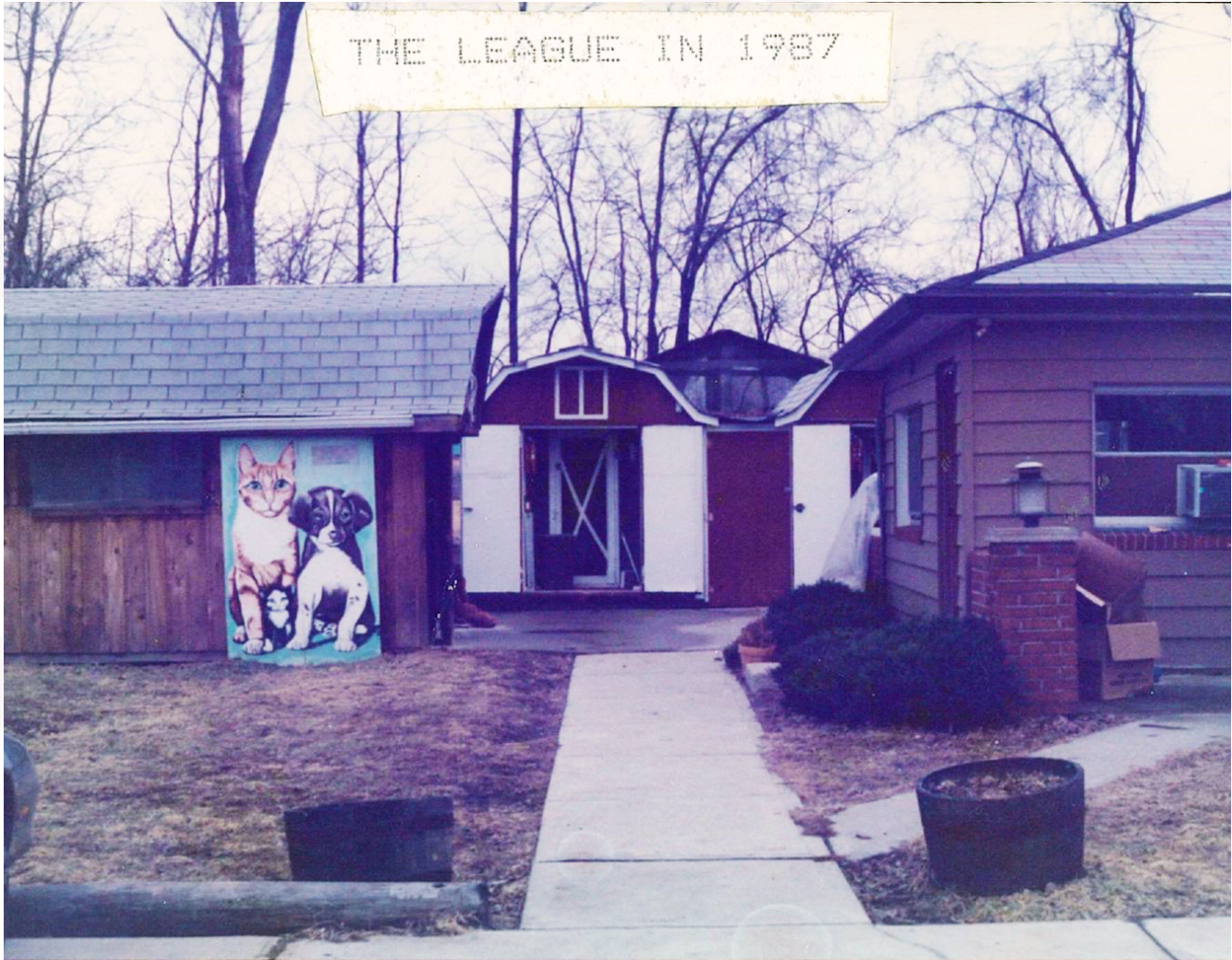


LEAGUE LINKS 2.0

Fall 2021



Legacies of Love: 70+ Years Finding Furever Homes **Long-term League supporters share their reflections**

It was back in 1942, when a typical American house cost some \$4,000 and you could buy a ticket to see the blockbuster movie *Casablanca* in theaters for 30 cents. The Great Depression wasn't too far behind us, and WWII marched on.

It was then that a group of concerned Cincinnati-area residents formed a loose network to help stray dogs and cats find homes, effectively starting the League for Animal Welfare. By 1949, the League was officially recognized by the state of Ohio as a nonprofit organization. In its 70+ year history, the League has found loving homes for tens of thousands of pets.

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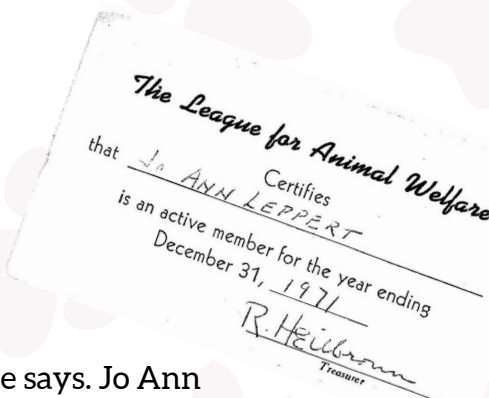
Over the years, the League's efforts have been largely driven by countless volunteers working to move the mission forward — typing up early, mimeographed bulletins; manning silent auctions at the Wine & Whiskers benefit galas; driving to hurricane-impacted areas to help evacuate overflowing shelters; spending free hours socializing the cats and dogs; making generous contributions, and so much more.

Here, three of our long-term supporters share memories of the decades of dedication that led the League to become among the region's largest and oldest no-kill shelters.

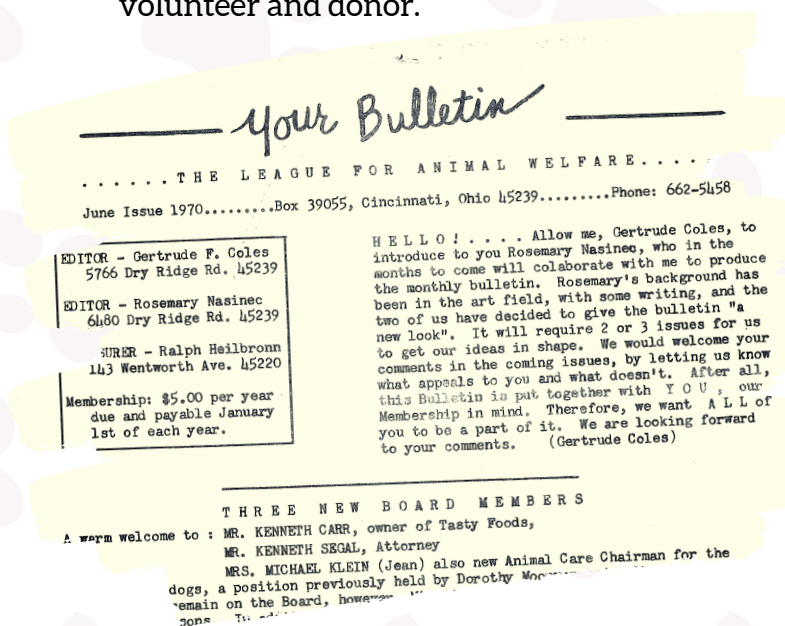
Jo Ann Leppert: Volunteer and Donor

Jo Ann was working at the University of Cincinnati Teacher's College when professor Victor Coles approached her to ask if she would help out by typing up a League bulletin for \$5. It would be mimeographed and sent to members of the founding coalition.

"After I finished the first bulletin, I couldn't take the money," she says. Jo Ann befriended Coles and his wife Gertrude, and began her lifelong journey as a volunteer and donor.



Jo Ann remembers the days before the League had a dedicated facility, when rescued cats and dogs took up residence in volunteer homes—a forerunner to the foster program today. Through the years, she saw the League grow into its first brick-and-mortar location on Heitman Lane in Clermont County, a former boarding kennel which served the League until 1999 when the current Taylor Road location was opened.



A lifelong animal lover, Jo Ann went on to serve the League in a variety of capacities, from board member to volunteer to fundraiser to donor. "I worked sidewalk sales, sold dog licenses, worked bake sales," she remembers. "One time I baked, like, 20 loaves of bread!"

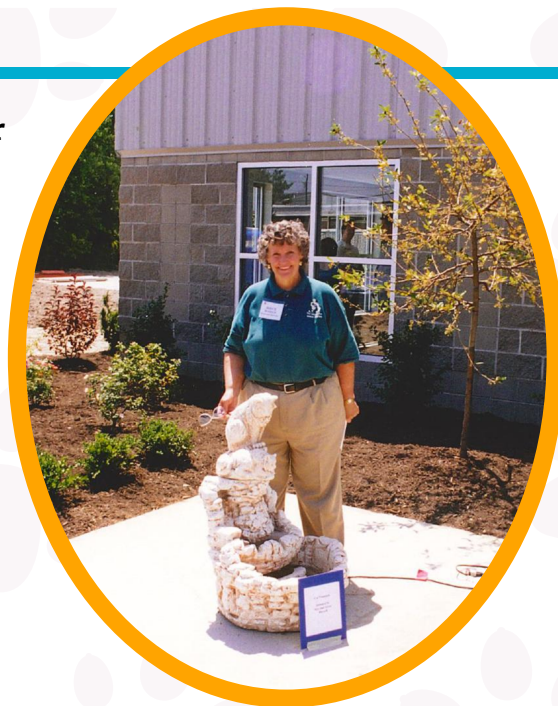
Why has she continued to support the mission all these years? "We're in a community where people need a no-kill shelter," she says. "People know they help there—they don't have to go to a kill shelter. It's nice to know you can go to a shelter and know that an animal has been taken care of."

Joyce Blersch: Board Member, Volunteer, and Donor

Some 35 years ago, Joyce saw a sign in a store for the League, soliciting volunteers. She and her sisters-in-law went out to the Heitman Lane facility—a former boarding kennel. “We were treated so nice and immediately welcomed, even though they were not really open yet.” Joyce took their invitation to work with the cats, started helping keep the cat barns clean, and within a couple of months she began helping at offsite adoption events in area shopping centers.

“We started with a small number of volunteers who were willing to do anything to help,” she says,

“cleaning kennels, barns, washing windows, transporting animals to the vet...going out to homes, fields or highways to pick up cats and dogs that were found.”



The League's current building,
dedicated in 1999.

Since that early beginning, Joyce has served on the board as president, vice-president and secretary, and served as chair of the cat committee for some 28 years. She also served on the search committee tasked with finding the League's current location, at one point advocating for the League's right to build a new shelter at the Ohio state legislature.

A lifelong animal lover, Joyce and her late husband Ray have adopted many cats and a dog from the League, and has watched the adoption rate climb from 1-2 per weekend to its current rate.

“The League is so important to our community,” Joyce says. “We have rescued so many dogs and cats that were losing their homes or who were thrown out to live on their own. I have always been so proud of what the League does in our community. Years ago, the League would send Ray and I to other states to bring back homeless animals. It was so wonderful to bring them to the League and watch them flourish and get adopted.”

Sis & Dick Miller: Donors

Now in their 90s, donors Sis and Dick Miller have contributed financially to support the League since its Heitman Lane days. Between their mutual love of animals and philosophy of philanthropy, giving to the League was a natural fit.

More recently, the couple had a talk, says Dick, a retired civil engineer, and decided to make a major contribution to the League's current location on Taylor Road in Batavia.



Today, the Sis & Dick Miller Wellness Clinic provides a variety of services to League animals, including spay/neuter, which means dogs and cats new to the shelter don't have to be transported off site for that care. The medical staff within the facility also provides the shelter's animals with wellness exams, bloodwork and urine tests, dental cleanings and extractions, nail trims and much more.

The pair was able to visit the brand new facility not long ago, and he says they're both very happy with the results. By way of explanation for their contribution, Dick says simply, "we give back." And give back they – and so many others – have, for more than 70 years of saving the lives of homeless animals in our community. 🐾

Dogs Playing for Life

EVERY DOG, EVERY DAY!



The League recently hosted the Colorado-based group Dogs Playing for Life for a two day, dog-centric based enrichment seminar and hands-on learning opportunity. Dogs Playing for Life, a nonprofit with a mission to enhance the quality of life of shelter dogs to increase life-saving, offers programs that are featured at international animal welfare conferences and implemented by shelters nationwide.

The group effectively tackles the critical issues (physical, emotional, behavioral, etc.) shelter dogs face with a novel, hands-on approach that revolves around opportunities to play in groups – every day! Their innovative programs define the meaning and importance of quality of life for all sheltered dogs by improving their experience through playgroups and individualized training, resulting in urgent and responsible lifesaving.

Playing can be a dog's most natural form of positive interaction and communication with both humans and fellow dogs. For shelters, allowing dogs to be dogs in playgroups can reveal their behavioral tendencies better than their reactions during the intake process, while kenneled, or during a formal behavior evaluation.

Unfortunately, many shelter dogs are often mislabeled as aggressive and may never get the chance to show their true personalities under more normal circumstances. That's why Dogs Playing for Life mentors shelters to see the best in their dogs through observing natural expressions shown during play!

We can't thank Dogs Playing for Life enough for their mentorship, and bringing their play group prowess to the League! This group taught us how to safely and effectively make sure all of our dogs get out to play together, and get enough mental and physical enrichment to keep them healthy and happy in a stressful shelter environment.



Three cheers for dogs, and all the wonderful people working to save them! 🐾

Shelter Sponsorships

HELP HOMELESS ANIMALS BEGIN A NEW LIFE



The League's shelter is a temporary home for homeless cats and dogs – a gentle stop on their way to a new and better life in a loving, forever home. As you walk through our shelter, you might see a cat room with two grown cats whose owner passed away or a dog kennel with a puppy who was abandoned in a cardboard box. These animals – and others who find their way to our shelter – have different lives but one thing in common: they are now safe.

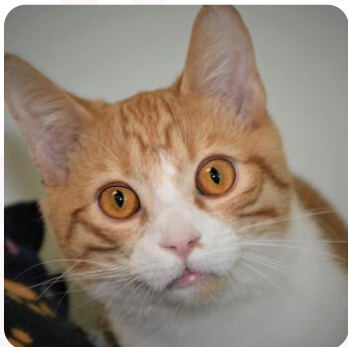
Our Shelter Sponsorship Program offers a unique opportunity to show your commitment to helping these animals begin a new life! For \$500, you can sponsor the care and upkeep of one cat room or dog kennel for one year (or \$300 for six months). Your gift will provide food, cat litter, bedding and toys

for all the cats or dogs who reside in your sponsored room or kennel during that time.

Shelter sponsors directly impact many cats or dogs as they make our shelter their temporary home. You will be recognized on the cat room or dog kennel you are sponsoring. Sponsorships can even be made in honor of a living pet or in memory of a special pet that has passed on. 🐾

To become a shelter sponsor, visit bit.ly/sheltersponsorlfa

ADOPT ME



Pokey - 1 year old, male

Despite a rough start (double ACL surgeries!), Pokey wants nothing more than to give love! Pokey has dutifully taken on the challenge of raising all the kittens that are put in his room with him - snuggling with them, grooming them, occasionally disciplining them (because, as we all know, well, kittens can be unruly!). This handsome fella has seen a lot of kittens come and go, though - and is kinda wondering why nobody has taken him home?



Billy Bob - 6 years old, male

Meet Billy Bob! This shy boy is as adorably eeyore-like in person as he is in photos. Billy Bob is a special adoption, because he's not normally at the shelter. This timid boy shuts down while here, so he has been with a foster family since he arrived to us. He has thrived in foster - but it's time to find his forever family! Call us at 735-2299 if you want to set up a time to come meet this shining star of a pup! (And yes, he's good with kids, dogs, and cats!)

View all the cats and dogs available for adoption at LFAW.org/adoption-center