and dispel the myths associated with stray animals.

Another major stumbling block for us is persuading people to call the police when they witness abuse. Most people aren't keen to take action for fear of confrontation and possible retribution from the abusers.



Finally, we are challenged daily by the resistance people here often have to the idea of neutering. The problem is twofold – first, many people make money from their animals by breeding and selling them and secondly, we are still confronted with the archaic view that it goes against nature and even against the will of God to neuter animals – a view we work tirelessly to change.

How do you raise funds?

As we have many friends who follow our Facebook page, each time we have an incident where we need to help an animal in crisis we post it and ask people to help us financially. We then update them frequently, so people can follow the story and see the incredible progress of an injured dog or cat. We hold two bazaars per year, before Christmas and before Easter and many people visit us and help us financially.

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Spotlight on an animal welfare organisation

Can you tell us about an animal you've helped?

There is never a dull day for us! Our work ranges from rescuing mistreated, neglected and abused animals, to educating young people about animal welfare and we've even saved a dog from a stream. One case that stands out for all of us is Billy's...

When thinking about him, we simply can't make up our minds what the worst part of his story is. Was it the state of him or the length of time it must have taken for him to get like that? Or was it the number of people who saw how bad things were for him and did nothing about it?

When we found Billy, we took him straight to our vet who told us this was the worst case he had ever seen. Billy was diagnosed with almost everything possible – he had mange, ehrlichiosis,



Main picture: Billy now
Inset: Billy when he was found

tantly, a lot of love. His carers have made it their mission to make him whole again – to nurture him back to full health and happiness. This Christmas, at our fundraising bazaar, Billy will be the star!

Billy - a new lease of life



leishmaniasis and bartonellosis. He had a blood count of just 20 and he gave a whole new meaning to the word emaciated. Billy was nothing but skin and bones. However, and quite remarkably, we were given some hope. His liver and kidneys were still functioning quite well, and he had an appetite. And despite his extreme weakness, we were sure we could catch a glimpse of a little sparkle in his eyes...

We nursed Billy back to health and he is now being cared for by one of our volunteers in her home. Perhaps for the first time, he has a warm bed, plenty of food, and most impor-

Would you like to tell us anything else?

In 2007 we founded a small kennel on Mount Hymettus where we are able to foster about 20 dogs until a family is found for them. We have 2 shifts every day, so all dogs go out and are fed, petted and walked. Last year the Municipality helped us to improve the cages where the dogs are kept but we would still like to do more.

For more information please visit <http://www.zeil.gr/> or email info@zeil.gr



Relaxing in the sun at the shelter

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Equine Project News

Our Equine Outreach Team has visited Stavros, Crete, Kos, Rhodes, Santorini, Ios, Amorgos, Paros and Antiparos, Poligiros, Naxos, Stavros, Soufli, Symi, Kasos and so far this year, around 1,500 animals have been examined and treated.

In addition, our team has responded to 136 animal welfare reports all over Greece and news of our new, Greek Mountain Shoe for working mules has featured in three international publications!

Right: Our vet Kleo and farrier Giannis discuss treatment with an equine owner.



Henry's story

Our regular readers will know of our plans to eradicate the cruel practice of hobbling, where equines (and other animals) are tied by the legs to restrict their movement. Animals can be tied in a variety of ways but all of these can cause serious injury and even death - so our Equine Team decided to take action by working in collaboration with Farmcare UK, to offer an appropriate alternative – the electric fence. We are delighted to introduce Henry, a donkey living on the island of Lefkada who enjoys his very own fenced enclosure, partly down to his owners seeing the work we have done on Paros. His owners have told us that Henry enjoys his freedom and sets an example to the other equines of Lefkada!

At his owners' request, we have sent them some leaflets to distribute on the island to encourage the use of fencing instead of hobbling and they will be actively promoting this to local farmers. It's an ongoing battle to change the views of many traditional animal owners but we are delighted to see even small victories for the animals and would like to thank Henry's owners for their support!

Still on the subject of hobbling, we were absolutely delighted to be contacted by a Dutch veterinary student volunteering at the Botswana Society for

the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BSPCA). Denyse explained that hobbling is an all too common problem in Botswana and told us she had read about our efforts to stop it. Our vet Elisa is now corresponding with Denyse and is assisting her in preparing an information folder for equine owners which clearly shows why hobbling is an unacceptable practice and offers humane alternatives. We are very pleased that our messages are now spreading even further than Greece and thrilled to see our ideas being promoted as far afield as Africa!



Henry in his fenced enclosure

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Equine Welfare across Europe

In 2014, Eurogroup for Animals launched an important project to ensure the European Union's 6 million horses and 1.5 million donkeys are covered by species-specific legislation. GAWF is participating in this vital campaign.

Currently there is no specific EU legislation in place to safeguard the welfare of Europe's equines despite the contribution of the equine industry to Europe's economies. Across Europe we see equines falling between the cracks of laws designed to protect farm animals and pets. This is in part because equines are uniquely versatile animals and can play so many different roles during their lives - from working animal, to sporting animal, to pet, to food source. As a result, equines face numerous challenges to their welfare and health, and indeed human health may also be affected. Furthermore, the equine sector

continues to grow, and as equines are one of the most frequently traded and transported animals in Europe they are in urgent need of protection.

Whilst equines on farms have the same level of protection as any other farmed animal, the European Commission recognises that there are gaps in the welfare legislation when they are considered as companion animals. We need to consider what impact this has had, and how to respond.



Furthermore, several areas of welfare concerns exist and most of the problems are pan-European and need to be

addressed at EU level. They include: improved identification and registration, better education on keeping and training, a ban on long distance transport to slaughter, the need for humane slaughtering and, last but not least, much more focus on effective law and enforcement.

In partnership with World Horse Welfare, Eurogroup for Animals – together with those of its members that are involved in equine welfare – launched a

research process mapping the equine sector, the role of regulation and key equine welfare and health issues. GAWF's equine vet, Elisa, has contributed to this process and earlier this year a report titled 'Removing the Blinkers' was published. This report aims to give a snapshot of equidae and the equine sector in the EU in 2015, uncover welfare problems, analyse the legislation currently in place affecting them, and recommend how legislation can better protect these animals. We will keep you posted on the progress of this important initiative.

Station collections

Our wonderful volunteers collected a fantastic £1,751 this year at London train stations. We would like to extend our thanks to each and every one of you – particularly John for organising the collections and for dragging himself out of bed in the wee small hours to meet the early (and generous) commuters. John's looking for more volunteers to join his team in 2016 so if you could spare a couple of hours to come and shake a tin, meet some of our fabulous supporters and help us collect much needed funds, the animals would be very grateful. Please get in touch gawf@gawf.org.uk.

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Greek plumber helping disabled animals

Evgenia meets Vasili



It's amazing what you can do with a length of copper pipe, some webbing, a pair of wheels... and a little ingenuity. Vasilis Tzigouras is a plumber by trade. When we heard about his other occupation Evgenia went to meet him.

Vasili told her that he has been an animal lover for as long as he can remember; rescuing street animals and nursing them back to health, then looking for someone who would take them in and care for them properly. But he always had the feeling there might be more that he could do. One day he thought of turning his hand to helping dogs with serious mobility issues. He began to look for information on the internet and studied everything he could find. When he came across a video about making wheeled harnesses on YouTube he realised he already had many of the skills and materials he would need to do it himself. Using copper piping from his plumber's van, nylon webbing, and parts intended for skateboards and bicycles he fashioned a trolley. He admits he had to scrap his first few attempts but he wouldn't allow himself to give up.

His first real patient was a German shepherd called Lupo. The 15-year-old had been diagnosed with osteomyelitis and when Vasili met him he was living all alone, out in a field somewhere, and had lost the ability to walk. Once a trolley was fitted, Lupo was off – and Vasili had a new career!

Alfredo was a hunting dog living as a stray on a hill in Athens. When the local welfare group in Galatsi brought him to Vasili he was in a terrible state. With a severed spinal cord, caused by a car accident, the dog was only able to move by dragging himself over the rough ground. This had caused open wounds on his paralysed hind legs; he had more than one serious disease, and was also covered in ticks. Even though his back was by now very deformed, Vasili was able to construct a device that gives him back his freedom to move. With care from the members of the Galatsi group Alfredo's general health has improved and the

volunteers are looking for a home for him.

Since last July and his first success with Lupo, Vasili has made 25 mobility trolleys – each one adapted to the needs of the animal he designed it for. The trolleys cost between 70 and 200 euros each to make, depending on the materials used. When working with strays Vassili charges no fee and local welfare groups appeal for the funds they need to cover the cost of materials on social media. So far, Vasili has not encountered a case that was beyond his help but, acknowledging the limits of his expertise, he always works in collaboration with two vets... his own and whoever is caring for his next "client". He is guided by the professionals on the question of which animals are suitable candidates for one of his very special, custom-built trolleys.

So what's next for Vasili? He told Evgenia: *"I have an enquiring mind and I hope that I will soon think of more ways to help animals and that this will never stop. Thank you so much for what you do for the animals, by the way, and I hope we'll work together sometime in the future."*

We feel certain we'll be hearing more from this inventive animal lover before too long.

Vasili's first client– Lupo



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Protect Our Pets Campaign

Eurogroup for Animals has launched a major new campaign to improve the welfare of Europe's cats and dogs. The Protect Our Pets campaign tackles the growing, underground and illegal pet trade in Europe, which causes a great deal of suffering.

The illegal part of the European pet trade has terrible consequences for the health and welfare of the animals involved. Breeding females are forced to reproduce far too frequently, while many of their young are born in inhumane circumstances, are poorly socialised, transported great distances, and all too often are at great risk of contracting diseases. Unsuspecting owners buy these pets, often online, and are regularly left heartbroken when things go wrong. This needs to stop!

The campaign uses multi-media tools and social network channels to spread the message and the Protect Our Pets campaign urges members of the public to call for pets across Europe to be properly identified and registered, and therefore linked to an owner.

A dedicated website has also been set up www.protectourpets.eu to facilitate members of the public contacting their Members of the European Parliament and calling for action now.

Eurogroup is working actively with the European parliament and in particular Renate Sommer MEP who is drafting a Motion for a Resolution asking the European Commission to mandate the introduction of harmonised national systems for the identification and registration of pets in each Member State.

The campaign also calls on members of the public to urge their elected MEPs to write to Commissioner Andriukaitis, the Commissioner in charge of Animal welfare calling for the harmonisation of identification and registration requirements for pets across the EU. You can read more and take action by emailing your MEPs. The information you will need is on the above website.



Health issues dealt with... now where are my wheels?



Alfredo... All set for action!



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Let GAWF take the strain out of Christmas shopping with our wide range of Caring Gifts and Christmas cards

You could 'pay for a spay for Christmas' or purchase any of our other gifts, happy in the knowledge that your money will go towards our vital work. Just tick the gifts you want below and complete the order form on the opposite page. We will send you a card, a voucher and a photograph which you can give to your chosen recipient so that they can see the good that their gift is doing.



All the money raised will go towards helping the animals that we work for and if the amount we receive for any individual item exceeds the funding required for that particular project, then it will be used to fund other aspects of our work. **Thank you for choosing a Caring Gift.**

	1 £10 could buy an anti-tick/flea collar for a stray dog	7 £20 could buy anti-worming treatment for hard working donkeys	
	2 £10 could buy cotton wool and bandages for dressing the wounds of equines	8 £30 could buy a full dental treatment for an equine	
	3 £10 could buy a 3-day treatment for a hard working donkey suffering a foot abscess	9 £35 could pay for a spay for a cat or dog and help to control the population humanely	
	4 £15 could vaccinate and protect a stray cat or dog against life threatening viral infections	10 £60 could buy a trap transfer/restrainer which allows cats to be carried with minimal stress	
	5 £15 could buy preventative treatment against parasites for stray cats	11 £180 could pay for a vet for a day—providing a full day of neutering for stray animals	
	6 £20 could buy insect repellent treatment for 20 donkeys to prevent them being bitten by annoying insects	12 £1,000 could buy a 3 day neutering programme on one of the Greek islands and make a sustainable difference there	

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Support the animals this Christmas by purchasing our lovely Christmas cards. Each pack of ten is just £5 including post and packaging*. Simply complete the order form below and send it and your payment by cheque, or complete the debit/credit card form on the accompanying letter. Alternatively visit our e-shop to buy your cards and caring gifts securely online at: http://eshop.gawf.org.uk/48_2c3/



* We regret we are unable to ship Christmas Cards outside of the UK

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I enclose a donation of: £100 £50 £25 £10 Other £

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Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

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Please notify the charity or CASC if you:

Want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return to: The Greek Animal Welfare Fund, 51 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1NB

Tel: 0207 357 8500

Email: gawf@gawf.org.uk

Website: www.animalactiongreece.gr

