

# OCAP RECAP

A newsletter for members of Ontonagon County Animal Protection

SPRING 2026

## President's Message

Lee McCaffery

In my "spot" in this issue, I'd like to introduce you to our current Cat and Dog Coordinators. These are the people who manage the two departments and are your first point of contact for dog and cat issues such as adoptions, surrenders, and general questions about our canine and feline residents.



### STEPHANIE KIBE

Is OCAP's new Cat Coordinator, taking over in January 2026 when Jan Wolfe retired. With her is Egg, a kitten her family fostered, who became a "foster failure" and is now member of the family.

(Rex Kibe Photo)

Steph grew up in a small town outside of Pittsburgh PA on the Monongahela River. With the steel industry in decline, her fiancé Glenn decided to go into the Air Force, so they married and spent 20 years as a military family living in Oklahoma, Alaska, and Arizona. They and their two children, Rex and Tina, chose Ontonagon for their retirement because it was the closest thing to Alaska without the high cost of living. Steph has always loved animals, and an early dream was to work in a zoo. Her family has always had cats and dogs and has fostered for OCAP. She's been volunteering since the spring of 2024.

Steph says that her greatest moment at OCAP was when Tommy let her pet him. (Tommy came us extremely fear aggressive from an abusive home.) She was sitting with him when he started to roll around in his litter box being cute and silly after weeks of fear aggression. Knowing the abuse he suffered, she cried; then she stuck her fingers into his cage. When he rubbed on them, she knew she was seeing a turnaround.

### REBECCA SPARPANIC,

OCAP's Dog Coordinator, has been in charge of our Dog Department since Anne Lundberg retired in July 2024. Eros the pup was adopted shortly after this photo was taken. Becca has a menagerie of animals at home, most of them rescues.

(BJ Pollard Photo)



Becca lived in Ontonagon until she was 12 when she moved to California with her mother. Despite the distance, she always kept an Ontonagon connection through her grandmother Agnes Broemer Sparpanic.

When she was 18, she had a dog she couldn't keep. The pain of that separation made her vow that one day she would work at a shelter. She did work at a county shelter in California, learning intake, assessment, and adoption procedures, but she did more than that - she and a friend eventually opened their own shelter in Arizona called Golden Valley Desert Rescue. The property was a former horse place of about three acres with another acre holding 10 kennels, a covered arena, and an air-conditioned shop for elderly and sick dogs. The rescue saved and found homes mostly for dogs dumped in the desert. Becca worked concurrently at a veterinary clinic where she learned about low-cost spay-neuter programs and brushed up on her caregiver skills.

Their shelter operated for about five years until she moved to Ontonagon in 2022 to raise her now-adult children, Hayley and Alex.

## FELINE MEGACOLON ISN'T A DEATH SENTENCE

Does your cat have severe and potentially painful constipation? Fewer bowel movements? Unusually hard feces with occasional watery diarrhea? These are just a few of the symptoms of megacolon, a condition caused by nerve damage or when the muscles in the intestines become stretched and the colon widens. Fecal material accumulates and is not pushed out. This can result in obstipation in which the cat stops passing feces at all.

Often kitty will pass hard, dry stool outside the box – not on purpose but because the pressure of more waste pushes it out without kitty realizing it.

Megacolon requires the immediate attention of a veterinarian, who can provide relief through an enema and prescribe medications to soften stool and increase motility of the colon.

If these remedies are not successful, the colon can be removed, and kitty can live a normal life, usually with special food and medications. Sounds horrific, but we want to share Tiny Boots' story so you know it can be done safely, and your cat can go on to live a long and full life without great inconvenience to you.

***Much more information about megacolon is available online.***



*Tiny Boots at 17 – ten years after surgery to remove his colon.*

### LIFE WITH TINY BOOTS

A Houghton family adopted OCAP's megacolon kitty, Tiny Boots, in October 2016, the year his colon was removed. To manage his megacolon, he eats a special dry food and gets oral lactulose and Cisapride every 2-3 days to help with motility and soften stool. Other than that, he's like any other house cat.

At 10:00 PM, he makes it known that it's bedtime when he climbs up onto his blanket on the back of the couch to sleep for the night.

He's very chill but still gets goofy on home-grown catnip and catnip toys.

Boots and the family's other cats are always featured on the back of their Christmas cards, but this year he made the front! They say he will always be their OG (original kitty).

*Boots has his family trained to turn on the tap when he asks. They don't mind, because drinking water is important for elimination and could be extending his life.*



This newsletter is available at [occappaws.com](http://occappaws.com) a week after mailing.  
To receive electronic notice when it's posted, send your email address to [jwolfe2@jamadots.com](mailto:jwolfe2@jamadots.com)

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### Mailing Address

PO Box 315  
Ontonagon MI 49953

### Web site

[Occappaws.org](http://Occappaws.org)

### Petfinder

[Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com)  
(location 49953)

### Facebook

[Facebook.com/OcapPaws](https://www.facebook.com/OcapPaws)

For more information about our dogs or to discuss volunteering with the dogs, contact Rebecca Sparpanic at 760-669-8565 or email [rsbabygirl@gmail.com](mailto:rsbabygirl@gmail.com).

For information about our cats or to discuss volunteering with the cats, call or text Stephanie Kibe at 520-954-0440 or email [crazydreamer78@gmail.com](mailto:crazydreamer78@gmail.com).

Report neglected or abused animals, to the Ontonagon County Sheriff's Department: 906-884-4901.

OCAP volunteers are not certified animal control officers. Animal Control issues are handled by the Sheriff's Dept.

OCAP's role is to provide a safe haven for cats and dogs that need sheltering until they're claimed or adopted.

## XENA'S STORY – HAD TO BE TOLD

As you can imagine, there are many stories, happy and sad, that can be told about the cats and dogs that live in an animal shelter. Xena's story is one happy ending that we have to share.

Xena is a German Shepherd who came to us five years ago when her owner died. True to her breed, she is intelligent, powerful, and full of opinions. She became bored with the controlled shelter lifestyle, even though she was walked and had a door to her outdoor kennel so she could go in and out as her mood dictated. When inside, she found it entertaining to bark at some of the volunteers when they walked by, just to get a reaction. She also wasn't a fan of other dogs. Between her selective choice of human friends and her dislike of her own kind, no one who came looking for a dog felt Xena was a good fit for their home,

So the years went by, and after five years in a shelter, Xena found herself eight years old with no immediate prospects. Of course, the volunteers who worked with her loved her, and she was treated well, but a shelter is not a home.

One day a woman called to request a meet-and-greet with Xena. She'd had other German Shepherds and was familiar with their quirks and personality traits.

Keep in mind that Xena was selective in choosing her friends, so meeting a stranger was a toss-up for how she'd react. To help her burn off some energy before her meet-and-greet, Becca, OCAP's Dog Coordinator, took her for a walk. While they were still outdoors, her visitor arrived. To Becca's chagrin, Xena pulled toward the vehicle. What did Xena have in mind! Turned out it was to give a warm greeting to this total stranger.

The meet-and-greet moved indoors and went well. Xena liked the woman and she liked Xena. Xena was finally going home.

Now comes the good part. When the papers are signed and it's time to go, there's usually a little fumbling and confusion as the dog is leashed and it processes the fact that it's leaving with the adopters. Not so with Xena. When it was time to go, she grabbed the blanket she'd been resting on and headed for the car all on her own. Becca said that she didn't even look back at her – she who had loved and spent time with her nearly every day!

But what really sealed the deal was that the woman had lost her husband just weeks before. When she said, "This is the first night I won't cry myself to sleep," we wondered who rescued whom...



*After five years in the shelter, Xena finally found her forever home. With her in this photo is Dog Coordinator Becca whom Xena loved but left without a backward glance when the chance came to have her own home.*

## HAPPY TAILS



*Tommy, who was featured as a Poster Child for abused cats in our last newsletter, has grown into a sweetheart and was recently adopted by the perfect family for him.*



*Nothing says “Home” like a good chair and a nap – unless it comes with treats. You can see that Artemis has found her comfort zone in her new home.*



*Dean - now Buddy - looks like a true Yooper in his stylish plaid shirt. His new family says he’s a goofy boy. His cute but unique face suits his personality.*

*No words are needed to know how Kiza feels about her new family. That big grin says she loves her new mom and dad and human sister, and they all look forward to walks and playtime,*



*Hank and Areyou (gray cats left), formerly Ace and Deuce, started life as feral kittens, then became barn cats. An accident that broke Areyou’s pelvis and an attack by a bobcat that wounded Hank brought them into the house to live with the family’s other spoiled pets. No more barn cats, says mom.*

## HAPPY TAILS



*Otis had a sleepover with his new family to make sure Millie, the resident dog, would accept him. They got along great – and Otis got a car ride out of the deal.*

Have a photo of your OCAP adoptee you'd like to see in Happy Tails? Email it to [jwolfe2@jamadots.com](mailto:jwolfe2@jamadots.com), and we'll see if we can fit it in. We love sharing photos of our kids in their forever homes.



*Sully was a frightened stray rural kitten scavenging in a trash can when she came to OCAP. She's found a forever friend in Luna, a stray from the Bronx. The girls are now living in South Carolina with their brother ASAP.*



*Xena spent five years -1,825 days – in the shelter, waiting for her person. See her featured story in this issue. Her mom said she made herself right at home from the get-go.*



*It takes a lot of naps for a tortie like Taco to build up enough energy to do her job of greeting all visitors at the door and maintaining control over a household of permanent and foster residents.*

*Stu, now Charlie, is in Blissville with all the toys and cat furniture in his new home. Although he wasn't adopted with any of his littermates, he loves playing with his new cat brother-from-another-mother.*



## LEPTOSPOROS IN DOGS – PREVENTION IS KEY

Some dogs can barely contain their excitement when it's time to go for a walk. The smells – the sounds – so much to take in. As dogs explore, they can get into soil and water, and organisms such as bacteria and fungi living in those media can make your dog very sick. One of those microorganisms is *Leptospira* that may develop into a life-threatening disease called Leptospirosis.

Leptospirosis is caused by bacteria that target the kidneys and liver. They can enter the dog through the skin if it swims in contaminated water. Your dog can also get sick from drinking infected water, being bitten by an infected animal, or eating tissue from an infected animal's body. Leptospirosis is also zoonotic, meaning it can spread to humans.

What should you watch for? Lethargy, poor appetite, tender muscles, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, shivering, not wanting to move, painful swelling in the eye, jaundice, or blood in urine or feces are red flags. Not all dogs will show symptoms, so testing is important if your dog seems "off."

If your dog is diagnosed with Leptospirosis, the earlier treatment is started, the better its chance for survival. If your dog becomes seriously ill, it might require hospitalization and aggressive treatment consisting of antibiotics, fever-reducing medications, intravenous fluids, and nutritional supplementation.

Your vet might prescribe long-term antibiotics to ensure that the infection totally clears and that your dog doesn't become a Lepto carrier. If you have other dogs, it's generally recommended that they also be given a course of antibiotics under the supervision of a vet.

Do you want to deprive your dog of that chance to plunge into a cool pond on a hot day? To never get off leash, because it might dig in some contaminated dirt? Do yourself and your dog a favor by being proactive in guarding against Lepto.

Talk to your vet about vaccinating your dog against Leptospirosis. Veterinary health authorities now include the Lepto vaccine in a dog's recommended core vaccinations. You can't control every move your dog makes, and a pond or puddle of standing water, a dead animal, some dirt that begs to be dug up – your dog can put itself happily in the middle of a dangerous situation before you even notice.



*What dog can resist a dip in a cool pond or puddle on a hot day? And what owner wants to deprive his buddy of that simple pleasure. But know the risks and talk to your vet about proper vaccinations first. Prevention is easier than trying to cure a sick pet.*

### Answers to Pet Trivia

1. Newfoundland
2. Manx
3. Chow Chow
4. Apparent lack of fur
5. Germany
6. Nine weeks
7. Cairn Terrier
8. Female
9. Touch
10. Polydactyl

### WISH LIST

If you would like to donate items to help OCAP with expenses, we can always use consumables such as

- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- White Copier Paper
- Clorox Disinfecting Bleach
- Lysol Laundry Sanitizer
- Disinfecting spray cleaner
- Party Mix Cat Treats
- Friskies Pate cat food
- Diamond Chicken & Rice All Life Stages dry dog food.

We currently have enough towels

## TEST YOURSELF ON PET TRIVIA

### 1. What Canadian dog is known for its webbed feet?

- Labrador Retriever
- Newfoundland
- Nova Scotia Duck Trolling Retriever
- Malamute

### 2. Which breed of cat has no tail?

- Siamese
- Persian
- Manx
- Maine Coon

### 3. Which dog has a black tongue as a unique trait?

- Border Collie
- Rottweiler
- Chow Chow
- Dalmatian

### 4. What is the most distinctive trait of a Sphynx cat?

- Flowing white fur
- Crooked tail
- Bright blue eyes
- Apparent lack of fur

### 5. Which country was the first to introduce guide dogs for the visually impaired?

- Switzerland
- United States
- Scotland
- Germany

(Answers on previous page)

### 6. How long is a cat's pregnancy?

- 9 months
- 6 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 9 weeks

### 7. In the original "Wizard of Oz," what breed of dog was Toto?

- Yorkshire Terrier
- Chihuahua
- Cairn Terrier
- West Highland Terrier

### 8. The great majority of calico cats are

- Male
- Female
- Neither
- Both

### 9. The first sense a dog develops is

- Sight
- Sound
- Small
- Touch

### 10. What is a cat with extra toes called?

- Muffin Toes
- Mitten Foot
- Polydactyl
- Big Foot

### WHEN IS MY MEMBERSHIP DUE?

OCAP memberships run from January 1 through December 31 each year. Our newsletter usually comes out in January and has the membership form on the back, but there was a production delay this year. The form is still on the back, but memberships acquired now will be retroactive to January 1 and will be due again next January. If you receive this newsletter by mail, your membership information is on your mailing label. If you read it online, you can call Jan Wolfe at 906-884-2429 or email her at [jwolfe2@jamadots.com](mailto:jwolfe2@jamadots.com) and she will look it up.

With the cost of paper and everything else going up, we had to raise the cost of membership from \$12.00 to \$15.00. We hope this modest increase won't keep you from supporting our rescue with your membership.

OCAP  
PO Box 315  
Ontonagon, MI 49953

# Renew or become a member of OCAP and help lost, abandoned and homeless animals

## Ontonagon County Animal Protection Membership



Annual  
memberships  
are  
only  
\$15 each.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Pet Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I will read your newsletter online at [ocappaws.org](http://ocappaws.org)

Do not send a copy in the mail. Email me when it is posted.

Please Check Below:

Individual Membership  New \_\_\_\_\_  Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Membership (not eligible to vote) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

\* Memberships run January 1 thru December 31.

Please mail to: OCAP • PO Box 315 • Ontonagon, MI 49953