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Plus: YOUR GUIDE TO HUMANE DOG COLLARS

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Thank you!
Dear animal lover,

Wildfires devastated large parts of the province this summer, displacing thousands of companion, farm and wild animals. The response from British Columbians has been nothing short of extraordinary. From individuals who volunteered countless hours to care for animals at our emergency evacuation centre in Prince George; to those who gave up their homes so that our constables could go behind the fire lines to rescue animals; to partner organizations who provided equipment and food; to people like you who donated so generously to allow the BC SPCA to respond to the fires in the way that it did; and to our incredible staff who responded so magnificently – my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all for being there for our province’s most vulnerable animals at a time of such great need.

While wildfire response consumed much of our efforts over the past months, this has not stopped us from continuing to work and highlight other areas of critical importance to animal welfare. One such area is the keeping and breeding of cetaceans in captivity, a position the BC SPCA has opposed for more than 30 years. In this edition of AnimalSense, we explore the issue in greater detail, outlining the BC SPCA’s efforts advocating at the local government level, partnering with other agencies and utilizing the mechanisms available through our legal system to highlight the importance of discontinuing these practices.

Thank you again for your ongoing support, without which it would not be possible to effect change.

Sincerely,

Craig Daniell
Chief Executive Officer
BC SPCA
**JOIN YOUR BRANCH’S COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

*IF YOU’RE NOT sure whether the BC SPCA board is the right fit but still want to get involved, the society is always looking for new branch-based Community Council members. Community Councils are local governance bodies that participate in a diverse range of functions at the branch level, including approving memberships and electing the Board of Directors, as well as supporting staff in areas such as advocacy, education and fundraising. Community Councils are always looking for new branch-based Community Council members. To express your interest in joining a Community Council, contact the branch closest to you for more information. All Community Council volunteers must be members in good standing of the BC SPCA.*

To learn more about how to become a member, visit our membership page at spca.bc.ca/membership or visit your local branch. We look forward to working with you!

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**BC SPCA develops AnimalKind**

*HAVE YOU EVER had to worry about mice in your basement, raccoons in your shed or squirrels in your attic? As an animal lover, dealing with “pests” at home and finding the right pest control company can be tricky. How can you be sure that the least harmful methods are being used to usher the animals out? To make your choice easier, the BC SPCA is developing AnimalKind, a new animal welfare accreditation program.*

AnimalKind was informed by expert advice from the UBC Animal Welfare Program and created with generous support from the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies and the Vancouver Foundation.

AnimalKind-accredited pest control companies follow our science-based standards and use the kindest, most animal-friendly ways to solve wildlife and rodent problems. The BC SPCA always recommends calling a professional to remove wildlife or rodents from your home. Starting next year, you can look for the AnimalKind logo, and we encourage you to ask your go-to pest control company to become AnimalKind. Visit animalkind.ca for more information.

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**JOIN OUR BOARD of DIRECTORS**

Do you have what it takes to help chart the future direction of one of the largest animal welfare organizations of its kind in North America? The BC SPCA is now seeking expressions of interest for vacancies on its provincial Board of Directors.

Board elections take place in the spring of each year and successful candidates will work alongside staff to set the direction for the society. The board meets approximately seven times per year to exercise fiduciary responsibilities, review policies, approve exciting new initiatives and discuss the future of the BC SPCA. You can learn more about the board and how to express your interest by visiting spca.bc.ca/board or by emailing board@spca.bc.ca.

The official nomination period takes place between January 31 and February 28, 2018. All board candidates must be nominated by two current members and must be a member in good standing of the BC SPCA.
**Bursaries help youth attend BC SPCA summer camps**

**THIS YEAR,** BC SPCA summer camps reached a record 1,627 youth around the province, providing children with a unique opportunity to forge a deeper connection to animals. “We want all kids to have direct experience with animals,” says Paula Neuman, BC SPCA manager of humane education. “Positive encounters with animals are such a meaningful and important part of childhood.”

Belief in the importance of nurturing the human-animal bond from a young age is what inspires the BC SPCA summer camp bursary program. Each summer, generous sponsors make it possible for children from low-income families to attend a week of camp. This year alone, the society offered more than $5,500 in bursaries. Those same generous sponsors also made it possible for the BC SPCA to reach out to another vulnerable group this summer: families displaced by wildfires. “We opened up spots in our camps for wildfire evacuees,” says Neuman. “We hoped to give them a welcome distraction from all the worry and uncertainty they faced.”

For more information on the summer camp program, or to help send a child to camp, visit spca.bc.ca/camp.

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**A CAMPAIGN LIKE NO OTTER**

**IT’S POSSIBLE** that there is a sight in this world cuter than three bewhiskered, guileless and oh-so-adorable baby otters – but if so, we have yet to see it.

Although Wild ARC, the BC SPCA’s Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre in Metchosin, does not name the more than 3,000 wild patients they treat annually, these three orphans became known by nicknames based on the locations they were found: Lady, Cowboy and Piers (for Ladysmith, Cowichan Bay and Piers Island). Lady was orphaned after her mom was chased by a dog and dropped her; Cowboy was found covered with more than 100 ticks after his mom was scared off; and Piers was discovered alone and dehydrated near Swartz Bay, calling for his mother, who sadly could not be located.

This summer, Wild ARC invited the public to participate in a unique campaign that followed the trio’s progress as they grew, played and learned life skills. New photos and videos were posted on the campaign website each week and anyone who donated $50 or more to care for patients at Wild ARC was automatically entered into a contest to be part of the release party when Lady, Cowboy and Piers are returned back to the wild next spring. Thank you to all of our supporters for giving these wonderful animals a second chance!

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**BEST NAMASTE EVER:**

**Animal yoga at the SPCA**

**GOING TO YOGA** can be good for you. Going to yoga with kittens and bunnies? Even better!

The BC SPCA’s Richmond and Surrey locations have started holding yoga-with-animals classes, offering a healthy exercise option for animal lovers. “So far, it’s been a big hit,” says Richmond SPCA assistant manager Florence Wong.

The yoga classes help give adoptable animals more exposure to potential adopters and increase their social interaction with humans. “Jack and Daxter, the two rabbits who helped us launch animal yoga, have been a huge help,” says Wong. “They seem to love the company and the freedom to run around in a larger space.” Check for upcoming sessions at spca.bc.ca/events.
ELIZABETH (BETTY) LAWSON adored animals her whole life. In 1948, she settled in Ottawa, where she met and married her husband Bill. Betty and Bill had several beloved dogs over the years, including a golden retriever named Max whom Betty would host birthday parties for at the dining room table – with Max happily sitting at the head of the table, eating off the good china!

After moving to Qualicum Beach, and losing Bill in 2001 and her last dog Sky in 2013, Betty focused her time and attention toward dogs in the care of the BC SPCA at her local branch. The work of the Parksville/Qualicum Beach Branch inspired her to add the BC SPCA as a beneficiary to a large portion of her estate, so that her legacy of caring could live on and help future generations of animals.

Betty passed away in 2014 but her legacy gift to the Parksville/Qualicum Beach Branch continues to be a vital part of the operations for this small branch. Thank you, Betty, for improving the lives of vulnerable animals and for being an inspiration to others to create their own legacy of love. To leave a legacy, please visit spca.bc.ca/giftplanning or call our Gift Planning (Estate Gifts) team at 1-800-665-1868.
“Our position is grounded in scientific research and the belief that the complex needs of these creatures cannot be met in a captive environment.”

— Dr. Sara Dubois
Seeing children squeal with delight as a breaching whale makes a splash during an aquarium show may warm the heart, but a growing number of animal welfare groups and concerned animal lovers are questioning the ethics of keeping whales, dolphins and other cetaceans in captivity.

“Scientific studies tell us that captivity is extremely harmful to these highly intelligent and social creatures,” says Dr. Sara Dubois, the BC SPCA’s chief scientific officer. “Imagine a human being confined to a closet or bathtub for their whole lives. That’s what it’s like for these very self-aware and complex marine mammals.”

The BC SPCA has long opposed the capture, confinement and breeding of marine mammals for entertainment or display. “Our position is grounded in scientific research and the belief that the complex needs of these creatures cannot be met in a captive environment,” says Dubois. “Cetaceans have demonstrated the ability to communicate, to create social structures and culture and to display high-level cognitive functions such as memory, problem-solving, concept formation and self-awareness.”

The first orca captured and put on display in North America was a female named Wanda, who was put in a tank at Marineland of the Pacific in Los Angeles in 1961. She died just a day later, after repeatedly slamming into the walls of her enclosure. The second capture occurred closer to home. In 1964, a young orca was harpooned off B.C.’s Saturna Island to use as a model for a life-size fibreglass art exhibit commissioned by the Vancouver Aquarium. When the young male killer whale (mistaken for a female and named Moby Doll) did not die after being harpooned, the plan changed and he was dragged with the line still painfully embedded for 80 nautical miles through reportedly rough waters to Vancouver’s Drydocks. There, the aquarium placed him in a makeshift pen for public display. Moby Doll lived only a short time, but during his confinement, thousands of curious onlookers flocked for a close-up view.

They jump, dive and perform for our amusement, but evidence shows that life in captivity is anything but entertaining for whales and other highly intelligent cetaceans.
“Sadly, Moby Doll’s capture and death helped to spawn a highly profitable industry of capturing whales for public display and entertainment purposes, including wild capture, captive breeding and the movement of cetaceans between aquariums and theme parks around the world,” says Dubois. “Some claimed it was an opportunity to study orcas up close, but we see it as the start of an inhumane industry that should never have occurred in the first place.”

There are an estimated 2,300 cetaceans being kept in captivity worldwide and more than 5,000 have died in captivity since the 1950s, many at ages far younger than their natural lifespan in the wild. In Canada, only two marine parks – the Vancouver Aquarium and Marineland Canada in Niagara Falls – still keep cetaceans.

According to neuroscientist and internationally recognized cetacean researcher Dr. Lori Marino, free-living whales are accustomed to diving to depths of 200 metres and swimming distances of up to 160 kilometres in a day in their natural environment. She says a captive whale would have to circle his tank 1,400 times a day to swim the equivalent distance he would in the wild. “Nothing in concrete tanks comes close to providing the freedom or enrichment experienced by cetaceans in nature,” says Marino. The result? Abnormal or stereotypic behaviours such as constant circling of their enclosure, floating listlessly, slamming themselves into the walls of their tanks, injury, self-harm, illness, aggression and early death. Captivity can also deprive cetaceans of the intimate, lifelong social bonds they develop and thrive on in the wild. Kiska, Canada’s only remaining orca in captivity, was captured at the age of three. Now residing at Marineland Canada, she has given birth to five calves, all of whom died before the age of six. She has had no companions for the past six years.

Marino says the alleged educational value of having cetaceans in entertainment facilities is questionable at best. “We’ve looked at the so-called evidence and I can tell you unequivocally that there is not a shred of evidence that dolphin and whale displays are meaningful in any sense of the word,” she notes in the film *Vancouver Aquarium Uncovered.* “All the evidence... leads to one inescapable conclusion: that dolphins and whales cannot lead healthy lives in entertainment parks.”

Adds Dubois: “You don’t need to capture and confine wild animals to educate our youth. There’s not a single dinosaur alive today and yet kids know everything about them.”

Furthermore, she wonders: “What are we teaching our children by showing them unhappy and deprived animals who are being confined solely for our entertainment – that it is OK to treat other living beings this way?”

The BC SPCA is among the growing number of animal welfare organizations, marine biologists, researchers and politicians seeking an end to cetacean captivity. In December 2015, Canadian Senator Wildred P. Moore introduced Bill S-203, the Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act. In February of this year, 20 marine mammal biologists from around the world signed a letter in support of the bill, saying the captivity of cetaceans cannot be justified in the face of a growing body of scientific knowledge about their biological needs, which shows that adaptation to captivity is extremely unlikely.

After it passed second reading, the bill was sent to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in November 2016, and committee hearings were held until June of this year. Bill S-203 moves to the reporting stage this fall and, after that, to a third reading and potential approval.

Marino was one of the many experts who spoke during the hearings. She says that while the aquarium industry often attempts to justify cetacean captivity by saying their facilities make important contributions to science and conservation, scientists in the field tell a different story. “During the past 30 years, for instance, the Vancouver Aquarium has conducted only 13 published...
in-house studies of captive cetaceans. Of those, only five have been cited more than a few times by the rest of the scientific community.” Hal Whitehead, a biologist and professor at Dalhousie University, also spoke at the committee hearings. He noted that studying cetaceans in captivity is far different than studying their natural behaviours in the wild. “Past research on captive animals is now being replaced by new techniques in the wild. If captive displays of whales and dolphins end, our ability to conserve the animals in the wild will be virtually unaffected.”

Recent documentaries such as Blackfish and the aforementioned Vancouver Aquarium Uncovered have brought a new level of public awareness and concern about captive whales and dolphins. Dubois says the movement to end cetacean captivity is global and has gained strong momentum. “It has taken nearly 50 years, but the public is now highly questioning this activity. We know so much more now about how these animals can suffer in captivity and there is a growing consensus that it is unconscionable to take these majestic marine mammals away from their families and their natural wild environment and confine them to tiny tanks for our amusement.”

In May 2017, the Vancouver Park Board voted six-to-one in favour of a bylaw that would ban the keeping of cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium, meaning it cannot bring any new whales or dolphins into its facility. In June, the Vancouver Aquarium launched a legal challenge to overturn the Park Board’s ban, applying to the Supreme Court for judicial review. In September, the BC SPCA and Vancouver Humane Society applied jointly for intervener status in the case to support the ban, noting that “cetaceans are worthy of moral consideration and are not just tools for science and entertainment.”

Dubois says that the aquarium’s messaging in the media that the new bylaw puts the facility’s marine mammal rescue program in peril is questionable. “The marine mammal program is located off-site and uses only a fraction of the facility’s annual budget,” she explains. “The program also treats mainly non-cetaceans. But if the aquarium believes the ban will put their rescue program in jeopardy, the BC SPCA is more than happy to work with them to find a long-term solution for this important work.”

Dubois points to a new initiative called the Whale Sanctuary Project as a promising option. It was launched in 2016 by Dr. Marino and a team of internationally renowned marine biologists, wildlife veterinarians, zoologists, university researchers, engineers and business experts dedicated to establishing a new, more humane model for the long-term care of cetaceans. Their goal is to create a seaside sanctuary in North America for whales, dolphins and porpoises who are being retired from entertainment facilities or who have been rescued from the ocean. The sanctuary would be situated in a cove or other large, natural bodies of water that could be enclosed with netting so that the welfare of the animals can be monitored. “There are sanctuaries for other large, highly social wild animals such an elephants, big cats and primates,” notes Marino. “A sanctuary for cetaceans is long overdue.”

Dubois, who serves as an adviser to the project, says the initiative is exciting because it creates the opportunity for injured and stranded cetaceans to be rehabilitated in a natural setting and released back to the wild, and for whales born in captivity who cannot be returned safely to the wild to live out their lives in a natural setting that is as close as possible to what they would experience in the wild.

Dubois says the group is looking at possible sanctuary sites along the coast of British Columbia and Washington State as well as in Nova Scotia along the East Coast. The sanctuary will allow public access to view the animals at a distance and will focus on education and conservation, not entertainment. “The bottom line is, when you know better, you do better,” explains Dubois. “We now know better – science tells us that keeping these highly intelligent and social creatures in captivity is not acceptable anymore.” She adds: “Given B.C.’s key role in spawning this industry through the capture of Moby Doll in 1964, I believe we have to be the ones to help end it. We have a moral and historical responsibility to do so.”

For more information about the Whale Sanctuary Project, visit whalesanctuaryproject.org.
This summer, more than 1,000 wildfires swept across B.C., forcing tens of thousands of residents to flee their homes. Many of the evacuees had to leave behind their pets and farm animals. With the help of generous donors, our special constables spent nearly 2,000 hours assisting animals behind fire evacuation lines while staff and volunteers provided around-the-clock care for displaced animals who needed temporary housing until their guardians could return. To our donors, thank you for making these rescue efforts possible!

Weathering the firestorm

After ensuring all of the animals at the Williams Lake shelter had been safely evacuated to Quesnel, Liz Dighton, manager of the Williams Lake & District BC SPCA Branch, packed up her three horses, three dogs and whatever belongings she could and headed to Prince George with her daughter and granddaughter.

“There was thick smoke everywhere, but we were lucky we had the time to pack up prior to the evacuation order,” Dighton says. “In some areas, people had less than 10 minutes’ notice. They literally had to just grab and go. I remember feeling relieved that my family and animals all made it out safely.”

Dighton was lucky enough to find a pet-friendly hotel, where she would spend the next three weeks. After settling into her temporary accommodations, she joined other SPCA staff and volunteers helping out at an SPCA evacuation centre set up in Prince George to provide care for more than 50 dogs who needed shelter until their guardians could reclaim them.

“Most of these dogs were from rural properties and were used to having acres and acres to roam. Many of them had never been in a kennel or even walked on-leash,” Dighton says. “It was all new to them so it was important to provide the best welfare possible and to help them adjust to the unfamiliar surroundings.”

When Dighton finally got the all-clear to go back to Williams Lake, she found her home intact but much of the region burned.

“Everyone here has been affected. I was one of the lucky ones. We came home and there was ash everywhere; my house smelled like an ashtray, but it was still standing. The smoke was just horrible – like a thick fog that just didn’t move.”

She immediately reopened the Williams Lake SPCA shelter and started reuniting lost pets with their caregivers. Dighton says it...
was heartwarming to be able to bring animals and guardians together again. She particularly recalls two senior dogs who were found behind fire evacuation lines. “When I phoned the guardian to let him know we had his dogs, he burst into tears – he was just so grateful to know his dogs were safe and were being cared for.”

Sorting through the pages of listings for lost dogs and cats, Dighton says the wildfire crisis also highlighted the benefit of pet identification. “Permanent identification, such as a tattoo or microchip, is so important. If your pet has ID of any kind, it helps us get them safely back to you so much faster. The relief and joy of these reunions – for both the animals and their caregivers – is always worth it.” She encourages people to register pets through the BC SPCA’s centralized online database bcpetregistry.ca.

Helping farm animals behind the fire lines

It wasn’t just cats and dogs left behind when local residents had to flee the flames. The BC SPCA also helped ferrets, birds, fish and even snakes, as well as farm animals, including pigs, chickens, cows and horses.

In 150 Mile House, where hot spots were still flaring up, the BC SPCA received several calls to check in on the farm animals left behind, including one property where the four-legged residents seemed especially glad for some human company. “When we arrived the horses were so excited to see us,” says Leiki Salumets, BC SPCA farm animal care supervisor. Salumets and Matt Affleck, a BC SPCA animal protection officer, made sure the horses and other animals had access to plenty of fresh water, hay and lots of pasture, but they soon realized the animals were craving attention as much as food. “The horses just really missed their guardians,” Salumets says. “One thing that really stood out for me was that our animals – whether companion or farm animals – really do value our attention and love.”

In addition to ensuring any animals left behind received food, water and, in some situations, medical care, Salumets and her colleagues spent as much time as they could holding them, petting them or talking to them while they went about their tasks. “The companionship seemed to make a world of difference to them while they were waiting for their caregivers to come back home – they just soaked up all the attention they could.”

Thank you to our amazing donors for ensuring we were able to help the four-legged victims of the wildfires in their time of need.

To find out how you can help, visit spca.bc.ca/support.
Gone to any drugstore or cosmetics shop and you’ll find shelves filled with products promising a younger, better-looking you. But behind these products is an ugly reality – the suffering and death of countless research animals who are subjected to painful chemical testing by companies who produce everything from lotion to lip balm.

Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy, a lecturer in applied animal biology at UBC and executive director of the Animals in Science Policy Institute, is part of a growing academic movement which opposes the widespread use of animals for the purposes of research, testing and education. “I don’t believe there is any ethical justification whatsoever in making an animal suffer just so we can have a new shade of lipstick,” she says. “Animal testing for cosmetics is not required in Canada and there are so many amazing technologies available now that allow full replacement of animal use.”

Ormandy notes that testing for the beauty industry is sometimes carried out in private labs, which do not fall within the oversight of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), the body that monitors the use of animals in science in government-funded facilities. “Some private labs do opt in to the CCAC program but they are not required to, so we really don’t know what’s going on in the institutions that do not opt in.”

She says testing for beauty and household products is normally carried out on rabbits, mice, guinea pigs and rats. Typical tests include: skin sensitization, where chemicals are applied to the surface or injected under the animal’s skin; skin irritation/corrosion, where the chemicals are applied to the shaved skin of the animal; eye irritation, where the animal is forced into a headlock and chemicals are applied to their eyes; acute oral toxicity, where substances are forced down the throat using a feeding tube; and acute inhalation toxicity, where the animal is placed in a tube and forced to inhale a substance.
“There are also numerous other long-term tests carried out to determine carcinogenicity or the impact of chemicals on the second generation of infected animals,” explains Ormandy. In addition to the physical suffering these animals endure during their exposure to the chemicals – reactions can range from painful rashes, lesions and bleeding to seizures, paralysis and death – Ormandy says the living conditions in these labs are equally inhumane. “Many of the animals are housed in cages many hundreds of times smaller than their natural home range. And since animals used in testing are typically euthanized afterwards, they don’t live out a normal lifespan.” She adds that euthanasia is most commonly carried out using carbon dioxide gas, a legal method that is cheap and efficient for researchers but leaves the dying animal panicked and struggling for breath.

Ormandy says more than 40 fully validated alternatives now exist to replace animals in cosmetic testing, many of which have already achieved regulatory acceptance internationally through the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development. “Validation and regulatory acceptance is a slow process because scientists have to be able to produce consistent results within and between laboratories over an extended period of time,” she explains. “But the alternatives now exist for cosmetic companies to safely market products without inflicting suffering on animals if they choose to do so.” She says one of the popular alternative methods currently being used involves the reconstruction of human skin using stem cells. “And earlier this year, a team of scientists in Madrid even built a prototype 3D printer that can create functional human skin.”

While the European Union and India have banned the use of animals for cosmetic testing, Canada is lagging behind. But Ormandy is hopeful that change will come. Bill S-214, also known as the Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act, was introduced in 2015 by Conservative Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen. On October 4, the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology voted unanimously to refer Bill S-214 back to the Senate for third reading and a vote. This represents the final step the bill will face in Senate before moving on to the House of Commons. If passed, it would ban animal testing for any product or any ingredient used in cosmetics, as well as the export of any newly animal-tested beauty product into Canada. Ormandy says that if Bill S-214 and a similar bill currently under review in the U.S. both pass, it will shift the momentum globally. “The only major cosmetics market that still requires testing on animals is China, but this would put huge pressure on them to change if they want to market their products to North America.”

BC SPCA STAFF currently serve on the board of the Canadian Council on Animal Care and participate in CCAC assessments of institutions and labs. We also helped to found, and currently sit on the board of the Animals in Science Policy Institute, a registered charity dedicated to providing education on ethics and alternatives to animals in research, testing and teaching in Canada.

How YOU can help

1. Check for the Leaping Bunny logo when purchasing cosmetics and household products. Visit leapingbunny.org or peta.org to find cruelty-free products and outlets.
2. Speak out! Write or email the federal government to let them know you are behind Bill S-214. Visit spca.bc.ca/crueltyfreecosmetics to take action.
Make walking your dog enjoyable with a pain-free, no-pull harness

Everything knows you need a dog collar to fasten an ID tag and licence and to hook up your leash, but new designs can also aid in reducing pulling. “There has been a revolution in dog collars and harnesses, particularly for dogs who pull,” says Craig Naherniak, BC SPCA general manager of humane education. “Thankfully, people are recognizing and rejecting the old-style collars that relied on pain to prevent pulling — the choke, prong and shock collars.”

**Flat collars**

A basic flat collar should be sturdy and designed for the correct weight of your dog; use wider, thicker collars for larger dogs. Make sure the collar fits so your dog can’t back out of it. But be vigilant with puppies. They grow quickly and collars can soon become too tight. “You should always be able to place two fingers under the collar,” Naherniak advises.

Another good flat collar is the Martingale. These collars stay loose around your dog’s neck yet tighten if she tries to slip out. When adjusted correctly, if your dog tries to pull out, the collar will tighten around his neck, preventing escape without choking him.

**Regular harnesses**

As an alternative to a flat collar, some people use a harness, which is different than no-pull varieties (see next category). “Harnesses provide more comfort and security for some dogs — particularly small dogs or strong dogs,” says Naherniak. Harnesses go over a dog’s shoulders and across her chest, with a D-ring to secure a leash behind her head or further along the back. Look for ones with wide, padded straps and be sure they fit well, so chafing under the legs and chest is avoided. A harness can also be a safe alternative for dogs with eye conditions or breathing issues where pressure from a collar on the neck is a concern — pugs and bulldogs, for example.
No-pull harnesses and head halters

“There is a wide range of ‘no-pull’ devices on the market designed to prevent dogs from dragging you down the street,” says Naherniak. There are two basic designs: no-pull harnesses and head halters. No-pull harnesses attach at the chest or, in some designs, behind the shoulder blades. When your dog pulls, the shoulder straps tighten, creating pressure across and under her chest (depending on the style) and she stops pulling. The front-attaching harnesses make a hard-pulling dog turn sideways, causing her to stop.

That said, there are some concerns with no-pull harnesses that guardians need to be aware of. These devices work by inhibiting a dog’s regular gait. If your dog is a large, powerful breed that constantly strains against the device or you have a sporting dog who is always lunging forward, the strain can impact the shoulder and biceps muscles. Also, dogs wearing front-attaching harnesses tend to lean to one side, causing the leg closest to you to carry more load, while the other leg has less strain. Over time this has the potential to cause injury.

Head halters are effective both to prevent moderate pulling and to help redirect your dog’s attention away from situations that cause him to be reactive – squirrels or other dogs, for instance. Head halters have a strap that goes across your dog’s nose. When your dog pulls, the strap tightens. This puts gentle pressure along his head, stopping the pulling. Some designs help steer the dog in the direction you want him to go. Head halters must be fitted correctly and used as directed or you could injure your dog, particularly the neck. For safety, always attach the head halter to the dog’s regular collar in case the halter slips off.

Keep in mind, all of these devices are not actually training your dog not to pull – they are simply discouraging the behaviour. There is no quick fix to stop a dog from pulling. The solution lies in a good training program based on positive reinforcement and a little help from a humane head halter or harness (see “Ask the SPCA” on page 20). “You shouldn’t rely on no-pull devices as a solution to pulling but rather an aid in a training program for excitable, energetic dogs,” says Naherniak. “They lessen the pulling, so you can concentrate on training your dog to walk calmly beside you – ideally with no strain on the collar or harness.”

Find the right fit

You may need to try a couple of different harnesses or head halters to get the one that works best for your dog. Read reviews online, ask knowledgeable pet supply store staff and talk to others at the dog park about which model they like. All designs have pros and cons but they are a far better alternative to choke, prong and shock collars.

DON’T USE PAIN TO TRAIN

The BC SPCA discourages the following training collars because they are based on exerting control using pain, fear and intimidation.

CHOKE CHAINS

Choke chains are nasty, old-fashioned devices. Many people incorrectly use them as an everyday collar when they were designed just for training. When jerked they snap against the throat of your dog, causing pain and discomfort. Even the newer “padded” styles can cause serious injuries to a dog’s neck, voice box and back.

PRONG (OR PINCH) COLLARS

Prong collars have metal spikes that drive into a dog’s skin as she pulls, exerting pressure and pain as a deterrent.

ELECTRONIC COLLARS

Electronic collars are typically used for training, and should not be worn by the dog all the time. They offer different forms of correction: electric shocks (sometimes called “static corrections”), noisy beeps, vibrations, ultrasonic sounds, or blasts of air or citronella, a lemony fragrance dogs dislike.

Many of these collars are controlled by remote, allowing the trainer to choose a setting (from mild to strong) and then deliver the correction when the dog misbehaves.

“The problem with these collars is that they tend to punish the dog for unwanted behaviour and there is serious potential for abuse,” says Naherniak. They can cause anxiety, fear, distress, pain or injury — and therefore cannot be condoned by the BC SPCA.

BARK COLLARS

Some electronic collars are specifically intended to prevent barking — the natural communication method of dogs. “There are examples of dogs with burn sores on their throats – these collars are just repugnant,” says Naherniak. The self-activating collars work by sensing the barking vibrations of the dog, which triggers a static electric shock. The BC SPCA believes there are other, more humane ways to deter barking.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

For specific situations, there are collars that only vibrate or beep. These can be used to grab the attention of a deaf dog or an off-leash dog who is too far away to hear your voice. “For deaf dogs, vibration collars can be effective, especially when the dog is out of visual contact — you can get his attention without fear or harm,” says Naherniak. “The vibration is similar to a cellphone.” Any training collar must be used carefully and under direction of a dog trainer who follows humane, positive reinforcement training methods.
Wild ARC, the BC SPCA's wildlife rehabilitation centre, recently released 14 California quail into the organic garden on their property. These adorable babies now have a very happy ending to their story, but the beginning was much more precarious.

California quail and other young birds come into Wild ARC for care for a variety of reasons, several of which were on display amongst these 14 babies. Six of them were admitted because their families were killed – some lost their mothers to free roaming outdoor cats, some lost parents and siblings to a collision with a vehicle. The other eight babies were brought into Wild ARC as hatchlings, in critical condition after they were caught by a dog.

The wildlife rehabilitation team worked tirelessly to nurse the young quail back to health. The birds were kept in an incubator and had to be tube fed once every hour. They received rehydration fluids and specialized diets to ensure a full complement of nutrients. When they were big enough, they were moved to an outdoor enclosure where they lived together and quickly formed a strong bond.

California quail are highly social creatures who tend to flock together in groups called coveys. Families in the wild will often mix together after the eggs have hatched and the parents will care for the young together. Adult males will often stand guard while the females brood.

The 14 quail released into the Wild ARC garden were provided with some extra food to help with the transition to fending for themselves. There is a family of California quail who already live around the property and it didn’t take them long to hear the soft chirps of the newly released babies and come to investigate. Within just a few hours they had brought these young orphans into the family and the large local male was seen watching over his new, giant covey of more than 25 quail!
Donors rally to save orphaned foal

**LILY, A YOUNG** filly foal, was found orphaned and injured at only one day old. She had deep gashes across her rump and hind legs and was dehydrated, in pain and hungry when a Good Samaritan happened upon her and alerted the Williams Lake & District SPCA Branch.

“We tried to find her mother and her guardian but we were unsuccessful,” says Williams Lake manager Liz Dighton. “Foals need key nutrients from their mother’s milk in order to survive, so an orphan like Lily required around-the-clock care and feeding every hour with a special formula that is very expensive.”

The medical costs associated with Lily’s care exceeded $3,000 but thanks to our wonderful supporters she received all the care she needed to survive and thrive.

With her striking white blaze highlight, and one deep-brown, one light-blue eye, Lily won over staff and volunteers’ hearts alike. “She loved her food and she loved getting cuddles afterwards,” recalls Dighton. Once Lily was six months old and able to eat a diet of hay and grain, she was adopted into a loving forever home.

FROM BADLY BURNED TO HEALTHY & HAPPY

**A CURIOUS PUPPY** in Dawson Creek learned the hard way that exploring her environment can be a deadly proposition. Lacey, a four-month-old German shepherd-husky mix, came into the care of the South Peace SPCA Branch with caustic chemical burns – inside and out – after ingesting toxic substances.

“During her X-rays, it was also discovered that she had a torn cruciate ligament in her right-hind knee, so the poor girl was in a lot of pain,” says South Peace manager Wendy Davies. “Despite her rough start, she has the sweetest personality and is a playful, smart and affectionate puppy. We really wanted to give her a chance at a full and happy life.” Donors stepped up to provide the $6,000 needed for Lacey’s medical costs and she is now enjoying life with her new adopted family.

Left to die, Prairie Rose blooms again

**SHE WAS TOSSED** from a vehicle and left to be buried alive in a rural construction zone in Fort St. John. Luckily, a worker heard Prairie Rose’s tiny mews for help and rushed the tiny kitten to a local vet. From here she was turned over to the care of the BC SPCA’s North Peace Branch.

“Rose was in agony after being thrown from the vehicle,” says North Peace SPCA manager Candace Buchamer. She suffered a broken pelvis as well as a prepubic tendon rupture that caused her intestines to fall into her stomach cavity. “Despite the excruciating pain she was in, her ‘instapurr’ remained intact and she thrived on the love and attention she received.”

The surgery and medical costs related to Prairie Rose’s care exceeded $2,000. But thanks to our generous supporters, the BC SPCA was able to fund her surgery and today she is positively thriving in her new adopted home.

Buchamer notes that Prairie Rose was one of six kittens who had been thrown from vehicles and abandoned on the area’s rural roads around the same time. “It’s so important for people to understand that the SPCA and other rescue groups are here to take care of unwanted kittens. There is absolutely no excuse to ever throw an animal away and leave them to suffer.”
When out on a walk, my dog pulls me down the street. How can I get her to walk beside me?

Getting your dog to walk beside you is a challenge for many guardians. Here’s how to change that scenario.

Begin in a place with few distractions, such as your yard or even in the house. With a high-value treat in hand (e.g. roast chicken, liver or hotdog pieces), call your off-leash dog using a super-friendly tone. Just as she comes to you, turn to the side, take a step and give her a treat. You want her to start to associate the treat with being beside you. If she continues to walk beside you, give another treat. Praise her and continue to give a treat every few steps as she stays beside you. Don’t lure her, but make sure she makes eye contact before you give the next treat.

Suddenly change direction. If she stays at your side, immediately give a treat. Go another 10 to 15 steps and, after eye contact, give a handful of treats — a jackpot. In her mind, she is learning that good things happen when she walks beside her guardian. Keep these initial sessions short — two to three minutes. Repeat over several days.

When out on the street, pick a low-distraction area. Begin with a sit and a high-value treat. Now you have her attention. Start slowly walking and she will likely be looking up at you hoping to get another treat. Give another treat. Do this every 10 to 15 steps. If she starts to pull ahead or gets distracted, immediately change direction. Make it a game. Pretty soon, she will love walking beside you. Keep these sessions short. Occasionally give a jackpot to keep her motivated. Eventually you can associate a command to the game — “heel” or “by me.”

Keep in mind that all training works best when your dog is motivated by the activity through a combination of treats, praise and fun. Initially, train before feeding to help her focus on the treats. Keep sessions short — not more than five minutes. Also, make sure your dog has eliminated first — it’s hard to think when you have a full bladder. If your dog is a “super puller,” consider using a “no-pull” harness when training (see “Pulling in the Right Direction” on page 16).

I just adopted a cat. What can I do to make sure she uses the litter box properly?

For starters, keep your new cat confined to a room with her litter box, food and water bowls, and a bed to help her settle in. Then, once a few days have passed and
she is feeling secure enough, let her have the run of the house. She should return to the litter box when she has to go to the bathroom.

Here are some other tips to set your cat up for litter box success:

■ Having two litter boxes for one cat is actually best. Some cats prefer to urinate in one and defecate in another. For a multi-level home, make sure there is a litter box on each floor.

■ Cats like privacy. Choose a quiet area away from household traffic — and her food and water bowls (cats do not like going to the bathroom near where they eat and drink).

■ To keep your cat from feeling cornered while using the litter box, pick a location where she can see who is approaching and make a quick exit should she feel anxious.

■ As for the litter box itself, most cats prefer an open design. Pick one that is longer than your cat and wide enough for her to turn around in easily. Litter boxes with lids not only trap in the smell, they can also make cats feel trapped.

■ Cats usually develop a preference for litter type and scent as kittens. Some adapt to a change without any problem at all, while others feel uncomfortable using an unfamiliar litter. While there are many different types to choose from, cats tend to prefer unscented, fine-grained litters. Most prefer shallow litter too. Provide your cat with a layer one to two inches deep to dig in.

■ Remember that cats have very sensitive noses! Scoop the litter box once or twice a day. Completely change the litter every week or two. Clean the box out with warm, soapy water and rinse it well. Avoid using any strong-smelling cleaning products that may irritate your cat. Let it dry before putting in new litter.

Visit spca.bc.ca/faqs/welcome-new-cat-home for more advice on welcoming your new cat home.

My neighbour insists on feeding the raccoons. What can I say to persuade him that it’s not the best idea?

Feeding wildlife can seem like an enjoyable way to connect with nature, so it may come as a surprise to some people that doing so actually puts animals at risk. Here are just a few of the reasons why:

■ Feeding wildlife is unhealthy. Tasty though they might be, human foods are no substitute for the natural diets that wild animals have evolved to eat. They do not provide the specialized, balanced nutrition that wildlife needs and, in fact, can cause serious health problems such as vitamin deficiencies and tooth decay.

■ Feeding wildlife spreads disease. Wild animals do not typically gather together in large groups — but, for food, they make an exception. Crowding encourages disease spread. Not only is wildlife at risk, but close contact with wild animals or their wastes can transmit diseases to people and pets as well.

■ Feeding wildlife alters behaviour. Normally, wild animals have a healthy fear of humans. When food is involved, however, animals are more willing to approach us. Over time, they lose their natural wariness;

they become habituated — with serious consequences.

Habituation puts wild animals at risk of getting hurt or killed. Because they are less flighty, they are more susceptible to predators and vehicle collisions. They are also vulnerable to harm from individuals who see them as a nuisance: stories of people poisoning or shooting wildlife “pests” are sadly not uncommon.

Unfortunately, habituation has an impact beyond just the individual animal being fed. When mothers bring their babies to their favourite feeding spots, it can teach the young ones that humans are not to be feared — and, just as concerning, that humans are actually a source of food.

Food-conditioned animals — animals who associate people with food — can become dependent on handouts. They can even lose the ability to find (or interest in finding) food on their own in the wild.

Because food-conditioned wildlife can be unpredictable and aggressive, people and pets are at risk too. Human foods serve as such a strong reward that, in some cases, animals escalate their behaviour in search of a treat. They become bolder, progressing from begging to threatening to get what they want.

Ultimately, given the risks to animals and to people, feeding wildlife does far more harm than help.
Raising the Standard

Are you doing all you can to ensure B.C.’s cows, pigs and other farm animals are being raised humanely?

British Columbians are becoming increasingly vocal in the fight to help farm animals across Canada. As an animal welfare agency, the BC SPCA recognizes that, while some people live a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle, others choose to consume creatures raised to provide them with food. But, whatever your practice, there are still ways to improve farm animal welfare, says Amy Morris, BC SPCA manager, public policy and outreach.

“People can take many actions that will help animals, such as researching where their food comes from, how the animals are treated, choosing to purchase ethically sourced food products and introducing more plant-based proteins into their diets,” Morris explains.

“Never underestimate your own individual power,” she continues. “You can also help by contacting your MLA and other elected officials to let them know how much you care about the humane treatment of farm animals. When even one voice is added to so many others, it can have a huge impact.”

How to contact your MLA

To reach out to your MLA and voice concerns about farm animal welfare, visit this link: leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members

Once there, you can search for your MLA in three different ways:

- **BY POSTAL CODE:** Enter your code into the search bar
- **BY LOCATION:** Click on “Find MLA by Community”
- **BY RIDING:** Click on “Find MLA by Constituency”

The federal government is planning to modernise regulations for how animals are transported and slaughtered in Canada, and Morris is hopeful these updates will set higher standards. She believes it is a necessary next step for government to fund better enforcement for farm animal welfare standards.

Canada’s current regulations governing the transportation of farm animals date back to the 1970s and allow for cattle to be shipped for 52 hours without access to food or water; the maximum for pigs and chickens is 36 hours. This falls far below the standards of other countries in the Western world, Morris says. “The good news is, you can help. You don’t have to share the political views of your MLA to lend your voice and concerns to any cause you care about.”

“Contacting your MLA is as easy as visiting a website or picking up the phone,” she continues. “You can also sign up for our action alerts, which will give you actions to take for the humane treatment of farm animals, such as signing an e-petition or emailing a government official.”

British Columbians have been particularly effective during public comment periods for several federal codes of practice to improve welfare standards for farm animals, representing more than 50 per cent of all responses from the public for both the bison code and the recently released egg-laying hen code.

“For so many responses to come from B.C., especially when some other provinces have far more people, speaks volumes about the passion British Columbians have for farm animals,” Morris says.

Case in point: this past June, undercover video released by the group Mercy for Animals showed Elite Farm Services Ltd. workers abusing and torturing chickens, and the outcry from British Columbians was massive – just as it was in 2014, when the same group released footage of workers at Chilliwack Cattle Sales Ltd. maliciously beating and abusing cows.

That is exactly the kind of public engagement that is required to effect real change.

“While the BC SPCA works to increase public awareness about farm animal issues and press for evidence-based changes to provincial and federal laws, we need individual actions from the public to help us improve laws for better animal welfare,” Morris says. “It’s never too late to take action. Sign up for our action alerts today and let your voice make a difference.”

Sign up for the BC SPCA’s action alerts at spca.bc.ca/actionalert.
Strange as it may sound, sometimes to improve the welfare of animals, we need to do a bit of research on our fellow human beings.

Several years ago, Erin Ryan was doing her MSc in UBC’s Animal Welfare Program, just when the Canadian Code of Practice for pigs was being revised. One of the controversial issues was whether to continue allowing pregnant sows to be kept in restrictive stalls. Some pig producers claimed that the public would support the use of stalls if people were better informed. Wanting to see if this were really the case, Erin conducted an online public survey, and then provided participants with information including photographs and articles about stalls and alternatives. She found that people actually became more opposed to stalls when they were better informed. In finalizing the Code of Practice, the pig sector ultimately decided to replace stalls with other types of housing.

Dairy farmers typically cauterize the horn buds of young calves to prevent the horns from growing and creating a later risk of injury. Years ago, our research group demonstrated how to manage the pain caused by this procedure and most Canadian farmers now use pain management. In some countries, however, the majority of farmers still make no effort at pain control. Recently, two UBC students, one from the United States and one from Brazil, did surveys of farmers in their home countries to find out why pain management has not caught on. In both cases, the main obstacle was ignorance of the methods and of the relatively low cost. This showed that a targeted farmer-education program might do a great deal to improve the lives of the calves.

Dogs of the pit bull breeds have created continuing controversy. UBC student Anna MacNeil-Alcock did an illuminating study at the BC SPCA Vancouver shelter. She identified 40 pit bulls plus a matched sample of medium-sized dogs of other breeds and contacted their adopters two to four months later to see how well the dogs worked out. A few of the dogs had been returned to the shelter because of aggression problems, but most of these were not the pit bulls. The pit bulls also seemed at least equal to the other dogs in terms of good care and integration into the family. Some (but of course not all) municipal governments have taken these findings into account and avoided blanket bans on pit bulls.

Leanne McConnachie came to the Animal Welfare Program after a career in business and wanted to improve the effectiveness of funding for animal welfare work. Her research involved interviewing animal welfare organizations and the foundations that fund them, in order to improve communication and effectiveness. Among many findings, she observed that most foundations want to fund new, short-term projects rather than long-term, established projects. As a result, small animal welfare organizations may feel pressured to “reinvent” themselves with new, short-term work rather than to continue existing work of proven benefit. Leanne made numerous recommendations, and then went on to help implement these in the organizations in which she is involved.

Most animal welfare research focuses on the animals themselves: better housing on farms, better noise control in shelters, better environments for zoo animals. But as these examples show, to get improvements adopted we also need to study the people whose decisions and behaviour directly affect animal care.

Dr. David Fraser is a professor in the UBC Animal Welfare Program. The program, initiated in 1997 by the BC SPCA and other partners, works to improve the lives of all animals through research, education and public outreach.
Thank you to everyone - participants, volunteers, supporters and sponsors - who made the 2017 Scotiabank & BC SPCA Paws for a Cause a success for animals in need!

Thank you!