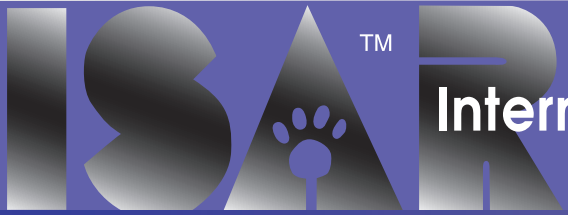


AUTUMN 2012



International Society for Animal Rights

Law and Education Serving Animals

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## President's Message

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I formally announce the launch of ISAR's new website *Stop Devocalization Now*.

Unknown to most custodians of dogs and cats and the public at large, there is a widespread practice in the United States of surgically cutting the vocal cords of canines (and, less often, felines). That's correct: *cutting their vocal cords*.

This mutilating procedure when not performed for the medical benefit of dogs and cats but instead for the convenience of humans, must be ended throughout the United States. *And it must be ended now!*

To accomplish that goal, International Society for Animal Rights has created our stand-alone **Stop Devocalization Now** Project, dedicated to helping those who are willing and able to engage in the legislative-lobbying actions that ISAR, as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, can not directly perform.

While commonly known by the euphemism "debarking," synonyms for cutting a dog's or cat's vocal cords include "devocalization," "silencing," "bark softening," "cutting the vocal chords" — and by the formal medical term "ventriculocordecctomy." (In this announcement, as shorthand I'll use dogs and the term "devocalization" as examples.)

Now for the gruesome details. A dog is devocalized by having her vocal cord soft tissue cut by the veterinarian making a surgical incision in the dog's neck, or by inserting tools through her mouth.

The consequences for devocalized dogs can be, and often are, horrific. For example, breathing can become a struggle for devocalized animals because of airway obstruction, which in turn can cause a later administration of anesthesia for legitimate medical reasons to be problematic. A dog can choke on food, inhale vomit into her lungs, choke, gag, cough. Scar tissue buildup can require multiple surgical procedures. And more.

The devocalization procedure can cause severe blood loss and infection.

Police — anyone, for that matter — encountering a devocalized dog trained to attack will have no warning.

It has been reported that a devocalized dog is more likely to be dumped or surrendered to a shelter, adding to the already serious overpopulation problem. Indeed, it has been reported also that in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shelters received many devocalized animals before the practice (with a narrow exception) was outlawed.

There is much more to be said about the medical aspects of devocalization, but just what I've said so far should suffice to demonstrate that devocalization is cruel, brutal, dangerous — let alone immoral — in its treatment of animals as if they were simply inanimate objects to be used and abused by humans without regard to their ability to experience pain and their need to live natural lives.

By devocalizing a dog, the veterinarian's knife assaults not only the animal, but its ability to communicate — and the idea of a humane society that humans should strive for.

Putting aside body language, the only other way an animal can communicate is through vocalization. Sever that ability literally and figuratively, and the animal has no means to convey its mental state to other animals and humans. It lacks the ability to control the tone, intensity and frequency of its voice. Lacking that, the dog cannot communicate fear, aggression, danger, pain — everything the animal "knows." To get a sense of what devocalization means to a dog or any other animal, one need only ask a mute human being what he's deprived of because of his inability to speak.

In order to precipitate a national discussion about devocalization, and to arm those likeminded people and organizations such as International Society for Animal Rights who want to end the practice, ISAR has created the

## Stop Devocalization Now Project.

We will provide all information possible about devocalization, including but not limited to links containing the following:

**Aspects of Devocalization**, Medical, Ethical, Behavioral, Opponents and proponents; **Activism**, ISAR's Model Anti-Devocalization Statute, Suggested Letter-to-the-Editor and others, Veterinarian/behaviorist non-devocalization support and pledge, Initiative and referendum, Petitions, Anti-devocalization efforts abroad, Australia, Elsewhere; **Law and Legislation**, Existing domestic anti-devocalization legislation, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Warwick, Rhode Island, Newtown, Ohio, Ohio, Pending anti-devocalization legislation, California, Virginia, Failed anti-devocalization legislative attempts, California, New York, Cranston, Rhode Island, Congress, Lobbying, Cases related to anti-devocalization legislation, Constitutionality of anti-devocalization legislation; **Public Education**, Anti-devocalization videos.

ISAR's potential supporters are literally countless. Our constituents are every dog and cat that is a potential victim of the scalpel. Potential activists are the many good people throughout the United States who understand the nature of devocalization, and are willing to work to end it.

*We are actively seeking volunteers to work legislatively to end devocalization.*

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, ISAR cannot lobby for or against the enactment of legislation. However, we can support those who are willing to fight for legislation that will end vocalization throughout the United States.

A volunteer's task is not difficult:

- The ISAR volunteer should identify a sympathetic legislator(s) on a municipal, county or state level;
- The ISAR volunteer should make the legislators aware of and provide to him or her the material contained in this website, *especially ISAR's Model Anti-Devocalization Statute*;
- The ISAR volunteer should encourage the legislators to solicit as many co-sponsors as possible in support of ISAR's Model Statute;
- The ISAR volunteer, once the bill is introduced and assigned to a committee, should identify sympathetic members of that committee and seek their support for the bill.

Ideally, the bill's sponsor and/or at least one co-

sponsor will have some leverage with the committee chairperson and legislative leadership so that the proposed legislation will get out of committee and obtain a majority vote of the legislature.

(At [www.stopdevocalizationnow.org/law\\_and\\_legislation\\_lobby.html](http://www.stopdevocalizationnow.org/law_and_legislation_lobby.html) we have provided a lengthy Table of Contents for NIFAA president and author, Julie Lewin's book entitled *Get Political for Animals and Win the Laws They Need*, which contains detailed information and instruction about how to lobby on behalf of animals.)

ISAR knows there are willing anti-devocalization advocates in legislative bodies throughout the United States, but we can't find them. But volunteers can.

And, as we have learned, in Massachusetts, New York and elsewhere, there are powerful legislative enemies of efforts to end the barbaric practice of devocalization.

But with the help of likeminded people, *whose volunteer participation we sincerely solicit*, this is one battle dogs and cats can win. ISAR will continue to assist in strengthening and enlarging current laws and in drafting state and federal animal protection legislation.

ISAR has begun publicizing our latest **Stop Devocalization Now** Project using online social media sites, e-newsletter, Twitter and even a radio interview on the Animals Today Radio Show, which can be heard on our website [www.stopdevocalizationnow.org](http://www.stopdevocalizationnow.org).

On another front, ISAR commemorated the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of International Homeless Animals' Day on Saturday, August 18, 2012 with hundreds of observances throughout the United States, Canada and abroad.

ISAR conceived and began International Homeless Animals' Day in 1992. Now, twenty-one years later, observances have consistently grown in number. They bring people all over the world together to shed light on pet overpopulation and the spay/neuter solution. By now, International Homeless Animals' Day events have been celebrated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, over in 50 countries and on 6 continents, saving millions of animals' lives.

ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day is devoted to bringing humane organizations and concerned individuals together globally to combat pet overpopulation head-on by promoting spay/neuter and adoption campaigns. As a direct result of ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day observances in 2012, many elected officials were enlisted to help lead their communities in pet overpopulation awareness campaigns and the simple spay/neuter solution. ISAR's

Proclamations declaring the third Saturday of August as International Homeless Animals' Day were signed by many Governors, Mayors, city council members and other elected officials worldwide. ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day observances result in the placing of companion animals into loving families and the performing of countless spay/neuter surgeries saving millions of animals' lives.

ISAR would like to thank all of the coordinators who have participated in International Homeless Animals' 2012, and who by doing so have contributed to advancing the war against dog and cat overpopulation.

We cordially invite our supporters, and those individuals who are receiving our Newsletter for the

first time, to explore ISAR's website and familiarize themselves with the work we have been doing for animal rights during the past half-century.

Because of your support, ISAR has remained in the forefront of the battles for the rights of animals. Your contributions will allow us to continue our work, making great strides on behalf of our beloved companion animals.

Sincerely,



Susan Dapsis  
President, ISAR

## ISAR'S INTERNATIONAL HOMELESS ANIMALS' DAY® 2012

*International Homeless Animals' Day 2012 was commemorated for the twenty-first consecutive year on August 18th with Candlelight Vigil observances in more than 20 U.S. states, Canada and involvement in at least 10 foreign locations including Australia, China, Cyprus, France, Guam, Malaysia, Panama, Russia, South Africa, and Switzerland.*

### Introduction

On Saturday, August 18, 2012, animal protection organizations and compassionate individuals from all over the world joined together to commemorate ISAR's 21<sup>st</sup> annual International Homeless Animals' Day. Since 1992, the year ISAR conceived and began International Homeless Animals' Day, dedicated vigil coordinators

have orchestrated events on the third Saturday of August, shedding light on an epidemic that sadly claims the lives of millions of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens on a global scale each year: pet overpopulation. Events that often accompany International Homeless Animals' Day observances promote pet overpopulation's simple solution: spay/neuter, educate individuals and commu-



The Warwick Valley Humane Society hosted their third annual International Homeless Animals' Day Candlelight Vigil on August 18, 2012. Pictured from left to right are: volunteers Steve and Dina Feneck, Town of Warwick Supervisor Michael Sweeton, Councilman Russ Kowal, Warwick Valley Humane Society President Suzyn Barron, Councilman Floyd D'Angelo, Justice Nancy D'Angelo and The Animal Rights Alliance, Inc. founder, Steve Tardiff. Photo By: Roger Gavan



nities about responsible pet care, and increase shelter pet exposure and adoptions. Low-cost spay/neuter clinics, adopt-a-thons, microchip clinics, information stalls, special guest speakers, volunteer appreciation ceremonies, animal shelter open houses, and candlelight vigils are just a few of the activities held on International Homeless Animals' Day around the world. ISAR is extremely grateful for the hard work our devoted vigil coordinators put forth every year leading up to our August event. Because of their loyal commitment, ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day observances result in the placement of companion animals into loving new families and the performing of countless spay/neuter surgeries.

ISAR offered its online virtual vigil for the 11th year in a row, allowing people who could not physically attend an International Homeless Animals' Day observance the option to participate. Visitors from all over the world including Canada, Colombia, New Zealand, Philippines, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States lit candles online in memory of victims of pet overpopulation, thus further driving home the importance of spay/neuter.

### **2012 Vigil Highlights**

While ISAR encourages all vigil coordinators to contact us with feedback, due to space restraints we are not able to acknowledge the many events that took place on August 18, 2012. Some representative examples follow.

The Railroad Green in the Village of Warwick, NY was the setting for the third annual International Homeless Animals' Day Candlelight Vigil observance hosted by the Warwick Valley Humane Society. Elected officials from New York's Orange County, the Town of Warwick, the Village of Warwick and the Village of Greenwood Lake all issued proclamations based on ISAR's designating Saturday, Aug. 18, 2012 as "International Homeless Animals Day." Special guest speakers, including Village of Warwick Mayor, Michael J. Newhard, Town of Warwick Supervisor, Michael Sweeton, Councilman Floyd D'Angelo, Town of Warwick Justice, Nancy D'Angelo, Councilman Russ Kowal and founder of The Animal Rights Alliance (T.A.R.A.), Steve Tardiff, took the stage to discuss the importance of community involvement when it comes to our animal companions, spay/neuter and adoption practices, and to acknowledge the important work of the Warwick Valley Humane Society and its dedicated staff and volunteers. Earlier that Day in conjunction with International

Homeless Animals' Day, T.A.R.A. set up their low-cost spay/neuter clinic fixing close to 50 animals helping to combat pet overpopulation.

The Humane Society of Elkhart County in Bristol, Indiana, commemorated International Homeless Animals' Day 2012 with approximately 220 people in attendance. Ms. Anne Reel, Executive Director, said of their annual International Homeless Animals' Day observance, "the event continues to be a huge success for our shelter as a way to raise awareness about homeless animals and to celebrate successful home connections with owners and their loving companions." Media coverage leading up to their event included television spots and local newspaper articles, while a local news anchor from an ABC affiliate acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. To reinforce the spay/neuter message, the Humane Society of Elkhart County hosted organizations working on behalf of feral cats and a local low-cost spay/neuter clinic. A moving blessing of pets rounded out the event, shedding light on the homeless animal epidemic.

Commemorating their 18<sup>th</sup> annual International Homeless Animals' Day Candlelight Vigil observance on August 18th, Defenders of Animals, RI, once again turned on the spotlight to educate others about the pet overpopulation epidemic and its simple spay/neuter solution. This year, Defenders of Animals honored members who were instrumental in assisting the enactment of crucial animal-friendly legislation, including those who fostered shelter animals, or went above and beyond the call of duty helping animals throughout the year. Live music and a candlelight vigil ceremony in memory of those affected by pet overpopulation closed out the evening.

Clutching vibrant signs boasting the spay/neuter message, members of Cats Angels, Inc. SPCA of Fernandina Beach, FL held their 11th annual International Homeless Animals' Day two mile walk and candlelight vigil on August 18th. Mayor Filkoff of Fernandina Beach declared the entire month of August as International Homeless Animals' Month and Saturday, August 18, 2012 as International Homeless Animals' Day. Throughout August 2012, Cats Angels performed 138 spay/neuter surgeries, preventing the births of hundreds more unwanted kittens. When asked why Cats Angels observes International Homeless Animals' Day, President, Beth Hackney said, "We participate in Internation-



**Beth Hackney, President of Cats Angel Inc., SPCA carries her “Spay/Neuter It Stops the Killing!” sign along a busy roadway during their 11th annual International Homeless Animals’ Day awareness walk in Fernandina Beach, FL.**

al Homeless Animals’ Day every year because we feel it brings attention to the plight of all the homeless animals who have nobody to speak for them. Cats Angels has so many spay/neuter surgeries in the summer months, because that is when we see the most animals coming in. Sometimes I get real discouraged wondering if we are truly making a difference, but I just look in the eyes of some of the babies we help, and I know we can’t give up, even if we help just some of them.”

Along a major highway in Tamuning, **Guam**, Fur-Ever Kinda Love displayed 10,000 twinkle lights, representing the number of animals killed by shelter euthanization or on local roadways in 2011. Informative banners promoting the spay/neuter message and a push for companion animal adoptions accompanied the touching light display. According to Fur-Ever Kinda Love volunteer, Shirley Miller, on the week prior to International Homeless Animals’ Day, a proclamation was signed by 19 mayors of the Guam Mayors Council

declaring August 18, 2012 as “Guam Homeless Animals’ Day.” Senator Judith Guthertz, a long-time animal supporter, also introduced a Resolution based on ISAR’s Proclamation to the Guam Legislature where it was signed and presented during the ceremony. Also, in honor of International Homeless Animals’ Day, the Guam Mayor’s Council has agreed to work with Fur-Ever Kinda Love to implement spay/neuter campaigns in Guam’s villages as well as promoting animal adoption from local shelters.

Spay/Panama and Angeles De Los Animales in Bethania, **Panama**, commemorated International Homeless Animals’ Day once again by performing more than 100 spay/neuter surgeries on August 18<sup>th</sup> bringing their total number of animals sterilized to just over 44,000. A big supporter of International Homeless Animals’ Day and promoting spay/neuter, Congressman HD Victor Juliao is not only working on creating and enacting the Animal Protection Law for Panama, he is also working with Spay/Panama to provide a spay/neuter mobile unit to travel and perform cat and dog sterilizations in several locations. A candlelight vigil comprised of 500 attendees took place in Parque Urraca after the Day’s spay/neuter clinic to memorialize the animals that lost their lives due to pet overpopulation. When asked of their overall effectiveness in educating others about pet overpopulation and spay/neuter on International Homeless Animals’ Day, Patricia Chan of Spay/Panama said, “International Homeless Animal’s Day brought us all together. Each attendant will now become a spokesperson.”

Pawlooza, also known as “the ultimate dog party” of London, Ontario, **Canada**, surpassed last year’s attendance record this year by hosting a whopping 25,000 attendees, some of whom brought with them as many as 6,000 dogs, on International Homeless Animals’ Day at the Plunkett Estate. On this Day, rescues and animal shelters from across Canada were invited to educate the public about pet overpopulation and spay/neuter, bring adoptable animals seeking new homes, fundraise for their cause, and network with others. With approximately 200 vendors and rescue organizations on hand, attendees and their pooches spent some quality time together for a good cause while enjoying games, contests, demonstrations, information stalls, and much, much more.

## Special Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the humane-minded elected officials who recognized August 18, 2012 as International Homeless Animals' Day in their communities by signing ISAR's Proclamation, acknowledging the plight of cat and dog overpopulation while encouraging the public to be part of the simple solution: spay/neuter. A special thanks to Mayor Arlene Filkoff of Fernandina Beach, Florida, for declaring the entire month of August 2012 as International Homeless Animals' Month, and August 18, 2012 as International Homeless Animals' Day. ISAR would also like to express our deepest gratitude to the Mayors' Council of Guam for signing ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day Proclamation and a special thanks to Senator Judith Guthertz for introducing a resolution based on ISAR's Proclamation that was adopted by Guam's Legislature highlighting the importance of spay/neuter and pet adoption and further emphasizing, "Pet owners who neglect to have their pets spayed or neutered are accountable to taxpayers of Guam for the financial burden the community incurs as a direct result of the over-population crisis." Thank you to all elected officials from New York's Orange County, the Town of Warwick, the Village of Warwick and the Village of Greenwood Lake who issued proclamations based on ISAR's designating Saturday, Aug. 18, 2012 as "Homeless Animals' Day."

ISAR would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many media outlets as well as all individuals who helped to publicize the plight of homeless animals by promoting ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day 2012. Articles and interviews focusing on ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day circulated in newspaper publications including Russia's St. Petersburg Times, and on television and radio stations around the globe. Countless websites, including The Voice of Russia, petmeds.org, PetMd.com, and Jane Goodall's rootsandshoots.org helped advertise the importance of International Homeless Animals' Day along with many blogs, and tweets on Twitter, including one from screenwriter Brian Lynch who encouraged others to visit an animal shelter if they were considering adding a companion animal to their family. ISAR is also grateful to those compassionate individuals who took the time to help publicize International Homeless Animals Day 2012 on their social media networks, by writing letters-to-the-editor, and simply by encouraging others to work for positive change for unwanted animals by adopting from shelters and promoting spay/neuter.

## ORGANIZE A VIGIL FOR 2013

ISAR extends a heartfelt invitation to all of our veteran International Homeless Animals' Day event coordinators, as well as to a host of new ones, to join us on Saturday, August 17, 2013 in commemorating ISAR's 22<sup>nd</sup> annual International Homeless Animals' Day. We encourage you to be part of something special and band together with us in solidarity to raise awareness of the plight of homeless animals.

ISAR offers free International Homeless Animals' Day packets to all who are interested in coordinating an event, whether it is a small modest event or a large public gathering.

ISAR's informational materials will assist you in organizing an effective observance with suggestions for site selection, reaching target audiences, speakers, sample press releases, ISAR's proclamations, and much more.

Please contact ISAR by mail, phone, fax or email to receive your International Homeless Animals' Day 2013 packet.

Together we will continue to be a voice for the animals and continue to demand an end to the suffering and exploitation inflicted on animals each day.