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# AFL News

*Advocating for Animals in our Community*



## **Gussie's Journey: A Life Worth Saving**

*(as told by her foster mother, Melanie M. Peterson)*

Special needs foster cat Augusta (aka "Gussie") has had a rough journey through life so far. Gussie's origins are unknown, and thanks to the worst in humanity, she has a virtually nonfunctioning tail from a traumatic injury. Because she was not spayed or otherwise properly cared for before she was rescued, she developed a uterine infection (pyometra) that can be fatal, which necessitated life-saving emergency surgery.

Complications from this neglect and resulting pyometra have left Gussie with recurring diarrhea and urinary tract infections. As a result, she is one of those special needs cats that are difficult to place in a permanent home. She must eat prescription hypoallergenic

food and needs some help grooming herself. She also takes antibiotics and lives in a safe, clean environment separate from other animals. If not for the generous support AFL receives from the Lansdowne community and area veterinarians, Gussie would not have made it.

But, Gussie does not hold grudges; she has long forgotten about the heartless humans who mistreated her. She is a gorgeous, friendly, playful calico cat who loves attention.

We sometimes have marathon combing sessions, one lasted 45 minutes straight. Even then, Gussie was not willing for it to end. Not only does Gussie purr loudly while being combed, she also rocks

*(Gussie's Journey—continued on Page 3)*

# From the President



Some of you may be surprised to see my name and photo on this column again; to be

perfectly honest, so am I. The nature of volunteer organizations is that they ebb and flow with the availability of our volunteers. Sometimes life gets in the way of volunteering--family issues, work and life changes, health, so many things.

As we near our tenth anniversary, Animal Friends of Lansdowne finds itself in something of a transitional period for just such reasons. Two board members are dealing with health issues and have had to step back for a while. Another is moving on to accommodate other interests. We are forever grateful for their commitment and their service; we support them and cheer them on as they navigate new challenges. As you well know if you are reading this newsletter, people who care for animals are a very special breed. Many of us not only work together; we have grown to have genuine respect and affection for each other as friends. I would like to personally thank all of our volunteers and board members past and present, our treasured foster families, and those who have stepped up to help us through this transition.

If you have ever considered volunteering with us, there couldn't be a better time, nor a time when your involvement will have a bigger impact. We very much need your help. That help can take the form of ongoing commitment, occasional assistance

with an event, or anything in-between. We need people who can help with day-to-day operations, such as keeping track of vet

care for our animals, helping process adoptions, maintaining and updating our web site, assisting with publicity, and more. We always have events on the horizon for which we can use extra hands and, as always, we are in desperate need of foster homes for our rescued animals, primarily cats and kittens. A spare room and lots of love are pretty much all that's needed.

When we founded AFL, we focused on advocacy and education. It soon became evident that our community animals needed rescuing, and AFL responded by becoming that rescue. We still do education, but now we bring as many animals into foster as we can, get them spayed and neutered, provide whatever medical care they need, and work hard to find permanent, loving homes. We do TNR (trap-neuter-return), which also means working with cat colonies to provide food and shelter on an ongoing basis. We make every effort to bring all friendly strays and kittens into foster so that they may be adopted.

This work is a labor of love—a strong love for animals that some may find incomprehensible. If you are reading this, I know you understand and you are one of us. You know the irreplaceable bond that exists between humans and our companion animals. This is our motivation every day. There are times when we drop everything to help an animal because a life depends on it, and that life matters very much.

*Fran Wayne*

## A Call for Support From Jayne Young

Being Mayor of Lansdowne had its perks and one of them was my partnership with Animal Friends of Lansdowne. I adopted them as a “pet” project and that led to the adoption of all three cats living in my home. My two girls know they caught the gold ring when their mom was trapped by one Animal Friend and my little boy counts his lucky stars he was rescued by another.

What started as a group of people attempting to shine a light on a growing problem of feral cats in the borough quickly became a full-blown rescue group with all the problems and stresses associated with that work. When they needed the borough to provide space for a workshop or access to the parking lot for Love Your Pet Day, I was happy to help.

AFL includes some of the best people I know. They introduced the borough to Trap Neuter Return and take seriously the work of fostering and adopting the borough's stray animals.

The problem of feral cats is huge in the borough. A struggling economy means people have less money to put towards vet care and responsible neutering of cats. AFL will never be able to solve the problem but with your support they can chip away at it and improve the quality of life for hundreds of animals.

Please support AFL any way you can. AFL greatly appreciates any monetary contributions, as well as donations of pet food, cat litter, and other pet items. Please also consider fostering a pet in need or giving a pet a forever home. 🐾



## Volunteer of the Year



*Leedom Morrison started volunteering for AFL a few years ago for a high school project and never left. President Dawn Manning presented Leedom with AFL's Volunteer of the Year award in November for all of his hard work.*

## Auction Donations Needed

We are in the process of gathering donations to be featured in AFL's 10th anniversary silent auction fundraiser. The auction will be part of a gala dinner celebration to be held on October 25 at Lansdowne's newly-renovated Twentieth Century Club on Lansdowne Avenue.

If you would like to donate something of value, please call or email us. Suggested auction items include antiques and collectibles, new or gently used household items, tickets to local arts or sports events, gift certificates for restaurants, goods and services, artwork, vacation homes, etc. AFL is a 501(c)3 corporation and donations are tax deductible. Donations may be credited to businesses or individuals, or they may be kept anonymous if you prefer.

Thank you for your support! 🐾

*(Gussie's Journey—continued from Page 1)*

sideways and marches her front paws up and down. I sometimes refer to her as my little marching Weeble cat (she wobble-marches but she doesn't fall down).

When I first met Gussie about six months ago, she was still recovering from her surgery. She was thin (less than 8 pounds), with a dull coat. And, much like a newborn baby, she did little more than eat, sleep, or poop for several weeks. You cannot imagine the thrill of one day hearing Gussie at play. I had left her with about four toys in her isolation room, one of which was a squeaky ball on a track. One morning I heard squeaking coming from the basement. When I dashed downstairs I found Gussie determinedly smacking that ball around its track. That was the moment I knew for certain that Gussie was ready to rejoin the land of the living.

Gussie has improved to the point that she no longer needs to be confined to the bathroom. She is still a cellar-dweller, but she has complete run of the basement, and particularly likes to roost above the washing machine. She continues to play with that squeaky ball. There are times when the squeaking goes for hours. She also has a ping-pong ball that she enjoys bouncing off the walls.

Often, when I enter the house after working all day, I can hear her dashing across the basement floor and up the stairs to the kitchen door where she sits "patiently" chirping to get my attention. The chirps quickly turn into full blown meows



*Gussie has a lot of love to give.*

if I do not open the door soon enough to acknowledge her presence and tell her I will be down to see her in a few minutes. It's uncanny how well cats can sense the passage of time without being able to "tell" time.

Now that she's up to 13 pounds, the one thing we know is that Gussie likes her cat food! We're still making slow progress on Gussie's medical issues. Her vets are confident that these issues will be resolved, but it could take a while.

Gussie has overcome many roadblocks on her highway to health, but has more to overcome. She needs loving, caring people in her life who not only keep her clean and well fed, but can see what an adorable little cat she is.

I highly recommend fostering a special needs pet. Having an animal to pour extra love and care into, who has visibly gotten better in my care, has done me a world of good. Even though I cannot adopt Gussie, I am eternally grateful that she came into my life. 🐾

# Celebrating 10 Years

Animal Friends of Lansdowne couldn't do all



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4



1-Readings by children's authors are some of AFL's most popular events.

2-Mario's dramatic rescue from a Lansdowne tree.

3-AFL's famous Annual yard sale!

4-It's all about teamwork at Doggie Spa Day!

5-Skippyjon Jones author Judy Schachner has done two book signings for AFL.

# *in Lansdowne 2004-2014*

that we do without the community's support



8-Carol Erickson of CBS 3 drew a big crowd at her book signing.

9-Our Community Cats Workshop focused on building shelters for the strays in our community.



6-Former President, Sara Burns, and friend from Jojo the Grey bird rescue.

7-People lined up to get a great deal for their cats at our spay and neuter clinics.



# Mercy's Adoptive Family Sings Her Praises

AFL has had many successful adoption stories, but we couldn't resist sharing this recent letter from the happy adoptive family of Mercy.

Dear AFL,

Thanks for the note about Mercy's anniversary. She is the sweetest, most affectionate, playful cat and she just seamlessly integrated into our family. It's like she's always been a part of us. The other cats adapted to her without missing a beat— probably because Mercy is so very likeable!

Our daughter Sophia adores her and the feeling is reciprocal; Mercy follows her EVERYWHERE! She plays tea party along with the dolls and submits with grace to being toted around the house when Sophia decides she wants to play with a more realistic "baby". And Mercy is the most attentive audience—when our daughter practices her violin it can be a test of one's patience, but Mercy sits in front of her at full attention, following the

bow and seemingly enraptured by the music!

Guests to our home are treated to her immediate welcome as Mercy jumps right up and settles, purring, on a lap. She wins everyone over and so receives lots of pets and scratches from people who end up really believing that they are Mercy's favorite! We are grateful every day for her sweet and loving presence in our home.

Thank you for all the good work you do—if we have been blessed in Mercy, how many others must be blessed in the pets they have welcomed into their hearts through you. Thanks again for our Mercy!!!!

Love,  
Lou, Regina, and Sophia

## AFL's Adoptables Featured on 6ABC Pet Segment

Did you catch Animal Friends of Lansdowne's appearance on 6ABC's "Shelter Me" segment, which aired several times between May 31 and June 1? It was a great opportunity to bring our adoptable kitties to a wider audience.



*Dawn Manning attempts to get Hunny's attention while Margaret Mercik holds him for the camera.*

The film crew met with Fran Wayne, Dawn Manning, Margaret Mercik, Dotti McCreary, and Melanie Peterson at Lansdowne Borough hall with camera-ready kittens and cats looking for their close-up. Fran, Dawn, and Dotti took turns explaining the joys of foster parenting, shelter building, and the benefits of "kitten therapy," among other topics.

Dawn and Margaret then went to the 6ABC studio to show off another adoptable on camera. AFL will take all the media attention it can get!

Our thanks to David Murphy, producer Tim Walton and the animal-loving staff at 6ABC for this opportunity. 🐾

## Inquisitive Sushi Loves to Play

Pretty Sushi is ready for her furr-ever home. This silver-gray female tabby with a white nose, toes, bib, and belly is cautious but inquisitive. Once you've gained Sushi's trust, she'll hop right up next to you and even flip over on her back to play. Sushi also enjoys chasing a laser light or catnip bubbles.

Sushi will make a great kitty companion and is good with other cats.



*Sushi is ready for a home of her own.*

If you want to make Sushi part of your family, visit <http://animalfriendsoflansdowne.org/adopt.shtml>. Click on the **ADOPT** button to complete and submit an adoption application. 🐾



*Bargain hunters uncover treasures at AFL yard sale.*

## Annual Yard Sale Raises Money for AFL

Animal Friends of Lansdowne's annual yard sale on May 10 was very successful! An avalanche of generous donations to sell and a team of volunteers to coordinate it all made the day fun and profitable. 🐾

## Help Wanted

We are seeking experienced **web page designers** and **grant writers** who can devote some time to Animal Friends of Lansdowne projects. It's a great way to get some additional experience and a letter of reference while helping animals and the community. Contact: [info@animalfriendsoflansdowne.com](mailto:info@animalfriendsoflansdowne.com) or (484) 463-1277. 🐾

## Got Stuff to Donate??

Animal Friends of Lansdowne is always looking for donations of pet items including unopened cat food, litter, clean toys, and bedding, as well as other items for pets in foster homes. AFL has a donation box in the lobby at Lansdowne Borough Hall. 🐾

## In Memory of a Special Pet

Thanks to a suggestion from one of our favorite Animal Friends, you can make a PayPal donation to Animal Friends of Lansdowne in memory of a loved one or a beloved pet. Go to this link:

<http://www.animalfriendsoflansdowne.org/donate.shtml> then scroll down to the "donate" button. After you enter your PayPal or credit card information, you will have the option to make your donation in memory of a person or pet. A field will be available to enter his or her name. AFL will post a remembrance in his or her name on our Facebook page (unless you specify otherwise). 🐾

## Become a Member of AFL

Membership Type:	Qty:	Price:	Total:
— Good Friend		\$30 / year	
— Family Friend		\$50 / year	
— Special Friend		\$75 / year	
— Best Friend		\$100 / year	
— Student Friend (full-time student)		\$20 / year	
— Senior Friend (65 or older)		\$20 / year	
— Young Friend (12 or under)		\$10 / year	
— Forever Friend (Lifetime)		\$500	

Check here if you would like to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check made payable to: AFL and send to the following address:

Animal Friends of Lansdowne  
 Post Office Box 869  
 Lansdowne, PA 19050  
 or sign up on the web at  
[animalfriendsoflansdowne.com](http://animalfriendsoflansdowne.com)  
 (Click on "Membership")



*AFL shirts, mugs, tote bags,  
 and bumper stickers  
 on sale now at  
[animalfriendsoflansdowne.com](http://animalfriendsoflansdowne.com)*

# Save the Date!

## AFL's 10th Anniversary Gala

Saturday, October 25, 2014

The Twentieth Century Club  
Lansdowne, PA

### AFL Member Meetings

Usually the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm  
Lansdowne Borough Hall  
Please contact us for exact dates and times.  
All are welcome!

### Animal Friends of Lansdowne

Post Office Box 869  
Lansdowne, PA 19050  
animalfriendsofLansdowne.com  
info@animalfriendsofLansdowne.com  
(484) 463-1277

### About AFL News

AFL News is a newsletter published by the Animal Friends of Lansdowne, an organization comprised of citizens who are passionate about animals and animal issues. We are concerned about the responsible management of our domestic and feral animals and about making the greater Lansdowne community a safe haven for people and animals to live in harmony.

To this end, we are committed to such issues as animal rescue and adoption, population control, health and sanitation, education and awareness, and, always, the humane treatment of all animals.

### AFL Mission Statement

Our mission is to advocate for animals in our community and for the people who care for and about them; to raise awareness of important animal issues through educational and promotional activities; and to foster the kind and responsible stewardship of both domestic and feral animals.

### Contributors for this issue of AFL News:

*Jocelyn Bolick, Samantha Drake, Dawn Manning, Dotti McCreary, Melanie Peterson, Amanda Villier, and Fran Wayne*

**Be sure to like us on Facebook!**



### Board Members:

*Fran Wayne, President*

*Margaret Mercik, Vice President and  
Volunteer Chair*

*Melanie Peterson, Secretary*

*Adrienne Patroni, Treasurer*

*Dawn Manning, Board Member and  
TNR Chair*

*Dotti McCreary, Board Member and  
Education Chair*

*Jocelyn Bolick, Memberships Chair*