

OCAP RECAP

A newsletter for members of Ontonagon County Animal Protection

FALL 2025

President's Message

Lee McCaffery

Time goes by so fast, before we knew it the leaves were turning color and it was time to do another newsletter. Somehow we missed Spring/Summer!

I'm pleased to report we did make good use of the spring and summer months, finally installing the blacktop in our parking area. What a difference it makes to the cleanliness of the shelter! We no longer need a mop and bucket by the door to clean up every time someone comes in after a rain.

Paving is expensive, and we've been putting the receipts from the returnable can and bottle money into a fund to pay for the parking lot. This has meant hundreds of hours from a volunteer team to collect, clean, and turn in cans and bottles, but it's paid off in the long run.

Some might wonder why we didn't pave a larger area or even do the entire driveway. Cost was one issue, but heavy trucks pick up our trash, and paving as far as the dumpster was going to mean using heavy-duty highway pavement or else risking break-up over time. We opted to pave what really needed paving and what we could afford and maintain.

In preparation for winter, we also started a project to replace our dog kennel doors. The interior kennels were originals that did the trick for a long time, but the metal began to rust (dogs are indiscriminate about where they lift their legs) and the fasteners became difficult to secure. We offered a program for donors to purchase naming rights to kennel doors for \$250 or \$500, and we were gratified to "sell" all in a short time. They will be ordered shortly.

We had two very successful fundraisers during the year and have two more in the planning stages between now and year-end. We hope to have another Quarters for a Cause auction and to sell food and drinks at the Home Town Christmas Bazaar, if the Chamber of Commerce holds it at the high school again. If anyone has an item to donate for any of our auctions, please contact Jan Wolfe at 906-884-2429 or jwolfe2@jamadots.com.

Fundraisers and donations are critical to our success. As grateful as we are to Ontonagon County voters for approving our 0.15 millage that brings in around \$42,000.00 year, it takes \$90,000.00 to \$100,000.00 a year to operate our shelter (depending mainly on vet bills and utilities if the weather is very hot or very cold). We have no paid animal-care employees; nevertheless, that \$40,000.00-\$50,000.00 we need to raise through fundraisers and donations is vital, and we can't say enough how much we appreciate our supporters.

That goes for the people who respond to our Facebook requests for dog food and those who give us donations of food, cat litter, blankets, and towels. We're well stocked now with blankets, towels, and other bedding, but we re-donate what we can't use to other shelters or charities. Nothing goes to waste or is unappreciated.

To stay abreast of our activities, the public is welcome at our monthly meetings held the third Monday of the month at 5:30 at the shelter.



This is an example of what our new kennels will look like. You can see the spaces for the donors' messages in the bones at the tops.

TOMMY BEATS THE ODDS

Who can understand why people abuse animals. Usually they blame the victim: "He wouldn't stop barking." "She keeps running away." "He jumps on visitors."

Or in Tommy's case, "He attacks my legs."

Tommy was a juvenile male kitten living in a small apartment with few outlets for his energy. Anyone who's raised a lively kitten has probably been the victim of a sneak attack. You're walking toward the kitchen when from around the doorway a furry missile leaps on your legs in a pretend hunting move. That's just what bored, energetic kittens do.

This behavior didn't sit well with Tommy's guardian, who took it as a personal attack and a flaw in Tommy's character. At the end of their relationship, neighbors reported that he'd thrown Tom against a wall more than once and, in the final act that brought Tom to us, attempted to choke him to death.

The "guardian" went to the hospital with infections from the desperate claw marks on his arms, and Tommy came to our shelter.

Tommy was so afraid of people he had to be humanely trapped to be removed from the apartment. He was set up in a wire crate at the shelter in a room by himself where only certain volunteers took care of him. Wracked by fear aggression, he made it clear he trusted no one and would attack anyone who invaded his space. He was especially fearful of hands, for obvious reasons. During this time, volunteers cleaned his cage, fed him, and spoke softly, even if he struck out at the hands invading the security of his cage. The volunteers wore gloves and reacted with gentleness. No one ever raised a voice to him nor did anything but speak softly and provide food, treats, and toys.

Even with this gentle care, people were too much for Tommy. At one point, he seemed to have lost his mind. Instead of focusing on hands, he went for a volunteer's face. Fearing he could not be safely transitioned even to a barn without being a danger to humans, the decision to put him down was made – tearfully and reluctantly.

Happily, another of his special caretakers took over his care, and after just a few days, the miracle happened. Tom started to settle down, and the appointment to euthanize became one to neuter and start his vaccinations. Within a few weeks, he was accepting petting while still being watchful. He went to a foster home – with the volunteer he wanted to kill just a few weeks earlier. From then on, Tommy showed no aggression, just a desire to be snuggled and loved.

This isn't a text-book success case. Many abused animals can be helped to some degree, but most retain some negative carry-over behaviors. Depending on the degree of abuse, the animal's personality, and the aftercare provided, some eventually trust enough to be pets. However, some never lose the fear.

Tommy is an example of the former. He presents no danger to volunteers or visitors. Although he's still wary of strangers, he's a friendly, social cat.

Tommy beat the odds. He's now available for adoption, preferably to a quiet home with people who empathize with what he went through just to survive.



Tommy usually closes his eyes in bliss when he gets a two-handed head rub, but when this photo was taken, he was on the lookout for the tuna Churu that usually comes next.

This newsletter is available at occappaws.com a week after mailing.

To receive a copy electronically, send your email address to jwolfe2@jamadots.com

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Web site

Ocappaws.org

Petfinder

Petfinder.com

(location 49953)

Facebook

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

Paws

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.

For information about our cats or to discuss volunteering with the cats, call Jan Wolfe at 906-884-2429 or email jwolfe2@jamadots.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.

WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR DOGS IN THE U.S. IN 2025?

Every year the American Kennel Club (AKC) releases its list of the most popular dog breeds in the United States, and while some rankings remain steady, others see surprising shifts. This year a few beloved breeds fell out of the top 10, making room for some unexpected newcomers. The Cane Corso continues its rapid rise in popularity, proving that big, protective breeds are having a moment, while longtime favorites like the Beagle and Rottweiler shuffled positions.

If you're thinking about adding a new dog to your family and wonder what breed would be the best fit, the AKC also has online descriptions of typical breed characteristics that can be helpful when choosing. However, not all dogs are perfect examples of their breed traits. Like people, they can all have their own idiosyncrasies.

1. French Bulldog

For the third year in a row, the French Bulldog tops the list as America's most popular dog. These compact bat-eared cuties are affectionate, playful, and low maintenance. They don't need much exercise, which makes them popular with apartment dwellers.

2. Labrador Retriever

After holding the #1 spot for 31 years, Labs still hold strong as favorites. They're outgoing, eager to please, and full of energy, making them ideal companions for active families. They also come in black, yellow, and chocolate for those with a preference.

3. Golden Retriever

Goldens are the ideal family dog – friendly, intelligent, and always ready to play. They're known for their love of people, making them wonderful therapy and service dogs.

4. German Shepherd

A breed known for its loyalty and intelligence, the German Shepherd is a true working dog. Whether working in law enforcement, search and rescue, or as a devoted family protector, these dogs are fearless and highly trainable if given proper training and socialization.

5. Poodle

Poodles are more than just fancy haircuts – they're one of the most intelligent dog breeds. Available in three sizes (Standard, Miniature, and Toy), they're adaptable to different lifestyles. They're hypoallergenic, highly trainable, and love to learn new tricks, making them a favorite with families.

6. Dachshund

Short in stature but big in personality, the Dachshund is one of the most recognizable breeds in the world. These little hounds were bred for hunting, which explains their fearless attitude and independent streak. Whether the smooth, long-haired, or wire-haired variety, they're playful, loving companions.

7. Bulldog

Sturdy, affectionate, and full of personality, the Bulldog remains a staple in American homes. Despite their tough exterior, these dogs are known for their gentle, easygoing nature. They love lounging around, making them perfect for city dwellers or anyone who leads a laid-back lifestyle.

8. Beagle

With their floppy ears and irresistible puppy-dog eyes, Beagles have been a favorite for years. Initially bred for hunting, these small hounds have an incredible sense of smell and an adventurous spirit. They're friendly, curious, and love being part of a pack, whether that's a family with kids or a household of other pets.

9. Rottweiler

Powerful, confident, and deeply devoted, the Rottweiler is a breed that commands respect. Originally bred as cattle-driving dogs, today's Rotties are intelligent and trainable but need early socialization and firm, consistent training to become the fearless protectors and big-hearted goofballs they're known to be.

10. German Shorthaired Pointer

These sleek, athletic dogs are known for their intelligence and versatility. They require plenty of exercise and mental stimulation, but in return they offer boundless loyalty and affection.

HAPPY TAILS



Benji and his housemate Shadow (not shown) are our first Ex-Pats – their mom retired and moved the family to Panama. She reports the cats have adjusted well, and Benji certainly looks as if his new porch suits him.



Harley and Bonnie hit the jackpot when they were adopted together. A family who fosters children also loves to take dogs with sad beginnings and make the rest of their lives happy and worry-free. These two came to OCAP fearful, filthy, and full of parasites. To see them now, clean, happy, and healthy, is the best reward.



Rocky spent over 700 days in the shelter until someone saw how special he is and took him home. He came from a breeder where he was just a commodity, but now he's in a home with a loving family that takes him to the beach – and spoils him with human food, since he's made it clear that's his preference.



Reece was one of four kittens born in a foster home while her mom was in OCAP's care. She's moved on to rule the roost over the two dogs in her new home where she sleeps with the kids and has the job of waking her mom up an hour before she's ready.

HAPPY TAILS



Patty Ann came to OCAP in a humane trap when deep November snows threatened her and her three outdoor littermates' safety. She spent time in a foster home to learn that people are OK, and now she has a family that will make sure she never has to face another winter outdoors.



Romeo is a senior gentleman that came to OCAP when his guardian died. He was diagnosed with kidney disease and was adopted by a couple who didn't want him to spend his last months in a shelter. Since then, he seems to have entered his second kittenhood – his days are filled with playing and toys and supervised outdoor treks – with time out for snacks and naps, of course.



Trout came to OCAP as a stray pup and went to a foster home, because he was so young. His foster family knew from the start they wanted to make him a permanent part of their family, and from the smile on his face, Trout agreed.



Marshall (left) was a stray, semi-feral kitten when he came to OCAP. His multiple toes just added to his general cuteness, but Marshall was afraid of every little change. It took a while for him to settle into his new home – and perish forbid if mom rearranges the furniture! Happily, he's gotten comfortable with the other animals in his new family, especially his dog Anna.

FROM A READER – ON CAT STIMULATION

I'm a sucker for sales, and especially sales of cat toys, so after Christmas when I saw this boxed "Catinee" house, a cardboard theater for cats, I snatched it up, never wondering whether I could actually assemble the darned thing.

In the back of my mind, I was remembering that when I first got the glamorous Cat Sisters from OCAP, I read somewhere that cat parents should plan some play and exercise time with the pets each day, especially with indoor cats. I have always had an array of toys, although they do tire of them, and one must replace and reinvent.

So how delighted was I, and then Samora and Malee, when I was able to put together this cardboard, two-story scratch pad that came complete with catnip, I sprinkled catnip inside and on the roof, and the rest was theirs for fun. There are three entryways to the "cat house," so they can sneak in, hide, and then pounce on the other or push the other out the back door.

After three weeks, they had not tired of what they can do in there, and it's hilarious for me to watch. So, a solution for the cats' cabin fever this winter...and mine.

Reminds me that special time with Mom, Dad, and kids is a pet's life, and it might also enrich our own!



Samora and Malee's mom, Marlene Broemer, sent us this piece, which reinforces the article about providing stimulation for indoor cats that ran in an earlier newsletter.

WHEN IS MY MEMBERSHIP DUE?

OCAP memberships run from January 1 through December 31 each year. Since the membership fee is \$12.00, that means it's \$1.00 a month. We set the annual schedule to make it easier for members to remember and create less paperwork for our volunteer staff.

Some people pay in advance and aren't sure when their membership is due again. For members who receive this newsletter by mail, your membership information is on your mailing label. We haven't figured out a way to easily provide the renewal date to those who read it online, but if that's you, feel free to email Jan Wolfe at jwolfe2@jamadots.com and ask. It's easy enough to check our records and reply.

Memberships are individual and are necessary for voting at the annual meeting. If there are two or more people in your household, each would need a membership to vote. Pet memberships are also \$12.00 a year, but we play favorites and don't allow pets to vote.

SHELTER WISH LIST

People often ask what kinds of things we need at the shelter. It varies, but there are items we go through quickly that when donated save money we can use for direct animal care. Here's a partial list:

Toilet paper

Paper towels

Dawn dishwashing liquid

Tide laundry pods

Lysol laundry sanitizer

Clorox (disinfecting)

Tall kitchen trash bags

30-gal. black trash bags

Friskies Pate cat food

Party Mix Cat Treats

Peanut butter

Dog Treats made in the USA

Hard dog toys – no soft filling or squeakers

Gift cards

WHAT VACCINATIONS DOES MY PET NEED?

A regimen of vaccines is needed to ensure that your pet stays healthy. The Michigan Humane Society recommends the schedule below. Always consult your own pet's vet for medications appropriate for your pet.

PUPPY VACCINATION SCHEDULE

8-10 Weeks

- General exam
- Distemper/Parvovirus vaccine (1 of 3 for pups)
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Deworming medication (appropriate for pups)
- Begin heartworm, flea, and tick preventatives

12 -15 Weeks

- General exam
- Distemper/Parvovirus vaccine (2 of 3 for pups)
- Leptospirosis (1 of 2)
- Optional Bordetella, Lyme, and/or influenza (1 of 2 series)
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Deworming medication appropriate for pups

16+ Weeks

- General exam
- Rabies vaccination (1-year)
- Distemper/Parvovirus vaccine (3 of 3)
- Leptospirosis vaccine (2 of 2)
- Optional Bordetella, Lyme, and/or influenza vaccine (2 of 2)
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Deworming medication appropriate for pups

6 to 7 months

- Heartworm test (done at 6-7 months, 12-13 months, then annually if kept up to date)

Adult Annual Visits

- General exam
- Rabies: Must complete 1 year vaccine, then get three-year vx within 30 days of due date
- Distemper, Leptospirosis
- Optional Bordetella, Lyme & Influenza vaccines
- Heartworm test
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Wellness bloodwork recommended for pets five years and older.

KITTEN VACCINATION SCHEDULE

8-11 weeks

- General Exam
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- FVRCP vaccine (1 of 3)
- Deworming medication appropriate for kits
- Begin flea and tick prevention with medication appropriate for kittens (not adult strength)

12 – 15 weeks

- General exam
- FVRCP vaccine (2 Of 2)
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Deworming medication suitable for kittens
- Optional FeLV vaccine (1 Of 2) (Test first)
- Optional FeLV/FIV test (OCAP always tests)

16+ Weeks

- General exam
- Rabies vaccine (1 year)
- FVRCP vaccine (3 of 3)
- Optional FeLV/FIV (2 Of 2)
- Fecal test for intestinal parasites
- Deworming medication – age appropriate

Adult Annual Visits

- General exam
- Fecal exam for intestinal parasites

Other

- Three-year FVRCP vaccine if kept up to date
- Three-year rabies vaccine if kept up to date. Must be given within 30 days of due date.
- Optional FeLV vaccine or FeLV/FIV test (must take test to have vaccine)
- Wellness bloodwork is recommended for pets five years of older

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
\$12 each.



Name _____ Pet Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

I will read your newsletter online at ocappaws.org

Do not send a copy in the mail.

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